

**High Level event on the Closing of the 2019
'International Year of Indigenous Languages' at UN, New
York, 17th Dec.**

**Your Excellency, Mr. Tijjiani Muhammad- Bande
President of the General Assembly UN, Mr. Liu Zhenmin,
Under Secretary General for Economic and Social
Affairs, Ms. Marie Paule Roudil Director UNESCO Liaison
Office, Ms. Yalitza Aparicio, Your Excellences Member
States and distinguished Indigenous sisters and
brothers from across the World;**

**JOHAR! Aap Ki Jay ! Jai Sewa! From Tribals/Adivasis of India!
Greetings from the Indigenous Peoples of India.**

Right after 10 months and 17 days, after the UN declaration of 'IYIL 2019 ' we have gathered globally to assess the activities and progress we made during the past months and to make a road map ahead on the Languages, culture, progress of the Indigenous peoples around the world.

As Steering Committee member for organizing 'IYIL 2019', I had the opportunity to participate in Six International meetings, One in '**Changsha in China**', One in **Purdue University in Fort Wayne, Indiana in USA**, Two in **Paris and two in UN including today's event**. It was impressive to see the initiative taken by the Republic of China , Changsha University, the scholars and professors, students of China who had then identified over 1500 endangered languages and were working for their revival. In Purdue University again we were about 400 participants across the world with local governments, University and lots of intellectuals and Social activists. I was happy to learn that there are over 650 different linguistic groups of population still continue to live with their distinct languages and cultures in Indiana, USA. Third one in **Paris** on Language

tool for All (LT4All). Again around 400 intellectuals, Information Technology Companies (ITC), governments and IPs leaders participated.

In India, three meetings were organized, though Government of India officially does not recognize us as Indigenous Peoples, We are called Adivasis, Tribals, Scheduled Tribes...etc. One meeting was in National Capital in Delhi where about 10,000 IPs participated with one Tribal Minister Mr. Omkar sing Markam from Madhya Pradesh and One Governor H. E Ms. Ansuiya Wiekey from Chhatisgarh. Some State government declared Holidays on 9th of August as 'International Day of Indigenous Peoples'. The next gathering we had with Mysuru University with about 4000 peoples, where two ministers, two vice Chancellors and Indigenous and Non Indigenous scholars, researchers and leaders participated the conference. In the middle of November we organized National level Conference at Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh selecting Indigenous Professors and Leaders. It was totally sponsored by the State Government of Madhya Pradesh through the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. The governments are positively recognizing, supporting and working for the progress of the Indigenous Peoples.

Friends, after having participated and organized so many conferences in local, National and International level, I have a very positive feelings, thoughts and wish. The United Nations 2030 Vision 'Sustainable Development Goals' where 'No one will be left Behind', I feel this is one of the ways to get involve, though lots to be done yet.

When I see around the world I find Of course; the Tribes, the Indigenous Peoples are economically weaker than others. It has its own historical and painful past because of Superiority feelings, exploitative, dominant and suppressive nature, who knowingly or unknowingly imposed their cultures, languages, snatched away our resources.....etc. etc., which I

do not want to go in, but I am proud and dare to say that 'We the IPs still exist'. We the Indigenous Peoples existed in the past, are existing now and will exist in the Future.

Now after the UN declaration of the 'IYIL 2019', I see there is lots of opportunity, lots of hope, lots of scope for preservation, revitalization, promotion and development of the IPs through the Languages and cultures. We have very rich cultures and traditions, very distinct knowledge system, sciences, and languages, which are not known to others ! we are equally civilized peoples like any one else in the world, who lived on this Mother Earth for Thousands of years.

Therefore UN and UNESCO and all of us placed the themes Recognition and Reconciliation, Peace Building , Good Governance, Health care , Quality education with mother tongue and Sustainable Development by declaring 'IYIL'. Therefore let us not only discuss and Talk, but materialize them so that each human person, each community and each race live in Justice, peace, harmony and with dignity.

Having spoken so much, My friends – I would like to **draw your attention in Asia , as I represent ASIAN Countries**

Some Challenging Situations in ASIA

ASIA is the largest of all continents in the Globe with 49 countries. Covering about 30% of the world's land, it has more people than any other continent, with about 60% of the world's total population. Out of 7000 languages spoken today one third of them 3,054 endangered languages documented by endangered language project website, nearly half are in Asia.

Therefore I have the following Recommendations for your kind Considerations:-

- i. All the Member States in Asian Countries could ratify the ILO Convention 169, recognize the Tribes/ Adivasi/ Scheduled Tribes or in any names we are called, give them the status as 'Indigenous Peoples' in your respective Countries and Implement 'UNDRIP 2007' in letter and spirit.
- ii. The UNESCO could play a mediator role in bringing together the member States and the IPs leaders, Scholars and experts and identify the endangered languages and cultures and make a plan with respective Members States with specific budget to protect, promote and revitalize the languages and cultures of vulnerable/endangered Indigenous /tribal groups.
- iii. The member States could develop Governance system with special administrative structures, for Planning, Decisions making and implementations by IPs, community leaders with financial powers in their countries.
- iv. All Member States in UN mechanism to organize such meetings in your respective countries in ASIA, so that the Indigenous peoples come forward in achieving the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.
- v. The education policy in the member states be inclusive of IP languages and cultures with their special syllabus from elementary to Higher education level

Hope for the Future:

I invite one and all of us to join together in building communities, that are sustainable, and build a world where every culture and race can coexist in harmony and Peace in

line with the vision of the United Nations 2030, where 'NO ONE IS LEFT BEHIND'.

I propose the UN and UNESCO to Declare for '**Decade of International Year of Indigenous Languages**' for further revitalization and growth.

Thank You

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Steering Committee Member for Organizing 'IYIL 2019'.