

## PGA77 Remarks at the Closing of the Launch of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages

---

Date and venue: December 16, 12:30 pm, GA Hall

Audience: Member States and Indigenous Peoples

Duration of the speech: 3 minutes

Main speakers: PGA (closing remarks)

Media presence: yes, open meeting

Brief background: The United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 74/135 proclaiming the period of 2022-2032 as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (IDIL). The General Assembly then adopted resolution 75/168, deciding “to convene a high-level event during 2022, organized by the President of the General Assembly, for the launch of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages [...]”. The International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022-2032 aims to draw attention to the critical loss of Indigenous languages, and the urgent need to preserve, revitalize and promote them, and to take urgent steps at national and international levels

\* \* \* \* \*

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Colleagues,  
Dear Indigenous People’s Representatives,

Let me begin by extending my most sincere thanks to you all - Member States, Observers, and Indigenous People’s Representatives alike - for your active engagement in this very important meeting.

I am also grateful to the Members of the Global Taskforce for travelling all the way to the United Nations Headquarters today.

Your involvement in this high-level meeting was critical to the success of the launch of the International Decade to promote, protect and revitalise Indigenous Languages.

You came prepared with ideas and solutions today. Thank you.

Unfortunately, while I cannot capture them all in my short remarks here, I do want to highlight a few that could become game-changers:

Firstly, to meld the Decade of Indigenous Languages with the achievement of our 2030 goals – we must be **action-oriented**.

I urge all Member States to fund the empowerment of Indigenous Peoples, by implementing legislation that genuinely demonstrates their political will to achieve the equality of Indigenous Peoples.

By funding quality education in Indigenous languages. By financially contributing to the provision of services in Indigenous languages. By allocating human resources to meaningfully support Indigenous languages.

In addition to concrete implementation, we need **sustained efforts**.

We need to link the preservation of Indigenous languages to the protection of Indigenous rights. To coordinate this decade of language revitalisation with the Oceans Decade, with biodiversity aims, and with the SDGs goals.

Finally, we must do our utmost to ensure that Indigenous peoples **see justice**. We must actively involve them leading government positions, in leading decision-making roles.

When we lose the language, we lose the identity. And we cannot let that happen.

Today, we close this meeting, but this is the beginning of a decade-long endeavour.

We must bring the momentum from today's discussions into all the work of the GA, consistently, over the next 10 years.

As we advance on our 15 negotiating tracks at the General Assembly and we prepare for the SDG summit, we must keep Indigenous peoples' rights and contributions in mind.

But, most importantly, we must meaningfully involve Indigenous peoples in these discussions.

The engagement of Indigenous scholars and elders is critical to making the large-scale transformations we need and to ensuring that their knowledge and values are reflected in the decisions we take in this Hall.

Next April, I will hold an Informal Interactive Hearing with Indigenous Peoples on ways to enhance their participation in the work of General Assembly.

I strongly encourage you all to take part in the process.

Dear colleagues,

With each lost language, we lose a culture, a civilisation, and a way of knowing.

My team and I stand ready to support all initiatives that will advance the actions for this Decade of Indigenous Languages to be successful.

I urge you to seize today's momentum and continue working together to ensure we preserve, revitalize and promote indigenous languages in all regions of the world.

Thank you.