



News Release

For Immediate Release

MANITOBA DELEGATION TO PRESENT AT THE UNITED NATIONS

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

March 14, 2018

New York, NY

The week after International Women's Day (March 8th), the Institute for International Women's Rights Manitoba (IIWR-MB) delegation will be hosting a parallel event during the sixty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women ([CSW62](#)) at the United Nations. The delegation's event titled, **"The Mass Incarceration of Rural and Indigenous Women in Canada"** will take place on March 15th and will focus on the session's priority theme "Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls."

In July 2016, the IIWR-MB received Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, making it the first and only non-profit organization in Manitoba to have such a designation. It is with this special status from the United Nations, that the IIWR-MB is able to send a delegation to the CSW62 and host a parallel event.

The IIWR-MB delegation is comprised of a number of Manitoba and Ontario based organizations who support the rights of women and are involved with Indigenous Women and communities. In keeping with the group's interests, their event aims to educate the global community and Canadian Government representatives about the challenges Indigenous women face, such as marginalization, poverty, exploitation—all factors that lead to incarceration. The delegation will also share information.

The delegation has also informed the Government of Canada's Department of Status of Women and has invited them to attend the presentation. They will also be developing a report from the CSW62 that will be shared with key government officials for further engagement and action.

The delegation acknowledges and thanks the office of Senator Marilou McPhedran and Mary Scott whom have both coordinated the delegation's presentation at the CSW62. The delegation includes representatives from the following organizations: The University of Winnipeg Global College, The Institute for International Women's Rights - Manitoba (IIWR-MB), Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc., Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO), Grand Council Treaty 3, Indigenous Women's Healing Centre and the Southern Chiefs Organization Inc. (SCOINC).

Quotes

"At a moment in Canada when Indigenous experiences are being more openly discussed than ever before, we cannot ignore the profound disparity in incarceration rates of Indigenous women. Whether living in rural or urban settings, Indigenous women continue to be doubly targeted and oppressed."

Dr. Julie Pelletier, PhD, Institute for International Women's Rights, University of Winnipeg Global College

"IIWR-MB believes it is important to have those affected speak about the causes, and the effects of the current justice system and to tell their story to the global community. Indigenous women are over-represented in prisons for reasons that are not isolated to their wrongs, but also because of the many challenges and barriers they face such as poverty, safety, lack of education, adequate housing, health care and the lasting legacy of residential schools on children and families."

Mary Scott, Board Member and co founder - The Institute for International Women's Rights – Manitoba, Inc. (IIWR-MB)

"The focus of this year's CSW62 is on rural and Indigenous women, I feel this is an excellent chance to bring the concerns of the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) to an international table. The 30 communities the MKO advocates for are in some of Canada's remotest regions, which presents huge challenges for families living in these communities. I will bring forward the issues that lead to missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, the challenges Indigenous women face within the justice system and while incarcerated, and the hurdles that our communities must clear under the democracy-challenged Indian Act system. As a First Nation woman, I feel it is crucial that the MKO presents our perspective on Canada, its justice issues, and the Indian Act governance system. As Grand Chief of the MKO, I will continue to push for change to address inequalities that make First Nation families vulnerable."

Grand Chief Sheila North, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO)

"The mass incarceration of women will continue to rise if we are not creating opportunity. We must emphasize understanding of the history and conditioned systemic characteristics of Canadian institutions, only once we are aligned in our understanding will we see justice for Indigenous Women."

Grand Chief Jerry Daniels, Southern Chiefs Organization Inc. (SCOINC)

"The Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc. is an Indigenous-led organization in Winnipeg and is made up of community people helping other community people to reclaim Indigenous people's inherent role and responsibility as the caregivers for Indigenous children and families. In the true spirit of our name, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata, 'we all work together to help one another', Indigenous men play an important role as allies in our teachings and practices to help address issues affecting Indigenous women and girls."

Terrance Delaronde, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc.

"The Indigenous Women's Healing Centre is committed to, and has been providing supportive opportunities to Indigenous women since 1979. We know that Indigenous women are over-represented in the justice system. We are presenting at this global gathering to advocate for them and share the challenges they are facing in Canada. We have to better support and address the needs of the Indigenous women who are incarcerated today. For them, their children and future generations."

Annetta Armstrong, Indigenous Women's Healing Center (formerly Native Women's Transition Centre Inc.)

"As a Cultural Sustainability Chief which carries responsibility for the Justice portfolio, I am shocked at the statistics for the number of Indigenous women incarcerated within provincial and federal institutions. I am hopeful that the work being undertaken by our Kaakewaaseya Justice program will be a positive step in establishing traditional and restorative initiatives which will benefit our citizens who come in conflict with the justice system or need to access victim support services."

Chief Marilyn Sinclair, Obashkaandagaang First Nation, Grand Council Treaty 3

About the Partners

[Global College](#) – University of Winnipeg

The University of Winnipeg Global College fosters global citizenship and engagement in human rights through interdisciplinary teaching, research, dialogue, and action in local and global communities. Global College provides students, faculty, staff, visiting scholars, and community leaders with ways to interact on their diverse perspectives about global citizenship, human rights, and other issues affecting local and global communities.

Institute for International Women’s Rights – Manitoba, Inc. (IIWR-MB)

Based in Winnipeg, Manitoba, the Institute for International Women’s Rights – Manitoba (IIWR-MB) is founded to generate education, awareness, and action to promote women’s human rights, locally and globally. IIWR–MB is provincially incorporated as a not for profit corporation. IIWR-MB is a community based organization, with diverse membership, working towards a world with respect for the dignity and lives of women and girls. IIWR-MB has Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and has supported the 2018 delegation of 33 members

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc.

The Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, Inc. (Ma Mawi) was given birth in the fall of 1984 by committed community members who sought an Indigenous solution to supporting and rebuilding families. Since that time, Ma Mawi has worked to support families to better care for children by creating meaningful opportunities for community and family involvement. Ma Mawi believes that strengthening families is a worthy investment in the future. Today Ma Mawi has over 50 programs, 11 sites and 200+ staff and volunteers. Programs include community programs, youth programs, children-in-care programs as well as The Housing First Program.

Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO)

Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. is a non-profit, political advocacy organization that has represented 30 First Nation communities in Manitoba’s North since 1981.

Indigenous Women’s Healing Centre (Native Women’s Transition Centre Inc.)

Since 1979, the Native Women’s Transition Centre Inc. (NWTC) has worked to support and strengthen Aboriginal women and mothers on their journey of healing and recovery from family violence, addictions, intergenerational issues and institutionalization.

Since opening its doors, the Native Women’s Transition Centre has offered a safe place for over 20,000 Native women and their children. During their residency, women are encouraged to return to their cultural roots to meet life’s challenges, build on personal gifts and strengths and undergo healing and transformation by learning together as women.

Southern Chiefs Organization Inc. (SCOINC)

The southern Chiefs of Manitoba established SCOINC to be an independent political forum to protect, preserve, promote and enhance First Nations peoples’ inherent rights, languages, customs and traditions through the application and implementation of the spirit and intent of the Treaty-making process.

Obashkaandagaang First Nation

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NGO CSW62 Forum Schedule

For more information, media may contact:

Mary Scott, Board Member, The Institute for International Women’s Rights – Manitoba, Inc
info@iiwrmb.ca or 204 996-7653

Renata Meconse, Delegation Communications
rmeconse@gmail.com or 1-204-226-0483