INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’ FORUM

In conjunction with the Forty-second Session of IFAD’s Governing Council

12-13 February 2019
The Indigenous Peoples’ Forum at IFAD

The Indigenous Peoples’ Forum at IFAD was established in 2011 as a permanent process of consultation and dialogue between representatives from indigenous peoples’ institutions and organizations, IFAD and governments. The global meeting of the Indigenous Peoples’ Forum convenes every other year in conjunction with the Governing Council of IFAD. In preparation for each global meeting, regional workshops are held to ensure that the Forum reflects the diversity of perspectives and recommendations gathered from indigenous peoples in the various regions.

A unique process within the United Nations system, the Forum 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 activities at the country, regional and international levels. Therefore, the Forum is a concrete way to implement IFAD’s Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples and translate its principles into action on the ground.

In 2019, the global meeting of the Forum is focusing on the promotion of indigenous peoples’ knowledge and innovations for climate resilience and sustainable development, providing an opportunity for indigenous peoples and IFAD staff to analyse and learn from previous experiences, and further strengthen their collaboration for rural transformation.

Background

On the occasion of the last three global meetings of the Forum, indigenous peoples’ representatives called on IFAD to support initiatives that recognize and protect their rights through a holistic approach; value their knowledge; strengthen their participation in IFAD’s project cycles; integrate specific indicators on their well-being in monitoring and evaluation systems; and ensure that free, prior and informed consent is sought in IFAD-funded projects. During the 2017 global meeting, it was also recommended that IFAD establish partnerships with indigenous peoples to support initiatives for community resilience and adaptation to climate change, using indigenous peoples’ traditional knowledge and innovations.

These recommendations echo the outcome document of the 2014 World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, which recognizes that traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities make an important contribution to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. They also align with IFAD’s Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples, which acknowledges that indigenous peoples are often the bearers of unique knowledge and custodians of biodiversity and should be supported to enhance the resilience of the ecosystems in which they live and develop innovative adaptation measures.

In line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development approach to “leave no one behind”, the IFAD Strategic Framework 2016-2025 further reaffirms IFAD’s commitment to indigenous peoples’ self-driven development, while respecting and enhancing their traditional livelihoods, occupations and knowledge. IFAD places strong emphasis on the restoration and sustainable management and use of ecosystems and their services through the engagement of indigenous peoples in providing environmental services that are sensitive to their traditional knowledge and culture.

The importance of engaging with indigenous peoples in climate change policies and action was recognized by the Conference of Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2015. The COP decision to adopt the Paris Agreement acknowledged that climate change is a common concern of humankind and that when acting to address climate change, parties should consider and fulfil their respective obligations on the rights of indigenous peoples. It also recognized the need to strengthen the knowledge, technologies and practices of indigenous peoples in their efforts to address climate change.

The operationalization of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform established by COP23 in 2017, and the adoption by the Green Climate Fund of an Indigenous Peoples’ Policy in 2018, are two major advances in the participation of indigenous peoples in decision-making related to climate action and for the protection of their rights.

These recent developments point to the importance of ensuring that IFAD’s policies and initiatives promote and support indigenous peoples’ knowledge and innovations for climate resilience and sustainable development. The Steering Committee of the Forum decided that this should be the overall theme for the fourth global meeting of the Forum.
In late 2018, regional workshops in preparation for the fourth global meeting of the Indigenous Peoples’ Forum at IFAD were held in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific. Within the thematic focus of the Forum, the objectives of the workshops were to: (i) exchange knowledge, experiences and good practices on indigenous peoples’ knowledge and their innovations for climate resilience and sustainable development; (ii) identify challenges and opportunities to promote and support indigenous peoples’ knowledge and innovations, as well as key elements for regional strategies to enhance IFAD’s support; and (iii) formulate action-oriented recommendations and draft regional action plans that will guide discussions during the fourth global meeting of the Indigenous Peoples’ Forum at IFAD.

The workshops also provided an opportunity for participants to assess the progress of implementation of IFAD’s Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples, and to review the status of implementation of the recommendations of the third global meeting and the regional action plans agreed upon with IFAD regional divisions in 2017.
Highlights and preliminary recommendations emerging from the regional workshops

From their different perspectives, participants in the regional workshops identified a series of issues and recommendations to be further discussed at the 2019 Forum. They reiterated the need for IFAD and national governments to take a holistic approach to supporting indigenous peoples, looking at the interlinked social, organizational, cultural and spiritual spheres that characterize their livelihoods and ways of living.

Participants stressed the need for IFAD to guarantee the full, systematic and effective participation of indigenous peoples in the design, implementation and monitoring, and evaluation of projects and strategies, including through the establishment of consultation mechanisms and the creation of a directory of indigenous experts.

Among the emerging recommendations from the regional consultations are the following:

• Promote and support indigenous knowledge, technologies and innovations and sustainable resource management systems as critical for strengthening community resilience to climate change and for sustainable development;
• Facilitate and promote knowledge-sharing and exchanges among indigenous peoples, particularly in relation to traditional knowledge and practices for addressing climate change;
• Support the creation of a database to systematize and capitalize on indigenous knowledge, innovations, practices and technologies for sustainable development and adaptation to climate change;
• Increase investments, including through grants, to support capacity-building initiatives of indigenous organizations, institutions and communities, with a focus on youth and women, that build on their knowledge and innovations to address climate change and/or strengthen climate resilience;
• Provide support to indigenous peoples in securing their lands, territories and resources, including through mapping and advocacy;
• Support and facilitate policy processes and dialogue at the national level between indigenous peoples, governments and the United Nations system to develop action plans that ensure the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples;
• Establish partnerships with indigenous peoples to access the Green Climate Fund to support community-based climate change mitigation and adaptation actions and initiatives of indigenous peoples; and
• Encourage and intensify the active participation of indigenous peoples in policy processes and spaces at all levels, such as those that relate to the definition and implementation of strategies for climate change mitigation and adaptation, the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform.

Expected outputs of the Fourth Global Meeting

• Assessment of the progress made since the last global meeting of the Forum in IFAD’s partnership with indigenous peoples.
• Exchange of knowledge on good practices and challenges in promoting indigenous peoples’ knowledge and innovations for climate resilience and sustainable development.
• Regional action plans for the following 2019-2020 period.
• Synthesis of deliberations, to be presented to the Governing Council of IFAD.
• IFAD Management response to the synthesis of deliberations.

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