

IPs welcome adoption of Green Climate Fund's Indigenous Peoples Policy, Call it a step in the right direction

Songdo, South Korea, 27 February 2018 – Indigenous peoples welcome the adoption today of the GCF Indigenous Peoples Policy by the Green Climate Fund Board.

“As faithful stewards of nature often in the frontline of negative impacts of climate change and unsecured climate change response actions, indigenous peoples have seen a ray of hope and a potentially promising future in the context of climate change and mitigation actions,” stated Kimaren Ole Riमित, a Maasai and member of the Indigenous Peoples Advocacy Team on the GCF.*

Part of a package of three human rights-based policies, the Indigenous Peoples (IP) Policy represents a high level rights-based benchmark for the Fund's operation and for climate finance at large. The other equally important policies still up for adoption are those on gender and environmental and social implications of Fund's operations.

For Eileen Mairena-Cunningham, an indigenous Miskitu from Nicaragua, “This adoption is a great step forward towards the recognition of our rights. It gives us clear and strong voice to say: We are here and now and our rights have to be respected!”

“This is a sign of willingness of the GCF to recognize, respect and promote the rights of indigenous peoples in climate actions,” added Tunga Bhadra Rai, an indigenous Rai from Nepal.

As the outcome of a detailed and participatory process of elaboration and consultation with indigenous organizations, civil society and other stakeholders, the policy recognizes indigenous peoples' rights to land, territories and natural resources, their crucial and active contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the importance of the knowledge of indigenous peoples and their livelihood systems.

It will also significantly contribute to enable effectiveness and support the transformative character of Fund's initiative in adaptation and mitigation while delivering benefits to indigenous communities.

The relevance of international standards such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and principles such as Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) are also acknowledged.

Once implemented it will offer an effective toolbox to improve the capacity of countries-recipient of GCF funds as well as Accredited Entities to fully and effectively engage indigenous peoples at all levels of climate policies and programs and prevent possible negative impacts of their activities on indigenous peoples' rights.

Indigenous peoples' organizations will therefore continue to engage with the Fund in the further steps of elaboration and adoption of operational guidelines, of the envisaged guidance on FPIC and new Environmental and Social Safeguards.

“The opportunity that the IP Policy opens to indigenous peoples is enormous. We still have a lot of work to do but we learned that with dedication and hard work, nothing is impossible,” said Helen Biangalen-Magata of Tebtebba.## *(Tebtebba and International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs on behalf of the IP Advocacy Team)*

* The Indigenous Peoples Advocacy Team has been consistently participating in GCF processes to highlight indigenous peoples’ issues and concerns and has led efforts to adopt the IP Policy. It is composed of Indigenous peoples’ organizations and advocates: Centro para la Autonomía y Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas, Nicaragua; Indigenous Livelihoods Enhancement Partners, Kenya; Indigenous Peoples Foundation for Education and Environment, Thailand; International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, Denmark; Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities; and Tebtebba.