Human Rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is firmly anchored in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights treaties. Further, the **Sustainable Development Goals "seek to realise the human rights of all"** and reflect elements of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, which are critical to implementing indigenous peoples' rights and development. Likewise, the commitment to "leave no one behind" is a reflection of the fundamental human rights principle of **non-discrimination** and is of key importance for making the Agenda relevant for indigenous peoples.

In order to fully appreciate the human rights potential embedded in the 2030 Agenda for indigenous peoples, it is worthwhile to look back at the past decades' international policy development and agreements and explore how these have shaped the current 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Road to the SDGs

The 2030 Agenda builds upon and captures key elements of international agreements and frameworks developed over the last 25 years:

On the one hand, it reflects the outcomes of the 1992 **Earth Summit,** including the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, as well as Agenda 21, which provided a framework for global partnerships for sustainable development. The Earth Summit put the concept 'sustainable development' firmly on the global agenda and marked the beginning of a new era of increasing integration of human and environmental concerns in international policy-making. Since then, international environmental policies and agreements have incorporated human rights concerns to an increasing extent. For example, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change stipulates in its preamble that parties should 'respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights' when taking action to address climate change.

Equally important, the 2030 Agenda builds upon the achievements of the 8 **Millennium Development Goals** (MDGs) which, until 2015, constituted the single most important initiative to promote human development and reduce poverty. The MDGs set concrete and time-bound targets to be reached by developing countries by 2015 and led to a number of key achievements, such as a decline in extreme poverty and undernourishment, greater gender parity in primary education and improved access to drinking water. However, the MDGs also left a number of **challenges and gaps**:

- They were defined without public consultations or the engagement of civil society;
- Their emphasis was more on economic growth than on environmental sustainability and social equity;
- They did not address the structural causes of poverty;
- They were only focused on developing countries, thus ignoring the situation of inequality and discrimination, unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, etc. in developed countries
- In many countries, the development, implementation and follow-up of activities related to the MDGs were not participatory and inclusive; and
- Overall, human rights, democracy and good governance were not a well-integrated part of the MDGs.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been shaped by these experiences and **merges key elements of international environmental processes, international development cooperation and human rights standards**. The process leading towards its adoption in 2015 was lengthy, complex and inclusive, with stakeholder groups representing a broad range of actors being able to engage in the negotiations. This practice is a continuation of the recognition, emerging from the 1992 Rio Summit, of the need to secure active participation of broad sectors of society to achieve sustainable development, and the coordination of stakeholder engagement through nine so-called 'Major Groups'.

Indigenous peoples have been actively engaged in all processes related to sustainable development since then. The current involvement of Indigenous Peoples' Major Group in the global discussions around the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a continuation of past decades' practice in other global processes. For decades, indigenous peoples have engaged in the negotiations under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) under the global coordinating caucus known as the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB). The IIFB has achieved significant impacts over the years and placed indigenous peoples' rights firmly on the global forest conservation agenda. Likewise, indigenous peoples have engaged in negotiations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) under a global coordinating caucus known as the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Climate Change.

> **Indigenous Peoples' Major Group (IPMG)** is one of the nine major groups of stakeholders that have been recognised as having a particular role and contribution with regard to sustainable development. The recognition as a major group also implies that indigenous peoples can participate and engage in relevant processes pertaining to sustainable development.
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> The IPMG promoted indigenous peoples' rights and needs in the process leading to the adoption of the SDGs in 2015 and, since then, has worked strategically to enhance indigenous peoples' visibility in the SDG context. The IPMG is active in regional and global follow-up and review processes, and also coordinates indigenous peoples' engagement in national follow-up and review, with a view to promoting adequate and equal SDG outcomes for indigenous peoples.

Where are human rights in the 2030 Agenda?

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development consists of three main elements:

- The **17 Sustainable Development Goals and the underlying 169 targets** – expressing a global commitment to environmental, social and economic sustainability, to be achieved by all countries by 2030.
- The **Means of Implementation (MOI)**, which specify the resources and partnerships that are necessary to reach the agreed goals and targets.
- The **Follow-Up and Review (FUR)** processes and mechanisms that will monitor and guide the implementation, including the global indicators framework.

Key principles of the Human Rights Based Approach to development are built into the 2030 Agenda:

Non-discrimination is an over-arching theme for the SDGs, highlighted under the 'leave no one behind' slogan, and addressed even more pro-actively with a commitment to reach those that are furthest behind first.

Accountability and **participation** are strongly reflected in the guiding principles for the follow-up and review processes and mechanisms that form part of the global SDG architecture: States are encouraged to plan, implement and monitor the SDGs in participatory and transparent ways – drawing on contributions from indigenous peoples, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders. It is specifically stressed that FUR processes will be people-centred, gender-sensitive, respect human rights and have particular focus on the poorest, most vulnerable and those furthest behind.

Non-discrimination is also addressed in the follow-up and review principles, with a commitment to report on SDG achievements with **disaggregated data**, showing how different groups in society have been reached. This is an attempt to avoid repeating the MDG experience of achieving development, but not for the most vulnerable groups. Furthermore, there is a recognition of the need to include data from multiple sources in the national SDG-monitoring – including citizen-generated data. The Indigenous Navigator has a strong potential to contribute to this 'eco-system of data'. This is described in-depth in Module 6, 'Monitoring the SDGs'.

Where are indigenous peoples' rights in the SDGs?

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) constitutes the overarching framework that defines what sustainable development means for indigenous peoples. If adequately implemented, the UNDRIP can help overcome challenges faced by indigenous peoples in the development context by:

- Fully **including indigenous peoples** and ensuring that they benefit from local, national and global development efforts, on an equal footing.
- **Respecting indigenous peoples' right to self-determined development** and ensuring that development contributes to the full realisation and strengthening of their potential by supporting their development priorities and institutional and management capacities.
- **Protecting indigenous peoples from adverse impacts of development**, which may undermine their rights and well-being if their specific needs and aspirations are not addressed.

All **17 SDGs are relevant to indigenous peoples**. Two SDG targets specifically mention indigenous peoples, but the goals on health, education, poverty reduction, food security, peace and security, women's empowerment and reduced inequalities are generally relevant for indigenous peoples.

> **More than one-third of the SDG targets are linked to specific provisions of UNDRIP**. These linkages provide the necessary guidance for states, indigenous peoples and other actors to design their SDG strategies and plans in accordance with UNDRIP.
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> **Two targets mention indigenous peoples specifically**
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> - Target 2.3 aims to double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular for indigenous peoples, among others, including through secure and equal access to land.
> - Target 4.5 aims to ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training, including for indigenous peoples.

Hence, if implemented in a cohesive manner, the Agenda could contribute to reducing the inequalities of opportunity and outcome that affect indigenous peoples in general – and indigenous women in particular. This requires a systematic approach to exploring the human rights obligations that underpin the SDGs. The Indigenous Navigator tool **Indigenous Peoples' Sustainable Development Matrix** is an indispensable tool for such analysis, and has the potential to help SDG actors building adequate human rights based approaches to sustainable development for indigenous peoples (further described in the last section of this hand-out).

Further, there is a need to avoid policies, programmes and projects to achieve the SDGs that have a negative impact or infringe on indigenous peoples' rights. Therefore, the procedural rights of indigenous peoples to be **consulted**, to **participate** and **to give or withhold free, prior and informed consent** must be upheld in all processes aimed at achieving the SDGs. Such an approach will make the Agenda relevant for indigenous peoples and ensure that they are not left behind, while ensuring coherence, effectiveness and efficiency in states' efforts to comply with their human rights obligations and development commitments.

Using Indigenous Peoples' Sustainable Development Matrix to guide SDG strategies and plans

The SDGs do not explicitly address indigenous peoples' right to self-determined development. The 2030 Agenda's commitment to realise the human rights of all, however, constitutes a strong basis for applying UNDRIP's provisions in development planning. The **Indigenous Peoples Sustainable Development Matrix** provides specific guidance on what an adequate human rights-based approach entails when addressing indigenous peoples under the SDGs.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals

1. No poverty
2. Zero hunger
3. Good health and well-being
4. Quality education
5. Gender equality
6. Clean water and sanitation
7. Affordable and clean energy
8. Decent work and economic growth
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure
10. Reduced inequalities
11. Sustainable cities and communities
12. Responsible consumption and production
13. Climate action
14. Life below water
15. Life on land
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions
17. Partnerships for the goals

The matrix shows the links between the SDG targets and specific provisions of UNDRIP. It thereby provides concrete guidance for all development planners on how to realise sustainable development for indigenous peoples. In accordance with UNDRIP, the matrix captures both the **non-discrimination/equality aspect** of indigenous peoples' right to development – and simultaneously addresses the **self-determination aspect** as it applies to the different development contexts that the goals and targets outline.

Some illustrative examples are included in the table below:

SDG Goal 3 - Good health and well-being	
Target 3.1 By 2030 reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births.	**UNDRIP Art. 24.1** Indigenous peoples have the right to their **traditional medicines** and to **maintain their health practices**, including the conservation of their vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals. Indigenous individuals **also have the right to access, without any discrimination, to all social and health services**.
	UNDRIP Art. 24.2 Indigenous individuals have an **equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health**. States shall take the necessary steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of this right.
SDG Goal 4 - Quality education	
Target 4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.	**UNDRIP Art. 14.1** Indigenous peoples have the right to **establish and control their educational systems and institutions** providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.
	UNDRIP Art. 14.2 Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the **right to all levels and forms of education of the State** without discrimination.

Indigenous Navigator tools and resources
Where are indigenous peoples' rights in the sustainable development goals? Indigenous Peoples' Sustainable Development Matrix – Shows the links between SDG targets and UNDRIP articles

Other resources
Sustainable Development Goals and Targets: http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/

Indigenous Peoples' Major Group statements

AIPP, 2017: *Leaving no-one behind. Practical Guide for Indigenous Peoples*

Galdu, 2017: *Realising sustainable development through indigenous peoples' rights*

DIHR: Guidance papers on *Human Rights in the 2030 Agenda*, and *Human Rights in Follow-Up and Review*