



ALLIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

This narrative provides useful insights when working with indigenous peoples. It offers an overview of some of the work done by the FAO Indigenous Peoples Unit and provides an historical background since the adoption of the Indigenous peoples' policy. It also explains the ongoing work-programme jointly designed by Indigenous peoples and FAO staff, describing its seven pillars and two thematic areas. The narrative introduces essential concepts such as indigenous peoples' food systems, FPIC, Interculturality and Biocentric restoration among others.

In addition, this document is useful in clarifying some of the most common pitfalls when talking about indigenous peoples by introducing the core principles outlined in the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the International Labour Organization Convention 169 (ILO 169), principles that are to be respected when working with Indigenous peoples.

The narrative offers useful advocacy and human-rights information as well as technical guidance to FAO personnel working with indigenous peoples at global, regional and local levels in the seven sociocultural regions.

We hope that you find it useful in your work.

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Understanding Indigenous Peoples

The guardians of biodiversity

Indigenous peoples are gatekeepers to a vast part of the world's cultural diversity. They represent more than 476 million people around the globe, living in 90 countries and speaking more than 4,000 languages. While constituting 6.2 percent of the global population with the majority living in middle-income countries, different sources place them among the most economically vulnerable, representing more than 19 percent of the extreme poor¹.

Asia has the largest concentration of indigenous peoples with 70.5 percent, followed by Africa with 16.3 percent, and Latin America with 11.5 percent. In Canada and the United States of America, indigenous peoples represent 6.7 percent of total population. Indigenous peoples are rapidly joining the process of rural-urban migration. While in Asia and Africa they mainly live in rural areas, in Latin America about 50 percent of them already live in urban centres.²

In addition, there are about 300 million pastoralists and nomadic people around the world². In some cases, pastoralists fall within the broader definition of indigenous peoples. They share certain commonalities with indigenous peoples in terms of their relationship with the environment, their food systems, their approach to land and territories and the importance of collective rights play in their livelihoods. When combined, pastoralists and indigenous peoples constitute 10 percent of the world's population.

Their territories encompass 28 percent of the surface of the globe and contain 11 percent of the world's forests. Within this 28 percent of the global surface, indigenous peoples are guardians to almost 80 percent of the remaining biodiversity of the world³. Indigenous peoples are not homogenous, they belong to more than 5,000 different groups. From savannahs to jungles, from arctic lands to mountains and plains, indigenous peoples have been and still are inhabiting the most diverse and unique ecosystems of our planet. Their presence today, despite adversity, is the best testimony of the resilience of humankind.

Through centuries, indigenous peoples have managed their territories and natural resources in ingenious ways. Their techniques and practices have allowed most of them to inhabit the same lands and territories for centuries providing food and natural resources for their communities, nurturing the existence and sustenance of future generations.

Indigenous peoples' lands and territories are inherently embedded in their identity. Their lands, territories and natural resources, are an intrinsic part of their relationship to Mother Earth. Their cosmogony, as well as their social fabric, political structure, and economic systems, are intertwined maintaining that relationship.

1. All cited statistics in this paragraph are from: ILO (2020). *Implementing the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention No 169: toward an inclusive, sustainable and just future*. International Labour Organization. Geneva, Switzerland. URL https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_735607/lang-en/index.htm

2 See FAO Pastoralist Knowledge Hub: <http://www.fao.org/pastoralist-knowledge-hub/background/en/>

3. Garnett, S.T., Burgess, N.D., Fa, J.E. et al. A spatial overview of the global importance of Indigenous lands for conservation. *Nat Sustain* 1, 369–374 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-018-0100-6>

Many indigenous peoples do not identify themselves as farmers⁴. Their food systems and livelihoods are rooted in natural and seasonal patterns, and food is generated through a combination of techniques, such as fisheries, hunting, shifting cultivation, harvesting and gathering. This blend of activities results in a broad food based with highly heterogeneous sources of food, and an economic structure based on a deep knowledge of the ecological and environmental characteristics of the territory.

The indigenous economy is based on reciprocity and exchange of services and knowledge with indigenous or non-indigenous communities. While the “market” economy is based on individualism and accumulation, the indigenous economy’s logic rests on collective knowledge, reciprocity, solidarity and distribution. Often their transactions involve barter and show a low level of monetization, though this is changing rapidly in some indigenous communities.

Governance systems and political representation

Indigenous peoples have ancestral governance systems and complex institutional structures that rule their societies, issue norms and resolve conflicts. Indigenous peoples have spiritual rituals and governance mechanisms to respond to situations of emergency, they have evolved conflict resolution mechanisms and norms that regulate their lives. Some indigenous societies are called nations; others are kingdoms, bands, pueblos, aboriginals, or tribes. Some indigenous peoples are transnational with their ancestral lands existing across different contemporary national borders and country frontiers. In most cases, indigenous peoples have occupied their territories long before the present national boundaries were set. In many instances, national authorities or governments do not recognize the societies of indigenous peoples despite the fact these indigenous societies have been living on those lands for hundreds of years prior to the existence of the state. They are sometimes referred to as ethnic groups, local communities or marginalized communities, which are not accurate descriptions. Sometimes they are mentioned as bands, pueblos, aboriginals, adivasis, janajati or tribes. Unfortunately, and in spite of their cultural richness, sometimes they are even referred to with pejorative terms, such as *primitive peoples*, *indigene*, *indios*, etc.

This is why internationally, the term agreed at the UN level is “**indigenous peoples**” with ‘s’ at the end, which is not a linguistic “S” but a political one, encompassing all the richness and variety that indigenous peoples have across the world.

Indigenous peoples have mobilized to represent themselves before the international community to participate in international decision-making processes and raise awareness on issues affecting them at local, regional, national, and international levels. In order to organize this representation, indigenous peoples have identified seven socio-cultural regions. These are 1) Africa; 2) the Arctic; 3) Asia; 4) Central and South America and the Caribbean; 5) Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia; 6) North America; and 7) the Pacific.

4 . FAO and CINE (2009). *Indigenous Peoples Food Systems: the many dimensions, of culture, diversity and environment for nutrition and health*. Food and Agriculture organization of the United Nations and Centre for Indigenous Peoples’ Nutrition and Environment at McGill University. Rome, Italy. <http://www.fao.org/3/i0370e/i0370e00.htm>

Indigenous Peoples and the UN

PARTICIPATION AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Despite being the oldest existing societies and groups on earth, indigenous peoples have struggled to be formally acknowledged and represented in the United Nations System. The United Nations Systems only formally represented indigenous peoples in 1977. This recognition allowed them to be integrated in the international community, in order to voice their opinions and partake in formal dialogue regarding the issues affecting them.

There are several international agreements and declarations that have progressively reinforced the recognition of indigenous peoples' rights. Two⁵ of the most prevalent instruments to ensure the well-being, protection and survival of indigenous peoples are: the 1989 ILO Convention 169 (ILO Co. 169)⁶ and the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)⁷.

The importance of UNDRIP: indigenous peoples with an “s”, free prior and informed consent, and self-identification

UNDRIP marks the inflection point in terms of the recognition of indigenous peoples' rights. It was adopted as a UN declaration by the General Assembly in September 2007 by 144 votes with the abstention of 11 countries and the rejection of 4. Today the 4 countries rejecting its adoption have modified their position in favour of UNDRIP.

UNDRIP paved the way for countries to start recognizing indigenous peoples' rights to their lands, territories, resources and has led to the introduction of the concept and process of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).

The nucleus of FPIC was first outlined in 1989 by ILO Convention 169, where the importance of consulting and involving indigenous peoples was developed from previous notions. UNDRIP took FPIC a step further making it one of the most important principles for indigenous peoples. FPIC protects indigenous peoples' right to participation, consultation and eventual agreement or not, prior to the beginning of any activity affecting their livelihoods. FPIC is a key mechanism that is embedded in indigenous peoples' right to self-determination, which includes the right to freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development, according to Article 3 of UNDRIP.

Similarly, UNDRIP became a trailblazer in creating the inclusive phrasing of “indigenous peoples” in plural form. This new all-encompassing phrasing includes an “s” after the word ‘people’, to reflect the plurality and diversity of the 5 000 indigenous peoples groups and societies that are now all encompassed for the first time under one term.

Although the term “indigenous peoples” is agreed as an all-encompassing-umbrella term, there is no official definition. Indigenous peoples are identified rather than defined. Therefore, based

5 Although the UNDRIP is a progressive instrument that is important in the fight for the recognition of indigenous peoples' rights, it is non-binding and purely suggestive. In comparison the ILO Co. 169 once ratified, it is legally binding for the ratifying countries, and therefore strongly reinforces indigenous peoples' collective rights individual human rights and their natural resources and land rights. As of today, only 23 countries have ratified ILO Co. 169, the majority, 21 of them being in Latin America, one country in Africa and one in Asia.

6 ILO Convention 169. 1989. https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C169

7 UNDRIP. 2007. https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf

on UNDRIP and UN-system⁸ consensus, FAOs' Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples states that, in accordance with international consensus, FAO will abide by the following criteria when considering indigenous peoples:

- Priority in time, with respect to occupation and use of a specific territory;
- The voluntary perpetuation of cultural distinctiveness, which may include aspects of language, social organization, religion and spiritual values, modes of production, laws and institutions;
- Self-identification, as well as recognition by other groups, or by State authorities, as a distinct collectivity; and
- An experience of subjugation, marginalization, dispossession, exclusion or discrimination, whether or not these conditions persist.

Self-identification is of particular importance in countries where governments do not recognize the claims of indigenous peoples.

At present, there are four United Nations entities/mechanisms on indigenous peoples: the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) reporting to United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC); and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP); the Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples; and the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (SRIP) reporting to Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

⁸ ILO Convention 169 (Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989), the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), UNDG [UN Development Group] Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues (2008), the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues.

Indigenous Peoples and FAO

WORKING TOGETHER

11 core principles that guide FAO's work with Indigenous Peoples

1. FAO does not work for indigenous peoples; **FAO works with indigenous peoples.**
2. **FAO does not use an acronym to refer to indigenous peoples.** Historically -and presently- indigenous peoples suffer from invisibility; using acronyms, like IPs, to refer to them, reinforce this invisibility.
3. **FAO, as a United Nations Agency, uses the agreed terminology of the UNDRIP: indigenous peoples, with an 's' as a collective term.** This is the case even when Governments, NGOs, civil society and other stakeholders would refer to indigenous peoples in other terms.
4. **FAO does not consider indigenous peoples as vulnerable populations.** FAO highlights that indigenous peoples are not vulnerable *per se*, they are placed in situations of vulnerability when their rights are not respected.
5. **FAO considers Indigenous peoples key allies for food security** given their traditional knowledge, capacity to preserve biodiversity and ability to adapt to a changing environment.
6. **FAO is particularly careful with language and concepts while working with indigenous peoples.** i.e. Indigenous peoples often emphasized that they are not poor: they live from forests, lakes, rivers and mountains. However, their **low level of monetization places them among the 19% of the extreme poor.** There is also scarce data about their food security status. Indigenous peoples do not talk about hunger, which entails negative connotations that are dealt by their reciprocity and collective solidarity. Past FAO campaigns and messages did not resonate with them.
7. **Indigenous peoples do not consider themselves as farmers,** while some may farm, many present blended activities including fishing, hunting and gathering. Similarly, pastoralists and nomadic peoples are not farmers. At the same time, both indigenous peoples and pastoralists have supported farming initiatives, even though their production unit is not the family but the clan or tribe. **Their livelihoods relies on collective rights to communal lands and natural resources. This often leads to conflicts with farmers who occupy their ancestral territories to farm, sometimes displacing indigenous peoples.**
8. **FAO respects and values indigenous peoples' knowledge.** Ensuring an exchange of knowledge between traditional and academic knowledge, ensuring crossing data and mutual cross-cultural respect.
9. FAO works to provide a space for indigenous peoples', particularly **indigenous women and indigenous youth**, voices to be heard in policy discussions and decision-making processes.
10. **FAO always implements participative processes that lead to consent or lack thereof,** of the indigenous communities affected by projects and initiatives using the Free, Prior and Informed Consent mechanism.
11. **FAO works with indigenous peoples under the 'do no harm' principle,** taking into consideration the context and the circumstances of the indigenous peoples involved in decision-making processes and knowledge sharing, amongst others.

Working together for mutual learning

FAO's work with indigenous peoples has evolved over time to become more progressive and inclusive.

For instance, in 2004, the [Voluntary Right to Food Guidelines](#) emphasized the importance for indigenous peoples to have access to their lands and resources to guarantee their right to food.

In 2009, the FAO's Nutrition Division published "[Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems: The many dimensions of culture, diversity and environment for nutrition and health](#)", bringing attention to the broad food base and consumption of nutritious edibles by indigenous peoples⁹.

In 2010, the Gender Unit at FAO, following the process of other UN agencies to align their work with UNDRIP, called a caucus of indigenous leaders from the seven socio-cultural regions to draft the [FAO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples](#) that has been ever since guiding FAO's work on indigenous peoples.

In 2012 the members of the World Committee on Food Security endorsed the [Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests](#), whose section 9, the longest of the guidelines, alludes to the importance of collective rights to land for indigenous peoples and pastoralists.

In 2014, FAO created a dedicated [Indigenous Peoples team](#) for the first time.

In 2015, FAO called a second caucus of indigenous representatives from the seven sociocultural regions to match their needs for assistance with FAO's technical competencies and create a joint programme of work consisting of 2 main focus areas; 1) indigenous youth and 2) indigenous women, and [6 main pillars](#): 1) Coordination; 2) Advocacy and Capacity Development; 3) FPIC; 4) Indigenous Food Systems; 5) Indicators and Statistics for Food Security; and 6) Voluntary Guidelines of Tenure.

In 2015, as requested by indigenous peoples and resource partners, FAO introduced and made compulsory in projects and programmes the implementation of the [Free Prior and Informed Consent process](#), by upgrading the [Environmental and Social Management Guidelines](#) and reframing the project cycle. [Training courses](#) and materials on how to implement Free Prior and Informed Consent have been made available in UN languages for FAO staff and experts outside the organization.

In 2017 FAO's senior management and indigenous youth representatives from the [Global Indigenous Youth Caucus](#) met in Headquarters releasing the [Rome statement on Indigenous youth](#), requesting FAO to introduce an indigenous internship programme and an additional pillar of work: Traditional knowledge and climate change.

In 2018, in collaboration with indigenous and international organizations, FAO organized the first [High-Level Expert Seminar on Indigenous Food Systems](#). The event gathered 23 countries and 200 participants, out of which 70 speakers from 22 indigenous communities and 20 research centres. It emphasized on the need to reinforce the sustainability of indigenous peoples' food systems in the context of climate change and the centrality of traditional knowledge transmitted in indigenous languages.

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In 2013 the FAO Nutrition Division in 2913 published a second book on indigenous peoples food systems: FAO and CINE (2013). *Indigenous Peoples' food systems & well-being. Interventions & policies for healthy communities*. Food and Agriculture organization of the United Nations and Centre for Indigenous Peoples' Nutrition and Environment at McGill University. Rome, Italy. <http://www.fao.org/3/i3144e/i3144e00.htm>

The main output of the High Level Expert Seminar was the agreement to create in 2020 a Global Hub on Indigenous Food Systems in FAO and a series of recommendations for Governments, Academia, International Community and indigenous organizations. The Global Hub will constitute an important platform for scientific and traditional knowledge holders, to coordinate and provide technical advice to policymakers at all levels.

In 2019, FAO together with Finland, Canada, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Saami Parliaments and the Inuit Circumpolar Council, organized in FAO Headquarters for the first time an [Expert Seminar on Indigenous peoples' fisheries and traditional knowledge in the Arctic](#) gathering indigenous representatives from remote areas of the Arctic region.

In 2019, FAO in collaboration with indigenous organizations developed the indigenous biocentric restoration approach, as a response to the need of having indigenous-inclusive conservation models. This indigenous peoples' perspective of restoration is rooted in the well-functioning of indigenous food systems. FAO and indigenous communities are working together to further develop this concept to restore degraded lands in indigenous territories based on their cosmogony. Biocentric restoration combines traditional knowledge, indigenous cosmogony, and natural resource management practices with new techniques to restore ecosystems in ways similar to how the sacred areas are cared for in existing indigenous territories.

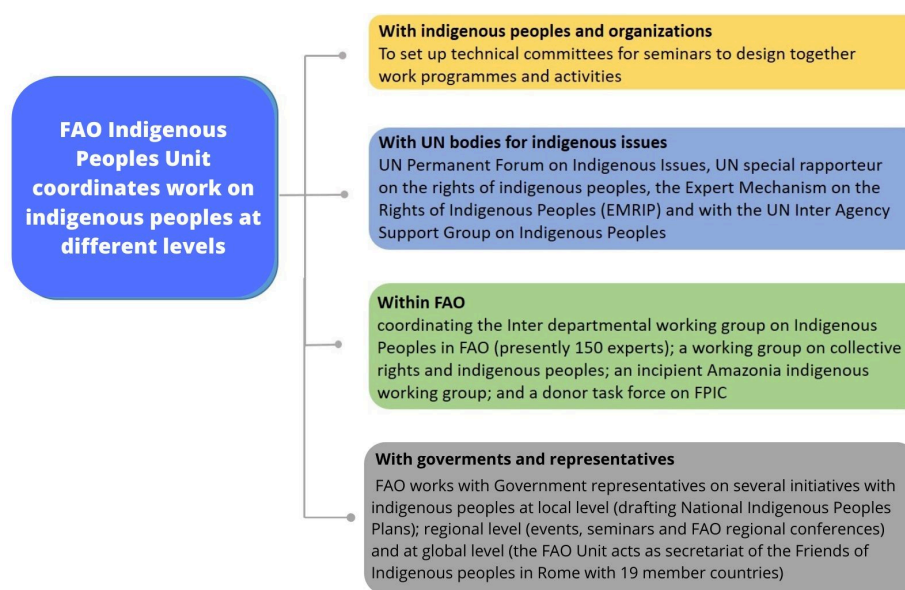
FAO's work with indigenous peoples over the past number of years has yielded a series of blended approaches and has introduced important concepts in FAO's development work, some of them include:

Indigenous Food Systems	Indigenous food systems differ from the traditional, mixed and modern food systems in the fact that their main characteristic is that they are not anthropocentric but biocentric. The generation of food is not done by humankind, instead is provided by the well functioning of the natural resource base and its biodiversity as well as their interactions in the environment.
Inter and intra generational transmission of knowledge	Indigenous peoples' ancestral knowledge is the accumulation of knowledge of the environment based on observation and experiences and shared from generation to generation. Different challenges (migration, climate change, poverty, etc) are affecting the inter and intra generational passing on of knowledge from elders to children and youth.
Indigenous Biocentric Restoration	Rooted in the well-functioning of indigenous food systems, this approach looks to restore degraded lands in indigenous territories through the combination of traditional knowledge and new restoration techniques. The approach aims to ensure the transmission of traditional knowledge and the preservation of local edibles and medicinal plants that are relevant for indigenous peoples.
Interculturality in policy making	Interculturality calls for a review of the curricula of different institutions affecting food habits from early stages, from the hospitals and medical dispensaries to the schools, through universities and public institutions. Malnutrition often starts in the schools where the habits are framed or unframed.

In 2020, the FAO Indigenous Peoples Team became a Unit with three main objectives:

1. Implement the FAO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples through the joint work programme;
2. Advocate and assist other FAO technical divisions in integrating indigenous peoples into their work;
3. Influence key policy processes and open spaces of dialogue between decision makers and indigenous peoples within FAO's mandate.

The FAO Unit on Indigenous Peoples works across silos and technical divisions in FAO by coordinating the Inter Departmental Working Group on Indigenous Peoples, and coordinating with a group of focal points at regional and national level in many country offices as well as regional and sub-regional country offices.



FAO and Indigenous Peoples' in the coming years

The FAO Indigenous Peoples Unit has a series of on-going activities with different technical units in FAO and external partners on indigenous food systems, collective tenure rights, free prior and informed consent, biocentric restoration, indigenous youth and indigenous women.

In an effort to strengthen FAOs' work with governments, FAOs' Indigenous Peoples Unit is acting as secretariat to the Friends of Indigenous Peoples Group. This group, established at the end of 2019, chaired by Canada, brings together 19 countries, Bioversity International, FAO, IFAD and indigenous leaders to discuss relevant issues affecting indigenous peoples.

FAO's work with indigenous women will be reinforced by the continuation of the Global Campaign for the Empowerment of Indigenous Women for Zero Hunger by re-launching the Indigenous Women: Leadership Schools and the Knowledge Sharing Initiative. The knowledge sharing initiative aims to collect knowledge and disaggregated data on indigenous women from universities, research centers, governments and the international community.

On youth, the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus and the FAO Indigenous Peoples Unit are discussing a Forum on Indigenous Youth for 2021 for which funds are being identified.

There are some relevant technical working groups that under the coordination of the FAO Indigenous Unit will continue to enhance FAOs' work in the Arctic and the Amazon basin.

The Arctic working group is collaborating with indigenous organizations from the Arctic region and consists of the FAO Indigenous Peoples Unit, the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department and the Environmental and Social Management Unit. This group meets to discuss climate change, livelihoods, and fisheries issues affecting indigenous peoples in the Arctic.

The *Amazonía indígena* working group launched in late 2019 with IFAD and COICA discusses the issues of deforestation in the Amazon basin and the land grabbing of indigenous territories and lands. The main purpose of the group will be to ensure that all IFAD and FAO initiatives in the Amazon involve indigenous peoples and are based on their Free Prior and Informed Consent.

It is worth noting the Working Group on Indigenous Peoples' Collective Rights to Natural Resources was established to address a request from the UNDESA/UN Permanent Forum of Indigenous Issues to FAO. Different key FAO technical Units, organizations and academia have shown interest in participating in this working group, namely, Cambridge University, Ekta Parishad, and the Rights and Resource Initiative.

Striving to further expand on the centrality of indigenous food systems, FAO will launch the Global Hub on Indigenous Food Systems during the September 2020 twenty-seventh Technical Committee on Agriculture. The Global Hub will be a platform for scientific and traditional knowledge holders, (academia, indigenous peoples, UN Agencies, etc.) to coordinate and provide technical advice to policymakers at all levels. The Hub will play a fundamental role in filling a knowledge gap on indigenous food systems to better understand key elements of sustainability when generating food. The Global Hub on Indigenous Food Systems was an outcome of the High-Level Expert Seminar on Indigenous Food Systems held at FAO Headquarters in November 2018.

To continue research on food security and indigenous peoples, FAO and the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) are collaborating to produce and release the first global analysis of food security and indigenous peoples. This report is in its second phase with an expected finalization date in early 2021 following a peer-review. The FAO Indigenous Peoples Unit and the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) Unit in the FAO Statistics Division are looking into how to include the Food Insecurity Experience Scale methodology into the global report.

In relation to Free Prior and Informed Consent, FAO will continue its efforts in developing capacity of FAO staff, training personnel from technical divisions and country offices on the FPIC process. To continue raising the knowledge and understanding of FPIC at corporate level, in 2020 a second meeting of the Resource Partners and Stakeholders Task Force on FPIC (which includes GEF, GCF, EU, AECID, GIZ, among others) is to be convened in the European Union premises in Brussel when the COVID19 pandemic permits.

The importance of indigenous peoples' participation in FAO's technical committees

Over the past years, civil society organizations, academia, producer organizations and private sector participation has increased significantly in FAO technical committees as well as important

multi stakeholder committees, conventions and treaties whose secretariats are housed in FAO (CFS, Treaty, Rotterdam).

The result has been more inclusive, participatory and relevant discussions between member states, FAO secretariat and the different stakeholders that have produced normative work and policy recommendations for society overall.

In previous years, indigenous peoples and their representatives have seen how their participation in the FAO hosted committees has been negligible. This lack of inclusion has resulted in indigenous peoples' livelihoods being affected by issued policies and recommendations without their views having been taken into account.

This situation was noticed by the Experts of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), under UNDESA. In 2018, UNDESA issued a recommendation to FAO to increase the participation of indigenous leaders and representatives in FAOs' technical committees.

Whilst the FAO Unit and indigenous peoples work together with the different committees to look into the specificities of each case, there are several common reasons behind why indigenous peoples have not been participating in FAO's housed committees. Some of the factors are:

Indigenous peoples do not fully understand the services and work FAO can provide as a UN technical specialized agency. The technical language used in the work of the Organization sometimes constitutes a real gap for people outside and indigenous peoples are not an exception.

Indigenous peoples have traditionally concentrated on working with other UN agencies, processes and meetings, particularly those linked to Human rights. Many indigenous leaders and representatives are specialized on human rights, advocacy and political processes but lack the technical background and expertise to follow highly technical sectorial discussions.

FAO has on different occasions requested the UNPFII to provide lists of indigenous representatives with relevant knowledge in water management; soils; seeds; nutrition; food security; forestry; pastoralism; etc. However, FAO has never received indications of relevant indigenous peoples that could be engaged in processes or discussions highly technical.

There has also been a lack of coordination and exchanges between important discussions taking place in New York in the United Nations arena and those in Rome, where three UN agencies focused on food security are located. Thus resulting in indigenous leaders often speaking in New York about decisions and norms adopted in Rome where no indigenous peoples participated during the discussions that led to the adoption of the decision and/or norm.

This participation-vacuum created by the lack of indigenous peoples' organizations and representatives in Rome, has been occupied by other organizations who claim to represent indigenous peoples. However, these organizations claiming to represent indigenous peoples do not communicate nor share information with the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, EMRIP, the Special Rapporteur or with Indigenous leaders, therefore generating an uncoordinated situation and thus, unrepresented indigenous peoples.

The FAO Unit on Indigenous people is discussing with the UNPFII how to solve these issues.

FAO & Indigenous Peoples, United Forces.

NOURISHING TIES FOR THE NEXT DECADE

FAO and indigenous peoples' collaboration over the past years has increased mutual understanding and respect. For instance, FAO recognizes the importance of indigenous peoples as key allies for zero hunger. This recognition mirrors also the evolution of FAO over time. An example is the recognition of the shifting cultivation as a sustainable way for indigenous peoples to produce food while managing the environment.

FAO has existed for more than 75 years and its approach and ways of work have evolved overtime to become more progressive and inclusive. It has evolved from an eminently productive and agronomic approach, towards a more livelihoods and people oriented and, more recently, climate change sensitive approach. This conceptual shift in the Organization is associated with an enhanced understanding of the roots of hunger considering the importance of access, stability and utilization vis a vis the previous emphasis on food availability.

Nowadays, FAO has diversified its views to include aspects such as poverty, resilience, climate change and territorial management.

One of the longest existing human groups are the Aboriginals of Australia. They have managed to adapt for thousands of years to different climate patterns. Other indigenous peoples such as the Inuit and the Saami have adapted their livelihoods for thousands of years to harsh climatic conditions of the North. These examples show indigenous peoples are the strongest allies in the global adaptations required to face climate change, as they have proven to be the most capable people in the world to effectively adapt their ways of life through times of great change.

In addition, we must consider their ability to blend traditional knowledge with innovation and technology. They adapt their ingenious traditional knowledge with technological advancements, making them important leaders in the fight against climate change.

Scientists are also interested in discussing sustainable food systems. Studies carried out in the field with indigenous communities have highlighted the unique sustainability elements of indigenous peoples' food systems. Indigenous peoples do not only maintain but also enrich the local biodiversity. Their food systems do not only provide food, but also renewable energy, medicine, and natural items for livelihoods.

Therefore, traditional knowledge should be protected and recognized as a collective right. Indigenous peoples have treasured knowledge regarding the environment and the management of natural resources for centuries. The practices that have safeguarded this traditional knowledge are currently under threat. Protecting indigenous peoples' collective rights is protecting that traditional knowledge.

Therefore, FAO needs to continue its path of including and understanding indigenous peoples, as well as supporting indigenous peoples in achieving their collective territorial rights and inclusion in political systems. FAO must also transmit work in a more comprehensible manner in

order to fill the technical language gap, and in order for the relevant parties to grasp the work of FAO and increase their engagement and their collaboration with FAO.

In conclusion, FAO should strengthen its ties with indigenous peoples' organizations and representatives, not only to learn more from them but also to address the unacceptable and systemic discrimination and marginalization they suffer in many countries.

FAOs mandate is directly related to indigenous peoples, to build a world without hunger through technical cooperation and assistance. Indigenous peoples are key allies in the achievement of FAOs main objectives of eliminating hunger, food security and malnutrition; fighting poverty; making agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable and caring for the earth, through their traditional knowledge and their deep connection with nature and their surroundings. Their sustainable way of life is one to be learned from, indigenous peoples traditional land management and food production are keeping the word food systems diverse and sustainable.

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Working for  **#ZeroHunger**