



Investing in rural people
Investir dans les populations rurales
Invertir en la población rural
الاستثمار في السكان الريفيين

XVI Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Statement of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, IFAD

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April 2017

Madam Chair, Distinguished Members of the Permanent Forum, Indigenous Peoples' Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of IFAD, I wish to update this Forum on the work we have been doing related to the economic and social empowerment of indigenous peoples - a key area for IFAD's mandate to reduce rural poverty through investments in agriculture and rural development.

We all know that most of the very poor people in the world live in rural areas of developing countries. And that indigenous people, especially women, are often among the most marginalized, both socially and economically.

IFAD's partnership with indigenous peoples has grown since our first loan in 1979 to support indigenous communities in Bolivia.

We have seen how critical it is to work together with indigenous peoples, to listen and learn from them, to engage with them as development partners - co-creating initiatives, thus fostering ownership and sustainability.

In the past decade, we have financed some 123 projects in developing countries. This corresponds to about 1.6 billion dollars in loans in support of indigenous peoples, and about 40 million dollars in grants.

Through IFAD's Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility, with 127 projects in more than 45 countries for a total of 3.6 million dollars, we support the development of innovative solutions to issues such as preserving traditional crops and food systems, or securing land tenure.

Indigenous people are a font of traditional knowledge and their voices need to be heard. Every two years at IFAD we host the Indigenous Peoples Forum, which is informed by 5 regional consultations, ensuring that the Forum reflects the diversity of perspectives and recommendations gathered from indigenous peoples around the world. Last February the third global meeting saw the participation of 43 indigenous peoples' representatives from 27 countries worldwide. The theme of the Forum was the economic empowerment of indigenous peoples with a focus on women and youth, reflecting the recognition of the importance of indigenous women's contribution to development.

The Forum recommendations were delivered to IFAD's Governing Council, and many have been incorporated into our regional action plans, which will be implemented over the next two years.

This year, we also inaugurated the Indigenous Peoples' Place at IFAD. This is a permanent space that we have dedicated to indigenous peoples, which also showcases their cultural heritage and stands as testament to the important partnership we have established.

Over the years, we have also learned the importance of facilitating positive dialogue between governments and indigenous peoples. And we will continue our collaboration in the international policy arena, in settings like the UN Permanent Forum, where we will showcase the vast and invaluable contributions that indigenous peoples are making – and can make – to inclusive and sustainable development.

Let's be frank: only by redoubling our efforts to empower indigenous peoples, to harness their knowledge, can we achieve the SDGs and live up to our shared commitment to leave no one behind.

IFAD stands ready, together with indigenous peoples, to do just that.

Thank you very much.