

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND THE UNITED NATIONS ROME-BASED AGENCIES WORKING TO ACHIEVE THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



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Achieving a world with Zero Hunger (SDG 2) unites the mandates of the three United Nations (UN) Rome-based agencies, collectively known as the RBAs: the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); and the World Food Programme (WFP). The RBAs provide development, humanitarian and resilience assistance, services, policy assistance, normative work, knowledge and financing in the areas of food, agriculture and transformative rural development.

THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (UNDRIP)

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted in 2007 by 149 Member States provides the overall framework for the RBAs' work with Indigenous Peoples. This brief highlights each agency's mandate, its main areas of focus, complementary areas of work, and opportunities for improved collaboration, leveraging each agency's strengths and comparative advantages.

The full text of the UNDRIP is [available here](#)

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES KEY FACTS

It is estimated that Indigenous Peoples are present in some 90 countries around the world.

Indigenous Peoples and their livelihood systems - farming, pastoralism, shifting cultivation, rotational agriculture, fishing, and hunting and gathering, occupy about 25 per cent of the world's land surface, with about 40 per cent of all terrestrial protected areas and ecologically intact landscapes, where they have preserved most of the remaining terrestrial biodiversity.



Is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger. Its goal is to achieve food security for all and make sure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Under the overarching objective of eradicating hunger and malnutrition, the FAO Indigenous Peoples Unit (PSUI) operationalizes FAO's Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in support of Indigenous Peoples' rights, free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) and Indigenous Peoples' food and knowledge systems in global debates on climate action and sustainable food systems.

PSUI brings together the normative and technical capacity to generate knowledge and technical evidence on Indigenous Peoples' food and knowledge systems, territorial governance and climate action that bridges the gap between evidence gathering and policy making and to provide strategic advice to Members, support their liaisons with Indigenous Peoples, and drive changes at global, regional and national levels.

FAO's technical capacity and the trust it has earned with Members, UN agencies, the scientific community and Indigenous Peoples' gives the Organization the unique ability to convene them into dialogues to discuss and reflect on Indigenous Peoples' food and knowledge systems. With this capacity, PSUI coordinates three key initiatives to influence normative work, policies and decision-making:

KEY INITIATIVES

The Coalition on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems

In 2021, Indigenous Peoples, seven Member States (Canada, the Dominican Republic, Finland, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway and Spain) and FAO joined forces to create a Coalition in the frame of the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS).

The main objective of the Coalition is to ensure understanding, respect, recognition, inclusion and protection of Indigenous Peoples' food and knowledge systems, providing evidence about their "game-changing and systemic" aspects.

This first-ever global Coalition on Indigenous Peoples' food systems was launched in 2022. It is chaired by the president of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples who appointed the FAO Indigenous Peoples Unit as the Secretariat. In addition, other UN agencies such as IFAD, UNEP, UNESCO, and WFP have joined.

The Rome Group of Friends of Indigenous Peoples

With Canada as its first Chair, and after two years of discussions and negotiations between FAO and members, the Rome Group of Friends of Indigenous Peoples was established in 2019 at FAO headquarters in Rome, with the main objective of sharing information and advocating about Indigenous Peoples issues.

Currently Chaired by Mexico, the Group of Friends provides an informal yet meaningful space for FAO Members, Indigenous leaders, and academics to interact on different matters relevant to Indigenous Peoples, such as climate change, food systems, UN Indigenous Youth Forum or Indigenous women. Currently, 36 countries participate in the discussions with a different country presenting at each meeting. Recently, there is growing interest from new countries, particularly in Africa, to join.

FAO invites all interested Members to engage in these informal exchanges organized by the Rome Group of Friends.

The Global-Hub on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems

The Global-Hub on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems is a knowledge platform that brings together 20 Indigenous and non-indigenous scientists, researchers, and experts to collectively co-create knowledge and gather evidence. The Global-Hub organizes exchanges of knowledge and dialogues about the sustainability and resilience of Indigenous Peoples' food and knowledge systems to inform normative work, policies and decision-making processes. The Exchange of Knowledge organized by the Global-Hub with the Scientific Committee of the UN food systems Summit, resulted in their recognition of the "game-changing" nature on sustainability and resilience of Indigenous Peoples' food systems.

The Global-Hub's flagship publications and documents are the "White/Whipala Paper on Indigenous Peoples' food systems"; the journal-article "Rethinking hierarchies of evidence for sustainable food systems". Several of the Global-Hub members contributed to the awarded publication "Indigenous Peoples' food systems: Insights on Sustainability and Resilience from the frontline of climate change".

The Global-Hub is currently collectively drafting a new paper about the importance of Biodiversity of Indigenous Peoples' mobile livelihoods and their collective rights to lands, territories and natural resources.



195 members: 194 countries + the European Union



FAO's overall programme of work is funded by assessed and voluntary contributions. Member countries' assessed contributions comprise the regular budget, set at the biennial FAO Conference



Active in over 130 countries, HQ based in Rome + 5 regional offices, 11 subregional offices and 85 country offices. 6 Liaison offices and 7 partnership & liaison offices





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Investing in rural people

Is the only UN specialized agency and an international financial institution (IFI), which focuses exclusively on reducing poverty and food insecurity in rural areas through agricultural development and rural transformation

The International Fund for Agricultural Development

IFAD is an international financial institution and specialized UN agency with a mandate to fight rural poverty. Its investments focus on rural people, empowering them to increase their food security, improve the nutrition of their families and increase their incomes. IFAD helps them build resilience, expand their businesses and take charge of their own development.

KEY INITIATIVES

The IFAD Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples

The policy, approved by the Executive Board in September 2009 and updated in December 2022, includes horizontal partnership with Indigenous Peoples as one of the key instruments to deploy its ten principles of engagement. The updated IFAD Policy enhances representation of Indigenous Peoples in IFAD's governance bodies with selected representatives of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD holding observer status in IFAD's Executive Board session when items of relevance to Indigenous Peoples are on the agenda for consideration.

Through its policy of engagement with Indigenous Peoples and its Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures, IFAD ensures that Indigenous Peoples' right to FPIC and Indigenous Peoples knowledge systems are part of IFAD investments.

The Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD

The forum is a platform for meaningful dialogue where Indigenous Peoples' representatives convey their concerns, requests and recommendations to improve the partnership with IFAD and the effectiveness of its engagement with Indigenous Peoples. The forum convenes every second February in connection with the Governing Council, IFAD's main decision-making body. A series of regional workshops 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 Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF)

The IPAF is an innovative funding instrument that indigenous communities can use to find solutions to the challenges they face. It finances small self-driven development projects that build on Indigenous Peoples' culture, identity, knowledge and natural resources. To date, 159 small-scale projects have been financed in 48 countries for a total of USD 5.2 million. These projects were selected from more than 4,200 applications received in response to five IPAF global calls for proposals (2007, 2008, 2011, 2015 and 2018) and were designed and implemented directly by Indigenous Peoples' communities and their organizations and with their FPIC. In August 2022, IFAD launched the sixth call for proposals for the IPAF; this cycle focuses on advancing Indigenous Peoples' conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity for adaptation and resilience to climate change.

Country strategic opportunities programmes (COSOPs)

COSOPs are frameworks for making strategic choices about IFAD operations in a country, identifying opportunities for IFAD financing and facilitating management for results. The central objective of a COSOP is to ensure that IFAD country operations produce a positive impact on poverty. IFAD recognizes and ensures Indigenous Peoples participation through consultations and promotes effective policy engagement at country level.

Country programmes

Since its creation in 1978, IFAD has supported rural development programmes with Indigenous Peoples as major stakeholders and partners. As of December 2022, around 30 per cent of the lending programme has been supporting development initiatives with Indigenous Peoples over the past 12 years. Thirty-seven per cent of IFAD's current portfolio supports initiatives in areas that are home to Indigenous Peoples, with 83 IFAD-funded projects reaching out to about 9 million Indigenous People in 46 countries – with an estimated IFAD investment of around USD 1 billion and leveraging around USD 2 billion in co-financing.

Grants

Since 2003, 51 grants specifically formulated in support of Indigenous Peoples with participatory methodologies and dialogue have been financed for a total financing of USD 23.1 million.



176 member countries, comprised of developing, middle and high-income countries from all regions of the world



Provides loans, grants and technical assistance to developing countries from Low to Upper Middle income (over US 22 billion of financing delivered in 42 years)



Active in over 92 countries, HQ based in Rome + 40 country offices



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Is the world's largest humanitarian organization with experience in both humanitarian and development contexts

The World Food Programme

In 2022, WFP – the largest humanitarian organization changing and saving lives worldwide – reached more than 140 million people in over 120 countries and territories. WFP is funded entirely by voluntary donations, and 87 percent of its staff are based in the field.

WFP is among the first on the scene in an emergency, providing food and other assistance to people affected by conflict, drought, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, crop failures and pandemics. At the same time, WFP keeps a sharp focus on sustainable development, providing governments and other key partners with the support and skills to manage food security in the long term.

WFP's efforts to combat hunger were recognized in 2020 when it was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize "for its contribution to bettering conditions for peace in conflict-affected areas and for acting as a driving force in efforts to prevent the use of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict".

In line with the 2030 Agenda, WFP is committed to ensuring that no one is left behind in its work. WFP's Indigenous Peoples' portfolio focuses on five components: (1) field-based research to identify the food security needs of Indigenous Peoples across regions; (2) evidence-based guidance to ensure a principled and culturally appropriate engagement; (3) capacity strengthening of its employees; (4) outreach to Indigenous Peoples' communities; and (5) fostering partnerships with Indigenous Peoples' organizations.

Policies and strategies

Much of WFP's work with Indigenous Peoples is supported by its [Protection and Accountability Policy \(2020\)](#) and its [Community Engagement Strategy \(2021\)](#). As a member of the United Nations High-Level Committee on Programmes, WFP is committed to ensuring the implementation of the [UN Call to Action: Building an Inclusive, Sustainable and Resilient Future with Indigenous Peoples](#) in collaboration with the [UN Interagency Support Group on Indigenous Issues](#).

KEY INITIATIVES

Partnerships

In 2022, WFP's Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBP) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with The Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean (FILAC) to work together to achieve SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) through activities in the areas of resilience building, nutrition, gender equality and emergency preparedness. In 2023, FILAC is implementing a capacity development sensitization programme for WFP RBP employees.

WFP is also a member of the Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems Coalition and is actively supporting activities under the Nutrition and healthy diets for everyone work pillar. This includes ensuring that Indigenous Peoples' organizations are active members of the School Feeding Coalition, and providing an analysis of intercultural approaches in school meals.

Research

In 2020–2022, WFP led in-depth evidence-based assessments in Latin America, Central Africa and Asia to better understand Indigenous Peoples' livelihoods and their vulnerabilities to food insecurity, with a view to informing its programming.

Guidance

WFP has guidance on FPIC in three UN official languages and in an easy-to-read format, as well as guidance on engagement with Indigenous Peoples throughout the programme cycle.

Projects

WFP projects with Indigenous Peoples across the globe often target neglected and remote communities affected by conflict, disaster, food insecurity and structural discrimination. They foster the agency of communities by recognizing their traditional knowledge and practices and by building their capacity to take the lead on the protection, management and restoration of their landscapes.



36 member states from all regions of the world which provide intergovernmental support, direction and supervision of WFP's activities



Operations are entirely funded through the voluntary contributions of donor governments, institutions, corporations and individuals. A total 93.5 percent of all government contributions go directly to supporting life-saving and life-changing operations



Active in over 120 countries, HQ based in Rome + 21,000 staff worldwide



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