

**BACKGROUND NOTE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A
SYSTEM WIDE ACTION PLAN TO ENSURE A COHERENT
APPROACH TO ACHIEVING THE ENDS OF THE UNITED
NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES**

Background Note 10

United Nations Indigenous Peoples' Partnership: Lessons learned
Extracted from the UNIPP Consolidated Annual Progress Report 2014

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Introduction

The United Nations Indigenous Peoples' Partnership was launched in 2011. It is a joint initiative of OHCHR, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF aimed to support efforts at country level for the realization of indigenous peoples' rights set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention No. 169.

In particular the Partnership aims at:

- a) Providing critical impetus to the implementation of indigenous peoples' rights at the country level through a series of coordinated interventions by various actors;
- b) Helping raise the profile of indigenous peoples in government consciousness and increase the amount of resources allocated to projects targeting indigenous issues;
- c) Providing support to on-going national legislative and policy processes concerning indigenous peoples, increasing their chances of success and thereby encouraging good practices in the given country and the wider region;
- d) Facilitating partnerships between indigenous peoples and governments as well as UN agencies.

As of 2015, UNIPP has organized six¹ joint country programmes and one regional project in South-East Asia. Included in these are over 110 individual projects or initiatives implemented with over 100 partners, some 40 thematic studies or publications and training provided to over 5500 government officials, indigenous representatives and other key stakeholders.

I. Impact on system coherence and effectiveness

By encouraging coordinated and collaborative UN support to countries, UNIPP has enhanced efficiency and effectiveness of the organizations' collective input. With the UN Resident Coordinators in their strategic leadership of the UN Country Team and relationships with national authorities, playing an important role in the Partnership, UNIPP has taken on board the opportunities offered by United Nations coordination processes through the UN Resident Coordinators' systems and UNCTs (including CCA/UNDAF), thereby making the Delivering as One principle a reality. The establishment in Nicaragua of a Consultative Committee of Indigenous and Afro-descendant Peoples (CCPIAN) is one example of such a success, where CCIPAN provides advice to the UNCT in a systematic manner.

II. Lessons learned

1. By pooling individual and collective expertise and resources of the five participating UN entities, UNIPP has bolstered coordinated and coherent action at the country level and has ensured a more efficient delivery of action on indigenous peoples under the respective UNDAFs.

¹ Bolivia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Nepal and Nicaragua.

2. Convening power of a UN System delivering as one has allowed UNIPP to bring together diverse actors, creating a climate of trust for dialogue, dispute resolution, building democracy, diversity.
3. Partnership served as a catalyst for action within UN system in support of national institutions and organizations for the advancement of indigenous peoples' rights.
4. Through a network of experts and specialists at the country level as well as the headquarters level, UNIPP has facilitated a global sharing of information and experiences in promoting the rights of indigenous peoples.
5. Delivering as one does not require large amounts of funds.

III. Challenges

1. Lack of recognition of indigenous peoples. This poses a challenge to mobilizing stakeholders to move forward.
2. Issues related to indigenous peoples are seen as politically sensitive, especially in relation to land rights and natural resource extraction on territories where indigenous peoples have traditionally lived. This has caused negative impacts, including delays.
3. Remoteness of indigenous peoples' communities requires additional financial and technical resources.
4. Lack of capacity of indigenous peoples' organizations.
5. Conflicting work schedules of United Nations focal points on indigenous peoples' issues.

IV. Recommendations

1. In the spirit of the Delivering as One approach, there is a need to broaden UNIPP membership to maximize efficiency, serving as an effective platform for joint and coherent action by UNCTs.
2. Emphasize strengthening of joint programming on indigenous issues, under the leadership of UN Resident Coordinators.
3. Strengthen cooperation between headquarters based network of technical focal points and national coordinators or focal points.
4. Focus on capacity development and promoting and establishing mechanisms for consultation and participation of indigenous peoples.
5. Link indigenous peoples' issues with broader policy areas such as education, health, rural development etc. opening avenues for different UN agencies' programmatic actions to also focus on indigenous peoples.
6. Increase focus on results, develop clear narrative of change and document success stories, good practices and lessons learned.
7. Learn from other UN trust funds, such as the Human Rights Mainstreaming Fund and the UN Disability Fund.