

The United Nations 2030 Agenda, Sustainable Development Goals and Indigenous Peoples



On September 25, 2015 the 193 member States of the United Nations unanimously adopted “Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” [A/RES/70/1] containing 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 implementation targets. The SDGs are intended to coordinate and measure global sustainable development efforts through 2030 to ensure that human needs are met, social and economic inequities are addressed and the natural world is protected for future generations. They officially came into force on January 1, 2016.

The SDGs seek to build on the gains made in overcoming extreme poverty, hunger, and preventable disease by the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which were adopted in 2000. The SDG’s are more comprehensive and include issues that were not addressed in the MDGs such as climate change, sustainable production and consumption, ecosystem and bio-diversity protection, innovation and the importance of peace, human rights and justice for all. Unlike the MDG’s, the 2030 SDG’s were developed with involvement by Indigenous Peoples, mainly through the active engagement of the Indigenous Peoples Major Group (IPMG), an Indigenous-led body which includes the participation of all 7 Indigenous regions.

The SDGs are not considered to be legally binding. However, the countries of the world have agreed to implement them by establishing national frameworks, providing follow-up and reviewing progress through accessible and timely data collection. National and Regional follow-up, analysis and review will contribute to annual global reviews on various themes at the High Level Political Forum held at UN headquarters in New York. Various UN bodies have already begun to utilize the SDG’s to

frame their own activities in areas such as Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture, Gender Equity, Climate Change and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.



Indigenous Peoples and the SDGs

The SDG’s as adopted in September 2015 refer to Indigenous Peoples 6 times, including in the political declaration, Goals 2 on Zero Hunger (target 2.3) and 4 on education (target 4.5), and in the section

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on follow up and review that calls for Indigenous Peoples' participation.

In addition, many other SDG's and associated targets reflect concerns consistently presented by Indigenous Peoples. For example, Human Rights principles and standards are reflected in the 2030 Agenda (A/RES/70/1 paragraph 10). The Agenda's overall focus on reducing inequalities is particularly relevant for Indigenous Peoples, who continue to be economically disenfranchised in both developed and developing countries.

An SDG's global indicator framework is currently under development to measure specific progress towards implementation. In addition, indicators are being developed at the national and regional levels, and countries have committed to include the input of Indigenous Peoples as well as women, youth, farmers and others, in these processes. In addition to SDG's indicators refer directly to Indigenous Peoples (Indicator 2.3.2 and 4.5.1), several others are also relevant, including indicator 1.4.2 and 5.a.1 on land rights. Currently Indigenous Peoples in several regions are also working on indicators based on their own concerns and cultural perspectives about sustainable development for their own measures of implementation as well as to impacts country, regional and UN-level processes.

The primary responsibility for implementation, review and follow-up lies at the national level. Indigenous Peoples are identified as one of the 9 Major Groups actively engaging in the process at all levels. Countries have agreed to include input by

Indigenous Peoples and other major groups in the development of their implementation plans and reviews. Indigenous Peoples' consistent engagement in these efforts at all levels is vital to ensure that our perspectives, rights and expertise are considered and respected.



*UN Press Conference on the SDG with Joan Carling, Otilia Lux de Coti, and Roberto Múkaru Borrero.
Photo: JS McIlwaine*

The Global Coordinators for IPMG are the International Indian Treaty Council and the Tebtebba Foundation. In 2017, a Global Steering Committee for the IPMG was established with focal points from all 7 regions.

For more information or to become involved, connect with the IPMG Website at <http://bit.ly/2t9F7K7> and join the IPMG Listserve at <http://bit.ly/IPMGSDGs>.

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