

CHALLENGES OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SDG 15.2 AND 13A

- » Indigenous peoples must be more involved in the strategies concerning mitigation and adaptation to climate change because of their traditional knowledge, in particular with respect to the sustainable management of ecosystems, they can make an important contribution to the solution of global problems.
- » Forest and climate protection measures must take into account and adequately include the cultural dimension of forest conservation by indigenous peoples and their communities and their closely related knowledge. Only then they may be sustainable and contribute to climate change mitigation.
- » In human rights based implementation processes of SDG 13 and the UNFCCC, measures of forest and climate protection, to combat climate change and to strengthen adaptability to climate change which directly or indirectly affect the concerns, rights, livelihoods, territories or lands of indigenous peoples, have to respect and guarantee human rights and the specific rights of indigenous peoples.
- » The GCF and any other future climate financing mechanisms have to take into account human rights standards and obligations provided for in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and other relevant International Law instruments. Currently, the GCF has started elaborating its own indigenous peoples' policy.⁸ It is essential that this process is further promoted and monitored.

Joint steps towards sustainable development: Indigenous communities as partners in forest, climate and land protection



Indigenous Peoples and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In 2015, the international community adopted „The Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development“, comprising 17 global *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) which unite the three dimensions of sustainable development – the economic, social and environmental. All countries are called upon to implement these goals. Human beings are at the core of sustainable development processes and their implementation.¹

Indigenous peoples - with about 370 million people worldwide who identify themselves as such – are important partners in the realization of sustainable development because of their knowledge, traditional practices, technologies, strategies and innovations. They make valuable contributions to the sustainable use of natural resources, to the protection of biodiversity, forests and climate and therefore to the fulfillment of the SDGs.

In order to be able to make these contributions, indigenous peoples' rights have to be guaranteed, in particular as they pertain to land, resources and self-determined development. As a precondition for the self-determined improvement of the living conditions of indigenous peoples and other disadvantaged population groups, the implementation of Agenda 2030 must follow a human rights based approach – also in and by Germany.

With the present series of fact sheets INFOE would like to

- make indigenous peoples' contributions to sustainable development more visible and understandable
- promote the recognition of indigenous rights in the implementation of the SDGs
- promote a human rights based approach to the implementation of the SDGs by Germany

SDG 15.2 Forest protection and sustainable forest management contribute to climate protection

Maintaining a functioning forest ecosystem is always climate protection, because with the destruction of forests, important greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane are released. A healthy forest also provides protection from the effects of climate change on the local level, where extreme weather events may be counterbalanced. Furthermore, a healthy ecosystem offers a higher biodiversity which plays an important role in adaptation to new climate conditions.

Of an estimated 500 million forest-dependent people worldwide, between 60 and 200 million belong to indigenous peoples.² Forests under the local management of indigenous peoples are often well protected on the basis of traditional and sustainable forest management and many of the last remaining tropical forests of this world can be found in areas where indigenous peoples live.³

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Front photo: Kichwa women in a field, Amazon Basin Ecuador. ©Bärbel Henneberger
Kichwa women harvesting in the Purun Forest, Ecuador. ©Bärbel Henneberger
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Für den Inhalt dieser Publikation ist allein das Institut für Ökologie und Aktions-Ethnologie verantwortlich; die hier dargestellten Positionen geben nicht den Standpunkt von Engagement Global gGmbH und dem Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit sowie den weiteren Förderinstitutionen wieder.

Gefördert von ENGAGEMENT GLOBAL im Auftrag des



Gefördert durch die
STIFTUNG UMWELT UND ENTWICKLUNG
NORDRHEIN-WESTFALEN

„Gefördert aus Mitteln des Kirchlichen
Entwicklungsdienstes durch Brot für die Welt –
Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst“.



Apart from the focus on forest protection in SDG 15.2, SDG 13A names the Green Climate Fund as one of the main financing mechanisms for global forest and climate protection.

Forest and Climate protection: The role of Indigenous Peoples in theory....

Target 15.2 of SDG 15 is of central importance for all indigenous peoples and local communities living in or near to forests who directly or indirectly depend on the forest and its natural resources. For indigenous peoples, the forest does not only serve as source of food and their livelihoods, but it is the fundamental basis of their identity, culture and living environment.

In conflicts over the protection and the use of forests, the biggest challenge for indigenous peoples is the fact that their rights are often not respected although they are guaranteed in international conventions and human rights agreements. While officially more than 22 % of the forests in the 18 so-called developing countries with the largest forest areas are owned by indigenous and local communities or lie in community reserves, these communities, without the recognition and protection of their rights scarcely have the means to assert their rights against the interests of governments, companies, great land owners and conservation institutions.⁴

The New York Declaration on Forests, which had been adopted by state, business and civil society actors at the UN climate summit 2014 in New York, aims at reducing deforestation by 50 % until 2020 and stopping it fully by 2030 as well as at regenerating and reforesting large areas of degraded forests. It recognizes the contribution of indigenous peoples to the global protection and conservation of forests through their traditional knowledge and their proven sustainable practices of natural resource use and management of forest ecosystems.

...and in practice

The „Chakra-Ushun-Purun“-system of the Kichwa of the Ecuadorian Amazon

The “Chakra-Ushun-Purun“-system is an ancient practice of traditional sustainable agroforestry in many cultures in the Amazon region. Following the clearing, firstly plants with short growth cycles are cultivated, for example maize, yuca, bananas - a chakra comes into being.

Gradually, plants with longer growth cycles (among others, fruit-bearing and medicinal trees) are cultivated which in the course of time form a secondary forest and can provide food and resources for the indigenous families over a period of up to 30 years. The knowledge about this practice is passed on among the women of the indigenous communities.

By creating such a secondary forest particularly diverse in species, the regeneration of the forest is improved – and thus also the climatic stability of this system is much more favorable compared to other agricultural practices.



Kichwa women harvesting fruits in the so-called Purun forest.

SDG 13 A and the Green Climate Fund: Adequate participation of indigenous peoples?

The establishment of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) was a concrete result of the Conference of the Parties of the UN-Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Durban in 2011. “GCF was established by 194 governments to limit or reduce greenhouse gas emissions in developing countries, and to help adapt vulnerable societies to the unavoidable impacts of climate change.”⁵ Many aspects of the development of this fund represent big challenges for indigenous peoples, such as the availability of sufficient funds, the role of the private sector and the establishment of safeguard mechanisms. Through the International Indig-

SDG 13 A

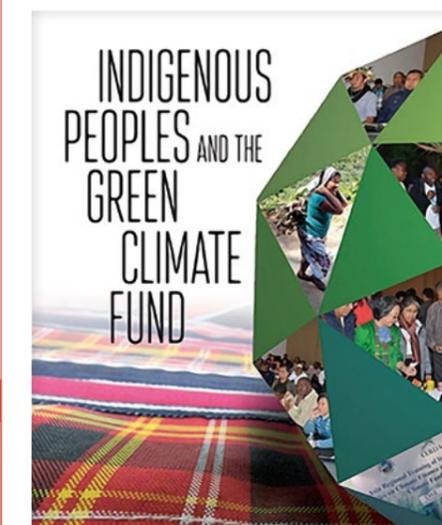
„Umsetzung der Verpflichtung aller Industrieländer im Rahmen der Klimawandelkonvention der Vereinten Nationen mit dem Ziel, bis 2020 jährlich 100 Milliarden Dollar zu mobilisieren, um die Bedürfnisse der Entwicklungsländer im Zusammenhang mit sinnvollen Maßnahmen zur Mitigation anzusprechen, und die Operationalisierung des Green Climate Fund zu gewährleisten.“

enous Forum on Climate Change (IIPFCC), indigenous peoples demand recognition of their contribution to climate change issues and respect of their right to participate actively in the activities and decision-making of the GCF.

Key demands concerning climate financing are presented by indigenous peoples by way of collective statements on the global level. With particular emphasis indigenous peoples warn that they might be made even more vulnerable because of climate protection projects, such as reforestation through monocultures, large hydroelectric dam projects etc. In addition, indigenous peoples expect to participate fully in the global and national efforts of mitigation and adaptation to climate change.⁶

In the course of the 22nd Conference of the Parties concerning climate change (COP22) of UNFCCC in Marrakesh in November 2016, indigenous representatives

claimed direct access to the GCF. This should include the right to have a say in the management of their natural resources and the necessary adaptation measures.



Cover-Publikation: Indigenous Peoples and the Green Climate Fund

Indigenous voices concerning the GCF at COP22⁷

Grace Balawag (Tebtebba, Philippines): „For a long time, indigenous peoples have been in direct contact with the forests, they have elaborated indigenous knowledge systems and should be supported to continue applying indigenous knowledge to protect the forests.“

Tarcila Rivera (CHIRAPAQ, Peru): „Despite their traditional knowledge on their environment, indigenous peoples have suffered hard from climate change. If they were able to obtain the necessary support, they would grow drought-resistant agricultural crops.“

Kimaren Ole Riamit, (Indigenous Livelihoods Partnerships, Kenya): „Pastoral peoples such as the Maasai have proven that an indigenous science lies behind the improvement of their strategies to obtain their livelihoods. However, it does not get support. What we need is financing and capacity building to work more vigorously on climate protection and the improvement of living conditions.“



¹ UN GA: Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable DevelopmentA/RES/70/1

² Sophie Chao (2012) FOREST PEOPLES: Numbers across the world. Forest Peoples Programme – FPP, p.3.

³ Tebtebba (2010) Indigenous Peoples, Forests & REDD Plus: Sustaining & Enhancing Forests through traditional Resource Management, Baguio City.

⁴ Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. 2010. Forest Biodiversity: Earth's Living Treasure, Montreal.

⁵ www.greenclimate.fund/home

⁶ Forest Peoples Program. 2012. Indigenous Peoples and the Green Climate Fund.

⁷ www.pamacc.org/index.php/k2-listing/item/450-indigenous-communities-demand-for-direct-access-to-green-climate-fund

⁸ In March 2017, the Board of the Green Climate Fund has called for inputs concerning the design of an indigenous peoples policy of the fund. 105 indigenous organizations have followed this call: <http://www.tebtebba.org/index.php/content/392-an-indigenous-peoples-policy-for-the-gcf>