

**FAO statement: Thirteenth Session of the Permanent Forum**

12-23 May 2014



**Respected Ancestors, Elders and Indigenous Peoples Leaders**

**Delegates from Member states,**

**Colleagues from UN organizations,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Señora Presidenta, La FAO aprovecha esta oportunidad para felicitarle por su nombramiento, deseándole todos los éxitos en esta importante misión.

It is my pleasure to address, on behalf of the Food and Agriculture Organization, this unique Forum where Indigenous Leaders, Member States and United Nations Agencies come together to discuss not only the challenges faced by indigenous peoples, but also their continuous contributions to Humankind.

The foundation upon which this forum was created and is managed, is very much shared by FAO and lies at the core of the mandate of our Organization.

That is, working for a future in which inclusiveness overcomes marginalization; in which dialogue, exchange and mutual understanding overcomes intolerance; in which governance and citizenship are closely interlinked; and in which all stakeholders have the opportunity to express their views in those processes leading to policies affecting their very own lives.

---

**FAO statement: Thirteenth Session of the Permanent Forum**

12-23 May 2014

Since 2012, FAO's Director General has placed the participation of stakeholders in policy and normative discussions, as an Organizational core principle.

This is not wishful thinking but has been followed by swift actions to support this decision. Some examples include: the nomination of an Indigenous leader as one of the ambassadors for Family farming in 2014; the two new Strategies to enhance collaborations with Private Sector and Civil Society; the nomination of FAO's focal point for indigenous peoples; and the inclusion of civil society spokespersons as participants in the FAO regional conferences that enabled Indigenous peoples to participate this year in the Asia regional conference.

These core principles and its accompanying governance spaces and tools are yielding important results:

Two years ago, FAO was pleased to see the approval of an unprecedented international agreement on the governance of tenure: the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests in the context of National Food Security (VGT)*.

Thanks to the active participation of Indigenous leaders in the negotiations and endorsement of these Voluntary Guidelines, its article 9 contains important provisions that recognize indigenous peoples' rights and customary tenure systems and acknowledges the social, cultural and spiritual value that land, fisheries and forests have.

Article 9, requests States to meet their relevant obligations and commitments to protect, promote and implement human rights,

**FAO statement: Thirteenth Session of the Permanent Forum**

12-23 May 2014

including as appropriate from the ILO 169, the Convention of Biological Diversity and the UNDRIP.

The Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure reinforce the message of UNDRIP where states committed to establish and implement, in conjunction with concerned indigenous peoples, a fair, independent, impartial, open and transparent process to recognize and adjudicate the rights of indigenous peoples pertaining to their lands, territories and resources.

Yesterday, the celebration of the two year anniversary of the approval by Member states of the Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure at the Committee on World Food Security, reminded us of the importance of establishing inclusive and participatory governance processes.

The reform of the Committee on World Food Security in 2009 was a step forward in terms of allowing different stakeholders to discuss with Member states on those issues affecting their lives.

Ever since, Indigenous Representatives have participated not only in the approval of the Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure, but also in the ongoing discussions on the Voluntary Guidelines of Small Scale Fisheries and the Principles on Responsible Agricultural Investment.

Today, we can say that the initial days in which stakeholders would see these new forms of Governance as an opportunity to advocate in front of states, have led to different constituencies presenting technical positions that significantly contribute to the agenda, the dialogue and are resulting in improved policies.

Therefore, Inclusive Governance matters...

## FAO statement: Thirteenth Session of the Permanent Forum

12-23 May 2014

Now the challenge is moving from endorsement to implementation.

Ever since the endorsement of the Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure, FAO has set up a Task Force that engages with indigenous peoples and other stakeholders and has established a five pillar programme.

This task Force is working with states to assess the extent to which their practices are aligned with the principles and best practices of the Voluntary Guidelines as well as developing indicators to set up monitoring systems on governance of tenure.

Additionally, FAO continues to develop technical materials, for the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure, the last one being on article 9.9 of the VGT on Respecting Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).

Awareness raising and capacity development on the VGT are also crucial. In 2013 alone, FAO carried out 11 regional workshops with 640 participants from 140 countries, including indigenous peoples representatives.

Madame Chair, Indigenous leaders, Colleagues, Friends

A fairer world, where hunger, poverty, discrimination and inequality are eradicated, cannot be realized without special consideration to indigenous peoples realities. Their ancestral knowledge, encapsulates many of the future solutions to problems like climate change and resource management. At the same time, their vulnerability, the poverty and aggressions they suffer and the lack

**FAO statement: Thirteenth Session of the Permanent Forum**

12-23 May 2014

of respect for their rights, calls for specific attention to their matters.

In this regard, FAO, continues to move towards the implementation of its Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, FAO is coordinating the United Nations Regional Inter-Agency Supporting Group besides organizing two regional Dialogues, that have established a shared mechanism with Indigenous Peoples

In Asia, FAO and the Asian Caucus organized a Regional Consultation attended by FAO experts, indigenous peoples representatives and government delegates. The consultation produced a set of joint recommendations to foster the work with Indigenous Peoples in the region.

One of these recommendations was the need for an in-depth analysis on shifting cultivation with respect to sustainable livelihoods, food security, natural resource management and biodiversity in indigenous communities.

FAO is collaborating with Indigenous Organizations in Asia to conduct case studies on good practices in shifting cultivation, land tenure and collective rights that will be presented this year in a regional multi-stakeholder workshop.

FAO will continue its technical work with Indigenous peoples. Such as, for example, in the co-organization of the upcoming World Park Congress, where FAO is working to ensure that Indigenous Peoples' needs in relation to protected areas are recognized.

**FAO statement: Thirteenth Session of the Permanent Forum**

12-23 May 2014

As a technical specialized agency of the United Nations, FAO stands ready to continue working closely with indigenous peoples in pursuit of a world free of hunger.

In this regard, FAO looks forward to the upcoming World Conference on Indigenous Peoples as a golden opportunity to advance in finding solutions through an inclusive and open dialogue that involves key indigenous leaders, member states and UN Organizations.

Gracias por su atención.