



2015 - 2016

## Report on the work of the FAO Indigenous Peoples' team

Partnerships, Advocacy and Capacity Development Division

### Background

Indigenous peoples are considered key partners of FAO to achieve its mandate of freeing the world from hunger and malnutrition. Accordingly, in 2010 the FAO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples was elaborated, and in 2014 the Indigenous peoples' team was established in the Partnerships, Advocacy and Capacity Development Division to be the focal point of indigenous peoples at FAO.

Our main objective is to implement the 2010 Policy on indigenous peoples, having the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples and the ILO Convention 169 as overarching frameworks. In order to set up a work agenda, on February 2015 FAO and indigenous peoples' representatives celebrated a technical meeting that resulted in three main outcomes:

1. Establishment of a joint workplan where the 6 main areas of work were identified, being advocacy; coordination; Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC); indigenous food systems; the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT) and food security indicators.
2. Identification of an indigenous peoples caucus at global level to monitor the implementation of the joint workplan;
3. Identification of a network of FAO focal points for indigenous peoples at regional and country levels;



### Pillar 1: Advocacy



FAO regards advocacy as a key strategy to promote the rights and demands of indigenous peoples within the scope of its mandate. We are convinced that raising awareness initiatives among public opinion as well as stakeholders sets the ground for greater and more responsible engagement with indigenous peoples, notably fostering development processes which respect self-determination, identity, free, prior and informed consent, participation and inclusion, cultural and collective rights, gender equality and rights over land and other natural resources.

## **Key initiatives**

### **1.1. Revision of FAO key guiding documents: ensuring consistency with the 2010 Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples.**

In line with the international legal framework, the Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples developed by FAO ensures that the organization makes all due efforts to respect, include and promote indigenous issues in its relevant work. The core principles of the policy are: self-determination; the respect for indigenous knowledge, cultures and traditional practices that contribute to sustainable and equitable development; and Free, Prior and Informed Consent. The Policy is operationally reflected in:

- FAO Environmental and Social Management Guidelines which has been revised to integrate key issues related to indigenous peoples such as their self-identification; cultural heritage; rights over lands, territories and natural resources; and the application of Free, Prior and Informed Consent. The revised version was adopted in March 2015.
- The Project Cycle Manual which has also been revised to include indigenous issues, the new version was released in July 2015.

### **2.2. National Leadership Schools of Indigenous Women**

Bolivia, Peru, India (2015), Philippines, Panama, Paraguay and El Salvador (2016)

Capacity building was one of the major topics identified in FAO and indigenous peoples joint workplan, in particular targeting indigenous women. In this line, we have devised the Leadership School of Indigenous Women, an initiative we are implementing with the International Indigenous Women Forum (IIWF-FIMI). It consists in a School where indigenous women learn about human rights, food security and advocacy skills during a 10-month course. In the last phase of the course, the participants prepare advocacy plans to improve the food security situation in their communities. The best plans will be selected for implementation at a later stage.

So far, the School has been taken to Bolivia, Peru, India and the Philippines, having empowered more than 90 women, who are now better able to voice their concerns and more prepared to demand greater recognition and respect in equal terms with men. In 2016-2017, Paraguay, Panama and El Salvador will be joining the programme.



Peru, January 2016



Bolivia, December 2015



India, November 2015



Philippines, March 2016

### 2.3. Engagement in international events

The team engages in events that promote discussions and ideas to address the present and future challenges of food security, particularly supporting the often marginalised voices of indigenous peoples, women and youth. The attendance of indigenous and pastoralist representatives are also supported so they can bring into the conversation the importance of their traditional knowledge, sustainable livelihoods and agricultural practices. These events are also an opportunity to build partnerships and seek joint collaboration with indigenous peoples and their organizations.

Relevant events attended in 2015:

#### 2.3.1. Side events during the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

**Fourteenth Session:** "International Year of Soils: exploring links between indigenous food systems, protection of native seeds and sustainable development"  
May 2015, UN Headquarters, New York

Together with the Convention of Biological Diversity, the Indigenous Partnership, CADPI, Tebtebba and the AIPP, FAO organized this side event with the objective of exploring the linkages between indigenous food systems and livelihoods and the sustainable management of soils, while also looking at the importance of conserving traditional seeds and their relevance in the context of climate change adaptation and mitigation. It contributed to raise awareness on the importance and relevance of indigenous food systems for achieving food security and nutrition in the context of increasing soil and environment degradation.

**Fifteenth Session:** "Follow up on the World Conference on Indigenous peoples: Development of a National Plan on Indigenous peoples in El Salvador"  
May 2016, UN Headquarters, New York

This event gave the opportunity to showcase as a best practice the way FAO has been working with the Government of El Salvador and networks of indigenous peoples to elaborate a National Action Plan of Indigenous peoples in the country. The event counted with the testimonies from the government, indigenous peoples' organizations (CADPI, IWGIA), as well as UN agencies that supported the process.



#### 2.3.2. "Terra Madre Giovani - We Feed the Planet" in Expo Milano October 2015, Milano, Italy

FAO took part in a global gathering of over 2,500 youth change-makers from 120 countries, representing farmers, fishers, indigenous peoples, pastoralists, chefs and food experts. Hosted

by the Slow Food Youth Network and supported by FAO, “Terra Madre Giovani - We Feed the Planet” put the spotlight on young food producers working for a more food secure world.

FAO engaged in three tables: “Access to Land and Land grabbing”; “Intercultural Gastronomy: Indigenous Seeds, Ingredients and Principles for a Sustainable Future”; and “How marginal food production feeds the world”. The discussions provided valuable insight into the diversity of food systems and helped feeding the work that FAO is already doing with indigenous leaders and pastoralists throughout the world. It was a unique opportunity for the Organization to build youth networks and work together in protecting indigenous and pastoral food systems.

In addition, FAO facilitated the attendance of indigenous and pastoralist youth from the seven sociocultural regions.



We Feed the Planet, Milano



Young indigenous and pastoralist representatives meeting in We Feed the Planet, Milano

### **2.3.3. Indigenous Terra Madre 2015**

November 2015, Shillong, India

Under the theme “The Future We Want: Indigenous Perspectives and Actions”, the International conference Indigenous Terra Madre 2015 aimed at drawing attention to the wealth of traditional knowledge and sustainable practices that safeguard the rich agrobiodiversity found in indigenous lands and local communities. With the participation of over 600 delegates from 140 tribes living in 58 countries, ITM 2015 created a space for exchange on how to shape a future for food that is more just, holistic and sustainable.



FAO engaged in this event chairing two thematic sessions: "Women's role in the future of food and nutritional security" which fostered a debate centered in the governance and land stewardship mechanisms found in some matriarchal societies; and "Pastoralists and their challenges," built around the main common issues affecting pastoral communities over the world.



Thematic session "Women's role in the future of food and nutritional security"



Thematic session "Pastoralists and their challenges"

## Pillar 2: Coordination

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As coordinators of FAO's work with indigenous peoples we are implementing the following five main liaisons and monitoring activities.

- **FAO Inter-Departmental Working Group on Indigenous peoples**

We chair and convey the FAO Inter-Departmental Working Group on indigenous peoples (IDWG). The IDWG is composed of technical experts from forestry, seeds, livestock, statistics, gender, partnerships, investment, legal and fisheries. This body serves both as a network as well as a coordination body that enables FAO units to work with OPCA in the implementation of the 2010 FAO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples.

- **Working group on Indigenous Food Systems**

In February 2015, indigenous peoples requested FAO to create a working group on indigenous food systems. Co-chaired by the Indigenous Peoples' team in OPCA and the Plant Production and Protection Division (AGP), this working group dwells on the expertise of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Biodiversity, the International Network for Food Data Systems (INFOODS), and FAO technical divisions on nutrition, trade, seeds, agroecology, emergencies and forestry.



- **The InterAgency Support Group of the United Nations**

The InterAgency Support Group of the United Nations (IASG) groups together twice a year the indigenous peoples' focal points from all UN agencies. The main role of the IASG is not only to mainstream the work of indigenous peoples inside the different UN organizations but also to provide support to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

The most important work undertaken by the IASG recently has been the finalization of a UN System Wide Action Plan (SWAP) for indigenous peoples, which is to be officially launched by UNDESA in the 9th of May 2016. This year, FAO through the Indigenous Peoples team, is co-chairing the IASG together with IFAD and the International Land Coalition.

- **United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)**

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is the UN forum where indigenous peoples' delegates gather once a year to discuss indigenous issues. With half of their representatives appointed by member states and half by indigenous leaders, the UNPFII is today, along with the Office of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of indigenous peoples, the most representative UN body where indigenous matters are discussed. FAO along with other UN organizations participates in the UNPFII debates and experts meetings.

- **Task force on Free Prior and Informed Consent**

The Free, Prior and Informed Consent' task force was created by the Indigenous Peoples' team to ensure the smooth implementation of FPIC inside FAO. Composed of the units working on Global Environment Facility (GEF) projects, Fisheries, Voluntary Guidelines, Emergencies and Forestry mainly, it ensures that FAO technical units will implement FPIC in those projects and programmes affecting indigenous peoples.

- **Indigenous peoples caucus**

As explained above, the Indigenous Peoples' team in OPCA coordinates with this indigenous peoples caucus in order to share information and monitor the implementation of the FAO Policy of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples.

## **Pillar 3: Free, Prior and Informed Consent**

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Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is a right that pertains to indigenous peoples throughout the world allowing them to give or withhold consent to an activity that may influence their livelihoods and customs, which has also emerged as an international human rights standard derivative from the collective rights of indigenous peoples to self-determination and to their lands, territories and other properties.

FAO has aligned its core guiding documents with the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent and is in the process of ensuring all personnel developing projects know how to implement FPIC effectively.

### **Key initiatives**

#### **3.1. Free, Prior and Informed Consent capacity development programme**

July 2015

A consultative Workshop entitled "Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) Capacity Development Programme" was held at FAO bringing together a total of 44 participants from FAO and from five guest organizations: Action Against Hunger; Action Aid; Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ); International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; and World Vision. The workshop participants reviewed a Draft



Curriculum Framework for an FPIC Curriculum, and discussed and further identified the learning needs for the development of the training curriculum to support project managers in the successful implementation of FPIC.

### **3.2. Development of a practical Manual for FPIC implementation**

To be launched in May 2016

As a result of the consultative process between FAO and its partner organizations mentioned above, a Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) Manual has been designed as a practical tool for project practitioners to know when and how do they have to apply FPIC principles. FAO is also developing a capacity building programme for FAO staff and partners to be trained in the application of FPIC.

## **Pillar 4: Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure**

The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security (VGGT) call upon States to recognize and protect legitimate tenure rights of indigenous peoples and consider adapting their policy, legal and organizational frameworks to indigenous peoples' tenure systems.

In partnership with different indigenous organizations, and in collaboration with the tenure team in FAO, we are developing specific programmes aimed at strengthening indigenous peoples' capacities towards the recognition and protection of their tenure rights and customary tenure systems, jointly exploring practical actions to implement the VGGT.

### **Key initiatives**

#### **4.1. Capacity development programmes on the application of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT) for and with indigenous peoples**

##### **4.1.1. India Programme**

November 2015

In partnership with the Asia Indigenous peoples Pact (AIPP), indigenous peoples team and the Land Tenure team in FAO have built a one-year capacity-development programme specifically built around the most common challenges faced by indigenous peoples. Its aim is to explore how they can use the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in support of their land tenure rights.

The first two subnational workshops took place in November 2015 in Assam and Odisha respectively for North East and Central India, bringing together 25 participants from each region during three days. In 2016, a national training will be implemented in New Delhi.



Subregional workshop in Assam with participants from Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura and Assam



Subregional workshop in Odisha with participants from Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha

#### **4.1.2. Central America programme** February 2016 FAO

In partnership with Centro para la Autonomía y Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas (CADPI) this programme trained 25 indigenous representatives on how to use the VGGT to address indigenous peoples' tenure issues. Coming from Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Panama, Nicaragua and Honduras, the indigenous experts discussed on how to engage in the policy dialogue in their respective countries to improve land access and rights for indigenous communities. The discussions will include the results from the research and community dialogues that each of the participants is carrying out since February.

CADPI and FAO are using this hands-on experience to develop a methodology of application of the VGGT for indigenous peoples that takes into consideration their communal tenure systems, traditional and customary rights, and access to natural resources. The main lessons learnt are being incorporated into an indigenous peoples manual on the VGGT, which, along with the translation of the VGGT into Miskitu and Q'eqchi, are some of the tangible results of a unique discussion on indigenous peoples' tenure systems in Central America.



Indigenous representatives and experts during the workshop in Panama

## **Pillar 5: Indicators for food security**

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FAO is advocating for the collection of disaggregated data that reflects the situation of indigenous peoples in particular in food security, and encouraging national statistical services to work jointly with indigenous peoples for the collection of data in indigenous communities to support the development of sound development policies.

In particular, analyzing indigenous peoples' food insecurity would allow FAO- and governments- to improve upon methodologies, develop new tools and move forward practically to find effective and inclusive solutions to hunger.

### **Key initiatives**

#### **5.1. Open seminar: indigenous peoples and food security indicators**

May 2015

Indigenous peoples' team together with Voices of the Hungry project in the Statistics Division organized a workshop with 15 indigenous representatives from Latin America to exchange knowledge about food security and new methods to measure it.

During the workshop, participants were trained in the use of the [Food Insecurity Experience Scale \(FIES\)](#), an experience-based measurement with eight questions regarding people's access to adequate food, topical to each indigenous community. The methodology is an easy-to-use tool for indigenous leaders to apply in their own communities, which could support the collection of disaggregated data for national statistical services, and encourage the elaboration of sound development policies.

After the workshop, some of the participants brought back practical skills to their communities, and trained other indigenous peoples to carry out pilot surveys to collect their own data on their food security. FAO experts are supporting these indigenous communities in collecting their food insecurity data, and analysing it, which will allow them to compare results across communities.



## 5.2. Way forward

In March 2016, the Statistical Commission of the UN endorsed the global indicator framework for monitoring progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Within this, Goal 2 (End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture) has an indicator (2.1.2) to measure the Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES). This framework provides an opportunity to strengthen our work with food indicators.

## **Pillar 6: Indigenous food systems**

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FAO considers that Indigenous peoples with their traditional knowledge, livelihoods and food systems have many of the answers to the problems of the world food security. Indeed, scientific evidence and development based nutrition projects have shown in the recent years that indigenous foods are particularly nutritious, rich in key nutrients such as Vitamin A, Iron, or Zinc. Indigenous foods are also climate resilient, and adapt to their environment, making them a good source of nutrients in climate challenged areas. Altogether, indigenous food systems, through their foods and production system could be essential in the contribution to world food security.

Of particular relevance is the nutritious value of indigenous foods. While some of them are known and have been extensively analysed in terms of micro and macro nutrients, others remained considered as nutritious but no proper nutrition composition analysis has been undertaken.

FAO has started the coordination of the analysis of the food composition of several indigenous foods from the seven socio-economic indigenous regions. In collaboration with the Nutrition division, a pilot project has been led in North-East India, in the Khasi hills of Meghalaya, to determine the food composition of several indigenous foods. It showed important results on the content of some essential micronutrients and minerals that the regional diets are lacking and which could therefore be considered in FAO programmes to implement the food security of indigenous peoples in the region.

Currently, FAO is seeking to strengthen this line of work and trying to put together a bigger initiative to continue gathering evidence that could lead to a better understanding of how indigenous food systems and the ancestral knowledge on which they are based, maintain a balance between food production, culture and language, biodiversity, and management of the resources.