



Misión Permanente de la República Dominicana  
ante las Naciones Unidas



Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations on  
behalf of the Central American Integration System (SICA)

**HIGH LEVEL MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
TO LAUNCH THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES**

**77° Session of the General Assembly**

New York, 16 December, 2022



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1. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Member States of the Central American Integration System (SICA): Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and my own country the Dominican Republic.
2. The Member States of SICA welcome this High Level Event of the General Assembly to launch the International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022-2032.
3. The preservation and promotion of indigenous languages are essential actions for sustainable development, social inclusion, cultural diversity and the patrimony of a nation.
4. We recognize the importance and potential of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, to draw attention to the critical loss of Indigenous languages and the urgent need to take urgent steps at the national, regional and international levels for the recovery, preservation, revitalization, promotion and development of indigenous languages.
5. For countries members of SICA, linguistic diversity is an important element of cultural diversity and Member States should adopt public policies with an intercultural approach in their design and implementation, aiming to preserve, revitalize and promote indigenous languages, the possibility of including educational programmes that reinforce the use of Indigenous languages among children and youth by using an intergenerational approach.
6. Currently, in the region of Central America and the Dominican Republic there are about 40 indigenous languages alive, 16 of which are transboundary and require special attention. Studies show that all indigenous languages are threatened and are in serious danger of being silenced even within a generation, if they are not used in all spaces, especially at home and in the community.
7. Consequently, the countries members of SICA reiterate our commitment to the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, for which we have been building a comprehensive strategy for the region to implement the major lines of work established by the Cultural Policy for Central



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American Integration years ago. One of these clear lines is the rescue, conservation and promotion of all forms of cultural and intangible heritage and, within this dimension, the promotion and protection of the indigenous languages of the region, representing a central aspect of this commitment that we have undertaken.

8. The countries members of SICA consider that the linguistic and cultural rights of Indigenous Peoples cannot be addressed in isolation, nor can indigenous languages be seen as objects on which it is possible to intervene and make decisions apart from their speakers. Indigenous languages are part of an intangible, living cultural heritage and therefore also reflect other philosophies, histories and ways of constructing and transmitting knowledge. Their silencing would imply an irreparable loss for humanity, because it also implies the loss of knowledge, tradition, culture and customs.
9. In the face of the latent threat of actions or omissions that could lead to a disastrous scenario of the loss of indigenous languages, it is clear that action-oriented decisions must be taken to ensure the sustainability of the active use of these languages in all areas and contexts.
10. The countries members of SICA call for the adoption of national action plans with an intergenerational approach to preserve, revitalize and promote Indigenous languages, including sign languages, and the engagement with public and private actors to enhance the use of digital technologies involving and empowering Indigenous Peoples, while respecting their cultures, traditions and autonomy.
11. While recognizing the ancestral knowledge of Native People in the protection and preservation of Mother Earth, especially regarding climate change, our countries also recognize the contribution of Native Peoples in the protection and defense of their indigenous languages, as well as, the social, cultural, political and ethical value of indigenous languages, as an essential driver for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Member States must integrate the preservation, promotion, and revitalization of indigenous languages in the wider efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda.