

# **Partnering with Indigenous Peoples: Experiences and Practices**

**Prepared by the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on  
Indigenous Issues**

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## List of Acronyms:

<b>ADB</b>	Asian Development Bank
<b>AIDS</b>	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
<b>AMIO</b>	Assembly of Indigenous Women of Oaxaca
<b>ASMUNG</b>	Association of Ngöbe-Buglé Women
<b>BDP</b>	Bureau for Development Policy
<b>CAPDI</b>	Center for Indigenous Peoples' Autonomy and Development
<b>CBD</b>	Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
<b>CCA</b>	Common Country Assessment
<b>CED</b>	Community Economic Development
<b>CEDALE</b>	Latin America and the Caribbean Demographic Centre
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; and Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
<b>CIDOB</b>	Confederation of Indigenous people of Bolivia
<b>CMC</b>	Community Multi-media Centers
<b>COINCABOL</b>	Coordinator of Indigenous Peasant Organizations of Bolivia and Inter-Cultural Communications
<b>CONAMAQ</b>	The National Council of Allayus and Markas of Qullasuyu
<b>CONAMI</b>	National Coordination of Indigenous Women
<b>DANIDA</b>	Danish International Development Agency
<b>DESA</b>	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
<b>ECLAC</b>	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>EIBAMAZ</b>	Bilingual Education in the Amazon Region of Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia
<b>FCPF</b>	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
<b>FPIC</b>	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
<b>FODIGUA</b>	The Guatemalan Indigenous Development Fund
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility
<b>GTI</b>	Inter-Agency Group on Inter-Cultural and Indigenous Matters
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>IASG</b>	Inter Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues
<b>IBE</b>	Intercultural Bilingual Education
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communications Technology
<b>IFAD</b>	International Fund for Agricultural Development
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>INDI</b>	The Paraguayan Indigenous Institute
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization of Migration
<b>IP</b>	Indigenous Peoples
<b>IPMS</b>	Indigenous Peoples and Minorities Section
<b>IPP</b>	Indigenous Peoples Plan
<b>LAC</b>	Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>MARENASS</b>	The Management of Natural Resources in the Southern Highlands.

<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental Organization
<b>OECD</b>	The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>PAHO</b>	The Pan American Health Organization
<b>PAINAC</b>	Programme for Street Children and Adolescents
<b>RIPP</b>	Regional Initiative on Indigenous Peoples' Rights and Development
<b>ROLAC</b>	Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>SCBD</b>	Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
<b>SNNA</b>	Secretariat for Children and Adolescents
<b>SPFII</b>	Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.
<b>SRH</b>	Sexual Reproductive Health
<b>TEBTEBBA</b>	Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education
<b>TEPJF</b>	The Electoral Tribunal of the Mexican Judicial Branch
<b>TK</b>	Traditional Knowledge
<b>TSB</b>	Toxic Soil Buster
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>UNDAF</b>	United Nations Development Assistance Framework.
<b>UNDG</b>	United Nations Development Group
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNDRIP</b>	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNFCC</b>	United Nations Framework on Climate Change
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UN-HABITAT</b>	United Nations Human Settlement Programme
<b>UNHRP</b>	United Nations Housing Rights Programme
<b>UNIC</b>	United Nations Information Centers
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNIFEM</b>	United Nations Development Fund for Women
<b>UNIPP</b>	United Nations Indigenous Peoples Partnership
<b>UNITAR</b>	United Nations Institute for Training and Research.
<b>UNPFA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNPFII</b>	United Nations Permanent Forum of Indigenous Issues
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>WIPO</b>	World Intellectual Property Organization



## **Chapter I: Background and Introduction**

### **Aim of this Publication**

The aim of this publication is to promote the application of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

It presents good practices that showcase the UN system's policy and programming work based on partnerships with indigenous peoples. The experiences and practices highlighted can offer useful insights on policy and programming approaches to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and advance the right to self-determination of indigenous peoples.

This is not an exhaustive inventory of the experiences of the UN system. The case studies and projects profiled demonstrate how partnering with indigenous nations, peoples and communities is integral to the success of UN policies, programmes and projects.

Experiences presented in the publication identify:

- Entry points for specific interventions that advance the rights of indigenous peoples;
- Bottlenecks and challenges encountered when addressing vulnerabilities of indigenous peoples;
- Strategies and key features of an enabling environment for ensuring the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples; and
- Processes and mechanisms aimed at addressing marginalisation, extreme poverty and other human rights violations experienced by indigenous peoples.

In terms of institutional learning, it is hoped that the experiences highlighted contribute to the sharpening of programmes, strategies and advocacy efforts to implement, strengthen or scale up activities with indigenous peoples.

The compilation is also oriented towards the sharing of practical knowledge that will underpin efforts of the UN system to reaffirm the spirit, principles and rights enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

### **Identification of Good Practices**

The minimum essential criteria of a good practice, as identified in the publication, reflect the following elements:

- Indigenous peoples are acknowledged as rights holders and programmatic strategies prioritize the importance of free, prior and informed consent;
- Indigenous peoples are recognized as key decision makers and as experts in matters that affect them;
- Emphasis is placed on the full and effective engagement and participation of indigenous peoples at all stages of the programme;
- Strong partnerships are established between UN agencies (or through the UN Country Teams) with local institutions, Members States, and indigenous peoples; and
- A culturally sensitive approach to programming, including an understanding of norms and practices of indigenous cultures is incorporated into policy and programme design and implementation.

An additional criterion is that the programmes included also can be easily modified or transferred and replicated into other contexts. While many of them have been evaluated, some programmes are still ongoing and are yet to be fully evaluated. However, they have been included in the publication for the approach adopted in implementing and the expected positive results.

## **Methodology**

This publication is based on information from UN agencies that responded to the 'Survey on Indigenous Peoples' Issues and the 'Compilation of Experiences and Practices Working with Indigenous Peoples' Issues' guidelines. Additional information is provided from reports submitted to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and other UN sources.

Consideration was given to UN agencies that promote the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in their activities, have put into practice the UN Development Group (UNDG) guidelines (or are in the process of doing so), and have created space for the meaningful participation of indigenous peoples in their programming and policy processes.

## **Identification of Indigenous Peoples**

There are over 370 million indigenous peoples<sup>1</sup> in the world. They make up about 5 per cent of the world's population with more than 5,000 different groups of

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<sup>1</sup> The United Nations does not define indigenous peoples, but to identify.



indigenous peoples living in more than 90 countries.<sup>2</sup> With unique traditions, they retain social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live. Spread across the world from the Arctic to the Amazon, indigenous peoples are the descendants of those who already inhabited a country or a geographical region at the time when people of different cultures or ethnic origins arrived. They live within or maintain close attachments to geographically distinct ancestral territories and self-identify as indigenous or tribal.

*“Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop, and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems.”*

*-- Martinez-Cobo, Study on the Problem of Discrimination against Indigenous Populations, Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities<sup>3</sup>*

The following provides the basic criteria when identifying indigenous peoples<sup>4</sup>:

- they live within or maintain close attachments to geographically distinct ancestral territories;
- they tend to maintain distinct social, economic and political institutions within their territories;
- they aspire to remain distinct culturally, geographically and institutionally rather than assimilate fully into national society; and
- they self-identify as indigenous or tribal.

The UN does not define indigenous peoples, as it is difficult to fully capture their diversity. Self-identification is a fundamental criterion as enshrined in ILO Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, 1989 and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (article 33).

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<sup>2</sup> State of the World's Indigenous Peoples, UN DESA, 2009 (ST/ESA/328) at p.1.

<sup>3</sup> Cobo Report E/CN.4/Sub.2/1986/7.

<sup>4</sup> UN Millennium Campaign and UNDP. *Millennium Development Goals and Indigenous Peoples*, p2.

Different agencies have adopted different approaches, guided by the characteristics outlined above. The Cobo study provides the basis for the commonly accepted understanding of 'indigenous peoples' and is the UN's working guidelines.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> For more details, see SOWIP, 2009 at pp. 4-7.

## **Chapter II: Recognition and Promotion of Indigenous Peoples' Issues within the United Nations System**

This section briefly highlights some of the innovations at the United Nations to more firmly place indigenous peoples' issues on the global agenda.

Since indigenous peoples first came to the United Nations to raise their voices in 1923 – when Cayuga Chief Deskaheh of the Iroquois travelled to Geneva but was not received at the League of Nations - there have been significant achievements. This has been the result of mobilization and concerted efforts by indigenous peoples, member-states, the UN system, and non-governmental organizations. It was only through partnership and close cooperation that the UN has created a space for indigenous peoples.

A major landmark is the adoption of the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

### **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is the most comprehensive statement on the rights of indigenous peoples ever developed. It is the culmination of over twenty years of work.

It is a best practice of partnerships. Indigenous peoples worked in close cooperation with Member-States, with the support of the UN System, non-governmental organizations and others, to draft and adopt the UN Declaration.

The entire process took over twenty years. The UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP)<sup>6</sup> commenced working on a draft in 1985. From the beginning, the WGIP sought to guarantee a broad openness on its part, which soon became its special feature, enabling a wide number of representatives of indigenous peoples and communities to attend its session and to provide information on their problems and contribute ways of resolving them. That meant, for indigenous peoples, the point of entry to the UN and the establishment of new methods of international cooperation and dialogue with governments and the international community. With the active participation of indigenous peoples, member-states and the UN system, as well as NGOs, in 1993 the WGIP submitted its draft to the sub-commission of the UN Commission on Human Rights (now the UN Human Rights Council). In 1995, the Commission set up a working group – which facilitated the participation of indigenous peoples and their organizations by granting specific consultative status for indigenous representatives - to take the process forward. After ten years of

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<sup>6</sup> Through Resolution No. 1982/34, ECOSOC authorized the Sub-Commission for Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, a sub-commission of the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights, to establish an annual Working Group on Indigenous Populations.

intense negotiations, the revised draft was submitted to the UN General Assembly in 2006. A remarkable example of cooperation between indigenous peoples and the Permanent Forum, which meanwhile had been established in 2002, was the intense advocacy activity undertaken by a group of African experts, which included researchers, indigenous leaders and scholars from Africa. The group, in cooperation with some international NGOs and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, managed to obtain the support of the African states for the adoption of the Declaration.

On 13 September 2007, the UN General Assembly adopted the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)<sup>7</sup> by an overwhelming majority.

***“The Secretary-General calls on Governments and civil society to urgently advance the work of integrating the rights of indigenous peoples into international human rights and development agendas, as well as policies and programmes at all levels, so as to ensure that the vision behind the Declaration becomes a reality.”*** Adoption of the UN Declaration on 13 September 2007.

In the broader context of the evolution of international human rights law, the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples expands the comprehensive normative human rights framework. With the reversal of position of the countries that had earlier voted against the adoption, as of today, the UN Declaration embodies global consensus on the rights of indigenous peoples.

The realization of the rights of indigenous peoples through the implementation of the UN Declaration in partnership with States and indigenous peoples remains a critical challenge for the UN system.

### **Indigenous-Specific Mechanisms at the UN**

The creation of new mechanisms and mandates evidence the international community’s recognition of indigenous peoples’ human rights after many years of invisibility when indigenous issues received scant attention. These are indeed strategic and innovative achievements given the historical context and the challenges of marginalization of indigenous peoples.

The UN has established three central mechanisms that are mandated to address the rights and issues important to indigenous peoples. These are:

- a) The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
- b) The Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and
- c) The Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

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<sup>7</sup> 143 in favour, 4 against (Australia, Canada, New Zealand and USA), and 11 abstentions.

## **The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**

In response to demands from indigenous peoples for a high level body to address their issues, the UN established the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in 2000.<sup>8</sup> The Permanent Forum is an advisory body to the Economic and Social Council, tasked to discuss indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights.

The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues has the mandate to:

- (1) Provide expert advice and recommendations on indigenous issues to the Economic and Social Council, as well as to programmes, funds and agencies of the United Nations, through the Council;
- (2) Raise awareness and promote the integration and coordination of activities related to indigenous issues within the UN system;
- (3) Disseminate information on indigenous issues; and
- (4) Contribute to the implementation of the UNDRIP.

### ***Membership of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues***

The Forum is comprised of sixteen independent experts, functioning in their personal capacity, who serve for a term of three years and may be re-elected or re-appointed for one additional term. Eight of the Members are nominated by governments and eight are nominated directly by indigenous organizations from the seven socio-cultural regions and appointed by the President of ECOSOC, with the eighth as a rotational post among Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Permanent Forum members actively participate in international meetings and events that deal with issues relevant to indigenous peoples, advocating for the recognition and protection of indigenous peoples' rights at all levels of society.

### ***Annual Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues***

The annual session of the Permanent Forum is held in April or May, at the UN Headquarters (or any other venue determined by the Permanent Forum) for two weeks. The first session was held in 2002. More than 1,500 indigenous participants from all parts of the world attend the annual sessions, in addition to representatives from some 70 governments and around 35 UN agencies and inter-governmental entities. The Permanent Forum has a biannual working method that focuses on a specific theme one year, with the following year devoted to reviewing its work. The

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<sup>8</sup> Economic and Social Council, Resolution No. 2000/22.

Forum has also succeeded in bringing high-level officials or representatives of the UN system, including the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the High Commissioner for Human Rights, to participate in its sessions. The Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples participates in each annual session and other special rapporteurs and chairs of human rights bodies have also participated in various sessions. During the annual sessions, the Forum gathers and galvanizes these participants into a “cooperative forum which is solution-oriented towards practical results on the ground.”<sup>9</sup>

The Forum sessions provide an opportunity for dialogue between the Permanent Forum members and governments, UN agencies and indigenous peoples, and identify best practices for replication in other countries and regions. They also help to draw out the challenges and gaps in implementing the UN Declaration as the framework for the UN’s work with indigenous peoples. Through its mandated responsibility to coordinate the work of the UN agencies, the Forum sessions ensure linkages between the local, regional and global level, with specific focus on the work of the UN agencies in implementing the recommendations at the community level to translate to tangible benefits for indigenous peoples.<sup>10</sup>

### *Good practice*

The Forum has established a practice of open dialogue and cooperation, whereby information on the situation of indigenous peoples are provided directly by representatives of indigenous peoples, governments and UN agencies participating at the session. Participants to the annual sessions are also encouraged to organize parallel events where they can network and raise issues that are pertinent to their work. In addition, participants have the opportunity to establish direct contacts with members of the Permanent Forum, with governments and with UN agencies, as needed.

The Forum develops recommendations on all the mandated areas, including for example those on indigenous children and youth, indigenous women, and the Millennium Development Goals, as well as issues concerning lands, territories and resources, forests, traditional occupations, governance, migration and housing, on the basis of the information and reports provided by indigenous peoples, UN agencies and member states. Inputs, recommendations, observations and comments provided by the participants including indigenous peoples’ organizations during the deliberations form part of the basis for the Forum’s information system.

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<sup>9</sup> Study on the structures, procedures and mechanisms that presently exist and that might be established to effectively address the human rights situation of indigenous peoples and to arrange for indigenous representation and inclusion in such structures, procedures and mechanism (2008), E/C.19/2008/2

<sup>10</sup> For more details on the work of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, see <http://social.un.org/index/IndigenousPeoples.aspx>

As part of its responsibilities, the Forum has established a collaborative approach to advancing indigenous issues within the United Nations, creating a space for cooperation among UN bodies, States and indigenous peoples. The UNPFII successfully engages UN bodies on indigenous peoples' issues through its comprehensive recommendations in all the areas of its mandate.

### **The Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

In 2001, the Commission on Human Rights appointed a Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as part of the system of thematic special procedures.<sup>11</sup>

Through his mandate, the Special Rapporteur:

- Promotes good practices, including new laws, government programs, and constructive agreements between indigenous peoples and states, to implement international standards concerning the rights of indigenous peoples;
- Reports on the overall human rights situations of indigenous peoples in selected countries;
- Addresses specific cases of alleged violations of the rights of indigenous peoples through communications with Governments and others; and
- Conducts or contributes to thematic studies on topics of special importance regarding the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples.

**Thematic:** As stated above, the Special Rapporteur conducts and participates in studies on issues or themes that are of interest to indigenous peoples across borders and regions of the world. Thematic studies are helpful in identifying major issues and for providing a foundation for subsequent positive practical action and reform. Some of the thematic studies have focused on impacts of development projects; domestic laws and international standards to protect indigenous rights; formal State law and customary indigenous law, among others.

**Country Specific:** The Rapporteur reports on the overall human rights situations of indigenous peoples in selected countries through country visits where he meets with governments, indigenous nations and their representatives, indigenous organizations as well as civil society groups. As of 2012, the Special Rapporteur has reported on the situation of indigenous peoples in over 20 countries.

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<sup>11</sup> For more details on the Special Rapporteur's work, see <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/SRIndigenousPeoples/Pages/SRIPeoplesIndex.aspx>

### ***Good practice:***

In carrying out its different mandates, the Special Rapporteur is requested, among other things, to work in close cooperation with the [Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues](#) and the Expert Mechanism.

The Special Rapporteur regularly collaborates with the Forum, as well as with EMRIP, and participates in the annual sessions of these mechanisms to discuss and exchange information on their respective agendas and activities. In the annual sessions of these mechanisms, the Special Rapporteur holds parallel meetings with representatives of indigenous peoples, states and other United Nations agencies to discuss specific cases or issues of concern to indigenous peoples and other matters of interest to the mandate of the Special Rapporteur.

In pursuing its mandate, the Special Rapporteur also gathers information and communications from all relevant sources – including governments, indigenous peoples and their communities and organizations – on violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples. The Special Rapporteur is authorized to take complaints from indigenous individuals, groups or communities, including requests for urgent action, to investigate them, to make visits to the countries where the complaints originate, and to make recommendations to the country violating indigenous human rights and to the various human rights organs of the UN.

Finally, the Special Rapporteur issues media or other public statements on situations of immediate concern in particular countries, and maintains a constructive dialogue with not only governments, but also indigenous peoples, regarding the implementation of his recommendations after on-site and country visits.

Since its creation in 2001, the Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples mechanism has drawn greater awareness and action on protecting and promoting indigenous peoples' rights as part of the UN human rights system. In fulfilling his mandate to 'identify and promote best practices' the Special Rapporteur has continued to promote legal, administrative and programmatic reforms at the domestic level to give effect to the standards of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other relevant international instruments.<sup>12</sup>

### **The Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:**

The UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous People (EMRIP) was established in 2007 through [Resolution 6/36](#) by the UN Human Rights Council, the main human rights body. It builds on the work of the earlier Working Group on

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<sup>12</sup> Annual Report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/15/37) of 19 July 2010.



Indigenous Populations (WGIP), and is composed of five independent experts on the rights of indigenous peoples, with due regard to experts of indigenous origin as well as to gender balance and geographic representation. EMRIP was established due to the mobilization and advocacy of indigenous peoples, who wanted to maintain the existence of an advisory body to the Human Rights Council to continue the work of the WGIP.

The Expert Mechanism has the mandate to:

- (1) Provide the Human Rights Council with thematic advice, in the form of studies and research, on the rights of indigenous peoples as directed by the Economic and Social Council; and
- (2) May also suggest proposals to the Council for its consideration and approval.

Since its establishment, EMRIP has conducted studies on: indigenous peoples' right to education; indigenous people's right to participate in decision making and the role of languages and culture in the promotion and protection of the rights and identity of indigenous peoples.

The Expert Mechanism holds annual sessions in Geneva for five days, usually in July, in which representatives from states, indigenous peoples, indigenous peoples' organisations, civil society, inter-governmental organisations and academia take part.<sup>13</sup>

The sessions of EMRIP provide a unique space for focused multilateral discussions on the scope and contents of the rights affirmed to indigenous peoples under international law, and how the implementation of these rights can be advanced. Participation of indigenous peoples and organizations is ensured through an open and transparent accreditation procedure in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Human Rights Council. Participation of representatives of indigenous communities and organizations is sustained with support from the [Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations](#).

For its studies, EMRIP adopts a participatory and cooperative approach whereby it seeks contributions through submissions presented during its sessions, but most of all through contributions from States, indigenous peoples, academic institutions, national human rights institutions and other non-state actors.

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<sup>13</sup> For more details on the work of the Expert Mechanism, see <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/EMRIP/Pages/EMRIPIndex.aspx>

## **International Decades of the World's Indigenous Peoples**

As good practices, demonstrating continuing commitment to indigenous peoples' rights, the UN proclaimed two international decades for indigenous peoples:

The first International Decade for the World's Indigenous People (1995-2004) was in response to growing international awareness of the critical situation of indigenous peoples. The theme: ***Indigenous people, partnership in action*** specified that a primary goal was strengthening international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous people in such areas as human rights, the environment, development, education and health. The Programme of Activities for the International Decade recognizes the value and diversity of the cultures and forms of social organization of indigenous peoples. It sets out the specific activities to be undertaken by the international community including the adoption of the UN declaration on the rights of indigenous people; the creation of a UN fellowship programme for indigenous peoples; establishment of an UN unit on indigenous peoples, and observance of the International Day of the World's Indigenous People on 9 August each year.

Some of these goals were achieved including the establishment of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the fellowship programme and the annual commemoration of the International Day of the World's Indigenous People.

The commemoration of the **International Day on 9 August** each year mobilizes greater attention on indigenous peoples and the specific challenges they face. It is increasingly being celebrated around the world by indigenous peoples, in partnership with UN agencies – a good practice that is gaining ground each year. As stated by the UN Secretary General in 2011: On the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, we reaffirm the rights of indigenous peoples and our shared commitment to advance the values of equity, justice and dignity for all.<sup>14</sup>

To carry on the work of the international community in realizing the rights and aspirations of indigenous peoples, on 22 December 2004, the UN General Assembly proclaimed the **Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People**, to commence on 1 January 2005 – 2015<sup>15</sup>. The theme of the Second Decade is Partnership for Action and Dignity with the goal of 'further strengthening of international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous peoples in such areas as culture, education, health, human rights, the environment and social and economic development. The Secretary-General appointed the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs as Coordinator of the Second Decade.

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<sup>14</sup> For more information, see <http://social.un.org/index/IndigenousPeoples/InternationalDay/2011.aspx>

<sup>15</sup> UN General Assembly Resolution No 59/174 of 22 December 2004

The Programme of Action for the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People was adopted as the guideline for action on the Second Decade (resolution 60/142). The Decade has five main objectives:

1. Promoting non-discrimination and inclusion of indigenous peoples in the design, implementation and evaluation of international, regional and national processes regarding laws, policies, resources, programmes and projects;
2. Promoting full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in decisions directly or indirectly affecting their lifestyles, traditional lands and territories, their cultural integrity as indigenous peoples with collective rights or any other aspect of their lives, considering the principle of free, prior and informed consent;
3. Redefining development from a vision of equity that is culturally appropriate, including respect for the cultural and linguistic diversity of indigenous peoples;
4. Adopting targeted policies, programmes, projects and budgets for the development of indigenous peoples, including concrete benchmarks, and particular emphasis on indigenous women, children and youth;
5. Developing strong monitoring mechanisms and enhancing accountability at the international, regional and particularly the national level, regarding the implementation of legal, policy and operational frameworks for the protection of indigenous peoples and the improvement of their lives.

The 2010 midterm assessment of the progress made in the achievement of the goal and objectives of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples<sup>16</sup> concluded that substantive advances have been made towards achievement of the goal and objectives of the Decade. While it acknowledged the importance of the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007 and the role it has played in the consolidation of a human rights-based approach to indigenous peoples' issues at the intergovernmental and national level, the report also identified a substantial gap between intentions at the policy level and actual implementation of the specific objectives of the Second Decade. In its conclusion, the report emphasized that further efforts must be made to transform initiatives at the policy level into effective action for and with indigenous peoples.

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<sup>16</sup> See UN Document A/65/166 for more details.

## ***World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (2014)***

- UN General Assembly -

The UN General Assembly has decided to organize a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly, to be known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014<sup>17</sup>. The aim is to share perspectives and best practices on the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples, including to pursue the objectives of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The President of the General Assembly is invited to conduct open-ended consultations with Member States and with representatives of indigenous peoples within the framework of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, as well as the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in order to determine the modalities for the meeting, including the participation of indigenous peoples in the Conference.

This will be the first world conference on indigenous peoples. It comes at a crucial time to influence the new era of sustainable development building on the gains and gaps of the Millennium Development Goals and the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Decade for the World's Indigenous People.

The World Conference provides an exceptional opportunity to continue the established practice of partnership between Member States and indigenous peoples – to determine the next steps in moving forward in taking concrete action to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In an innovative approach, and in accordance with the spirit and mandate of resolution 65/198, the President of the 66<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly appointed two facilitators – a representative of a Member State and a representative of an indigenous peoples' organization - to conduct inclusive informal consultations on his behalf in order to determine the modalities for the World Conference, including the substantive participation of indigenous peoples.

The World Conference demonstrates the UN's continuing commitment to the rights of indigenous peoples at the highest level. The UN system including the indigenous-specific mechanisms, as well as the UN agencies, funds and programmes can play a key role to actively engage in, and support the full and meaningful participation of indigenous peoples, in the processes - at the national, regional and global level – as well as the outcomes of the World Conference.

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<sup>17</sup> UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/65/198

## **United Nations Funds for Indigenous Peoples**

The United Nations has established two funding mechanisms to support its work on indigenous peoples through voluntary contributions.

### ○ **United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations**

The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations was established by the UN General Assembly in 1985 to assist indigenous peoples' participation at indigenous-related UN meetings and events.<sup>18</sup> It was initially established to assist representatives of indigenous communities and organizations to participate in the deliberations of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations by providing them with financial assistance, funded by means of voluntary contributions from Governments, non-governmental organizations and other private or public entities.<sup>19</sup> The mandate of the Fund was expanded to assist indigenous representatives to attend the sessions of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in 2001<sup>20</sup> and to the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2008<sup>21</sup>. This was further expanded in 2010 to facilitate participation of indigenous representatives to the sessions of the Human Rights Council and of human rights treaty bodies<sup>22</sup>.

The Voluntary Fund is administered by OHCHR assisted by a Board of Trustees. The mandate of the Board is to advise the Secretary-General on the use of funds, through the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Board is composed of five persons with relevant experience on indigenous issues, who serve in their personal capacity. They are appointed for a three-year renewable term, with regard to geographical and gender representation, and to indigenous origin.<sup>23</sup>

### ○ **United Nations Trust Fund on Indigenous Issues**

The United Nations Trust Fund on Indigenous Issues was established in by the General Assembly<sup>24</sup> to provide support for (a) the activities of the Permanent Forum and (b) for projects and programmes undertaken during the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (2005-2015).

The Small Grants Programme under the Trust Fund is an important contribution to the capacity building and empowering of indigenous peoples in engaging in their

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/IPeoplesFund/Pages/IPeoplesFundIndex.aspx>

<sup>19</sup> UN General Assembly Resolution 40/131 of 13 December 1985

<sup>20</sup> UN General Assembly Resolution 56/140 of 19 December 2001

<sup>21</sup> UN General Assembly Resolution 63/161 of 18 December 2008

<sup>22</sup> UN General Assembly resolution 65/198 of 21 December 2010

<sup>23</sup> For more details, see

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/IPeoplesFund/Pages/IPeoplesFundIndex.aspx>

<sup>24</sup> UN General Assembly Resolutions 57/191 and 59/174

own development processes and local and national policies. Priority is on projects focusing on the Programme of Action of the Second Decade under the broad mandated areas of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues: culture, education, health, human rights, the environment and social and economic development.

The Bureau of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) functions as the Advisory Group to the Coordinator of the Decade, the Under-Secretary General in the selection of projects under the Trust Fund. The Advisory Group meets for two days before the sessions of UNPFII to identify projects to recommend for support. These are for up to US\$ 10,000 for a time period covering one year. From 2006 to 2011, the Trust Fund supported 109 projects, from over 1801 projects submitted, due to limited resources. The projects have mainly been implemented with a local focus (74 %), with a majority in the rural areas (64 %).

The Trust Fund contributes to the Permanent Forum's partnership and support for indigenous community-based development according to their own needs and priorities. It is funded solely through voluntary contributions.

## Chapter III: Good Practices of the UN System

*“Working with indigenous peoples at country level implies adapting the programming processes and strategies to ensure their effective participation. Their human rights, aspirations, cultures and specific characteristics must be fully respected and strengthened in order for programming to be effective.” – UNDG Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples’ Issues (February 2008)*

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples clearly provides the mandate to all United Nations agencies to work on indigenous peoples’ issues.

The UN Declaration added new responsibilities to the UN system. Article 41 calls for the UN system to develop effective ways of ensuring the participation of indigenous peoples on issues that affect them. Such a process requires an understanding of their spiritual ties to their lands, their collective and individual rights and identities and their diverse worldviews, traditions, languages and cultures. Realizing the rights of indigenous peoples and safeguarding their right to participation and self determination requires a rights-based approach.

Article 42 of the Declaration is far reaching and its purpose is two-fold: (i) it calls upon the UN to aim at contributing to the “respect for and full application” of the Declaration – that is the UN system shall work to promote the incorporation of the Declaration into national law and policy, including through national courts and through administrative decisions. It also should work in partnership to create awareness of the rights contained in the Declaration; and (ii) it requires the UN system, including the Permanent Forum, to follow up on the “effectiveness” of the Declaration i.e. to examine and assess the *realities* on the ground, to see how the international standards created by the Declaration are implemented at the local and national level and identify any gaps that may persist.

It follows that the UN system, including its specialized agencies as mentioned in article 41, should orient its work and develop policies and programmes towards the achievement of substantial results for indigenous peoples as rights holders.

<p><b><u>UNDRIP</u></b></p> <p><b>Article 41</b></p>	<p>The organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations shall contribute to the full realization of the provisions of this Declaration through the mobilization, inter alia, of financial cooperation and technical assistance. Ways and means of ensuring participation of indigenous peoples on issues affecting them shall be established.<sup>25</sup></p>
<p><b>Article 42</b></p>	<p>The United Nations, its bodies, including the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and specialized agencies, including at the country level, and States shall promote respect for and full application of the provisions of this Declaration and follow up the effectiveness of this Declaration.<sup>26</sup></p>

This publication draws out the diverse range of programmatic and institutional activities specific to indigenous peoples carried out by the UN system and also covers some of the challenges that emerge. The aim is to raise questions and inspire innovations through the examples provided so as to enable the UN system to better fulfill its responsibilities and implement the UN Declaration.

## **GLOBAL LEVEL**

The following are a few joint initiatives of the UN system at the global level:

### **Inter Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues**

There are a number of inter-agency and inter-department networks and groups that focus on both normative and operational work specifically related to indigenous peoples' issues.

At the global level, the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues (IASG) is a mechanism for inter-agency cooperation on indigenous issues. It was established to support and promote the mandate of the UN Permanent Forum, and expanded to include indigenous-related mandates. It is formed by focal points/units of the departments or organizations of the UN system agencies, programmes and funds whose work is relevant to indigenous peoples.

<sup>25</sup> UNGA Resolution A/RES/61/295, 2007: p10.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.



The main objectives of the UN Inter-Agency Support Group are: to provide an opportunity for the exchange of information in regards to their work on indigenous issues; strengthen inter-agency cooperation to promote the human rights and well-being of indigenous peoples including the dissemination and implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; analyze, disseminate and contribute to the implementation of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum; interact with the Permanent Forum and its members to provide and seek information, advice and substantive inputs; advise in the mainstreaming of indigenous issues within the UN system, and strengthen mutual collaboration.

The IASG meets once a year for a substantive meeting, with follow-up meetings and communications during the Permanent Forum session. Responsibility for chairing the IASG is rotated annually among the participating UN organizations. There are currently over 32 members of the IASG.<sup>27</sup>

Currently, there are efforts underway to establish an inter-agency support group at the regional level in Latin America and the Caribbean. It is expected that this will inspire other regions to follow this practice.

### **UNDG Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues**

In an effort to better align their work at the country level, and ensure greater compliance with the UN Declaration, a UN inter-agency task team<sup>28</sup> undertook efforts to mainstream indigenous peoples' rights into the work of the UN system in particular at the country level.

Following on from a 2006 recommendation from the UN Development Group to the UN IASG, the task team developed the UNDG Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues. The Guidelines were approved by UN Development Group in February 2008. The guidelines provide practical advice on how to mainstream indigenous peoples' issues into the planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes at the country level. It presents a practical table and checklist of key issues and related rights and describes specific programmatic implications for addressing and mainstreaming indigenous peoples' issues.

The purpose of the Guidelines is to assist the UN system to mainstream and integrate indigenous peoples' issues in processes for operational activities and programmes at the country level. They set out the broad normative, policy and

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<sup>27</sup> For more details, see

<http://social.un.org/index/IndigenousPeoples/InterAgencySupportGroup/MembershiptoIASG.aspx>

<sup>28</sup> This included FAO, IFAD, ILO, OHCHR, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UN-HABITAT and UNITAR.

operational framework for implementing a human rights based and culturally sensitive approach to development for and with indigenous peoples.

The Guidelines underscore the potential of the UN system to realize the provisions of the UN Declaration and provide clear lines of action for planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes involving indigenous peoples. They provide the framework for systematically recognizing the specificity of indigenous peoples' situations and cultures, taking into consideration the special needs of indigenous women, children and youth. The Guidelines integrate the principles of the UN Declaration and of cultural diversity into UN country programmes.

The Guidelines provide guidance for UN country teams, in particular within the framework of the Common Country Assessments / CCAs and the UN Development Assistance Framework UNDAF and the incorporation of indigenous peoples' rights into this process. They are an operational tool to promote the inclusion of indigenous peoples' issues and adherence to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples within the UN System.

### **Action Plan on the Rollout of the UNDG Guidelines**

An example of a good practice that links the global to the regional and local levels is capacity building activities undertaken by the UN system. The Secretariat of the Permanent Forum has spearheaded an Action Plan on the UNDG Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples Issues, with the active participation and involvement of the UN agencies, in particular the task team.

The main components of the action plan are:

- Building capacities of UN staff, government officials and representatives of indigenous peoples' organizations; and
- Enabling the creation of spaces for consultation and dialogue between UN Country Teams and indigenous peoples.

The activities are oriented towards ensuring greater incorporation of indigenous peoples' issues into the policy and programming process at the national level including the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) processes and to assist the UN system to mainstream and integrate indigenous peoples' issues in operational activities and programmes, following the normative and programmatic framework presented in the UNDG Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues.

Efforts aim to consolidate and build on the awareness-raising and advisory mandate of the Permanent Forum. The main beneficiaries are policy makers, government officials and representatives of indigenous peoples' organizations. With support

from IFAD, and in close cooperation with the relevant UN Country Teams, capacity building trainings have been conducted in Argentina, Bolivia, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Guyana, and the Philippines. This has been with the participation of indigenous experts as resource persons and facilitators.

The following are some examples of UN-system projects and programmes specific to indigenous peoples:

***Programme to Promote ILO Convention No. 169 (PRO 169)***

**- International Labour Office -**

**Objective:** The aim is to promote the rights and improve the socio-economic situation of indigenous and tribal peoples, in compliance with the principles of ILO Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, 1989.

**Strategy:**

PRO 169 combines a flexible demand-driven approach, responding to emerging needs and opportunities at international, regional and national levels with longer-term strategic initiatives at regional and country-level. PRO 169 actively contributes to UN system coordination on indigenous peoples through the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Inter-Agency Support Group, and has an ongoing dialogue with specialized technical staff in other agencies, in order to ensure sharing of information, experiences and lessons learned.

PRO 169 is developing tools and mechanisms to facilitate a better institutional embedding of the issues relevant to indigenous peoples. The increased focus on mainstreaming has strengthened the attention on indigenous issues within the ILO and the linkages with other relevant programmes and units at headquarters, in the regions and with the ILO International Training Centre in Turin, Italy.

**Overview:**

The International Labour Office established the Project to Promote ILO Convention No. 169 in 1995. It has operations in Africa, undertaking comprehensive research on indigenous peoples, policy reform, capacity-building of government and indigenous partners as well as local economic development. In Asia, the focus is on dialogue and conflict resolution as well as policy reform and capacity-building of indigenous and government partners. In September 2007, a major achievement was reached as Nepal ratified Convention No. 169 as part of the current peace and state reform process. In Latin America, PRO 169 is increasingly responding to

needs and requests for technical cooperation related to the implementation of Convention No. 169 given the wide range of ratification in the region.

**Good practice:**

The programme has developed a number of initiatives in cooperation with indigenous peoples, addressing the information, training and capacity-building needs of several and very different target groups ranging from national governments and social partners to indigenous fellows and interns. The strategy takes into account the different levels of intervention (community, local, and national, regional, international) as well as the diversity of target groups, which necessitates a diversity of entry points, modalities, tools and languages.

PRO 169 is the first global programme within the UN system that is specific to indigenous and tribal peoples, and has achieved recognition for its efforts.<sup>29</sup>

For more information: [http://pro169.org/?page\\_id=9](http://pro169.org/?page_id=9)

***Indigenous Fellowship Programme***

**- OHCHR -**

**Objective:** To capacitate indigenous peoples on the UN system, human rights instruments and mechanisms and relevant national laws and processes to enable greater awareness and use of these tools to promote and protect their rights.

**Overview:**

The OHCHR Indigenous Fellowship Programme<sup>30</sup> was established in 1997. The aim of the programme is to offer indigenous peoples the opportunity to work within the UN system and thereby increase their knowledge and practical experience of the UN and its work with indigenous peoples. The goal is to enable the Indigenous Fellows and through them, their organizations, communities and people to better protect and promote their rights. The Indigenous Fellowship Programme was launched by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in the context of the first International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples (1995/2004) and continues to this day.

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<sup>29</sup> For more details on PRO 169, see <http://www.ilo.org/indigenous/Aboutus/pro169/lang--en/index.htm>

<sup>30</sup> For more details see: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/Pages/Fellowship.aspx>

The indigenous fellows must be sponsored by their indigenous communities and/or indigenous organization, and work within the OHCHR team at the UN in Geneva, as well as with other agencies involved in the programme. The selection of fellows reflects a gender and a regional balance. The general human rights situation in the respective regions/countries is also taken into consideration.

The Fellowship programme, initially offered only in English, has since expanded to include a Spanish-speaking component particularly open to candidates from Latin America in 2000, organized in close cooperation between OHCHR and the Human Rights Institute of Deusto University in Bilbao (Spain); French in 2002 - to benefit indigenous communities from Africa, Canada and other French speaking countries<sup>31</sup>; and in Russian from 2005, in partnership with the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON) and the Center for Support of Indigenous Peoples of the North/Russian Indigenous Training Centre (CSIPN/RITC) and since 2008, in cooperation with the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia.

### **Strategy:**

The Fellows are based at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Geneva, Switzerland. The programme is an inter-active process, which consists of briefings on several topics (OHCHR's mandate and activities, the UN system, Human Rights instruments and mechanisms, including those more specifically dealing with indigenous issues) and individual and group assignments. Fellows also have the opportunity to receive training/briefing sessions with other UN and specialized agencies (ILO, WIPO, UNESCO, UNDP, UNITAR) and with other international organizations and Geneva based Human Rights NGOs.

The programme provides the Fellows with general knowledge on the United Nations system, international human rights instruments and mechanisms, in particular those relevant to indigenous peoples. This is done to enable them to conduct training sessions within their communities/organizations on their return with the knowledge and practical experience they have gained during the fellowship.

The training programme coincides with the sessions of the Expert Mechanisms on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, thus allowing the fellows to participate more actively at EMRIP sessions.

### **Good practice:**

A key element of the IFP is its focus on the involvement of indigenous organizations – both in the process of selection of the Fellows and in their follow up commitment to applying and sharing their knowledge and experiences at the community level.

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<sup>31</sup> Until 2008, the French-speaking component of the IFP was organized in partnership with the University of Bourgogne in Dijon (France).

As part of the application process, sponsoring organizations are required to specify how the recommended candidate, once trained through the fellowship, will support current and future activities of the organization. This practice helps cement a partnership between the UN system and the local indigenous organization, through the indigenous fellow, thereby multiplying the effects and sustainability of the programme.

An evaluation of the first 10 years of the Indigenous Fellows Programme showed that Fellows provided human rights training to more than 100 indigenous men and women from 46 countries, who in turn have provided human rights training to many more in their communities. The programme is ongoing.

### ***Engagement with Indigenous Peoples***

#### **- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)**

**Objective:** To implement the Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples with the support of institutional tools and participatory mechanisms to incorporate indigenous peoples' engagement in programme planning.

'In our 2011 **Rural Poverty Report**, we wrote that indigenous peoples: "Are often disproportionately held back by disadvantages rooted in inequalities... virtually everywhere, they suffer from discrimination, violation of their rights from mainstream social, economic and political processes... In addition, indigenous peoples suffer from precarious control over their natural resources base, particularly in the face of commercial interests."

Given IFAD's mandate to assist and enable poor rural people to overcome poverty, combating these injustices is central to our work.'

*Mr. Kanayo F. Nwanze, IFAD President at workshop establishing the Indigenous Peoples Forum, Rome, 17 February, 2011*

#### **Overview:**

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has been working with indigenous peoples in rural areas of developing countries for over thirty years. From this experience, as well as from experience of indigenous peoples and other partner, in 2009 IFAD adopted a Policy of Engagement with Indigenous Peoples to enhance effectiveness in its engagement with indigenous peoples' communities in rural areas. The Policy of Engagement sets out the principles which IFAD will adhere to in its work with indigenous peoples, and the instruments, procedures and resources IFAD will deploy to implement them. The Policy is consistent with international

standards, in particular the United Nations Development Group Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues, and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

IFAD's fourth Strategic Framework (2011-2015) centers on enabling poor rural people to improve their food security and nutrition, raise their incomes and strengthen their resilience. The Framework identifies indigenous peoples as an important target group because they face economic, social, political and cultural marginalization in the societies in which they live, resulting in extreme poverty and vulnerability for a disproportionate number of them.

### **Strategy:**

IFAD uses specific principles of engagement to enhance its development effectiveness with indigenous peoples' communities in rural areas, drawn from its Strategic Framework 2007-2010. The nine fundamental principles guiding this engagement process are: (a) cultural heritage and identity as assets; (b) free, prior and informed consent; (c) community-driven development; (d) land, territories and resources; (e) indigenous peoples' knowledge; (f) environmental issues and climate change; (g) access to markets; (h) empowerment; and (i) gender equality.

IFAD will implement these principles in the formulation of country strategies, in policy dialogue and throughout the project cycle, and will update its operational guidelines accordingly. In addition, IFAD will strengthen the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility, will establish new learning and knowledge sharing instruments, and will further develop dialogue with indigenous peoples through the creation of an indigenous peoples' forum.

IFAD developed technical notes to guide staff at the country and regional levels, to build the capacity of staff on indigenous issues and to support the implementation of the policy. The technical notes inform the development of country programme strategies and the design of IFAD-funded projects. Generally the Notes describe the situation of indigenous peoples in a country or region and include information on national legislation on indigenous peoples; international treaties, declarations and conventions ratified by the country; relevant regional, national and grass-roots organizations/networks; a summary of IFAD's existing work with indigenous peoples; and good local practices of UN and other international organizations. The country specific technical notes – many of them prepared by indigenous experts and with support of indigenous organizations - have been instrumental in implementing IFAD's Policy of Engagement with indigenous peoples.

The Policy of Engagement also calls for the establishment of an Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD. This was done in February 2011. The Forum will be a process of dialogue and consultation between representatives of indigenous peoples, IFAD staff and Member States. It will bring together between 20 and 30 indigenous peoples' representatives, including members of the UNPFII and selected

representatives of indigenous peoples' communities involved in IFAD-supported programmes. The Forum will also promote accountability in providing feedback on IFAD's operation. The first meeting of the Forum will be in 2013.

**Good practice:**

Indigenous peoples have repeatedly asked for a more systematic dialogue with United Nations agencies. In response to this request, IFAD has taken a series of initiatives and accumulated valuable experience in establishing constructive dialogue with indigenous peoples.

The adoption of the IFAD policy of engagement with indigenous peoples in 2009 was in response to a recommendation made by the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples at its fourth session (May 2005). The Forum recommended that IFAD consider:

*“... operational guidelines on indigenous peoples and a framework tool for advocacy for promoting indigenous rights and development and achieving international development goals which emerged from international conferences, summits and conventions which are relevant for indigenous peoples.”  
(E/2005/43)*

The policy enables IFAD to *systematize* a rights based approach to work effectively with indigenous peoples as partners, and ensure its institutional sustainability.

IFAD's policy of engagement with indigenous peoples has had a positive impact on programme implementation based on the concept of self-determined development as essential with the participation of indigenous communities. An integral part of implementing a new approach, the Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples facilitates the creation of the institutional space and capacity to carry it out.

The objectives of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum, as set forth in the annex to its Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples explaining the process, are to:

- share and discuss the assessment of IFAD's engagement with indigenous peoples among 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.

The activities of the Forum will focus on indigenous peoples' consultations and involvement in the development of IFAD's country strategies, project design, implementation and monitoring processes, and in policy dialogue and advocacy. In so doing, the Forum will also support IFAD in implementing its Policy on



Engagement with Indigenous Peoples and in translating its principles into action on the ground. Moreover, the Forum will promote accountability by encouraging feedback by indigenous peoples' representatives on IFAD's operations.

The establishment of the IFAD Indigenous Peoples' Forum represents a concrete attempt to institutionalize a process of consultation and dialogue with indigenous peoples' representatives at the national, regional and international levels.

## ***United Nations Indigenous Peoples Partnership (UNIPP)***

**- UNDP, ILO, OHCHR, UNICEF & UNFPA -**

The United Nations Indigenous Peoples Partnership (UNIPP) launched in May 2011 is the first global UN inter-agency initiative to promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples through joint country programs in partnership with indigenous communities. It is a joint initiative of the Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), International Labour Organization (ILO), UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA.

The partnership serves as a framework to facilitate the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples and demonstrates a commitment to Article 41 of UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. UNIPP aims to intensify efforts to “deliver as one” by building capacity to enhance meaningful participation of indigenous peoples as equal partners in developing policies and programmes.

As a UN collaborative framework, the primary goal of UNIPP is to focus on developing national capacities to promote effective dialogue and partnership to fulfill the rights of indigenous peoples at the country level. It has a core grounding in human rights principles which align with indigenous peoples’ vision of self-determination, consultation, participation, and free, prior, and informed consent, as these are key for establishing meaningful partnerships. To realize UNIPP’s objectives, the Participating UN Organizations mentioned above have decided to establish a UNIPP MultiDonor Trust Fund. UNIPP is governed and directed by a Policy Board comprised of representatives from participating UN organizations, and indigenous representatives and experts who are identified in consultation with the UN mechanisms on indigenous peoples’ issues.

UNIPP has recently initiated operations.

***“UNIPP is an opportunity for UN partners to bring their respective expertise under one umbrella, and intensify their efforts to ‘deliver as one’,” -- Asha-Rose Migiro, UN Deputy Secretary-General, Launch of UNIPP, 26 May 2011***

## **REGIONAL LEVEL**

There are also some initiatives at the regional level that are noteworthy, of which UNDP's Regional Initiative on Rights and Development (Asia) is an example of a good practice at the regional level:

### ***Regional Initiative on Indigenous Peoples' Rights and Development***

#### **- UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Centre -**

The UNDP Regional Initiative on Indigenous Peoples' Rights and Development (RIPP) was established in September 2004 within the framework of UNDP's Policy of Engagement with Indigenous Peoples (2001). It was specific to the Asia Pacific region, and part of the regionalization process of UNDP.

RIPP encourages cooperation among governments and indigenous peoples to widen the development choices available to indigenous peoples and ensure better integration of indigenous issues into national development processes and outcomes. Activities include conducting policy dialogues on critical issues such as natural resource management at the local, national and regional level; providing policy advice and programming support for indigenous peoples' rights and sustainable development; and strengthening the capacity of indigenous peoples and governments in upholding and implementing indigenous rights.

RIPP is distinctive in that it was developed through a broad and thorough consultation process that included indigenous peoples, as well as governments and UN agencies, to enable it to clearly respond to the rights and priorities of indigenous peoples. The process also helped to position RIPP within the international indigenous peoples' rights movement and occupy a specific strategic niche. RIPP worked in close partnership with indigenous peoples and with governments and helped link UN agencies with indigenous peoples in the region.

Indigenous peoples are involved in the programme at every level, as part of the management committee, advisory committee, as experts and resource persons and in directing and managing the programme.

A major factor in its sustainability and impact was its flexibility in adapting and responding to the needs and priorities in the different countries. The recognition of indigenous peoples in Asia remains a challenge, and UNDP-RIPP, played a key role in bridging the gap between policy and practice by enabling dialogue and cooperation between governments and indigenous peoples, and the UN system.

A 2010 assessment of the programme noted that having a separate and distinct programme on indigenous peoples within UNDP was critical to its success in raising awareness on indigenous peoples' rights in the Asia-Pacific region.

UNDP-RIPP is recognized as a unique initiative within the UN system, and has inspired a similar programme in the Latin American region.

For more details see: <http://asia-pacific.undp.org/practices/governance/ripp/>

## COUNTRY LEVEL

The following examples illustrate how the rights enshrined in the UNDRIP are promoted across different programmes and initiatives at the country level. Each activity is described from the perspective of the UN agency, within the context of indigenous peoples, their unique identities and needs.

They are organized according to the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum and as specified in the Programme of Action of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Decade for Indigenous Peoples (2005 – 2015).

- Economic and Social Development
- Culture
- Environment
- Education
- Human Rights and
- Health

The Good Practices *profile* is introduced with information on the central UN agency leading the programme, the country or region of operation, the title, and the programme's objective. The *overview* provides background information on the programme and the specific issue addressed. It also describes the situation in terms of rights of indigenous peoples. The *strategy* includes information on the participation, engagement and partnership with indigenous peoples. The profile concludes with a closer look at why the programme may be considered a **Good Practice**.

The programmes highlighted below are at different stages of implementation; some are in progress while others have been finalized or are near completion.<sup>32</sup>

### **Economic and Social Development**

***Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including,***

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<sup>32</sup> The majority of the experiences described in this compilation are based on reports from UN agencies, fund and programmes and from UN Country Teams in response to the 'Survey on Indigenous Peoples' Issues for UNCTs' and 'Compilation of Experiences and Practices Working with Indigenous Peoples' Issues' guideline.

*inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security. – Article 21, UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

### **Grupo Técnico de Interculturalidad / GTI**

#### **- UN Country Team – Bolivia-**

**Objective:** To strengthen collaboration with indigenous peoples through a consultative approach and mobilize effective inter-agency partnerships<sup>1</sup> including at the community level.

#### **Overview:**

The United Nations Country Team in Bolivia established an Inter-Agency Group on Inter-Culturalism (Grupo Técnico de Interculturalidad / GTI) in 2006. The GTI aim is to enable greater cooperation and coordination of UN agencies, funds and programs with programmes and activities that have particular relevance for the indigenous peoples in Bolivia. The objective is to strengthen the technical capacity on indigenous rights and inter-cultural dialogue, and promote greater integration of indigenous peoples and afro-descendants into the work of the UN system. The inter-agency group played a leading role in the creation of the National Council for Dialogue among Indigenous, Native, Peasant Peoples and the United Nations System. It is defined as a space for consultation, partnering, exchange and dialogue on national development policies to enable indigenous peoples to constructively engage with UN programmes and agencies. It has been described as a progressive mechanism for consultation and dialogue with the main indigenous organizations in the country.<sup>33</sup>

#### **Strategy:**

The Inter-agency Group on Inter-Culturalism mobilized inter-agency, indigenous, institutional and local partnerships as well as technical training and capacity building to integrate the rights of indigenous peoples within the work of the UN System.

Through the Inter-Agency Group and the National Council for Dialogue, the UN Country Team/ UNCT coordinated with national and indigenous leaders on initiatives that would benefit from a joint, inter-agency approach, including the provision of logistical and technical support to the organization of a number of

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<sup>33</sup> See A/HRC/11/11, Mission to Bolivia, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, Rodolfo Stavenhagen, 18 February 2009.  
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/11session/A.HRC.11.11.pdf>

indigenous initiatives. Most notably, the national council for dialogue secured indigenous participation in the consultation process for the elaboration of the 2008-2012 UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

The UN Country Team supported a situational analysis of the Guaraní peoples and the formulation of a strategic plan for the Alto Parapetí region developed by local government authorities and representatives of the Guaraní peoples. In addition, a programme to provide the Guaraní with identity documents to enable them access to cash transfer programmes and other social services was also initiated. The programme assisted 700 persons, mainly indigenous women.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, the UNCT provided support for indigenous peoples' participation at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and other international fora. The UN Country Team played a lead role in raising greater awareness on the UN system and its work with indigenous peoples.

### **Good Practice:**

In 2009, UNDP conducted an evaluation on the extent to which civil society consultation mechanisms in thirteen countries enhanced the meaningful participation and inclusion of civil society in the work of the UN. According to this evaluation, the concept of UN-civil society policy dialogue was relatively new for United Nations Country Teams in general, as well as for civil society at the country level. Indigenous organizations in Bolivia, according to the review, were “very satisfied with the meaningful participation and inclusion at the grassroots level”.<sup>35</sup>

The National Council for Dialogue is an indication of the commitment of the UN to engage with indigenous peoples in a manner that supports a participatory and community based approach. The creation of the National Council for Dialogue represents a UN effort to be a more outward-looking organization open to consulting a range of stakeholders, in addition to national governments. It is an example of a mechanism to leverage the participation of indigenous peoples in spaces where they can provide input and suggestions on UN programmes and frameworks, where they constitute an integral part of the dialogue and decision-making process, and where they can set the national development agenda. The GTI has served as a major interface for UN agencies, including UNFPA, UNIFEM, UNICEF and OHCHR in their work on the ground.

An assessment by the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service noted high level indigenous participation and engagement in the initial meetings of the National Council for Dialogue. At the same it reported that the relations between indigenous peoples and the Council were “uneven” and at times were not deep or effective enough to help their indigenous peoples organizations achieve their objectives. The

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<sup>34</sup> E/C.19/2012/11

<sup>35</sup> See UNDP National Civil Society Advisory Committees to United Nations Country Teams: Assessment Report, November 2009.

assessment cautioned that to optimize the usefulness of the Council, “technical and other capacities need to be strengthened on both sides”.<sup>36</sup> To this end, in 2009, the Special Rapporteur recommended after his mission to Bolivia that the UN country team “strengthens the activities of the National Council for Dialogue among Indigenous, Native, Peasant Peoples and the United Nations System, with the participation of the representatives of the various agencies, funds and organizations comprising the United Nations country team.”<sup>37</sup>

### ***Strengthening Indigenous Peoples’ Rights and Development***

- UNDP, Philippines -

The problems faced by about 14 -17 million indigenous peoples in the Philippines require interventions that are integrated and holistic, rather than stop-gap and piece-meal. The UNDP program: “Strengthening Indigenous Peoples’ Rights and Development” was launched on 9 February 2010, and brings together stakeholders from relevant areas to zero in on cross-cutting issues as peace building, environmental justice and good governance.

The programme focuses on securing the rights of indigenous peoples and strengthening their stake in resource management, particularly on their ancestral lands, including the sustainable use, management and protection of these lands. The program is part of UNDP’s larger involvement in the UN’s drive for a comprehensive, multi-agency UN System response to the challenges faced by indigenous peoples in the country. It supports good governance principles and promotes indigenous peace-keeping mechanisms to avoid costly and harmful armed conflicts.

The programme will integrate and build on current responses and help facilitate greater mainstreaming of indigenous rights and concerns across the development agenda. The SIPRD was designed thorough a consultative process involving government agencies and indigenous peoples, drawing on the resources of the entire UN System in the Philippines.

The UN is exploring greater collaboration within the UN Country Team including ILO, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, UNIFEM, WFP, UNEP, UNESCO, FAO and the World Bank to better integrate their activities to strengthen impact through joint programming, under the framework of the SIPRD programme.

Priority work focused on the nationwide population census of indigenous peoples conducted by the National Statistics Office (NSO), in collaboration with the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP). The national census, for the first time,

<sup>36</sup> Nora McKeon and Carol Kalafatic, “Strengthening Dialogue: UN Experience with Small Farmer Organizations and Indigenous Peoples,” page 29. UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service, 2009.

<sup>37</sup> A/HRC/11/11, Report on the Mission to Bolivia, para. 103.

included disaggregated data on indigenous peoples, significantly providing a clearer picture of where interventions are most needed.<sup>38</sup>

UN Development Assistance Framework: A UN Country team training on the UNDG Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples, conducted by the UN Permanent Forum in 2009, resulted in the establishment of an Inter-Agency Technical Working Group on Indigenous Peoples<sup>39</sup>. The IATWG was instrumental in incorporating indigenous peoples' rights into the UNDAF (2012 – 2018) as a strategic priority.

## **Culture**

*Indigenous peoples have the right to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.*

*- Article 11, UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

*...culture should be integrated as a prerequisite for any development project design in order to build development with identity, respecting people's way of life and building sustainable human development.*

*- Recommendation 12 of the Programme of Action of the Second Decade of the World's Indigenous People*

### **Regional Community Multimedia Centres: Indigenous Peoples and Multi-media in Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug, Western Siberia**

#### **UNESCO – Russian Federation**

**Objective:** This is part of UNESCO's larger International Initiative for Community Multimedia Centres (CMCs). The objective is to revive traditional cultural practices of the Khanty-Mansi region through the establishment of indigenous multi-media centers.

<sup>38</sup> For more details, see <http://content.undp.org/go/newsroom/2010/february/undp-multi-agency-program-seeks-stronger-role-for-indigenous-peoples-in-the-philippines-en>

<sup>39</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/manila/aboutus/WCMS\\_124886/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/manila/aboutus/WCMS_124886/lang--en/index.htm)



### **Overview:**

Cultural traditions of indigenous peoples in the Khanty communities at Tiu-Tiacha and Yaoun Yakh were revitalized through a combination of traditional customs and multi-media with support from UNESCO, through a two-year grant from the Ford Foundation.

UNESCO Moscow supported the launch of two Community Multimedia Centers in Khanty communities. In particular, indigenous peoples set up and launched a website introducing their culture and traditions in May 2010. The multi-media centers enabled local indigenous peoples to generate awareness of the traditions of the Bear Festival, the most ancient Khanty ritual, thereby contributing to the revival of Yugan Khanty cultural traditions.

The circumpolar bear cult acknowledges and honors the Bear as a ritual ancestor and as Master of the Forest. The Bear Festival (pupi kot, 'the bear's house,' in the language of Khanty) is an elaborate 'bringing home' festival, where the Bear is made a guest in the house and celebrated with songs, dances, and folk drama.

### **Strategy:**

To strengthen and document the cultural traditions and practices of the Khanty, in particular the Bear Festival, UNESCO assisted in the training and instruction of apprentices and masters of the ceremony. The project promoted the revival and transmission of Yugan Khanty cultural traditions to future generations by facilitating their documentation through the use of media and communication strategies.

### **Good Practice:**

For the Khanty, access to information and communication technology / ICT plays an instrumental role as a source of information and cultural knowledge. Capacity building in the use of ICT at local multimedia centers enabled community members to use and apply their new skills to stage and document the festival. The website on cultural traditions and the visual documentation of the festival were produced by indigenous community members.

The process inspired discussion about the form and meaning of indigenous celebrations and folklore texts among indigenous elders, the ceremony leaders and apprentices and empowered indigenous peoples in reviving and documenting their cultures and traditions in their own local indigenous communities.

The key principle in the success of this project stemmed from the involvement of the indigenous communities in its development, including the indigenous youth and elders. This is also a good practice of inter-generational linkages to maintain and strengthen indigenous culture.

## **Environment**

*“...respect for indigenous knowledge, cultures and traditional practices contributes to sustainable and equitable development and proper management of the environment”—Preamble, UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

### ***Integrated coastal management with special emphasis on the sustainable management***

#### **UNEP, Latin America and the Caribbean**

**Objective:** The project applies the UN ecosystems approach in order to develop activities that can contribute to the sustainable management of mangroves. The aim is to establish local and regional, consultative partnerships and mechanisms towards environmental sustainability of indigenous peoples lands, territories and resources.

#### **Overview:**

The Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) directs a project in La Moskitia, which is a shared ecosystem in the tropical rainforest between Honduras and Nicaragua populated mainly by indigenous peoples. The programme has three components: (i) research on the economic valuation of mangrove ecosystem services, (ii) a community livelihood component and (iii) capacity building activities. The main beneficiaries are the Miskito, Rama, Garifuna, Sumo, Lenca, Pechs and to a smaller extent Tawahka peoples. In Nicaragua, the project is implemented by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources together with the autonomous governments of the Southern and Northern Regional Autonomous Atlantic Regions (RAAN and RAAS).

This project was implemented through a Joint Programme and with the participation of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment of Spain and the Ministries of Environment and Natural Resources of Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

#### **Strategy:**

Embedded in the project design is a structure to reinforce indigenous participation, including in the monitoring of project implementation, and promote respect for indigenous culture and language.

The UNDG Guidelines call for quality programme monitoring that is consultative and participatory. Indigenous peoples as the beneficiaries should provide input on the extent to which a project or programme is meeting their needs and strategic interests on a regular basis, and participate in monitoring activities and outcomes.

*“... sound monitoring and evaluation should be participatory and be adapted to capture indigenous perceptions through their own analytical perspective.”- UNDG Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples Issues (2008)*

**Good practice:**

UNEP and its partners established a stakeholder committee that plays an advisory role for the implementation in each country. Indigenous communities formed part of this committee together with government partners, non-government organizations, academia and the private sector. Furthermore, indigenous national coordinators of the project serve an important role in consultation and monitoring mechanisms.

The indigenous national coordinators in each country consult with community members using indigenous languages to ensure the project meets community needs. The national coordinators are from indigenous communities themselves and are therefore familiar with local issues and they are well placed to raise awareness of indigenous knowledge and engagement processes to non-indigenous members of the committee. The coordinators collect data and monitor the efficiency of the programme. From information received, the efforts of indigenous national coordinators are received positively by indigenous communities. This strategy has the potential to enhance learning and allow the programme strategies to change over time and adapt as necessary to increase effectiveness.

***Integrated and Adaptive Environmental Resource Management to Minimize Vulnerabilities to Climate Change in Microbasins of the Andean Highlands***

**United Nations Joint Programme on Climate Change - Peru**

**Partners:** United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Pan American Health Organization/ World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) and the Peruvian Ministry of Environment - Peru

**Objective:** To foster effective outreach mechanisms through collaboration with local Indigenous leaders to create greater awareness about the threats of climate change and to develop local methods on how to react to these changes.

*“The Andes is the area of Peru most affected by climate change  
...Many people have had to move elsewhere in search of better*

*living conditions. Not so in Ccsacancha. The residents of this rural town participate in a joint and coordinated manner in integrated and sustainable natural resource management. This society has become a reference point, a pilot and model community for the Joint Programme.” -- UNEP Latin America and the Caribbean* <sup>40</sup>

### **Overview:**

The UN Country Team in Peru created a Joint Programme to enable local, provincial and regional governments in the provinces of Chumbivilcas and Cotabambas, Peru, to raise awareness on climate change, and to design and implement decentralized environmental management systems to respond to climate changes.

### **Strategy:**

The Joint Programme was conducted in partnership with local indigenous leaders and communities to create awareness on climate change and to increase local capacity to respond to the effects of climate change. Indigenous leaders participated in Joint Programme workshops on climate change and climate adaptation and then passed along their new knowledge so that it could be understood in the local context.

Information is vital for coping with the effects of climate change but valuable information would not be able to reach to indigenous peoples if it was not communicated in local indigenous languages. With radio the primary form of mass media in the region, programmes on climate change adaptation were broadcast in the Indigenous language of Quechua. Using radio as the medium ensured that the majority of people in the region were reached (over 82% of the population). The programmes were accessible for a number of factors including the following: (i) they were conducted in Quechua; (ii) the terminology used was non-technical; and (iii) this was based on traditional Inca environmental techniques and on Inca relationships to the land. This led to supporting the revitalization of ancient land management techniques and ensuring their continuation by incorporating them into the practical day to day livelihoods of indigenous peoples.

### **Good Practice:**

To develop an effective strategy to create awareness among peoples inhabiting this region of Peru, the Programme consulted and involved Indigenous leaders from the start. Indigenous peoples participated in the programme design and communication strategy, and developed the radio programmes on climate change.

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<sup>40</sup> UNEP Bulletin Latin America and the Caribbean July-August 2011:10, available at [http://www.pnuma.org/boletin\\_JulioAgosto/July-August.pdf](http://www.pnuma.org/boletin_JulioAgosto/July-August.pdf)

The active involvement of Indigenous peoples throughout the programme, beginning with the programme design stage, illustrates a genuine recognition of the importance of Indigenous peoples' opinions and cultural values. It also shows how open and active dialogue between local and national governments can be conducive to setting up decentralized environmental management systems to adapt to climate change. Most notably, it illustrates how peoples can live in harmony with nature, and how traditional ecological knowledge may be revitalized to combat the effects of climate change.

Furthermore, the workshops supported capacity building of Indigenous peoples – they informed local leaders on the effects of climate change and indigenous participants then passed on this knowledge so that it could be understood in the local context. Climate change adaptation activities reflected values and practices embedded in the local Indigenous culture, which supports indigenous cultural revitalization and sustainability.

### **UN-REDD - Vietnam**

The UN-REDD Programme is the United Nations collaborative initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD). The Programme was launched in 2008 and builds on the convening role and technical expertise of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The UN-REDD Programme supports nationally-led REDD+ processes and aims to promote the informed and meaningful involvement of all stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples and other forest-dependent communities, in national and international implementation.

Viet Nam is one of 16 countries identified for country programming under the UN-REDD Programme. The UN-REDD programme for Viet Nam (2009-2012) seeks to address deforestation and forest degradation through capacity building at national and local levels.

Deforestation is locally significant in Viet Nam, especially in the Central Highlands. Fast economic growth within the country and the drive to export commodities is an underlying driver of the deforestation and forest degradation within Viet Nam. A central element of the programme is to build capacity at local levels (provincial, district and commune) through pilots in two districts in Lam Dong province that demonstrate effective approaches to planning and implementing measures to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

The UN-REDD Programme in Viet Nam piloted a Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) process in 80 villages to ensure the full and effective participation of local

rights-holders. The exercise provided stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples and local communities, with the opportunity to provide or withhold their consent.

A number of lessons emerged from the process that will be applied to the next stages of the country programme and to others UN-REDD initiatives in the region. First and foremost that adequate time needs to be allowed for awareness-raising. A single awareness-raising event for local communities and Indigenous Peoples is insufficient. Furthermore, it is necessary to use a variety of approaches and media such as film, posters, radio broadcast, and newsletters to ensure that key messages and issues are understood. It is also helpful to train and recruit local facilitators (20 village facilitators were active in 2011). Also, as free, prior and informed consent is an “ongoing process, rather than a single event”, it is necessary to understand that FPIC be integrated not just into the strategy but the programme implementation process at all stages.

When such lessons are applied, UN-REDD may serve as a catalyst for greater participation of indigenous people in decision making thus increasing transparency and strengthening democratic processes.

**Sources:**

UN-REDD Lessons Learned: Asia Pacific, p. 9.  
UN-REDD Viet Nam Joint Programme Document.  
UN-REDD Programme : 2011 Year in Review

## **Education**

*“It is unacceptable that, despite significant gains over the past two decades, indigenous children today still face widespread disadvantages, often evident in higher mortality and school dropout rates compared to other groups of children.” -- Anthony Lake, UNICEF Executive Director<sup>41</sup>*

### ***EIBAMAZ, the Regional Andean Project of Intercultural Bilingual Education for the Amazon Region***

#### **UNICEF - Amazon Region of Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador**

**Objective:** To support indigenous intercultural education for indigenous children in the Amazon Region to realize their right to education.

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<sup>41</sup> Statement by Anthony Lake, UNICEF Executive Director, on the occasion of the International Day of the World’s Indigenous People, 9 August 2011, available at [http://www.unicef.org/media/media\\_59489.html](http://www.unicef.org/media/media_59489.html)

## Overview:

Strengthening access to culturally and linguistically appropriate education is important for indigenous peoples to maintain their languages. In Latin America, educational systems historically excluded indigenous children; policies to mainstream or assimilate indigenous children in schools where only the dominant language was spoken often resulted in many indigenous children either repeating grades or dropping out of school without completing their education.<sup>42</sup>

Intercultural bilingual education in Latin America emerged along different paths throughout the continent. UNICEF's role in supporting intercultural bilingual education / IBE in the Amazon Region has been primarily through the training of indigenous researchers, curriculum development, teacher training and the creation of educational materials. It has also contributed to the establishment of a network of ministries of education, municipal authorities, universities and indigenous organizations, to support intercultural/bilingual education in the sub-region.

The programme, EIBAMAZ (Intercultural/Bilingual Education in the Amazon), initiated in 2006, is implemented in three Amazonian countries – Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru. In these three countries, UNICEF created new channels for dialogue and enhanced existing modes of collaboration between the main actors in the promotion of intercultural bilingual education.

UNICEF describes an “intercultural” approach as:

*“[G]rounded in understanding and respecting indigenous knowledge, know-how and forms of social organization in the promotion of indigenous children’s and women’s rights, and the delivery of such relevant services as education, health and legal protection.”<sup>43</sup>*

The Innocenti Research Centre’s publication on indigenous children defines intercultural/ bilingual education as follows:

*Intercultural education refers to learning that is rooted in one’s own culture but that is, at the same time, open to knowledge of other cultures. By promoting respect for and understanding of other cultures, intercultural education is a key element in eliminating discrimination and, as such, is equally relevant for*

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<sup>42</sup> Lopez, Enrique (2009). Background paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2010. UNESCO. Reaching the unreached: indigenous intercultural bilingual education in Latin America, page 5. Available at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001866/186620e.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> UNICEF (2009). Promoting the Rights of Indigenous Children and Women: A Stocktaking of UNICEF’s Approach and Practice. Available at: [http://www.unicef.org/policyanalysis/rights/files/UNICEF\\_Final\\_Indigenous\\_Stock-Take\\_Report-2009.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/policyanalysis/rights/files/UNICEF_Final_Indigenous_Stock-Take_Report-2009.pdf)

*indigenous and non-indigenous children. In this way, diversity becomes a pedagogical resource that contributes to better education for all children. Bilingual education offers children the opportunity to learn in their own community's language and to realize their full intellectual potential while, at the same time, progressively mastering their country's official language.*<sup>44</sup>

### **Strategy:**

UNICEF's EIBAMAZ programme addresses the challenges faced by indigenous children of the underserved populations of the Amazon Region through a strategy oriented towards strengthening alliances between the indigenous movement, the public sector, and academia, including mostly indigenous researchers.

With the goal of creating new opportunities for indigenous children to realize their right to education, the programme has developed and expanded the use of culturally appropriate teaching methodologies, curricula and material for Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) and has enhanced national teacher training capacity and the education sector in general. Furthermore it has included the participation of indigenous communities and organizations in the planning and implementation of the project objectives.

The curriculum was developed to be culturally relevant in order for education to be accessible and of high quality; for example, the curriculum was conceived to include topics such as cultural life and agricultural calendars. Teaching modules go beyond basic and early childhood education to include adult education reflecting an understanding that learning occurs throughout life.

### **Good practice:**

Strengthening access to culturally and linguistically appropriate education is a primary method for indigenous peoples to realize their rights. Results have shown that IBE improves the rural educational system as a whole, while providing better access, retention and learning of children in this area.

The mid-term evaluation of the programme (2009) revealed two important factors for success related to local partnership and community participation: first, parents see school as an ally in their attempts to transmit to their children their cultural heritage and, second, indigenous leaders are committed to working for IBE which is based on their own culture.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> [Ibid.](#), page 11

<sup>45</sup> UNICEF (2009) Mid-term review of EIBAMAZ, available at:  
[http://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/EIBAMAZ\\_Informe-Final-MTR\\_\(septiembre2008\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/EIBAMAZ_Informe-Final-MTR_(septiembre2008).pdf)



In Ecuador, EIBAMAZ is integrated into regional and national education structures and policy thereby guaranteeing the continuity of its activities in the long term. In Bolivia, efforts are underway to transform newly developed “community curricula” into practical and accessible tools for classroom teaching. Though support from the national government for IBE is limited in Peru, IBE is firmly situated on the regional education agenda. Regional indigenous organizations have helped to make the programme responsive to indigenous demands and needs for a more relevant education and facilitated the training of teachers and the dissemination new learning material.

### ***Observer, Réfléchir, Agir (ORA) Educational Programme***

#### **United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) - Republic of Congo**

**Objective:** To support Indigenous self-determination and equality through the development of a participatory educational program for Baka Indigenous children.

#### **Overview:**

UNICEF’s 2010 ‘Situation Analysis of Autochthonous Children and Women’ concluded that the core rights of children and women – including non-discrimination, health, education and legal protection – are substantially disrespected for indigenous peoples.<sup>46</sup> The Indigenous (Baka) peoples in Congo Brazzaville are the most vulnerable and discriminated group within the country<sup>47</sup>. For the majority of indigenous children, discrimination by students and teachers in the academic setting is so strong that it prevents indigenous children from attending and/or completing school. To address this issue, UNICEF Congo and the Catholic Church developed an alternative education program called Observer, Réfléchir, Agir (ORA). The pedagogy is based on three components which translate as Observe, Think/Reflection, Action. Its purpose is to ensure that Indigenous children are prepared for the public school system.

#### **Strategy:**

The programme is based on a “bridging in” approach, a concept of gradual learning that eases the transition into mainstream schools to create a positive preparatory environment that ensures Baka children have the needed tools to succeed in the public school system. An integrated, “bridged in” approach prior to entering the public education system addresses the hurdles of marginalization and

<sup>46</sup> UNICEF (2009). Working Paper by Patrizio Warren. Promoting the Rights of Indigenous Children and Women: A Stocktaking of Unicef’s Approach and Practice.

<sup>47</sup> Scolarisation des Enfants Autochtones au Congo Les Écoles ORA: Les Écoles ORA

discrimination, so that a sense of cultural identity is transferred to children, thus assuring greater student retention, while a bilingual component (classes are in both French and the local indigenous language) ensures children have an understanding of non-indigenous epistemological ways so that they are on equal starting ground as other children. These schools are formulated around intercultural educational methods, based on an active and play-based pedagogy. The programme tries to be as creative and hands-on as possible and has classes on language and art.

### **Good Practice:**

This programme is not only aimed at increasing educational success, but supports self-determination of Indigenous children and reduces educational inequality. It recognizes that indigenous children and youth are disadvantaged even before entering the public school system, and that marginalization and exclusion are often reinforced within these schools. As a result, the programme is proactive. It gives students the practical tools needed to be at the same competitive academic level as other students in the public school system. These targeted actions support an indigenous pedagogy. Specifically, the school calendar and school hours support the culture and lifestyle of indigenous Baka peoples. Children may play an active role in community life, thereby this programme ensures that children can contribute to the community and at the same time fulfill their academic requirements. Even though many of the communities are in remote or isolated areas, different from public schools, ORA schools are more accessible, located near the communities.

ORA-schools are based an innovative non-formal education approach whereby the content and curricula is a reflection of the social and ecological environment and cultural context of the indigenous learner. For example, the lessons are more practical and hands-on. Bilingual classes support the maintenance of the local indigenous language and reduce the rate of student drop-out. Though UNICEF Congo provided support for the first training course on the teaching method, the curricula is led and created by indigenous peoples. ORA schools recognize that for indigenous students to be successful, they need to have a strong cultural identity. The pedagogy used supports and re-instills a confidence within students, while creating a love for learning. The schools do not want age to be an impediment to success, so they are open to students aged 6-18, and mature learners are able to attend the second chance schools.

The programme has successfully illustrated that preparatory programs can make primary education obtainable for Baka children and create the foundation for their future education. Initial assessments reveal that drop-out rates are low among students who transition to the mainstream primary school.

Looking ahead, ORA-schools still have many difficulties to overcome. Baka communities are dispersed and it is difficult to find land to hold the schools. The schools are dependent on local authorities and the churches for the land to hold the

classes. Also problematic, this school program is not a part of the public school education system, so it must independently find money to pay its teachers. The government has created a plan to improve the conditions of life for indigenous peoples, yet the Minister of Education has not yet endorsed ORA-schools as part of the national education plan. In the long term, the ORA schools aim to be included as part of the national education plan.

## **Human Rights**

*“We need to bring the rights and dignity of those who are suffering most to the centre of our efforts. This requires changes in practices, but we also need improved laws and institutions, without which advances are not sustainable. . . let us reaffirm our commitment to translate the words of the Declaration into effective action. Keeping this promise is our obligation.” - Navi Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights*

### ***Guide to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples***

**OHCHR, the Asia Pacific Forum on National Human Rights Institutions, and the Australian Human Rights Commission**

**Objective:** To develop a guide for national human rights institutions to support institutional adherence to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

#### **Overview:**

The primary goal of the creation of a guide to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples for national human rights institutions (NHRIs) is to enhance awareness of the Declaration and provide national human rights institutions with a tool to address systemic discrimination of indigenous peoples. The overall aim is to promote and ultimately achieve a framework for justice and human rights for all.

Indigenous peoples played a role as key partners in the development and implementation of the guide for National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs). The resulting guidebook (forthcoming 2013) will provide advice and good practices on implementing the UNDRIP to advance the rights of Indigenous peoples at the national level.

### **Strategy:**

National human rights institutions (NHRIs) are mandated to protect and promote human rights. While they are funded by and form part of the State, they are typically independent, autonomous institutions that operate at the national level. According to the Paris Principles, the NHRIs generally fall into three categories: human rights commissions, ombudsmen, and specialized national institutions designed to protect the rights of a particular vulnerable group (such as ethnic minorities, indigenous populations, women or children).<sup>48</sup>

This publication is directed at NHRIs themselves on their engagement with indigenous peoples and promotion of their rights.

The development process of this guide was underpinned by the principles of engagement and consultation with indigenous peoples. Global and sub-regional meetings took place involving collaboration between indigenous peoples, and regional and global human rights institutions, including NHRIs and OHCHR. To support the work at these meetings, examples of good practices of the fulfillment of indigenous rights were gathered and shared by the International Coordinating Committee of NHRIs, a global network of NHRIs.

### **Good Practice:**

It is critical that indigenous peoples - intricately involved at all stages of the drafting and adoption process of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples - are also involved in its implementation. To this end, indigenous peoples were central actors in the drafting and creation of the guide for NHRIs, a project that is ultimately oriented towards transforming NHRIs into mechanisms that promote the UN Declaration (UNDRIP).

Although a challenge, OHCHR attempted to ensure that the Guide reflected the diversity of indigenous peoples views on this issue. At the international meeting organized by OHCHR in Bangkok in 2009, Indigenous representatives and NHRIs from Australia, Canada, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, New Zealand and Panama shared their vision of the role of NHRIs in promoting the UNDRIP.<sup>49</sup> At the second global meeting in Geneva in July 2011, indigenous representatives shared examples of good practices in advancing the rights of indigenous peoples and discussed the content of the operational guide and exchanged ideas on the drafting process. Throughout the process, the contributions of indigenous peoples were assigned equal to the contributions made by UN agencies and NHRIs. Overall, the process

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<sup>48</sup> UNDP-OHCHR Toolkit for Collaboration with National Human Rights Institutions, 2010 available at <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/NHRI/1950-UNDP-UHCHR-Toolkit-LR.pdf>

<sup>49</sup> See <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/seminar.htm>

represents a positive and cooperative relationship between Indigenous peoples, and regional and global human rights institutions.

***Normative Systems and State Intervention in Indigenous Issues: Role of Political and Social Participation from a Gender Perspective***

**UNDP – Mexico**

**Objective:** To promote a democratic culture amongst indigenous populations within new electoral districts and enhance the political participation and leadership of indigenous women.

**Overview:**

In 2008 UNDP launched a programme - Strengthening Democratic Culture in the Indigenous Electoral Districts in Mexico - to follow up on the actions taken by the Mexico's Federal Electoral Institute, in collaboration with the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples, to establish 28 uninominal electoral districts wherein 40 per cent or more of the population comprise indigenous peoples (Chiapas, San Luis Potosí and Oaxaca). The establishment of such districts aimed at increasing indigenous peoples' representation in Congress. The programme focused on promoting a "democratic culture" amongst the indigenous population of each electoral district, taking into account traditional forms of political participation, and applying a human rights-based approach.

The findings and results of the first phase of the project, together with an assessment of indigenous women's political participation, indicated the need for a more refined focus on strengthening indigenous women's participation and leadership. While there are a number of programmes aimed at promoting the economic and social empowerment of indigenous women with a view to development and reduction of poverty, programmes focusing capacity development to achieve these ends and to also strengthen governance are much less common. Therefore, women's political participation was given sharp focus within this programme and its extension, stressing the positive impact of indigenous women's political and social participation in the design and implementation of public policies.<sup>50</sup> Until this initiative, indigenous women's political participation and leadership had received little attention by the UN.

**Strategy:**

The project promotes local government accountability by increasing the capacity of indigenous communities to demand transparency and monitor the work of

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<sup>50</sup> UNDP (2010). Building Bridges Between the State & the People: An Overview of UNDP's Recent and Current Interventions in Public Administration and Local Governance in Latin America & The Caribbean.

government institutions and their representatives. With the focus of the second phase of the project on indigenous women, interventions were tailored specifically to augmenting their voices in effect enhancing their political power and leverage.

At the project inception, an assessment looked at the institutional mechanisms through which indigenous peoples articulate and present their demands and identified a need for the development of a toolkit to strengthen lobbying and monitoring capacities within their communities and institutions. Meetings with indigenous representatives served to provide training and ensure that the information was useful and relevant. Working closely with partners, UNDP organized a series of workshops to apply the toolkit in selected municipalities. Indigenous women's organizations, including members of the Alianza de Mujeres Indígenas de Centro América y México (Alliance of Indigenous Women of Central America and Mexico) and the Coordinadora Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas-CONAMI (National Coordination of Indigenous Women), and indigenous organizations such as SER Mixe, defined for themselves the strategies that would have the greatest impact on strengthening the participation of women in their communities.

As part of the monitoring toolkit, audio material was produced by the project and broadcasted over indigenous radio stations, providing information about citizen participation and the right to information, and links to various social programmes.

Together with the UNDP Virtual School, UNDP organized a virtual course on Local Governance and Indigenous Women's Political Leadership in Mexico with 30 participants. The course focused on the rights of indigenous women, their political participation, as well as democracy and local governance.

***“Indigenous peoples must be recognized as allies jointly responsible for the strategy of designing, planning and implementing projects, and should not be looked upon as recipients of actions for their own good.” - UNDP Mexico***

### **Good practice:**

The initial assessments conducted at the field level in three municipalities helped UNDP understand the local political fabric including the gender dynamics that affect participation; the resulting analysis informed the programme design and helped to build a more democratic culture and create tools to enhance the capacity of indigenous communities to demand accountability from their local authorities. Specifically the project succeeded in enhancing the capacities of indigenous women to more efficiently use public information to improve knowledge about the public administration and social services.

In relation to working with women leaders, UNDP project managers noted the importance of understanding the realities, contexts, and complexities related to their lives and their challenges to meaningful participation. Critical to the

project's success were the "horizontal" relationships with indigenous organizations and their leaders. These relationships helped UNDP and other partners to learn about and understand indigenous worldviews and institutional methodologies, as well as share knowledge and expertise to support a true collaboration.

*"Lessons learned point to the need to break away from the tradition of assimilating indigenous peoples into dominant structures as a means of strengthening their autonomy, and to legitimize, both legally and pragmatically, indigenous peoples as subjects in their own right and valid stakeholders in representing their interests at all levels."<sup>51</sup>*

**- United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) -**

**Nepal**

**Objective:** To build capacity and mobilize advocacy efforts among local organizations devoted to eradicating the practice of Kamalari and supporting the rights and well being of victims of the practice.

**Overview:**

Kamalari is the practice of sending young girls from indigenous families to work for years at a time in private homes of the wealthy and privilege.

While outlawed in Nepal, the practice persists specifically among the Tharu indigenous group. In 2006 the Supreme Court of Nepal handed down a decision ordering the Government to implement existing laws prohibiting child exploitation, including the Kamalari practice.<sup>52</sup>

The practice violates the human rights of these girls including their right to an education and places them at risk of being exploited. Kamalari is a form of bonded labour where the girls live in areas often far from their homes often not knowing the language with restrictions on their inherent right to freedom of movement. Many are without identity cards and trafficked into brothels either within Nepal or across borders.

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<sup>51</sup> UNDP (2011). Reflections on the Regional Seminar On Local Governments and Indigenous Peoples: San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas-Mexico 15-16 of April 2010, page 39. available at: <http://www.delog.org/cms/nl/pdf12/localgovandindigenos.pdf>

<sup>52</sup> A/HRC/18/26, Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the rights of indigenous peoples, para 28.

According to the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, “the desperate situation of many former Kamaiyas contributes to perpetuating the sending of children to work as domestic workers in wealthier homes through the Kamalari system of perpetual servitude.”<sup>53</sup>

The OHCHR Nepal Office provided support to civil society networks devoted to ending the practice known as Kamalari, including through enhancing their understanding and knowledge about human rights standards and building their capacity to monitor violations. The programme also focused on facilitating access to justice for those who have been abused, locating and rescuing those who have gone missing and providing direct support and rehabilitation to former Kamalaris and their families.

### **Strategy:**

The programme’s strategy is to prevent girls from entering the practice of Kamalari, to provide services for those liberated from the practice, and to abolish the practice altogether.

OHCHR in Nepal, in collaboration with indigenous organizations, strengthened and developed new advocacy networks at the local level. Local organizations formed a network in five affected districts in the Mid and Far Western Regions. In addition to those representing practicing communities, members of the network include local government representatives and the media.

To leverage the power of these new networks, OHCHR supported a number of initiatives to call upon the Government and law enforcement agencies to fulfill their responsibilities in ensuring the rehabilitation of rescued Kamalaris and providing access to justice.

### **Good practice:**

OHCHR’s engagement on this issue was not only at the centralized government level but also at the regional and district level. If the abusive practice is to stop in communities where it is entrenched and prominent, solutions must address the issues of tradition and low social and economic status due to marginalization; thus actions were oriented around taking advocacy efforts from *local* to *national* to construct an environment conducive to the abolishment of the practice.

The Office of the Resident Coordinator funded the deployment of a National Program Officer fully dedicated to the support of local Kamalaris organizations that supported eradication of the practice.

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<sup>53</sup> A/HRC/12/34/Add.3, Report on the Situation of Indigenous Peoples in Nepal, para 39.



As a result of the training and workshops, one of the organizations in attendance registered a complaint of abuse of one of the rescued Kamalaris by the former landlord to be heard before the district court. There is potential for the outcome of the case to set a significant precedent in establishing justice for rescued victims.

Furthermore, with strengthened advocacy skills and a new sense of the need for collective action, a delegation of local organizations and rescued Kamalaris organized advocacy tours to Kathmandu where they met with the Prime Minister's Office and other Government representatives to discuss their grievances. As families subscribe to the Kamalari system for reasons linked to tradition as well as financial need, chief among the grievances was the inadequate package of subsidies and compensation given to families of rescued Kamalaris. In response, the government increased the funding for the rehabilitation packages in 2011.

### **Health**

*"Indigenous individuals have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. States shall take the necessary steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of this right". -- Article 24, UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

*"Full participation of indigenous peoples in the management of health services in their communities, better access to modern diagnostic processes and treatment, use of traditional healing and culturally appropriate reproductive health services are considered steps to improving the health of indigenous peoples". - UNDG Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples Issues*

#### ***HIV Prevention for Vulnerable Populations: rural, indigenous and sexually diverse***

**The United Nations Joint Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) - Guatemala**

**Objective:** To promote the health of indigenous youth through local peer to peer interventions

#### **Overview:**

According to UNAIDS, two thirds of the estimated HIV positive population in Guatemala is unaware of its HIV status. In 2009, there were about 7000 new

infections.<sup>54</sup> The youth centered peer to peer outreach programme supported by UNAIDS targets youth in Guatemala, who did not previously have access to information on HIV in an environment where HIV related stigma is great. UNAIDS supports a programme “HIV prevention for vulnerable populations: rural, indigenous and sexually diverse” which aims to raise awareness about HIV, eliminate stigma and discrimination and contribute to achieving the vision of no new infections in Guatemala. According to government data, in 2009 only 23% of young people age 15 – 24 years old knew how to correctly identify ways of preventing sexual transmission of HIV and reject major misconceptions about HIV transmission.

### **Strategy:**

Given the sensitive nature of the subjects of HIV and sexuality, the programme adopted a strategy of direct participation of indigenous youth, educators, and parents.

Funding and support from UNAIDS and other partners enabled Media Impact and Comunicares, a local non-governmental organization, to organize local health fairs and radio dramas. At the fifth rolling health fair entitled *More information, less infection*, more than 1000 indigenous children and adolescents aged 9 to 15 years old from rural communities of Guatemala learned about HIV in San Pedro Yepocapa. The Rolling Fair is an initiative that consists of a train with 11 illustrative wagons. Each wagon provides information, entertainment and games related to themes such as modes of HIV transmission and ways to prevent HIV infection, sexual education, understanding of stigma and discrimination, as well as prevention of violence towards children, especially girls.

Another complementary effort is the production of the 20-episode radio drama *El Intruso*, or *The Intruder*, and the call-in discussions focusing on the issues of the series, which aim to increase knowledge about contraception, STIs and HIV prevention and to ultimately inspire behavioral change among adolescents from Quetzaltenango.<sup>55</sup> To enhance the reach of the sexual health message in *El Intruso* from Quetzaltenango to the national level, youth from the organization Comunicares hosted a National Child and Youth Communicators Meeting with the theme “Let’s Talk about HIV.” This event hosted 150 youth communications representatives from 15 organizations from all over the country.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> UNAIDS fact sheet – Guatemala: [http://www.unaids.org/ctrysa/LACGTM\\_en.pdf](http://www.unaids.org/ctrysa/LACGTM_en.pdf)

<sup>55</sup> See: S. Grainger (2011) *The Intruder: Radio Soap Operas Teach Locals About Sexual Health*, <http://mediainpact.org/?p=141>.

<sup>56</sup> pci media impact: telling stories, saving lives. *El Intruso...Nuevo Temporado: The Intruder...New Season*.

### **Good practice:**

What made a sensitive subject less “taboo” was that the outreach and education activities were community and youth driven. In effect, the community was educating the community about HIV through a variety of media. The radio dramas, produced by youth, feature characters such as Josefina, a pregnant widow who discovers that she is HIV positive; Vicky and Julián, a married couple that encounters community opposition to the youth run radio show they coordinate which aims to educate the town on sexual health; and Soledad, a single mother with two children who only speaks with her son and not her daughter about sex.<sup>57</sup> The lives and decisions of the characters provide the audience information about HIV prevention and treatment, thereby lowering their risk; they also explore gender stereotypes and the right to health-related information.

### ***Bolsas Semáforo - a Strategy and Tool to Prevent Maternal Deaths in the Comarca Ngöbe-Buglé***

#### **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) - Panama**

**Objective:** To improve reproductive health services for indigenous women and reduce rates of maternal mortality.<sup>58</sup>

### **Overview:**

The Comarca Ngöbe-Buglé is the largest indigenous territory in Panama and also has the worst reproductive health indicators in the country. The maternal mortality rate in this area is nearly 5 times greater than the national average of 60/100,000.

The Bolsas Semáforo programme in Panama is part of UNFPA’s efforts in the region to establish an “intercultural and human rights-centered approach” to sexual and reproductive health. This means creating culturally tailored reproductive health models in hospitals and communities that address the rights of women, the inequalities they face and their access to services. The right-based approach is critical in the face of “triple discrimination” linked to gender, ethnic and socio-economic factors in this area that are all are key determinants of health status.<sup>59</sup>

The UNFPA Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office, together with its country offices, is providing and promoting technical assistance for designing or adapting intercultural reproductive health policies and norms with a range of partners

<sup>57</sup> See: <http://mediainpact.org/ready-for-rebroadcast>

<sup>58</sup> Survey on Indigenous Peoples’ Issues for UNCTs: Panama; See Laura Elena Flores, ‘Intercultural Attention Model in Sexual and Reproductive Health’, May 3-4, 2010.

<sup>59</sup> UNFPA, 2010. Promoting Equality, Recognizing Diversity Case Stories in Intercultural Sexual and Reproductive Health among Indigenous Peoples.

including governments, indigenous women leaders and indigenous organizations, and health ministries. Specifically in Panama, the United Nations Population Fund provides technical support to the Ministry of Health and the local Ngöbe indigenous women's association, called ASMUNG, with funding from IFAD, the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

### **Strategy:**

Ngöbe women are given bolsas semáforo, or traffic light bags made by local women, to identify the stage of their pregnancy. The bags are colored red, yellow or green, contain supplies and health information and serve as incentives for Ngöbe women to make the trip to a health center or hospital for their regular pre-natal check ups. This system is part of the broader work focused on reducing the four delays<sup>60</sup> that cause maternal mortality in the Comarca Ngöbe-Buglé.<sup>61</sup> Local health providers are trained on the importance of providing services with an intercultural approach. UNFPA also trained “community multipliers”, community members who inform and educate their peers to prevent maternal deaths. In an environment where there is not an adequate supply of physicians and nurses, the community multipliers play a role in delivering information to individuals and families using visual tools on human rights, maternal health, family planning, gender equality, and intra-family violence prevention.

The intervention strategy by UNPFA was twofold: to increase and strengthen demand from the rights-holders by facilitating women's empowerment and promoting community organizations that support pregnant women, while at the same time addressing the need for quality health services by developing the intercultural skills of healthcare personnel and providing equipment and supplies.<sup>62</sup>

### **Good practice:**

As a result of the programme, started in 2007, maternal deaths have been significantly reduced and prenatal visits have increased five-fold.<sup>63</sup> Indigenous women have reported increased care and respect when accessing services. The bolsas semáforo function as a key link between the community, underserved

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<sup>60</sup>The cuatro demoras or four delays are: 1) The delay in recognizing alarm symptoms during pregnancy, labour or puerperium; 2) The delay in making the decision to seek help at hospitals and health clinics; 3) The delay caused by lack of adequate access to quality health services; and, 4) The delay in receiving appropriate care one in the clinic or hospital.

<sup>61</sup> See Laura Elena Flores, ‘Intercultural Attention Model in Sexual and Reproductive Health’, May 3-4, 2010.

<sup>62</sup> See: UNFPA (2011) Maternal Mortality Reduction Programme; UNPFA (2010) “Bolsas Semáfora” as a Strategy and Tool to Prevent Maternal Deaths in the Comarca Ngöbe- Buglé in Promoting Equality, Recognizing Diversity: Case Stories in Intercultural Sexual and Reproductive Health Among Indigenous Peoples, Latin America.

<sup>63</sup> Report of the field visit of the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS to Panama, 20-25 February 2011.

women and their families, and the health system. Furthermore, through the work of community members and multipliers, demand for sexual reproductive health (SRH) services has increased. These efforts have heightened a sense of solidarity and commitment to making every pregnancy and delivery safe.<sup>64</sup>

One reason for the positive results of the programme is the level of collaboration between UNFPA and local government and health personnel, as well as with indigenous traditional authorities and community leaders.

It is critical to note that the programme arose from an analysis of inequalities and therefore was designed in a way to address the “triple discrimination” linked to gender, ethnic and socio-economic factors in this area that affect health inequalities. This focus is important as national averages tend to mask disparities at the sub-national level and among specific populations that belie development problems and impede development progress.

### **Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)**

#### **UNFPA – UNICEF Joint Programme**

Established in 2008, the UNFPA – UNICEF Joint Programme to Accelerate Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) is one of the major United Nations instrument for supporting national efforts to end the practice. Activities in promoting the abandonment of FGM/C cover in 15 countries (Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda), a number of which include also activities within indigenous communities. Activities undertaken for this project have been reported to the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues by the agencies in view of the implementation of the Forum recommendation “to continue their efforts with indigenous peoples and their communities”.<sup>65</sup> As noted in General Assembly Resolution 54/7, “Ending female genital mutilation”, the programme promotes and supports a multi-disciplinary, comprehensive, coordinated and coherent approach at all levels which is required for achieving abandonment of FGM/C worldwide. The approach recognizes that FGM/C operates as a social norm. It therefore takes into account the degree of support for FGM/C within practicing communities and in the country as a whole, and adapts specific strategies to country-specific realities.

Experience gained among the 15 countries was disseminated by the agencies to inform the global movement to end the practice, including to countries not covered by the programme and to countries with communities of immigration. As a result, it can be registered an increased concurrence among governments and civil society

<sup>64</sup> UNFPA (2010). Promoting Equality, Recognizing Diversity Case Stories in Intercultural Sexual and Reproductive Health among Indigenous Peoples.

<sup>65</sup> See E/2011/43-E/C.19/2011/14, para. 76.

that FGM/C is a deeply entrenched social practice and that ending the practice requires a holistic and respectful approach that stimulates and promotes societal support for its abandonment, and includes the provision of appropriate services for those affected by the practice. This approach also fosters dialogue about shared values and practices that support the rights of girls, and builds on these to create consensus about ending FGM/C.

The UNFPA-UNICEF joint programme on FGM/C is informed by a culturally sensitive, human rights-based approach, as advocated by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues among others. That includes engaging all community groups, such as traditional and religious leaders, women, men and young girls themselves, in discussing the harms of the practice, while highlighting that it is not a religious requirement. The strategy recognizes that real change needs to come from within communities themselves, through a process of dialogue and debate, listening, sharing knowledge and insights, and jointly planning, in which individuals, empowered with information, have an opportunity to challenge social norms. Ideally, community dialogues unfold over the course of a couple of days or even weeks and embrace a range of development issues. Three or four people may help facilitate, including a religious leader who commands respect, and a health worker who can expound on the adverse effects of FGM/C and a child rights facilitator who puts the FGM/C debate within the context of human rights.

Information about the medical and psychological harm the practice can cause can help inform such dialogues, as can discussions of human rights. These discussions often take place over weeks or months, and address FGM/C not as a standalone issue, but within a broader context of health, human rights and gender-based violence. In Kenya, for example, the Joint Programme, in partnership with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development and other partners, has trained more than 400 community facilitators on how to carry out dialogues. One hallmark of success the promotion of initiation ceremonies as an alternative rite of passage without FGM/C, as a way to maintain important cultural rituals and values, while rejecting the harmful element.

The Joint Programme has been extended by one year to December 2013 to allow countries additional time to implement activities. This also enables the agencies to invest greater resources on the monitoring, assessment and evaluation of the results of the programme's activities. The global evaluation of the programme will be conducted with UNFPA in 2013.

See also <http://www.unfpa.org/gender/practices3.html>

## CHAPTER IV: Moving Forward

The range of projects and practical activities addressing indigenous peoples' issues highlights the progress made by UN agencies to recognize the diversity of indigenous peoples and populations. While this publication only presents a few examples, the many approaches taken are evidence of the diversity of indigenous knowledge, spirituality, cultures, languages and identities.

The projects also provide compelling evidence that the success of UN project and programmes depends on indigenous peoples' role and engagement in the process. This should build on the principles of the UNDG Guidelines and the UN Declaration to ensure that indigenous peoples actively participate in UN programmes at all levels including as:

- implementing partners;
- project or activity coordinators, facilitators etc;
- experts, advisors and resource persons;
- programme or project committees; and
- monitors and evaluators.

Despite the examples profiled in this publication are evidence of the efforts underway to forge a positive and cooperative environment for the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples, challenges and gaps in the implementation of the Declaration remain a critical issue.

Issues at the root of these gaps include:

- The implementation of the concept of free, prior and informed consent in States and international development programs;
- While targeted interventions and positive measures for indigenous peoples are more common and increasingly acknowledged as necessary to promote individual and collective rights and reduce social and economic marginalization, less common are efforts to mainstream and integrate indigenous peoples' issues in operational activities and programmes at the country level.;
- The adoption of approaches adapted to indigenous peoples' cultures with and through their participation are mainly confined to the health and education sectors;
- Engagement and participation by indigenous peoples and their organizations remain limited, ad hoc or considered optional in many areas;
- Indigenous issues are often institutionally marginalised within organizations and programmes;

- Insufficient information, often due to the lack of disaggregated data at the national and local levels, may weaken the programme planning/design process; and
- Implementation of the human rights-based approach remains a challenge.

By recognizing the progress and also the gaps in the collective effort of the UN system, it is important to highlight and learn from past experiences of the UN system. It serves as a source for ideas and concrete action for the various areas of the UN system to fulfill their responsibilities to implement and apply the UNDRIP within their mandated areas of work.

An important opportunity to renew the efforts and commitment of the UN system agencies, funds and programmes is to actively engage in the process leading up to the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (A/RES/65/198) in 2014 by prioritizing the development of concrete ways to support the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in the World Conference, including technical and financial support. Further, to ensure that the outcome documents of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples provide clear guidelines and action-oriented programmes and activities to implement the UN Declaration and realize the rights and aspirations of indigenous peoples around the world.

The UNDRIP and other documents that facilitate and guide its implementation, such as the UNDG Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples Issues need to be put into practice so they do not remain as words only. This compilation is a small step forward in strengthening greater partnership and collaboration between the UN system and indigenous peoples in this journey forward.

The UNPFII has consistently called on the UN system to document good practices for knowledge sharing. It has also recommended the presentation of case studies, good practices and lessons learned as the systematic collection and sharing of good practices and lessons learned is a useful tool to enhance delivery of UN services at the local and country level. There is a wealth of information that has evolved from the work of the UN with indigenous peoples at global, regional and country levels; while not all successful, it is important to identify and document the good practices. This is of particular importance in the achievement of sustainable development goals in the new millennium.

Ultimately, the experiences profiled here show how partnering with indigenous nations, peoples and communities is integral to the success of the programmes, projects or policies. In order to establish a positive and cooperative environment conducive to the implementation of the UNDRIP, these issues require further attention from the UN system, Member States, Indigenous peoples' organizations and other relevant parties.

Looking ahead it is hoped that such an environment will set the stage for making the UN Declaration a truly transformative force in the lives of indigenous peoples.



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