



THE SENATE
SENATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE
REFERENCES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)
Public Hearing –7 December 2018
Questions Taken on Notice
National Congress of Australia's First Peoples

1 HANSARD, pp. 5–6

Senator MOORE: I have one last question. You might want to take this on notice. The committee is really interested to see whether there are good examples of work being done overseas. That's one of the things: to compare what we're doing.

Mr Little: Yes.

Senator MOORE: If, through your work and the work of Co-Chair Huggins and from the various international meetings you've described, you're aware of where other countries may be integrating the work with their first nations people into their overall response and that's working better, or you're aware of some contacts we could have, it would be very useful if you could share that with us.

Mr Little: I will provide those. Off the top of my head, South America and parts of Africa are places where the Sustainable Development Goals are the driving force, coupled with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Senator MOORE: And people talk about it when they're presenting?

Mr Little: Absolutely.

Senator MOORE: If you could refer us to that in any way, that would be very useful.

Mr Little: I will.

Senator MOORE: Thank you very much.

CHAIR: Can I just follow up on that line: can you refer us to any examples of where we are successfully doing that at home?

Mr Little: Yes, absolutely.

CHAIR: If we're doing something really well, we'd like to know.

Mr Little: Yes. I will do that.

ANSWER

Please find examples of Indigenous peoples contributing to the Sustainable Development goals internationally and in Australia.

- Below is an Australian case study shared by DFAT, plus this website [Big River Impact Foundation](#)
- [The Centre for Appropriate Technology Limited](#) (CfAT Ltd) is a world-wide award winner
- The [Kimberly Land Council](#) is another exciting example of first peoples environmental protection
- Sustainable development projects in the [Caribbean](#)
- This research is of particular interest to the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples because it explores the interrelated linkages with the domestic policy frameworks and the SDGs.
- National Congress advocates it is imperative that the following 'line of sight' is considered seriously when translating international standards to the domestic policy and legislative environment to maximise positive impact.

				
<p>Campaign to close the life expectancy gap for Australia's First Peoples & governments 'Closing the Gap' framework to target & effect change.</p>	<p>Alliance of Australia's First Peoples experts representing respective sectors to lead the development of solutions.</p>	<p>This Declaration Australia has committed & recommitted to is paramount in enable enjoyment of not only rights, including health and life benefits and freedoms as other Australians.</p>	<p>Australia's First Peoples have made their contributions to this nation for over 60,000 years and are willing an able to further contribute to the building of an that values equality for all human beings.</p>	<p>One of the priority pillars for Australia is Indigenous Rights and Congress urges home success contributes to international credibility.</p>

22. Due diligence for the inclusion of indigenous peoples

By Sheena Graham, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Australia

Indigenous peoples often face multiple and intersecting forms of exclusion

Indigenous peoples comprise 5% of the global population, but 15% of the world's poor. They face high risks of exclusion due to social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that are distinct from the majorities in their surrounding societies.

Indigenous peoples are at heightened risk of being left behind due to systemic disadvantages and the political choices of governments. They often live on traditional lands that are rich in resources or targeted for development projects that may be detrimental to their communities. The United Nations reports cases of governments seeking reprisals against indigenous individuals and communities who are defending their rights or seeking recourse against abuses committed by their government or by private sector actors operating with impunity.

In addition, achieving the principle of leaving no one behind will require targeted interventions for indigenous peoples that simultaneously intervene in their multiple and intersecting forms of disadvantage. For instance, an extremely poor indigenous woman with a disability is particularly disadvantaged; interventions that only focus on her gender or her disability may not be sufficient to overcome the full range of barriers and disadvantages that she faces as an indigenous person too.

A framework to ensure inclusion of indigenous peoples in foreign, trade and development policies

Australia's DFAT recognises that our mainstream policies and programmes are unlikely to benefit indigenous peoples unless we undertake due diligence to be inclusive. DFAT has developed a range of policies and operational guidance¹ to ensure the department is inclusive of indigenous peoples in its foreign policy, trade policy and development policy.

DFAT believes that donor governments need to work at the aid investment level and elevate policy coherence across these three policy areas to minimise the risk of leaving behind indigenous peoples in developing countries and to advance their interests throughout the international system. A multi-track systems approach could be effective in ensuring that indigenous issues are considered. DFAT has identified three tracks, aiming to:

1. Design aid investments that specifically target indigenous peoples.
2. Be inclusive of indigenous peoples in mainstream aid investments.
3. Harmonise donor efforts and pursue the inclusion of indigenous peoples across the entire international development sector.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) provides a structured and systematic approach along all three tracks. The UNDRIP affirms that it is critical for indigenous peoples to be at the centre of any decisions that may affect them or their lands and territories; otherwise, they may be harmed or prevented from determining solutions to their own challenges. In particular, development actors can strengthen aid investments by using the UNDRIP principle of free, prior and informed consent to determine the extent of consultations with indigenous peoples (Government of Australia, 2017^[1]).

DFAT has also identified, in the table below, how to improve policy coherence across development, foreign and trade policy through a structured process.

Table 22.1. Policy coherence for indigenous peoples in developing countries

	Economic sector	Social sector	Cultural sector	Civil sector	Political sector
Development policy	Build an enabling environment for Indigenous businesses/private sector to flourish.	Ensure indigenous peoples benefit from essential services in developing countries.	Apply safeguards to protect indigenous peoples' lands and waters; languages; cultural sites; traditional practices and knowledge.	Invest in measures for the law and justice sectors to be inclusive of indigenous peoples in developing countries.	Tackle the underlying sources of conflict for indigenous peoples and include them in peace building initiatives.
Foreign policy	Influence the international system to prioritise economic development for indigenous peoples.	Hold domestic private sector actors to account for breaching human rights obligations to indigenous peoples in developing countries.	Shape multilateral fora to protect indigenous peoples' cultural knowledge and traditional practices.	Influence the multilateral system to enhance the participation of indigenous organisations and civil society representatives.	Hold developing States to account for any abuses perpetrated against their indigenous peoples.
Trade policy	Ensure that indigenous peoples in developing countries can participate in the global trading system.	Promote the economic empowerment of indigenous women in developing countries.	Influence multilateral fora to protect the intellectual property of indigenous peoples' cultures, products and services.	Ensure that trade policies are inclusive of indigenous peoples.	Create a space for indigenous business leaders to influence international economic policy negotiations.

Source: DFAT, Australia.

Being inclusive requires continuous efforts

DFAT has observed three challenges when applying its indigenous policies. There are limited resources to design investments that target indigenous peoples; managers may not consider whether mainstream investments will inadvertently exclude indigenous peoples; and experience may be lacking to devise and implement programmes that respond to the differential experiences of indigenous peoples. In particular, DFAT continues to work through the following questions:

- How to engage with self-identifying indigenous peoples in countries where their own government does not consider them indigenous.
- How to respect a partner government's ownership over their country's development while upholding the imperative to hold governments accountable for abuses against indigenous peoples in their countries.
- How to retrospectively include indigenous peoples in aid investments that were not designed to be inclusive.
- How to strengthen a partner country's systems and institutions so that it can meet the needs of its indigenous peoples after graduating from development assistance.

What next?

DFAT hopes that its experience will help development organisations - donor governments, multilaterals and NGOs alike - unpack the assumptions that underpin programming choices, and help organisations either accept their assumptions and limits to programmes, or further evolve activities to leave no indigenous person behind. More can be done, through collaboration between all of these actors, to include indigenous issues in the international development system.

Notes

¹ <https://dfat.gov.au/international-relations/themes/indigenous-peoples/Pages/indigenous-peoples.aspx>.