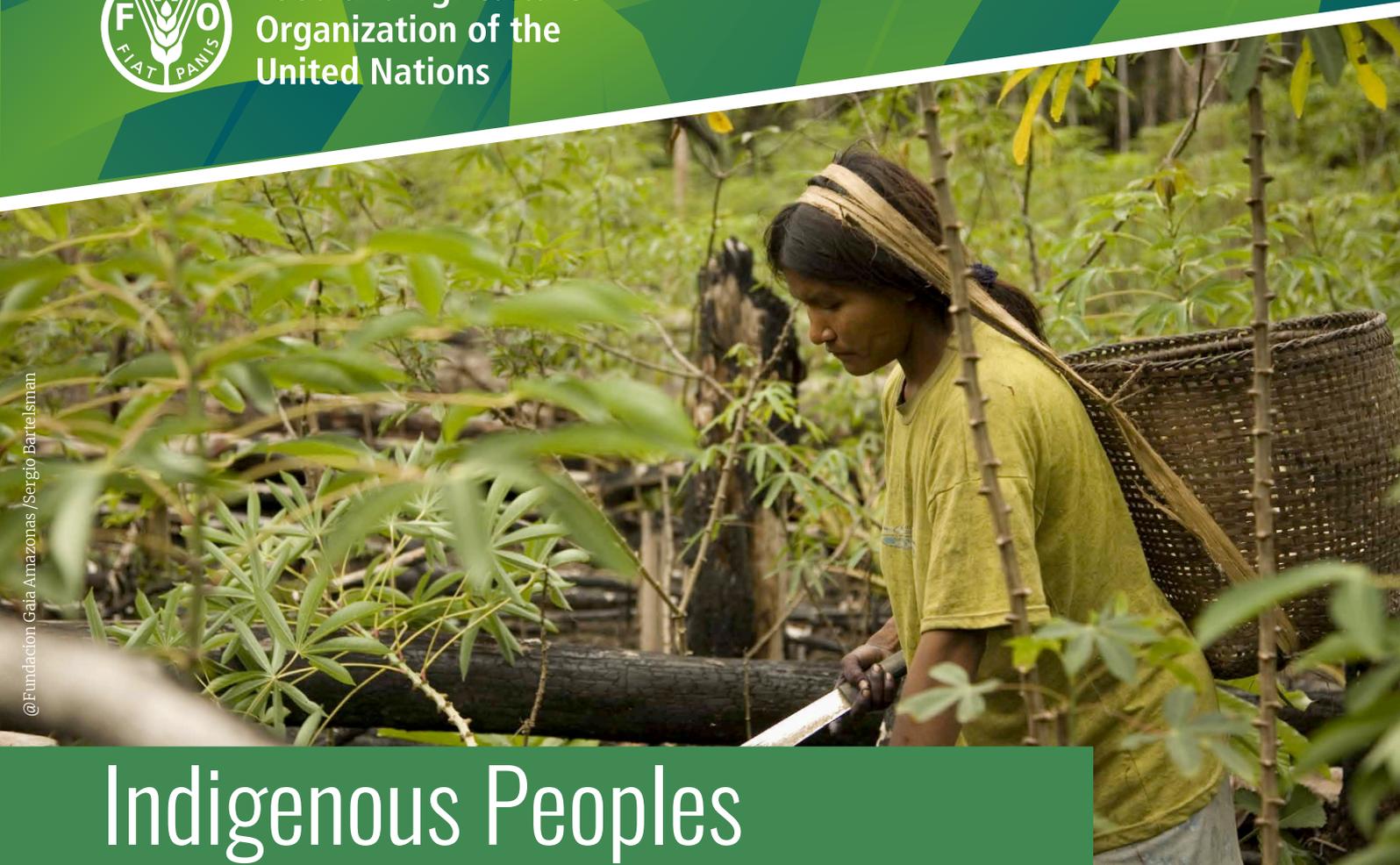




Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

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Indigenous Peoples and the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture

POLICY BRIEF

The Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (KJWA) is a landmark decision that was reached at the UN Climate Conference (COP23) in November 2017 on the next steps for agriculture within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The decision officially recognizes the unique role that agriculture can play in adapting to and mitigating climate change while considering the vulnerability of the sector to climate change and approaches to achieve food security. This joint work addresses six interrelated topics on soils, nutrient use, water, livestock, methods for assessing adaptation, and the socio-economic and food security dimensions of climate change across the agricultural sectors.

Introduction

The objective of this brief is to provide recommendations on how KJWA can support the adequate integration of Indigenous Peoples' traditional knowledge and practices in international, national and local governance systems. This is necessary to enable Indigenous Peoples to continue their efforts to preserve the environment and biodiversity while mitigating climate change. It is also essential to ensure that they are not placed in situations of vulnerability that may also impede climate change adaptation. Indigenous Peoples' food systems are

resilient, having prevailed until our days and generated food while protecting biodiversity since before the advent of agriculture. Despite these efforts and the scientific evidence recognizing the role of Indigenous Peoples in preserving biodiversity, Indigenous Peoples see their rights not respected. Even though Indigenous Peoples are frequently placed in situations of vulnerability by the direct and indirect impacts of climate change due to their unique relationship with nature, often they are overlooked in policy and decision-making processes.



Indigenous Peoples' food systems and livelihoods are based on:

- a biocentric approach that considers humans as an integrated part of the ecosystem;
- natural and seasonal patterns;
- generation of food through a combination of techniques, such as fishing, hunting, shifting cultivation, harvesting and gathering;
- integral-systems approach to food that is the result of sophisticated territorial management practices that have adapted to changes in the environment in a dynamic way over time;
- inter and intragenerational oral transmission of knowledge.

KJWA seeks to drive a just transformation in food systems and address trade-offs and synergies between climate adaptation, mitigation and agricultural productivity. The Joint Work can further support Indigenous Peoples efforts and reduce their situations of vulnerability by promoting inclusiveness of their food systems and knowledge, and by considering different ways of producing and generating food in discussions on agriculture. Indigenous Peoples' involvement in governance systems is crucial for the successful transformation of current food systems into more efficient, sustainable, resilient, and equitable systems if we are to achieve the goals of the international climate agenda and of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Both Parties and observers to the

UNFCCC have recognized the importance of actively and appropriately engaging Indigenous Peoples throughout the Koronivia process and its implementation, considering their potential for contribution to the objectives set out by KJWA.

Successful responses to climate change require an integral approach that is informed by the latest available science and guided by the knowledge, values, beliefs and priorities of those impacted. KJWA constitutes an important window of opportunity to materialize such collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, at both the policy-making level as well as on the implementation side.

Lessons from Indigenous Peoples' food systems on climate change adaptation, mitigation and resilience

Indigenous Peoples' food systems are well-placed to contribute to global debates about food and climate change adaptation and mitigation. Considered some of the oldest and most sustainable on the planet, Indigenous Peoples' food systems can provide food and nutritional security whilst restoring ecosystems and maintaining genetic diversity. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the adaptive capacity and resilience of Indigenous Peoples' food systems, with evidence supporting that those who have relied upon their local food systems have coped better than communities who depended heavily on the market for their food needs or are displaced from their territories (FAO, 2020).

In contrast with monoculture agriculture, the high floral and faunal diversity of Indigenous Peoples' food systems has been linked to increased resilience against environmental shocks including pests and disease. Indigenous Peoples typically generate food from across multiple distinct areas of the landscape and from a rich diversity of species, varieties, and breeds. Making use of a diverse basket of foods, contributes to the flexibility and resilience of Indigenous Peoples' food systems facing environmental variability, and diminishes the

comparative risks associated with relying on any single resource for food.

In addition, the vast biocultural diversity of Indigenous Peoples' food systems contributes a broad knowledge base that can inform and expand the set of possibilities and resources that humanity can draw upon in facing environmental uncertainty. Indigenous Peoples often possess rich environmental knowledge that guides resource use and land-management practices. Deep knowledge of their environments and their associated cycles enables Indigenous Peoples to leverage the many resources available in different areas of their territories and to detect and predict environmental change, which is essential for adaptation in the face of environmental and socio-economic shocks.

Many Indigenous Peoples are also custodians of the world's forests and rainforests. Practically all scenarios for achieving the global target of less than a 2°C temperature rise this century rely upon reductions in deforestation and forest degradation (IPCC, 2018). Examples from Latin America show that historically these areas were maintained and did not suffer from

- 1 Indigenous Peoples represent **over 476 million people in the world.**
- 2 They live in **more than 90 countries, and belong to over 5 000 different peoples**, living in diverse ecosystems, including the savannah, rainforests, the Arctic tundra, deserts and mountains.
- 3 **Indigenous Peoples' food systems are heterogeneous.** They comprise different ways of obtaining, preparing, storing, and sharing food. These systems are built on diversified means and techniques and are based on interactions with nature that respect its biogeochemical cycles, limits, and seasons.
- 4 **Indigenous Peoples' territories are estimated to hold 80 percent of the world's remaining biodiversity**, despite occupying just a quarter of global land mass (Garnett et al, 2018).



deforestation or degradation (FAO and FILAC, 2021). However, today they are under increased pressure due to road construction, commercial agriculture and mineral and hydrocarbon extraction. More attention must be given to the factors that induce vulnerability to climate change. Deforestation, marginalization, displacement, and food insecurity have all been reported as deeply affecting Indigenous Peoples' sensitivity to climatic risks across the world (McDowell, Ford, & Jones, 2016;

Sherman, Ford, Llanos-Cuentas, Valdivia, & Bussalleu, 2015; Zavaleta et al., 2018). Funding and policies to secure Indigenous Peoples' territorial rights are of great importance, as neglecting these territorial rights or traditional livelihood practices would threaten both the sustainability and resilience of Indigenous Peoples' food systems, and risk to impede their important contribution in the mitigation of climate change.

Recommendations

We can only reach the goal of the Paris Agreement by navigating the pathway of agriculture through KJWA in a holistic manner and ensuring an inclusive transition to a food-secure and sovereign climate-resilient food system. For KJWA to adequately include and address Indigenous Peoples in this transition, understanding, learning from and protecting Indigenous Peoples' food systems will involve building, strengthening and revitalizing the elements that contribute to their resilience. This should include actions to secure their territorial rights, their agency, systems of governance, traditional knowledge, biodiversity, and health status.

Recommendations for the institutional implementation of Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture

- **inclusion within high-level policy discussion.** "Leaving no one behind", the international promise set by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, can only be achieved by involving Indigenous leaders in policy discussions and strategies, as well as approaches to the implementation of KJWA;
- **use of terminology that is inclusive to Indigenous Peoples' agricultural practices, food generation and food production, and ensures food sovereignty together with food security in KJWA outcomes;**
- **promotion and enabling of equitable access to land, markets, information, basic services, financial**

resources and stable sources of production through a KJWA outcome to alleviate economic poverty and food insecurity, whilst supporting sustainable and self-determined development; and

- **increased funding for Indigenous Peoples' organizations**, enabling them to better respond to climatic changes and natural catastrophes in Indigenous Peoples' communities in accordance with needs and local traditions.

Recommendations for the technical implementation of Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture

- **inclusion of Indigenous youth and Indigenous women's views and opinions in policy processes.** Indigenous youth are the present and future of Indigenous Peoples' food systems and Indigenous women are the daughters of mother earth;
- **intercultural and holistic policies on food, agriculture and health services** which recognize and support the different dimensions of Indigenous Peoples' food systems to enable healthy and sustainable food generation and consumption patterns;
- **development of platforms for the co-learning and co-production of knowledge.** Successful climate resilience and environmental sustainability strategies should engage with community-led collaborative

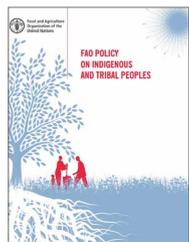
rights-based co-learning approaches, guided by the values and priorities of those most impacted, and informed by the best available science. These approaches should ensure that Indigenous Peoples' customary access, land and territorial rights are secured and respected;

- **community-based decision-making mechanisms and information systems** on land rights, access and control over essential food-producing resources

to promote food sovereignty. Equitable land and resource rights, effective and responsible governance, and sustainable livelihoods are prerequisites for the resilience of Indigenous Peoples' food systems; and

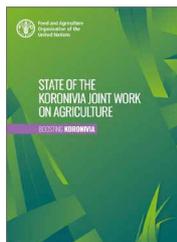
- **written documentation and publication of Indigenous Peoples' knowledge to inform more inclusive policy making** that considers the potential of their knowledge systems as well as the threats they face.

Resources



FAO POLICY ON INDIGENOUS AND TRIBAL PEOPLES

www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/2ead5dd4-4fa1-46ef-9a3e-d6296fe39de9/



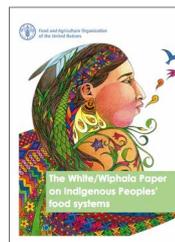
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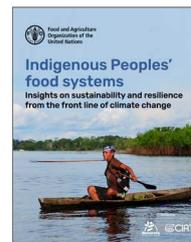
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THE WHITE/WIPHALA PAPER ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' FOOD SYSTEMS

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INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' FOOD SYSTEMS: Insights on sustainability and resilience from the front line of climate change

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