

Global Indigenous Youth Forum 2021

Leading up to the Food Systems Summit 2021

The Global Indigenous Youth Forum 2021 will establish a space of dialogue between member countries and Indigenous youth representatives to discuss their challenges, priorities and prospects. This Forum results from a 2017 recommendation from UNDESA to FAO through the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, which built upon FAO's work with the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus in 2017 and the Rome Declaration on Indigenous Youth. Indigenous youth are concerned with climate change, traditional knowledge, loss of lands, Indigenous food systems, interculturality, suicide, migration and job opportunities among others. The forum will offer an opportunity for policy and decision makers to discuss issues affecting Indigenous youth and thus, contribute to the 2021 World Food Summit; The UN Decade of Ecosystem restoration; and the 2030 Agenda with special focus on SDG 1, SDG 2 and SDG 13.

I. Background

Recent studies estimate that there are more **than 476.6 million Indigenous Peoples in the world**¹. If they were in a single country, it would be the third in population, with more people than the United States of America. To organize their representativeness in different fora, Indigenous Peoples established seven socio-cultural regions².

Custodians of **80 per cent of planet's biodiversity**, Indigenous Peoples live in varied and often fragile ecosystems such as the Arctic, small islands, tropical forests, savannas, high mountains, deserts. Their livelihoods (hunting, fishing, gathering, shifting cultivation) depend primarily on natural resources allowing them to, over centuries, devise ingenious ways of managing their territories without depleting the resource base.

Indigenous Peoples, even though they are amongst those who contribute the least to global warming, are at the frontline of climate change's impacts, particularly in small islands. Indigenous Peoples have developed mechanisms that can play a significant role in containing climate change's impacts on natural resources and food security. Such knowledge has been traditionally passed on from one generation to another.

Indigenous youth have important contributions to make to the world with a profound understanding of their identity, cultural heritage, livelihoods, and lands. At the same time, many Indigenous youth face immense challenges resulting from the intergenerational effects of dominant cultures. Often, Indigenous youth are confronted with the hard choice between maintaining their roots and traditions in the Indigenous community or pursuing education and employment by migrating to cities far from home.

In 2017, FAO called in Rome a meeting with the **Global Indigenous Youth Caucus**³ to incorporate their views in the work of the Organization. The meeting resulted in the "Rome Declaration"⁴, with FAO adopting two recommendations from the GIYC: the Indigenous internship programme; and the inclusion of a seventh pillar of work on Traditional knowledge and Climate Change into FAO's work plan with Indigenous Peoples.

¹ ILO, Implementing the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples – Convention No. 169, 2019.

² The seven sociocultural regions are: Africa; Asia; Central and South America, and the Caribbean; the Arctic; Central and Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia; North America; and the Pacific. They were determined following consultations with Indigenous Peoples to establish the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, a subsidiary body of the United Nations Economic and Social Council established by its resolution 2000/22.

³ In 2006, and to reflect on all these issues, indigenous youth organized themselves into the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus (GIYC), which convenes during the annual sessions of the UN Permanent Forum to discuss about Indigenous youth's concerns worldwide.

⁴ <http://www.fao.org/indigenous-peoples/our-pillars/focus-areas-youth/rome-statement/en/>

In 2017, ECOSOC through the United Nations Permanent Forum congratulated FAO's work with Indigenous youth and recommended scaling up this initiative by establishing in FAO a Forum on Indigenous youth⁵.

II. Objectives of the Indigenous Youth Forum⁶

The main objective of the Forum will be to, every two years, create a space for dialogue between Indigenous youth, member states and other stakeholders to mutually learn from each other in order to:

- Acknowledge the role and contributions that Indigenous youth can play in international decision-making processes affecting their lives and development.
- Incorporate Indigenous youth as agents of change contributing in collaboration with governments to the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit; 2030 Agenda and the SDGs; and the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration.
- Promote innovation by establishing a dialogue between knowledge-systems and by sharing the relevance of Indigenous inter- and intragenerational knowledge-transmission.
- Incorporate Indigenous youth's views in the global discussions related to FAO's mandate on climate change; traditional knowledge and interculturality; food security; land and natural resource management; Indigenous food systems; rural job opportunities; and ecosystem restoration.
- Raise awareness between member states about the need to respect and recognize Indigenous Peoples' organization systems and local governance mechanisms.
- Support the strengthening of Indigenous youth coordination and organizing systems at regional and local levels to support the flow of information and the implementation of international initiatives at local level.

III. Expected outcome and Outputs of the first Global Indigenous Youth Forum

An International forum has been established every two years in FAO Rome, where Indigenous youth and member countries engage in focus discussions on food security, traditional knowledge and climate change contributing at global, regional and national levels to the 2030 Agenda, and resulting in the following outputs:

- Completion of regional consultations for all seven socio-cultural regions on their inputs to the UN Food Systems Summit 2021.
- A game changing solution proposal to the UN Food Systems Summit.
- A summary of key priorities for Indigenous youth to be considered within the UN decade of Ecosystem restoration.
- A proposal on innovation where Indigenous youth collaborates with academia and research centers to establish exchanges of knowledge and combined research on inter and intra Indigenous generational knowledge.
- A summary report with the main recommendations and points of collaboration between Indigenous youth, member countries, UN, research centers and universities to accelerate the 2030 SDG Agenda.

IV. Forum structure

The Forum will meet every two years in FAO. For 2021, the format will be virtual bringing together participants including Indigenous youth representatives, elders, UN agencies, member states, universities, and NGOs. It will include both regionally specific and global sessions.

The Secretariat will be composed of the FAO Indigenous Peoples Unit and the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus.

⁵ https://esa.un.org/unpfiiidata/UNPFII_Recommendations_Database_view.asp?editid=2094&editid2=&editid3=&TargetPageNumber=1&todo=readonly&masterkey=

⁶ These objectives have been informally agreed within the Indigenous youth organizations during the preparation process leading to this note and they will be reviewed and approved during the first Forum on Indigenous Youth.