



Enabling poor rural people
to overcome poverty

68th Session General Assembly – Third Committee
Agenda Item 66: Rights of Indigenous Peoples
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Mr. Chairperson,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure to address the Third Committee today on behalf of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) as the Committee turns its attention to agenda item 66 on Right of Indigenous Peoples.

Mr. Chairperson,

The commitment of IFAD to indigenous peoples' development continues to be high on our agenda for poverty reduction in rural areas of developing countries.

Today IFAD funds about 240 on-going projects. About 30 per cent of these support indigenous peoples' communities in some 38 countries, for a total investment of about USD 800 million. Indigenous peoples are valued partners for IFAD.

In 2009 IFAD approved its Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples. It sets out nine principles of engagement – including free, prior and informed consent – that IFAD adheres to in its work with indigenous peoples. The Policy envisages the establishment of an Indigenous Peoples Forum at IFAD as a concrete way to institutionalize consultation and dialogue with indigenous peoples and to improve IFAD's accountability to its target groups.

I am pleased to inform this Assembly, that in February 2013, we hosted the first global meeting of the Indigenous Peoples Forum at IFAD.

The indigenous peoples' representatives underscored their commitment to partnering with IFAD in working towards the ambitious goal of reducing rural poverty, pointing out that there can be no sustainable rural development without indigenous peoples. They called on IFAD for more capacity-building support, more efforts to encourage participation by indigenous peoples and more effective implementation of the Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples. They called on governments to recognize the rights of indigenous peoples.

Their recommendations were reported in the Synthesis of Deliberations of the Forum, which were delivered at the Thirty-sixth Session of IFAD's Governing Council.

Another instrument to promote implementation of IFAD's Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples, is a dedicated fund – the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility. This is a demand-driven fund that finances indigenous peoples' small projects based on their needs, priorities and identity. Indigenous leaders make up the majority of the Facility's governing board, and indigenous peoples' organizations co-manage the Facility at the regional level. Since its establishment in 2007, more than 100 small projects were funded in 43 countries around the world.

Mr. Chairperson,

In its 66th Session, this Assembly encouraged the United Nations agencies to actively engage and to support activities and events of indigenous peoples in the process leading to the World Conference. IFAD has taken this call seriously and has supported indigenous peoples in organizing their regional workshops in Africa and Asia.

Furthermore, in view of this important appointment in 2014, I am pleased to inform you that IFAD just approved a grant of about USD 1 million to support indigenous peoples in the processes leading up to the World Conference and beyond.

This grant will be implemented in partnership with the International Work Group on Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), the Indigenous Global Coordinating Group and the Secretariat of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. This grant aims at enabling indigenous peoples' organizations and their representatives to effectively engage in the processes leading to the WCIP. It will also promote the dissemination of the World Conference outcomes and support the effective implementation of the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at the country level.

We hope we will be joined in this effort by other UN Agencies in order to ensure true success of this very first UN World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

IFAD welcomes the outcome document of the Global Indigenous Preparatory Conference for the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples held in Alta, Norway, in June 2013. We hope that the four themes identified in the outcome document be taken into account when considering the specific themes for the round tables and interactive panel for the World Conference. We trust that the upcoming consultations on the outcome document of the High Level Plenary Session will continue to include indigenous peoples.

Mr. Chairperson,

While we are proud of progress achieved in the past ten years of intensive engagement with indigenous peoples, and in building true and effective partnership based on mutual trust, we are also well aware that much more needs to be done. We believe that the World Conference and the post-2015 development agenda are golden opportunities to empower the world's indigenous peoples to realize their hopes and aspirations and to confront the challenges they face.

Thank you.