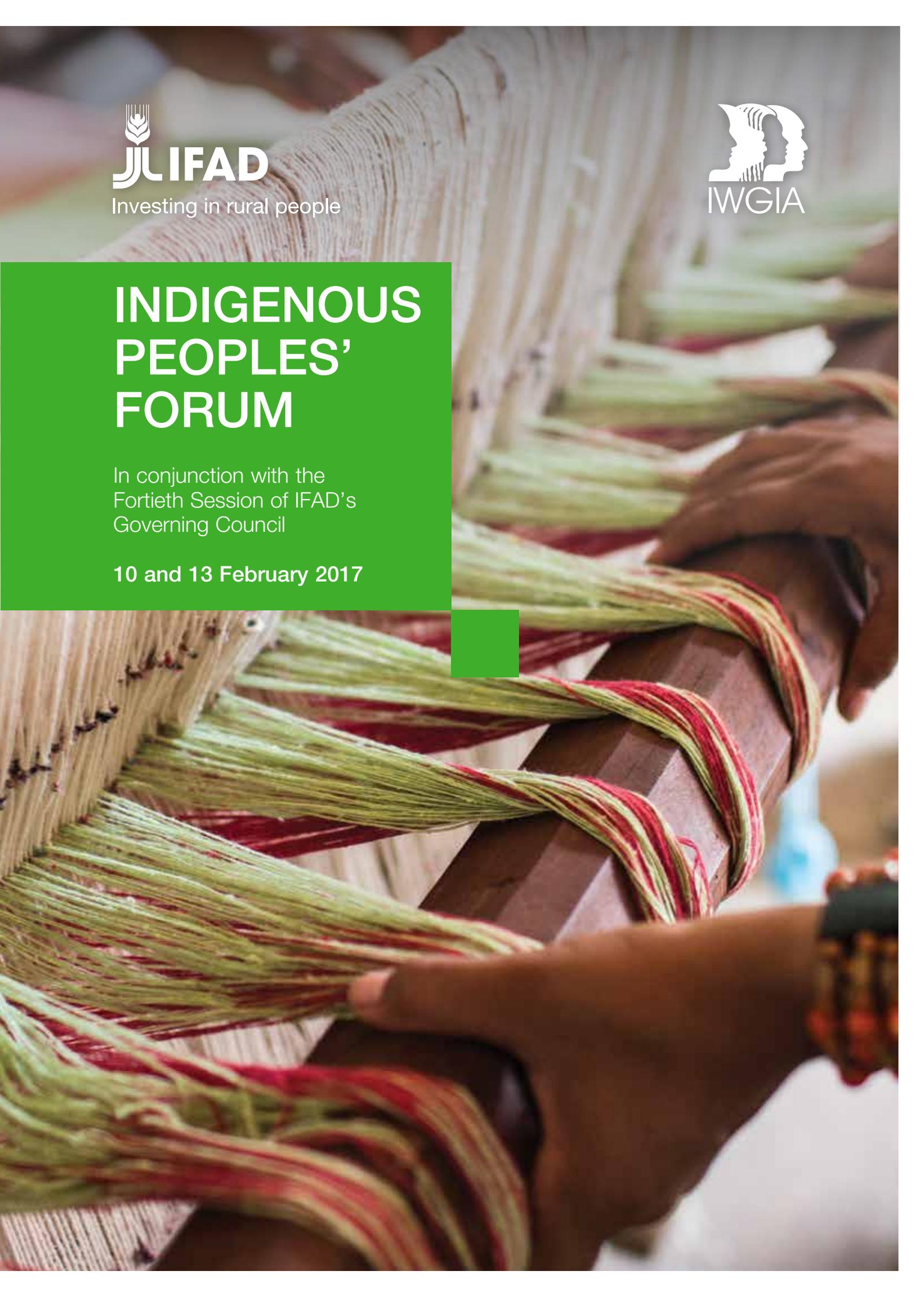




INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' FORUM

In conjunction with the
Fortieth Session of IFAD's
Governing Council

10 and 13 February 2017



The Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD

The Global Meeting of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum convenes every other year in conjunction with IFAD's Governing Council. In preparation for each Global Meeting, regional workshops are organized to ensure that the Forum reflects the diversity of perspectives and recommendations gathered from indigenous peoples in the various regions.

A unique process within the United Nations system, the Forum institutionalizes IFAD's consultation and dialogue with indigenous peoples' representatives at the national, regional and international levels. In 2017, the Forum is focusing on economic empowerment of indigenous peoples, particularly women and youth. It provides an opportunity

for indigenous peoples and IFAD staff to analyse and learn from previous experiences, and further strengthen their collaboration for rural transformation.

The 2017 Forum coincides with the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The Forum will also highlight IFAD's engagement with indigenous peoples during the past decade within the context of the implementation of the UNDRIP, and brainstorm on future opportunities to improve IFAD's work within the 2030 Development Agenda.

Background

Adopted in 2009 to consolidate IFAD's role in advancing indigenous peoples' rights to sustainable development, IFAD's Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples contained a series of commitments, including the establishment of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD.

The Forum is a process for indigenous peoples to engage in a direct dialogue and improve participation of indigenous peoples in IFAD country programmes. Engagement with indigenous peoples at the country and regional levels, and dialogue through the global meetings of the Forum at the corporate level, are mutually reinforcing processes.

Through the two previous meetings of the Forum, in February 2013 and 2015, indigenous peoples' representatives called on IFAD to support initiatives to recognize and protect their rights; value their knowledge; strengthen their participation throughout IFAD's project cycles; and ensure that free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) is sought in the context of IFAD-funded projects. During the 2015 global meeting, IFAD was specifically recommended to design targeted initiatives with and for indigenous women and youth in order to promote traditional economies and marketing.

These recommendations echo the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples held in 2014, which recognizes the importance of the role that indigenous peoples can play in economic, social and environmental development. Following the recommendations from the Conference, a System-Wide Action Plan was developed in 2016 to ensure that the United Nations implements programmes with a coordinated and coherent approach.

In line with the 2030 Agenda's aim to "leave no one behind", the IFAD Strategic Framework 2016-2025 reaffirms IFAD's commitment to indigenous peoples' self-driven development. The Framework states that IFAD will support indigenous peoples to benefit from emerging economic opportunities, while enhancing their traditional livelihoods, occupations and knowledge. Investing in the potential of rural youth is considered essential to sustain rural economic growth.

The Strategic Framework also mandates in-depth sociocultural and vulnerability analyses of different target groups, and integration of specific indicators on their well-being to capture impacts and results. The Framework stresses the importance of indigenous peoples' economic empowerment for future development efforts, including for IFAD's goal of investing in rural people to enable them to overcome poverty and achieve food security through remunerative and sustainable livelihoods.

The Steering Committee of the Forum decided that **economic empowerment of indigenous peoples, with a focus on women and youth**, should be the overall theme for the Third Global Meeting of the Forum. Economic empowerment of indigenous peoples is key to IFAD's work and has been pursued both through its country programmes and projects as well as support to specific initiatives such as the partnership with Slow Food in creating Presidia, which gathers small-scale food producers who join forces and agree on common ways to produce and promote their products. A number of projects financed through the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF) have demonstrated how economic empowerment of indigenous women and youth can build on their cultural assets.

2016 Regional Workshops

In late 2016, regional workshops in preparation for the Indigenous Peoples' Forum were held in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific. The specific objectives were to: (i) exchange knowledge and experiences on good practices on indigenous peoples' economic empowerment that build on their distinctive cultures, traditional knowledge and natural resources; (ii) identify challenges and opportunities for indigenous peoples to pursue economic empowerment, as well as key elements for regional strategies to enhance IFAD's support; and (iii) analyse and formulate action-oriented recommendations.

Economic empowerment of Indigenous Peoples with a focus on women and youth

At the regional workshops, participants shared experiences, including lessons learned from IFAD-funded projects. The traditional and local economic systems of indigenous peoples are characterized by a diversity of small-scale, family-based activities, and also include regulation of territories, sustainable use of natural resources, and practice of social responsibility. These are integral aspects of indigenous peoples' lives.

Although in many countries indigenous peoples actively participate in economic development, the impact on improving their well-being is usually negligible. Their economic systems are under pressure to conform to a globally defined agenda, and they continue to face challenges and violations of their social and economic rights preventing them from accessing and benefiting from development processes and economic opportunities.

Access to markets is a key issue, and indigenous producers have little control over the goods pricing, as their bargaining power is limited. Access to credit – a decisive factor in starting small businesses – is also limited, particularly due to high interest rates. Indigenous peoples also often lack the necessary business and entrepreneurial skills and knowledge.

In recent decades, many countries have reformed their legal systems in response to indigenous peoples' calls for the recognition of their right to protection and control of their lands. However, many indigenous peoples are still fighting to own, manage and develop their traditional lands, territories and resources.

Workshops assessed the progress of implementation of the IFAD Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples, and reviewed the status of implementation of the recommendations of the Second Global Meeting and the regional action plans agreed upon with IFAD regional divisions in 2015. Where possible, a field visit to a project supported by IFAD or through IPAF was organized.

This is particularly true for women and youth. Though indigenous women play a crucial role in small-scale trade and business, as well as in supporting the well-being of their families, the custodians of their properties remain the male members of their families. Indigenous women also face discrimination, unequal access to education and training, non-recognition of their traditional skills, and lack of access to credit and markets.

Indigenous youth also face exclusion and marginalization, limiting their entry into the job market. The lack of opportunity and access to resources pushes them to migrate from their communities, which disrupts the transfer and preservation of indigenous knowledge, including ecological knowledge and practices that have long enriched bio-cultural diversity. This possibly irreparable loss is a loss not just for indigenous peoples, but for humanity as a whole.

However, good examples of development initiatives aimed at increasing indigenous peoples' engagement in economic activities have built on traditional knowledge, practices and livelihoods as a path towards success. Acknowledgement of indigenous peoples' contribution to sustainable development and appreciation for the values embodied in indigenous peoples' traditional production practices have also grown. This awareness provides further potential for the empowerment of indigenous peoples.

Highlights and preliminary recommendations of the regional workshops

From different perspectives, participants identified issues and made recommendations to be further discussed at the 2017 Forum. They highlighted the need for IFAD and national governments to take a holistic approach to supporting indigenous peoples' economic empowerment. For indigenous peoples, this empowerment is not simply about increasing income. Hence, in planning development initiatives IFAD should look at the interlinked social, organizational, cultural and spiritual aspects of indigenous peoples' livelihoods and ways of living.

Participants stressed the need for IFAD to guarantee the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in all stages of project cycles through decision-making and consultative bodies. They called upon IFAD to ensure the application of the FPIC in all development projects. Among the recommendations are the following:

- Promote, value and revive traditional activities and initiatives, skills, employment and off-farm activities such as handicraft, and facilitate their marketing as a means of economic empowerment for women and youth.
- In development projects focusing on production, promote the rights of indigenous women and youth to land, as well as the securing of economic resources.
- In monitoring systems, include indicators relevant to the situation of indigenous peoples, not only focusing on income generation but also on how these strengthen the culture, identity and well-being of indigenous peoples.
- Increase direct financial support to indigenous peoples' organizations, including through the IPAF, to contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through self-determined development.
- Develop policies and strategies conducive to indigenous people's engagement in economic activities and development processes.
- Facilitate policy dialogue and raise awareness on indigenous peoples' rights and issues of relevance to them at all levels. Intensify the participation of indigenous youth and women in international dialogue, as well as initiatives and organizations inspired by common values and objectives such as Slow Food.
- Support capacity-building and training of indigenous women and youth for the development of their business (e.g. in downstream processing, value addition, marketing and product promotion).
- Replicate and scale up successful experiences and start pilot projects to support business initiatives of women and youth based on traditional knowledge.
- Encourage and support exchange of experiences, networking and knowledge-sharing among indigenous peoples, including youth and older people.
- Promote the implementation of campaigns for the consumption of products from indigenous peoples based on their added value (e.g. use of traditional knowledge and practices, sustainability, resilience and adaptation to climate change).

Expected outputs of the Third Global Meeting

- Synthesis of deliberations, to be presented to the Governing Council
- Regional action plans, emerging from the regional working group sessions
- IFAD management response to the synthesis of deliberations.



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