

FAST FACTS

United Nations
Development Programme



UNDP and Indigenous Peoples

The longstanding engagement of UNDP with indigenous peoples received a renewed impetus with the historic adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on 13 September 2007. The partnership with indigenous peoples is critical to all aspects of the UNDP mission – from preventing and resolving conflict, enhancing democratic governance, reducing poverty and sustainably managing the environment.

UNDP Regional Initiatives

The Regional Initiative on Indigenous Peoples' Rights and Development in Asia and the Pacific (RIPP) is now in its second phase. This unique initiative facilitates active cooperation between Governments, UNDP country offices and indigenous peoples' organizations. It develops the capacity of Government officials and representatives of indigenous peoples' organizations to implement inclusive and participatory processes in policymaking and integrate indigenous peoples' rights into national policy and strategies.

Building on the RIPP experience, UNDP has also initiated a process of engagement with indigenous peoples in **Latin America** that aims to systematize best practices and establish consultation processes to promote the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Gender Equality and Indigenous Women

The UNDP Regional Initiative on Indigenous Peoples' Rights and Development trains indigenous women in decision-making to address the power dynamics that characterize the daily lives and relationships of indigenous women in their communities. For instance, UNDP in **Bangladesh** has undertaken a project to promote development and confidence-building in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The project helped to set up 450 women's groups, empowering and allowing them to develop their own community-based projects and set up a grass-roots leaders' network.

In **Namibia**, UNDP is supporting the Government to enhance legal protection of the San and promote gender equality. The programme seeks to ensure that San women and children become aware of the existence of services available for reproductive health, prevention and

treatment of HIV/AIDS, and protection against gender-based violence.



Lisu women in Thailand documenting at a rally.

Environment and Climate Change

The United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD Programme), a collaborative effort of UNDP with FAO and UNEP, aims to achieve economic balance in favour of sustainable management of forests so that their economic and environmental goods and services benefit forest users while also contributing to reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. On behalf of this programme, UNDP has undertaken dialogues and consultations with indigenous peoples. As an outcome of these dialogues, the UN-REDD Programme has developed an Operational Guidance on the Engagement of Indigenous Peoples and other Forest Dependent Communities to ensure that programme formulation and implementation is fully participatory, transparent, and accountable.

The Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (GEF-SGP), implemented by UNDP, is now operational in over 115 countries. Through its decentralized governance mechanism, some 15% of its funding goes directly to projects implemented by indigenous peoples. Significant efforts have been exerted by the SGP at the global level to increase the use of innovative formats for the submission of project concepts in indigenous and vernacular languages, such as through the use of participatory video (PV). The PV Handbook launched at the UNPFII in 2006 has been translated into Russian, Spanish, Chinese and Bahasa Indonesian, and French.

Since 2008, GEF-SGP has supported a number of initiatives on indigenous and community conserved areas, and implemented community-based adaptation (CBA) projects in 10 pilot countries to be mainstreamed into SGP funding at the global level in 2010. In **Guatemala**, these projects are under development in the Kiché and Mam communities, focusing on reducing the increasing risks of landslides and soil erosion in the highland agro ecosystems. In **Viet Nam**, projects under development will work towards stabilizing water resources for agricultural purposes in Muong communities. UNDP in **India** supported projects that strengthened sustainable livelihoods for biodiversity conservation for the Sundarbans ecosystem and the sustainable coastal zone management Gulf of Mannar.

The Equator Initiative is a partnership between UNDP, civil society, business, governments and communities created to develop the capacity and raise the profile of grassroots efforts to reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Equator Initiative community dialogue spaces provide venues for indigenous input into national and international policy formation as well as indigenous peer-to-peer knowledge sharing on conservation best practices, adaptation to climate change, and sustainable income generation activities. Over 40% of communities that have received the Equator Prize, a prize awarded biennially for outstanding community work in biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction, self-identify as indigenous peoples.

Democratic Governance

UNDP and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) have launched a joint initiative to understand and promote the effective representation of minorities and indigenous peoples in parliaments. The **Promoting Inclusive Parliaments** project aims to provide parliamentarians and other stakeholders with tools to increase representation of indigenous peoples.

UNDP in **Kenya** recently launched a Civil Society Democratic Governance Facility to support, for example, indigenous peoples' organizations in their efforts to deepen democracy through improved internal good governance against established benchmarks. In **Indonesia**, UNDP is supporting the local government of Papua to put in place a special local regulation that will enable the use of Adat courts as a formal dispute-resolution method. In December 2008, the provincial parliament legitimized the local regulation that enables the use of Adat courts.

UNDP in **Mexico** has collaborated with the Government to establish 29 uninominal electoral districts where indigenous peoples made up 40% or more of the population. Additionally, UNDP will initiate a capacity-development process to create better conditions for indigenous women to be politically active and effectively exercise their local authority duties.

Poverty Reduction and the MDGs

The high incidence of poverty in most indigenous communities is often the most visible evidence of their exclusion from access to productive resources and basic social services. UNDP is committed to incorporating the concerns of indigenous peoples into UNDP approaches to poverty reduction at the macro level as well as at the local level by empowering indigenous peoples and their organizations to network and influence policy.

At the policy level this means that UNDP instruments to support MDG-based planning (such as needs assessment methodologies) encourage, for example, the participation of indigenous peoples and the establishment of accountability mechanisms and non-discriminatory service delivery. Having the skills to collect, use and understand data enables civil society to monitor the progress of MDG-based strategies and use the results to improve policy-making and planning. UNDP has been involved in producing course materials and leading workshops to train data users in government, media, and civil society actors on the use of statistics to monitor development outcomes.

UNDP in **Burundi** has supported the Associations of Batwas in developing a microfinancing and small and medium sized enterprise project for income generation. In conjunction with ILO, UNDP in **Indonesia** launched a programme for indigenous peoples in Papua and West Papua, to help them to improve their entrepreneurial skills and gain better access to markets and economic returns from their resources. UNDP in **China** has implemented a project on poverty reduction for ethnic minorities that seeks to improve human development outcomes among targeted ethnic groups through strengthening institutional support mechanisms and community responses.

UNDP looks forward to strengthening partnerships with Governments, indigenous peoples and other actors, and working collectively towards the effective implementation of the principles recognized in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

For more information, visit:

www.undp.org/partners/cso/indigenous.shtml

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