



Presentation of the kit

Rights & Democracy, in partnership with Enlace - the Continental Network of Indigenous Women - and Quebec Native Women, have prepared this information kit to highlight the work of women acting at the local, national and international levels to ensure that their rights are respected. The kit proposes possible avenues of action to help enable these women to take full advantage of international forums and mechanisms available to them.

In 1993, indigenous leaders asked Rights & Democracy to assist in building what would become the Continental Network of Indigenous Women. The Network serves to strengthen the capacity of indigenous women from grassroots organizations on issues that affect them, notably intellectual property rights of traditional designs and patterns, and militarization. Rights & Democracy, created by an act of the Canadian Parliament, has always advocated the rights of indigenous peoples and has committed itself to assisting the Network members in the areas of training and intellectual property.

A Decade Drawing to a Close

A broad range of events was held over the course of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, which ended in 2004. Spaces were created at the international level, particularly with the 1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing, with the creation of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in 2000, and with the appointment of a U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous People in 2001. In December 2004, the United General Assembly declared a Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (2005-2015), with the objective of further strengthening international cooperation and finding solutions to problems of particular concern to indigenous communities, especially human rights violations.

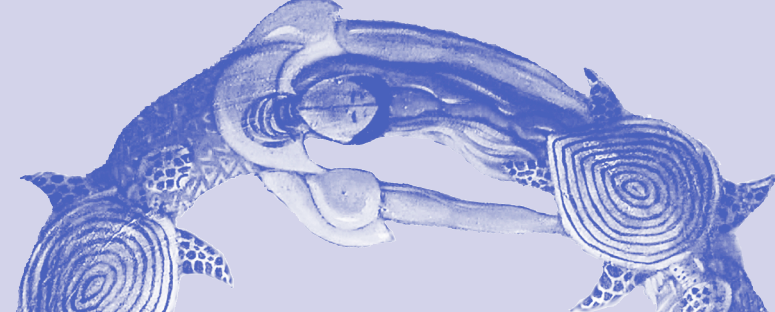
However, indigenous women continue to suffer the double marginalization of being women and being indigenous, making them the primary victims of poverty. This situation is reflected in the statistics (when they exist!) that show infant mortality and illiteracy rates for this group far surpassing national averages.

THE CONTINENTAL NETWORK OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN IS...

- ▲ member organizations from 13 countries in the Americas
- ▲ four continental meetings since 1995 (Quito, Mexico, Panama, Lima)
- ▲ four working groups: intellectual property and biodiversity, non-violence, leadership training and international instruments
- ▲ a coordinating committee composed of regional representatives and members of the working groups

For more information: www.enlace.nativeweb.org

Furthermore, the first International Decade did not stem the exodus of thousands of indigenous people pushed off their lands by "development" (mining and oil companies, land settlement), by armed conflict or hunger. Indigenous women pay a higher price for these migrations, whether they remain behind in the communities that men have deserted or flee to cities where they find themselves cut off from their family and cultural networks. They are the prime targets of violence resulting from the militarization of their territories and, more generally, of violations to the integrity of their peoples and families.



The International Decade ended without having mobilized the political will necessary to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This first step – so critical to protecting the social, cultural, economic and political integrity of indigenous peoples – still needs to be accomplished. Women's fate is intimately tied to that of their peoples. Their survival and well-being depend on the survival and well-being of their respective peoples.

A number of challenges lie ahead in the coming decade. Rights & Democracy will pursue its commitment to defend and promote the rights of indigenous peoples in national and international forums.

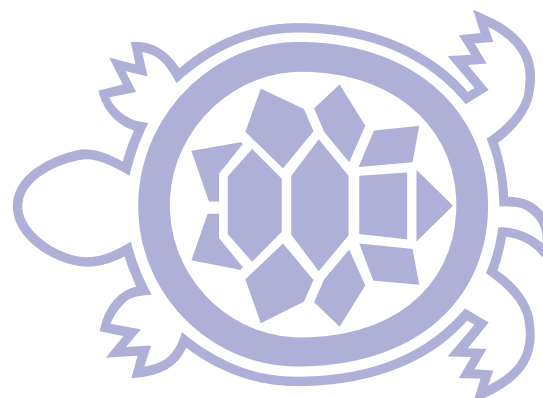
The objective of the Enlace network is to make women's voices heard – the voices of activists working in communities across the Americas, the voices of millions of women who hope, struggle and endeavour to ensure the development of their families and their peoples. The Network seeks to be a forum for exchange and discussion, a mechanism for undertaking collective action to improve women's situations, and, lastly, a space for giving women's struggles the attention they deserve.

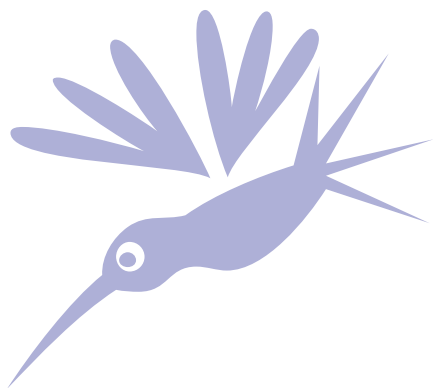


Marie Léger, from Rights and Democracy, with Rita Mestokosho, Sonia Henriquez and Melvis Henriquez Genardo, from the *Enlace* Network.

The Enlace network initially sought to build bridges between women's indigenous organizations in North, Central and South America. Since then, it has worked on specific themes and regions and will continue to do so in the coming years. It participates in various international debates, and has taken part in initiatives like the World March of Women and discussions on the recognition of indigenous peoples' rights at the OAS and the UN.

Quebec Native Women was one of the founding organizations of the Continental Network. Representing women from eight First Nations in Quebec, it has participated in all of the continental meetings and has hosted women from Peru, Ecuador and Panama in its member communities. It has also taken part in exchanges with Peru on various themes, including violence, and is now part of the network's Coordinating Committee. For more information, visit www.faq-qnw.org.





How to Use this Tool?

Designed primarily for member organizations of the Continental Network, these information sheets can be used by anyone who wishes to share information and learn more about the situation of indigenous women and the work of the Continental Network. This kit is designed to allow your organization to add information sheets about your country or about a relevant experience. In addition to the presentation sheet, the following information sheets were designed to be photocopied and widely distributed:

Sheet 1 A Portrait of Indigenous Women of the Americas

Sheet 2a UN International Instruments for the Protection of Indigenous Women's Rights

Sheet 2b International Instruments for the Protection of the Rights of Indigenous Women: Specialized Institutions

Sheet 3 Indigenous Women at the End of the Decade

Sheet 4 Indigenous Women and Intellectual Property

Sheet 5 Indigenous Women and Militarization

Sheet 6 Canadian Aboriginal Women: Legal Discrimination

These sheets can be used in various contexts: during training sessions with the leaders of your organizations or to promote the Network and address the situation of indigenous women. They can help to further discussion by providing information and encouraging questions on issues for further discussion and reflection. They also include useful references for further information or action.

To help develop this project, we ask that you send us a copy of any sheets you add to your kit. We can also send you copies of the sheets that we add over time if you send us your contact information. Please send your comments to: dd-rd@dd-rd.ca.



Nancy Henriquez, *Enlace*



To order

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**This tool is available in English, French and Spanish.
It is also posted on our Web site: www.dd-rd.ca.**

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Rights & Democracy would like to sincerely thank the members of Enlace and Quebec Native Women for their valuable comments on this document.

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Design: Brunel Design

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First edition, 2004. Second edition, amplified and revised, 2006.

Legal Deposit: Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, 2006. National Library of Canada, second quarter 2006. ISBN-10: 2-922084-89-2 ISBN-13: 978-2-922084-89-4.

Printed in Canada