

# The Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD

## Regional and subregional consultation meetings 2022

### Concept Note

#### Introduction

The IFAD Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples aims to enhance IFAD's development effectiveness in its engagement with Indigenous Peoples' communities in rural areas. The Policy, which is currently being updated for presentation to IFAD's Executive Board in December 2022, sets out the principles of engagement that IFAD will adhere to in its work with Indigenous Peoples, and the instruments, procedures and resources that IFAD will deploy to implement these principles.

As a key instrument to implement the Policy, the the Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD (IPFI) was established in 2011. The Forum is a permanent process of consultation and dialogue between representatives from Indigenous Peoples' institutions and organizations, IFAD and governments.

The Forum enables participants to jointly assess IFAD's engagement with Indigenous Peoples, consult on rural development and poverty reduction challenges and opportunities, and promote the participation of Indigenous Peoples' organizations in IFAD's activities at the country, regional and international levels. Overall, these activities help IFAD to implement its Policy and translate its principles into action on the ground.

The global meeting of the IPFI convenes every other year in conjunction with IFAD's Governing Council, IFAD's main decision-making body. In preparation for each global meeting, **regional and subregional consultation meetings** are held to ensure that the Forum reflects the diversity of perspectives and recommendations gathered from Indigenous Peoples in the various regions where IFAD operates; the regional consultations also track the progress made on past agreements.

The overall process is guided by a steering committee composed of representatives of Indigenous Peoples' organizations from the different regions, representatives of indigenous youth (one per region), the Board of the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF), the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and IFAD.

A unique process within the United Nations system, the Forum institutionalizes IFAD's consultation and dialogue with Indigenous Peoples' representatives at all levels and provides an opportunity for Indigenous Peoples and IFAD to further strengthen their collaboration for rural transformation.

It is estimated that there are more than 476 million self-identified indigenous people in some 90 countries around the world. Indigenous Peoples have been dispossessed of their lands, territories and resources over centuries and, as a result, have often lost control over their way of life. Indigenous Peoples continue to face discrimination and criminalization, destruction of cultural heritage, forest degradation, loss of biodiversity, conflicts over resource use and development, increased violence against indigenous women and girls, and rising inequality. While there have been significant developments in the recognition of Indigenous Peoples' rights and agency, their voices often continue to go unheard.

Worldwide, they account for 6 per cent of the population but represent more than 18 per cent of those living in extreme poverty.

IFAD <https://www.ifad.org/en/indigenous-peoples>

## The sixth global meeting of the IPFI

The regional and subregional consultation meetings leading up to the global meeting will take place between September and December 2022. The sixth global meeting of the IPFI will take in February 2023 in conjunction with the Forty-fifth session of IFAD's Governing Council. The overall theme for the sixth global meeting of the IPFI will be **“Indigenous Peoples’ climate leadership: community-based solutions to enhance resilience and biodiversity”**.

The sixth global meeting of the Forum and its regional and subregional meetings will be an opportunity to recognize the fundamental role Indigenous Peoples play in protecting the environment and their leadership in seeking global solutions to the immense challenges that climate change is posing to humanity. Today, Indigenous Peoples are at the forefront of resilience and are key *agents* of environmental conservation, showing the path to a more holistic understanding of humans and their relationship with the environment, reminding us that humans are part of nature. The overall theme will allow for a meaningful dialogue that will showcase the community-based solutions Indigenous Peoples are putting forward to adapt to the changing climate while enhancing biodiversity. These community-based solutions centre on Indigenous Peoples’ leadership and knowledge systems and on the co-creation, development, implementation and evaluation of such solutions. The overall theme will foster a proactive environment where Indigenous Peoples share their perspectives on how to design and implement actions that enhance biodiversity, encourage climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience, and care for the community, its members and the planet.

Even though Indigenous Peoples contribute the least to greenhouse emissions, climate change is affecting their ways of life – their cultural and linguistic diversity, food security, health and wellbeing.<sup>1</sup> As Indigenous Peoples are often more directly reliant on the environment for subsistence, they are already feeling the effects of loss of climate change.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, Indigenous Peoples are interpreting and reacting to the impacts of climate change in creative ways, drawing on traditional knowledge and other technologies to find community-based solutions, which may help them to cope with imminent changes. It is important that Indigenous Peoples participate in the design and decision-making of projects. One key instrument to ensure full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples is Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). At IFAD, FPIC represents a proactive approach to shaping development pathways with Indigenous Peoples and goes beyond consent. The IPFI is one of the

### IFAD actions to support Indigenous Peoples’ climate leadership

In the newly created Advisory Committee of IFAD's Rural Resilience Programme – an innovative umbrella programme that consolidates multiple sources of financing channeled to small-scale producers and their communities – an Indigenous Peoples’ representative has been included as committee member, in order to strengthen the role of Indigenous Peoples in decision-making within IFAD's strategic programmes.

Within the Indigenous Peoples’ Livelihoods and Climate Resilience Programme, supported by the Swedish International Development Agency, IFAD launched in August 2022 a call for proposals for the sixth cycle of the IPAF, which focuses on advancing Indigenous Peoples’ conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity for adaptation and resilience to climate change. Furthermore, IFAD aims to enhance the capacity for direct access to climate financing by Indigenous Peoples and is supporting the participation of Indigenous Peoples’ consultants and organizations to ensure that FPIC is sought and that Indigenous Peoples’ visions, aspirations and knowledges are included in IFAD projects co-financed with climate finance. These actions are currently supporting projects under design in Ethiopia, Kenya, Mexico and Viet Nam.

IFAD's commitment to support Indigenous Peoples’ climate leadership is being reflected in the process to draft the updated IFAD Policy of Engagement with Indigenous Peoples that will guide IFAD's engagement in the years to come.

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/climate-change.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Sixth Assessment Report, 2022, [https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/report/IPCC\\_AR6\\_WGII\\_FullReport.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGII_FullReport.pdf).

mechanisms present at IFAD that ensure that FPIC is respected and that Indigenous Peoples are included in decision-making that concerns them.

Supporting Indigenous Peoples' self-determination, recognizing their rights, and supporting indigenous knowledge are critical to reducing climate change risks and promoting effective adaptation.<sup>3</sup> Increasingly, the crucial role that Indigenous Peoples play in protecting the planet's lands, forests and biodiversity is being acknowledged. Likewise, the relevance of indigenous knowledge, which contains unique information sources about past changes and potential solutions to present issues, is being increasingly recognized. For instance, research shows that well-managed forests store significantly more carbon, and that indigenous management methods reduce forest degradation and vulnerability to natural variabilities. In the Amazon Basin, for example, indigenous lands have on average higher carbon density per hectare than non-indigenous areas, partly because their vegetation is in better condition.<sup>4</sup> Indigenous Peoples possess rich environmental knowledge, which encompasses a holistic understanding, including climate, botany, ecology and spirituality that guide resource use and land-management practices.<sup>5</sup>

Secure access to lands, territories and natural resources is fundamental to Indigenous Peoples' self-driven development. Their relationship to ancestral territories and related resources, which form the basis of their livelihoods, are central to their identity. As 80 per cent of the world's remaining biodiversity is on indigenous homelands, biodiversity losses have cascading impacts on cultural and linguistic diversity and Indigenous Peoples' knowledge systems, as well as on food security, health and livelihoods – and often with irreparable damages and consequences. Cultural losses threaten adaptive capacity and may accumulate into intergenerational trauma and irrevocable losses of sense of belonging, valued cultural practices and identity.<sup>6</sup>

Indigenous Peoples' food systems will also be showcased during the sixth global meeting of the Forum. Beyond the preservation of biological diversity, Indigenous Peoples' food systems constitute a broad knowledge base that can inform and expand the possibilities and resources that humanity can draw upon in facing environmental uncertainty.

An integrated approach to gender, youth, and people with disability will also be part of the dialogue. Indigenous women are the backbone of Indigenous Peoples' communities and play a crucial role in the preservation and transmission of traditional ancestral knowledge. They have an integral collective and community role as carers of natural resources and keepers of scientific knowledge. Many indigenous women are also taking the lead in defending Indigenous Peoples' lands and territories and advocating for Indigenous Peoples' collective rights worldwide.<sup>7</sup> Youth and intergenerational transfer of knowledge are of great importance to Indigenous Peoples. Children and youth stand to inherit the long-term consequences of climate change. Their role in protecting biodiversity is central, and they act as a channel for indigenous and local knowledge. Indigenous youth are practising the sustainable use of wild species as a key part of their identity and well-being, while also navigating both traditional and digital spaces to share knowledge, which is a strength for Indigenous Peoples' climate leadership.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Walker, Wayne S., et al., The role of forest conversion, degradation, and disturbance in the carbon dynamics of Amazon indigenous territories and protected areas. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 117.6: 3015-3025, 2022, <https://www.pnas.org/content/pnas/117/6/3015.full.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> FAO, The White/Wiphala Paper on Indigenous Peoples' food systems, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb4932en>.

<sup>6</sup> IPCC, 2022.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/observances/indigenous-day>.

## The regional and subregional consultation meetings

In preparation for the sixth global meeting of the IPFI, regional and subregional consultation meetings will be held in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Pacific. The regional and subregional consultation meetings will be an opportunity to dialogue with IFAD staff on their regional portfolios making use of climate finance<sup>8</sup> and targeting Indigenous Peoples. The experiences gained during the implementation of the Resilience Programme funded by Sida will allow for special sessions to share the knowledge on Indigenous Peoples' participation and access to climate finance. The goal is to ensure that Indigenous Peoples lead their own direct engagement and contribution in the preparation process leading to the global meeting of the Forum.

Within the overall theme of **“Indigenous Peoples’ climate leadership: community-based solutions to enhance resilience and biodiversity”**, the objectives of the regional and subregional consultation meetings are to:

- Exchange experiences and good practices on the main theme of the Forum;
- Share knowledge and evidence on Indigenous Peoples’ climate leadership;
- Identify opportunities for strengthening good practices and finding sustainable solutions to the challenges that Indigenous Peoples and their livelihoods face due to climate change, and the corresponding elements for regional strategies to enhance IFAD’s support;
- Allow for dissemination and communication on climate finance access for Indigenous Peoples;
- Analyse and formulate action-oriented recommendations on the theme of the Forum; and
- Draft regional action plans that will guide the engagement between Indigenous Peoples, development partners (including IFAD staff) and donors during the Forum.

The regional and subregional consultation meetings will also contribute to:

- Assessing the progress of implementation of the IFAD Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples adopted in 2009;
- Reviewing the recommendations made at the fifth global meeting of the IPFI (2021) and assessing the progress of the recommendations and regional action plans adopted;
- Preparing the regional participation in the sixth global meeting of the IPFI, including the selection of delegates; and
- Reviewing and selecting the candidate proposals for the IFAD Indigenous Peoples Awards.

All regional and subregional consultation meetings will be virtual or hybrid and will be organized by indigenous organizations – Centre for the Indigenous Peoples' Autonomy and Development (CAPDI) for Latin America and the Caribbean; Mainyoto Pastoralist Development Organization (MPIDO) for Africa; Global Home for Indigenous Peoples (GH4IP) for Asia; and Partners in Community Development Fiji (PCDF) for the Pacific – in cooperation with IFAD country offices and IFAD staff. All meetings will take place between September and October 2022. Virtual meetings will provide an opportunity to broaden participation and engagement of Indigenous Peoples.

Participants in the regional and subregional consultation meetings will include:

- Members of the IPFI Steering Committee;
- Representatives of regional and subregional networks/constituencies of Indigenous Peoples (to be selected by the members of the Steering Committee of the IPFI in consultation with their regional and subregional networks/constituencies);

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<sup>8</sup> United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), *“Climate finance refers to local, national or transnational financing—drawn from public, private and alternative sources of financing—that seeks to support mitigation and adaptation actions that will address climate change”*, <https://unfccc.int/topics/climate-finance/the-big-picture/climate-finance-in-the-negotiations>.

- Member(s) of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues;
- Member of the IPAF co-management organization at the regional level: the International Indigenous Women's Forum (IIWF - FIMI) in Latin American and the Caribbean; Samburu Women Trust (SWT) in Africa; and Tebtebba Foundation in Asia;
- Participants selected from IPAF-funded projects;
- Representatives from IFAD-funded projects in the regions and subregions (to be selected by country programme managers);
- Selected development partners/donors as observers; and
- IFAD staff and consultants, including indigenous experts participating in the design of IFAD-funded projects that include climate finance.

All participants must be familiar with the IFAD Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples and be knowledgeable about and/or engaged on the ground with the theme of the sixth global meeting of the Forum. Geographical balance must be ensured, as well as the different ecosystems and livelihood systems (pastoralists, fisher folk, hunters and gatherers). Gender balance and the participation of youth will be ensured.

### The IFAD Indigenous Peoples Awards

In September 2022, IFAD launched the second call for nominations for the Indigenous Peoples Awards<sup>9</sup>. The aim of the Awards is to recognize the efforts and achievements of development projects that successfully engage with Indigenous Peoples or ethnic minorities living in rural areas. This initiative was established to promote best practices, share knowledge and lessons learned, and identify opportunities to replicate and scale up results. The candidates of each Award category (Best performing IFAD-funded project; Best performing non-IFAD-funded project; Best performing IPAF-funded project) will send short videos of their projects. The selected proposals will be shown during the regional consultation meetings in preparation for the sixth global meeting of the Forum. The participants of each regional meeting will vote for the best candidates (one per category). Finally, the three award winners (one per category) will be selected by a committee composed of Members of the IPFI Steering Committee. The final winners will be awarded during the sixth global meeting of the IPFI.

### Useful links

- [IFAD's Engagement with Indigenous Peoples: Evaluation Synthesis](#)
- [IFAD Policy of Engagement with Indigenous Peoples](#)
- [The Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD](#)
- [Proceedings of the fifth global meeting of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD](#)
- [Synthesis of Deliberations of the fifth global meeting of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD](#)
- [Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures](#)
- [The fifth global meeting of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD](#)
- [The Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility](#)

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/latest/-/2022-call-for-nominations-ifad-indigenous-peoples-awards>.

## Annex 1. Indigenous Peoples and climate action: international framework

The overarching commitment of the 2030 Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to promote human rights, combat inequalities and “leave no one behind” provides a highly relevant framework for addressing Indigenous Peoples’ needs in the context of development programming and implementation. To ensure a truly rights-based and inclusive sustainable development, it is critical to empower Indigenous Peoples to participate in and monitor national implementation of the goals and targets in order to ensure that they are not being left behind once again and that their rights are respected and protected. At the same time, Indigenous Peoples, with their profound knowledge of nature and sustainability, have proved that they have much to contribute to the 2030 Development Agenda. Many of the 17 universal and transformative SDGs are relevant for Indigenous Peoples and have direct links to the human rights commitments outlined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

According to the Indigenous Peoples Major Group for Sustainable Development, after years of working to implement the SDGs,<sup>10</sup> Indigenous Peoples across the globe have not only been left behind but have been pushed further behind. This is demonstrated by the continuing widespread grabbing of Indigenous Peoples’ lands and resources, criminalization, increasing poverty and hunger, loss of livelihood, destruction of cultural heritage, forest degradation, loss of biodiversity, conflicts over resource-use and development, increased violence against indigenous women and girls, and rising inequality among others.

Over the last 20 years, Indigenous Peoples’ rights have been increasingly recognized through the adoption of international instruments. For instance, the Paris Agreement recognizes the need to strengthen knowledge, technologies, practices and efforts of local communities and Indigenous Peoples related to addressing and responding to climate change, and establishes a platform<sup>11</sup> for the exchange of experiences and sharing of best practices on mitigation and adaptation in a holistic and integrated manner. The establishment of the platform marks a critical milestone in the global endeavour to strengthen knowledge, technologies, practices and efforts of local communities and Indigenous Peoples in addressing climate change.

The Convention on Biological Diversity recognizes the dependence of many Indigenous Peoples and local communities on biological resources and acknowledges the contribution of Indigenous Peoples and local communities and their unique role in conserving life on Earth.<sup>12</sup>

At the COP26 in Glasgow, the United Kingdom, Norway, Germany, the United States, and the Netherlands, and 17 funders pledged<sup>13</sup> to support Indigenous Peoples and local communities with US\$1.7 billion, citing their proven role in preventing deforestation that fuels climate change. This pledge acknowledges the land and resource rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, in accordance with relevant national legislation, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and other international instruments, as applicable. The pledge also acknowledges that, despite the important role played by Indigenous Peoples and their communities in protecting forests and nature, only a small fraction of these communities enjoy secure rights to own, manage and control land and resources and have access to the support and services required to protect forests and nature and to pursue sustainable livelihoods.

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<sup>10</sup> Indigenous Peoples Major Group for Sustainable Development, <https://indigenouspeoples-sdg.org/index.php/english/>.

<sup>11</sup> The Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform, <https://lcipp.unfccc.int/>.

<sup>12</sup> International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2022, <https://www.iwgia.org/en/ip-i-iw/4696-iw-2022-convention-on-biological-diversity-cbd.html>.

<sup>13</sup> COP26 IPLC forest tenure Joint Donor Statement - UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) at the SEC – Glasgow 2021, <https://ukcop26.org/cop26-iplc-forest-tenure-joint-donor-statement/>.