



## **Message on the occasion of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples**

**Geneva, August 9, 2023**

**Daren Tang, Director General  
World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)**

It is with deep appreciation and respect that the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) joins today in celebrating the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

This year's theme is - "Indigenous Youth as Agents of Change for Self-determination".

Indigenous youth play a vital role in preserving and transmitting the living identity and cultural heritage of their communities. At the same time, by drawing on new ideas and perspectives, Indigenous youth bring a fresh outlook to their communities' practices and activities, finding new ways of bringing their unique heritage to the world.

WIPO supports Indigenous Peoples to make strategic and effective use of intellectual property in support of their community and tradition-based businesses. This includes through our [Training, Mentoring and Matchmaking Program for Indigenous women entrepreneurs](#) (the WEP).

The involvement of young Indigenous women in the WEP is significant: more than 20 percent of beneficiaries were under 30 years old at the time of selection. This includes Wakangay Santi, a 19-year-old woman from the Indigenous Community Kichshuar Amazanga in Ecuador. [Wakangay's experience](#) of being part of a community enterprise, as well as the practical intellectual property skills that she honed through one of the regional editions of the WEP, is an inspiring example of how by supporting our youth to succeed, we support entire communities to succeed as well.

We also reach out directly to Indigenous young people, including through the [WIPO Photography Prize for Indigenous Peoples and Local Community Youth](#). Last year's competition attracted more than 250 submissions and raised awareness among young participants on how copyright can protect their creativity. We also organized exhibitions of the 30 shortlisted works, as well as a bespoke training program on photography and copyright. I am pleased to report that this year's edition, themed *How We Wear Our Culture is How we Tell Our Stories*, received close to 300 entries, with our final shortlist to be announced in the autumn.

As part of our Covid-19 response package, at last month's WIPO Assemblies, we launched "[Uchi CreActive](#)" a new intellectual property-related project with the Government of Peru that will support children from the Awajun Community in Urakua, Peru.

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As well as supporting Indigenous youth through bespoke and impact-driven projects at the national level, the results of WIPO's normative work through the [Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore \(the IGC\)](#) promise to deliver better outcomes for Indigenous Peoples across the generations and around the world.

We welcome the decision of Member States to renew the IGC's mandate for the coming biennium, as well as the landmark decision reached last year to convene a [Diplomatic Conference on intellectual property, genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge](#).

A successful outcome at the Diplomatic Conference supported by all Member States will not only demonstrate the power of multilateralism, but also show that the global IP framework is capable of evolving to be more inclusive. We are working hard to support all Member States on the preparatory work ahead of the Diplomatic Conference next year.

Given the nature of this work, it is important for Indigenous Peoples to participate widely and effectively in these discussions, as well as in the work of the IGC. To help make this a reality, we have created [the WIPO Voluntary Fund](#), which recently attracted further contributions from Germany, Australia, and Mexico. We warmly welcome these donations and encourage others to follow suit.

On this International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, we are proud to reaffirm our commitment to building a balanced and effective intellectual property ecosystem that works for everyone, everywhere. WIPO's work in support of Indigenous Peoples is an integral part of this mission and we will continue to provide platforms where Indigenous youth can highlight their ideas and the wisdom of their communities in a strategic and respectful manner.

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