



SIXTH GLOBAL MEETING OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' FORUM AT IFAD

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

9, 10 and 13 February 2023

Background

The [Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD](#) (IPFI), established in 2011, is 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 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 2023 global meeting, the sixth held since its establishment, will be a happy return to an in-person format; the 2021 global meeting was held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The overall theme for this meeting is "Indigenous peoples' climate leadership: community-based solutions to enhance resilience and biodiversity".

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, mobility, communication, employment, planetary health, and political stability and peace. However, while all ecosystems are affected, the causes and the burden of effects are unevenly distributed. Often those who contribute the least to the problem must bear the heaviest burden of its effects, exacerbating 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 resulting from historical and contemporary exclusionary dynamics, are on such a receiving end. Their life-sustaining natural and cultural assets are being undermined and their political, economic and social exclusion are being exacerbated by climate change and also, at times, by local and global climate policies and

The theme for the previous IPFI global meeting was "The value of indigenous food systems: resilience in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic". The forum called for a greater recognition of the value of indigenous peoples' food systems and the "treasure of knowledge, experience, values, traditions and development concepts that – if adequately supported – can contribute to the well-being and health of all humankind". IFAD has made efforts to heed this call through its country programmes, the [Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility](#) (IPAF) and other initiatives such as the Indigenous Peoples Livelihoods and Climate Resilience Programme, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, and the recently created Rural Resilience Programme, which ensures the representation of the Steering Committee of the IPFI in its own advisory committee.

Through these experiences and ongoing dialogue with indigenous peoples' representatives, what has emerged is the need to focus the attention of the forum process on climate change, its impacts on indigenous peoples, and their response through community-based solutions that build adaptation capacity and strengthen resilience. In sum, the IPFI wants to answer the question: What does indigenous peoples' leadership in climate action look like and how might its potential be unleashed?

actions. Nevertheless, they are responding with determination and creativity, drawing on their wealth of knowledge and wisdom and offering leadership and inspiration. It is this reality, and the recognition that indigenous peoples' knowledge is finally receiving for its contribution to the resilience and sustainability of livelihoods and food systems worldwide, that has inspired the theme of the sixth IPFI global meeting.

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; and 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; and they are often excluded from climate debates, planning, and decision-making processes

in national and international spaces. However, while their land and social relations continue to be undermined and disrupted, they are not completely erased. Indigenous peoples display tremendous resilience, leadership and creativity. They are revitalizing and inventing practices and ways of thinking that are invaluable in confronting the challenge of climate change, biodiversity conservation and sustainability.

2022 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 sessions involved the participation of around 150 representatives of indigenous peoples' organizations and communities, IFAD, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and other development partners. IFAD updated indigenous peoples' representatives on its ongoing work in the implementation of its Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples, engaged with them in dialogue and reflection on the lessons learned, and discussed future directions, particularly as they relate to the theme of the forum. The objectives of the sessions were to: (i) exchange

experiences and good practices on the main theme of the forum; (ii) share knowledge and evidence on 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. 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.

Issues and recommendations from the regional and subregional consultation meetings

From their different perspectives, participants in the consultation meetings identified a series of issues and recommendations to be further discussed at the global meeting.

The key issues identified are as follows:

1. Climate change is affecting the life-sustaining capacity of indigenous peoples' lands and territories, and their social institutions that anchor living well in the community. Climate change is reducing food security, producing changes in livelihood strategies (sometimes towards unsustainable practices), accelerating the loss of traditional knowledge, increasing migration, and sometimes increasing tensions and conflicts with neighbouring communities.
2. State and third-party climate policies and actions sometimes perpetuate historical exclusions of indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples are excluded from climate change debates, decision-making and financing; their perspectives and solutions are ignored; and their rights and well-being are often sacrificed as their lands and forests are used for biodiversity conservation and carbon sequestration or to extract minerals for sustainable energy transitions.

3. Indigenous peoples are responding to climate change through community-based action and national and international advocacy. They not only generate practical solutions, but also have a conceptual understanding of the issues and inspiration to address them.
4. In order for indigenous peoples to exercise leadership and overcome climate vulnerability, the following interconnected factors are needed: land security; respect for indigenous peoples' governance and decision-making institutions; respect for their traditional knowledge and



practices; autonomous spaces to innovate and define their future; and a supportive political environment.

5. Some of the community-based actions identified include: adjusting agriculture calendars; adopting and reclaiming more resilient varieties of seeds and livestock; reclaiming and revitalizing traditional knowledge and technologies and incorporating new ones; reclaiming, strengthening and innovating traditional organizational systems and institutions; formulating strategies for diversifying agriculture and livelihoods; promoting reforestation, water and soil conservation and land use and territorial planning; and building partnerships and solidarity.

The key recommendations from the regional and subregional consultation meetings are as follows:

1. **Engagement.** Enhance and leverage IFAD's leadership role in its engagement with indigenous peoples to promote respect for indigenous peoples' rights and perspectives, foster dialogue and cooperation between

states and indigenous peoples at national levels, and mobilize the support of other international agencies.

2. **Finance.** Increase climate financing for indigenous peoples' communities. Channel investments more directly and simplify the application process for the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility.
3. **Consultation.** Ensure participation and consultation throughout the project cycle, guarantee free, prior and informed consent, and increase the frequency of consultations beyond the sessions of the IPFI.
4. **Capacity.** Build the capacity of indigenous peoples and their organizations – develop an internship programme, strengthen support for south-south collaboration, and support initiatives of indigenous youth, women and persons with disabilities.
5. **Territories.** Support territorial planning and community-based development and ensure that interventions do not disrupt indigenous peoples' livelihoods and institutions but rather strengthen and build on them.

Expected outputs of the sixth global meeting

The general goal of the sixth IPFI global meeting is to generate discussions and recommendations that will guide IFAD's partnership with indigenous peoples during the 2023–2024 biennium and contribute to the overall implementation of the Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples.

In keeping with this goal, the expected outputs are as follows:

- Assessment of the [progress made since the 2021 IPFI global meeting](#);
- Reflection on indigenous peoples' climate action and leadership and its implications for IFAD's work;
- Conferral of the Indigenous Peoples Awards 2023;
- Development of regional action plans for the 2023–2024 biennium;
- Synthesis of deliberations presented to the IFAD Governing Council; and
- IFAD management's response to the synthesis of deliberations.

Partners

Centro para la Autonomía y Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas (CADPI)

International Indigenous Women's Forum (IIWF/FIMI)

Global Home for Indigenous Peoples (GH4IP)

Mainyoto Pastoralists Integrated Development Organisation (MPIDO)

Partners in Community Development Fiji (PCDF)

Samburu Women Trust (SWT)

Tebtebba (Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education)

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)

International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA)



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Links:

Indigenous Peoples' Forum
<https://www.ifad.org/en/indigenous-peoples-forum>

Sixth Global Meeting of the Indigenous Peoples Forum at IFAD
<https://www.ifad.org/en/web/events/ifad-indigenous-peoples-forum-2023>

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/unpfii-sessions-2.html>