

General Plan of Action for the rolling out and implementation of the UNDG Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues (5 year plan)

Context and Objectives

At its Principals meeting on 12 July 2006, the UNDG recommended that the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues (now composed of over 30 UN system agencies, funds and programmes and other inter-governmental organizations), in consultation with the UNDG Programme Group, provide support and guidance for mainstreaming and integrating indigenous issues in UN operational activities, working through existing mechanisms and procedures. The UNDG Task Team on indigenous issues was thus created. Over the course of 2007, the Task Team developed the UNDG Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues, which were adopted by the UNDG and became operational as of February 2008.

Objective of the action plan: to assist the UN system to mainstream and integrate indigenous issues in processes for operational activities and programmes at the country level, following the normative and programmatic framework presented in the UNDG Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues.

Organization and strategy of the plan

The plan is organized into five main clusters of action:

- 1. Mapping of existing capacities within the UN system for country-level support and gaps**
- 2. Creating/strengthening support structures, mechanisms, and instruments/tools for implementing the Guidelines**
- 3. Developing further capacities among UN country teams**
- 4. Resource mobilization/funding support**
- 5. Communications and advocacy**

The plan is intended to be implemented over a period of 5 years, supporting batches of countries according to which countries enter into a new UNDAF cycle. Factors to consider include size of the indigenous population of the country, political and socio-economic situation of the country's indigenous peoples, previous experience (or lack thereof) of UNCT with programmatic work on indigenous issues, etc. The plan should be considered a rolling plan to be

reviewed and elaborated on an annual basis based on progress made and availability of funding.

There are approximately **60 countries with indigenous peoples where UNCTs are present**. UNDG should be prepared to lend guidance and support for the implementation of the Guidelines and Plan of Action to **approximately 9-12 countries per year**.

1. Mapping of existing capacities within the UN system for country-level support and gaps

- a. Take stock of expertise available within agencies, and focal points on indigenous issues (number of specialists on indigenous issues by area of focus) and create an expert roster and network based on this information.
- b. Take stock of existing knowledge resources within agencies on indigenous issues (existing guidelines, documentation on best practices and lessons learned, programme/project documents focused on indigenous peoples' issues, training resources, etc.) and make this information readily accessible via the UNDG workspace for indigenous issues.
- c. Map presence of UN-supported programmes focused on addressing indigenous peoples' issues in programme countries and their national focal points in order to identify and make accessible good examples to UNCTs.
- d. Provide guidance to UNCTs on identifying country-level resources and consulting with agencies and programme officers on the partners they engage with successfully (including indigenous leaders, academic institutions, NGOs, civil society, etc) with regard to indigenous issues

2. Creating and/or strengthening the support structures, mechanisms, and tools for implementing the Guidelines

- a. **Setting up a Management Committee for the Action Plan, and network for backstopping fieldwork:** A management committee will be established to provide support, technical advice and access to a network of experts (both from within and outside the UN system) on the various issues that may arise in connection with indigenous peoples' rights. This committee will include the following agencies: UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, OHCHR, ILO and SPFII. The Management Committee will consult with the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues.

- b. **Provide support to UNCTs for the establishment of consultation mechanisms with indigenous peoples:** UNCTs will be encouraged to create consultative mechanisms to provide a forum for dialogue between the UNCT and indigenous peoples' representatives, as appropriate. Such mechanisms would provide opportunity for indigenous peoples' participation in CCA/UNDAF/PRSP/MDG processes and other UN programmes affecting indigenous peoples.
- c. **Provide support to UNCTs for the establishment of inter-agency task forces on indigenous peoples:** UNCTs are invited to establish inter-agency groups that can exchange information about indigenous issues and activities thereby furthering better understanding of and cooperation on indigenous issues. In certain cases, it may be possible to integrate indigenous issues into existing inter-agency task forces. The CCA and UNDAF processes should ensure that indigenous peoples are properly represented in both processes and that their free, prior, and informed consent is respected in all programmatic interventions that may affect them.
- d. **Agency country programmes:** In addition to support to the CCA/UNDAF, support will be provided to UNCT agencies, where requested, to ensure that their country programmes reflect guidelines set out in the UNDAF so that indigenous peoples' issues are adequately addressed and their opinions are taken into consideration. Use of the Guidelines should bring a better degree of thoroughness and consistency to the agency country programmes dealing with indigenous issues.
- e. **Strengthening the use of online spaces for exchanging information and sharing experiences on programming on indigenous peoples' issues:** Of special relevance in this area are the UNDG's website, especially the Programming Reference Guide, as well as the UNDG Coordination Practitioner's Network, which serves as an online discussion forum. A list of such sites will be prepared and circulated widely, and practitioners will be encouraged to use and contribute to it.
- f. The **compilation and dissemination of good practices on indigenous issues from UNCTs** will be carried out in conjunction with the use of the UNDG website as a repository of knowledge resources on indigenous peoples' issues.

3. Developing further capacities among UNCTs

- a. **Integrating indigenous issues into existing training opportunities/modules:** There is a wealth of training opportunities in the context of UNCTs, including training in the human rights based approach

to programming, results-based management, monitoring and evaluation, etc. Integrating indigenous issues to these training opportunities makes sense both programmatically and practically. In programmatic terms, this would be a crucial step towards mainstreaming indigenous issues into UNCT operational activities and programmes. In practical terms, existing training modules provide an already existing space in which these activities can take place.

- b. **Training of trainers:** Given the limited financial and human resources available to UNCTs for work on indigenous peoples' issues, training of trainers represents a strategic means of rolling out the Guidelines. This can work on two levels. On one level, trainers can carry out further training among UNCTs in their region. On another level, trainers can work with UN agencies to strengthen each agency's work on indigenous peoples' issues. One important issue to consider is how to identify trainers.
- c. **Priority training to specific UNCTs:** There are undeniably certain UNCTs that require more immediate attention. Factors to consider include size of the indigenous population of the country, political and socio-economic situation of the country's indigenous peoples, previous experience (or lack thereof) of UNCT with programmatic work on indigenous issues, etc.
- d. **Regional/sub-regional training activities or programmes:** It would be worthwhile to consider pursuing a regional/sub-regional approach in tandem with the work with UNCTs. This can be carried out through the regional commissions and through the Regional Director's Team's QSA group (quality support and assurance). Collaboration in this regard with regional institutions like the regional banks and regional/sub-regional organizations that have programmes dealing with indigenous peoples' can be explored.
- e. **Temporary advisors on indigenous issues** may be posted to countries undergoing CCA/UNDAF processes if there is no one in the UNCT who can carry out this function. Another option is for the UNCT to nominate a focal point on indigenous issues (usually the human rights advisor, if present) to undergo training.
- f. **Involvement of indigenous professionals in UN-supported programmes/projects where their knowledge and expertise are critical or relevant will be strongly encouraged.** Support will be provided to UNCTs in order to increase the number of indigenous professionals working in the UN System. Indigenous professionals could contribute significantly to programmatic work on indigenous peoples'

issues and therefore strengthen UNCT work in this area. A database created by SPFII in 2008 is one source of support in this regard.

4. Resource mobilization/Funding support

- a. 30,000 Euros have been allocated to the Trust Fund on Indigenous Issues by the Government of Finland to carry out field-level capacity building on indigenous issues, including the roll-out of this Plan of Action.
- b. Additional sources of funding will be mobilized through a resource mobilization strategy to be further developed.

5. Communications and Advocacy

- a. The Guidelines and Plan of Action should be distributed as widely as possible within the UN System.
- b. **Awareness-raising:** An agency-wide effort will continue to be undertaken to raise awareness of the Guidelines among UNCTs. The IASG may take leadership in this regard.