



International Women's Day, 8 March 2011

The Asian Indigenous Women's Network (AIWN) join our sisters worldwide in celebrating this year's centennial celebration of March 8, the International Women's Day!

As we celebrate 100 years of progress in the advancement of women's rights we are still concerned that violence against women and gross violations of their basic human rights persists in most countries. The UN-Secretary General Ban Ki-Mon, himself, stated on his message for this occasion that "in too many countries and societies, women remain second-class citizens." Gender discrimination and violence continue to be the lot of many women, because patriarchy is still promoted by media and is strongly embedded in the family, schools, churches and the society at large. In addition, the dominant neo-liberal economic paradigm which promotes unsustainable consumption and production, individualism and profit-seeking behavior, discrimination and patriarchy, remains strong.

Indigenous women in all parts of the globe are disproportionately impacted by the multiple crisis confronting the world. This includes the economic crisis and the ecological crisis of climate change and biodiversity erosion, food insecurity and increasing disparities between the rich and the poor. The burdens of indigenous women to provide food, water, care and nurturance to their families and communities have multiplied several times over because of this crisis. While they say that in Asia, the economic crisis is not as bad as in other parts, this is a myth. Climate change has very distinct impacts on indigenous women in Asia who are dependent and who live in forests, those who are in low-lying coastal areas and those in high montane areas. Prolonged floods and droughts and landslides which

occurred in countries, like the Philippines, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, Taiwan, among others, have displaced indigenous women from their homes and some still remain as climate refugees.

2011 has been declared as the International Year of Forests. In this context, the AIWN honors forest-dwelling and forest-dependent indigenous women who have protected their forests from being totally destroyed by loggers, miners, plantation owners and oil and gas corporations. Their significant yet often unrecognized roles in sustaining the remaining megabiodiverse areas which are fundamental life support systems not only for them but for the rest of the world should be hailed and rewarded.

We bring forward the "Mandaluyong Declaration of the Global Conference on Indigenous Women, Climate Change and REDD Plus" which captured the sentiments, perspectives and proposals of the indigenous women who participated. The inspiration provided by the participants who continue to analyze and address the differential impacts of the climate change crisis on them and their communities is infectious. In the midst of the problems they face, they are still seeking ways to surmount these and continue to take actions to protect their lands, territories and resources, as well as keep their families healthy and well.

We salute all the indigenous women who persist in asserting their rights and who are fighting relentlessly against all forms of discrimination, marginalization and violence against them.

Long live indigenous women in Asia and all over the world. Long live all women who continue to believe that a day will come when patriarchy , discrimination and inequality will end and are doing their share to achieve this goal.

HAPPY INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY!