An environment that maintains world peace and protects and promotes human rights, democracy and the peaceful settlement of disputes is an important factor for the advancement of women. Peace is linked with equality and respect between women and men and development. In a world where armed and other types of conflicts still persist, democracy, justice and peace are becoming more and more unattainable.

Aggression, foreign occupation, ethnic and various forms of conflicts are an ongoing reality affecting women and men in almost all the regions. Systematic violations and situations that constitute serious obstacles to the full enjoyment of human rights continue to occur in different parts of the world. The root causes often include discrimination, struggle for resources and violation of human rights.

The indigenous peoples are the worst victims and are in terrible situation since their land has been snatched away, their resources have been robbed, their languages have been band, their culture has been destroyed, their existence has been rejected and their fundamental rights have been denied. Therefore there are religious conflicts, ethnic conflicts, conflicts over national resources, gender conflicts, conflicts for civil and political rights, economical, social and cultural rights, conflicts against colonisation, globalisation, national security, terrorism, armed conflicts and militarisation. Armed conflicts continue to occur in many parts of the world and have escalated over the last decade.

All these conflicts are having adverse impact on indigenous women and girls because of their status and sex. The indigenous women continue to live in conditions marred by constant discrimination, exclusion, suppression, exploitation and a dearth of power. They are targeted of specific forms of violence and abuse. Parties to conflicts often rape women with impunity, sometimes using systematic rape as a tactic of war and terrorism compounded by emerging forms of violence leaving life-long social, economic, and psychologically traumatic consequences.

Indigenous women are suffering and are victims of conflicts but at the same time they are contributing to establish and regain peace, security and stability. The role and responsibility and the efforts, the indigenous women are undertaking should not and cannot be ignored. It is with this objectives, South Asia Indigenous Women Forum SAIWF and Nepal Tamang Women Ghedung jointly organised the panel discussion on “IndigenousWomen and Peace Building”, on May 22nd, 2003 at 13.00 hrs at United Nation as side event during the 2nd Session of UN Permanent forum On Indigenous Issues. The cost for the hall and the interpreters was supported by IWGIA. The panellists have been requested to share with us the indigenous women roles, their practices, tradition and culture in resolving conflicts, their initiatives and the recommendations to strengthen their initiatives in peace building.
Stella Tamang of Nepal was the facilitator and the panellists were:

1. Victoria Tauli Corpuz,
2. Lucy Mulenkei
3. Leonor Zalabata/Maria Eugenia Choque
4. Ms. Njuma Ekundanayo, Member, Permanent Forum,
5. Mililani Trask, Vice President, Permanent forum Member

This side event was very successful and was attended by many indigenous women and men, state representatives and representatives of the UN Agencies. The panel discussion was very interactive and lively. It is regretted that Leonor Zalabata could not attend and Maria Eugenia presented on her behalf.

**Recommendations:**

1. **Formation of an Independent International Commission of Indigenous Peoples for the Mediation and Resolution of Conflicts based on traditional resources and methods for the handling and resolution of conflicts and provide assistance whenever requested by indigenous peoples.**

2. **Condemn the inhumane act in Democratic Republic of Congo because of which our indigenous sisters are suffering and dying and call for the immediate halt.**

3. **Condemn violence against indigenous women and girls and exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and punish acts of violence against women, whether those acts are perpetrated by the State or by private persons.**

4. **Strengthen the role of indigenous women and ensure equal representation of indigenous women at all decision-making levels in national and international institutions which may make or influence policy with regard to matters related to peace-keeping, preventive diplomacy and related activities and in all stages of peace mediation and negotiations.**

5. **Take measure to reduce the excessive military expenditures including trade in arms, investment for arms production and acquisition so as to permit the possible allocation of additional funds for social and economic development, in particular for the advancement of indigenous women.**

6. **Support, strengthen and promote the indigenous knowledge, tradition, customs and practices that contribute to conflict resolution.**
7. Support and promote the implementation of the rights of self-determination of all peoples as enunciated, inter alia, in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action by providing special programmes in leadership and in training for decision-making.

8. Offer adequate protection and assistance to indigenous women and children displaced and find solutions to the root causes of their displacement with a view to preventing it and, when appropriate, facilitate their return or resettlement.