



2ND WORLD CONFERENCE OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN

Together for wellbeing and Mother Earth





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The Sustainable Development Goals and 2030 Agenda

Background

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are the result of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 2012, and were introduced as an attempt to surpass the Millennium Development Goals (MDG)⁸ and create a set of goals that linked environmental, political and financial challenges to the 2030 Agenda. The final document from the conference, 'The Future We Want', contains practical measures for the implementation of the goals, committing member states to starting a process to implement these SDGs and create new alliances to promote sustainable development.

Each of the 17 SDGs is linked to Indigenous Peoples exercising their rights. The United Nations (UN) recognises that 156 of the 169 SDG targets are closely linked to human rights, whilst 73 are have a significant link to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).⁹ Indigenous Peoples are specifically mentioned in target 2.3 that aims, between now and 2030, 'to double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular Women, Indigenous Peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land'. In turn, target 4.5 aims to 'eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, and Children in vulnerable situations'.¹⁰

From an Indigenous Women's perspective, the following are particularly interesting goals: Goal 5: 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls'; Goal 10: 'Reduce inequality within and amongst countries'; and Goal 16: 'Promote peaceful and inclusive societies'. These SDGs have received many recommendations from the UN Human Rights system to be achieved, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) and the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII).¹¹





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Nonetheless, despite recognition of equal rights and that the global agenda for sustainable development promises 'to leave nobody behind', the SDGs and 2030 Agenda **do not reflect the underlying principles of UNDRIP**. Although, as an implementation measure, it is anticipated that states consult and involve their citizens in decision-making processes linked to the SDGs, 2030 Agenda does not cover the **complexity and specificity of the rights and needs of Indigenous Peoples with regard to access to land, education and vocational training from the specific perspective and needs of Indigenous Women**.¹² Whilst the need to eliminate gender-based violence and to empower women is recognised, the SDGs do not refer to **intersectional factors** (gender, financial status, ethnic or community identity) that characterise the discrimination experienced by Indigenous Women and Girls and, therefore, do not establish specific implementation measures for these populations.

⁸ UN General Assembly, 55/2. Millennium Declaration, A/RES/55/2, 13th September 2000, <https://undocs.org/A/RES/55/2>

⁹ Indigenous Peoples and the 2030 Agenda for SDGs, <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/news/indigenous-peoples-and-2030-agenda-sustainable-development>

¹⁰ United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Fifteenth Session, Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Peoples and the 2030 Agenda, E/C.19/2016/2.

¹¹ International Indigenous Women's Forum (IIWF) and Indigenous Peoples Major Group for Sustainable Development (IPMG) Special Report on Constant Discrimination and Disempowerment of Indigenous Women, High-level Political Forum (HLPF), 2019.

¹² Indigenous Peoples Major Group for Sustainable Development, *Los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible y los pueblos indígenas. Aportes para un informe regional*





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In turn, although the Sustainable Development Goals include environmental, social and economic factors, the epistemological proposals of the notion of 'sustainable development' uphold an ethnocentric approach and pursue merely economic purposes, despite there being alternative ways to define it. For example, the notion of '**Buen Vivir**' (living well together), based on the concepts and cosmovision of the Indigenous Peoples in the Andes, is a **plural and multidimensional concept based on the inherent constructions of indigenous wisdom**. Buen Vivir recognises the intrinsic values of nature and rejects traditional development as perceived by Big Money. The notion also posits a social and environmental harmony that underscores the close relationship with the land, territory and individual and collective human rights of Indigenous Peoples, including environmental justice and food sovereignty.¹³

Another challenge for implementing the SDGs is the **voluntary nature of commitments made by states**. In this sense, although they undertook to allot the necessary resources to achieve them, as well as include all parties in the implementation process, this depends on the political will of states themselves. Along these lines, holding a High-Level Political Forum to monitor and review the 2030 Agenda represents a platform enabling Indigenous Peoples to formulate recommendations, provide oral contributions about the implementation status of the SDGs, etc.

In turn, it is notable that only seven of the 22 countries who voluntarily submitted to national reviews in the High-Level Political Forum mentioned Indigenous Peoples in their reports, whether as a global priority or as an issue of national concern. The main topics to come out of the Forum were: recognition of Indigenous Peoples as groups at risk of being left behind, the importance of obtaining information about Indigenous Peoples in the 2030 Agenda and the economic status of Indigenous Peoples.¹⁴



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Guiding questions:

- What is sustainable development or Buen Vivir from the experience or needs of women in your community?
- What are the SDG implementation strategies in your country? How are they crystallised in your community?
- Are you aware of any SDG implementation project where your community has been a part of the entire decision-making process or where a free, prior and informed consultation has been undertaken, whose result was respected?
- If so, what are the results of this process? What are the best practices and lessons learnt?
- Do you have specific examples of changes in public policies, laws, special implementation programmes or others that can be directly linked to states' commitments to SDGs?
- What strategies could be implemented in your community to strengthen the empowerment of Indigenous Women and Girls in order to achieve the goal of zero hunger and no poverty (SDG 2)
- What are the examples of best practice to implement SDGs in your community? What are the lessons learnt and main challenges?

¹³ Indigenous Peoples Major Group for Sustainable Development, *Los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible y los pueblos indígenas. Aportes para un informe regional*

¹⁴ Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Juntos lo lograremos. *Los Pueblos Indígenas y la Agenda 2030, Background document.*