



AMERICA/PERU - Exclusion and discrimination, but also struggle and resistance for indigenous women around the world

Lima (Agenzia Fides) - Poverty, ignorance, indifference, are words often associated to indigenous groups around the world, the most affected by discrimination for opportunities, income and access to basic services. The phenomenon is aggravated when it comes to women. The topic was widely discussed during the World Conference of Indigenous Women, just concluded in Lima, where the leaders of various ethnic groups from different Countries around the world launched their appeal to governments and society in general to end discrimination and violence that they experience both inside and outside their territories. The 200 representatives have asked governments for a greater presence in the social agenda. Despite the ethnic, linguistic and cultural differences, they shared stories and similar experiences of exclusion and discrimination, but also of struggle and resistance. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), in Latin America there are more than 23 million indigenous women who face profound social, ethnic, and gender inequalities. In 2004, the Permanent Forum for Indigenous Peoples recognized that women are among the most marginalized and discriminated against not only because of their gender, but also for their ethnicity, culture and social level. The UN reports that violence against indigenous women has different forms, including rapes, forced prostitution, and violence in armed conflict, sexual slavery, genital mutilation, plus other harmful practices and traditions. Sexual violence is the most widespread. In Peru, for example, about 37.6% of indigenous women have suffered physical or sexual violence by relatives. Moreover, according to the UN Fund for Population, millions of these women and girls, most of them in Africa, the Middle East and Asia, have been subjected to genital mutilation. According to the UN, there are about 370 million indigenous people around the world, and account for 5 % of the world population and 15% of poor people in the world. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 07/11/2013)