

TEMPLATE – SIDE EVENT SUMMARY

TWO PAGES MAXIMUM

Advancing a rights-based partnership for a just transition: The Right Energy Partnership initiative (REP)

2 February 2022, 8:00-8:50 AM EST

Background on the event (one paragraph)

Since its establishment in 2018, the Right Energy Partnership with Indigenous Peoples (REP) continues to gain support, albeit the challenges posed by the COVID 19 pandemic. This initiative is promoting a human rights-based approach to renewable energy development and access to community-based renewable energy development for the empowerment of indigenous women and communities. This initiative is a collective response of indigenous peoples whose lands and resources are being used for renewable energy development without their participation in decision-making and millions of indigenous peoples in rural areas are hosting these projects but remain without access to energy. The side event will highlight work done – achievements, challenges, and lessons learned - in the REP initiative as well as partnerships developed to support a just transition that respects the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

1. There is an urgent need for Just Energy Transition but doing that, the approach should be people centric which will centre around Indigenous Peoples and communities. They need to be at the centre of the SDG strategy which needs inclusion of Indigenous Peoples. The solutions brought about by Indigenous Peoples will lead the way towards a sustainable and reliable future. The key to a people centric approach is to give emphasis on Indigenous Peoples led organisations and networks who are the drivers towards realizing the radical transformation that is needed in the ground.
2. In regard to the SDGs, initiatives like Right Energy Partnership (REP) and other indigenous networks are creating an inclusive model related to energy transition. This is critical if we want to create new partnerships and new ways of accessing energy to people especially in rural and remote areas. The REP model is solutions oriented on how to make energy accessible to people globally because of its existing networks in Asia, Latin America and Africa. Since REP's model has a global vision and collective voice of indigenous communities, it can have greater impacts towards inclusive energy transitions.
3. Another important thing to note is that the REP is looking and building safeguards & protocols of how large renewable energy is carried out. As we develop models on inclusive and equitable development, we need to do so in a way that is responsive to the people closest to the areas where these projects are rolling out. Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) is the centerpiece of building those safeguards which lead to a new inclusive energy future, where Indigenous Peoples and Rights holders are leading the way.

4. Challenges faced by Indigenous Peoples due to Renewable Energy Projects

- The question of indigeneity is raised continuously, not just by governments but NGOs and funders; there is a real contestation on who is indigenous. Further, this is restraining the collective voices of indigenous communities in Kenya to demand for FPIC. The push for green development is leading to displacement, loss of livelihoods, destruction and violations of Indigenous Peoples' rights.
- As we see the shift towards energy transition, we see the increase in the use of minerals, whereby mining will become necessary. These minerals include neodymium, copper, lithium and cobalt and most of these minerals are sitting in indigenous territories and mostly in the global south. The key discussion is not just on energy systems but the kinds of violence that comes with it towards Indigenous Peoples and how they will live with that production process.
- There has been considerable challenge on legal processes on green transition projects in indigenous lands. Even courts and donors are in support of such projects. For indigenous communities, their territories are their life and they are intrinsically connected to. If they do not give consent, a project should not be developed in their territories. They have the right to say "no". It is injustice when land grabs are happening without consent and it should not matter whether it is green energy.

Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)

1. The Green Climate Fund by the UNDP has recognised community-based energy systems led by Indigenous Peoples. IFAD is supporting micro-hydro projects in Indonesia which is again driven by indigenous groups. Identifying, documenting and scaling of such technologies and systems need support from other agencies as well.
2. Indigenous communities including women must be directly included and involved during every stage of the energy planning process. It addresses the needs of women and engages the youth to be part of their self-driven community development and initiatives.
3. Exchanges on lessons learnt and good practices on renewable projects among indigenous communities are pertinent. Most indigenous communities live in geographically remote places and often lack or have no access to information, hence REP is a deliberate attempt to fulfil that gap.
4. Regional consultation at the national and regional level on renewable energy projects which would include both indigenous led solutions and campaigns on land grabs by large renewable energy projects needs to be pushed.