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**IFAD**  
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**IFAD'S ENGAGEMENT WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

**For: Information**

## **Note to Executive Board Directors**

This document is submitted for the information of the Executive Board.

To make the best use of time available at Executive Board sessions, Directors are invited to contact the following focal point with any technical questions about this document before the session.

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## IFAD'S ENGAGEMENT WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

### I. BACKGROUND

#### **Poverty, Marginalization and Invisibility**

1. Indigenous peoples make up about 5% of the world's population but comprise about 15% of the world's poor. They are often among the poorest population groups, and the poverty gap between indigenous and non-indigenous groups is increasing in many countries. For example, a World Bank study on selected countries in Latin America, released in May 2005, observes that the indigenous poverty gap is deeper than before and shrank more slowly over the 1990s.<sup>1</sup> A report published in 2000 by the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme finds that ethnic minority groups make up less than 9% of the total population of China but account for an estimated 40% of the country's absolute poor. A similar study conducted by the World Bank in Viet Nam in 2004 observes that poverty in that country is increasingly associated with ethnic minority groups. A recent IFAD study concludes that the Human Development Index for various tribal belts in India is as low as that of some of the poorest countries of sub-Saharan Africa.

2. Unfortunately, the marginalized conditions of indigenous peoples do not figure prominently in the debates on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs). Indeed, whatever attention indigenous peoples are receiving internationally is the result of their own struggles. In a 2004 ethnic audit of the PRSPs of 14 countries, the International Labour Organization found that – despite a high incidence of poverty among indigenous peoples – these national progress reports proposed few, if any, remedial actions.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, with few exceptions, indigenous peoples had not been included in the PRSP consultation process. There is also concern that indigenous peoples may be left out of MDG efforts in some countries unless their particular situations are adequately taken into account.<sup>3</sup>

### II. IFAD AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ISSUES

#### **Lending Programme**

3. IFAD has from its early years been very much involved in the development of indigenous peoples thanks to its approach to targeting the poorest rural peoples. It has so far provided a total of US\$1,134 million equivalent in loans (or about 12.6% of its total loan portfolio) in support of indigenous peoples, mainly in Latin American and Asian countries. Regarding Africa, although the Fund provided several loans in support of pastoralists and other marginalized groups in the late 1980s and early 1990s, by the end of the 1990s this support had dwindled. Recently, the Fund has shown renewed interest in supporting pastoralists in northern and western Africa, and some of its ongoing projects are also helping hunters and gatherers in central and southern Africa regain their livelihoods.

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<sup>1</sup> Gillete Hall and Harry Anthony Patrinos, *Indigenous Peoples, Poverty and Human Development in Latin America 1994-2004* (MacMillan, forthcoming).

<sup>2</sup> Manuela Tomei, *Indigenous and Tribal Peoples: An Ethnic Audit of Selected Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers* (Geneva: International Labour Organization, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Annex 11 of United Nations document E/C.19/2005/2, Statement of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues Regarding Indigenous Peoples and the MDGs (paragraph 9), p.19; and United Nations document E/2005/53, United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Report on the Fourth Session, p.12.

4. IFAD-funded projects over the years have addressed the following issues of crucial importance to indigenous peoples:

- securing access to ancestral lands and territories;
- promoting, in a culturally sensitive way, indigenous women's capacity for autonomous action in community affairs;
- enhancing indigenous peoples' livelihoods through sustainable natural resource management, according to their perspectives and visions;
- valuing and revitalizing indigenous knowledge systems and blending them with modern technology;
- strengthening indigenous peoples' institutions and their judicial systems;
- supporting bilingual and cross-cultural education and promoting intercultural awareness;
- enhancing indigenous identity and self-esteem; and
- fostering culturally based microenterprises.

5. One example can be found in the Western Mindanao region of the Philippines, where IFAD has supported the documentation of traditional ecological knowledge (plants and other genetic resources) of Subanen communities and its diffusion through locally based school curricula. The Fund has also contributed to protecting the intellectual property rights of the knowledge holders.

6. In the Jharkhand-Chattisgarh Tribal Development Programme in India, the Fund is supporting implementation of the provisions of the Panchayat Extension to the Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act of 1996. This milestone legislation entrusted ownership of all natural resources (non-timber forest products, minor minerals, small water bodies) to village assemblies (*gram sabhas*) that were to be established in all natural villages for that purpose. The PESA Act also gave the assemblies the right to manage their land, water and forest resources. A recent mid-term review of the programme noted that gram sabhas had been set up, notified, and were active throughout the programme area, with full engagement in programme planning. Both women and men effectively participated in the assemblies as did poorer household members. Committees handled both financial and food-aid programme resources in a transparent manner.<sup>4</sup>

7. The Office of Evaluation of IFAD recently assessed the Fund's strategy in Asia and the Pacific, which has indigenous peoples as a specific strategic thrust. It found this thrust to be highly appropriate and relevant, and concluded that – given the many past achievements – IFAD should continue to play a leading role in addressing rural poverty among indigenous peoples in the region.

8. An earlier evaluation of the Andhra Pradesh Tribal Development Project in India, again undertaken by the Office of Evaluation, also highlighted the role of this IFAD-funded operation in reducing insurgency activities in the project area (see box).

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<sup>4</sup> International Fund for Agricultural Development, Mid-term Review (Rome: IFAD, February 2006), p. 9. In view of the programme's success, the mid-term review concludes that there is a need to disseminate the results on a wider scale, to evaluate their policy impact and to explore the potential for extension and up-scaling up by others.

The Fund's facilitation role significantly contributed to greater awareness within government and civil-service cadres and to a process of change in bureaucratic attitudes that favoured more listening and greater partnership orientation in the effort to foster the development of tribal peoples. Emphasis was also placed on the need to address the movement through government social and economic advancement schemes, in addition to the law-and-order approach. The Andhra Pradesh Tribal Development Project brought about the establishment of village tribal development associations, which engaged in participatory contract procedures for the construction of irrigation and soil-conservation works and related activities. This created an atmosphere of optimism and empowerment and weakened the Naxalite movement in the project area.

Source: Evaluation Report, 2001.

9. A recent country programme evaluation for Mexico recommended that the Fund concentrate its operations on indigenous populations, who comprise the largest share of the vulnerable rural poor in Mexico. It further recommended that specific emphasis be put on indigenous women and their empowerment. The Mexican Government stressed the same point during a workshop organized to discuss the findings of the evaluation.

### **Grants Programme**

10. Although IFAD has given significant support to indigenous peoples in its lending programme, its grant portfolio has a smaller share allocated to indigenous peoples and issues. In fact, about US\$14.1 million equivalent, or only 3.7% of its grant resources, have been allocated in support of indigenous peoples.<sup>5</sup>

11. Within the grant programme, one noteworthy initiative is the Regional Programme in Support of Indigenous Peoples in the Amazon Basin. Initiated in 1992, this highly innovative programme provides direct support to indigenous communities so that they themselves can develop and implement projects reflecting their own perspectives and aspirations. Many of these projects combine economic activities with cultural valorization. At the specific request of the indigenous peoples, the resources provided to indigenous communities are accompanied by training. The programme's financial support is released against proposals from indigenous communities or organizations and is generally small (US\$5,000 to US\$50,000). To date, 128 projects have been supported, involving territorial recognition, the strengthening of indigenous crafts for both livelihood and cultural enhancement, bilingual and multicultural education, microenterprise management, arts and culture.

12. To facilitate the flow of information among beneficiary communities, the programme also supports experience-sharing. Since 2000, it has organized the Anaconda Film Festival, a biennial competition focusing on films directed by indigenous film-makers. Many books related to indigenous issues and culture have likewise been prepared and published thanks to the programme.

13. This regional programme furthermore helps indigenous communities organize themselves to offer ecotourism services, an activity that also serves to reaffirm their identities as distinct indigenous communities. Groups offering ecotourism services now meet every year to exchange experiences and learn from each other. During these meetings, participants highlight promising initiatives for improving the quality of life of indigenous peoples and restoring the natural resource base of their territories while enhancing the identity and cultural values of the concerned communities.

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<sup>5</sup> In reality, some of the grants are intended to support both indigenous and non-indigenous communities. If the grants were appropriately apportioned, the figure would be lower.

## Advocacy Activities

14. While preparing for its participation in the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, IFAD decided to work more proactively on advocacy with indigenous peoples beyond the confines of its projects and within the wider framework of the Summit's international dialogue. Since then, the Fund has collaborated closely with a broad network of representatives of indigenous peoples and the organizations that support them. Consequently, IFAD established a close partnership with the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and in 2004 provided its first grant to the Forum's secretariat. The grant allowed indigenous experts to review some of IFAD's projects in support of indigenous peoples in order to identify best practices.

15. In July 2005, and in collaboration with the World Bank's Coordinator for Indigenous Peoples, the findings of the International Labour Organization "ethnic audit" of selected PRSPs were presented at a meeting held at IFAD on sharpening the rural focus of poverty reduction strategies. As an outcome of this meeting, IFAD decided to include a special section on the participation of indigenous peoples in PRSP processes in a multistakeholder study it was financing on the rural focus of the PRSP process in five countries. Similarly, thanks to the joint advocacy work of IFAD and various indigenous peoples' organizations, the World Bank pledged in May 2006, during the Fifth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, to monitor more carefully the inclusion of indigenous peoples' issues in PRSP processes in selected countries.

### III. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN SINCE MID-2005

#### Working with Other United Nations Agencies

16. In September 2005, the President of IFAD granted a request by Mr Phrang Roy, IFAD's Assistant President for External Affairs, to be placed on special assignment for indigenous issues. Promptly after this change was announced, IFAD took on a more proactive role in the Inter-Agency Support Group (IASG) for Indigenous Issues. It sent a representative to the IASG meeting organized by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Panama City in September 2005, the theme of which was interagency cooperation at regional and country levels. Pleased with IFAD's growing commitment to indigenous issues, IASG suggested that IFAD host the 2006 IASG meeting, a proposal that was readily accepted.

17. Following the IASG meeting, United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) organized a workshop in Panama on indigenous traditional knowledge. Indigenous experts from around the world and representatives of United Nations agencies took part in the workshop. IFAD presented a new publication to participants explaining the participatory documentation of traditional knowledge undertaken as part of the IFAD-funded Western Mindanao Community Initiatives Project in the Philippines.<sup>6</sup> The workshop produced a set of recommendations, including one specifically urging IFAD to continue assisting communities in documenting their ecological knowledge and protecting their intellectual property rights.

18. The Fund has also prepared various publications on best practices relating to indigenous men and women.<sup>7</sup> In addition, it provided the majority of case studies reported in the 2005 UNPFII publication entitled *Indigenous Women and the United Nations System*.

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<sup>6</sup> International Fund for Agricultural Development, *Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Intellectual Property Rights: An Enabling Tool for Development with Identity*, (Rome/Panama: IFAD, 2005).

<sup>7</sup> Besides IFAD, 2005 see: International Fund for Agricultural Development, *Valuing Diversity in Sustainable Development* (Rome/Johannesburg: IFAD, 2002) and *Enhancing the Role of Indigenous Women in Sustainable Development* (Rome/New York: IFAD, 2004).

19. UNPFII, together with IFAD, the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank, held a meeting in Washington, D.C., in November 2005 to sensitize members of the Multilateral Financial Institutions Working Group on Environment about indigenous issues.

20. Directly following the Washington meeting, IFAD and UNPFII sponsored a brainstorming workshop on indigenous and tribal peoples' perspectives on selected IFAD-funded projects. The workshop presented the results of case studies carried out by indigenous experts to assess the extent to which five IFAD-funded projects in Asia and Latin America had been based on indigenous peoples' principles, worldviews and practices of development. It was found that when IFAD-funded projects promoted the full and effective participation of the community in planning and implementation (including managing resources), they were in practice applying the cherished principle of free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples. This was greatly appreciated by indigenous participants and their supporters. It was also concluded that as a result of all five IFAD-supported projects indigenous women had gained more autonomy and now took part in local-level decision-making bodies. Moreover, IFAD-funded projects supporting indigenous peoples had heightened appreciation of the role of culture, identity and indigenous traditional knowledge in development, and the need for these to be integrated in development practices.

21. The workshop concluded that whenever IFAD-funded projects had empowered indigenous peoples to implement and frame their own development policies, the results had been catalytic. The workshop therefore reaffirmed the view long held by indigenous peoples that sustainable solutions to their situations must be based on respect for their history, rights, identity, dignity and security. An advocacy framework for indigenous and tribal peoples' rights and development was also presented and thoroughly debated. The participants produced a set of recommendations to IFAD, a summary of which can be found in the annex to this document.

22. By December 2005, IFAD had provided two institutional grants to indigenous organizations and their supporting institutions in a total amount of US\$350,000. The first grant was given to the UNPFII Secretariat to define, on the basis of regional consultations among representatives of indigenous organizations, indigenous-sensitive indicators based upon indigenous peoples' own principles, concepts and practices of development. The second grant was given to the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development to initiate a worldwide comparative action-research project on the theme "identity, power and rights" in relation to indigenous communities.

### **Policy Forum on IFAD and Indigenous Peoples**

23. As a follow-up to the November 2005 workshop, an IFAD policy forum was organized on 4 May 2006 on the theme "IFAD and Indigenous Peoples". The workshop provided an opportunity for IFAD staff to reflect on and react to the recommendations of the workshop and, in so doing, determine how the Fund could increase both its operational and policy engagement capacity to specifically address the issues faced by indigenous peoples. The chair of UNFPII and a member of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Working Group on Indigenous Populations/Communities were invited as resource persons.

24. The resource person from the African Commission stated that in Africa the concept of "indigenous peoples" was still met by scepticism. She emphasized that a number of misunderstandings were involved. One was that protecting the rights of indigenous peoples would give special rights to some groups vis-à-vis others within a given State. The issue was, however, that certain groups were discriminated against because of their culture, mode of production and marginalized position within the State. Their call for special protection of their rights was therefore legitimate. A related misunderstanding was that such protection would lead to disharmony within communities. This was not true: giving recognition to all groups, respecting their differences and allowing them to flourish in a truly democratic spirit did not lead to conflict, but rather prevented it.

Such a process should be welcomed as it provided an opportunity to discuss ways to develop African multicultural democracies based on the respect and contribution of all ethnic groups. She urged IFAD staff who worked in Africa to listen to and work with indigenous peoples, and concluded by saying that, particularly in Africa, IFAD could contribute significantly by setting an example.

25. The chair of UNPFII highlighted indigenous peoples' emphasis on collective rights. Indigenous peoples also claim the right to self-determined development (development that cherishes their world vision and their distinctiveness), self-identification, collective ancestral lands and related resources, respect and dignity. She encouraged IFAD to share its experience with others and to consider its expertise in working with indigenous peoples as one of its comparative advantages.

26. The policy forum agreed that IFAD should develop specific principles of engagement to guide its work with indigenous peoples. These principles should stress inclusiveness, specificity, flexibility and a demand-driven approach. It was also agreed that the November workshop recommendations would be reflected in the ongoing work on IFAD's Action Plan for Improving its Development Effectiveness and, more specifically, the articulation of the strategic framework, regional and national strategies, and the knowledge management and innovation strategies. Indigenous peoples' issues should also be reflected in IFAD's forthcoming policy on targeting.

### **Participation in Workshops and Meetings**

27. In the first quarter of 2006, IFAD participated in two workshops. The first, organized by the UNPFII Secretariat and held in New York in January 2006, was the International Expert Group Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals, Indigenous Participation and Good Governance. Workshop participants had the opportunity to share their ideas on the importance of indigenous representation in decision-making processes within the context of the MDGs and the Millennium Declaration. The second workshop, held in Chang Mai, Thailand, in March 2006, focused on the concept of "indigeneness" in Asia. This useful and important workshop highlighted the need for IFAD to develop a deeper historical understanding of the concept as progressively used by the international community, and to play a proactive role in resolving some known misunderstandings about the concept and dispelling fears that it commonly kindled.

28. In May 2006, IFAD jointly organized with the Inter-American Development Bank, UNPFII and the World Bank, the Conference on Indigenous Peoples and Poverty, held in New York. The conference addressed the root causes of persistent poverty among indigenous peoples and highlighted the inadequacy of the current development paradigm's response to indigenous peoples' development aspirations. Many indigenous participants recommended that a new development paradigm that recognized the principle of "development with identity" be agreed upon and applied.

29. IFAD contributed two papers to the conference. The first, based on the Fund's field experiences and that of its partners in South Asia, illustrated how indigenous communities were adopting shifting agriculture practices to enhance their livelihoods while still maintaining their cultural identities. The second paper reported on a statistical study calculating the human development index (HDI) for selected tribal areas in India and compared it with the national HDI and with the HDI of some sub-Saharan countries. Both papers generated considerable interest and discussion.

30. IFAD subsequently participated in the Fifth Session of UNPFII that took place from 15 to 26 May 2006 in New York. The session, devoted to a discussion of "The Millennium Development Goals and Indigenous Peoples: Redefining the Millennium Development Goals", was opened by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, who also officially launched the Programme of Action for the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples. The Programme of Action highlights the crucial importance of partnerships for (a) achieving the inclusion and full participation of indigenous peoples in all processes affecting their lives, (b) promoting



development policies respectful of their cultures and identities, (c) adopting targeted programmes and budgets for their development and monitoring, and (d) strengthening accountability for commitments made to protect and improve their lives. While launching the Programme of Action, the Under-Secretary-General urged the newly created Human Rights Council to adopt the most recent draft of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

31. Mr Phrang Roy delivered, on behalf of President Båge, the keynote address at the opening ceremony of the Fifth Session. The address emphasized that IFAD had in its work with poor and marginalized people come to identify indigenous peoples as one of its important target groups. It was essential that marginalized people became a rallying point of MDG actions. Furthermore, the transformational role of indigenous women needed to be recognized and more efforts made to develop the capacity and sensitivity of national and local institutions that work with indigenous peoples. The address was well received by UNPFII members, governments, agency representatives and indigenous peoples alike. IFAD also took part in a press conference together with the Foreign Minister of Bolivia, the Chair of UNPFII and the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

### **Transfer of the World Bank Grants Facility for Indigenous Peoples to IFAD**

32. A series of discussions were held in April and May 2006 by representatives of UNPFII, IFAD and the World Bank on opportunities for enhanced partnership and cooperation on indigenous peoples' issues. Discussions centred on the transfer of the World Bank-managed Grants Facility for Indigenous Peoples to IFAD. The World Bank explained why such a transfer was needed and provided an overview of the development and history of the Bank's engagement with indigenous peoples through the Grants Facility. It noted that the Facility had a governance structure in which the representatives of indigenous peoples were in the voting majority. From experience gained in the Facility's first three years of operation, it was clear that the governance structure had worked well, that there was significant interest in the Facility, that the quantity and quality of the proposals had been high, and that the approach of working directly with communities for the self-identification of activities had been successful. A separate paper supporting the transfer of the Facility to IFAD has been prepared for the information and approval of the Executive Board on this innovative mechanism. The ensuing programme, to be administered by IFAD as a time-bound facility, will provide small grants ranging from US\$10,000 to US\$30,000 to indigenous peoples' organizations and indigenous communities to support culturally appropriate development projects. It will be managed by a board composed in its majority of indigenous peoples. IFAD will vet board members and will have the power to veto any proposal that it deems would result in any risks to the Fund.

## **IV. THE WAY FORWARD**

33. IFAD is currently the chair of the Inter-Agency Support Group (IASG) and, in this capacity, will host the upcoming IASG meeting on the theme of "Development with Identity". Representatives attending the meeting are expected to share their experiences in three important areas: (a) land; (b) territories and resources; and (c) indigenous knowledge and technology and the role of culture. Serving as IASG chair creates an important opportunity for IFAD to play a harmonizing role in the advocacy of indigenous issues among the different agencies. The Fund will also continue to work closely with UNPFII and the World Bank to further understanding and collaboration among international financial institutions, governments and indigenous peoples' organizations.

34. Following a recommendation made both by UNPFII and at the May policy forum at IFAD, the Fund will commence a consultative process in 2007, learning from the best practices of the Inter-American Development Bank and others, to develop "principles of engagement" to guide its work with indigenous peoples. Moreover, building on the limited work that IFAD and ILO began in 2006 on training and sensitization, the Fund will discuss with ILO the possibility of developing in 2007 a

programme of training and sensitization for IFAD staff and project personnel on the rights of indigenous peoples.

35. In 2006, IFAD started a discussion with UNPFII and the Inter-American Development Bank about the possible production of a “development with identity” report for indigenous peoples. The Fund will explore the possibility of producing such a publication by 2008 through a collaborative effort with several interested parties. It will also try to extend its work on the human development index of indigenous peoples.

36. Currently, IFAD is undertaking a desk review of its grants related to technology development with and for indigenous peoples. This review will be the basis of a brainstorming workshop where IFAD staff will share ideas. It is hoped that in 2007 there will be opportunities to engage in a serious stock-taking exercise with members of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research and to reinforce partnerships on technology development based on indigenous knowledge and practices.

37. In May 2007, UNPFII and the World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Peoples – in collaboration with the Standing Committee of the Dana Declaration on Mobile Peoples and Conservation, the UNDP World Initiative for Sustainable Pastoralism and the Global Environment Facility – expect to hold a workshop on mobility, territory and natural resources. IFAD will explore opportunities to support this initiative for the development of pastoralists and hunter-gatherers.

38. As part of the development of the Rural Poverty Portal, which is an Action Plan activity, IFAD will take concrete steps in 2007 to expand the special window on its experiences and general issues related to indigenous peoples. This exercise will be carried out in consultation with all informed IFAD staff, learning from the best practices of institutions such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, and seeking advice from a number of indigenous peoples’ organizations.

39. With regard to the continuation of a high-level focus on indigenous peoples’ issues at IFAD, when the current Assistant President completes his assignment, these tasks and the related budget will be transferred to the Programme Management Department, where the Assistant President of that department will provide the leadership, initially designating a senior staff member experienced with indigenous issues to continue the related tasks. A junior professional staff member will also be recruited to support these activities and to coordinate the newly established indigenous peoples assistance facility.

ANNEX

**SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORKSHOP ON INDIGENOUS AND TRIBAL PEOPLES'  
PERSPECTIVES ON SELECTED IFAD-FUNDED PROJECTS, NOVEMBER 2005**

**Guiding Principles**

- IFAD's policies and practices should be consistent with the human-rights-based approach to development enshrined in various international treaties and instruments and espoused by the United Nations Development Group. To keep its staff and consultants informed about indigenous peoples and their rights, IFAD should provide appropriate training on these issues.
- The principle of free, prior and informed consent should be applied more systematically in all aspects of IFAD initiatives in support of indigenous peoples as well as in initiatives that may affect them.
- IFAD should set an example to other multilateral and bilateral agencies by promoting periodic and independent project reviews by indigenous experts in close collaboration with indigenous peoples' institutions.
- The Fund should reinforce its best practices relating to fostering development with identity and strengthening self-determined development.
- It should continue and reinforce its efforts to empower indigenous peoples and support the building of local institutions capable of managing their own financial, natural and cultural resources, and able to negotiate with mainstream national and international institutions.

**Strategic**

- IFAD should share more proactively with concerned governments and other agencies the lessons learned from its own experiences; considerably increase its advocacy role to influence macro-level policy interventions, including national poverty reduction processes; and strengthen its engagement in global, regional and local processes.
- The Fund should commence a process, in close partnership with indigenous peoples' representatives, for developing its own guiding principles of engagement with indigenous peoples, and thereafter sensitize its staff to these principles.
- The participation of UNPFII in Governing Council meetings should be ensured, and this includes regularly holding side events on indigenous issues.
- IFAD should promote the participation of indigenous leaders in loan negotiations for projects affecting their communities.
- The Fund should adopt a comprehensive indigenous peoples' communication-for-development strategy for action and advocacy purposes.

**Operational**

- IFAD must acknowledge the distinctiveness of indigenous peoples and plan its activities accordingly. In project design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation, it is crucial that IFAD team members have a deep and thorough understanding of indigenous peoples' livelihood systems, perspectives, beliefs and practices.
- In the formulation of country strategic opportunities papers and project design the Fund should: (a) involve local indigenous experts; and (b) undertake socio-economic studies to identify existing biases in traditional institutions and develop ad hoc mechanisms for the direct engagement of indigenous networks and associations.

## ANNEX

- IFAD should facilitate the exchange of experiences across regions, departments and divisions.
- The Fund should enhance indigenous peoples' skills so that they can evaluate project activities within the framework of their perspectives and their indicators. As much as possible, local indigenous experts should be trained so that they can slowly take over some of the tasks customarily carried out by foreign consultants. IFAD should also proactively provide resources and skills directly to communities to enable them to articulate and pursue their visions of development, assisting them in overcoming mainstream challenges and creating employability.