Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FAO regional strategy for collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent

in Latin America and the Caribbean

Revised edition

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Regional Team for Collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent

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Abbreviations and acronyms

ACNUDH	Oficina del Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Derechos Humanos
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIAT	International Centre for Tropical Agriculture
CICA	Central American Indigenous Council
CINE	Centre for Indigenous Peoples' Nutrition and Environment
COAG	Committee on Agriculture
COIP	Caribbean Organization of Indigenous Peoples
DIGESTyC	General Directorate of Statistics and Census of El Salvador
DOCIP	Indigenous Peoples' Center for Documentation, Research and Information
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FILAC	Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIYC	Global Indigenous Youth Caucus
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IIWF	International Indigenous Women's Forum
INEC	National Institute of Statistics and Census
INFOODS	International Network of Food Data Systems
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
NOTIMIA	News Agency of Indigenous and Afro-descendant Women
OAS	Organization of American States
RRI	Responsible Research and Innovation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals

SSF	Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication
UN	United Nations
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNPFII	United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VGGT	Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security
WRI	World Resources Institute

Background

This regional strategy is the result of a broad process of intercultural dialogue, carried out with various organizations representing Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent and their leaders in Latin America and the Caribbean, almost entirely against the backdrop of the pandemic since the beginning of 2020.

This journey has been characterized by processes of dialogue with various people and sectors involved, along with debates, lessons learned, progress and setbacks, agreements and decision-making, in which the nature of an intercultural process that requires openness and respect for differences and diversity was put first; guided by the commitment of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to achieve a transformation towards more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment and better quality of life, so that no one is left behind.

Producing the document came with the challenge of integrating different mandates and guidelines that govern and guide the actions of FAO, such as: the priorities identified by the governments of the countries at the 36th session of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, the new Strategic Framework (2022-2031), FAO Policy on indigenous and tribal peoples (FAO, 2011) and the FAO Global Work Plan with Indigenous Peoples (2017). Based on this, the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean developed an initial proposal for this regional strategy for collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent, which was then submitted for consultation with different actors, both within the Organization (focal points of Regional Initiatives, colleagues from different countries, areas of work and projects) and externally (regional and national organizations representing Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent, as well as indigenous leaders, relevant governmental institutions and other agencies of the United Nations System, among others).

As mentioned above, 90 percent of the consultation was carried out against the backdrop of the COVID-19pandemic and social isolation, a context that led the Organization on a path towards strategic, methodological and technological innovation. Comments, suggestions and observations were received by e-mail, telephone, and online meetings (using different digital platforms, in both group and individual settings).

The vast digital divide in the region, brought to light by the pandemic, was the most difficult challenge to overcome during this process. Although the desired level of participation was not achieved, this regional strategy is considered a "living document" that will allow for gradually adding other visions and voices, which will enrich the collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent.

The hundreds of inputs obtained through the dialogues and exchanges that took place were analyzed in detail and in depth, leading to a review of institutional practices, basic concepts and manners of interacting, etc. This provided the Regional Office with a valuable learning experience that marks a milestone in its work with Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent, the benefits of which can be seen in the development of concrete actions that will lead to the achievement of more inclusive, efficient, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems. This is the guiding principle of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that underpin the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This principle was previously adopted by FAO in March 2021, in the definition of its Strategic Framework, which clearly establishes the Organization's strategy for the next decade (2022-2031) towards achieving better production, better nutrition, a better environment and better life – the four improvements – while ensuring no one is left behind (FAO, 2021a).

The FAO Strategic Framework, closely linked to the 2030 Agenda, is guided by SDG 1 "No Poverty", SDG 2 "Zero Hunger", and SDG 10 "Reduced Inequalities", and also underscores the importance of all SDGs in FAO's overall vision. The strategic contributions to the fulfillment of the SDGs are concentrated within twenty priority programmatic areas that guide the actions of the Organization, and therefore, this regional strategy.

In line with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), the International Labour Organization's Convention 169 (1989) on Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), and the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (UN, 2001) on combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, FAO has had a Policy on indigenous peoples in place since 2011 (FAO, 2011); the values and guiding principles of which are implemented through this regional strategy.

Throughout this document, key principles and concepts for cross-cultural collaboration have been considered, based on an adaptation of the text of the White Paper/Whipala on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems (FAO, 2021d), which are detailed in the Appendix.

Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC)

This regional strategy, following the FAO Policy on indigenous and tribal Peoples (2011), maintains the importance of guaranteeing the right to direct and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent in FAO's activities, and thus incorporates FPIC as a cross-cutting issue in all FAO activities that have a direct or indirect impact on the territories of Indigenous Peoples, or those close to them. In this regard, for its successful implementation, the regional strategy shall use the FPIC Manual formulated by FAO as a guide (FAO, 2016).

All individuals and peoples have the right to self-determination, and therefore, the right to freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

It is a fundamental principle, recognized in the Charter of the United Nations, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The rule of free, prior and informed consent, as well as the rights of Indigenous Peoples, associated with their lands, territories and natural resources, are part of the universal right to self-determination. The legal framework of FPIC consists of a set of international legal instruments, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the International Labour Organization's Convention 169 (ILO 169), and the Convention on Biological Diversity, among many others, as well as various national laws.

FPIC is based on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the Convention on Biological Diversity, and ILO Convention 169, which are the most powerful and comprehensive international instruments that recognize Indigenous Peoples' issues and uphold their rights.

The principle and right to FPIC requires that States and organizations of all types and at all levels obtain the consent of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent before adopting and implementing projects, programmes or legislative and administrative measures that may affect them. This means that Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent must be included in the consultative processes, and the time required for these processes must be respected, and information on the possible effects of the activities involved in such consultations must be disclosed in advance.

Legitimate consultation measures must ensure that planned activities or actions respond to the concerns and interests of Indigenous Peoples, thus allowing for a freely determined development process.

A PARTNERSHIP OVER THE YEARS

For FAO, Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent are key allies. Their ancestral knowledge of food, land management practices and biodiversity conservation mechanisms, to name a few examples, make them the bearers of special knowledge, passed down generation after generation and skillfully adapted to the natural habitats where they live. For this reason, collaboration between FAO and Indigenous Peoples has been strengthened on the basis of mutual understanding and respect, yielding important results; some of which can be seen in the following milestones.

2004

Voluntary guidelines on the right to food

Emphasizing the importance of Indigenous Peoples having access to their lands and resources to guarantee their right to adequate food.

2009

First FAO Study on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems

Highlighting the nutritional value of Indigenous Peoples' food systems and broad diet – FAO Food and Nutrition Division and the Centre for Indigenous Peoples' Nutrition and Environment (CINE) at McGill University.

2010

Draft of the FAO Policy on indigenous and tribal peoples

FAO Gender Unit, together with indigenous leaders from the seven socio-cultural regions (this policy has since guided FAO's work with Indigenous Peoples).

2012

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) adopts the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT)

The most extensive guideline of the VGGT, section 9, refers to the importance of collective land rights for Indigenous Peoples and pastoralists.

2013

Second book on Indigenous Peoples' food systems

Published by the FAO Nutrition Division and CINE-McGill University.

2014

FAO established the Indigenous Peoples team

The first FAO team fully dedicated to Indigenous Peoples' issues.

2015

Establishment of a joint FAO programme of work with indigenous representatives from the seven socio-cultural regions

Programme of work, consisting of:

- Two key areas: Indigenous youth and Indigenous women.
- Six main pillars: 1) Coordination; 2) Advocacy and capacity building; 3) Free, Prior and Informed Consent; 4) Indigenous food systems; 5) Food security indicators and statistics; 6) Voluntary tenure guidelines; and 7) Traditional knowledge and climate change.

Pillar 7 on traditional knowledge and climate change was added in 2017.

Update of the FAO Environmental and Social Management Guidelines and the Guide to the Project Cycle to include Free, Prior and Informed Consent in the Organization's projects and programmes

The implementation of FPIC is operationally reflected in FAO's environmental and social standards, which are included in the project cycle guide under safeguard number nine.[1]

Establishment of the working group on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems

This Working Group draws on the experience of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Biodiversity, the International Network of Food Data Systems (INFOODS), and FAO's technical divisions on nutrition, trade, seeds, agroecology, emergencies and forestry.

[1] To learn more about FAO's Environmental and Social Safeguards, you can visit http://www.fao.org/investment-learning-platform/themes-and-tasks/environmental-social-safeguards/social-safeguards/es/.

2016

Regional Indigenous Peoples' Forum (Latin America)

A forum to develop a plan of action with representatives of the 15 regional Indigenous Peoples' organizations, along with the leaders of the three regional initiatives and their teams, where priorities were identified to work on a shared agenda.

2017

Rome Declaration on Indigenous Youth, as a result of the meeting with indigenous youth representatives of the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus (GIYC) in Rome

The challenges faced by indigenous youth in the context of food security and agriculture were discussed. It was a driving force for the inclusion of FAO's indigenous internship programme in the FAO Programme of Work with Indigenous Peoples, and an additional pillar of work on traditional knowledge and climate change.

2018

High-Level Forum for the Empowerment of Indigenous Women in Latin America (in collaboration with indigenous women's organizations in Latin America)

More than 100 indigenous women from different countries discussed the main challenges they face in terms of food security, and shared many of their proposals, presenting them to the government representative. In addition, that same year, FAO, the International Indigenous Women's Forum (IIWF) and the News Agency of Indigenous and Afro-descendant Women (NOTIMIA) launched the Global Campaign for the Empowerment of Indigenous Women, which is comprised of 95 organizations from around the world.

First high-level expert seminar on indigenous food systems (Rome). Main outcome: Agreement to create a global center on Indigenous Peoples' food systems to close the knowledge divide on indigenous food systems, as well as recommendations for governments, academic institutions, international communities and indigenous organizations

Organized by FAO, together with the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean (FILAC), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the Indigenous Peoples' Center for Documentation, Research and Information (Docip).

More than 200 participants (20 universities, 22 Indigenous Peoples and 23 Member States), of which 70 were speakers.

2019

Development of the concept of the indigenous biocentric restoration approach

An approach developed by FAO and indigenous organizations as a nature-based solution to address climate change through the restoration of degraded lands in Indigenous Peoples' territories, using methods based on ancestral knowledge and practices and Indigenous cosmogony.

First meeting of the Group of Friends of Indigenous Peoples

Comprised of ambassadors from 24 countries, from different socio-cultural regions that promote joint work with Indigenous Peoples (with quarterly meetings).

2020

Publication of the Policy Brief on COVID-19 and Indigenous Peoples

Key messages reflected in the report emphasized the resilience of Indigenous Peoples and the role of indigenous food systems, traditional knowledge and indigenous language in managing the impacts of COVID-19.

Establishment of the Global Hub on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems – during the 27th Session of the FAO Committee on Agriculture (COAG)

With the objective of promoting processes of the co-creation of knowledge and evidence, with an intercultural and inclusive approach. They also recognized the importance of increasing the participation of Indigenous Peoples in FAO policy processes, Committees and UN frameworks, particularly at the UN Summit on Food Systems in 2021.

2021

Publication of the report: Indigenous and tribal peoples and forest governance. An opportunity for climate action in Latin America and the Caribbean

A study based on the analysis of scientific evidence from more than 300 research studies in recent years, which makes specific recommendations to governments.

The recognition of Indigenous Peoples' food systems as unique, and revolutionary solutions to inform the global discussion at the UN Summit on Sustainable Food Systems

An achievement of the joint work between Indigenous Peoples and FAO.

3rd publication in the series on Indigenous Peoples' food systems: *Indigenous Peoples' food systems: Insights on sustainability and resilience from the front line of climate change*

FAO and the partnership with Biodiversity International and the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT).

Publication of the White Paper/Wiphala on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems

The Global Hub on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems produced a book through a participatory process with more than 60 indigenous experts and academics, which was recognized by the scientific community as a background paper for the World Food Summit.

Creation of a Coalition on Indigenous Food Systems that will bring together the efforts of various UN agencies, academia, indigenous leaders and governments

Led by six countries, together with indigenous leaders.

In line with these milestones, FAO's work is steadily progressing, with increasingly insightful approaches and proposals more in tune with the times and current issues.

Under the guidance of the Strategic Framework 2022-2031, and based on FAO's global plan of work with indigenous peoples, with the aim of shifting the Organization's work to the regional context, this regional strategy, as a dynamic and intercultural document, is a direct response to the recommendations and demands made by the Member States of the region at the 36th Session of the Regional Conference (FAO, 2020a), requesting that FAO:

> *"Provide support to Member States in the development of strategies and programmes for the recognition, protection, participation and development of Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants in the framework of comprehensive rural development policies"*
>
> (PARA 23, ITEM VI).

WHO ARE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT?

In Latin America, one out of every four inhabitants self-identifies as Indigeonus Peoples or people of African descent. Mexico, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia are home to the largest indigenous population, while Brazil has the largest African descendant population (Angulo, Solano and Tamayo, 2018, p. 60).

Together, Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent living in rural territories in Latin America represent roughly half (46%) of

the rural population. In turn, these groups inhabit a vast area of the territories where the continent's greatest natural wealth is found, and their traditional management practices make them the best guardians of biodiversity (FAO, 2021).

About Indigenous Peoples

According to the analysis of figures from the latest censuses of seventeen Latin American countries, as of 2018, one out of every ten inhabitants self-identifies as Indigenous, with more than 800 Indigenous Peoples in the region. Mexico is the country with the largest indigenous population, followed by Peru, Guatemala and Plurinational State of Bolivia (ECLAC, 2020, p. 152). With regard to their geographical distribution, Indigenous Peoples continue to maintain their rural traditions associated with settlements in their ancestral territories, without limiting their deep-rooted migratory traditions and strong tendency towards settling in urban centers in many countries of the region. It was estimated that in 2018, Latin America and the Caribbean had around 58.2 million indigenous inhabitants, of which approximately 50 percent lived in rural areas. The rural indigenous population (29 million) represented 24 percent of the total rural population of Latin America. The number of countries that break down census information by indigenous status has notably increased over the last five decades (ECLAC, 2020).

Although there is no precise definition of the term "Indigenous Peoples," at the international level Indigenous Peoples have reached agreements with States and recognized a number of characteristics that identify them in international treaties. In this regard, it can be said that Indigenous Peoples are characterized as descendants of "populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonisation or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions." Furthermore, "self-identification as indigenous or tribal shall be regarded as a fundamental criterion for determining the groups," (ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous Peoples).

The experience acquired in the region has made it possible to identify four dimensions through which to apply the concept of "Indigenous Peoples":

1. self-identity,
2. a common origin,
3. the principle of territoriality, and
4. the linguistic-cultural universe (Del Popolo and Schkolnik, 2006).[2]

About people of African descent

People of African descent, meanwhile, correspond to "all peoples and individuals descended from the African diaspora throughout the world." In Latin America, the concept refers to the different 'Black' or 'Afro-American' cultures that emerged from the descendants of Africans, who survived the slave trade that took place in the Atlantic from the 16th to the 19th century" (Antón, 2007).

In addition to sharing origins, culture and identity, people of African descent face various social problems rooted in enslavement, colonization, discrimination and exclusion. This was admitted by the Third World Conference in Durban (United Nations, 2001, p. 14, paragraph 34), (FAO, 2021c).

It can be stated that people of African descent live in a wide variety of countries around the world, dispersed throughout the local population or forming their own communities, with the largest number in Latin America and the Caribbean – an estimated 150 million people – of which approximately 27 million live in rural areas in the region (Freire *et al.*, 2018).

[2] The concepts of race and ethnicity are not synonymous and are in fact social constructs. However, ethnic identity has greater depth and stability than racial identity, because it is not only based on phenotypic characteristics and their meanings, but also refers to a set of attributes that an ethnic community shares collectively and passes down from one generation to the next.

Caribbean countries have followed a very different path in recognizing their indigenous populations and establishing a framework of rights for them. One of the most distinctive features of this population is its early intermingling with the population of African origin that was brought over as slaves, which resulted in diverse African descent identities.

At present, the recognition of the rights of these groups in Caribbean countries is only just emerging, and in nearly all cases, they are not even counted by the census. However, a relevant milestone in this regard is CARICOM's recognition of the Caribbean Organization of Indigenous Peoples (COIP), formed by national organizations from Belize, Dominica (the only country in the sub-region to have ratified Convention 169), Guyana, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago (Banco Mundial, 2018; Rajack-Talley, T., 2016).

For rural African descendant communities, beyond the physical aspects, the land is where the principle of territoriality is applied. That is, the constant practice of ownership, domination, belonging, settlement and the struggle for a strategic space to fulfill their life plans. This is a connection between culture, development and land; aspects that have been legally recognized by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights of the Organization of American States (OAS). Indeed, the Court has issued rulings in favor of the African descendant communities Moiwana (2005) and Saramaka (2007) in Suriname, and the Garífuna communities of Punta Piedra and Triunfo de la Cruz (2015) in Honduras, in which it refers to the fact that these communities can be considered tribal peoples or, where appropriate, indigenous peoples (ECLAC and UNFPA, 2020).

The descendants of Africans transported to the Americas during the transatlantic slave trade over 400 years ago, as well as those who have migrated more recently to the Americas, Europe and Asia, and even within the African continent itself, represent one of the most marginalized and victimized groups who are continually discriminated against, due to the historical ramifications of the transatlantic slave trade. Even people of African descent whose ancestors were not slaves still suffer from racism and discrimination to this day, several generations after the end of the slave trade; practices that are among the factors contributing to social and economic inequalities (OHCHR, 2020).

In 2001, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action recognized slavery and the slave trade as atrocious tragedies in human history, not only because of their barbarity but also their magnitude, their organized nature and their denial of the victims' dignity. It also acknowledged that slavery and the slave trade constituted a crime against humanity, and is one of the main sources and expressions of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (OHCHR, 2020).

Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent share a common plight, fraught with inequalities that are evident in the long-standing poverty and social marginalization to which they have been relegated, as a result of the social stratification systems based on ethnic classifications established in colonial times, which placed these two groups in a position of structural subordination that was consolidated in the 19th century with the formation of the Nation-States, and whose effects are still felt today. Thus, beyond the diversity of situations that can be observed in Latin America, Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent share a socio-political reality in which ethnic discrimination and structural racism condition their situation of poverty, social and political exclusion (Iturralde, 2001; Hopenhayn and Bello, 2001; Oyarce, 2010). For this reason, this regional strategy aims to contribute to reducing structural inequalities that disproportionately affect Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The regional strategy

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

Foster collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent through the protection and recognition of their knowledge and contributions to the transformation of agrifood systems, and the fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); promoting cultural relevance, full participation and the co-creation of sustainable rural development public policies, while also respecting and protecting individual and collective rights to land tenure, territory and natural resources, so that no one is left behind, as stipulated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

CONTEXT

Analysis of the challenges

In general terms, the region saw significant economic and social improvements between 2000 and 2015, which was reflected in the high rates of economic growth during part of that period, as well as significant reductions in poverty and inequality (Talvi and Munyo, 2013). Despite this, gaps still remained in terms of income, health and education among Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent, compared to other social groups (de Ferranti *et al.*, 2004; Gandelman *et al.*, 2011; Hall and Patrinos, 2006; Ñopo, 2012).

It should be noted that the violations of rights faced by Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent are the result of marginalization and inequalities perpetrated throughout history, leading to economic and political conditions that hinder the exercise of their social, economic and cultural rights.

Today, Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent represent the majority of the population (and their territories) with the highest levels of poverty and extreme poverty. A recent study that analyzed the 1945 municipalities in 14 countries with the highest levels of hunger and unmet basic needs found that 47 percent of the population in those municipalities self-identified as Indigenous or African descendants (FAO and ECLAC, 2018). The proportion of indigenous households living in poverty (43 percent) is twice that of non-indigenous households, and for indigenous households in extreme poverty (24 percent) it is 2.7 times that of non-indigenous households (World Bank, 2015). While the number of indigenous people in poverty has decreased, the gap separating them from non-indigenous people has remained the same or widened (Freire *et al*., 2018).

In five countries in the region with a high concentration of people of African descent (Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay), poverty and extreme poverty are more severe for the African descendant population compared to the non-African decendant population. Regarding the incidence of poverty among people of African descent, the highest rate was recorded in Colombia, where 41 percent of people of African descent are in a situation of poverty. It is followed by Ecuador (31 percent), Brazil (26 percent), Peru (20 percent), Panama (11 percent) and Uruguay (8 percent). In turn, the highest levels of inequality between African descendants and non-African descendants in relation to this indicator are found in Uruguay, Brazil and Peru. Uruguay is the Latin American country with the lowest poverty rate. However, the percentage of people of African descent in poverty there is about three times that of non-African decendants. In Brazil, it is 2.2 times higher, whereas in Peru it is twice as high, and in Colombia it is 1.5 times higher. This highlights the fact that ethnic-racial inequalities still exist – and can even worsen – in contexts with low rates of poverty or a marked reduction in poverty (ECLAC, 2020a, p.108). In turn, gender inequality and ethnic-racial inequality intersect and lead to a disproportionate number of African descendant and indigenous women living in poverty (ECLAC, 2020, p.112).

The significant inequalities in access to basic services for Indigenous People and people of African descent are found in various countries of the region. The percentage of the indigenous population without adequate access to clean drinking water is up to three times higher than for the non-indigenous population (ECLAC and FILAC, 2020). In turn, in rural areas, approximately 50 percent of Afro-Colombians and Afro-Ecuadorians and approximately 30 percent of Afro-Brazilians and Afro-Peruvians lack access to clean drinking water (ECLAC, 2020, p.34).

With regard to employment, the results of various studies in the region show that the type of employment to which Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent have access tends to be more precarious, informal, without access to social protection and without labor benefits, compared to the non-indigenous and non-African descendant populations. As an example, in the case of employed persons with 13 years of education or more, it was observed that African descendant women receive an hourly income equivalent to 57 percent of that received by non-African descendant men. In turn, non-African descendant women earn 76 percent of the income earned by non-African descendant men, while African descendant men earn an income equivalent to 78 percent of that earned by non-African descendant men (ECLAC, 2020, p.204). In the case of Indigenous Peoples, according to a World Bank study, indigenous women in the Plurinational State of Bolivia earn 60 percent less than non-indigenous women for the same type of work. Census data indicates that while indigenous Brazilian men earn 39 percent less on average than non-indigenous men, for indigenous women the difference is almost 58 percent. In Panama, the same gaps are 57 percent and 70 percent, respectively (World Bank, 2015).

Indigenous and African descendant women and girls often face situations of greater vulnerability, both within and outside the Indigenous and African descendant communities, as a result of the three-fold discrimination they face; based on gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status. In addition, they face a frequent and systematic lack of recognition and protection of their collective and individual rights. In fact, the Committee of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has highlighted some of the main problems faced by Indigenous women and women of African descent: high levels of poverty; low levels of education and illiteracy; limited access to health, basic sanitation, credit and employment; limited participation in political life; and the prevalence of domestic and sexual violence.

Indigenous and African descendant children suffer from higher levels of malnutrition and infant mortality, due in part to extreme poverty, lack of access to clean water and adequate housing, and limited access to health services. The highest percentage of inhabitants in Peru without access to health services speak an indigenous language as their mother tongue; about 61 percent of all Quechua speakers and 80 percent of Aymara speakers do not have access to such services on a regular basis. Similarly, only 41 percent of indigenous communities in the Amazon have a community health center (Banco Mundial, 2015, p.31). Based on data prepared by ECLAC, which compiled information on ethnic-racial self-identification in its 2010 round of censuses (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Uruguay), all of the countries, with the exception of Argentina, estimated that infant mortality was higher in the African descendant population than in the non-African descendant population. Colombia is the country with the highest proportion of deaths of Afro-descendant children (26 per 1,000 live births), and is also the country with the largest gap (10 percentage points) compared to the non-Afro-descendant population (ECLAC, 2020, p.138).

Ethnic inequalities, together with gender inequalities, territorial inequalities and other inequalities related to lifestyle are some of the main underlying factors of social inequality in Latin America (ECLAC, 2017).

In the context of climate change, Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent are facing an inequitable challenge since, although they contribute very little to greenhouse gas emissions (in fact, their territories are biodiversity reserves), they are one of the most vulnerable groups in terms of the effects of climate change, given that they are located in geographic areas that are more exposed to extreme climate events and

they have fewer resources to develop adaptation plans (ECLAC, 2018). For this reason, the long-term effects of climate change, including the loss and accelerated deterioration of natural resources, biodiversity and the related food systems must be mitigated by working together with Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent.

The historical dynamics of exclusion and political and economic marginalization that affect Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent have been exacerbated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, as a result of insufficient State responses to the crisis, which have not adequately guaranteed their collective rights in general, and have been of little cultural relevance to them (ECLAC, 2020). However, due to the pandemic and the corresponding protection and social isolation measures, the communities whose livelihoods and food supply rely on their ancestral systems of knowledge and food production were able to deal with the effects of social isolation better than those in a monetized society (FAO, 2020b).

At the same time, a phenomenon common to all Latin American countries can be observed: pressure for natural resources and the lack of legal protection for land tenure, which generates an increase in the killing and criminalization of Indigenous and African descent leaders, related to the control and use of the land and natural resources for infrastructure, roads, mining, energy (including clean energy) and the extraction of raw materials. The growth of primary exports in the region, the restrictions put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the increased presence of illegal groups have led to serious environmental impacts, spatial reclassifications and the violation of the rights, interests, territories and natural assets of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent.

The table below shows some general causes of the increase in threats to the territories of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent in Latin America and the Caribbean (FAO and FILAC, 2021):

Economics	Increased international demand for minerals, fuels, food, forestry products, tourism and illicit crops.
	Continued expansion of roads and other transportation, storage, energy and communications infrastructure.
Policies	The growing political influence of the top players in the agricultural and extraction sectors.
	Government interest in expanding extractive and agricultural activities to new regions and reactivating national economies.
Governance	The reduction of public budgets for environmental activities, both for promotion and oversight.
	Uncertainty in the collective tenure of their lands. Increased presence of organized crime groups in forest areas, violence, evictions from their lands, etc.
Demographics	The constant migration of settlers and indigenous people to forest areas.
	Migration of youth to cities in search of opportunities.
Environmental 	Climate change and forest fragmentation, which leads to an increase in natural disasters.
Cultural	Weakening of the intergenerational transmission of languages, traditions and knowledge about their own ecosystems.
	Invasion of urban culture, markets and the media, rural-urban migration, and scarce economic opportunities for youth in the territories.
Health 	The COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating effects on indigenous and Afro-descendant territories in the region (a large number of people affected by the virus, a loss in the markets for their own products or tourism services, the inability of governments to control forest fires, and the opportunism of illegal loggers).

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on FAO and FILAC contents, 2021.

Prospective analysis

It would be a serious mistake to analyze the situation of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent solely from the perspective of the challenges they face.

The most recent FAO study on the food systems of Indigenous Peoples provides evidence that strongly supports the aforementioned. The eight indigenous food systems studied in different regions of the world reveal a high degree of food self-sufficiency, where the percentage of food produced in indigenous territories ranges from 55 to 80 percent (FAO *et al.*, 2021).

In 2013, the United Nations launched the International Year of Quinoa, one of the most important foods of the pre-Incan Andean peoples and which has greatly contributed to global food security and nutrition.

Another significant aspect of the food systems of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent is their capacity to generate hundreds of foodstuffs in the ecosystems of their territories, without depleting natural resources. For example, the ancestral food system of the Maya Ch'orti People in Guatemala produces more than 143 crop species, 101 of which are considered foodstuffs (FAO *et al.*, 2021). Likewise, the food systems of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent not only contribute to the preservation of biodiversity, but also enriches it through the management of wild and semi-domesticated species (FAO, 2021).

Ensuring the recognition, respect, preservation and active promotion of traditional food systems of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent that is centered around their cultural heritage, whether agricultural or based on other natural assets, is a key part of FAO's efforts. Furthermore, considering that the future of these food systems will largely depend on the decisions made by the youth, this regional strategy highlights the need to adopt an intersectional, inter- and intra-generational approach as a cross-cutting agenda, paying special attention to the role of indigenous youth and indigenous women.

In turn, the collective rights to land, territory and related natural assets are an essential factor for Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent, given that these resources constitute the basis of their economies and food security, and are an undeniable source of their spiritual, cultural and social identities.

Of the 2.011 billion hectares of land in Latin America, Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent occupy approximately one-fifth: 404 million hectares (Garnett *et al.*, 2018). Of this area, governments have recognized formal collective tenure rights over approximately 269 million hectares, or roughly two thirds. (FAO and FILAC, 2021). In the last thirty years, approximately 8 million hectares of collective territories belonging to people of African descent have been titled, including around five million in Colombia, two million in Brazil and one million between Ecuador, Honduras and Nicaragua, most of them in forest areas (Rapoport Center, 2009; Herrera Arango, 2017; RRI, 2020). In addition to the collectives territories of people of African descent in Brazil and Suriname, there are additional significant areas to be titled in Colombia (outside of the Chocó Biogeographic Region), the Pacific region of Ecuador and the northern coast of Honduras, with a total of approximately four million hectares. If the entire area of territories where Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent carry out forest governance is added together, it would cover between 320 and 380 million hectares, including areas formally recognized by States and those that have not yet been recognized (FAO-FILAC, 2021, p.21).

More than 80 percent of the area occupied by Indigenous Peoples (330 million hectares) is located in forest areas (Fa *et al.*, 2020) and, as a whole, indigenous areas represent around a third of the total forest area of Latin America (Fa *et al.*, 2020; Walker *et al.*, 2020; Saatchi *et al.*, 2011). The vast majority of these forests are located in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Mexico, Peru and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Moreover, Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants also occupy more than a quarter of the forest area in Belize, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and Suriname (Fa *et al.*, 2020).

Titled land belonging to Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent stores 20-25 percent of all forest carbon in Latin America, and 12-15 percent in the tropics worldwide (Saatchi *et al.*, 2011; Walker *et al.*, 2014). The Amazon Basin alone harbors 24 641 MtC, one third of all forest carbon in the Amazon. The total amount would perhaps be closer to 30 000 MtC if Mexico and the other countries in the region were included (Frechette *et al.*, 2018).[3]

In Central America, Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent occupy more than 75 percent of the coastal marine areas in the Caribbean Sea, as well as extensive areas bordering continental waters and the Pacific Ocean, relying on fishing as their main livelihood (IUCN, 2016).

Several studies have shown that in Latin American regions where Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent enjoy a secure collective tenure regime for their territories, they are often the best guardians of those natural areas. A review of 130 local studies in 14 countries, jointly conducted by the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) and the World Resources Institute (WRI), found that community-managed forests suffer less deforestation and store more carbon (RRI, 2020). Another international study also showed that State-protected areas suffer from deforestation four times faster than neighboring community forests (OXFAM, 2016). While Latin America lost 11.2 percent of its "intact" forests in non-indigenous areas between 2000 and 2016, only 4.9 percent of "intact" forests were lost in indigenous areas (Fa *et al.*, 2020).[4]

[3] It is not possible to give a precise estimate, since the sources do not disaggregate the forest carbon stored in Mexico's indigenous agricultural communities from that of the mestizo communities.

[4] The referenced author defines "intact" forests as forest ecosystems larger than 500 km² with no large-scale human activities.

Given the growing scientific evidence in this regard, both the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) have recently highlighted the importance of guaranteeing the collective territorial rights of Indigenous Peoples and other traditional communities, as well as protecting their indigenous and local knowledge to address climate change and mitigate the loss of biodiversity, agro-biodiversity and desertification (IPCC, 2019; IPBES,2019). However, at present, Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants continue to face innumerable challenges in gaining direct access to financial resources to combat climate change, and their contributions are rarely reflected in the design of climate change mitigation or adaptation strategies.

All of the above demonstrates the need to bring awareness to and protect the contributions of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent to sustainable development, taking into account their particular socio-cultural identities and their rights to land, territories and biocultural heritage in the design of public policies, and formulating processes where Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent are considered active partners in sustainable development.

Therefore, FAO recognizes the essential nature of collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent, as well as the protection of their lands, territories, and natural assets, and of the traditional knowledge associated with the conservation and sustainable use of natural diversity, both terrestrial and aquatic.

SOME ADVANCES IN THE REGION SINCE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FAO'S POLICY ON INDIGENOUS AND TRIBAL PEOPLES

Since 2012, FAO has been carrying out initiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean to improve its work with Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent, and which provide a relevant framework for this regional strategy as a result of the outcomes and lessons learned from the process.

Some of the main advances achieved in the region are highlighted below:

1. **Dialogues with Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent.** FAO has held several regional dialogues with representatives of indigenous and African descendants organizations. These forums have made it possible to identify priority actions for the Organization's Regular Programme and Field Programme, as well as to generate inputs for analyses and discussions related to the situation of these groups.

2. **Regional dialogue with Indigenous Peoples on climate action in the region.** In order to learn about and include the experience of Indigenous Peoples in the formulation of projects to combat the effects of climate change, the Government of Nicaragua, in cooperation with FILAC and FAO, held a meeting with the participation of Indigenous Peoples' organizations from 18 countries with national and regional representatives, delegates from government institutions working with indigenous issues, national authorities designated by the governments and agencies affiliated with the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

3. **Capacity building to ensure Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).** In 2016, FAO's Indigenous Peoples Unit developed a manual on the application of FPIC, designed primarily for project managers and implementing professionals, which highlights the main steps to follow and the responsibilities to comply with, as established by the Organization's safeguards (FAO, 2016). In turn, several international funds, such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF), have specific fiduciary standards that require

compliance with FPIC. In 2017, FAO held the first regional training in Panama for the implementation of FPIC.

4. **Technical assistance for the formulation of national action plans, laws and policies for Indigenous Peoples.** As a contribution to the commitments of the States in the final document of the United Nations General Assembly, held in 2014 (UN, 2014), and in close collaboration with various agencies of the United Nations System, FAO has provided technical assistance in the design and coordination of national action plans and national development frameworks for Indigenous Peoples. Specific examples of this work are the National Action Plan for Indigenous Peoples (PLANPIES) in El Salvador, the National Plan for Indigenous Peoples in Paraguay, and the Protocol for the Process of Consultation and Free, Prior and Informed Consent with Indigenous Peoples (MEC Paraguay, 2018).

5. **Regional network of focal points in FAO country offices for collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants.** With the aim of strengthening the Organization's work with Indigenous Peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean, FAO has had an internal regional network of national professionals since 2014 that aims to facilitate capacity building, the exchange of information, the identification of important national processes and the consolidation of a regional vision.

6. **Statistical data collection on Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) for – and with – Indigenous Peoples in Panama and El Salvador.** One of the main challenges in promoting sustainable rural development and food and nutrition security among Indigenous Peoples in the region is the absence and unreliability of statistical data on FNS, which is necessary to guide the implementation of public policies and programmes from a multicultural perspective. In 2018, FAO implemented an innovative process to overcome this challenge, together with the General Directorate of Statistics and Census of El Salvador (DIGESTyC), the National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC) of Panama, and the authorities of the Lenca, Kakawira, Emberá, Guna Yala and Ngäbe Buglé Indigenous Peoples. The project is aimed at adapting statistical methodologies to the specific cultures and contexts of Indigenous Peoples to collect the required information on FNS.

7. **Support for strengthening the leadership and visibility of indigenous women.** FAO has helped formulate specific mechanisms to strengthen the leadership capacities of indigenous women. Two excellent examples are the 2017 High-Level Forum for the Empowerment of Indigenous Women for the eradication of hunger and malnutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean, with more than 200 representatives of governments and indigenous women from across the region, as well as the Leadership Schools for Indigenous Women in El Salvador, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Guatemala, Panama (two editions), Paraguay (two editions), and Peru, carried out together with the International Indigenous Women's Forum (IIWF). Since 2018, work has been carried out with country governments and integration bodies in the region to enhance the visibility of the role of indigenous women in sustainable development, through the campaigns #MujeresIndígenas, mujeres visibles (Indigenous Women, Visible Women) and #MujeresRurales, mujeres con derechos (Rural Women, Women with Rights).

8. **Improving incomes through community forestry.** Community forestry is an alternative way to improve monetary income, especially for Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent who live in or depend on forests. FAO has led various initiatives to contribute to their empowerment in forest and natural resources management, supporting the development of regulations for forest and land management, offering methodological tools and new technologies to monitor forests, as well as guides to combat deforestation and forest degradation, strengthening community forestry and promoting capacity-building actions for men and women for all of the aforementioned activities. Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela are some of the countries where various projects have been implemented.

9. **Policy Dialogue on Sustainable Fisheries.** In Central America, Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent occupy more than 75 percent of the coastal marine areas in the Caribbean Sea, as well as extensive areas bordering continental waters and the Pacific Ocean, relying on fishing as their main livelihood. In 2017 and 2018, two public policy dialogue workshops were held between representatives of Indigenous Peoples (fishers) and their authorities, along with national fisheries

authorities of Central American countries. As a result, joint plans for the implementation of the Fisheries Guidelines were developed, and the Alliance of Central American Indigenous Fishers was created. Since 2017, FAO has been fostering actions to improve small-scale fisheries management for these groups, through the dissemination and implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines). In this context, representatives of Indigenous Peoples from seven Central American countries founded the first Network of Small-scale Fishers of the Indigenous Peoples of Central America in 2018, in collaboration with the Central American Indigenous Council (CICA), the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples (FILAC) and FAO.

PILLARS SUPPORTING THE REGIONAL STRATEGY

1	2	3
Protection and recognition of the knowledge and contributions of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent towards the transformation of agrifood systems and the achievement of the SDGs.	Promote cultural relevance, full participation and the co-creation of public policies for sustainable rural development.	Protect and respect collective and individual tenure rights to land, territory and natural resources.

The following three pillars underpin the regional strategy, through which FAO is committed to working together, and which reflect the convergence between FAO's mandate and the priorities of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent. These pillars are based on the analysis of possibilities and challenges already presented in this regional strategy, where the specific dynamics of these Peoples in the Latin American and Caribbean region were observed.

1. Protection and recognition of the knowledge and contributions of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent towards the transformation of agrifood systems and the achievement of the SDGs.

The Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent of Latin America and the Caribbean have developed sophisticated ancestral knowledge systems and practices that contribute to sustainable development and the correct management of natural resources and assets. The agricultural and food production practices of their cultural systems, which for centuries – and to this day – have demonstrated a high capacity for adaptation and resilience, continue to play an important role in the domestication, conservation and adaptation of genetic resources and biodiversity at all levels (genes, species, ecosystems and landscapes).

The symbiotic relationships between food, the environment, the social system, well-being, spirituality and culture are integral to Indigenous Peoples' food systems. The environment and ecosystems in which Indigenous Peoples have settled are interconnected with health, well-being and socioeconomic aspects (Cunningham Kain, 2017; Settee, 2020; IFAD, 2016).

Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent view their food systems through a holistic and broad approach that encompasses spirituality, life and culture, with both biotic and abiotic components in the ecosystem, as well as the interconnectedness between them. Indigenous Peoples' food systems capture the totality of human agency (knowledge, strategies, skills, techniques, values, exchange) to grow, produce, use, access, and manage the availability, stability and process of food that is nutritious, culturally and spiritually satisfying, and sustainable for future generations (FAO, 2021d). It is important to understand the main differences that exist between agri-food systems and Indigenous Food Systems, in order to create optimal opportunities for Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent (FAO *et al.*, 2021).

It is important to recognize that indigenous and African descendant women and youth play a vital role in the generation, preservation and

transmission of ancestral knowledge. To this end, it is essential to carry out specific actions and programmes that value their knowledge and promote the preservation of their ancestral practices in order to pass down this knowledge from generation to generation.

This fact alone represents an important contribution to the historical development of the world's agricultural and food systems. Recognizing and valuing the expertise derived from this biocultural heritage and its legacy is an important resource for addressing the present and future challenges of food and agriculture in the region. Therefore, sustainable development policies and programmes that are capable of harnessing these legacies are essential, in addition to ensuring the necessary conditions for the wellbeing of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent. In addition, their full and effective participation and the recognition of their rights to their lands, territories and natural assets must be safeguarded, which must also be ensured for the entire population of Latin America and the Caribbean.

2. **Promote cultural relevance, full participation and the co-creation of public policies for sustainable rural development.**

Many Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent have different notions of poverty or the concept of wellbeing. For many of these Peoples, wellbeing is a multifaceted concept, defined by a set of human experiences that include social, mental, spiritual and cultural wellbeing, and whose world views go beyond perspectives based solely on economic or productive criteria. This vision is strongly based on their collective relationship with the land, territory and natural resources.

For this reason, it is essential that public policy formulation processes for sustainable rural development and the transformation of agrifood systems recognize the knowledge, food, governance and land management systems of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent, as well as sociocultural aspects and their rights, including their lands, territories and biocultural heritage, in addition to avoiding conflicts of interests or the imposition of values by dominant societies. Likewise, it is necessary that the programmes led by governmental entities include the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and people

of African descent, with their traditional representatives, throughout the different programme stages (design, formulation, implementation and monitoring). In addition, they should be designed on the basis of a territorial approach, as the result of local and traditional participatory processes, and following the principle of free, prior and informed consent.

This intercultural approach and policy co-creation process should be expanded – rather than limited – to school feeding programmes, the preservation of food systems, social protection and assistance, increased agricultural production, climate change mitigation and adaptation plans, the preservation of biodiversity, and all initiatives that are part of the national rural development strategies that have an impact on the livelihoods and ways of life of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent.

3. Protect and respect collective and individual tenure rights to land, territory and natural resources.

Collective rights are indispensable for the survival, wellbeing and integral development of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent. These rights include recognizing their particular histories, languages[5], identities and cultures, as well as protecting their collective rights and assured tenure over their respective territories, lands and natural resources. In accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (UN, 2007), the recommendations of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT), adopted by the countries of the region, "Where indigenous peoples and other communities with customary tenure systems have legitimate tenure rights to the ancestral lands on which they live, States should recognize and protect these rights," (FAO, 2012).

[5] The vast majority of the world's nearly 7 000 languages are spoken by indigenous peoples. However, many of these languages are in danger of disappearing. In 2019, UNESCO affirmed that there are 370 million indigenous people in the world, living in 90 different countries and representing 5 000 different cultures.

Latin America is home to the largest number of countries that have ratified ILO Convention 169 and have accepted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Similarly, there has been significant progress in the region in the constitutional recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent, although there are still many challenges in regulating and guaranteeing their collective and individual rights.

We hope that this regional strategy will be a useful tool as a guide for collaboration between FAO, the governments of the region, and the Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent in Latin America and the Caribbean. It has been formulated by taking into account:

- The three pillars mentioned:

    1. the protection and recognition of the knowledge and contributions of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent in the transformation of food systems and the achievement of the SDGs,

    2. the need to promote cultural relevance, full participation and the co-creation of public policies for sustainable rural development, and

    3. the importance of protecting and respecting collective and individual tenure rights to land, territory and natural resources;

- Appreciation of the lessons learned by the Organization throughout the history of its work with Indigenous Peoples at the global and regional levels;

- Dialogues held with Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent, their organizations and representatives; and

- Analysis of the challenges and opportunities for collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent.

Some of the main normative instruments and international mechanisms for the protection of the rights of people of African descent and Indigenous Peoples

Regarding the protection of the rights of people of African descent:

- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination – ICERD, UN (1965)
- Committee on the Elimination of Ratial Discrimination – CERD, UN (1970)
- Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, UN (1993)
- Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, UN (2002)
- Special Rapporteur on minority issues, UN (2005)
- The rapporteur on the Rights of Persons of African Descent and against Racial Discrimination – OAS (2005)
- Durban Declaration and Program of Action of World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and Outcome document of the Durban Review Conference (2009)
- Inter-american Convention Against Racism, Racial Discrimination and related forms of intolerance, OAS (2013)
- Permanent Forum on People of African Descent (Resolution General Assembly UN – / RES/73/262 - 2021)

Regarding the protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples:

- Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, ILO (No. 169) (1989)
- Convention on Biological Diversity, UN (1992)
- Foro Permanente de las Naciones Unidas para las Cuestiones Indígenas (2000)
- Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples – UN (2001)
- UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)
- Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – UN (2007)
- American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – IACHR (2016)

Lines of action

"Free, prior and informed consent processes must be binding when it comes to indigenous and tribal territories, in order to guarantee the legitimacy of the communities' decisions."

TARCILA RIVERA
CONTINENTAL COORDINATOR
INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S FORUM (IIWF)

REGIONAL INITIATIVES

In keeping with the multilateral nature of the Organization, FAO Member States of the Region of Latin America and Caribbean, within the framework of the Regional Conference, have identified strategic priorities related to food and agriculture that will guide FAO's actions through three regional initiatives (RIs):

Regional Initiative 1: Sustainable food systems to provide healthy diets for all

Regional Initiative 2: Hand in hand to achieve prosperous and inclusive rural societies

Regional Initiative 3: Sustainable and resilient agriculture

Based on the consultations carried out, the regional strategy for collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent proposes specific lines of action to ensure that the three regional initiatives progressively incorporate a unique, culturally relevant and inclusive approach, in addition to highlighting and acknowledging the rights, priorities and interests of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent, as well as their full participation in these processes.

Regional Initiative 1 "Sustainable food systems to provide healthy diets for all":

1. In partnership with Indigenous Peoples, people of African descent and the statistical authorities of the countries, improve the availability of relevant statistics on the right to food, Food Security and Nutrition, and access to land, territory and natural resources, in order to monitor progress on the SDGs and guide the necessary public policies for the social inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent, through the development and validation of appropriate cross-cultural methodologies for data collection and analysis, disaggregated by age, sex, ethnic group, age group and geographic area. This line of action coincides with point 5.1.1 of the Regional Gender Strategy (FAO, 2019).

2. Foster cultural relevance, co-creation and the full participation of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent in the design, implementation and monitoring of legislation, regulations, policies and programmes that contribute to reducing inequalities among ethnic groups in terms of hunger, overweight and obesity; while taking into account the specific characteristics of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent, through capacity building, technical assistance, dialogue of knowledge and South-South cooperation, among other means.[6]

[6] In Costa Rica, El Salvador, Panama and Paraguay, FAO has played an important role in creating platforms to develop national agreements to effectively comply with the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent. Among the lessons learned from these successful experiences is the need to constantly monitor the political, social, economic, environmental and cultural implications of legislative measures, and to ensure close collaboration with the other agencies in the United Nations system at country level.

3. Promote the co-creation of policies, studies and initiatives for the recognition, promotion and protection of the food systems of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent, and their various elements (nutritional, environmental, cultural, productive, etc.) within the context of Food Security and Nutrition.

Regional Initiative 2 "Hand in hand to achieve prosperous and inclusive rural societies":

1. Foster the protection, recognition and legal certainty of collective territorial rights, security of tenure, good governance and the sustainable use of lands, territories and natural resources by Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent, through the development and implementation of national legislation and policies that are effectively implemented in the territories, in consultation with Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent and ensuring their full participation.

2. Jointly develop strategies for the analysis, recognition and promotion of the food systems of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent, in order to generate marketing opportunities and agricultural products with identity; highlighting the specific contributions of their food systems (e.g., biological biodiversity, medicinal plants, forest and fishery products, handicrafts, tourism, etc.).

3. Promote the co-design of rural extension policies, programmes and services that are culturally adapted to the livelihoods and ways of life of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent; considering their forms of tenure, production systems and environmental conditions that incorporate a territorial and participatory approach (for example: social protection systems with cultural relevance).

4. Strengthen the political, economic and productive capacities of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent, and the preservation and recognition of their traditional and ancestral knowledge, with a particular emphasis on women and youth, through the exchange of knowledge, access to technological innovation, intercultural communication for development and South-South cooperation.

Regional Initiative 3 "Sustainable and resilient agriculture":

1. Facilitate direct access to climate and environmental finance initiatives and their effective management by strengthening the technical, operational and financial capacities of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent and their organizations.

2. Support and foster actions aimed at reducing the impacts of natural disasters and environmental crises, including climate change, as well as promoting inclusion and empowerment in the use of new practices, technologies and innovation that are culturally appropriate.

3. Support and promote policies for the joint management of protected areas, the supply of ecosystem services related to biodiversity, payment for environmental services, water security, etc.

4. Promote forest governance with Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent and the sustainable use, conservation and restoration of ecosystems and their natural resources, supporting sustainable community forest management and other intercultural tools related to forest monitoring and fire prevention.

5. Collaborate with Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of natural resource management plans (such as soils, forests, marine-coastal resources and fisheries), recognizing and valuing traditional and scientific knowledge.

CROSS-CUTTING ACTIONS

The implementation of the regional strategy requires a firm organizational structure that includes, among other things, professional and institutional capacity building, as well as the review and improvement of certain processes. For this reason, the following cross-cutting actions have been planned, and represent pillars of the work to be carried out both inside and outside the Organization:

Intercultural dialogue: FAO plays an important role as an international forum, providing a meeting place where key stakeholders (governments, Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent, the private sector, international cooperation, civil society, etc.) can come together to discuss and reach agreements on sustainable development processes that directly or indirectly affect the interests of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent.

Mainstreaming gender equality with an emphasis on indigenous and African descendant women: Incorporate the key dimensions that must be addressed to transform gender dynamics in agriculture, rural development and natural resource management to achieve food and nutritional security with cultural relevance (FAO, 2021b), as well as generate opportunities and specific spaces to enhance the systematic empowerment of indigenous women and recognize them as holders of knowledge and capacities.

South-South cooperation and the exchange of knowledge: Promote and foster opportunities for the exchange of knowledge and experiences among Indigenous Peoples, people of African descent and the countries, in search of good practices, success stories and lessons learned to address challenges, as well as the identification of public policies and innovative technologies that aim for sustainable rural development.

Intergenerational approach with an emphasis on indigenous youth: Recognize and facilitate the transmission of intergenerational knowledge,

and design specific spaces for the participation of indigenous youth in FAO's various initiatives in the region.

Technical assistance: Foster an intersectoral, territorial and intersectional approach in the various actions of FAO in the countries of the region, recognizing and contributing to reducing ethnic inequalities. Technical support will also be provided for the review of culturally relevant programmes and public policies.

Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC): Build regional capacities for the design and implementation of FPIC, following the Project Cycle Guide and, in particular, the Environmental and Social Management Guidelines – Safeguard # 9 (Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Heritage), which ensure that UNDRIP (UN, 2007) is respected in all FAO actions, thus ensuring the application of FPIC throughout each stage of the project cycle. The FPIC process applies to different types of projects undertaken by FAO that may have an impact on Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent or their territories.[7]

Generate evidence: Support the generation of statistical data that appropriately reflects the reality of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent, the knowledge and evidence produced that will bring awareness to the importance of social inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent and related topics, as well as their contributions to rural development and sustainable development.

Capacity building: Strengthen and build capacities within the Organization, increasing the number of professionals specialized in the field, and designating focal points in FAO Country Representations throughout the region. Promote capacity building in this area with counterparts and advise on the development of training materials or courses on indigenous issues or culturally relevant topics.

[7] Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), FAO/Government Cooperative Programme (GCP), Unilateral Trust Fund (UTF), Office for Special Relief Operations (OSRO), Multipartner Programme Support Mechanism (MPSM), etc.

Intercultural communication: Formulate communication mechanisms and tools in which Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent have a greater role and influence on relevant issues (with special attention to women and youth).

Strategic alliances: Develop and strengthen strategic alliances with organizations of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent, the United Nations System, academia, civil society and the private sector, and foster the mobilization of resources to carry out actions for – and with – Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent.

Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

Collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent is a priority in FAO's work in Latin America and the Caribbean. In this regard, the achievement of results is the responsibility of everyone involved in the Organization at all levels.

This regional strategy will be implemented through FAO's main mechanisms for initiatives and results in the region (Regional Initiatives, Country Programming Frameworks). By doing so, in its various strategic planning exercises, the Organization will continue to progressively improve its mechanisms for collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent in the context of its new Strategic Framework and priority programmatic areas, with the aim of fostering more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems, thus enabling better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, leaving no one behind.

In turn, for this regional strategy to be most effective, most of the actions should be implemented at the country level. FAO country teams are therefore expected to identify those priorities that are most relevant and pertinent to their respective contexts, and ensure their successful implementation, in collaboration with governments and organizations representing Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent.

FAO will also develop and strengthen various inter-agency, inter-institutional and inter-state partnerships and coordination mechanisms to ensure the successful implementation of the aforementioned Lines of Action.

The Monitoring and Evaluation of this regional strategy is governed by FAO's internal monitoring and evaluation systems. Its progress will be evaluated every four years and the results will be presented to FAO member countries at the Regional Conference.

Appropriate mechanisms will be designed to guarantee the participation and collaboration of organizations representing Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent in the process of monitoring progress and reviewing the regional strategy, achievements, budget allocations, and challenges in terms of methodologies and outcomes.

Appendix

Key factors and concepts for cross-cultural collaboration

* *An adaptation of the text of the White Paper/Whipala on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems (FAO, 2021d).*

Indigenous: In other literature, the word "indigenous" as an adjective often refers to the native, traditional or ancestral nature of an entity in a geographic location, which may or may not refer to Indigenous Peoples. In this Regional Strategy, whenever "indigenous" is used as an adjective, it explicitly refers to Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous Peoples: There is no internationally agreed-upon definition of Indigenous Peoples. The 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognized the right of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination, so that they may freely determine their political status. "Indigenous Peoples" is typically written in capital letters and in the plural, in order to emphasize the diversity of these groups and peoples and their rights, and they are referred to in this manner within this Regional Strategy.

According to international consensus (FAO, 2011; p.10), the four criteria taken into account to identify Indigenous Peoples are the following:

- Priority in time, with respect to occupation and use of a specific territory;
- The voluntary perpetuation of cultural distinctiveness, which may include aspects of language, social organization, religion and spiritual values, modes of production, laws and institutions;

- Self-identification, as well as recognition by other groups, or by State authorities, as a distinct collectivity; and

- An experience of subjugation, marginalization, dispossession, exclusion or discrimination, whether or not these conditions persist.

People of African descent: Correspond to "all peoples and individuals descended from the African diaspora throughout the world." In Latin America, the concept refers to the different 'Black' or 'Afro-American' cultures that emerged from the descendants of Africans, who survived the slave trade that took place in the Atlantic from the 16th to the 19th century" (Antón, 2007).

In addition to sharing origins, culture and identity, people of African descent face various social problems rooted in enslavement, colonization, discrimination and exclusion. This was recognized by the Third World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held by the United Nations in Durban, South Africa in 2001 (United Nations, 2001, p.14, para. 34) (FAO, 2021c).

Indigenous Peoples' traditional knowledge: This regional strategy uses "Indigenous Peoples' traditional knowledge" to refer to the cumulative body of knowledge, practices and manifestations maintained and developed by Indigenous Peoples with a long history of interacting with their natural environment. The importance of Indigenous Peoples' traditional knowledge has been expressed to FAO by indigenous people participating in activities led by the Organization. This type of knowledge is mostly passed down orally, and its effective inter- and intra-generational transmission keeps their food systems alive.

Land, natural resources and territories: This regional strategy defines "land," "territories" or "natural resources" according to the terminology stipulated at the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014: the collective rights of Indigenous Peoples with regard to lands, territories and natural resources. These terms encompass not only land, but also the resources and customary rights over the management of these lands, and therefore take on a different meaning.

For rural communities of people of African descent, beyond the physical aspects, the land is where the principle of territoriality is applied; that is, the constant practice of ownership, domination, belonging, settlement and the struggle for a strategic space to fulfill their life plans. It is a connection between culture, development and land; aspects that have been legally recognized by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights of the Organization of American States (OAS). Indeed, the Court has issued rulings in favor of the Afro-descendant communities Moiwana (2005) and Saramaka (2007) in Suriname, and the Garífuna communities of Punta Piedra and Triunfo de la Cruz (2015) in Honduras, in which it refers to the fact that these communities of people of African descent can be considered tribal peoples or, where appropriate, Indigenous Peoples (ECLAC and UNFPA, 2020).

Cosmogony, cosmogonic visions and spirituality: In this regional strategy, the term "cosmogony" is used to refer to the set of spiritual beliefs, rites, religious practices and customs that are part of Indigenous Peoples' vision of the ecosystem, nature and the world. "Cosmogony" is different from "cosmology," and is the term used by Indigenous Peoples to refer to the spiritual principles of their societies.

Living in balance and harmony with nature and Mother Earth: In this regional strategy, "living in harmony" means recognizing the interconnection and balance with all other beings in nature, respecting the carrying capacity of ecosystems. The holistic vision of Indigenous Peoples considers the interconnectedness and balance among all living beings (including humans) as fundamental to a life of peace and harmony.

Indigenous food systems: Indigenous Peoples view their food systems through a holistic and broad approach that encompasses spirituality, life and culture, with both biotic and abiotic components in the ecosystem, as well as the interconnections between them. Indigenous Peoples' food systems capture the totality of human agency (knowledge, strategies, skills, techniques, values, exchange) to grow, produce, use, access, and manage the availability, stability and process of food that is nutritious, culturally and spiritually satisfying, and sustainable for future generations (FAO, 2021d).

Food sovereignty: Although Indigenous Peoples understand the definitions of "food security" and the principle of the "right to food," they place greater emphasis on the importance of food sovereignty. While the definition of "food sovereignty," adopted by Vía Campesina in 1996, provides an important conceptual framework, Indigenous Peoples tend to emphasize food sovereignty as their right to choose, cultivate and preserve their food practices and biocultural values.

Collective rights and community or common resources: Indigenous Peoples' traditions of collective rights to lands and resources (through the community, region or State) contrast with the dominant models of individual ownership, privatization and development. This regional strategy defines and recognizes the collective rights of Indigenous Peoples to lands, territories and resources, in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), Articles 3 and 26, and Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples.

Biocentrism: The principle of biocentrism is part of the cosmogony of many Indigenous Peoples' societies. From a biocentric perspective, humans are simply a component of the ecosystem, which deserves to be respected alongside other (non-human) living beings. Biocentrism underpins Indigenous Peoples' food systems, guiding their food supply practices, production and natural resource management strategies. Anthropocentrism is typically associated with food-producing societies.

Land management: Indigenous Peoples' food systems cannot be understood without land management practices. This often includes nomadic, semi-nomadic and changing practices, such as shifting cultivation, itinerant fishing and hunting, transhumance and other practices that consider mobility to be an essential part of land management. The respective territories are where the spiritual and material worlds are manifested and the place where harmony is sought, by maintaining a balance and peace among the different elements. It does not involve resource management dedicated solely to production, but rather a type of management that preserves the reciprocal relationships, storytelling, cosmogony and natural resources, producing food while preserving biodiversity.

Food is more than just eating: For Indigenous Peoples, food has nutritional, medicinal, healing, spiritual, social, cultural, relational and emotional dimensions and values. Food is an expression of the links between Indigenous Peoples, the land, water, non-human relations (species) and the spiritual world.

Sustainability and resilience: Although Indigenous Peoples' food systems predate the concept of sustainability or resilience, they have been incorporated into indigenous food practices. These food systems have remained intact for hundreds, or in some cases thousands of years, as living proof of their sustainability and resilience.

Collective reciprocity and solidarity: Many Indigenous societies around the world are governed by principles of reciprocity and solidarity. Food cannot often be sold or stored, so it is shared among communities.

Barter exchange: Although rapidly changing, Indigenous Peoples' food systems have traditionally been based on non-commercial access to food, self-sufficiency and livelihoods, and low levels of monetization.

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