

The background of the entire page is a photograph of an indigenous woman in a lush green forest. She is wearing a traditional headdress with a prominent red feather and colorful beads. She has red body paint on her face and is holding a wooden staff. Other people in traditional attire are visible in the background.

SIXTH GLOBAL MEETING OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' FORUM

9, 10 and 13 February 2023

Sixth global meeting of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD

In conjunction with the Forty-sixth session of the IFAD Governing Council

Theme – Indigenous Peoples' Climate Leadership: Community-based solutions to enhance resilience and biodiversity

9,10 and 13 February 2023

This report was prepared by Ms. Valeria Galletti, Independent Consultant, under the supervision of Ms. Ilaria Firmian, Senior Technical Specialist in the Environment, Climate, Gender and Social Inclusion Division of the Strategy and Knowledge Department of IFAD.

Abbreviations and acronyms

ADFAC	<i>Association Debout Femme Autochtones du Congo</i>
ASAP+	Enhanced Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme
CADPI	<i>Centro para la Autonomía y el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas</i>
CAOI	<i>Coordinadora Andina de Organizaciones Indígenas</i>
CICA	Indigenous Council of Central America
CIPO	Cambodia Indigenous Peoples Organization
COSOP	Country strategic opportunities programmes
CSN	Country strategy notes
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FEDEC	<i>Fondation pour l'Environnement et le Développement au Cameroun</i>
FIMI	<i>Foro Internacional de Mujeres Indígenas</i>
FPIC	Free, prior and informed consent
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GH4IP	Global Home for Indigenous Peoples
IPAF	Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPFI	Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD
IWGIA	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs
MPIDO	<i>Mainyoito Pastoralist Integrated Development Organization</i>
PCDF	Partners in Community Development Fiji
PROCAMÉLIDOS	Integral Strengthening Programme for the Camelid Value Chain in the Bolivian High Plateau
SC	Steering committee
SIBAT	<i>Sibol ng Agham at Teknolohiya Inc.</i>
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UEFA-RDC	<i>Union Pour l'Emancipation de la Femme Autochtone</i>
UN	United Nations
UNPFII	United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

BACKGROUND

About the Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD

The [Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD](#) (IPFI) was established in 2011 as a permanent process of consultation and dialogue between representatives of Indigenous Peoples' institutions and organizations, IFAD and governments. The global meeting of the IPFI convenes every second February in conjunction with the Governing Council of IFAD, the Fund's main decision-making body. A series of regional consultations lead up to each global meeting, ensuring that the Forum reflects the diversity of perspectives and recommendations gathered from Indigenous Peoples around the world.

The overall process is guided by a steering committee (SC) composed of ten representatives of Indigenous Peoples' organizations from the different regions (Africa, Asia, Latin American and the Caribbean, the Pacific), including one youth representative per region (except for Pacific) and one representative each from the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF), the [UNPFII](#) and IFAD.

A unique process within the United Nations (UN) system, the Forum aims to improve IFAD's accountability, enhance its development effectiveness and exercise leadership among development organizations. It enables participants to assess IFAD's engagement with Indigenous Peoples, consult on rural development and poverty reduction, and promote the participation of Indigenous Peoples' organizations in IFAD's operations at the country, regional and international levels. These activities help IFAD to implement its Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples and translate the Policy's principles into action on the ground.

The theme of the sixth global meeting – Indigenous Peoples' Climate Leadership: community-based solutions to enhance resilience and biodiversity

Climate change places the very life-sustaining capacity of the planet in jeopardy and is hence the single most important threat humanity faces. Its effects are felt across all facets of life, including food security, livelihoods, gender equality, employment, health, and political stability and peace. However, while all ecosystems are affected, the causes and the burden of the effects of climate change are unevenly distributed. Those who contribute the least to the problem must bear the heaviest burden of its effects, aggravating already existing disparities. Indigenous Peoples who are intimately connected with and dependent on the land and its resources, and who live in some of the most vulnerable regions and conditions, are on such a receiving end. Their life-sustaining natural and cultural assets are being undermined and their political, economic and social exclusion is being exacerbated by climate change and, at times, climate policies and actions.

Historically, containment, displacement, deracination and dispossession reduced the land base on which Indigenous Peoples depended, pushing them onto marginal lands, or completely dispossessing them. Their labour, economies and resources were subordinated to external exploitative interests that impoverished and marginalized them. Further, their organizational systems, knowledge and practices were denigrated and subjugated through discriminatory and assimilatory policies and practices, eroding their capacity for self-care.

Unfortunately, these dynamics continue to be replicated in contemporary policies and practices, including in climate action. Indigenous Peoples' perspectives, aspirations, concerns and land relations are at times sacrificed in the interest of global biodiversity conservation goals and the extraction of minerals for sustainable energy transitions. Also, Indigenous Peoples are often excluded from climate debates and decision-making. However, Indigenous Peoples display tremendous resilience, leadership and creativity. They are revitalizing and inventing practices and ways of thinking that are invaluable in confronting the challenges of climate change, biodiversity conservation and sustainability.

PREPARATION OF THE 2023 GLOBAL MEETING OF THE FORUM: THE REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL CONSULTATION MEETINGS

As part of the preparatory process of the IPFI, 13 regional and subregional consultation meetings were held in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Pacific.

The 2020 consultation processes was mostly virtual except in the Pacific, where hybrid consultations took place. The virtual format allowed for wider participation. Overall, meetings involved the participation of around 150 representatives of Indigenous Peoples' organizations and communities, members of the UNPFII, IFAD staff, and development partners (as observers). All consultation meetings were organized by indigenous organizations (see box 1) in cooperation with IFAD Country Offices and IFAD staff.

Box 1. The consultation meetings

Africa (organized by [the Mainyoto Pastoralist Integrated Development Organization, MPIDO](#))

- *Two regional meetings*: two regional consultation meetings covering English- and French-speaking countries on 16 and 17 November 2022, respectively

Asia (organized by [the Global Home for Indigenous Peoples, GH4IP](#))

- *Three subregional meetings*: South Asia (20 October 2022); East Asia (31 October 2022), Central and Western Asia (1 November 2022)
- *One regional meeting*: 9 November 2022

Latin America and the Caribbean (organized by [Centro para la Autonomía y el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas, CADPI](#))

- *Five subregional meetings*: Central America (30 September 2022), Amazon region (14 October 2022), Southern Cone (21 October 2022), Caribbean (28 October 2022), Andean region (3 November 2022)
- *One regional meeting*: 4 November 2022

Pacific (organized by [Partners in Community Development Fiji, PCDF](#))

- *One regional meeting*: 3-4 November 2022

The consolidated report of the regional consultation meetings is available [here](#).

Within the thematic focus of the Forum, the objectives of the meetings were to: (i) exchange experiences and good practices on the main theme of the Forum; (ii) share knowledge and evidence of Indigenous Peoples' climate leadership; (iii) identify opportunities for strengthening good practices and finding sustainable solutions to the challenges that Indigenous Peoples and their livelihoods face due to climate change; (iv) disseminate information on access to climate finance for Indigenous Peoples; and (v) analyse and formulate action-oriented recommendations on the theme of the Forum.

The meetings also provided an opportunity for participants to assess the implementation progress of the IFAD Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples, and to review the implementation of the recommendations of the fifth global meeting and the regional action plans agreed upon with IFAD regional divisions in 2021. Additionally, the sessions allowed for the selection of participants to the IPFI global meeting and the selection of candidates for the IFAD Indigenous Peoples Awards.

Based on the discussions, the regional workshops provided suggestions and action-oriented recommendations in relation to the theme of the Forum, which the participants brought to the global meeting.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SIXTH GLOBAL MEETING OF THE FORUM

The sixth global meeting of the IFPI took place on 9,10 and 13 February 2023, in conjunction with the Forty-sixth session of the IFAD Governing Council.

The meeting brought together 42 Indigenous Peoples' representatives from 33 indigenous groups,¹ from Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean, to exchange views on developments in the partnership with IFAD. At total of 57 per cent of the indigenous representatives were women and 21 per cent were young people under 35 years of age. Over 30 representatives from partner organizations such as NGOs, foundations, international organizations, UN agencies, research institutes and universities joined the meeting as observers or as speakers. Overall, the Forum saw the participation of more than 180 attendees.

Opening of the Forum

The Forum began with an indigenous spiritual ceremony conducted by Ms Sonia Astuhuaman Pardave (Andean Women's Advisor, [CAOI](#)).



The President of IFAD, Mr Alvaro Lario, at the opening ceremony of the IPFI

@ IFAD/Flavio Ianniello

Welcoming remarks were shared by Ms Jyotsna Puri (Associate Vice-President, Strategy and Knowledge Department, IFAD). Ms Puri warmly acknowledged the presence of Her Excellency Ms Ligia Margarita Quessep Bitar (Governor of IFAD for the Republic of Colombia, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Colombia to Italy and Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture in Rome).

The Associate Vice-President presented the theme of the Forum and shared IFAD's expectation of hearing and

learning from Indigenous Peoples' perspectives and experiences of effective governance systems, values systems, spirituality, and reciprocity.

Ms Puri made reference to the dual crisis of climate change and biodiversity loss we are undergoing, both of which are driven by the over-exploitation of resources. She noted that the international community is realizing that climate change and biodiversity loss must be tackled hand in hand and that at IFAD "we are also deeply aware that human rights and a healthy planet are mutually dependent. To have a safe, clean and healthy environment, we have to respect, protect and fulfil human rights". She added that "the relevance of the focus of the global meeting on Indigenous Peoples' leadership appears clear". Ms Puri stated that Indigenous Peoples are the most effective stewards of the environment, with indigenous lands making up around 20 per cent of the Earth's territory yet containing much of the world's remaining biodiversity. She further observed that Indigenous Peoples are on the front lines of a rapidly changing climate and are leading

¹ The full list of participants is available [here](#).

the development of land-based and culturally rooted climate solutions in response. Ms Puri pointed out that Indigenous Peoples' leadership "means recognition of Indigenous Peoples' solutions to climate and biodiversity challenges and providing the space for these solutions to be brought forward".

The global meeting was officially opened by IFAD's President Alvaro Lario. The President emphasized that the only way to turn the tide on climate change is for governments and institutions like IFAD to join forces with Indigenous Peoples. He added that Indigenous Peoples are in fact recognized as the stewards of nature and biodiversity and that they know the land, seas and earth's plant and animal life "with an intimacy that no agronomist, project designer or funding provider ever will". According to Mr Lario, the invaluable knowledge of Indigenous Peoples can be a guide to transform food systems and respond to climate change. "For this to be possible," he concluded, "there is a need to advocate for social justice and land rights for Indigenous Peoples' communities."

Mr Lario reminded the participants that IFAD has been working with Indigenous Peoples for more than 40 years and has learned that IFAD projects and programmes work best when they are tailored to the identities, values and cultures of Indigenous Peoples. He observed that good examples are provided by the IPAF and the projects implemented with the support of the [Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency \(SIDA\)](#) in Ethiopia, Kenya and Mexico, where indigenous consultants were engaged in project design missions. According to Mr Lario, this is a way of putting the principle of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) into practice. The President also emphasized that economic and social development must be community-driven and community-led, as rural people know the strengths and weaknesses of their own communities – and what needs improvement in their lives and livelihoods – better than anyone.

Mr Lario reminded participants that in the IFAD12 funding period, the Fund pledged to review its Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples. This was achieved, and the [updated Policy](#) now states very clearly that IFAD works with Indigenous Peoples as equal partners to co-create strategies and design and monitor investments. He underscored that looking ahead, as IFAD continues its work with Indigenous Peoples and their organizations, the Fund's priorities will include improving nutrition, safeguarding biodiversity through traditional food systems, and focusing on the needs and roles of women and youth.

Mr Lario concluded by stating that IFAD will continue working with Indigenous Peoples and their organizations so that they can achieve their own development goals. He wished participants every success in finding the best ways forward and assured them of IFAD's continued commitment and partnership on the road ahead.



IPAF-funded "Climate change adaptation and food security for indigenous communities in Natagaima Tolima project (RENACER)", Colombia

@ IFAD/Michael Benanav

The opening remarks from the members of the SC of the Forum further focused on expressing deep appreciation for IFAD's commitment and support over the years. They particularly welcomed the updated Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples. Key challenges and areas of improvement in the partnership between IFAD and Indigenous Peoples were also highlighted.

Ms Esperance Binyuki Nyota (Coordinator, [Union Pour l'Emancipation de la Femme Autochtone, UEFA-RDC](#)) expressed appreciation for IFAD's facilitation of meetings and consultations held in preparation for the IPFI in the two Africa subregions. She welcomed the close collaboration with IFAD's teams to make the partnership between IFAD and Indigenous Peoples more pragmatic and visible. In relation to the Policy, while appreciating IFAD's efforts to update it, she emphasized the need to ensure ownership by stakeholders and recommended that IFAD translate the policy into local languages.

Ms Nyota's intervention was echoed by Mr Jesus Amadeo Martinez Guzman (Board Member, [Indigenous Council of Central America, CICA](#)). He congratulated IFAD for the development of the Policy and highlighted the need to translate it into concrete actions at country level with clear guidance and appropriate mechanisms. He stressed the limited access to land and natural resources and the criminalization and murder of indigenous leaders as some of the main issues that confront Indigenous Peoples in all regions. He concluded his interventions by requesting a minute of silence for Indigenous Peoples who sacrificed their lives in defence of Mother Earth.

Mr Pallab Chakma (Director, [Kapaeeng Foundation](#) and Asia Representative, International Land Coalition Global Council) emphasized that the process for updating the Policy was conducted in consultation with Indigenous Peoples and will result in more opportunities for Indigenous Peoples and IFAD to work together and achieve common targets. Mr Chakma underscored the role of Indigenous Peoples in protecting and preserving biodiversity and addressing climate change particularly by using traditional knowledge to sustainably manage natural resources. However, he signalled, land tenure still remains an issue requiring support. He urged IFAD to translate the Policy into practice, reinforce IFAD's engagement at the national level through its local offices, and facilitate policy dialogue at the national level between Indigenous Peoples and national governments.

The opening session was closed with the keynote address of Mr Dario José Mejía (Chair, UNPFII), who emphasized the huge contribution of Indigenous Peoples to humanity, the need for a paradigm shift to ensure the fulfilment of their territorial, cultural and political rights, and the need to integrate the knowledge of Indigenous Peoples into policies and investments. He further stressed the need to increase the global budget for projects supporting Indigenous Peoples, including through the financing for climate action.

The opening session closed with the review and approval of the agenda of the global meeting.

Trends and developments in IFAD's partnership with Indigenous Peoples

Partnership in progress. As is the practice at the global meetings of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum, IFAD presented a report analysing the [trends and developments in IFAD's partnership with Indigenous Peoples in the biennium](#) (2021–2022), taking stock of IFAD's experience and highlighting success stories and achievements.

Progress on the recommendations of the fifth global meeting was presented by Ms Ilaria Firmian (Senior Technical Specialist, Indigenous Peoples and Tribal Issues, IFAD).²

An overview of the process and the results of the review of the IFAD Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples was provided. The process was co-led by the indigenous members of the IPFI SC. The updated Policy takes into full consideration the need to promote the rights of Indigenous Peoples to lands, territories and



Ms Ilaria Firmian (IFAD), delivering the presentation on the partnership in progress

@ IFAD/Flavio Ianniello

resources through an integrated approach to economic, environmental and social development within a human rights framework. Also, the Policy builds on the Fund's comparative advantage in climate change adaptation and its unique mandate to eradicate poverty in rural areas. Significant changes introduced by the updated Policy include: (i) a paradigm shift within IFAD, in which IFAD works with Indigenous Peoples as horizontal partners; (ii) consideration of the evolving nature of global aid and the need for increased funding from various multilateral and bilateral sources; (iii) the introduction of a new principle on food sovereignty and nutrition security to ensure the protection and preservation of indigenous food systems; and (iv) the enhancement of Indigenous Peoples' representation in IFAD's governance bodies, with selected representatives of the IPFI holding observer status in IFAD's Executive Board sessions when items of relevance to Indigenous Peoples are on the agenda for consideration.

It was reported that the IFAD12 Replenishment committed to ensuring that at least 10 projects during its implementation period (2022–2024) include Indigenous Peoples as a priority target group. Of these, two projects – one in Congo and one in Lao People's Democratic Republic – have been approved so far, while six more have been preliminarily identified and are currently under design. The commitment to operationalize FPIC by involving indigenous consultants in the design of projects is being implemented in five countries (Belize, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mexico and Viet Nam).

In the biennium, IFAD approved 12 country strategic opportunities programmes (COSOPs) and country strategy notes (CSNs) that include and/or target Indigenous Peoples.³ Further, 21 new projects supporting Indigenous Peoples were approved by the Executive Board (representing 50 per cent of all projects approved during the period).

In relation to monitoring and evaluation, the following progress was highlighted: (i) IFAD is piloting the development of a web-based interactive dashboard to support informed strategies and decisions and encourage knowledge-sharing, including on engagement with Indigenous Peoples; (ii) specific indicators to measure the well-being of Indigenous Peoples were developed by *Foro Internacional de Mujeres Indígenas* (FIMI), Samburu Women Trust and Tebtebba Foundation to monitor the progress made in IPAF-funded

² The full presentation is available [here](#).

³ Burundi, Cambodia, Guatemala, Guyana, Indonesia, Madagascar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Somalia, Togo, Uganda.

projects. These indicators also refer to highly relevant areas related to Indigenous Peoples' self-driven development.

Relevant advancements were also reported on the operationalization of FPIC with the adoption of the updated Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures in 2021, and the revision of the [How to Do Note: Seeking free prior and informed consent in IFAD investments projects](#). In 2022, IFAD published the [Policy Brief: Free, Prior and Informed Consent \(FPIC\) - Indigenous peoples-driven development pathways](#), followed by a [Call to Action](#) for all development actors, including governments and the private sector, to respect and apply FPIC as a tool for social justice in any development initiative. In the same year, IFAD published the report [The Free, Prior and Informed Consent Advantage: Action for empowerment in Latin America](#).

To improve the collaboration between IFAD and Indigenous Peoples' representatives at country level, IFAD successfully supported the organization of 13 regional and subregional consultation meetings in preparation for the IPFI, updated 35 Country Technical Notes and improved the IPAF selection process with a view to strengthen linkages with IFAD country programmes.

Specific efforts were also made to enhance evidence-based knowledge management by conducting the independent assessment of the fifth cycle of the IPAF, the Indigenous Peoples Awards, and through regular blog posts, stories and podcasts on IFAD's website, and the participation of IFAD in learning events. IFAD also supported the participation of Indigenous Peoples' representatives in global platforms such as the IPFI, UNPFII, the Conferences of the Parties of the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) and the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#). Conversely, no progress was made in relation to the commitment to update IFAD's toolkit on "[Engaging with pastoralists – a holistic development approach](#)".

In line with the decisions taken during the Consultation on the Twelfth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources, to reaffirm IFAD's commitment to Indigenous Peoples the following achievements were made:

- Direct support to Indigenous Peoples' self-driven development is being provided through the IPAF, whose sixth cycle (2022–2026) was launched in August 2022. It will be co-financed by SIDA and the [David and Lucile Packard Foundation](#), with a total of US\$3.3 million. A grant proposal was submitted in December to top up this cycle with an additional US\$2.5 million by IFAD;
- A representative of the IPFI Steering Committee and one from the Steering Committee of the Farmers' Forum were nominated as members of the Rural Resilience Programme Advisory Committee of the [Enhanced Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme \(ASAP+\)](#). This is expected to facilitate access to resources for Indigenous Peoples under this Programme.

Achievements of IPAF-funded projects. IPAF regional co-managers Ms Yohanis Amador ([International Indigenous Women's Forum](#)), Ms Jacqueline Macharia ([Samburu Women Trust](#)) and Ms Eleanor Dictaan-Bang-ao ([Tebtebba Foundation](#)) presented the results achieved so far in the implementation of the IPAF projects in [Latin America and the Caribbean](#), [Africa](#) and [Asia and the Pacific](#), respectively. The added value of the Facility was emphasized by all speakers as a unique instrument for supporting Indigenous Peoples' self-driven development. According to speakers, the IPAF has strengthened trust within indigenous communities and successfully supported them to exercise their individual and collective rights and be recognized as contributors to global challenges. At the same time, the need to scale up investments for financing IPAF projects was emphasized.

AFRICA	ASIA AND THE PACIFIC	LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
<p>Direct beneficiaries: 2,553 including 53% women and 53% youth</p> <p>11 projects in 8 countries: Cameroon, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Tanzania, Uganda</p> <p>Main results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22,184 hectares of land under communal and individual titles (Tanzania) • US\$150,000 mobilized • 60% increase in income for indigenous youth (Ghana) • Improved mitigation and adaptation to climate change through improved cooking stoves (Cameroon) • Rehabilitation of community forests, promotion of agroforestry and preservation of drought-resistant tree species (Cameroon, DRC, Morocco) 	<p>Direct beneficiaries: 6,656 including 66% women and 51% youth</p> <p>12 projects in 10 countries: Cambodia, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Fiji, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, Vanuatu</p> <p>Main results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer of indigenous knowledge, particularly through the engagement of youth • Recovery and preservation of traditional food, and nutrient-rich and climate-resilient crops and seeds • Improved livelihoods and access to markets • Securing of land (e.g. through community protocols) • Improved production (e.g. support to collective farms, producers groups) • Improved access to technology to address the impact of climate change (e.g. improved cooking stoves) 	<p>Direct beneficiaries: 1,488 including 50% women and 26% youth</p> <p>11 projects in 11 countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru</p> <p>Main results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened networks linking indigenous organizations with FIMI initiatives (e.g. Global Leadership School, Program Leading from the South) • Knowledge generation and sharing at all levels • Improved livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples through the recovery of ancestral techniques for community economic development • Successful advocacy actions • Recovery and promotion of ancestral knowledge, particularly in relation to natural resources management

The partnership between Indigenous Peoples and IFAD: The way forward

Summary presentations on the outcomes and recommendations from the [regional consultation meetings](#) held in [Africa](#), [Asia](#), [Latin America and the Caribbean](#), and the [Pacific](#) in preparation of the Forum were given by: [Ms Margaret Tunda Lepore](#) (member of the Steering Committee of the IPFI and co-funder of the Kopito Women Group); [Ms Yun Mane](#) (member of the Steering Committee of the IPFI and Technical Advisor of the [Cambodia Indigenous Peoples Organization, CIPO](#)); [Mr Nestor Perez](#) (Technician, CICA); and [Mr Ulaiasi Baya](#) (Consultant, [Customary Land Solutions](#)).⁴



IPAF-funded "Indigenous Tree Species Restoration, Climate Change Adaptation and Indigenous Livelihood Enhancement Project", Ethiopia

@ IFAD/Petterik Wiggers

⁴ The presentations are available [here](#).

Overall, Indigenous Peoples' representatives recognized the relevance of the preparatory consultation meetings within the Forum process. They are not only key for the preparation of the global meeting, but they contribute to improving mutual knowledge between IFAD and Indigenous Peoples and their organizations, to sharing information on IFAD and its modus operandi, and to enhancing the engagement and participation of Indigenous Peoples in IFAD's operations. The meetings also provided an opportunity to showcase Indigenous Peoples' perspectives, experiences and good practices on how to design and implement actions that enhance biodiversity and encourage climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience.

The presentations served as an introduction to the discussions that followed within three regional parallel working group sessions (covering Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean) co-chaired by IFAD regional directors and Indigenous Peoples' representatives. The participation of IFAD included directors, subregional hub directors, country programme managers and officers, and country team staff. Most of them were connected remotely.

Following intense and constructive dialogue and debates, IFAD participants in the sessions identified a way forward for developing the regional action plans for the biennium 2023–2024, taking into account the inputs received during the regional parallel sessions.

Discussion on the overall theme of the Forum – Indigenous Peoples' climate leadership: community-based solutions to enhance resilience and biodiversity

The session was chaired by [Mr Oliver Page](#) (Lead Climate and Environment Specialist and IPAF Board Member, IFAD), who introduced the theme of the Forum. Many interventions and presentations by Indigenous Peoples' representatives, IFAD and partners enriched the discussion and enabled participants in the Forum to debate and dialogue on issues of relevance, strengthen mutual knowledge, and assess opportunities for developing synergies and partnerships.

[Ms Sherilee Harper](#) (Associate Professor, School of Public Health, University of Alberta) shared a presentation⁵ on the [IPCC](#), a United Nations body that provides governments with scientific information they can use to develop climate policies. According to the speaker, some recent studies, such as the "[Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability](#)" and the "[Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate](#)", show that indigenous knowledge alone is a valuable source of evidence, wisdom and information which is critical to understanding, responding to, and governing climate change. To benefit from this knowledge, the self-determination of Indigenous Peoples is key. Looking at the future, reports should include indigenous lead authors and remove barriers to engaging with indigenous knowledge.

[Ms Liliana Vianey Vargas](#) (Indigenous Consultant) shared her experience as an indigenous consultant participating in the design of the IFAD-supported project "Basin Approach for Livelihood Sustainability through Adaptation Strategies" in Mexico. Ms Vargas emphasized the added value of engaging indigenous consultants in design processes, as they bring unique perspectives on collective and individual rights of Indigenous Peoples including in relation to the empowerment of women. Their participation is key to ensuring that projects are responsive to local needs and include the participation of indigenous authorities, institutions and decision-making bodies as horizontal partners. Ms Vargas also highlighted that indigenous consultants should be engaged in the entire project life cycle to ensure permanent dialogue with communities and their decision-making systems. Further, the establishment of a network of indigenous consultants could facilitate their engagement, mutual learning and lead to replication within other agencies and organizations.⁶

⁵ The full presentation is available [here](#).

⁶ The full presentation is available [here](#).

Mr Wolde Tadesse (Member of the IPFI Steering Committee and the IPAF Board) emphasized the role of Indigenous Peoples as leaders in climate matters, particularly due to the special connection they have with their territories. Within this context, indigenous land tenure remains the foundation for Indigenous People's well-being, livelihood and autonomy. The lack of secure land rights constitutes a major threat to climate leadership.



IPAF-funded project "Enhance Ulu Gumum Jakun Orang Asli Livelihoods through Diversity, Social Enterprise and Sustainable Agriculture", Malaysia

@ IFAD/Francesco Cabras

Ms Carine Nzimba Zere (President, *Association Debout Femme Autochtones du Congo*, ADFAC)

presented the results

achieved in the implementation of the IPAF-supported *Projet de Renforcement de la Sécurité Alimentaire des Femmes et Jeunes Autochtones du Village Ingolo 2*. The project was implemented in the department of Lekoumou and benefited 30 people (including 16 women) who improved their livelihoods as well as food and nutrition security. Promoted activities included the creation of a cooperative composed of youth, training to improve maize, cassava and rice production, the installation of maize and cassava transformation units, and support to women's leadership. Advocacy actions were also conducted for the delimitation and securing of land. The speaker emphasized the need to increase IPAF funding, with a focus on reinforcing indigenous leadership on climate change-related issues, undertaking studies on indigenous knowledge and practices, and conducting advocacy actions at different levels.⁷

Ms Jennifer Rubis (Indigenous Peoples Specialist, [Green Climate Fund, GCF](#)) shared some reflections on climate finance and how it can support Indigenous Peoples' climate leadership. She emphasized that while the GCF has financed many projects that include support to Indigenous Peoples, there is a need to improve monitoring and evaluation in order to capture impacts, track investments targeting Indigenous Peoples, draw lessons, design better systems and improve targeting. She also highlighted the need to build synergies between different bodies and organizations supporting indigenous climate leadership.

On behalf of Ms Lucy Mullenkei (Chair, Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group, [Global Environment Facility, GEF](#)), Mr Terence Hay-Edie (Programme Advisor for biodiversity, GEF) reported that the GEF has enhanced its partnership with Indigenous Peoples through several instruments. An Indigenous Peoples' Task Force was established in July 2011 to provide feedback to the GEF Secretariat, including options for enhancing the engagement and participation of Indigenous Peoples. He reported that an [Evaluation of GEF Engagement with Indigenous Peoples](#) was published in 2018 to provide insights and lessons leading to recommendations to strengthen collaboration. He pointed out that in 2011, the GEF adopted its Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards, which includes a minimum standard dedicated to Indigenous Peoples. A GEF Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group was also created to provide guidance and partnership to the GEF Secretariat. Its membership, which includes Indigenous Peoples, will be renewed in 2023. Looking ahead, Mr Hay-Edie informed participants that the CEO of the GEF, Mr Carlos Manuel Rodríguez,

⁷ The full presentation is available [here](#).

committed to having 10 per cent of GEF resources flow to non-state actors, including Indigenous Peoples, by 2030.

Participants had a number of comments, questions and recommendations in relation to the theme of the Forum. Participants emphasized the need for a paradigm shift to include indigenous knowledge as a reliable source of information and evidence in UN agencies and academic institutions. They highlighted the importance of promoting Indigenous Peoples' access to renewable energy in order to build communities resilient to climate change. In this regard, the allocation of US\$1 million by the GEF-Small Grants Programme is expected to have a tremendous impact. The programme supports community-based renewable energy and is being implemented by the United Nations Development Programme in partnership with Right Energy Partnership with Indigenous Peoples. Participants raised concerns about climate solutions being imposed in indigenous territories and the grabbing of land and natural resources by the mining industry - among other industries – leading to massive displacements and loss of lives of Indigenous Peoples. Finally, they underlined the importance of Indigenous Peoples' engaging with international organizations, donors and decision makers and demanding that they abide by the commitments to provide direct funding to Indigenous Peoples.

Ms Diana Pizarro (Global Coordinator for Indigenous Peoples, World Bank) explained that the World Bank is working on a new initiative to identify the key drivers of resilience and understand how the Bank can strengthen Indigenous Peoples' participation across its large investment portfolio and policy dialogue. In this regard, the World Bank is planning to organize meetings with Indigenous Peoples' representatives to bring their voices into the thinking of the institution and to look at poverty in the broader context of sustainability and climate change.

The 2023 IFAD Indigenous Peoples Awards Ceremony

The Indigenous Peoples Awards were launched in 2021 by IFAD to recognize achievements of development projects that effectively engage with Indigenous Peoples. The award ceremony was conducted by Mr Jesús Amadeo Martínez Guzmán, who announced [the winners](#) among the candidates.

The [Integral Strengthening Programme for the Camelid Value Chain in the Bolivian High Plateau \(PRO-CAMÉLIDOS\)](#) received the award as best performing IFAD-funded project. The award was collected by Ms Dania Peñaloza Gomez (representative of the Ayllu Lerco community). The programme was implemented in 30 municipalities in the departments of La Paz, Oruro and Potosí, where Indigenous Peoples dedicate themselves to raising camelid livestock. It directly targeted 10,563 people from the Ayllu Lerco community and provided them with mobile corrals, haylofts for fodder storage, and access to water systems, which decreased animal mortality and reactivated their economy and surrounding territories. Through the implementation of community projects in coordination with the municipalities, the programme is also undertaking actions to protect ecosystems and biodiversity and to promote indigenous livelihoods.

The project "Improving the Food Security of Bakola/Bagyeli Children and Ensuring the Empowerment of the Ngoyang School through Sustainable Agriculture" was awarded best performing IPAF-funded project. The prize was collected by Ms Catherine Fleur Amban Nkoro (Logistic Coordinator, *Fondation pour l'Environnement et le Développement au Cameroun*, FEDEC). With the overall goal of strengthening the Ngoyang school hostel, the project established a 10-hectare agroforestry plantation with plots for traditional foods and other crops, provided equipment, and constructed a warehouse to safely store produce. In 2022, it produced over a ton of cassava, which the community ate or sold, bringing in US\$182 to finance activities at the school. A hostel management committee was also established, with key positions assigned to women. The committee members bring together their traditional knowledge with training on agroforestry monitoring and techniques to counter erosion and mitigate climate change.

Finally, the project [Strengthening Capacities of Community-Based Renewable Energy Systems towards Off-Grid Energy Policy Development in the Philippines](#) was awarded best performing non-IFAD-funded project. The award was collected by [Mr Glendo Gayyed](#) (Electrician, [Sibol ng Agham at Teknolohiya Inc., SIBAT](#)) and [Ms Estrella Catarata](#) (Executive Director, SIBAT). The project



The Indigenous Peoples Award ceremony

@ IFAD/Flavio Ianniello

engaged with Igorot indigenous communities in the Cordillera region to set up community-based renewable energy systems. Thanks to the initiative, 1,684 indigenous households set up small community-managed hydroelectrical power generation systems enabling homes, schools and health facilities in remote areas to have electricity. Rural businesses, such as rice and maize mills, are now running on clean energy and helping to build livelihoods and food security, while also being sustainable. The project adopted a participatory approach in which FPIC was applied from the early design stage throughout project implementation.

Panel discussion with Rome-based agencies on the Coalition on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems

The session was chaired by [Ms Lola García-Alix](#) (Senior Advisor, Global Governance, [International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, IWGIA](#)), who provided background information on the creation of the Coalition on Indigenous Peoples' Food System.

[His Excellency Miguel Jorge García Winder](#) (Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Mexico to the UN Agencies Based in Rome) emphasized that the long process that led to the creation of the Coalition was democratic and inclusive. He further recognized the leadership role of Indigenous Peoples, and the tireless effort of the countries and UN agencies participating in it. Finally, he underlined that UN agencies should support the efforts of the Coalition by aligning their strategies to build on Indigenous Peoples' proposals, needs and views. In particular, UN agencies should: (i)

Box 2. The Coalition on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems

Led by Indigenous peoples, [the Coalition on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems](#) was created in October 2022 as a major outcome of the United Nations Food Systems Summit, with the support of the governments of Canada, Dominican Republic, Finland, Mexico, Norway, New Zealand and Spain, and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the UNPFII.

The Coalition aims to protect and strengthen Indigenous Peoples' food systems across the world, and to disseminate and scale up their traditional knowledge and good practices that have the potential to transform global food systems at large.

The global Coalition is chaired by the president of the UNPFII, who appointed the FAO Indigenous Peoples Unit as the Secretariat. In addition, other UN agencies such as IFAD, the United Nations Environment Programme, The United Nations Organization for Education, Science, and Culture, and the World Food Programme have joined.

support the development of a system to monitor progress and timely decision making; (ii) create a portfolio of projects to support Indigenous Peoples' food systems; and (iii) commit resources.

Mr Dario José Mejía emphasized that innovations implemented by Indigenous Peoples to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the relevance of their knowledge, systems and practices to ensure the resilience of indigenous communities. Within that



Local Productive Development Project in the Highlands and Rainforest of Peru (Avanzar Rural)

@ IFAD/Giancarlo Shibayama/Factstory

context, the Coalition is an opportunity to elaborate strategies for the development of public policies at the national level which are based on Indigenous Peoples' knowledge and vision about food.

Mr Pallab Chakma highlighted that Indigenous Peoples' knowledge, practices and ways of living are key for sustainable food systems. However, the benefits are only possible if Indigenous Peoples' secure land tenure is prioritized. He emphasized that Indigenous Peoples expect meaningful engagement at all levels (including to facilitate country level dialogue), partnership and concrete actions from the Coalition.

Ms Myrna Cunningham (Chairperson, IPFI Steering Committee and Member of the IPAF Board) highlighted that Indigenous Peoples have resilient and sustainable food systems anchored in their knowledge and production systems. To support Indigenous Peoples, the Coalition and Rome-based agencies should foster dialogue with governments towards transforming public policies, facilitate access to technical assistance, and mobilize resources. However, Indigenous Peoples should be involved in all processes through the systematic engagement of their leaders, communities and organizations. If Indigenous Peoples do not take ownership of the process, the result from the Coalition will be a failure. Lessons learned and recommendations formulated in existing mechanisms of dialogue such as the UNPFII should be fully exploited. Additionally, the Coalition should take advantage of the knowledge and experience already generated by Indigenous Peoples' food systems. Finally, UN agencies should mobilize resources and work in a coordinated and focused manner. According to Ms Cunningham, if these conditions are met, "there will be a Coalition for a long time", and other countries where indigenous communities live will be inspired to replicate the positive experiences.

Mr Phrang Roy (Coordinator, [Indigenous Partnership for Agrobiodiversity and Food Sovereignty](#)) stated that Indigenous Peoples, who have a sacred relationship with nature that helps them to adapt to distinctive and diverse environmental systems, can be effective game-changers towards a more nature-based food system. According to Mr Roy, Indigenous Peoples' food systems offer risk management initiatives to limit global warming, prevent future famines and restore biodiversity loss at different scales. Despite these assets, Indigenous Peoples were marginal players at the Food Systems Summit until seven countries promoted the Coalition. For the Coalition to be effective, the defence of the rights of Indigenous Peoples to their lands and territories must be its highest priority. He called for successful initiatives and best practices such as those implemented through the IPAF to be scaled up.

Ms Ilaria Firmian shared updates on IFAD's advancements in supporting Indigenous Peoples' food systems. She underscored that the development of the new IFAD Policy, which integrates a new principle of engagement related to food and nutrition security, was the result of a consultative process co-led by Indigenous Peoples. Furthermore, she noted, IFAD has a successful portfolio with 60 per cent of projects completed in the period 2018–2023 integrating a strong focus on agroecology with a clear connection with Indigenous Peoples. She observed that a significant number of IPAF grants aim to build resilient food systems, providing lessons and experiences to build upon. Ms Firmian added that the very existence of the Coalition has resulted in more regular consultation among the Rome-based agencies. Nonetheless, she identified some areas in which the partnership might be strengthened: (i) collaboration at country level; and (ii) capacity building (e.g. through fellowship programmes with the participation of indigenous youth).

Ms Alejandra Pero (Global Advisor on Indigenous Peoples, World Food Programme) shared her views on the Coalition as a key mechanism for collaboration. She informed participants that the Rome-based agencies developed a [brochure](#) to share knowledge on the initiatives, strategies and policies promoted to date in support of Indigenous Peoples. Ms Pero highlighted the work conducted by the three agencies over the last year and the challenges faced in raising awareness around the Coalition, particularly at the national and regional levels. She also informed participants that the World Food Programme will be preparing a regional report from the Latin American region that explores intercultural approaches to school meals; members of the Coalition are expected to contribute as co-authors. According to Ms Pero, the Rome-based agencies should work more closely, particularly at the national and regional levels, through existing mechanisms.

Mr Yon Fernandez de Larrinoa (Head of the Indigenous Peoples Unit, FAO) stressed the importance of the Coalition as a special and open space where inclusiveness is key and where a larger participation is welcome. This, he emphasized, is particularly relevant considering that following the Food Systems Summit 22 coalitions were created with only one focused on Indigenous Peoples, creating the challenge to transform discussions into policies at country level that improve the lives of Indigenous Peoples. Within this context, he highlighted the existence of two advocacy spaces beyond the Coalition on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems: the Stakeholder Engagement and Networking Advisory Group, in which three representatives of Indigenous Peoples will participate; and the Coalition for Food Systems Transformation through Agroecology, in which indigenous experts collaborate. He also pointed out that key actions in the near future include developing the Coalition action plan and identifying funding sources.

Mr. Maarten de Groot (Deputy Permanent Representative at the Permanent Mission of Canada to the Food and Agriculture Agencies of the UN) emphasized that the Coalition represents an opportunity for collaboration at multiple levels across different entities and that ideas for action are now to be prioritized and put into practice on the ground.

Synthesis of Deliberations

Based on the discussions and contributions from the debates, the Synthesis of Deliberations of the 2023 global meeting of the IFPI was adopted.

The synthesis was read and discussed during the final plenary session of the Forum on 13 February 2023 chaired by **Ms Satu Santala**, (Associate Vice President, External Relations and Governance Department, IFAD). It was presented by **Mr Wolde Gossa Tadesse** in the presence of the Indigenous Peoples' delegates, IFAD Management and the representatives of a number of IFAD Member States.

Box 3. Sixth Global Meeting of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD

Synthesis of Deliberations

Preamble

We, Indigenous Peoples, are among those who are particularly affected by the impacts of climate change. These: lead to disruptions to agriculture and other livelihood activities and ecosystems; increase threats to the integrity and security of indigenous lands, territories and resources; and exacerbate food insecurity. These effects further result in: the adoption of unsustainable livelihood strategies, including migration; increased tensions and conflicts; and an increased burden on women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, and the elderly.

Likewise, we are concerned about some undesirable and unjust climate actions in large renewable energy projects involving energy transitional minerals through mining that are being imposed in our territories without our consent and in violation of our rights.

Indigenous climate leadership faces challenges, including: lack of recognition and understanding of, and respect for, our governance and decision-making institutions as well as our rights, in particular free, prior and informed consent; discriminatory laws and practices; forced displacement and encroachments on indigenous lands and territories; failure to make space for indigenous planning; and exclusion from climate change debates, decision-making and financing.

Despite the daunting challenges that we face, we continue to demonstrate resilience and active leadership in different ways and processes and at all levels.

Indigenous Peoples' community-led adaptation actions are based on traditional technologies, knowledge and capacities and the incorporation of innovations. These include: adjusting agriculture calendars; adopting more resilient varieties of seeds and livestock; diversifying agriculture and livelihood strategies; and conserving water and soil.

Additional actions include mitigation measures such as: reforestation; land use and territorial planning; life plans anchored in our visions of well-being; sustainable agriculture practices; defense of our lands against encroachments; and communitymanaged renewable energy plans.

We reinforce these actions by strengthening traditional organizational systems and institutions, by building partnerships and solidarity with national and international organizations and other communities, and by conducting advocacy.

Indigenous Peoples' climate leadership is anchored in our ways of knowing and being, characterized by a deep, intimate and reciprocal relationship with the land, our community living, our resilient and creative spirit, and our intercultural and long-term outlook. Our climate leadership is also intimately tied to the integrity, security and health of our lands and territories and custodianship, robust indigenous social institutions that sustain communities, the vitality of our knowledge systems and spiritual dimension, and a supportive social, economic and political ecology.

Indigenous climate action highlights the important role of women as knowledge bearers and transmitters, and as anchors and guardians of community life and well-being. Equally, the indigenous experience points to the important role of young people as leaders.

IFAD has been an important partner to Indigenous Peoples, demonstrating tangible efforts to make space for our participation and incorporating and responding to our perspectives in its plans and policies.

Based on the frank and open deliberations we have had over the last few months during the consultation process and at this global meeting, we recommend the following:

Recommendations to IFAD

IFAD Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples

1. Allocate adequate financial and human resources to fully implement the updated IFAD Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples. This includes: the recruitment of dedicated staff at all levels, including a lead technical specialist; the translation and publication of the Policy in indigenous languages; awareness-raising and capacity- building of Indigenous Peoples, governments and IFAD staff; and the development of monitoring tools.
2. Develop guidelines and protocols for the meaningful participation of the members of the Steering Committee of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD as observers at the Executive Board of IFAD.

The Indigenous Peoples' Forum process and dialogue

3. Enhance communication, dialogue and information-sharing with Indigenous Peoples, including the participants in the Indigenous Peoples' Forum, especially at the regional and national levels. This includes through: the organization of quarterly meetings; the establishment of country coordination groups; and the identification of focal points at the level of both IFAD country teams and Indigenous Peoples' organizations.
4. Ensure that recommendations from the Forum are integrated in the regional action plans to be agreed upon with IFAD's regional

divisions.

IFAD country programmes

5. Ensure the meaningful and independent participation of Indigenous Peoples in the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of IFAD's strategies, projects and programmes at all levels in order to: (i) align them to our needs, priorities and aspirations, taking into account gender, intergenerational specificities, and persons with disabilities; (ii) integrate our values, land tenure, governance and knowledge systems, taking into account our territorial planning and visioning cycles; and (iii) ensure that interventions do not disrupt our systems but rather strengthen and build on them.

6. Provide the necessary information, resources and capacity-building to enable Indigenous Peoples to effectively engage in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of strategies, projects and programmes; and ensure the involvement and hiring of Indigenous consultants in these processes.

7. IFAD country teams to actively engage and collaborate with other UN agencies to strengthen complementarity and enhance synergies in supporting the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the updated IFAD Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous Peoples' climate leadership

8. Enhance IFAD's leadership role in its engagement with Indigenous Peoples to:

a. Promote the respect for and protection of Indigenous Peoples' rights and wellbeing by governments, including through free, prior and informed consent, especially in countries where no protocols exist, and provide effective grievance mechanisms;

b. Foster meaningful dialogue and cooperation between Indigenous Peoples' organizations and traditional institutions and governments and ensure that the latter are aware of the updated IFAD Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples and of IFAD interventions on the ground;

c. Mobilize support, including direct finance, by other international agencies for Indigenous Peoples' climate leadership; and

d. Facilitate and support the meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples' in climate and biodiversity actions at all levels.

9. Invest in building the capacities of Indigenous Peoples, including to access climate finance that is culturally appropriate, including in relation to disaster risk and response mechanisms, and to design and manage projects and programmes. As concrete measures: (i) develop an internship and fellowship programme for Indigenous leaders and professionals at IFAD, prioritizing women and youth; and (ii) facilitate inter-learning exchanges among the partners of the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF) in relation to climate leadership.

10. Increase direct support to the initiatives of Indigenous Peoples, with a focus on women, girls, persons with disabilities and youth, in climate leadership and resilience, including through the IPAF.

Recommendations to governments

11. Develop legislation, policies and programmes that protect and advance the rights of Indigenous Peoples and promote their effective implementation in coordination with our peoples, communities and organizations, by ensuring our free prior and informed consent, alignment with the UNDRIP, and the implementation of the updated IFAD Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples. Recognize and protect the land rights and the integrity of indigenous "territories of life" and promote the implementation of self-determined development with the necessary technical, financial and institutional resources.

12. Support Indigenous Peoples' climate leadership through programmes, policies, adequate resources and financing mechanisms that strengthen our self-determined development, with special attention to women, youth and persons with disabilities.

13. Ensure the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples, including women, youth and persons with disabilities, in discussions, decision-making and planning processes, including those related to climate and conservation actions, at all levels. Commitments as Indigenous Peoples As Indigenous Peoples, we commit to:

14. Continue to protect and enhance the health and integrity of our lands, territories and resources through sustainable natural resources management practices.

15. Revitalize and continue to develop and transmit Indigenous Peoples' values, knowledge and practices, including our forms of government and decision-making, as key institutions in the stewardship of our lands, territories and resources, and in our climate leadership.

16. Continue to advocate for Indigenous Peoples' rights and well-being, and meaningful and diverse participation in IFAD decision-making processes related to climate change and biodiversity conservation at all levels.

17. Continue to build collaboration and solidarity between Indigenous Peoples in support of our climate leadership, including through the documentation and sharing of our knowledge and experience.

18. Build the capacities of indigenous women and youth and strengthen their participation in decision-making processes and

organizations, recognizing the immense value of their contribution to climate leadership.

19. Strengthen the engagement and improve communication with IFAD at all levels, including by translating the IFAD Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples in indigenous languages and establishing accessible formats.

20. Support the Thirteenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources. We, as the Indigenous Peoples' delegates to this Sixth Global Meeting of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD, express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to IFAD management and staff for organizing this important meeting to strengthen the partnership between IFAD and Indigenous Peoples.

IFAD Management's response to the Synthesis of Deliberations. In response to the outcomes of the Forum and the synthesis of deliberations, **Mr Donal Brown** (Associate Vice-President, Programme Management Department, IFAD) reiterated that the Forum is a testimony to the determination and commitment of the representatives of Indigenous Peoples as well as to the dedication of IFAD staff. He emphasized that the Forum is an event of great value to IFAD, which is committed to prioritizing its work with Indigenous Peoples as "anchors of climate leadership". In relation to the recommendations presented in the synthesis, Mr Brown stated that ensuring that the voices of Indigenous Peoples are heard by IFAD and governments in both policy dialogue and project design and implementation will be key. In this regard, by end of 2023 IFAD expects to have 45 Country and Multi-country Offices with country directors located in the field. This will be a significant opportunity to facilitate regular dialogue and identify concrete opportunities for collaboration in individual country programmes. Furthermore, to invest in building the capacities of Indigenous Peoples, the Fund committed to having at least 10 new projects in IFAD12 with a focus on Indigenous Peoples. The Associate Vice-President also announced that starting in 2023 IFAD will fund an internship programme for Indigenous Peoples in the Latin America and the Caribbean region. Mr Brown closed his intervention reiterating that "IFAD's partnership with Indigenous Peoples is one that all of us at IFAD are strongly committed to".

Remarks from the floor. Governments representatives and indigenous leaders expressed their appreciation for the work of the Forum and its deliberations. In particular, The Honourable **Dr Mohammad M. Abubakar** (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Nigeria) emphasized the relevance of the dialogue space created by the Forum and the key role Indigenous Peoples play in addressing climate change based on their traditional knowledge and their special relationship with nature and the environment. **Ms Gloria Wiseman** (Counsellor Deputy Permanent Representative of Canada to FAO) stated that the Forum can be looked at as a model and that this dialogue space is necessary for IFAD to fulfil its mandate. She added that discussions and recommendations from the Forum also have value to inform the work of other agencies, institutions and fora, particularly in relation to climate change. Furthermore, she observed, scaling up ideas, initiatives and learning that emerge from the implementation of projects on the ground is certainly to be supported.

Box 4. IFAD Management's response to the Synthesis of Deliberations

"Chair and members of the Steering Committee of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD

Representatives of Indigenous Peoples' organizations and communities

Friends, colleagues

Today I have the privilege to deliver IFAD management's response to the Synthesis of Deliberations from the sixth global meeting of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD, and I would like to open by reiterating that the Forum continues to be a real testimony to the determination and commitment of the representatives of Indigenous Peoples who over the years have contributed so actively to make it what it is today; as well as to the dedication of the IFAD staff who have supported its creation and managed its regular meetings.

This is the third Indigenous Peoples' Forum that I am attending, and I see it being ever more inclusive and consultative, with more focused deliberations. I believe this year there were as many as 150 Indigenous Peoples' representatives who participated in 13 regional consultations. There was also a significant number of IFAD staff – regional directors, country directors and country programme officers among them – who participated in the regional consultations and during the regional meetings of Day 2 of the Forum.

This Forum is an event of real value to IFAD, and I hope it is the same for you and the Indigenous Peoples you represent. We share experience, we learn from each other, and we find ways to partner more closely with clearer objectives. My only regret is not having had enough time to sit in on more of the sessions of the Forum, as I would have liked to.

As you may have heard from President Lario in his opening remarks, IFAD is committed to prioritizing its work with Indigenous Peoples, as you are the anchors of climate leadership, with your intimate knowledge of your land, and your reciprocal relationship with the biodiversity of your land. As he rightly put it, "No one will ever understand nature as deeply as the Indigenous Peoples". And so, in the context of the severe climate crisis that we are faced with today, it is only apt to have this Sixth Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD dedicated to Indigenous Peoples' Climate Leadership.

And in this context, I wish to acknowledge the recently updated IFAD Policy of Engagement with Indigenous Peoples, which the Indigenous Peoples' Forum Steering Committee has endorsed – with renewed focus on the principle of food sovereignty, food security and nutrition.

Moving on to the Synthesis of Deliberations, firstly, I would like to thank you all for having put together this Synthesis document. It will be a helpful accountability tool for us all moving forward.

It is through the Programme Management Department, which I head, that our partnership with Indigenous Peoples is operationalized at the country level. So, I want to highlight the point that in many countries Indigenous Peoples are key stakeholders – and active partners – in our country programmes; and that where their communities are particularly marginalized, they must be important beneficiaries of the projects we cofinance with the governments of our member states.

I have heard the recommendations you have put to IFAD. They are all sensible, and I believe IFAD should aim to respond positively to most of them, within the structures and resources available to IFAD. Central to success will be to make space for your voices in our dialogue with governments – which we work with and through, and which borrow from IFAD to fund their projects. Ensuring your voices are heard not only by IFAD but by governments in both the policy dialogue and design and implementation of projects will be key.

But I want to come back to you on the recommendations that I believe are particularly important for the Programme Management Department:

- On ensuring the meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples in the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of IFAD's strategies, projects and programmes at all levels: **Yes** to this, and we have set the ball rolling. By end of 2023, we shall have 45 IFAD Country and Multi-country offices across the world, with country directors located in the field, and we have already seen positive outcomes in terms of engagement with our partners and stakeholders in the country. We see this as a key opportunity to facilitate regular dialogue between IFAD country programmes and key stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples' representatives. We have many new country directors, and I will ensure that they have all been sensitized to the new directions of IFAD's updated Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples and take into account the regional action plans that will be finalized after this Forum, when they develop new country strategies and projects with governments.
- On your recommendation of investing in building the capacities of Indigenous Peoples: **Yes** to this. As you may know, we have committed to having at least 10 new projects in IFAD12 with a specific focus on Indigenous Peoples, but I can already say that we will probably have more than that, and I hope to be able to report back to you at the next Forum that many or all of these projects have capacity building of Indigenous Peoples as their core objective. We are also committed to ensuring greater representation of Indigenous Peoples among our staff in the country offices, and are keen to support this. I am pleased to announce today that IFAD will fund a specific internship programme for Indigenous Peoples starting this year in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- I am also supportive of the recommendation to IFAD to play a role in creating the space for Indigenous Peoples to participate in policy processes. My concern is particularly at the national level and ensuring that governments create space for your voice. My department is trying to support the strengthening of IFAD's policy engagement capacity at country level, and in this context we are committed to encouraging governments to include Indigenous Peoples' voices.
- I also heard your other recommendations to IFAD and governments to bring Indigenous Peoples to the decision-making table. While I cannot speak today on behalf of my colleagues in IFAD's Senior Management Team, my initial impression is that these recommendations look to be reasonable and pragmatic, but we also need to encourage governments to respond positively. We will of course study them closely.

However, I do want to highlight the underlying fact that IFAD's principal product for supporting sustainable and inclusive rural transformation is the loans it provides to governments for their programmes and projects, and how we use these platforms to engage them in policy discussions. Ultimately, we are partners with governments and we work primarily to serve them. And this, to some extent, determines what we are able to do in support of Indigenous Peoples and where we are able to do it.

As we look forward, my hope is that IFAD's decentralization process will be a game-changer for the Organization. Having IFAD's operational staff located within the countries should make it possible for IFAD and Indigenous Peoples to have a much closer and more day-to-day dialogue. And that will make it possible for us to better understand each other's perspectives and to identify concrete opportunities for collaboration in individual country programmes.

Finally, let me reiterate that IFAD's partnership with Indigenous Peoples is one that we are all in IFAD strongly committed to. We want it to be about actions, as well as about words. We will be looking to respond to the recommendations to the best of our ability, and we hope that from your side, you will be advocates for our partnership and for IFAD.

Closing of the Forum

The Forum was closed by **Mr Dominik Ziller** (Vice-President of IFAD). Mr Ziller emphasized the privilege for him to participate to his third Forum, a "strong and productive platform for open dialogue". He stated that while Indigenous Peoples have historically been excluded from the table where decisions are made, "this is no longer acceptable". He also recalled several of the highlights of the Forum: the recognition by IFAD's President of the central role that Indigenous Peoples must play in addressing climate change; and the importance of re-imagining development as respecting the environment and upholding the wisdom and harmony that Indigenous Peoples are teaching us, as affirmed by His Holiness Pope Francis. He further emphasized the important exchanges of knowledge and experience during the regional meetings, and noted that these discussions "will help shape IFAD's interventions and advocacy".

In relation to the theme of the Forum, Mr Ziller stated that climate change is already affecting food systems, lives and livelihoods the world over. The paradox is that while Indigenous Peoples have contributed the least to this catastrophe, they are the ones on the frontline today. He emphasized that IFAD recognizes the

importance of supporting and advocating for Indigenous Peoples in order to address climate change mitigation and adaptation, and added that the partnership with the Coalition on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems "will continue to grow in this direction".

Mr Ziller concluded his intervention by affirming IFAD's commitment to make every effort to translate the Forum deliberations into meaningful, timely and concrete actions, and to implement the updated Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples and the IPAF.

The global meeting was closed with an indigenous ceremony conducted by [Ms Yun Mane](#) (Member, CIPO).

OTHER EVENTS AROUND THE FORUM

Amazigh tattoos and Indigenous Peoples' Market Place

Two events were organized in IFAD's atrium during the Forum. The organization *La Voix de la Femme Amazigh* (Morocco) had collected tattoo designs among indigenous communities, which are a significant cultural element of the identity of Amazigh women. From the designs they offered temporary tattoos to Forum participants. The second event was the Indigenous Peoples' Market place, where community handicrafts produced by Indigenous Peoples were displayed and sold.

Change Cinema

On 2 February 2023, to raise awareness among IFAD staff on the upcoming Forum and the struggles that Indigenous Peoples face, a Change Cinema event was organized. The documentary "The Illusion of Abundance", co-directed by Erika González Ramírez and Matthieu Lietaert, was screened featuring three women's human rights defenders from Latin America on the front lines to protect their land and communities. The event was organized in collaboration with the International Land Coalition.

Lunch talk: Celebrating the achievements of indigenous women

A lunch talk was organized on 10 February in collaboration with the Gender Team at IFAD to discuss the important role of indigenous women as agents of change. The experiences of organizations such as the Kapaeeng Foundation (Bangladesh), the project PRO-CAMÉLIDOS (Bolivia), the National Indigenous Disabled Women (Nepal), the Ujaamaa Community Resource Team (Tanzania) and the Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas de las Américas (Uruguay), and were shared.

Private audience with His Holiness Pope Francis at the Holy See

On 10 February, a delegation of Indigenous Peoples' representatives was received at the Holy See for a private audience with Pope Francis. On that occasion, **Ms Myrna Cunningham** was given the opportunity to read a letter addressed to the Pope on behalf of Indigenous Peoples participating in the Forum. In the letter, Indigenous Peoples asked to join forces in the fight against injustices, to promote peace, and to build alternative models of development determined by Indigenous Peoples. The Pope stated that the sixth global meeting of the IPFI offered an opportunity to recognize the fundamental role that Indigenous Peoples play in protecting the environment, and to highlight their wisdom in finding global solutions to the immense challenges that climate change poses to humanity.



Box 5. Address of the Holy Father

"Dear brothers and sisters,

I give thanks for this visit, in the midst of the work of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum, which is taking place in these days at the headquarters of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). This year's theme – "Indigenous Peoples' Climate Leadership: Community-based solutions to enhance resilience and biodiversity" – offers an opportunity to recognize the fundamental role Indigenous Peoples hold in the protection of the environment, and to highlight their wisdom in finding global solutions to the immense challenges that climate change poses to humanity every day.

Unfortunately, we are witnessing an unprecedented social and environmental crisis. If we truly want to take care of our common home and improve the planet on which we live, it is essential to make profound changes in our lifestyles, it is essential to have models of production and consumption. We should listen more to the Indigenous Peoples and learn from their way of living, to understand adequately that we cannot continue to devour natural resources avidly, because "the Earth was entrusted to us in order that it be mother for us" – the Mother Earth – "capable of giving to each one what is necessary to live" [Video Message for the Meeting of 500 national and international representatives: "Expo of Ideas 2015 – toward the Milan Charter", 7 February 2015]. Therefore, the contribution of Indigenous Peoples is fundamental in the fight against climate change. And this has been scientifically proven.

Today, more than ever, there are many who demand a process of reconversion of the consolidated structures of power that underpin the societies of Western culture; these, at the same time, transform the historical relations marked by colonialism, exclusion and discrimination, giving rise to a renewed dialogue on the way in which we are building the future of the planet. We urgently need joint action, the fruit of sincere and constant collaboration, because the environmental challenge we are experiencing and its human roots have an impact on every one of us. Not only a physical impact, but also psychological and cultural one.

Therefore, I ask governments to recognize the Indigenous Peoples of the world, with their cultures, languages, traditions and spirituality, and to respect their dignity and their rights, in the knowledge that the richness of our great human family consists precisely in its diversity. I will return to this later.

Ignoring indigenous communities in protecting the earth is a grave error – it is extractive functionalism – not to mention a great injustice. On the contrary, valuing their cultural heritage and their ancestral techniques will help to embark on pathways for better environmental management. In this regard, IFAD's work in assisting indigenous communities in a process of autonomous development, primarily through the Indigenous Peoples Support Fund, is commendable, although these efforts must still be multiplied and accompanied by a more resolute and far-sighted decision-making process, in a just transition.

I would like to focus on two key words in this regard: good living or living well, and harmony.

Living well is not "doing sweet nothing", the "dolce vita" of the rarefied bourgeoisie, no, no. It is living in harmony with nature, knowing how to create not equilibrium, no, but more than equilibrium – harmony, which is superior to balance. Balance can be functional; harmony is never functional; it is sovereign in itself.

Knowing how to move in harmony: This is what gives the wisdom we call living well. The harmony between a person and his or her community, the harmony between a person and the environment, the harmony between a person and all creation.

The wounds against this harmony are those that we are clearly seeing, which destroy populations: extractivism, in the case of Amazonia, for example, deforestation; or in other places the extractivism of the mining industry.

So we must always strive for harmony. When people do not respect the good of the land, the good of the environment, the good of time, the good of vegetation or the good of the fauna, when they do not respect this general good, they lapse into inhumane attitudes, because they lose contact with, I will say the words, Mother Earth. Not in a superstitious sense, but rather in the sense of what culture gives us, and of what this harmony gives us.

Aboriginal cultures are not to be transformed into modern cultures, no. They are there to be respected. And two things: firstly, let them follow their path of development; and secondly, listen to the messages of wisdom they give us. Because it is not an encyclopaedic wisdom. It is the wisdom of seeing, listening to and touching daily life.

Continue to fight to proclaim this harmony, because this functionalist policy, this policy of extractivism, is destroying it. And we can all learn how to live well in the harmonious sense of the Indigenous Peoples.

Dear brothers and sisters, I accompany you with my closeness and my prayer. God bless you, your families and your communities, and may He enlighten you in the work you are carrying out, for the benefit of all creation.

Thank you."

Source: <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2023/02/10/230210d.html>

Indigenous Peoples at IFAD's Governing Council



Ms Margaret Tunda Lepore delivering the Synthesis of Deliberations of the IPFI at the Forty-sixth session of the IFAD Governing Council

@ IFAD/Cristian Gennari

On 14 February 2023, the Synthesis of Deliberations of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum was delivered to the Forty-sixth session of the IFAD Governing Council by Ms Margaret Tunda Lepore (youth member of the IPFI Steering Committee).

On the same day, Indigenous Peoples' representatives participated in the Interactive Session on Indigenous Peoples Issues: Indigenous Peoples' Climate Leadership, Holistic perspective to achieving food security and nutrition.

Consultation on the Thirteenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources

On 16 February 2023, Mr Pallab Chakma was invited to attend the first session of the Consultation on the Thirteenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources with observer status at IFAD Headquarters. A statement on behalf of Indigenous Peoples was delivered.



Ms Dayana Paola Urzola Dominicó (youth member of the IPFI Steering Committee and member of the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus) and Mr Devashish Roy (Chief Chakma Circle and former IPAF Board Member) at the interactive session of the IFAD Governing Council

@ IFAD/Daniele Bianchi

List of background documents

Thematic area	Document
Regional consultation meetings in preparation for the Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD	Summary report from the regional consultation meetings Report from the Asia consultation meetings Report from the Pacific consultation meeting Report from the Latin America and the Caribbean consultation meetings Report from the Africa consultation meetings
2023 Indigenous Peoples' Forum	Concept Note of the 2023 Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD Agenda List of Participants Welcoming remarks by Ms Jyotsna Puri, Associate Vice-President of IFAD Opening of the Forum by Mr Alvaro Lario, President of IFAD Report on IFAD's progress in its engagement with indigenous peoples Indigenous Peoples Awards Synthesis of Deliberations Management response to the Synthesis of Deliberations delivered by Mr Donal Brown, Associate Vice- President of IFAD Closing remarks by Mr Dominik Ziller, Vice President of IFAD Address of the Holy Father PowerPoint presentations IFAD Image Bank
Other IFAD strategy and knowledge documents and material	IPAF, Assessment of the performance of the fifth IPAF cycle , 2023 IFAD's Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples , 2022 Policy brief: Free, prior and informed consent, Indigenous peoples-driven development pathways , 2022 The Free, Prior and Informed Consent Advantage: Action for empowerment in Latin America , 2022 How To Do Note: Seeking free, prior and informed consent in IFAD investment projects , 2021 Good practices in IFAD's engagement with indigenous peoples , 2021 Policy brief: Partnering with indigenous peoples for the SDGs , 2019 IPAF, Linking grass-roots indigenous peoples' organizations and the international community , 2019 Indigenous Peoples Glossary , 2018 Indigenous peoples' collective rights to lands, territories and natural resources , 2018 Toolkit, Engaging with pastoralists – a holistic development approach , 2018 A decade of IFAD's engagement with indigenous peoples , 2017 The traditional knowledge advantage: Indigenous peoples' knowledge in climate adaptation and mitigation strategies , 2016 IFAD Strategic Framework 2016–2025
Other documents	GEF, Evaluation of GEF Engagement with Indigenous Peoples , 2018 IPCC, Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability” and the “Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate , 2022 IPCC, Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate Rome-based Agencies, Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations Rome-Based Agencies Working to Achieve The Sustainable Development Goals