

E-consultation on the scope of the HLPE-FSN report on preserving, strengthening, and promoting indigenous people's food and knowledge systems and traditional practices for sustainable food systems – Germany

General remarks:

- **Business and human rights:** Include correlation between Indigenous Peoples' food and knowledge systems and global supply chains. In this regard, taking into account challenges concerning human rights in supply chains, specifically for Indigenous Peoples. Therefore, referencing also the document 'UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights'
- **Biodiversity:** The reference to the „Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework“ (point 8 under foundational documents) should also reflect the recent decisions of CBD COP 16 related to the role of indigenous peoples and local communities.

Guiding questions:

- **Should the objectives include mainstreaming Indigenous Peoples food and knowledge systems, and lessons learned from them, for the benefit of all, or solely for the benefit of Indigenous Peoples as rights holders?**

Indigenous People's communities and farmers play a crucial role in conserving and developing plant genetic resources, which serve as the foundation of global food production systems. This vital contribution is acknowledged by the International Treaty on Plant and Genetic Resources adopted by FAO in 2001 and enforced starting in 2004. In that context, they can contribute significantly to the expansion of regenerative agroecological practices, conserving and promoting nature-positive food production systems worldwide. However, a critical prerequisite for this is the **affirmation of Indigenous Peoples' rights, sensitive use of their knowledge** and ensuring the **equitable sharing of benefits**.¹ Hence, the report should both benefit Indigenous Peoples as rights holders and increase the respect, protection and recognition of Indigenous Peoples food and knowledge systems. In a second step, „for the benefit of all,“ it should share ideas on how principles of biocentrism, seasonality and circularity could be further applied to mainstream food systems.

- **How can the report ensure the inclusion of marginalized groups, sustainability, and protection against commercialization risks for Indigenous Peoples' food and knowledge systems?**

The **inclusion of small-scale farmers, artisanal fisheries and aquaculture** is essential for sustainable food systems. The inherent **right to self-determination** of Indigenous Peoples is jeopardized by the commodification and overexploitation of aquatic resources. Through their own tenure systems, Indigenous Peoples have the right to manage and govern their coastal and riparian ecosystems. It is imperative that Governments recognise, respect, and protect **Indigenous tenure**.²

- ➔ In the report (A/HRC/55/49), the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food provides a **framework** for the advancement of the rights of small-scale fishers, fish workers and Indigenous Peoples and a guide for States to ensure that the world's aquatic ecosystems are biodiverse and safe, and that States fulfil human rights obligations despite climate change challenges.

Furthermore, there could be a special focus also on the role of **Indigenous women and youth** in their food and knowledge systems. Overall, the report should address risks of commercialization and potential remedies, also taking into account the work of WIPO Global Reference on intellectual property

¹ FAO. 2021. The White/Whiphala Paper on Indigenous People's food systems. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb4932en>

² UNGA. 2024. Fisheries and the right to food in the context of climate change. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Michael Fakhri

and genetic resources, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, e.g. the publication “Protect and Promote Your Culture”.³

- **What best practices, ethical standards, and strategies for addressing climate change should be highlighted in the report?**

The most vulnerable actors in food systems – including small-scale farmers, artisanal fisheries and aquaculture, other SMEs, women, youth, and **Indigenous Peoples – across food supply chains** are not well-represented and empowered to influence the formulation of policies related to food systems. Despite the recognition of the **valuable role of Indigenous Peoples knowledge and practices in informing sustainability, adaptation to climate change and resilience-building strategies**, their values, views, cosmovisions, and practices continue to be **excluded from policy and science**. Western scientific knowledge remains the dominant knowledge system, whereas Indigenous People’s traditional knowledge is only understood as scientific when it is validated and transcribed into scientific language. Nevertheless, the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples’ knowledge systems can facilitate sustainable resources management.⁴

- Following and implementing important international agreements and voluntary guidelines such as the **‘Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security’** (VGGT Guidelines) and the **‘Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication’** (SSF Guidelines) is crucial to enhance Indigenous Peoples’ food systems.⁵ <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb5131en>
- In agricultural regions, women’s traditional and Indigenous People’s traditional knowledge is key to **adaptive practices in farming, climate change and resource management**. Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IP&LCs), their relationship with nature and their traditional knowledge are indispensable partners for the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, and thus also for the protection of the climate and biodiversity. For instance, according to studies, deforestation rates in forests managed by IP&LCs are two to three times lower than in other forests.⁶ In the context of maintaining healthy aquatic food systems, the SSF guidelines recognize the important role of small-scale fisheries as **environmental stewards** by *inter alia* noting that *“States should recognize the role of small-scale fishing communities and Indigenous Peoples to restore, conserve, protect and co-manage local aquatic and coastal ecosystems”*.⁷
- The whitepaper on Indigenous Peoples food systems by FAO (2021) outlines eight key **sources of resilience that can enhance adaptive capacity in indigenous fisheries systems** for climate-sensitive small-scale fisheries systems: (1) “the use of diverse kinds of knowledge systems for daily fishing activities”; (2) “practise different ways of learning opportunities to foster adaptive learning”; (3) “the use of community-based institutions to cope with everyday challenges and fisheries management”; (4) “efforts to improve human agency to build adaptive capacity”; (5) “unique worldviews that encourage living with the changing conditions and adapting”; (6) “specific cultural attributes such as sharing, collective action and collaboration”; (7) “effective social networks that lubricate specific information-sharing processes that are mandatory for fishing activities”; and (8)

³ WIPO. Global Reference on intellectual property and genetic resources, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions. https://www.wipo.int/tk/en/global_reference.html

WIPO. Protect and Promote Your Culture. A Practical Guide to Intellectual Property for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. [Protect and Promote Your Culture](#)

⁴ FAO. 2021. The White/Whiphala Paper on Indigenous People’s food systems. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb4932en>

⁵ FAO and Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT. 2021. *Indigenous Peoples’ food systems: Insights on sustainability and resilience from the front line of climate change*. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb5131en>

⁶ World Resources Institute (2016), https://files.wri.org/d8/s3fs-public/Climate_Benefits_Tenure_Costs_Executive_Summary.pdf

⁷ Charles, A., Macnaughton, A. & Hicks, S. 2024. Environmental stewardship by small-scale fisheries. FAO, Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc9342en>

“the flexibility with which fisheries systems can switch between different adaptive responses or engage in multiple responses as appropriate to adapt to changing conditions.”⁸

- **Agrobiodiversity** plays a key part in ensuring healthy and varied nutrition. Indigenous Peoples can play a significant role in increasing agrobiodiversity for improved nature-positive production and resilience. Indigenous People’s territories encompass unique dynamic biocultural spaces that are important to adapt to climate variability and other climate-related challenges. In addition, Indigenous People’s communities serve as guardians of a substantial proportion of the world’s **genetic resources**.⁹
- Through **systemic approaches to risk analysis** including a collaborative, co-learning approach that is guided by science as well as by the priorities and values of those impacted, it is possible to include Indigenous People’s perspectives in preventing and monitoring shocks.¹⁰
- **Land tenure and sovereignty** are a prerequisite to adaptive capacity in confronting climate change and fostering sustainability. Community-based decision-making mechanisms and information systems on land rights, as well as the application of CFS Voluntary Guidelines are fundamental.¹¹
- **UNESCO’s Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems programme (LINKS)** promotes local and Indigenous Peoples knowledge and its inclusion in global climate science and policy processes.
- The **Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF)** by IFAD is an innovative funding instrument that Indigenous Peoples’ communities can use to find solutions to the challenges they face.

Overall, the report should present a literature review of already existing major studies, e.g. Indigenous Peoples’ food systems by FAO (2021). Besides climate change, the report should identify and address all drivers that threaten Indigenous Peoples food and knowledge systems, including climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, violence and extractivism. It should address the responsibilities of governments and the private sector (CFS RAI, VGGTs, Right to Food, UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights) to respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples in the context of their food and knowledge systems and make policy recommendations.

• **Could you please indicate relevant references that should be taken into account?**

- Charles, A., Macnaughton, A. & Hicks, S. 2024. Environmental stewardship by small-scale fisheries. FAO, Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc9342en>
- FAO. 2015. ‘Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication’ (SFF Guidelines)
- FAO and Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT. 2021. Indigenous Peoples’ food systems: Insights on sustainability and resilience in the front line of climate change. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb5131en>.
- FAO. 2021. The White/Whiphala Paper on Indigenous People’s food systems. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb4932en>
- General Recommendation No.39 (2022) on the rights of Indigenous Women and Girls by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which acknowledges **intersectional discrimination** faced by indigenous women and girls, perpetuated by gender stereotypes and racism fuelled by colonialism and militarization, and identifies a lack of effective implementation of the right to self-determination as one of its root causes.
- WIPO 2017 - Protect and Promote Your Culture A Practical Guide to Intellectual Property for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities
- CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (RAI)

⁸ FAO (2021). The White/Whiphala Paper on Indigenous People’s Food Systems. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cb4932en>

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid