High-Level Side Event during the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2020

Partnering with Indigenous Peoples:
Leveraging their knowledge to achieve the SDGs by 2030 while recognizing the challenge to address the outbreak of COVID-19

Tuesday, 14 July 2020
8.00 – 9.00am EDT
Held Virtually – RSVP (Link Here) | Event Website (Link Here)

Concept Note

EVENT OVERVIEW: There are approximately 476 million Indigenous Peoples worldwide, in over 90 countries. Despite representing over 6 percent of the global population, they account for about 15 percent of the extreme poor. Indigenous peoples are custodians of an estimated 80 per cent of the world’s biodiversity and are also among the most affected by climate change impacts as a result of their close interaction and reliance upon the climate and natural systems. As we enter the Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is therefore critical to acknowledge how the specific role and challenges of Indigenous Peoples are at the heart of the entire 2030 Agenda. Although Indigenous Peoples despite being among the most discriminated and marginalized groups in the world, they are also active participants and partners who are making important contributions to sustainable rural development worldwide. Indigenous knowledge systems and sustainable practices are essential to addressing major challenges, related to sustainable natural resource management, climate resilience, and promoting inclusive and healthy food systems.

OBJECTIVE: The “Partnering with Indigenous Peoples: Leveraging their knowledge to achieve the SDGs by 2030 while recognizing the challenge to address the outbreak of COVID 19” event, to be held on the margins of the 2020 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), has the objective to showcase how Indigenous Peoples’ knowledge, cultural values and sustainable management systems are essential to the realization of the entire 2030 Agenda, the importance of building mutually beneficial partnerships with their communities and organizations to leave no-one behind, and recognize the specific role, rights, needs and priorities of Indigenous Peoples in addressing the global outbreak of COVID 19 and contributing to SDGs.

BACKGROUND: Indigenous Peoples play a unique and important role in ensuring the sustainable management of a significant share of the world’s lands, ecosystems, and biodiversity. Additionally, the food systems of Indigenous Peoples are anchored in sustainable livelihoods and the principle of ensuring the food sovereignty and collective well-being of communities. The nutrition and diversity of indigenous food varieties, the practices that contribute to resilience in the face of climate change, and, more broadly, the way that indigenous peoples’ communities have, for centuries, ensure harmony between social, environmental and natural resources, should be of particular interest to the world in the context of the challenges faced in achieving zero hunger, and addressing the outbreak of covid-19.

The Global Sustainable Report (GSDR) recognizes the world is not on track to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030. Notably, the report stresses that extreme poverty is now concentrated among marginalized groups and includes Indigenous Peoples among those most likely to be left behind. Marginalized communities face such challenges as a lack of financial resources and technological capacity required for climate change impacts. However, the report further highlights that women, Indigenous Peoples, and other groups can be powerful agents of change when included in the design of solutions, as they are directly impacted by the effects of climate change.
Supporting the role and endeavors of Indigenous Peoples in the implementation of the SDGs requires building mutually beneficial partnerships with their communities and organizations, even in the most remote rural areas, underpinned by respect and recognition for Indigenous Peoples’ rights and livelihoods. Realizing this potential depends on the way and extent governments and other private and public stakeholders collaborate with Indigenous Peoples, respect of their rights, such as the free prior and informed consent for any actions to take place in their territories and recognize the value of such partnerships in building the future we are all working towards.

It is clear that Indigenous Peoples are widely recognized for the contribution to holding a sustainable planet for all. However, in a recent letter to Member States regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, the United Nations Secretary-General noted that “…this is a moment that demands coordinated, decisive, and innovative policy action…we are in an unprecedented situation and the normal rules no longer apply. We cannot resort to the usual tools in such unusual times…Done right, we can steer the recovery towards a more sustainable and inclusive path”. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is more critical than ever to support indigenous peoples, which means: strengthening their right to hold their livelihoods and their traditional governance structures, access to technical, financial services and resources, that can support their coping with the adverse impacts of the pandemic, and securing their participation in relevant development processes, respecting their rights recognized in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) at all times.

Now is the time to listen to innovative solutions driven by Indigenous Peoples themselves and how they can contribute to seeking solutions when tackling COVID-19 pandemic.

**FORMAT:** The format of the event provides an opportunity for leaders from governments, Indigenous Peoples and organizations, civil society, the private sector, and the UN System to share strategies and partnership initiatives. The event is convened by the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), co-convened with Canada, Finland, the Indigenous Peoples Major Group for Sustainable Development, and in partnership with the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and other civil society organisations and partners on Indigenous Peoples issues.

The event will be virtual, opening with a spiritual ceremony and remarks from high-level representation from governments, followed by an interactive panel, and closing with remarks from the floor. Maximum time will be given to statements by Indigenous Leaders and confirmed representation include: the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus, Former UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and Chair of the Steering Committee of Indigenous Peoples’ Forum at IFAD, and others. The President of IFAD, will open the discussion by sharing IFAD’s approach and work with Indigenous Peoples in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the need to support Indigenous Peoples, particularly in rural areas, when addressing the global outbreak of COVID-19.

RSVP link found [here](#). For further information, please contact Mr. Travis Renz by email ([t.renz@ifad.org](mailto:t.renz@ifad.org)).