

Amazon: New paths for the Church and for an integral ecology  
Presentation of the Proceedings of the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops  
for the Pan-Amazon Region  
Sheikh Zayed Centre - FAO Headquarters (Rome)  
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Talking points  
~ 600 words in a five-minute speech

- At IFAD, we are committed to contributing to a world without poverty and hunger.
- We know that the only way to achieve this is by joining forces with Indigenous Peoples, who are stewards of nature and hold a vast reservoir of traditional knowledge.
- Indigenous Peoples are recognized and respected as custodians of fragile ecosystems.
- The Amazon is often referred to as the lungs of the planet. But over the years, rising temperatures, drought and strong winds are affecting the region. Climate change, coupled with mass deforestation, mining and pollution, has destroyed much of the ecosystem and taken its toll on the livelihoods of indigenous communities, making it harder for them to live above poverty line and combat food insecurity.
- Indigenous Peoples' communities are heroes of conservation, and many actively monitor their forests, which is both their home and their livelihood. Supporting them means safeguarding our future.
- An IFAD ongoing project in the heart of the Peruvian Amazon, for example, supports a group of 70 indigenous women of the Awajún community in farming and reforesting the *Bosque de las Nuwas* – the women's forest. This is over nine hectares of land, where indigenous women grow medicinal plants for infusions, while creating a thriving ecotourism business. With the help of the Avanzar Rural project - which supports more than 17,000 farmers - they are expanding their range of products and are growing commercially. The *Nuwas* now grow 42 varieties of cassava, have planted more than 100 medicinal plants and registered them in the regional archive, and produce tea

from these plants, which they sell on the market under the registered brand Nuwa. A water reservoir and a drip irrigation system help them and other local farmers withstand drought. The *Nuwas* have even started raising fish in the reservoir.

- Innovation and an eye for opportunity are fundamental to revive both the Amazon ecosystem and livelihoods, as these indigenous women demonstrate.
- It is a pleasure for IFAD to be part of this conversation that started in 2019. We are here now because we are committed to agendas relevant to Indigenous Peoples, and we have relevant experiences to contribute
- IFAD is an international financial institution and a specialized agency of the United Nations dedicated to eradicating poverty and hunger in rural areas of developing countries.
- Since the beginning of its operations, IFAD has approved 284 projects targeting Indigenous Peoples. Currently, a total of 82 projects ongoing in 46 countries are expected to reach at least 5.6 million Indigenous people, for an estimated total investment of US\$3.7 billion, of which US\$1.1 billion is directly financed by IFAD.
- In addition, IFAD has established since 2007 a strategic instrument that supports the ideas and potentials of Indigenous Peoples and their self-driven development through small grants. This is the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF). Across six cycles, IPAF has financed 212 projects in over 45 countries. Currently, in its sixth cycle, 53 projects have just started, of which 4 in the Amazon (2 in Brazil, 1 in Ecuador, 1 in Suriname) implemented directly by Indigenous Peoples and their organizations and focusing on enhancing their livelihoods and building resilience to climate change. We are confident that useful lessons will be generated by these projects.
- Protecting the Amazon is protecting humanity. Its vital role in stabilizing the global climate by storing carbon and shaping weather patterns is essential. We celebrate the spotlight that the Holy See is putting on the issues faced in this specific environment.

- Above all, it's crucial to recognize that Indigenous Peoples are key partners in development and in the urgent action to tackle climate change. They guide us to rethink the way we interact with our earth, and this is what we need in these times.