



Foro Internacional de Mujeres Indígenas. International Indigenous Women's Forum

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**A statement at the High-level event for the closing of the 2019  
International Year of Indigenous Languages December 17th, 2019 at the  
UN General Assembly.**

Mr. President,  
Indigenous peoples representatives,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,

My name is Aminatu, I come from the mbororo indigenous community in Cameroon. I am reading this statement on behalf of the international indigenous women's forum (FIMI), a global network of Indigenous women leaders that links local, national and regional organizations from Africa, Asia, Arctic, Pacific, North America and Latin America. FIMI's mission is to bring together indigenous women leaders and human rights activists from different parts of the world to coordinate agendas, capacity-build, and develop leadership roles.

As indigenous women, we acknowledge the progress made to raise awareness on the critical loss of indigenous languages, and the urgent need to preserve and revitalize it. Therefore, we would like to thank the United Nations General Assembly for adopting the resolution (A/RES/71/178) proclaiming 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages, based on a recommendation by the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

We however would like to highlight that one year is not enough to achieve this goal, hence we believe that some of the best ways to continue revitalizing and preserving indigenous languages is for member states, UN agencies and other stakeholders to collaborate with indigenous peoples, particularly women and youth, at all levels and allow a longer time for the society to be informed and to understand the important role that indigenous languages play in peacebuilding, reconciliation and sustainable development. Member States should make more efforts to revitalize and preserve indigenous languages by introducing indigenous languages in school curriculums, integrate indigenous cultural values in the classroom, encourage a segment on local and National media that will promote indigenous languages. We therefore would like to recommend that a decade of indigenous languages is proclaimed to give more time for these developments to be achieved.

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Furthermore, to ensure the intergenerational transmission of indigenous languages, member States should introduce appropriate public policies that guarantee empowerment, well-being and access to relevant, quality and sufficient services in indigenous territories and communities. UN agencies and other stakeholders should collaborate with Indigenous communities to support trainings on indigenous languages where elders can transfer their knowledge to the younger generation, build and fund platforms that encourage intergenerational exchange to teach indigenous languages at local and national levels. The growth of new language speakers within our Indigenous communities is critical in order to ensure the survival of indigenous languages for generations to come and this is particularly urgent for endangered languages.

Indigenous organizations should promote inter-tribal exchange visit to learn and share the values of their languages and encourage the use of indigenous languages in every social event like meetings or conferences. While the UN systems should promote and provide support for the translation of documents into the different indigenous languages and make exhibitions. Finally, the Member States should provide funds and scholarships to support indigenous language teachers through trainings and provide them with salaries to teach the languages in schools, Promote and encourage the celebration of indigenous language day.

Thank you!