



PERMANENT MISSION
OF ESTONIA TO THE UN

High-Level Event for the Closing of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages

New York, 17 December 2019

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Thank you, Mr President.

Estonia is glad to join the high-level event today. The promotion and preservation of indigenous languages is paramount for cultural identity, diversity, traditions, and intercultural dialogue. It should be a common concern for us all.

We would like to thank UNESCO, the Secretariat, the representatives of the indigenous peoples, and all other stakeholders who have contributed to the successful organization of the International Year.

In this regard, we are glad to note that the indigenous peoples have been able to participate on an equal footing in the overall activities of the Year, including in the work of the steering committee, the preparation of the outcome document, as well as in regional and local events. We hope to see a continued engagement of the indigenous peoples in the UN discussions in the future.

Estonia has been proud to actively participate in the Steering Committee of the Year and contribute, including financially, to its activities. We note with satisfaction that the International Year has gained attention globally, with more than 800 activities directly linked to it.

The Year has also been celebrated in Estonia, including through several awareness-raising activities. Its framework was also successfully used to draw attention to local dialects that are crucial for the expression and transmission of intangible cultural heritage. The annual Finno-Ugrian Days were focused in particular on the importance of indigenous languages with the aim to share best practices for the protection and preservation of disappearing languages.

Estonia continues to support the Finno-Ugrian indigenous peoples with whom we share a common language family. Almost 20 years ago Estonia launched its Kindred Peoples' Programme to support

cultural and educational activities among the Finno-Ugric peoples. Next year Estonia will organise the 8th World Congress of Fenno-Ugric People

Despite their indispensable value, indigenous languages around the world continue to disappear at alarming rates. The international community, including all states, need to step up efforts to preserve and revitalise indigenous languages. We are therefore glad that this goal will receive further attention throughout the decade of indigenous languages starting in 2022.

In going forward, we emphasise i.a. the importance of making use of modern technologies to advance the promotion of linguistic diversity, multilingual internet and language technologies which take into account indigenous languages.

Estonia is regular donor to the UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations, which facilitates the participation of the representatives of indigenous peoples in UN meetings affecting them. We hope that many new donors will join us in supporting the Fund in the coming years.

Thank you.