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Investing in rural people

Information note: A decade of IFAD's engagement with indigenous peoples (2007-2017)

Note to Executive Board representatives

Focal points:

Technical questions:

Adolfo Brizzi
Director
Policy and Technical Advisory Division
Tel.: +39 06 5459 2450
e-mail: a.brizzi@ifad.org

Antonella Cordone
Senior Technical Specialist-Indigenous Peoples and
Tribal Issues
Tel.: +39 06 5459 2065
e-mail: a.cordone@ifad.org

Dispatch of documentation:

William Skinner
Chief
Governing Bodies
Tel.: +39 06 5459 2974
e-mail: gb@ifad.org

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For: Information

Information note: A decade of IFAD's engagement with indigenous peoples (2007-2017)

I. Introduction: IFAD as a global pioneer of sustained dialogue with indigenous peoples¹

1. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) approved by the United Nations General Assembly on 13 September 2007. This document traces the evolution of IFAD's engagement with indigenous peoples in the past decade. During this time, IFAD has been recognized as a global pioneer for establishing strong partnerships with indigenous peoples' institutions from the grassroots to the international level, and for establishing institutional instruments that enhance IFAD's development effectiveness with indigenous peoples.

"IFAD has facilitated the engagement of indigenous peoples with its highest governing body and senior management through the establishment of an Indigenous Peoples Forum which meets every two years, just before the Governing Council meeting. It adopted a Policy of Engagement with Indigenous Peoples and established the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility. I certainly wish that more UN agencies, funds and programmes followed this practice, so more constructive dialogues and collaborative actions between indigenous peoples and UN bodies, agencies, programmes and funds could take place for the effective implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples." – Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, United Nations High Level Event on the ten-year UNDRIP Commemoration.

II. IFAD's instruments and processes for engaging with indigenous peoples

2. Over the past ten years, IFAD has established a number of instruments and processes to engage with indigenous peoples and their organizations. They are described in the following paragraphs.
 - A. The Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility
 3. In 2007 IFAD established the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF). Its objective is to foster indigenous peoples' self-driven development and build direct partnerships with indigenous peoples' organizations that enable them and their communities to design, approve and implement their own grassroots development projects.
 4. In response to the four IPAF calls for proposals (2007, 2008, 2011 and 2015), indigenous communities and their organizations in 90 countries have submitted more than 3,000 applications. To date, 127 projects have been financed through small grants of up to US\$50,000 in more than 45 countries.²
 5. The challenges and solutions presented by indigenous peoples in their grant proposals provide a wealth of information for IFAD. The knowledge generated by IPAF is feeding IFAD-funded projects and the innovations proposed in these small projects present a unique opportunity for scaling up solutions in collaboration with indigenous peoples through IFAD's loans.

¹ The 2014 publication *United Nations and Indigenous Peoples in Developing Countries - An Evolving Partnership* by the Tebtebba Foundation and the Asia Indigenous Peoples' Pact recognizes IFAD as a global pioneer among United Nations agencies for establishing mechanisms for sustainable dialogue with indigenous communities.

² IPAF web page: www.ifad.org/en/topic/ipaf/tags/indigenous_peoples/2093919.

6. IPAF's distinctive method of putting indigenous peoples in the driver's seat was also recognized in the 2014 Outcome Document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (WCIP), which encourages Member States, the private sector and other institutions to contribute to IPAF.³

B. IFAD Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples⁴

7. IFAD adopted its Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples in 2009. The policy, which sets out nine principles of engagement and elaborates the instruments, procedures and resources that IFAD will deploy to implement them, is aligned with UNDRIP and aims to enhance the effectiveness of IFAD's work with indigenous peoples' communities in rural areas. IFAD's policy takes a proactive approach to support indigenous peoples and fully applies the principle of free, prior and informed consent.

C. The Indigenous Peoples Forum at IFAD⁵

8. To translate policy commitments into action, the Indigenous Peoples Forum at IFAD was established in 2011. The forum is a unique process within the United Nations system for expanding IFAD's dialogue with indigenous peoples' representatives. It provides opportunities for indigenous peoples, IFAD and its Member States to strengthen their collaboration for rural transformation.
9. Since the first workshop establishing the forum, approximately 150 representatives of indigenous peoples' organizations have attended global meetings at IFAD's headquarters in Rome (held in 2013, 2015 and 2017 in conjunction with IFAD's Governing Council sessions). More than 300 people participated in the regional consultations held in preparation for the global meetings. The forum's global sessions have also provided opportunities to organize indigenous peoples' panels during Governing Council sessions.
10. The recommendations issued by the forum translate into regional action plans, which are implemented by IFAD's regional divisions. The networks created have fostered the direct engagement of indigenous experts and specialists on indigenous peoples' issues, resulting in tailored approaches that reflect the priorities, challenges and opportunities of indigenous peoples in IFAD-supported programmes and projects.

D. IFAD Strategic Framework 2016-2025

11. The Strategic Framework 2016-2025 envisages the enhancement of IFAD's interventions through: improved targeting and tailored approaches; conducting in-depth socio-cultural and vulnerability analyses of different target groups; and integrating indicators of their well-being to capture impacts and results. The new Strategic Framework highlights that "collaboration with and engagement of indigenous peoples' communities in the provision of environmental services that are sensitive to their traditional knowledge and culture will be an area of focus in order to enhance the resilience of the ecosystems in which they live."

E. Country strategies and funded projects

12. Integrating the principles of the Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples into IFAD's operations has resulted in increased funding to improve the quality of IFAD's strategies and projects targeting indigenous peoples. In the past decade, IFAD has financed more than 120 projects in developing countries, with an investment of US\$1.6 billion in loans to support indigenous peoples along with US\$40 million in grants. Approximately 30 per cent of IFAD's loan-funded projects support indigenous peoples' communities in 34 countries, with a current investment of US\$700 million.

³ www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/69/2.

⁴ www.ifad.org/documents/10180/14e50d95-2c58-423e-8ac6-3023359173b6.

⁵ www.ifad.org/topic/ip_forum/tags/indigenous_peoples/6520350.

13. Consultations with indigenous peoples' organizations and the direct involvement of indigenous experts have enabled indigenous peoples to become co-authors and active partners in development strategies and projects. Since the approval of IFAD's Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures in 2014, the principle of free, prior and informed consent has become an increasingly important part of project design.

F. Policy engagement

14. Together with partner organizations and led by the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) and the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), IFAD has supported policy dialogue among indigenous peoples, governments and United Nations country teams. The dialogue focuses on developing national action plans to implement the WCIP outcome document and the UNDRIP.
15. In 2016, policy dialogues took place in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Myanmar, Nepal, Paraguay and the United Republic of Tanzania, with indigenous peoples' organizations leading the process. Policy engagement will continue in five countries during 2017 and 2018. These initiatives are reinforcing IFAD's successful strategy of engagement with indigenous peoples at the country and grassroots levels while remaining connected to the global movement and international processes (and fostering alliances among them).

G. Partnership

16. In the international arena, IFAD is active in UNPFII and the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues, which is comprised of 40 United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and other intergovernmental organizations. Through a US\$1 million grant, IFAD assisted indigenous peoples' representatives in WCIP engagement. As a follow up to the conference, IFAD supported the development of the System-Wide Action Plan on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
17. The Fund has also established solid partnerships with indigenous peoples' organizations, NGOs, academia, civil-society and international organizations such as IWGIA and the Forest Peoples Programme.
18. Since 2011, IFAD has partnered with Slow Food and the international Terra Madre movement to promote local sustainable food systems, indigenous food security and agrobiodiversity. Through small grants, IFAD supported the first two editions of Indigenous Terra Madre, which were held in Jokkmokk (2011) and Meghalaya (2015), and attended by 600 indigenous delegates from seven regions worldwide. In 2015 IFAD also supported the Terra Madre youth event, "We feed the planet", organized by Slow Food and coinciding with the Universal Expo. This unique event brought together 2,500 young people from all over the world. The 2016 Slow Food Terra Madre event gathered 7,000 delegates from 143 countries and featured an Indigenous Terra Madre Network space, co-sponsored by IFAD and dedicated to indigenous peoples.⁶

H. Knowledge management

19. IFAD has developed knowledge tools and products to disseminate experiences and good practices from its programmes and projects, and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its operations. The most recent include: How to do note on seeking free, prior and informed consent in IFAD investment projects; The Traditional Knowledge Advantage; Indigenous Peoples Glossary; Evaluation synthesis on IFAD's engagement with indigenous peoples (Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD); reports on the process of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD; assessments of projects financed through IPAF; and A Decade of IFAD's Engagement with

⁶ IFAD and Slow Food: www.ifad.org/documents/10180/51452868-b558-4005-bded-f9ae89a9bcdb.

Indigenous Peoples,⁷ which details IFAD's work from the perspectives of people who have worked with IFAD during this time.

20. In addition, 34 country technical notes have been prepared to facilitate access to information on indigenous peoples. In 2008, IFAD and the Inter-Parliamentarian Union, UNPFII, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Development Programme supported the publication of a handbook on indigenous peoples' issues for parliamentarians to use as an advocacy tool.

III. The way forward

21. Through its experiences, IFAD has learned that development strategies with indigenous peoples need to be guided by a holistic approach that encompasses their economic growth, empowerment, sustainable management of natural resources and the recognition and protection of their social, economic, cultural, and land tenure rights. IFAD has also learned that it is critical to ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples at all levels.
22. Over the past decade, IFAD has made great strides in working with indigenous peoples, but the Fund is aware that much more needs to be done in the years to come. While the rights of indigenous peoples are increasingly recognized, including by the private sector, the threats seem to be escalating at a fast pace, and pressures on traditional economies have intensified over the last decades, resulting in the increasing erosion of territories and resources.
23. The links between poverty reduction, the rights to land, territories and resources, food security and sustainable development need to be acknowledged by all actors and reflected in policies and actions. IFAD aims to find ways of working coherently to improve its support to Member States and indigenous peoples by using their capacities to facilitate dialogue, cooperation and action.
24. The 2015 Evaluation synthesis on IFAD's engagement with indigenous peoples by IFAD's Independent Office of Evaluation highlights IFAD's rich experience working with indigenous peoples. Among the report's recommendations is a call for greater attention to project design and the need to provide adequate implementation support, ensuring the participation of indigenous peoples supported by teams skilled in working with indigenous peoples.
25. At the forum's 2017 global meeting, indigenous peoples identified a number of priority areas for improving IFAD's development effectiveness in the short and medium term. They include: (i) empowering indigenous youth to promote farming systems and improved nutrition; (ii) developing niche markets and supporting the economic activities of indigenous youth based on their knowledge, cultures and traditions (e.g. sustainable community-based tourism, handicrafts and organic production); and (iii) facilitating direct access to markets for indigenous products through participatory certification and labelling. Building on the untapped knowledge of indigenous peoples to find solutions to combat climate change is another important area that indigenous peoples have requested IFAD to take up at the national level, along with supporting them to mobilize resources through the Green Climate Fund.
26. Based on its experience and strong participatory approach, IFAD has a comparative advantage in improving the livelihoods of one of the most vulnerable groups of rural people. IFAD will continue its efforts to change the narrative of the development paradigm, from considering indigenous peoples as passive beneficiaries of development initiatives to active agents of change who can contribute to sustainable growth with their wisdom, practices, ancestral knowledge and natural resource management. In this process, IFAD will contribute to realize the pledge to "leave no one behind," which is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda.

⁷ www.ifad.org/documents/10180/5a5bbf1c-96c2-4177-ab82-1c38e87a4568.