

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND GENDER RESPONSIVE EMISSIONS REDUCTION PROGRAM :

A CALL BY INDIGENOUS WOMEN IN ASIA AND PACIFIC

Indigenous Peoples contributions to sustaining the earth and its resources and mankind's cultural, intellectual, political and economic development has been recognized in different international processes and agreements including the Paris Agreement and the Cancun Safeguards under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) and the Sustainable Development Goals. This recognition implies the need to strengthen and enhance indigenous peoples knowledge, skills and practice in conservation and use of lands, waters, forests and natural resources which are key to the vision of Agenda 2030. For indigenous peoples, these calls for the full and effective operationalization of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at the local level.

Indigenous women's knowledge and multiple roles from the domestic to the collective/community level encompasses their daily activities and relationships to the land as stewards. Honoring the land which sustains life obliges indigenous peoples, especially women, to ensure the integrity of their territories for future generation. However, historical discrimination and patriarchy prevails rendering them generally invisible in the current global discussions and national-local initiatives on sustainable development and climate change, including the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation REDD+/Emissions Reduction Programs (ERPs), among others.

We are 19 indigenous women and representatives from indigenous peoples' and non-government organizations working for Indigenous Peoples in relation to climate change and related matters in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, Cambodia, Fiji, India, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Thailand, Vanuatu and Vietnam, participating in the Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop on Indigenous Peoples and Gender Responsive Emissions Reduction Programs held on 25-27 February 2017 in Hanoi, Vietnam. Having shared our situations in our vision to advance the status of indigenous women, we are forwarding the following concerns and recommendations to the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, the national REDD+ Working Groups, CSO National Platforms, to our own organizations and communities and to other concerned groups and agencies to ensure compliance to the REDD+ safeguards consistent to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the substantive achievement of Agenda 2030.

A. SUSTAINING CLIMATE RESILIENCE

With knowledge practices and developed through generations, indigenous women continue to ensure and sustain the lives, land and resources of their communities and the

future generation but remain discriminated in the ownership and control of lands, forests and resources. The right to own, manage and control land, forests and resources are primary factors in indigenous women's livelihood, community well-being and food security. The recognition of these rights is crucial in sustaining emissions reduction initiatives and actions.

State and business interests like extractive industries, palm oil plantations, hydropower dams, including environmental conservation and protection initiatives have encroached into our lands resulting to deforestation, erosion of biodiversity, land, knowledge, culture and spirituality.

Conflicts continue to emerge in this situation galvanized by militarization as a peace and order strategy employed by state and private sectors exposing women and children to gender violence and human rights violations. This has and is displacing us physically, economically, socially and culturally impacting on our right to self-determination and governance as indigenous peoples.

1. Institutionalize Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment under the REDD+ /ERP at all levels.
2. Tenurial reform which should be done in respect of indigenous peoples' right to their ancestral lands, territories and resources. State agencies should provide resources to delineate indigenous peoples' territories through mapping, resolve existing disputes and provide security of tenure ensuring effective consultation and participation of indigenous peoples and transparency in the process. Specifically, reforms should address the status of land tenure among indigenous women and provide legal remedies and mechanism to address security of land tenure for indigenous women. Conflicting laws/policies/programs that impedes the full operationalization of indigenous women and peoples' right to their customary lands and resources should be addressed by REDD+ Strategies and Actions. State commitment to these should be monitored.
3. Governments to conduct strategic social and environmental assessment as part of the readiness and ERP design to address the issue of land tenure, especially for indigenous women and institutionalize an accessible process or mechanism to facilitate security of tenure and put in place preventive actions against eviction and displacement as part of the Safeguards Information System.
4. As part of the feasibility study of governments, social and environmental assessment and due diligence should be undertaken to ensure that private initiatives in the name of emissions reduction are consistent with the right to free prior and informed consent.

B. CAPACITY BUILDING

Our capacities to fully and effectively engage as women and as indigenous peoples in state and other initiatives related to climate change, REDD+ and sustainable development, remain limited due to various intersecting factors among which are the lack of appropriate information, resources and support which are reinforcing traditional and behavioral gender barriers.

Strengthening indigenous women's agencies and/or institutions and indigenous peoples communities and organizations as a whole is crucial to be able to articulate, operationalize and negotiate our visions of sustained climate resilience and inclusive development. This includes better understanding of the context of indigenous women's marginalization among REDD+ actors and addressing this within and among indigenous organizations/communities and in the broader social context. Capacity building is a two-way process.

1. Institutionalize investment in processes that ensures the strengthening and institutional development of indigenous women and peoples' organizations. These processes should be designed to provide a means through which state agencies and other stakeholders learn from the specific situations of indigenous women and peoples towards more informed interventions and actions.
2. Provide time, resources and create spaces in REDD+ strategies and actions to raise the awareness of indigenous women on their rights as women and as indigenous peoples and how these are/are not translated into state policies, regulations and programs related to forests, the REDD+ and ERP.
3. REDD+ initiatives and actions should address the intersectionalities of gender discrimination and provide enabling spaces for indigenous women for full and effective participation in all levels. Governments should allocate adequate time and resources to enable meaningful consultations and dialogues with indigenous women through targeted consultations specially those who are directly impacted by the REDD+ initiatives, to provide timely, full, adequate and appropriate information to enable understanding how it impacts on their rights as women and indigenous peoples, including benefits and risks, as a primary process towards free and prior informed consent.
4. REDD+ Actions should facilitate recognition of and strengthen the protection and advancement of the rights, knowledge and roles of indigenous women in climate mitigation and adaptation, emissions reduction, resource management and conservation and sustainable development.
5. Direct access to funds and resources by indigenous women and their organizations/agencies in support of their own local/community emissions reduction initiatives, livelihoods, appropriate technology and innovation. Current standards, requirements and processes to access grants should be simplified or

mechanisms installed to accommodate direct access by indigenous women's organizations/agencies.

6. REDD+ actions should include organizing and equipping indigenous women and their communities to access and effectively manage resources, implement projects and programs through skills development workshops on popular education methods and approaches, project proposal development and fund-raising as well as organizational and finance management.

C. GOVERNANCE : PARTICIPATION, MONITORING AND BENEFIT SHARING

Indigenous women are most often left out of public life and decision making because of their poverty in time caused by their multiple roles and responsibilities in the family and in the community. Existing practices and approaches may not necessarily apply effectively among indigenous women where the work and agricultural cycle, spiritual and other socio-cultural and community matters have to be considered

1. Readiness and ERP designs should include targeted consultation processes and capacity building activities for indigenous women and peoples including providing ample time, resources and spaces specific for indigenous women to be able to participate fully and effectively in decision making processes from local to national levels and in all project phases and processes from conceptualization, design, implementation, evaluation and benefit sharing, including IP and gender sensitive grievance mechanism;.
2. Provide spaces and enabling resources for indigenous women representation at the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility's Participants Committee level. Where REDD+ initiatives and interventions involve indigenous peoples, the FCPF - PC should ensure the participation of indigenous women representative/s from the country under review.
3. Ensure the gender analysis of REDD+/ERP design, implementation, evaluation and benefit – sharing using culture-sensitive and gender responsive approaches with the active engagement of indigenous women.

MONITORING :

- 1. Institutionalize gender assessment in the SESA towards the development of specific Gender Action Plans and indicators for monitoring of REDD+ from strategies to activities, including benefits.
- 2. Allocate resources for the development of culture sensitive gender indicators in consultation with indigenous women in consideration of their knowledge, roles and other contributions to sustaining community well-being viz ecological

resilience and emissions reduction and ensure that these are reflected in the safeguards and benefit sharing plans of all ERP design documents.

- 3. As part of the national monitoring system, governments, in consultation with indigenous peoples, to develop culturally appropriate and gender-specific indicators for monitoring community based activities and livelihoods.
- 4. Provide resources for the creation of an independent international monitoring and evaluation process that includes experts from indigenous women/peoples results of which should be directly communicated to the communities concerned.
- 5. Designate independent funding to assess, set-up where needed, and strengthen existing indigenous, gender-sensitive and accessible grievance mechanisms ensuring that indigenous women are represented.

BENEFIT SHARING

Benefits from forests, forest conservation and emissions reduction should not be viewed merely in terms of carbon sequestration and opportunity cost. Based on a longer term perspective of empowerment and transformation towards sustained, rights-based and gender responsive climate resilient communities, indigenous women and peoples have been articulating the significance of non-carbon benefits from the REDD+/ERP i.e recognition of land rights, securing indigenous women and peoples' land tenure and livelihoods, recognition of and development of indigenous knowledge and management of their territories and resources, adaptive and appropriate technologies and innovation, among others.

- 1. Gender and women empowerment can result from the REDD+/ERP which can be considered as a benefit. Addressing traditional and behavioral gender barriers, with the participation of and in full consultation with indigenous women, therefore, should be targeted in all design documents at the global to the local levels.
- 2. REDD+/ERP strategies and action should establish gender sensitive and disaggregated baselines and a documentation system accessible to and useable for and by indigenous peoples to enable negotiation for equitable benefit sharing.
- 3. Design equitable, gender-sensitive benefit-sharing mechanisms with due respect to existing indigenous institutions and in full consideration of advancing the status of indigenous women.