



## UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement      Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente  
Программа Организации Объединенных Наций по окружающей среде      برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة

联合国环境规划署



# UNEP and Indigenous Peoples: A Partnership in Caring for the Environment Policy Guidance November 2012

The objective of this Policy Guidance to UNEP is to better understand and build on the Indigenous Peoples' rights, knowledge, practices and systems that provide the framework for the harmonious relations that most Indigenous Peoples have with their environment. Furthermore, this Policy Guidance aims to ensure that United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) appropriately considers Indigenous Peoples in its activities, with the understanding that UNEP does not speak in the name of or represent Indigenous Peoples.

The purpose of the Policy Guidance is to initiate and support a process to enhance practices in UNEP for engaging Indigenous Peoples as an important partner in environmental policy development and implementation on a continuous and organized basis.

The Policy Guidance has been developed following the recommendations to UNEP by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues<sup>1</sup> (UNPFII) and on the basis of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 13 September 2007, in particular its articles 41 and 42<sup>2</sup>. It also makes reference to the recently adopted Rio+20 outcome document: "The Future We Want" on 22 June 2012<sup>3</sup>.

The Policy Guidance provides an approach to the issue of definition of Indigenous Peoples, the rationale of UNEP's engagement with Indigenous Peoples, and defines mechanisms of this engagement.

The Policy Guidance shall be reviewed after two years and then be updated every four years, starting with the date of endorsement by the Senior Management Team (SMT) of UNEP.

### **Recommended SMT decision:**

#### Approval of the Policy Guidance

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1 See Document: E/2006/43, E/C.19/2006/11, *Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Report of the fifth session (15-26 May 2006)*, paragraph 15: The Permanent Forum recommends that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) adopt an Indigenous Peoples' policy and ensure the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in the formulation of this policy and its programmes and projects.

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#### *Article 41*

The organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations shall contribute to the full realisation of the provisions of this Declaration through the mobilization, inter alia, of financial cooperation and technical assistance. Ways and means of ensuring participation of Indigenous Peoples on issues affecting them shall be established.

#### *Article 42*

The United Nations, its bodies, including the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and specialized agencies, including at the country level, and States, shall promote respect for and full application of the provisions of this Declaration and follow up the effectiveness of this Declaration.

3 <http://www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/727The%20Future%20We%20Want%2019%20June%201230pm.pdf>

**Approval**

This document has been approved by UNEP's Senior Management Team and goes into effect from the date of signature. The Policy Guidance will be reviewed periodically based on experiences in its application.

Signed:  
Achim Steiner  
Executive Director

Date: 26 November 2012

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# **United Nations Environment Programme and Indigenous Peoples: A Partnership in Caring for the Environment Policy Guidance**

## **1 Executive Summary**

This Policy Guidance was initiated to guide the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to promote the synergies and linkages between Indigenous Peoples and the global, regional and national environment policy development, policy decision-making and implementation as well as to inspire potential partnerships. The Policy Guidance also seeks to promote the integration of Indigenous Peoples' perspectives into UNEP's long-term, mid-term and short-term activities, with the understanding that UNEP does not pretend to speak in the name of, or represent the Indigenous Peoples.

The Policy Guidance is envisaged to become an instrument to achieve effective, efficient, and mutually beneficial relations with Indigenous Peoples, as part of the continuing process of engagement of Major Groups and Stakeholders in UNEP's work.

Principles of engagement with Indigenous Peoples are presented to guide UNEP's staff when working in cooperation with Indigenous Peoples. Specific mechanisms of engagement with Indigenous Peoples as they can be applied by UNEP are being introduced, including with respect to accreditation of Indigenous Peoples organizations, and to broad participation of Indigenous Peoples in relevant UNEP meetings and conferences.

In view of the rapid developments and changes in the indigenous world at all levels, UNEP aims to promote continued dialogue with Indigenous Peoples and relevant institutions such as the UNPFII and the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues and aims at complying with the recommendations of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as also reiterated and supported by the Rio+20 outcome document in June 2012: "The Future We Want" in particular articles 40, 43, 49, 58(j), 109, 131, 175, 197, 211, 229 and 238, which are underlining the importance of indigenous peoples in the achievement of sustainable development.

The Policy Guidance also aims to raise awareness among UNEP's staff, UN member states and partners on the importance to engage with Indigenous Peoples as equal partners and invaluable knowledge holders on the environment and to apply this understanding and perspective also in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Work (PoW) taking into account the UNEP's current Medium-term Strategy (MTS) and UNEP's thematic priority areas.

It establishes the basis to guide and assist Indigenous Peoples in their collaboration, cooperation and partnerships with UNEP. To assist Indigenous Peoples to make use of this Policy Guidance, UNEP will provide additional information for Indigenous Peoples in form of a brochure.

## 2 Background

Within its approach towards Major Groups and Stakeholders, UNEP considers Indigenous Peoples as an important partner at the strategic, political and programmatic levels. They inhabit large areas of the Earth's surface, spread across the world from the Arctic to the South Pacific, from the tropical rainforests of Borneo and the Amazon, to the mountain regions of the Andes and Himalayas, to the deserts of the Sahara and Sahel. Each community and group of Indigenous Peoples has developed over the millennia a unique relationship with its traditional land, territory, and related natural resources as well as with the ecosystems they inhabit.

Many economic practices of Indigenous Peoples can be considered as "green" and have been proven to be sustainable and equitable, and also to assist the environment in its rehabilitation and resilience. A sustainable low-carbon, equitable economy has been the foundation of Indigenous Peoples' survival for many generations and there is a need to recognize and value the sustainable activities as practiced by many Indigenous Peoples and local communities as well as to empower local stewards and indigenous institutions in their efforts to live in a sustainable way with nature.

Many indigenous groups had their own concepts of stewardship and respected nature long before the conservation movement began. The survival of their cultures and ways of life is invariably linked to maintaining the traditional knowledge which supports and nurtures the healthy relationships with the ecosystems in which they live. Their continued existence is also linked to ensuring that Indigenous Peoples are in most cases able to live within the carrying capacity of their ecosystems.

The state of Indigenous Peoples and their environment and health conditions are increasingly under threat by a general population increase, large scale industrial activities, climate change, toxic waste, conflicts and migration, as well as by other unsustainable development activities. The structures of the world's ecosystems have been significantly degraded through human actions, including through the transformation of approximately one quarter of the Earth's terrestrial surface to cultivated systems.<sup>4</sup> Most Indigenous Peoples suffer disproportionately from loss of biological diversity and deterioration of ecosystems such as forests, due to their subsistence economies and occupations and their spiritual connection to their traditional lands and territories.

Many Indigenous Peoples live in the world's more bio-diverse areas, and their displacement either by force due to conflict or by the consequences of unsustainable development or climate change leads to greater destruction of these important ecosystems such as in the Amazon or the Congo Rivers basins.

UNEP recognizes – in line with "The Future We Want" and the UNDRIP - the importance of Indigenous Peoples' participation at all levels of policy and programme development and implementation stages in order to achieve sustainable development in a holistic and integrated manner. UNEP also respects the valuable inputs that these holders of traditional knowledge and heritage – gained through trans-generational experiences and observations - can contribute to environmental assessments and sustainable ecosystem management. This provides a unique foundation for a global, regional and national partnership between UNEP and Indigenous Peoples and calls for a specific guidance aimed at enhancing Indigenous Peoples' full and effective participation in its work. UNEP recognizes Indigenous Peoples' rights, risks, responsibilities and contributions in caring for the environment in furtherance of UNEP's over-all mission to promote ecosystems health and human well-being. However, as with all humans, Indigenous Peoples can also act in ways that damage the environment or reduce biodiversity.

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<sup>4</sup> The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, <http://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/Framework.aspx>.

UNEP recognizes that all initiatives directly affecting Indigenous Peoples require their effective participation in decision-making, planning and implementation, and consent<sup>5</sup> to ensure that such initiatives are in line with their rights, cultures, visions and priorities. Indigenous Peoples need to be recognized as equal partners in development and environmental projects. UNEP also recognizes the link between the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Indigenous Peoples' rights; and that the MDGs will have beneficial impacts for Indigenous Peoples, only if their rights are respected in the sustainable development process and as reiterated in "The Future We Want".

The Guidance Document will assist UNEP, its partners as well as Indigenous Peoples in facilitating:

1. Partnerships between UNEP and Indigenous Peoples that will strengthen Indigenous Peoples' participation in *environmental* development, policy-making and programme and project implementation.
2. A better understanding among UNEP's staff regarding the situation of Indigenous Peoples, in particular the impacts of environmental changes on indigenous communities and their cultures. It will also enhance the engagement of UNEP with Indigenous Peoples, and draw out their key concerns and priorities, thereby firmly placing Indigenous Peoples on UNEP's agenda.
3. A strengthened institutional interaction between UNEP and Indigenous Peoples to tap into Indigenous Peoples' knowledge, expertise and experiences, for the benefit of the environmental decision-making processes.
4. Increased Indigenous Peoples' participation in policy development and decision-making and implementation that could contribute to improved international and national environmental governance.<sup>6</sup> Indigenous Peoples increased involvement in the sessions of UNEP's Governing Council as well as relevant regional and sub-regional consultations and the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forums (GMGSF) would also result into enhanced participation and improve awareness and knowledge sharing among all relevant stakeholders as well as UNEP.

### 3 Who are Indigenous Peoples?

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) estimates Indigenous Peoples to number 370 million individuals living in approximately 90 countries around the world.<sup>7</sup> They represent 5 % of the world's total population yet comprise about 15% of the global poor. There is no universally agreed definition of *Indigenous Peoples*.<sup>8</sup> This reflects the difficulty in attempting to capture in one single term the diversity and unique characteristics of Indigenous Peoples around the world. Indigenous Peoples themselves have refused to be 'defined' on the grounds of this being both discriminatory and unnecessary.<sup>9</sup> The Secretariat of the UNPFII concluded that *the prevailing view today is that no formal universal definition of the term is necessary*.<sup>10</sup> Internationally, it is commonly understood and accepted that *self-identification as indigenous or tribal shall be regarded as a fundamental criterion*<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Through the application of Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).

<sup>6</sup> Also see paragraphs 43 and 49 of "The Future we want".

<sup>7</sup> Source: UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (Statement on the occasion of the IASG meeting held in Paris, UNESCO, in September 2008): [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/Message\\_unpfiichair\\_07.doc](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/Message_unpfiichair_07.doc).

<sup>8</sup> Indigenous Peoples are sometimes also referred to as: Aboriginals, First Nations, Natives, Ethnic minorities, tribes, Highland peoples, Forest peoples, hunters and gatherers, pastoralists, indigenous fishers communities or coastal communities.

<sup>9</sup> In fact some of the Indigenous Peoples' representatives contributing to the UNEP consultation process expressed reservations about attempts to define Indigenous Peoples, e.g. the Pacific Islands are inhabited by 80% of the indigenous population.

<sup>10</sup> PFII/2004/WS.1/3: [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/workshop\\_data\\_background.doc](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/workshop_data_background.doc).

<sup>11</sup> ILO Convention 169 Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/indigenous/standard/index.htm1>.

The UNPFII provides following approach on how Indigenous Peoples can be identified:<sup>12</sup>

- They have historical continuity or association with a given region or part of a given region prior to colonization or annexation;
- They identify themselves as Indigenous Peoples and are, at the individual level, accepted as members by their community;
- They have strong links to territories, surrounding natural resources and ecosystems;
- They maintain at least in part, distinct social, economic and political systems;
- They maintain, at least in part, distinct languages, cultures, beliefs and knowledge systems;
- They are resolved to maintain and further develop their identity and distinct social, economic, cultural and political institutions as distinct peoples and communities;
- They often form non-dominant sectors of society.<sup>13</sup>

## 4 UNEP's Mission and Mandate and Indigenous Peoples

The mission of UNEP under the principle of "Environment for Development" is "to provide leadership and encourage partnerships in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and people to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations."

Established in 1972, UNEP is the principal UN body in the field of the environment that promotes coherent implementation of environmental dimension in sustainable development. UNEP is mandated to coordinate the development of international environmental policy consensus by keeping the global environment under review and bringing emerging issues to the attention of governments and the international community for action.

UNEP's mandate has been further shaped since its inception through several decisions and declarations of UNEP and UN wide governing bodies, some of which are relevant to Indigenous Peoples issues.

In its approach to engage with Indigenous Peoples UNEP relates to the following:

### **Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (C 169)**

The [ILO C 169 Convention](#) of 1989 is a legally binding international instrument open to ratification, which deals specifically with the rights of Indigenous and tribal peoples. So far it has been ratified by 20 countries.

### **The Malmö Declaration**

UNEP's engagement with Indigenous Peoples is the result of UNEP's policy decisions to enhance engagement with civil society as well as with Indigenous Peoples in its work. The [Malmö Declaration of 2000](#) explicitly states that "*success in combating environmental degradation is dependent on the full participation of all actors in society, an aware and educated population, respect for ethical and spiritual values and cultural diversity, and protection of indigenous knowledge*".

It furthermore states in paragraph 18 that: "*We must pay special attention to threats to cultural diversity and traditional knowledge, in particular of indigenous and local communities, which may be posed by globalization.*"

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<sup>12</sup> Resource Kit on Indigenous Peoples' issues, DESA, UN 2008, page 7-8.

[http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/resource\\_kit\\_indigenous\\_2008.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/resource_kit_indigenous_2008.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> Not all non-dominant groups are indigenous – important seems here to be the historical connection to land.

### **Governing Council Decision 21/19**

[Governing Council Decision 21/19](#), adopted in 2001, called on UNEP to submit “a *draft strategy for the active engagement of the civil society, private sector and other major groups in the work of UNEP*”; and

### **Governing Council Decision SSVII.5**

[Governing Council Decision SSVII.5](#), adopted in 2002, endorses the Global Civil Society Forum and requests that “the *Executive Director continue the current practice of convening a civil society forum that is regionally balanced and representative in conjunction with the meetings of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum in close consultation with civil society*”.

### **Environment and Cultural Diversity**

The twenty-second session of the UNEP Governing Council/GMEF adopted a decision on *Environment and Cultural Diversity* (decision 22/16), which asked for a survey on the current state and possible developments in collaboration with UNESCO. The survey report was presented to the twenty-third session as *Environment and Cultural Diversity: Note by the Executive Director* ([UNEP/GC.23/INF/23](#)).

### **The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)<sup>14</sup>**

The [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) was adopted by the General Assembly on 13 September 2007 by a majority of 144 states.

The Declaration guides the increasing cooperation of States, Indigenous Peoples and the international community as a whole for the promotion and protection of the human rights of Indigenous Peoples and to strengthen their partnerships for the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Article 41 and 42 specifically state:

#### **“Article 41**

The organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations shall contribute to the full realization of the provisions of this Declaration through the mobilization, inter alia, of financial cooperation and technical assistance. Ways and means of ensuring participation of indigenous peoples on issues affecting them shall be established.

#### **Article 42**

The United Nations, its bodies, including the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and specialized agencies, including at the country level, and States shall promote respect for and full application of the provisions of this Declaration and follow up the effectiveness of this Declaration.”

### **United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues**

The [UNDG Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues](#) were approved by the UNDG Programme Group on 1 February 2008. The guidelines provide information on the international human rights framework that guides the UN's work on indigenous issues and provide practical advice on designing programmes with a special focus on indigenous issues according to the requirements of the UNDRIP of 2007.

### **Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building**

[The Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building](#) was approved by the 23rd session of UNEP Governing Council in February 2005.

The Bali Strategic Plan constitutes an intergovernmentally agreed approach to strengthen technology support and capacity building in developing countries, as well as countries with economies in transition. It seeks to strengthen the capacity of Governments of developing countries and of countries with economies in transition at all levels and provide systematic, targeted, long- and short-term measures for technology support and capacity building. Another objective of the Plan is to promote,

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<sup>14</sup> United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as Adopted by the General Assembly, 13 September 2007: [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS\\_en.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf).



facilitate, and finance access to and support for environmentally sound technologies and corresponding know-how. Indigenous and traditional knowledge as well as good practices could serve as promoting sustainable and environmentally sound technologies in many different sectors at country levels.

### **Indigenous Peoples in UNEP Strategic Approaches**

The following strategic approaches demonstrate the relevance to UNEP of engaging with Indigenous Peoples in some of its cross-cutting thematic areas:

*The UNEP Science Strategy* is guided by the following in relation to indigenous and traditional knowledge which will be complemented by the research and assessments undertaken by UNEP and its partners:

- Disseminate relevant scientific data in order to ensure that the information also reaches those who can practically apply it on the ground.
- Considering Indigenous Peoples as stakeholders in the development of scenarios that impact upon them and/or their lands and territories.
- Involving Indigenous Peoples in impact assessment of development and environmental projects that involve and/or impact upon them.
- Engaging Indigenous Peoples as technicians enables researchers in collaboration with trained indigenous groups to gather more data of larger areas than would otherwise be possible.
- Inviting Indigenous Peoples to share their experiences and observations acquired from previous generations.<sup>15</sup>

UNEP/Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (DEPI) is currently developing a *Strategic Agenda on Forests Ecosystems and their Goods and Services* that will also refer to the needed participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in forest ecosystems' management due to their strong dependency on forest ecosystems to meet their livelihood needs.<sup>16</sup>

### **UN-REDD**

The UN Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD Programme), between FAO, UNDP and UNEP, is committed to the engagement of Indigenous Peoples and other forest-dependent communities on REDD+. The Programme has been developed in collaboration with the World Bank's "Guidelines on Stakeholder Engagement". In addition, the UN-REDD Programme is working with partners and REDD+ countries to develop tools and guidance to enhance the multiple benefits of, and reduce risks from REDD+. As part of this work, a set of Social and Environmental Principles and Criteria (SEPC) are being developed, which consists of broad principles, within which more detailed criteria describe important issues to be considered in developing REDD+ programmes. Relevant issues addressed include the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples, respecting their land tenure and carbon rights, and ensuring their Free, Prior and Informed Consent. The draft SEPC may be accessed via [http://www.un-redd.org/Multiple\\_Benefits\\_SEPC/tabid/54130/Default.aspx](http://www.un-redd.org/Multiple_Benefits_SEPC/tabid/54130/Default.aspx). The Programme is also finalizing the "Guidelines on Free, Prior and Informed Consent". The UN-REDD Policy Board, which is the main governance structure for the programme includes a total of 4 Indigenous Peoples and 4 civil society organizations representatives, one of each serving on the Policy Board as full members. Full members participate in the deliberations of the Board and have veto power.

### **"The Future We Want" (Rio +20 outcome document), June 2012**

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<sup>15</sup> The local perspective has gained more value among scientists in recent years and growing political awareness and activism by Indigenous Peoples have led to increased recognition of their knowledge, ideas and understanding of the natural environment and its changes.

<sup>16</sup> Strategic agenda on forest ecosystems and their goods and services. Draft III, October 2011 (UNEP).

Although criticism was expressed by Indigenous peoples' groups on the outcome document, there is a fair representation of indigenous issues in the entire text making reference to the importance of indigenous peoples' active participation towards achieving sustainable development, the recognition of the UNDRIP for the first time in an international document of such importance as well as acknowledging the diversity of green economy as well as it being a tool towards reaching the goal of sustainable development which would also preserve and respect non-market approaches that would contribute to the eradication of poverty. The document also recognizes pastoralists, fishing and forest dependent communities and insists on the intrinsic and cross-cutting value of biodiversity.<sup>17</sup>

## **5 Objectives of the Policy Guidance**

The Indigenous Peoples Policy Guidance represents a renewed commitment by UNEP towards an enhanced recognition of Indigenous Peoples issues and introduces relevant mechanisms which can assist reflecting upon this renewed commitment in the ways UNEP designs and implements its activities. The Policy Guidance will support the development of future UNEP strategies, policies, programmes and projects and will have the following objective:

To strengthen the capacity of UNEP's staff in understanding Indigenous Peoples' perspectives, needs and concerns; and to establish and employ a more systematic mechanism in UNEP to take into account Indigenous Peoples' views, needs and rights.

The above policy objective will be achieved through the mechanisms described below.

## **6 Mechanisms of Engagement with Indigenous Peoples**

### ***6.1 Indigenous Peoples Focal Point***

UNEP will continue to take into consideration Indigenous Peoples' issues through an Indigenous Peoples Focal Point. The focal point is located within its Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch in the Division of Regional Cooperation.

The Focal Point will facilitate the following:

- Assisting Indigenous Peoples and their organizations in working with UNEP;
- Providing relevant information on UNEP's activities that affect Indigenous Peoples and their organizations, including by further developing its Indigenous Peoples Website and enhancing its communication and outreach to IPs in several ways;<sup>18</sup>
- Disseminating information within UNEP on Indigenous Peoples issues and collaborating with UNEP's Regional Offices and all divisions on issues and themes that have an indigenous peoples dimension;
- Preparing background materials in collaboration with relevant offices for UNEP senior staff to attend meetings that focus on Indigenous Peoples issues. The Focal Point may be delegated to represent UNEP when appropriate;

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<sup>17</sup> The Future We Want: Articles 43, 49, 58(j), 109, 131, 175, 197, 211, 229, 238.

<sup>18</sup> On communication also see next chapter.

## ***6.2 Indigenous Peoples in Environmental Policy Processes***

The following mechanisms can be avenues to facilitate and advocate for an informed and appropriate representation and inclusion of Indigenous Peoples' issues at international, as well as regional and national environmental processes, in which UNEP is involved:

- **UNEP's representation and participation in the UNPFII and the Inter-Agency Support Group (IASG)**  
UNEP will, provided resources are available, regularly and actively participate in the annual UNPFII sessions as well as in the associated meetings of the IASG, which provide platforms of exchanges of views, information sharing and collaboration between Indigenous Peoples, UN agencies, UNEP and donors.
- **Indigenous Peoples accreditation and participation in governing bodies**  
UNEP will encourage and enhance the accreditation of Indigenous Peoples' Organizations to facilitate meaningful participation in the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum as well as the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. UNEP will also strive to promote participation of accredited Indigenous Peoples organizations in other relevant meetings to address issues of particular concern to them.

## ***6.3 Capacity Building and Development***

UNEP will employ the following:

- **Strengthening its capacity** by raising awareness and building knowledge and understanding within the organization about the situation of Indigenous Peoples, the beneficial impact of involving Indigenous Peoples and their communities as partners and about the ways how to involve and engage them as stake- and rights-holders in specific projects and programmes. To achieve this, UNEP will put into place targeted training courses that will assist its staff to engage Indigenous Peoples in their work more effectively.
- **Providing regular information to Indigenous Peoples** to enhance their knowledge, understanding and competence about international environmental standards and international environmental policy processes, including UNEP's procedures and structures, in order to empower Indigenous Peoples towards influencing processes that may affect their communities and their capacity to claim their rights. To achieve this, UNEP will further strengthen its Civil Society Website and maintain regular contact to accredited Indigenous Peoples organizations and networks.
- **Providing technical support to and raising awareness of governments**, in order to strengthen their awareness and capacity to include Indigenous Peoples' rights and interests in environmental governance processes and procedures. UNEP will support, within available resources, the UNPFII in its delivery of specific trainings tailored to United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) on Indigenous Peoples issues and will assist in developing materials related to the environment and Indigenous Peoples in the respective countries in collaboration with relevant partners and UN sister agencies.

## **6.4 Inclusion of Indigenous Peoples' Perspectives in the Implementation of UNEP's Programme of Work**

UNEP will utilize relevant mechanisms to regularly engage and consult with Indigenous Peoples at the Programmatic level when developing and implementing its Programme of Work. When specific projects, programmes and activities are developed that have relevance to Indigenous Peoples issues, relevant considerations will be taken on throughout the planning, development, implementation and the evaluation processes of those projects. The following mechanisms could be used:

- Through the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum including its preparation and follow up phases, UNEP will seek inputs from all relevant Major Groups, including Indigenous Peoples, into each newly developed Programme of Work. These inputs will be reviewed and forwarded to the responsible managers for consideration.
- Early in the design phase of single projects that constitute the Programme of Work, the Project Manager will determine whether Indigenous Peoples are present in, or have a collective attachment to the project area. In doing so, the project manager will bring this to the attention of UNEP's Indigenous Peoples Focal Point, with a view to involving relevant expertise and encouraging the application of the [principle of free, prior and informed consent](#).

### **Box 1. Indigenous Peoples' Free, Prior and Informed Consent**

"The substantive and procedural norms underlying free, prior and informed consent empower Indigenous Peoples to meaningfully exercise choices about their economic, social and cultural development, particularly in relation to development proposals by States and other external bodies in their ancestral lands and territories. [...] Substantively, the principle of free, prior and informed consent recognises Indigenous Peoples' inherent and prior rights to their lands and resources and respects their legitimate authority to require that third parties enter into an equal and respectful relationship with them based on the principle of informed consent. Procedurally, free, prior and informed consent requires processes that allow and support meaningful choices by Indigenous Peoples about their development path."

Source: UN Commission on Human Rights, Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Working Group on Indigenous Populations; Document E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.4/2004/4, 8 July 2004

If the screening indicates that Indigenous Peoples are present in, or have collective attachment to the project area, the Project Manager will liaise with the Indigenous Peoples Focal Point to determine an appropriate response to the situation.

UNEP as one of the implementing agencies of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) will comply with the recently adopted GEF policies on Environmental and Social Safeguards and Gender Mainstreaming which also includes criteria related to Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous peoples are involved in the design, preparation and implementation of all relevant UNEP's GEF projects.<sup>19</sup>

## **6.5 Project planning and implementation**

<sup>19</sup> In 2011, the GEF approved its GEF policies on Environmental and Social Safeguards and Gender mainstreaming policies. The safeguards policy includes criteria on the following seven safeguard standards: (1) Environmental Assessment; (2) Natural Habitats; (3) Involuntary Resettlement; (4) Indigenous Peoples; (5) Pest Management; (6) Physical Cultural Resources; and (7) Safety of Dams. The GEF Policy on Gender Mainstreaming includes policy provisions that will apply to both the GEF Secretariat and the GEF Agencies: [http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/C.40.10\\_GEF\\_Policies\\_on\\_Safeguards\\_and\\_Gender.April\\_26\\_2011.pdf](http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/C.40.10_GEF_Policies_on_Safeguards_and_Gender.April_26_2011.pdf).

UNEP will develop further its Project Manual to include relevant questions and checklists on the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples as stakeholders.

UNEP staff and partners on the ground should follow these steps during the respective project phases for projects that are likely to affect Indigenous Peoples:

**1. During project design:**

- Addressing social and environmental impacts affecting Indigenous Peoples which are likely to arise when the project is implemented;
- Stakeholder involvement, taking into account the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) Principle;
- Addressing the results of the Social and Environmental Impacts Assessments in terms of Indigenous Peoples issues.

**2. During project development phases:**

- Include responses to Social and Environmental Impacts assessments, if conducted;
- Suggest mitigation measures;
- Planning and development of the project in consultation with relevant local groups in the respective area.

**3. During the implementation phase:**

- During the implementation of the project regular stakeholder meetings take place for checks and balances and to determine whether the project responded to local communities' needs and aspirations.
- Indigenous Peoples should be involved in project implementation, to ensure their buy-in and sustainability of the project once project funds are spent.

**4. Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and Evaluation will take into account Indigenous Peoples issues and will evaluate whether the project has been implemented in line with this Policy Guidance.

UNEP project managers are encouraged to involve respective expertise on issues relevant for Indigenous Peoples, in-house and external, in all project phases to ensure that Indigenous Peoples' concerns are adequately taken into account. Project managers are required to ensure that project budgets foresee the coverage of the related costs.

## **7 Communication, Education and Awareness-raising about Indigenous Peoples**

Public information is an important element of UNEP's core work which includes raising environmental awareness, seeking to influence attitudes, promoting sustainable living, behaviors and decisions related to the local and global environment. Awareness-raising about the specific situation of Indigenous Peoples, their rights, and their particular environmental concerns, will be an integral part of UNEP's overall communication strategy.

### ***7.1 Environmental Education***

UNEP will continue to have an Indigenous Peoples focus in the work coordinated by the Environmental Education and Training Unit (EET) that promotes attitudes and value systems that influence

environmentally ethical behavior including the application and use of traditional and indigenous knowledge in Environmental Education in universities in particular.

UNEP through its diverse education programmes addressing children and youth will continue to enhance the participation and involvement of young indigenous leaders and representatives in their relevant global and regional meetings and the TUNZA programme for children and youth in particular.

## ***7.2 Environmental Assessment and Early Warning***

UNEP undertakes supports and is a partner in a number of environmental assessments with different thematic and geographic coverage. Through the [UNEP Global Environment Outlook \(GEO\) reports](#), UNEP provides the world community with improved access to meaningful environmental data and information which helps to increase the capacity of governments and the society at large to use environmental information for decision-making and action planning for sustainable human development. Involvement of Indigenous Peoples' issues in the assessments as well as direct involvement of Indigenous Peoples' organizations have been and will continue to be an integral part of the GEO and other assessment processes. Indigenous knowledge needs to be acknowledged as being complimentary to scientific knowledge in the areas of assessment and early warning strategies in particular.

# **8 UNEP, Indigenous Peoples and UNEP's Programme of Work (PoW)**

## ***8.1 Climate Change***

UNEP believes that Indigenous Peoples' contributions are essential in designing and implementing solutions to climate change.

Climate change is one of the most critical global challenges of our time. Recent events have emphatically demonstrated the growing vulnerability to climate change. Climate change impacts will range from affecting agriculture, further endangering food security, sea-level rise and the accelerated erosion of coastal zones, increasing intensity of natural disasters, species extinction and the spread of vector-borne diseases.

The impact of climate change on Indigenous Peoples' lives, survival, development chances, traditional knowledge and related biological diversity is of great concern to UNEP. There are also several examples of international and national climate change mitigation strategies posing an additional threat to Indigenous Peoples' territories and coping strategies. For example mono-crop plantations for bio-fuels may affect the ecosystems, the water supply and the whole landscape on which Indigenous Peoples depend.

UNEP recognizes that indigenous communities are not simply the passive victims of climate change. They are valuable partners in the global efforts to address climate change. Indigenous Peoples are already using their traditional knowledge to address and adapt to climate change at the local level. Also, an international system to reward carbon sequestration should benefit the Indigenous Peoples.

Therefore, UNEP endeavors to support activities that raise awareness about the effects of climate change on vulnerable regions and peoples, and will continue to build capacity to strengthen the role of these communities in negotiations on mitigation and on climate change adaptation.

## ***8.2 Disasters and Conflicts***

UNEP works in areas where the people are impacted by conflicts and disasters, or where the environment is a factor contributing to conflicts and disaster impacts. UNEP conducts environmental assessments in conflict or disaster affected countries and strengthens national environmental management capacity through institutional building, promoting regional and sub-regional cooperation, technical legal assistance, environmental information management and integrating environmental concerns and risk reduction measures in reconstruction and recovery programmes. In the context of natural disasters indigenous knowledge could become a major source for early warnings and enhance preparedness against natural disasters.

In post-conflict assessments particular attention is often needed for the most vulnerable groups within a nation which includes indigenous groups, minorities, women and the poor. UNEP will emphasize the importance of addressing environmental and disaster risks and impacts, in ways which are gender and culturally-sensitive, as a prerequisite to sustainable development and will seek to integrate environmental management needs within recovery plans and peace-building strategies, primarily designed by Indigenous Peoples themselves in those areas/projects in which Indigenous Peoples are directly affected by such plans and strategies.

## ***8.3 Ecosystem Management***

**Poverty and Environment:** Indigenous Peoples make up about 5% of the world's population but comprise about 15% of the world's poor. They are often among the economically poorest population groups, and the poverty gap between indigenous and non-indigenous groups is increasing in many countries.<sup>20</sup> Indigenous Peoples largely depend on the environment for their basic needs, such as water, food shelter and health. Environmental degradation contributes to continued poverty in indigenous communities, due to their strong dependence on the environment. UNEP addresses in its work the particular link between poverty in indigenous communities and the environment. The explicit linking of poverty and environment, achieved by promoting sustainable management of natural resources, will also contribute to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

**Natural Resource Extraction:** The survival of Indigenous Peoples, as distinct peoples, largely depends on the sustainable utilization of their traditional lands and natural resources in a manner and mode appropriate to their specific circumstances. Around the world there are disputes about ownership, utilization, management and conservation of traditional indigenous lands and resources. Such disputes are often caused by decisions to use traditional indigenous lands and resources for industrial purposes uninformed by traditional knowledge and without the consent of Indigenous Peoples. Also, Indigenous Peoples' territories and lands are often designated to become protected areas or nature reserves to which the original occupants of the relevant lands are often being denied access or living rights.

This situation represents an enormous challenge, and in some cases threatens indigenous societies and their economies, cultures and ways of life. Management and restoration of ecosystems – terrestrial (land and freshwater) and marine – in a sustainable manner for socio-economic development is a key objective of UNEP. UNEP recognizes and promotes respect for Indigenous Peoples' rights to their lands and natural resources. UNEP believes that vulnerable and disadvantaged communities' resilience is increased through sound ecosystem management. UNEP shares the view that prospecting or extraction of natural resources in Indigenous Peoples' lands and territories should not take place without their free, prior and informed consent and access and benefit sharing. This includes not only

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<sup>20</sup> IFAD, "IFAD and Indigenous Peoples": <http://www.ifad.org/english/indigenous/index.htm>.

the lands which are owned by Indigenous Peoples but also those which are and were traditionally occupied and used by Indigenous Peoples.

**Water:** To address new and emerging challenges in water resources management UNEP has significantly revised its Water Policy and Strategy. The objective of the Water Policy and Strategy is to contribute substantively to environmental sustainability in the management of all water resources by utilizing integrated ecosystems approaches. Participation by all stakeholders is fundamental to sustainable integrated water resources management. UNEP will promote the inclusion of all stakeholders, including women and Indigenous Peoples' groups – who are affected by the lack of access to water and other issues of water quality and quantity - in water resources planning and management.

The use of freshwater inland has a significant impact on the quality of coastal and oceans waters. UNEP is involved in addressing the freshwater - coastal linkages through several activities: The Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA) addresses the inter-linkages between freshwater and the coastal environment. The UNEP Regional Seas Programme in turn addresses the rapid degradation of the world's oceans and coastal areas through the sustainable management and use of the marine and coastal environment. It does so by engaging neighboring countries in comprehensive and specific actions to protect their shared marine environment. There is a strong need to strengthening the voices of indigenous fisher communities in ensuring that they effectively participate in development initiatives that are of direct consequence to their lives.

## ***8.4 Environmental Governance***

The modalities for major group participation at the policy development level is realized through participation as observers at the UNEP's Governing Council (GC) sessions and providing civil society with channels for sharing with governments their views, within the established rules and modalities of the UN system. The main involvement in UNEP policy development is through participation in sessions of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF) and secondly through the Global Major Groups and Stakeholder Forum organized immediately prior to the UNEP's GC/GMEF.

The [rule 69](#)<sup>21</sup> of the procedures of the UNEP's GC states that only accredited international NGOs can participate in the GC/GMEF session. According to the rules of procedure an accredited organization has the right to: Sit as an observer in the GC meetings; Make oral statements if called upon the chair and subject to the approval of the GC; Circulate written statements on the agenda of the GC. UNEP circulates those comments to the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) and the governments, and posts them on the official website for delegates.

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<sup>21</sup> The Rule 69 (rules of procedure of the governing council, Rule 69, Chapter XIII: Observers of international non-governmental organizations, para 2) stipulates that the civil society organization (CSO) should:

1. Be an International Non-Governmental Organization: "International non-governmental organizations having an interest in the field of the environment, referred to in section IV, paragraph 5, of General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII), may designate representatives to sit as observers at public meetings of the Governing Council and its subsidiary organs, if any. The Governing Council shall from time to time adopt and revise when necessary a list of such organizations. Upon the invitation of the President or chairman, as the case may be, and subject to the approval of the Governing Council or the subsidiary organ concerned, international nongovernmental organizations may take oral statements on matters within the scope of their activities."
2. Have an interest in the field of environment: "Written statements provided by international non-governmental organizations referred to in paragraph 1 above, related to items on the agenda of the Governing Council or of its subsidiary organs, shall be circulated by the secretariat to members of the Governing Council or of the subsidiary organ concerned in the quantities and in the languages in which the statements were made available to the secretariat for distribution."



In the process leading to the GC/GMEF, the accredited organizations also receive the provisional agenda, the unedited working documents of the GC/GMEF at the same time as the CPR for comments and can thereafter submit comments in writing on the relevant documents. UNEP shall circulate those comments and inputs to the CPR for its consideration before the government representatives come to attend the GC and finalize the documents. A regularly updated website is informing on all the relevant processes for civil society at [http://www.unep.org/civil\\_society/](http://www.unep.org/civil_society/).

UNEP has recently encouraged greater regional balance and representation among the nine major groups through their membership in the UNEP Major Groups Facilitating Committee. The nine major groups as defined in Agenda 21 are: NGOs, the scientific and technological community, local authorities, women, children and youth, Indigenous Peoples and their communities, farmers, business and industry. For this purpose guidelines have been drafted towards a balanced and actively facilitated framework for managing major groups input to the UNEP governance process. These underwent consultations among civil society in 2007 and were adopted at the Global Civil Society Forum in February 2008 and then endorsed by the Executive Director of UNEP, went through a revision process in 2009 and in 2011.

UNEP will continue to engage Indigenous Peoples and their communities as appropriate in the Major Groups and Stakeholders meetings as well as the GC/GMEF sessions themselves. UNEP will look into options to include Indigenous Peoples' representatives in relevant discussion forums, including those at the ministerial level and will support and promote relevant partnerships at all appropriate levels within and outside of UNEP.

## ***8.5 Harmful Substances and Hazardous Waste***

UNEP promotes chemical safety by providing policy advice, technical guidance and capacity building to developing countries and countries with economies in transition, including activities on chemicals related to the implementation of the [Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management \(SAICM\)](#).<sup>22</sup> Environment Ministers agreed on a landmark decision on mercury during the UNEP Governing Council at its 25<sup>th</sup> session in February 2009. Governments unanimously decided to launch negotiations on an international mercury treaty to deal with world - wide emissions and discharges of a pollutant that threatens the health of millions. They also agreed that the risk to human health and the environment was so significant that accelerated action under a voluntary Global Mercury Partnership is needed whilst the treaty is being finalized.

Up to one-third of the global burden of disease can be attributed to negative environmental factors, such as polluted air, dirty water, poor sanitation, and insect-transmitted diseases such as malaria. The health of the most vulnerable in society, those living in desperate poverty, the elderly and children is particularly affected. Environmental studies show that some Indigenous Peoples are severely exposed to hazardous environmental contaminants, including persistent organic pollutants and heavy metals such as in the Arctic or the Amazon as a consequence of the traditional food chains being polluted by Persistent Organic Pollutants or water streams by mercury pollution.

Trans-boundary hazardous environmental contaminants often reach indigenous areas by means of air and water currents. Indigenous Peoples are also severely affected by locally produced environmental contaminants, including from urban areas, alien settlements, transportation routes, industry, forestry, military activities, prospecting, mining and oil production. Exceptionally exposed indigenous communities may in some cases be forced to shift from traditional to non-traditional diets in order to

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<sup>22</sup> Adopted by the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) on 6 February 2006 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) is a policy framework to foster the sound management of chemicals.

minimize future risk of contamination. UNEP will continue to support in the context of its work on harmful substances and hazardous waste measures, in line with its mandate that reduce emissions of pollutants that threaten Indigenous Peoples' subsistence production.

## ***8.6 Resource Efficiency – Sustainable Consumption and Production***

UNEP promotes more sustainable patterns of consumption and production. In order to help implement these instruments, UNEP helps decision makers in government, local authorities, and industry to develop and adopt policies and practices that: are cleaner and safer; make efficient use of natural resources; ensure adequate and safe management of chemicals; incorporate environmental costs; and reduce pollution and risks for humans and the environment.

To address **food security** in many parts of the world traditional and indigenous crops and livestock recognized in the agro-biodiversity approach should be retained and further promoted and protected with the support of Indigenous Peoples and their relevant knowledge and expertise through the maintenance and further development of traditional food seed banks and traditional livestock breeds. The sustainable production and consumption of indigenous and traditional food has invaluable benefits not only on natural resources and the ecosystems but also contributes to a healthier diet. The production and consumption of traditional foods also contributes to the mitigation of climate change. UNEP will further promote the use of traditional crops and livestock through its work on the Marrakesh Process among other entry points.

## **9 Conclusions**

Working with Indigenous Peoples at policy and programmatic level implies adapting the programming processes and strategies to ensure their effective participation as well as a high degree of transparency in project and programme implementation in line with Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration 1992. Their human rights, aspirations, cultures and specific characteristics must be fully respected and strengthened in order for programming to be effective.

As reaffirmed in the recently adopted Rio+20 outcome document of June 2012, *The Future We Want*, the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples issues, needs and concerns, the recognition and respect for indigenous knowledge, cultures and traditional practices contributes to sustainable development including the conservation and responsible use of biodiversity and ecosystems. Wider application can support social well-being and sustainable livelihoods (para 197 of the outcome document).

The human rights standards as well as the recognition of Indigenous Peoples' collective rights, provide the framework for adopting a human rights-based and culturally sensitive approach when addressing the specific situation of Indigenous Peoples. Cultural diversity in society should be understood and promoted as an element of richness and a resource for development. However, indigenous cultures must not be understood as static. They are constantly changing and capable of incorporating and adapting to new development concepts that complement traditions, providing the adaptation is not forced but results from the aspirations of the community itself.<sup>23</sup>

UNEP will be guided by this document which will be accompanied by practical training and reference tools including an overview of relevant literature and links.

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<sup>23</sup> [http://www.undg.org/docs/8646/UNDG\\_Guidelines\\_indigenous\\_FINAL-01FEB08.pdf](http://www.undg.org/docs/8646/UNDG_Guidelines_indigenous_FINAL-01FEB08.pdf).

## Appendix:

### *International Policy Framework on Indigenous Peoples:*

<p><b>ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples</b></p>	<p><a href="#">ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples</a> adopted 1989 is recognizing indigenous rights over land, identity, internal affairs and development, replacing the earlier Convention 107 (1957). It has been ratified by 20 countries and is in force.</p>
<p><b>Sustainable Development</b></p>	<p>The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) highlighted the need to work together and develop broad partnerships to promote sustainable development and to safeguard the environment. <a href="#">Agenda 21</a> (Chapter 26) acknowledges the need to strengthen the role of Indigenous Peoples and their communities at all levels, including at the international level, in this global undertaking. The <a href="#">Convention on Biological Diversity</a> (Article 8(j) and related provisions), which recognizes the role of indigenous peoples in environmental conservation and call for the protection of traditional knowledge, practice and innovation, as well as benefit sharing. <a href="#">The Future We Want</a>, 2012 – the outcome document of the Rio+20 - recognises the importance of indigenous peoples in achieving sustainable development.</p>
<p><b>AGENDA 21 - Chapter 26</b></p>	<p>"In view of the interrelationship between the natural environment and its sustainable development and the cultural, social, economic and physical well-being of indigenous people, national and international efforts to implement environmentally sound and sustainable development should recognize, accommodate, promote and strengthen the role of indigenous people and their communities."</p>
<p><b>African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)</b></p>	<p>The <a href="#">African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights</a> adopted in 2000 a resolution on the rights of indigenous populations/communities in Africa. The resolution provided for the establishment of a <a href="#">working group of experts on indigenous populations/communities</a>. The Working group is constantly working on indigenous peoples related topics.</p>
<p><b>World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002)</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development:</a> "We reaffirm the vital role of the Indigenous Peoples in sustainable development."</p>
<p><b>Human Rights</b></p>	<p>UN Human Rights Treaties, the ILO Convention No. 169 Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (1989), and the 2007 adopted <a href="#">UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples</a>, as well as <a href="#">UN Common Understanding on the Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) to Development Cooperation</a> establish international standards and norms to guide UNEP's engagement with Indigenous Peoples.</p>
<p><a href="#">The Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building</a></p>	<p>The Bali Strategic Plan constitutes an inter-governmentally agreed approach to strengthen technology support and capacity building in developing countries, as well as countries with economies in transition. It seeks to strengthen the capacity of Governments of developing countries and of countries with economies in transition at all levels and provide systematic, targeted, long- and short-term measures for technology support and capacity building. Another objective of the Plan is to promote, facilitate, and finance access to and support for environmentally sound technologies and corresponding know-how.</p>

<p><a href="#">Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (2005-2014)</a></p>	<p>The first International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples ( 1995-2004) was followed by the <a href="#">Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (2005-2014)</a> adopted by the General Assembly through Resolution A/RES/59/174 in 2004. The second decade was declared because Indigenous Peoples continued to suffer from the consequences of historic injustice, including colonization, oppression, discrimination, and dispossession of their lands, territories and resources. Their right to development that is in accordance with their own needs and interests has in most cases been ignored. Indigenous Peoples' right to exercise control over their own ways of life, lands and resources and economic development, are often not accorded due recognition at the national level. As a consequence, Indigenous Peoples are often among the economically poorest and most marginalized groups in their respective countries.</p> <p>The second decade's overall goal is to strengthen international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by Indigenous Peoples in the areas of culture, education, health, human rights, the environment and social and economic development. <a href="#">Recommended areas of action</a> include: sharing of benefits from the use of genetic resources<sup>24</sup>; protection of traditional knowledge; adaptation to environmental, economic and social impacts of climate change, pollutants, ecologically unsustainable use of natural resources; implementation of management strategies for ecosystems ensuring Indigenous Peoples' participation; integration of indigenous and local knowledge into scientific studies; implementation of the <a href="#">Akwé: Kon Guidelines for the conduct of cultural, environmental and social impact assessments regarding developments impacting sacred sites on lands and waters traditionally occupied and used by indigenous and local communities</a>; and development and implementation of programmes and projects for natural disaster management at the national and community levels with Indigenous Peoples' participation.</p>
<p><a href="#">The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)</a></p>	<p>The UNDRIP recognises Indigenous Peoples' rights to self-determination; their right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used; to exercise their distinctive customs and practices, including juridical systems or customs; to represent themselves through their own institutions; to free, prior and informed consent to developments on their land; and to control and maintain their traditional knowledge. The UN agencies are required to contribute to the implementation of the UNDRIP in particular through following articles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Article 41</i> - The organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations shall contribute to the full realization of the provisions of this Declaration through the mobilization, inter alia, of financial cooperation and technical assistance. Ways and means of ensuring participation of Indigenous Peoples on issues affecting them shall be established.</li> <li>- <i>Article 42</i> - The United Nations, its bodies, including the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and specialized agencies, including at the country level, and States shall promote respect for and full application of the provisions of this Declaration and follow up the effectiveness of this Declaration.</li> </ul>
<p><a href="#">The UN-Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues ( UN-PFII) and the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues (IASG)</a></p>	<p>The UNPFII, composed of 16 independent experts, many of whom are indigenous persons, is mandated to discuss indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights.</p> <p>The UNPFII's mandate also includes raising awareness and promoting the development and coordination of activities related to indigenous issues within</p>

<sup>24</sup> Where Indigenous Peoples own land and resources, they should have the right to refuse access to genetic resources. They should not be forced to share benefits. Some indigenous groups object to intellectual property rights such as the patenting of life forms and therefore do not wish to provide the basic genetic material to the corporate sector.

	<p>the UN system. The UN system has responded to these calls for action by establishing the IASG in order to promote and support the mandate of the UNPFII within the UN system and the inter-governmental system. UNEP received from the UNPFII in 2006 the recommendation <i>to adopt an Indigenous Peoples' policy and ensure the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in the formulation of this policy and its programs and projects.</i></p>
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