

Rome, 31/03/2017

**Subject: Views on the purpose, content and structure of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform**

IFAD welcomes this opportunity to submit its views on the Indigenous Peoples Platform.

**General reflections**

- Indigenous peoples are among the world's most vulnerable, marginalized and disadvantaged people. We must ensure that their voices are heard, their rights respected, and their well-being improved. IFAD is committed to achieving this in its own programme of work.
- IFAD believes institutionalizing instruments to respect indigenous peoples' rights and support their self-driven development is essential and contributes to the economic, social and environmental sustainability of countries home to indigenous peoples. .
- Indigenous peoples around the world have repeatedly asked for a more systematic dialogue within United Nations agencies. In response, IFAD has put in place instruments to improve their participation at all levels. The IFAD Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples approved by its Executive Board in 2009 foresees the establishment of a permanent platform of dialogue with indigenous peoples. As part of the Policy implementation, in 2011 the Fund established the Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD as a concrete way to institutionalize consultation and dialogue with indigenous peoples' representatives at national, regional and international levels. The process of the Forum culminates in a global meeting which convenes every other year at IFAD's headquarters in conjunction with IFAD's Governing Council. The Forum acts as a venue to discuss and assess IFAD's engagement with indigenous peoples between IFAD staff, member states and indigenous peoples' representatives; 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. Major achievements obtained through the Forum process relate to improvement in IFAD's interventions through its country strategies and funded projects. Over the past two years, out of 16 country strategies approved by IFAD's Executive Board, 10 included specific focus on indigenous peoples. Forty-nine projects approved in the last two years included support to indigenous peoples, and several had strategies tailored specifically to the needs of indigenous peoples' communities. Through the network of the Forum indigenous experts were engaged in the design of several projects and strategies, improving consultation on the ground and, hence improving the quality and outreach of IFAD's investments in support of indigenous peoples. In terms of establishing institutional mechanisms for sustained dialogue with indigenous peoples, IFAD has been recognized as a global pioneer by indigenous peoples' organizations<sup>1</sup>. Representatives of indigenous peoples' organizations and Members of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues have often used IFAD as a good practice and called upon United Nations and development agencies to take up a proactive agenda to outreach to indigenous peoples and take their perspective on-board in the design and implementation of project investments, within the framework of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- IFAD believes the LCIP platform has a very good opportunity to implement the Paris agreement and its recognition of indigenous peoples' rights. Actions to combat climate change should be done in collaboration with, whilst respecting the rights of, listening to the voices of indigenous peoples and ensuring their full and effective participation in decision making. Highlights from the Paris Agreement are the following:

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<sup>1</sup> See Publication United Nations and Indigenous Peoples in Developing Countries – An evolving partnership, published by Tebtebba Foundation and Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact, 2014.

- *Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, **the rights of indigenous peoples**, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity;*
  - *Agreeing to uphold and promote regional and international cooperation in order to mobilize stronger and more ambitious climate action by all Parties and non-Party stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector, financial institutions, cities and other subnational authorities, local communities and **indigenous peoples**;*
  - *Recognizes the need to strengthen knowledge, technologies, practices and efforts of local communities and **indigenous peoples** related to addressing and responding to climate change, and establishes a platform for the exchange of experiences and sharing of best practices on mitigation and adaptation in a holistic and integrated manner;*
  - *Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, **the rights of indigenous peoples**, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity,*
  - *Parties acknowledge that adaptation action should follow a country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent approach, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems, and should be based on and guided by the best available science and, as appropriate, traditional knowledge, **knowledge of indigenous peoples** and local knowledge systems, with a view to integrating adaptation into relevant socioeconomic and environmental policies and actions, where appropriate.*
- The LCIP platform is encouraged to acknowledge and aligns with the outcomes of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (2014), specifically commitments related to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and commitments related to climate change:
    - *We reaffirm our support for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted by the General Assembly on 13 September 2007, and our commitments made in this respect to consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them, in accordance with the applicable principles of the Declaration.*
    - We confirm that indigenous peoples' knowledge and strategies to sustain their environment should be respected and taken into account when we develop national and international approaches to climate change mitigation and adaptation (para 36).

#### Purpose, content and structure of the LCIP Platform

- One of the key principles of IFAD Policy Engagement with Indigenous Peoples is Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) as a criterium for project approval. This principle is reflected in other IFAD policies, such as the Policy on Improving Access to Land and Tenure Security (2008), the Policy on Environment and Natural Resource Management (2011) and in IFAD's Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures

(2014). IFAD is the first international financial institution to adopt FPIC as an operational principle in its policy documents. IFAD has experienced measurable success with implementation of its Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples and guidelines on how to seek free, prior and informed consent in IFAD-funded projects and welcomes advances from other organizations to improve cooperation on the implementation of its policy which has been developed within the framework of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

- With the aim of enhancing broad-based participation, we encourage the platform to move towards an operation-oriented business model and consider moving towards a financial mechanism. IFAD manages the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF) whose objective is to strengthen indigenous peoples' communities and their organizations by financing small projects which foster self-determination within the framework of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and to generate lessons learned and approaches for replication and upscaling. The Facility invites applications from indigenous peoples' organizations and communities, as well as organizations that work with them, for grants to fund projects, innovative approaches and partnerships that promote the development of indigenous peoples and help them fulfil their aspirations. IFAD calls for proposals for this facility and receives far more than the facility can answer. The facility is governed by a board formed in majority by indigenous peoples' representatives and it is co-managed at the regional level by indigenous peoples' organizations. Therefore, the consideration to move the platform towards a more complimentary financing system would be most welcome. Funding of small grants is but one of many possibilities for the platform as it aligns with operations.