



16th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
(24 April - 5 May 2017)

Item 11 - Follow-up to the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples
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Chairperson, Members of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), colleagues and friends:

Thank you for the opportunity for the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to contribute to the Forum's discussion of Agenda Item 4, Implementation of the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum with reference to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous peoples' livelihoods, traditional knowledge and ecosystem management practices are closely aligned with the work and mission of the GEF. The Global Environment Facility was established as an independent financial mechanism to provide resources to developing countries and countries with economies in transition for projects that benefit the global environment and promote sustainable development. The GEF unites 183 countries—in partnership with international institutions, civil society organizations (CSOs), the private sector, indigenous peoples and local communities—to address global environmental issues in the areas of biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, the ozone layer, and chemicals and waste.

GEF-supported projects have benefited from partnership and engagement with indigenous peoples; indeed, many could not be successful without it. The GEF also recognizes that we have to continue to strengthen our engagement with indigenous peoples to meet our objectives in supporting implementation of the Paris Agreement and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets as well as the Sustainable Development Goals.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) guides the GEF's work and engagement with indigenous peoples. We have multiple policies and guidelines in place to ensure that GEF operations fully respect the dignity, human rights, economies, cultures and traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples, and the realization of the UN Declaration's provisions. Several years ago, in collaboration with indigenous peoples, the GEF formally incorporated the UN Declaration, and our support for the realization of the provisions articulated in the Declaration, into the GEF's document on *Principles and Guidelines for Engagement of Indigenous Peoples*. All GEF Agencies and their partners have this as a guide for project development and management.

Since the development of the *Principles and Guidelines*, the GEF, with support from its Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group (IPAG), has undertaken several initiatives to expand and enhance its implementation of the provisions outlined in the UNDRIP. Based on discussions with the IPAG and to align with the organization of the GEF Secretariat, a position for an indigenous person from the Small Island Developing States was added to the IPAG.

First among these initiatives is a targeted and collaborative effort to support increased funding and capacity development of indigenous peoples through GEF projects. The GEF's IPAG has and continues to review different modalities to expand funding for indigenous peoples to implement environmental projects, and the IPAG produced a white paper to provide guidance to the GEF Secretariat on expanding funding opportunities for indigenous peoples within the GEF system.

Second, last year at the Permanent Forum, as a result of discussions on ways to expand support for indigenous peoples as well as needs articulated by the IPAG, we announced the creation of an indigenous peoples fellowship as part of the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP). We are pleased to have the attendance of the first two of hopefully many fellows at the Permanent Forum this year.

Third, the GEF has continued our work on strengthening our monitoring and knowledge management systems to better track project level engagement with indigenous peoples. A recent review of GEF projects approved since 2014 found that 35 percent of projects involve indigenous peoples as key partners. We are pleased that this is a significant increase from previous GEF cycles. The GEF is continuing to examine how to measure, track and learn about the quality of engagement with indigenous peoples in our projects.

Looking ahead, the GEF has recently started negotiations for the Seventh Replenishment of the GEF, which will start in July 2018. We are currently developing our investment strategy for this phase and look forward to productive engagement with the IPAG as well as many other stakeholders to not only ensure full respect of the rights of indigenous peoples in line with UNDRIP, but also protect and promote the well-being of indigenous peoples through our investments to protect the global environment. As part of the replenishment process, the GEF's Independent Evaluation Office is currently undertaking an evaluation of the GEF's engagement with indigenous peoples and welcomes dialogue on this topic.

Lastly, we must thank all the indigenous peoples who have devoted significant time to GEF meetings and consultations as well as informal discussions. Particular recognition goes to the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group (IPAG) of the GEF whose time and energy have been invaluable to the work of the GEF. The GEF invites continued dialogue and feedback from all partners.

Thank you for your attention.