

# INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CAN FEED THE WORLD



FAO is aware that to achieve its mandate of hunger eradication it has to work with indigenous peoples. While constituting around 5% of the global population or more than 370 million, indigenous peoples make up 15% of the total poor, and many of the world's 800 million of food insecure are indigenous.

However, this poverty of rights, entitlements and opportunities contrasts sharply with their spiritual wealth, traditional knowledge, ability to live in harmony with their territories, skills to sustainably manage their natural resources, and diversity of their food systems.

It is the lack of respect and recognition of their rights that places indigenous peoples in situations of high vulnerability. FAO works to support them while also considers them **essential allies** in the fight against hunger.

With the elaboration of the **Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples** in 2010, FAO committed to ensure that the organization makes all due efforts to respect, include and promote indigenous issues in its relevant work. The core principles of the policy are: self-determination; respect for indigenous knowledge, cultures and traditional practices that contribute to sustainable and equitable development; and Free, Prior and Informed Consent.

## 1. Free, Prior and Informed Consent

Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is a right that pertains to indigenous peoples throughout the world, and allows them to give or withhold consent to an activity that may influence their livelihoods and customs. It has also emerged as an international human rights standard derived from the collective rights of indigenous peoples to self-determination and to their lands, territories and other properties.

In line with the international legal framework, the FAO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples includes FPIC. The policy is operationally reflected on FAO Environmental and Social Management Guidelines and the Guide to the Project Cycle which have to be applied in all activities undertaken by the organization.

[www.fao.org/indigenous-peoples/our-pillars/](http://www.fao.org/indigenous-peoples/our-pillars/)





## 2. Lands, territories and natural resources

Indigenous peoples have an intimate connection with their traditional lands, territories and resources, which shapes their lives, cultures and spirituality. Their livelihoods are closely based on the sustainable management of their natural resources, while their traditional practices have resulted in biodiversity conservation in those territories they inhabit. Indigenous peoples tenure rights are understood within their collective rights. Their customary rights often refer to the management of communal areas and resources. The lack of recognition over their traditional lands, territories and resources is a source of conflict and places them in a situation of vulnerability.

[www.fao.org/indigenous-peoples/our-work/tenure-rights/](http://www.fao.org/indigenous-peoples/our-work/tenure-rights/)

## 3. Traditional knowledge for climate change adaptation

Indigenous peoples are among the first populations to face the direct consequences of climate change, owing to their dependence upon, and close relationship with the environment and its resources. Climate change exacerbates the difficulties already faced by indigenous communities, including marginalization, loss of land and resources, human rights violations, and discrimination. However, indigenous peoples hold answers to climate change challenges, contributing to the resilience of the ecosystems they live in and drawing on ancestral knowledge to cope with its consequences.

[www.fao.org/indigenous-peoples/our-work/monitoring-forests/](http://www.fao.org/indigenous-peoples/our-work/monitoring-forests/)



## 4. Women empowerment to overcome triple discrimination



Indigenous women often suffer a triple discrimination: because of being women, indigenous and poor. This crosscutting discrimination affects all spheres of their lives and exacerbates inequalities. Despite their key role as custodians of seeds, traditional knowledge, and ecosystem management, they suffer from wide range of rights violations both inside and outside their communities. FAO believes it is paramount to empower indigenous women in order to achieve gender equality and work alongside them to reducing poverty.

[www.fao.org/indigenous-peoples/our-work/indigenous-women/](http://www.fao.org/indigenous-peoples/our-work/indigenous-women/)

## 5. Indigenous food systems to feed the world

As a result of their traditional knowledge, spirituality and sacred vision of their lands and foods, indigenous peoples take particular care in managing their food systems, which are intrinsically linked to culture and identity. The way in which they manage their food systems could provide lessons for improving sustainability in food systems in general, having the potential of diversifying the current food base within efficient production systems that balance production and food supplies.

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