

## **Indigenous Youth Global Declaration on Sustainable and Resilient Food Systems**

### **We Indigenous Youth, the present and future of indigenous food systems,**

We, the Indigenous Youth of the seven socio-cultural regions of (i) Africa; (ii) Asia; (iii) North America; (iv) Central and South America and the Caribbean; (v) the Arctic; (vi) the Pacific; and (vii) Central and Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia; met virtually on the 16, 17 and 18 of June 2021 in the context of the Global Indigenous Youth Forum 2021, organized by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus (GIYC) and the Indigenous UN Food Systems Summit Champions.

We, the present and future of our Indigenous Peoples, aware of our essential role in the transmission of our cosmogonic systems, knowledge, languages and food systems, have come together from the seven socio-cultural regions of the world with the urgency of that our voices are heard and incorporated into inclusive policies and programs as well as intercultural programs that are critically needed.

Prompted by the urgent need to address current threats and challenges facing Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems, and the importance of listening to Indigenous Youth in the process leading up to the United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021, we have gathered to share our perspectives and knowledge with FAO, other UN Agencies, government officials and relevant stakeholders. As Indigenous Peoples we are ready to provide leadership for this work: to respect, commit, collaborate, and mobilise.

As we prepare for the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, we share our distinct perspectives, knowledge, research, and recommendations. We do so with humility and an expectation to be heard. We believe the current structure fails to adequately respect the voices and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Youth in particular. We call for our perspectives to be adequately addressed during the July Pre-Summit in Rome, and the September Summit in New York. We are ready to work together on the urgent need for meaningful action.

We reaffirm our interdependent, interrelated, and indivisible rights as elaborated in the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, including our right to self-determination (article 3), and to our lands, territories, and resources (article 26), and underscore the need to integrate our unique knowledge, views, recommendations, and perspectives into the systems - local, national and international – that govern the use of lands, waters and resources. We remind States that they must obtain our Free, Prior, and Informed Consent before adopting any legislative, administrative and development projects that will impact our rights, lands, territories, or resources. We reaffirm that the rights of Indigenous Youth are linked to the collective rights of our peoples and nations, including the profound relationship with our territories and the transmission of traditional knowledge and spirituality.

We appreciate the recognition of the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus (GIYC) as a forum of participation, meeting, and articulation of the organizational processes of the Indigenous Youth of the seven socio-cultural regions of the world related to the United Nations system.

We stand by and reiterate the importance of the recommendations within the *Rome Declaration on the Contribution of Indigenous Youth towards a World without Hunger* that was issued by the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus in 2017 for elevating and supporting the perspectives of Indigenous Youth towards ensuring food security.

We welcome the *White/Wiphala paper on Indigenous Peoples Food Systems*, which was coordinated by the Global Hub on Indigenous Peoples food systems towards the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021 and the characteristics of Indigenous Peoples Food Systems that it documents, the processes and elements that contribute to their sustainability, the drivers impacting them, and recommendations to enhance their protection, strengthening and revitalisation.

We acknowledge and appreciate the efforts made by FAO in elevating Indigenous Youth's perspectives in the process leading up to the UN Food Systems Summit, through the coordination of the Global Indigenous Youth Forum, as well as the integration of Indigenous Youth's perspectives in the FAO World Food Forum.

**A. We stand in solidarity with our Indigenous Peoples and Nations to...:**

1....maintain, revitalize and protect our connection to our territories and traditional knowledge systems, and also adapt our lifestyles by incorporating and revitalizing traditional culture with sustainable technology to capture, communicate, and safeguard traditional knowledge, practices and heritage, including knowledge related to Indigenous Peoples' foods.

2....to learn our stories, traditions and cultures and continue our Indigenous identity and food systems. Based on Indigenous Peoples' customary law, access to benefit sharing, and free prior informed consent, we could share these stories, cultures, and lessons in solidarity to develop truly democratic societies.

3... to make an international call to Indigenous Youth in the seven socio-cultural regions to prioritize their consumption, preferences and demand for local and traditional foods generated and produced in our Indigenous Peoples' food systems. We must appeal to the importance of our traditional Indigenous food as an instrument of effective expression of our food sovereignty in action. We call for coordinated efforts of Indigenous Youth around the world to reduce and eliminate the consumption of ultra-processed foods and junk and fast food, which is having devastating effects on the health of our peoples and the maintenance of our ancestral food practices.

4....to strengthen community partnerships to localize our food systems with producers, harvesters, herbalists and economies, in order to protect our traditions and create engagement for Indigenous Peoples' food systems among multiple stakeholders. We must also strengthen global networks between Indigenous Peoples at all levels to ensure the survival and dissemination of our knowledge systems.

5....to draw attention to the need to incorporate our voices into all policy discussions at the national, regional and global levels in the spirit of leaving no one behind.

6... to offer our determination and conviction of the importance of combining innovation with technologies and looking for new ways to stop the disappearance of ancestral knowledge, much of it oral, in our Indigenous Peoples' communities about plants, animals and ecosystems that constitute the foundations of our cultures, customs, beliefs, cosmogony and language. We are aware of the urgency of looking for new formulas that guarantee the transmission of the knowledge of our peoples before it disappears, along with the departure of our elders, old women and old men.

**B. To support our endeavours, and in the context of the UN Food Systems Summit 2021 and beyond, we, the Indigenous Youth gathered in the Global Indigenous Youth Forum, urge the UN Secretary-General, Member States, and other relevant stakeholders to adhere to the following recommendations:**

1. We urge Member States and the UN to recognize the rights of Indigenous Peoples within the framework of Human Rights and the obligations of the United Nations Charter, regardless of the population size of the people concerned. The criterion of self-identification to an Indigenous People is the main criterion for determining membership to the people. Member States must recognize the criterion of self-identification. Indigenous Peoples right to self-determination in all aspects affecting their food systems should be duly respected.

2. We urge Member States to recognize the customary law of Indigenous Peoples over our territories and the ancestral ties with our lands and territories; we Indigenous Youth are the current and future custodians of our lands and territories.

### **The United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021**

3. We ask Member States and the UN Food Systems Summit Secretariat to meaningfully engage with Indigenous Youth in their Action Tracks and Action Areas, recognizing Indigenous Youth as experts on resilience and sustainable food systems, keepers of first-hand experiences with extreme climatic changes, and holders of rich cultural traditional knowledge of our food systems.

4. We recommend Member States and the UN Food Systems Summit Secretariat to fully integrate an understanding of the characteristics of Indigenous Peoples' food systems into the Summit process, as elaborated in The White/Wiphala Paper on Indigenous Peoples' food systems coordinated by the Global-Hub on Indigenous Peoples Food Systems, as well as an understanding of the importance of these food systems for food system transformation towards resilience and sustainability, into the development of new game changing solutions, policy proposals and commitments.

5. We recommend that Member States and the UN Food Systems Summit Secretariat consider Indigenous Peoples' food systems a game-changing solution in themselves, for their unique characteristics and holistic nature, as well as the lessons to be learned by the rest of the world from our food systems.

### **Protection and promotion of Indigenous Peoples' traditional knowledge and food systems**

6. We urge Member States and UN Agencies to value Indigenous Peoples' traditional knowledge equally as scientific knowledge. We, Indigenous Peoples, are the local observers and experts of the environment. The value of our traditional knowledge also calls for equitable inclusion, and very importantly, fair compensation as established in the Nagoya Protocol on access to benefit-sharing to traditional knowledge. We ask Member States and relevant stakeholders to allocate resources to sponsor Indigenous Peoples and youth to ensure their effective participation and consultation toward the Food Summit.

7. We recommend that Member States work with Indigenous Peoples to establish intercultural education programmes; recognising Indigenous Youth need to learn about our traditional food systems, cultural heritage and key knowledge to sustain our food systems. We also encourage Member States to build interculturality into mainstream education, which will enable entire societies to better understand and respect Indigenous Peoples.

8. We urge Member States to develop Intellectual property legislative frameworks recognizing and protecting Indigenous Peoples' traditional knowledge systems. We urge Member States and United Nations Agencies to guarantee Indigenous Peoples' control over our Traditional Knowledge for effective intergenerational transfer of our knowledge, without the risk of misappropriation or misuse by third parties. Further, we ask that they put into place enforcement mechanisms upholding and protecting Indigenous Peoples' cultural rights to sustain connection to our food systems.

9. We assert that the Indigenous and biocentric ecological restoration must be urgently prioritized by Member States and relevant stakeholders, as it is the insurance for our collective future on the planet and the surest way to mitigate the impacts of climate change. We call upon the Private Sector and all parties to cease practices causing destruction and contamination of our waters, forests, air and lands.

10. We ask Member states to develop emergency preparedness, response and climate change adaptation plans with us, that respect our traditional governance and decision-making processes. We have agency in our preparedness and responses.

### **Access to resources and training for carrying forward Indigenous Peoples' food systems**

11. We call upon Member States, to ensure that Indigenous Youth are granted access to our lands and territories in order to protect and uphold our cultural rights and carry forward our food systems.

12. We urge Governments to grant Indigenous Youth tailor-made affordable credit facilities to allow them financial stability to carry forward Indigenous Peoples Food Systems and to support the development of Indigenous Youth's enterprises. We call upon the Private Sector to create spaces for Indigenous Peoples to sell our products. For Indigenous youth living in urban areas, we urge Member States to ensure decent equal employment opportunities that guarantee labour rights free of discrimination and with social protection.

13. We appeal to governments to develop training plans for new technologies in Indigenous languages that allow, within the framework of interculturality, to develop the capacities of Indigenous Youth to create local plans for the conservation of traditional knowledge through actions of innovation that combine ancestral knowledge with new technologies.

14. We ask Governments and funders to commit to investing in infrastructure and capacity building for and by Indigenous Peoples' communities to build accredited processing centres for foods, community gardens/growing areas for traditional foods, and connecting to composting, recycling systems and networks to reduce waste. We ask funders, private sector and government to commit funds to Indigenous-led programming and training for Indigenous Youth's capacity development and education.

### **C. On the work of FAO, the Global Indigenous Youth Forum 2021 makes the following recommendations to FAO:**

14. We recommend the continuation of the Global Indigenous Youth Forum (GIYF) within FAO, in coordination with the GIYC, on a biannual basis. The GIYF will raise awareness about the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and in particular the rights of young people, on the path to a world free from hunger, and showcase Indigenous Youth's unique knowledge and innovative solutions.

15. We applaud the FAO for the establishment of an internship program for Indigenous Youth in 2017. We underscore the importance of the continuation of this program, which allows for the development and strengthening of the skills of Indigenous Youth. We recommend that consultancy positions are also granted to Indigenous Youth for furthering our professional development.

16. We urge Member States, FAO and other UN agencies to implement the recommendations of the Rome Declaration on the Contribution of Indigenous Youth towards a World Without Hunger. Especially we highlight the need to generate disaggregated data and specific indicators of Indigenous Youth on issues of access to land and territory, health, food security, education and participation.

We Indigenous Youth recognize the historical struggles and demands of our peoples. The struggle begun by our grandmothers and grandfathers resulted in the adoption of the United Nations

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which contains the basic demands and priorities for a dignified life. Today, we, the Indigenous Youth, assume the fundamental task of making these rights real and possible at all levels in the pursuit of a world where all may live in harmony with Mother Earth.

We acknowledge the collaborative nature of this work, and call upon Member States, UN Agencies, NGOs, Scientific community and the Private Sector for better coordination, to stand in solidarity with us, and to value us as essential partners. At minimum, we ask all parties to ensure our inclusion and uphold existing legal frameworks, such as legal recognition and FPIC. We ask all parties to centre reciprocity in processes with Indigenous Youth and Indigenous Peoples, while respecting and valuing our knowledge and governance systems.

Rome, June 18 2021