

EGM/CSW/2021/EP4

September 2020

ENGLISH ONLY

UN Women

Expert Group Meeting

Sixty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 65)

'Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls'

New York, New York

5-8 October 2020

**The Participation and Discrimination of Indigenous Women and
Women of African Descent**

Expert paper prepared by:

Otilia Lux de Coti*

* The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations.

Indigenous women are women who fight for their lives: they are **defenders** of their human rights and **defenders** of their territories, and this has seen them criminalized. They are **midwives** who bring life into the world; they are **weavers** who recreate the textiles that represent their worldviews – the books that the colonizers could not burn. They are **academics** who, with their research, contribute to the historical narrative of indigenous peoples; they are **politicians** who, with their achievements and proposals, have influenced local, national and international decision-making. They are **young women** ensuring historical continuity of the struggles faced by indigenous women and peoples; they are **rural women** sowing seeds to fill the fields with food and medicinal plants. They are **healers** who, with their ancestral wisdom, keep their communities healthy and sustain the ancestral medicine system of the indigenous peoples; they are **spiritual guides** who connect with Mother Earth and preserve the most important values and principles for living well. They are **poets, writers and singer–songwriters** whose lyrics and voices capture historical memories, life and events. They are **professionals** who, through their work, have raised the profile of indigenous women.

The causes of discrimination against indigenous women and women of African descent

History has taught us that the Latin American republics created states founded on patriarchal, racist, discriminatory, feudal and violent pillars at the command of the creole elite. This was accompanied by an ideological militarism which created violence that is still being reproduced in today's societies. The states are monocultural and corporative, and are based on the Doctrine of Discovery, a fifteenth-century doctrine that offered the first explorers religious justification to occupy indigenous peoples' lands and resources, a practice that was later embraced and justified by international law.

Today, the Doctrine of Discovery continues to be applied to indigenous peoples despite its Eurocentric religious and racial foundations. It is often characterized by the violation of cultural practices and spiritual expressions, the expropriation of lands, territories and resources, and constant violations of human rights. The papal bulls issued by Pope Alexander VI in 1493, which granted discoverers the right to exercise sovereignty over conquered territories and dominate inhabitants to "reduce" them to the Catholic faith, are still in force.

Monocultural, corporative and exclusionary republican states have exacerbated racism, racial and gender discrimination, patriarchy, and intolerance towards indigenous people and people of African descent.

The new states must break these ignominious paradigms of exclusion and discrimination, inequality, racism, and political, economic and legal impunity, which are an attack on the high values of democracy, freedom, peace, order, justice, rule of law, equality, development and progress.

The capitalist model and the system of domination were built on patriarchy, racism and colonialism and these must be eradicated from society, states and their administrations. In both cases, colonial and patriarchal structures must be dismantled to beat racism, sexism and discrimination.

Indigenous women and women of African descent: the current situation

In the face of the social, economic and health humanitarian crisis caused by the global crisis, indigenous peoples and women are experiencing an unprecedented pandemic of exclusion and invisibility, of racism, discrimination and misogyny. They are extremely concerned and faced with a new reality. The depth of their poverty and inequality is clear: malnutrition and the lack of technology to allow their children to continue schooling online show the persistence of racism and discrimination. There has been evidence of domestic violence against women and girls and an increase in cases of sexual violence against young girls, adolescents and women. Added to this are diseases such as dengue fever and malaria, and the lack of health services.

It is always the women and their peoples against states lacking in public policies on their individual and collective rights. It is exclusive and repressive of these states, which have stripped the Earth, to deny people their rights. States are absent in indigenous territories, as shown by education, health and production indicators, which mostly reflect indigenous and rural women.

States make decisions without indigenous people and people of African descent. They implement policies without input from indigenous peoples and women and they address macroeconomic strengthening but strengthening the local, family or community economy, and even less so from the indigenous perspective.

The coronavirus has negatively affected women in five ways: health, domestic violence, care duties, unemployment and deeper poverty.

Mental health has featured on the international agenda and is linked to colonization, globalization, displacement, violence and migration, as well as the loss of traditional knowledge, land and natural resources or environments.

The pandemic is making a bad situation worse, widening gaps in equality, health and education, which predominantly affect women who are indigenous, rural-dwellers, farmers, of African descent, migrants, have disabilities or who are heads of households.

It will have devastating economic, social and political impacts on indigenous women. However, their will for survival, resilience and resistance means they are always participating in decentralized schemes through projects that are in progress or to which they are applying or implementing. For example, women have taken advantage of the opportunities they have to organize themselves as part of initiatives to offer their products via social media.

In Latin America, the indigenous population is over 40 million, spread over several peoples and cultures, with a greater proportion in Guatemala, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Mexico, Chile, Colombia and Argentina. There are over 150 million people of African descent, mainly concentrated in Brazil, Colombia and Venezuela. In these and other countries, there is still deep inequality and an unacceptably wide gap in indicators of access to goods and services. Indigenous women and women of African descent suffer the most from economic, social, political and cultural inequalities – they are the poorest of the poor.

These women's exclusion is a product of discrimination and racism, because of their physical features, their names and surnames, their clothes, their language and other forms of cultural expression. However, there are other deep-seated issues: poverty, exploitation and rurality further exclude indigenous people and people of African descent.

Indigenous women are the most racially discriminated against and also experience discrimination on several other grounds. Asymmetrical power relations mean that both indigenous women and women of African descent experience more discrimination due to poverty, racism, their culture, gender, age, their rural or urban lifestyle, education and simply for being indigenous or of African descent.

Various studies show that indigenous women are the most marginalized group in terms of social exclusion, education access, health services, paid work, political participation, decision-making and social and economic development.

In countries recovering from war, such as Guatemala and Colombia, discrimination and racism against indigenous women has greatly intensified, eroding norms, spirituality, values and principles, and breaking the common thread that ties indigenous peoples together. For example, the war in Guatemala worsened the ethnocide and genocide by the Guatemalan State against indigenous people.

Indigenous women and women of African descent are invisible in public policies, national budgets, intersectional strategies, information and quantitative and qualitative data. As a result, nobody designs or promotes public policies that support the needs of indigenous women and women of African descent. The situation is complex due to both the gender inequality of patriarchal societies, placing women in a position of subordination, and the racism in our societies, which results in more women in poor populations with little or no access to basic services, such as health and education, to productive resources, such as land, credit and housing, or to justice.

Indigenous women and women of African descent experience particularly acute discrimination, as shown by various indicators of poverty, education, health and labour integration. In recent years, they have been gaining momentum in their struggle for individual and collective rights, especially indigenous women who have achieved this as part of a gradual process of interaction and cooperation with other social movements. The intersection between gender, ethnicity and race as forms of discrimination that must be attacked simultaneously provides the basis for their reflection. In the last few decades, indigenous women and women of African descent have gained visibility in the political sphere, allowing them to help design and adapt public policies both nationally and internationally.

Regarding women's living conditions, Elizabeth Peredo Beltrán reports that the discrimination they face is in addition to racial and sociocultural discrimination, which creates conditions of extreme poverty and marginalization. To equitably integrate development proposals and effectively integrate indigenous, black and Afro-Caribbean women into this process, deeper analysis is needed of the forms of ethnic and racial discrimination present in our societies, which – paradoxically – contrast with the official discourses of equality, democracy and fairness of nations states based on their concepts of citizenship and political organization.

Kimberlé Crenshaw uses the intersection of gender and race as her starting point, arguing that racial discrimination is often gendered, since women can sometimes experience discrimination and other human rights abuses differently from men. The gender-mainstreaming imperative highlights the differences between men's and women's experiences of racial discrimination and related intolerance.

Based on these assumptions, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action from the Fourth World Conference on Women includes measures for the transformation of living conditions and a commitment to ensuring women's human rights. In the debate leading up to the outcome document, the use of the notions of race and ethnicity caused major controversy. In the end, both were explicitly included.

In these global times, Latin America has made huge democratic progress, and most elections now take place transparently and without incident. However, the organization of elections is just one of many ways in which democratic power is exercised. Democracy is much more than this: it is respect for human rights; it is rejecting discrimination and racism; it is the full force of the rule of law; it is freedom of expression, pluralism, the separation and independence of powers or probity, transparency in public action, and the full and effective participation of women and indigenous peoples in exercising power.

Progress is being made with national and international instruments that protect the human rights of women, indigenous peoples and people of African descent and legal instruments that promote equality and reduce discrimination and racism are being more broadly applied, increasing demand for more egalitarian and democratic societies with women's representation in decision-making spaces.

The non-discrimination principle is a pillar of any democratic system and one of the foundations of the human rights protection system. Similarly, the right to have rights is essential for peaceful coexistence and social justice.

While democracy is a political ideal and a means for peaceful coexistence, there have historically been calls for greater equality and representation. Today's democracy debate concerns its ability to manage and represent the interests and needs of a diverse population and neutralize the historical structural inequality and discrimination expressed against large sections of the population. One of the main points of discussion is whether socially diverse groups can fully exercise and enjoy the same rights, since differences should not imply inequality.

For a long time, women were not considered worthy of rights, much less citizens, but suffrage granted them a nominal entry into the political sphere. However, in reality, obtaining fair and equal access to and participation in public affairs for women – one of their political rights – without discrimination, remains a challenge.

The insertion of women in parliaments is an uphill struggle due to the various constraints that stop them from fully participating, and for indigenous women and women of African descent it can be all but impossible. Indigenous women and women of African descent in Latin America have historically experienced – and continue to experience – exclusion, racism and racial discrimination, and have been made invisible despite constituting the majority of the population of some states.

It has not been possible to create conditions that support the elimination of gender gaps in political representation due to obstacles of various kinds (economic, political, cultural, legal and attitudes, social and media and more) and numerous initiatives have been required to change this. Latin America, or *Abya yala* as the indigenous peoples call it, has been an excellent testing ground on which significant changes have been made to overcome these obstacles.

Examples include the adoption of gender quotas to incorporate more female candidates and, most recently, the adoption of gender parity measures.

The adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979, the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 and the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, which include goal five to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, have meant a push to guarantee women's rights and advancement towards gender equality in politics and elections.

There is evidence that gives cause for celebration, but also concern. Firstly, we must recognize that every day, more and more Latin American and Caribbean women occupy spaces of power and participate in political decision-making: In January 2015, five countries in Latin America and the Caribbean were led by women: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. The region also has the highest percentage of female ministers – 22.9 per cent compared with 16.75 per cent worldwide (excluding Nordic countries). According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, five women chair legislative assemblies in the Americas, surpassing the world ranking of female parliamentarians by four percentage points (26.3 per cent compared with a world average of 22 per cent).

However, UN Women Guatemala paints a different picture: “As of 2016, the number of women who participated in decision-making in the executive branch totalled zero in Latin America, and five in the Caribbean. (Barbados, Grenada, Puerto Rico, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago). Only 31.2 per cent of seats in the Legislative Branch are held by women in parliaments in the Americas. In local governments, only 15.5 per cent are mayors.

“In the case of Guatemala, despite its majority indigenous population and the many efforts of women and indigenous peoples to participate, the country has not yet had a female president. In the 2019 general elections, only 31 women were elected as deputies to the country's congress, representing 19.38 per cent of a total of 160 deputies. Only three of these women are indigenous. In these same elections, only 10 women were elected as mayors (2.94 per cent of a total of 340 municipalities), none of whom are indigenous.

“These figures show very little change from the results of the previous election: in 2015, 22 out of 158 deputies elected were women (13.9 per cent of the total) and 10 women were elected as mayors, one of whom was of Q'eqchi' Mayan origin. As for the executive branch, two out of 14 ministries are headed by women: the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance. In 2015, during the first year of government, only one woman (of Kaqchikel Mayan origin) was Minister of State in charge of the Department of Labour and Social Welfare.

“This reality starkly contrasts with both the Political Constitution of the Republic of Guatemala (1985), which states in article 4 that men and women are equal,¹ and the main commitments on women's political participation within the international human rights instruments ratified by the country.”

Various studies identify three determining factors that explain the progress made in the region:

¹Political Constitution of the Republic of Guatemala, 1985, art. 4: “In Guatemala, all human beings are free and equal in dignity and rights. Men and women, regardless of their marital status, have equal opportunities and responsibilities...”

1. Feminist movements and networks of women in politics have joined forces to influence their parliaments and Governments through the formation of “benches” of women parliamentarians, networks of women in municipal authorities and other women politicians’ movements which have overcome partisan and ideological barriers and are committed to finding consensus and mainstreaming the gender agenda as a common cause, helping to raise public awareness.
2. Regulatory and institutional frameworks have driven the acceleration of public policies that promote women’s rights and gender equality, with a strong regional commitment enshrined in CEDAW and the Consensuses of the Regional Conferences on Women.
3. The introduction of affirmative action – especially the legislative adoption of gender quotas in several countries – and, in recent years, the commitment to measures that lead to parity (50/50) and to changes in government and the inclusion of indigenous women and women of African descent.

However, progress has not been uniform. There are large disparities between countries, groups (in particular, indigenous women, women of African descent, rural women and women living with a disability) and levels of government, with women still significantly underrepresented at the subnational and local levels. Data from 2012 show that women accounted for no more than 10 per cent of mayors and 25 per cent of councillors. The harassment and political violence experienced by many women is also a cause for concern, as is the fact that only Bolivia has adopted comprehensive legislation to prevent and eradicate this phenomenon, which is of increasing concern in the region.

International legal framework

International standards, which promote the full and effective participation of women, are based on the foundational document of women’s human rights, CEDAW, which states: Recalling that discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity, is an obstacle to the participation of women, on equal terms with men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries, hampers the growth of the prosperity of society and the family and makes more difficult the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity,

Emphasizing that the eradication of apartheid, all forms of racism, racial discrimination, colonialism, neo-colonialism, aggression, foreign occupation and domination and interference in the internal affairs of states is essential to the full enjoyment of the rights of men and women.

On political participation, article 7 of CEDAW states: “States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men.”

Article 8: “States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations.”

The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (the Belém do Par Convention): Articles 3, 4 and 6 relate to political participation free of violence.

The 2001 World Conference against Racism held in Durban was convened under the slogan “United to combat racism: equality, justice and dignity” and is connected to the declaration of 2001 as the “International Year of Mobilization against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance”. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action provided a clearer definition of the victims of discrimination and identified different forms of exclusion that must be addressed, including the multiple forms of discrimination that affect women and prevent them from enjoying their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights; inequalities rooted in race, colour, language or national or ethnic origin; based on sex, language, religion, political or other opinions; and barriers arising from a person’s social origin, property, birth or other status.

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) states: Article 1, paragraphs 1 and 4, subparagraphs a) and b).

Article 3 of Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, provides as follows: “1. Indigenous and tribal peoples **shall enjoy the full measure of human rights and fundamental freedoms without hindrance or discrimination.** [...] 2. No form of force or coercion shall be used in violation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the peoples concerned, including the rights contained in this Convention. How should we understand and apply these rules? One of the measures in the Convention also involves “promoting the full realization of the social, economic and cultural rights of these peoples **with respect for their social and cultural identity, their customs and traditions and their institutions**”, reasserting the link between human rights and the principle of cultural diversity.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and article 2 states: “Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular that based on their indigenous origin or identity.”

Far from genuine parity

Women’s political participation is far from the goal of genuine parity. Women do not participate in decisions on the future of their societies on an equal footing with men. Structural factors that prevent or limit the full exercise of women’s political rights persist in the region. This is reflected in cultural attitudes based on patriarchal paradigms, sexist and racist stereotypes and traditional gender roles, as well as in the lack of political and economic empowerment of women and in the dramatic data on gender-based violence. Gender bias can also be found in the media and in the difficulty of reconciling family life and professional commitments (which mainly affects women). States must assume their responsibility to respect, protect and promote the rights of women and are legally bound to do so by their own constitutional mandates and by various international instruments.

For years, faced the extremely low participation and representation of women in public and political life, efforts to promote their participation have focused on increasing their presence. We have made progress. And this continues to be absolutely necessary. Without doubt, women’s presence – both in quantitative and qualitative terms – in political decision-

making spaces is key to changing the structural factors that exclude them, helping to break the vicious cycle of discrimination and gender inequality. The public agenda – and public policies – must therefore integrate new dimensions and perspectives to become *more open, more inclusive and more legitimate, representing the interests of the whole of society, 50/50*.

UN Women Guatemala reports that in a national assessment by UN Women and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the country achieved an average overall score of 42.6 points on the political parity index out of a possible 100 points. This puts its performance below other countries in the region and globally. Although 10 out of 193 states (6.2 per cent) have woman Heads of State and the world average for women in parliament is 24.9 per cent, the indicators mentioned above.

The proposal to move towards parity democracy is a further step in the right direction. It places the democratic system at the centre of the transformations. It represents a model of democracy in which parity and substantive equality embody the two main pillars of the inclusive state. Moreover, implementing and consolidating parity requires an evolution towards equitable relations between the sexes, as well as between people of different ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses and other characteristics for the equal enjoyment of rights.

It is a holistic concept that transcends merely political concerns. This is not a women's issue, or even a gender-relations issue, but an opportunity to decide on the type of state we want for our region.

To this end, we must defend the construction of substantive equality, equality of outcomes and parity. This will require cross-party and intersectoral commitment, strong political will and adequate financial resources to achieve this comprehensive and long-term goal, that permeates civil society, public institutions, businesses, the media and social actors.

Substantive equality: Is the recognition of different statuses and aspirations to realize equal rights and opportunities. It requires the implementation of specific measures to correct de facto discrimination or disadvantages and remove asymmetries caused by differences, whether of gender, age, ethnicity or other characteristic, that produce discriminatory effects on rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities in the private or public sphere. It is closely intertwined with:

1. The principle of equality: that different people have the same worth and should have the same rights and duties. Different mechanisms may be required to make equality a reality. Equal opportunity: the absence of any barriers to social, economic, legal and political participation to put people on an equal footing from the outset.
2. Equal treatment: the absence of discrimination on any grounds. It is enshrined in law and is present in the interpretation and application of legislation.
3. Equality of outcomes: the end result of legal equality and substantive equality, both in qualitative and quantitative terms, meaning it should be effective in practice rather than based on the concept of procedural justice. It can be achieved through unequal treatment, and therefore requires the establishment of temporary special measures to achieve substantive equality, a status to which parity democracy aspires in all areas of society.
4. Parity: A democratizing measure that entails the balanced participation of women

and men in all decision-making processes in the public and private spheres. Understood as a goal to which public authorities aspire as the basis of their democratic legitimacy and through promotion by the state.

Parity: A democratizing measure that entails the balanced participation of women and men in all decision-making processes in the public and private spheres. Understood as a goal to which public authorities aspire as the basis of their democratic legitimacy and through promotion by the state. It should also be an aspiration of the private sector, academia and civil society, etc.

Parity of political representation reformulates the concept of political power by conceiving it as a space that must be shared between men and women as a fact of the universal human condition, embodied by the demographically balanced presence of both genders, 50 per cent women and 50 per cent men (50/50). Parity is both a cause and an effect of gender equality, which legitimizes the social and political order of parity democracy. In this way, gender differences have the same importance as territorial differences and differences in ideology or political affiliation.

Guiding principles:

1. Inclusive and accountable state with parity democracy.
2. Equal treatment and no discrimination.
3. Culture of parity by moving beyond patriarchal cultural norms and eliminating gender stereotypes.
4. Freedom of action and autonomy, which means eradicating all types of violence, including political harassment and political violence.
5. Equality of opportunity and outcomes as the logical end result of substantive or de facto equality.
6. Interculturalism, through the recognition, expression and coexistence of ethnic and cultural diversity (in particular, indigenous populations and people of African descent) and institutional, religious and linguistic diversity in a context of equality and respect.
7. Political and ideological pluralism.
8. Gender mainstreaming in both public and private institutions.
9. Women's empowerment as an awareness of women, of their rights and their right to act with autonomy and self-determination to make decisions about their environment.

The implementation of parity democracy requires reforms in three main areas:

1. Firstly, the central pillar of change is an inclusive state model that assumes its responsibility for gender equality and women's empowerment and provides all the necessary guarantees so that women and men enjoy the same opportunities and conditions of equality in the political, economic, social, cultural and civil spheres. In view of the diversity of human beings and the historic discrimination against women, states are called upon to remove, through the adoption of special measures, all factors that result in blatant de facto inequality despite the formal recognition of the principle of equality.
2. The second key pillar is parity in all powers of the state – legislative, judicial and executive – throughout the entire state apparatus and gradually in society as a whole. Parity is a goal of inclusive states in express recognition of the fact that

humanity consists of women and men in equal parts (50/50).

3. The third pillar is a genuine transformation for parity in the power relations and dynamics within political parties and organizations. Political parties, political movements and independent candidates are key tools in a democratic system to promote transformation in society and guarantee the parity of representation and the consolidation of the principle of substantive equality. They must create the right conditions in their three dimensions – organizational, electoral and programmatic – as well as in financial terms so that the political sphere is no longer a bottleneck for women’s political empowerment and instead becomes a platform that promotes and defends it.

Factors that limit the political participation of indigenous women and women of African descent

Women’s participation has reached unprecedented levels but technology has now paved the way for increasing personal attacks, disinformation and fake news. Recent years have seen the proliferation of hate speech that derides the gender approach as an ideology, mainly through moral and religious judgements that legitimize violence against women. These discourses mislead the population, engrain macho attitudes, racism and misogyny, perpetuate discriminatory gender stereotypes and roles, and even influence government decision-making, which can result in the explicit reversal of advances in women’s liberation.

Political violence is one of the greatest threats to public health and harmony among people and a barrier to the creation of safe environments. Women who occupy decision-making spaces or who have political responsibility are harassed and experience political violence with serious consequences and impacts on their political life and their emotional and physical health.

Cyberviolence has been disastrous for women’s self-esteem, especially for indigenous women and women of African descent, as a result of fake news and false information, hate speech, stereotyping, racism and misogyny. Such views are generally expressed via social networks, primarily WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook and netcentee.

After spending some time in power, Women avoid returning to politics because the patriarchal system has found other ways to circumvent electoral quotas.

This phenomenon is found in both urban and rural areas. Such attacks are a violation of women’s civil and political rights. They are a threat to the physical and mental health of women leaders for which the guilty go unpunished and those affected get neither material nor moral reparations or redress.

Gender-based political violence is the primary barrier to women’s political participation. However, this phenomenon is still absent from and ignored in government programmes, discourse and public debate.

Funding for women candidates is a major constraint given that many women support their families through their jobs or work in the informal economy and cannot use this income

because then they would not be able to cover their expenses. Electoral tribunals provide funding to political parties for training and capacity-building for their members and others invited to participate in such events, but less so for election campaigns.

The political parties draw up their lists of candidates by popular vote meaning that women are left without a space on the ballot. This is especially true in countries without affirmative action quotas, much less parity, like Guatemala and Venezuela. There is no doubt that patriarchy and machismo bar indigenous women and women of African descent from accessing their inalienable rights to full participation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Various forms of discrimination can constrain or deny indigenous women and women of African descent their human rights. Principles and values of indigenous ways of life and a gender perspective must be integrated into relevant policies, promoting understanding between cultures and peoples.

A more coherent and systematic approach is needed for assessing and monitoring racial discrimination against women and girls, as well as the disadvantages, barriers and difficulties faced by women in the full exercise of their social, cultural, economic and political rights as a result of racism, racial discrimination and intolerance.

The impunity of those who violate the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples and women, individuals and groups who are subjected to racism, racial discrimination and intolerance, must be halted by building and strengthening the democratic bodies of the three state powers from the perspective of multi- and interculturalism.

Effective public policies that incorporate gender and ethnic perspectives should be developed to eradicate all types of discrimination. Progress made overcoming inequalities should be recognized, innovative projects should be identified and valuable participatory dialogue should be promoted among the main stakeholders involved in this agenda. In turn, the consensus already reached should be driven forward and strengthening diversity, intersectionality, equality, peace and democracy in Latin America.

Various independent avenues should be pursued rooted in mutual learning for the construction of shared agendas as well as national state agendas.

States should consult with civil society to support the process of raising awareness on discrimination, racism and sexism.

States must undertake a comprehensive review of their domestic legislation, with a view to (i) identifying and repealing provisions that entail direct or indirect discrimination, and (ii) adopting legislation that expressly and comprehensively outlaws racial discrimination.

Adequate information, disaggregated by gender, ethnicity and age is a necessity, as is assigning sufficient specific human and financial resources to deconstruct racist and discriminatory prejudices and stereotypes against indigenous women and women of African descent.

States should enact constitutional reforms that recognize gender, religious, linguistic and

cultural diversity to enable all women and men to live together in harmony and enjoy the benefits of good governance.

Member States are urged to adopt legislative and any other necessary measures to achieve effective parity of representation between men and women in public office in all branches and institutions of the state, at all levels, and to take affirmative action to guarantee the participation of ethnic and racial groups, indigenous women and women of African descent, women with disabilities and women who experience other forms of social exclusion, as a prerequisite for democracy, particularly in Guatemala.

Political parties, as key spaces for women's political empowerment, should be urged to guarantee and implement the principles of parity in all dimensions – organizational, electoral and programmatic – and to promote women's full political participation and empowerment.

Guatemala does not have a legal instrument that categorizes violence against women in the political sphere. One of the routes set out below could be followed to enact specific legislation to rectify this situation:

- a) Amending the special criminal law by incorporating specific types of political violence against women;
- b) Introducing administrative measures and sanctions applicable to electoral legislation that establish an obligation of political organizations to prevent and punish political violence against women;
- c) Approving and implementing the Inter-American Model Law on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women in Political Life. UN Women/Guatemala.

We must rethink the model of development and incorporate initiatives such as the one proposed by the indigenous peoples on Good Living (*Buen Vivir*). While progress has been made on women's rights based on this vision of Good Living, the situation of subordination, oppression and exploitation of women continues in our societies. To succeed in Good Living, epistemological and sociopolitical breaks are needed to dismantle both colonial and patriarchal social paradigms, which are at the core of the discrimination, exploitation and subordination that indigenous peoples and women have suffered for centuries.