

Real Opportunities from Knowledge:

Leveraging Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems for Resilience, Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Hosted by Norway, World Reindeer Herders, ICR & FAO Indigenous Peoples Unit

In the NOMAD Indigenous FoodLab @ FAO HQ

Tuesday, October 14, 2025 - 10.30-12.30



ICR

N O M A D
INDIGENOUS FOODLAB



This session explores Indigenous Peoples' food systems as catalysts for positive change amid global food insecurity, geopolitical uncertainty and climate change. With shifting international funding landscapes, the session highlights how strategic support and investment in indigenous food knowledge systems delivers multiple dividends: strengthening indigenous economic base, empowering youth, fostering sustainable food innovation, enhancing positive self-determination in food systems, and advancing global food security goals, national aims, and the UN SDGs.

Context and Rationale

The global food security landscape faces unprecedented challenges, with mounting humanitarian crises and changes in donor landscapes. Indigenous Peoples' traditional food systems simultaneously face disruption, stemming from climate change, land use change, biodiversity change, and economic marginalization, often compounded by institutional and knowledge barriers that fail to recognize traditional food knowledge systems within existing governance frameworks. The challenges facing Indigenous Peoples are multiple, mutually reinforcing, and often overwhelming, swarming the capacity of indigenous communities, people and youth. As a result, Indigenous Peoples are often in a weak position to develop opportunities for positive internal development, based on their own knowledge, resources and people.

However, existing and emerging initiatives demonstrate untapped potential. From the Arctic Council's EALLU project empowering indigenous youth, the global Aramat project, to the NOMAD Indigenous Foodlab's innovation platform, indigenous communities are pioneering approaches for indigenous knowledge and development. The Global Hub on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems is another key example.

This presents opportunities for national states to redirect investment and effort toward proven, community-led solutions addressing multiple policy objectives.

Session Objectives

Secure increased commitment to indigenous food systems by demonstrating their potential as vehicles for economic development, youth empowerment, and sustainable climate-smart food production. Build consensus on expanded support within FAO frameworks, explore opportunities of existing funding landscapes, while addressing institutional barriers for food innovation.

AGENDA:

10.30-11.00 Welcome Mingling

With *indigenous delicacy food tasting*, presented by NOMAD Indigenous FoodLab

11.00-11.30 Opening Thematic Keynotes

Indigenous Food Systems as Economic Engines

Anders Oskal, Secretary General of World Reindeer Herders

Indigenous Youth Leadership and Food Innovation

Alena Gerasimova, NOMAD FoodLab Manager, Intl. Centre for Reindeer Husbandry, Norway

The Efforts of The Global-Hub on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems

Yon Fernandez Larrinoa, Leader of FAO Indigenous Peoples Unit

11.30-12.25 Ambassadors and Indigenous Representatives Panel

Panel participants, in no particular order:

- H.E. Ambassador Kjersti Sommerset from Norway
- H.E. Ambassador Jhenifer Mojica Flórez from Colombia (tbc)
- President Sara Elvira Kuhmunen, SámiNuorra, the Sámi Youth Organization in Sweden
- Vice-President Herb Nakimayak, Inuit Circumpolar Council, Canada
- H.E. Ambassador Vinod Ahuja from Mongolia (tbc)
- H.E. Ambassador Nosipho Nausca-Jean Jezile from South Africa (tbc)
- Sámi pastoralist Issat Turi, Arctic Norway

12.25-12.30 Concluding remarks

Envisioned Key Themes for Discussion

The panel will discuss national approaches, reflect current initiatives and processes, and engage in dialogue on best practices. The discussion will address how to secure funding for indigenous food system innovation for youth given the current funding landscape. The discussion will touch upon questions like: How can indigenous food knowledge and youth engagement be used to enhance rural economic prosperity, food security and climate-smart solutions? What opportunities are there for enhanced indigenous participation in FAO frameworks, and for inclusion of indigenous food systems into national strategies and food governance networks? How can indigenous food system support be aligned with existing policy commitments and funding landscapes? How do indigenous food systems achieve FAO mandates and national objectives, and how can the results we need be secured by indigenous knowledge? How many institutional barriers to food innovations be addressed and adjusted?

