

## **Speaking Notes**

**for the  
Honourable Marc Miller,  
Minister of Indigenous Services**

**on behalf of the Honourable Steven Guilbeault,  
Minister of Canadian Heritage**

**at the United Nations General Assembly for the  
conclusion of the International Year of Indigenous  
Languages 2019**

**Location: United Nations  
New York, New York**

**December 17, 2019  
Length: (400 words, approx. 4 minutes)**

**Check Against Delivery**

**Wa'tkwanonhwerá:ton tsionkwe'taié:ri,  
tsionkwe'taká:ions,tsionkwehón:we, sewaia'takwe'ní:ios.  
Tsitewehiá:rak tsi ionkwaia'taró:ron raononhwentási:ke tkénhne ne  
Karhahakon nihononhwentsiò:ten. Kia'takwe'niiio kakoíáshera  
koráhnen, tsi ronwatiiatakénhas onkwehón:we**

*(Excellencies, Elders, Indigenous representatives, Heads of Delegation ...  
It's an honour to join you today on the traditional territory of the Lenape  
people.)*

**Wa'thinonhwerá:ton ronkwe'taká:ion Sid Hill, atatárho ronwáíats  
nè:ne wahshonkwaterrennaiénhahse' ne káti tkaié:ri  
aetewatenhniseranhotón:ko'.**

*(I thank Sid Hill for their opening prayer and for helping us to start this  
event in the right way.)*

**Wakatshennón:ni akwahthárhahse' ne Kanien'kéha, skawén:na nè:ne  
Rotinonhsión:ni ronhrónkha, owén:na nè:ne tóha áhsen niiosrráke  
nikari:wes wakateweienhstonhátié.**

*(I am pleased to speak in Kanyen'kéha, an Iroquoian language I have been  
learning for almost 3 years.)*

**lonkwatshennón:ni Koráhne tsi United Nations rotirihwanorónhston  
ne onkwehonwehnéhna thiiionhwentsyakwé:kon ón:wa ken  
tiohserá:te.**

*(Canada welcomes the designation by the United Nations of 2019 as the  
International Year of Indigenous Language)*

**lonkwaio'ten'onhátye Koráhne ne káti skáhne skén:nen  
aetewanonhtónnion' ne Onkwehón:we, Othore'kehró:non tahnnon  
Tehatinekwensaiéhston.**

*(In Canada, we have taken significant steps towards reconciliation with  
First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples)*

**Skáhne wa'onkwaio'ten' ne kaianeren'tsherón:ni ne  
onkwehonwehnéha aorihwà:ke.**

*(One of these steps is the co-development of an Indigenous Languages Act.)*

**Tókat iah thaetewanóhstate' ne kí:ken kawení:ios, é:so nítion enionkwató:ken'se' oh neniá:wen'ne' ne ohén:ton iawenhniseratenóntie.**

*(If we do not act now to protect these beautiful languages, many of us will not hear it for ourselves in the years to come)*

I'm honoured to be here for the closing of the International Year of Indigenous Languages, on behalf of my honourable colleague, the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Steven Guilbeault.

Indigenous languages are fundamental to identities, cultures, spirituality, relationships to the land and to the world as well as self-determination of Indigenous Peoples. Three-quarters of the 90 living Indigenous languages in Canada have been identified by UNESCO as endangered.

Le 2019 fut un année charnière sur le chemin de la réconciliation avec les peuples autochtones. Nos efforts conjoints pour la réappropriation, la revitalisation, le maintien et le renforcement des langues autochtones au Canada sont remarquables.

Language is the carrier of stories, the memory of those who came before us, and the promise that we hold for those who come after us.

Tout au long de l'année, les peuples autochtones et le gouvernement du Canada ont uni leurs efforts. En célébrant la richesse de la culture et des langues autochtones. En finançant des projets et des activités communautaires. Et en légiférant pour préserver les langues.

I would like to highlight this last point. Legislation. Laws.

The Government of Canada and Indigenous partners worked relentlessly together to create the *Indigenous Languages Act*.

I want to acknowledge the outstanding work of all Indigenous partner organizations in the co-development of this legislation.

I also want to recognize the presence of their leaders here today:

- National Chief Perry Bellegarde [National Chief of the AFN]
- President Aluki Kotierk [President of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated]
- President Clément Chartier [Métis National Council (MNC)]

And to the many other leaders here today and those who have also guided the work on Indigenous languages, on behalf of the Government of Canada, I want to personally thank everyone involved.

I look forward to seeing the work continue with all Indigenous partners in Canada for the co-implementation of the *Act* in a spirit of mutual trust and respect.

Canada is proud to join the world in closing the International Year of Indigenous Languages. I invite the global community to continue to strive for a strong future for Indigenous Peoples and their languages.

Thank you. Merci.

Meegweetch – *Algonquin*  
Nakurmiik [na-koor-meeek] – *Inuktitut*  
Marsee – *Michif*  
Niá:wen – *Mohawk*