



2019 | INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
Indigenous Languages

**Official Global Launch Event of the
2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages**

28 January 2019
UNESCO Headquarters
Paris, France

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CONCEPT NOTE

Background

Indigenous languages matter for development, good governance, peace building and reconciliation

Indigenous languages represent complex systems of knowledge developed and accumulated over thousands of years. Local languages are cultural treasures; they are repositories of diversity and key resources for understanding local environments and harnessing their potential to the best advantage of local populations, as well as of humanity as a whole. They foster and promote local cultural specificities, customs and values.

Each indigenous language represents a unique paradigm and framework for understanding the world. Elaborate vocabularies are constructed around topics of particular ecological, economic or sociocultural importance. Knowledge is often captured or encoded in specific words and therefore is not easily transferable among languages.

The loss of an indigenous language can mean the loss of vital knowledge, which could be harnessed for human improvement and sustainable development. Consequently, the disappearance of a language implies a considerable negative impact upon the indigenous culture concerned, as well as on global cultural diversity. Unique ways of knowing and experiencing the world may disappear forever.

Reasons for the endangerment of languages vary across different communities and locations, but all represent tremendous challenges to indigenous peoples, be they assimilation, enforced relocation, educational disadvantage, illiteracy, migration or other manifestations of potential discrimination leading to the possible disappearance of a culture or language.

In practical terms, the risk is that parents and elders can no longer transmit indigenous languages to their children and that indigenous languages fall out of daily use. The issues around indigenous languages could have much broader consequences, affecting a wide range of areas, including politics, law and justice, health, cultural practices and identities, the biosphere, access to information and communications tools, etc.

The celebration of the International Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL2019) will encourage all stakeholders to respond appropriately to these challenges, by promoting and protecting the right of indigenous peoples to preserve and develop their languages.

International Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL2019)

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages (Ref.: 71/178) in order to raise global attention on the critical risks confronting indigenous languages, and their significance for sustainable development, reconciliation, good governance and peacebuilding.

The celebrations in 2019 will contribute to promoting and ensuring access to indigenous languages and to improving the lives of indigenous peoples by strengthening the capacities of indigenous language speakers and relevant indigenous peoples' organizations.

The 2019 celebration will further contribute to the robustness and reinforcement of the many standard-setting tools adopted by the international community, among them specific provisions to promote and protect languages.

More specifically, the global celebration will also contribute to achieving the goals of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2006), the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), of the International Labour Organization, the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, held in 2014, and other relevant documents, including UNESCO conventions and recommendations, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda, the United Nations system-wide action plan on the rights of indigenous peoples, alongside other relevant regional and national frameworks.

Action Plan for the organization of the IYIL2019

Building upon UNESCO's mandate, experience and leadership in promoting linguistic diversity and multilingualism around the world, as well as in its capacity as the lead United Nations agency for the organization of the International Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL2019), UNESCO launched several consultations with a range of stakeholders to define major objectives, areas of interventions and further actions to be taken, during this International Year.

The outcome of this consultative process resulted in the elaboration of the Action Plan, which lays the foundation for implementation of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 71/178. The Action Plan was supported by the members of the 17th session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (April 2018) and by the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) (July 2018).

The Action Plan for the IYIL2019 calls for a coherent approach and for joint collaborative action by all stakeholders to achieve positive impact and social change with regard to indigenous languages and their communities. It provides a comprehensive overview of key objectives, principles and actions to be taken during and beyond the IYIL2019.

A Steering Committee was constituted in April 2018 to provide guidance on the overall implementation of the United Nations Action Plan for the organization of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages.

Major objectives of the IYIL2019

The International Year is an important mechanism of international cooperation, which is used to raise awareness of indigenous languages and to mobilize different stakeholders and resources for coordinated action around the world by preserving, supporting and promoting indigenous languages at national, regional and international level.

Main objectives of the IYIL2019 are to:

- **Focus global attention** on the critical risks confronting indigenous languages, while highlighting their importance for sustainable development, reconciliation, good governance and peacebuilding,
- **Target steps** which will lead to improved quality of life for indigenous peoples, enhanced international cooperation and strengthened intercultural dialogue, and reaffirm cultural and linguistic continuity, and
- **Deliver** increased capacities on the part of all stakeholders to take concrete and sustainable measures to support, access and promote indigenous languages around the world in accordance with the legitimate rights of indigenous peoples.

Official Global Launch event of the IYIL2019

This official launch event is co-organized by UNESCO, UNDESA, and the members of Steering Committee for the organization of the International Year, as well as with the participation of other relevant stakeholders.

To be held under the theme ***“Indigenous languages matter for sustainable development, peace building and reconciliation”***, this official launch event will gather high-level governmental officials, indigenous peoples, civil society, academia, media and information organizations, United Nations agencies, public language harmonization and documentation institutions and private sector bodies.

The official launch event aims at providing a global forum for a constructive debate in which high-level speakers and prominent experts will address new paradigms for safeguarding, promoting and providing access to knowledge and information for the indigenous languages’ users.

UNESCO, in its capacity as leading UN agency of the International Year of Indigenous Languages, will organize the **Official Global Launch event of the 2019 International Year on Indigenous Languages that will take place at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France, on Monday, 28 January 2019:**

- **Open Roundtable Discussion from 10.00 to 12.45 in Room VI;**
- **Official Ceremony from 15.00 to 18.25 in Room II;**
- **Cultural Programme from 18.30 to 19.30 in Room II.**



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



2019 International Year
of Indigenous Languages

AGENDA

28 January 2019

Official Ceremony for the launch of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages

15.00 – 19.30

UNESCO Headquarters (Room II)
125 avenue de Suffren
75007 Paris, France

Open Roundtable Discussions

10.00 – 12.45

UNESCO Headquarters (Room VI)
7 place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris, France

Contributors

The Official Global Launch event of the IYIL2019 is organized with the generous contribution of:



Plurinational State of Bolivia



Canada



Estonia



Japan



Russian Federation



Saudi Arabia



Union Latine

Open Roundtable Discussions

28 January 2019

10.00 – 12.45

UNESCO Headquarters (Room VI)
7 place de Fontenoy, 75007 Paris, France

Simultaneous interpretation will be provided
in English, French, Spanish, Russian and Arabic

Due to the limited availability of seats, prior registration is required by email:

indigenous.languages@unesco.org

10.00 – 12.45	Open roundtable discussions (Room VI)
Chair: Mr Boyan Radoykov, Director a.i., Knowledge Societies Division, Communication and Information Sector, UNESCO	
10.00 – 10.35	Introduction to the International Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL2019) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opening ceremony by indigenous peoples• Ms Aysa Mukabenova, Member, Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII)• Mr Alexey Tsykarev, Expert Member, Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP)• Mr Belkacem Lounes, Member, African Indigenous Peoples Network (AIPN)• Mr Clément Chartier, President, Métis National Council (Canada)
10.35 – 11.00	Making technological innovations accessible for indigenous language speakers <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms Aili Keskitalo, President, Sami Parliament (Norway)• Mr Joseph Mariani, Director of Research Emeritus, Mechanical and Computer Engineering Laboratory, French National Center for Scientific Research (LIMSI-CNRS) (France)• Ms Talitha Tolles, Associate Director, Global Program Innovation and Indigenous Programs, Leadership, WE.org (Canada)
11.00 – 11.15	Coffee Break

Chair: Ms Irmgarda Kasinskaite-Buddeberg, Programme Specialist, Knowledge Societies Division, UNESCO

11.15 – 12.00

Promoting access to information and knowledge in indigenous languages

- Mr Evgeny Kuzmin, Vice Chair, Intergovernmental Information for All Programme (IFAP)
- Mr Abdullah Saleh Alwashmi, Director, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Center for the Arabic Language (Saudi Arabia)
- Mr Aengus Finnan, Executive Director, Folk Alliance International (USA)

12.00 – 12.45

Role and contribution of academia and public organizations in the preservation, access and support of indigenous languages

- Mr Camiel Hamans, Assistant Secretary General, Permanent International Committee of Linguists (CIPL)
- Ms Gaid Evenou, Head of the Languages of France and French Overseas Territories Unit, Division for French Language and Languages of France Policies, Ministry of Culture (France)
- Ms Mandana Seyfeddinipur, Director, SOAS World Languages Institute, University of London (SOAS) (UK)
- Ms Nina Veisalova, First Vice President, Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON) (Russian Federation)
- Ms Delicia Villagra Batoux, Member, Academy of the Guarani Language (Paraguay)

Official Ceremony for the launch of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages

28 January 2019
15.00 – 19.30

UNESCO Headquarters (Room II)
125 Avenue de Suffren
75007 Paris, France

Opening session	
<i>Master of ceremony: Mr Moez Chakchouk, Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, UNESCO</i>	
15.00 – 15.05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening traditional ceremony by indigenous peoples
15.05 – 16.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome address by Ms Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO • Ms Aili Keskitalo, President, Sami Parliament (Norway) and Co-chair of the Steering Committee for the organization of the International Year of Indigenous Languages • Mr Akile Ch'oh, Grand Chief Edward John, Tl'azt'en Nation and First Nations Summit (Canada) and Co-chair of the Steering Committee for the organization of the International Year of Indigenous Languages • Musical performance by Mr Odeskun Thusky, young musician from Kitigan Zibi, Anishinabe nation (Canada) • H.E. Mr Diego Pary Rodríguez, Minister of Foreign Affairs (Plurinational State of Bolivia) • H.E. Ms Zohour Alaoui, President of the General Conference of UNESCO • H.E. Mr LEE Byong-hyun, Chairperson of the Executive Board of UNESCO • H.E. Mr Alfredo Astorga, Vice-Minister of Education and Co-chair of the Steering Committee for the organization of the International Year of Indigenous Languages (Ecuador) • H.E. Ms Ladislaa Alcaraz De Silvero, Minister, Secretariat of Linguistic Policies (Paraguay) • Ms Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

High-level roundtable :
“Indigenous languages matter for sustainable development and peace”

Moderator: Mr Ernesto Ottone, Assistant Director-General for Culture, UNESCO

16.00 – 17.00

- Video message by The Honorable Pablo Rodriguez, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism (Canada) introduced by H.E. Ms Elaine Ayotte, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Canada to UNESCO
- H.E. Ms Elena Burga, Vice Minister of Interculturality, Ministry of Culture of Peru; First Vice-President, Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples in Latin America (FILAC) and President of the Women's Association for Development
- H.E. Mr Igor Barinov, Head, the Russian Federal Agency for Ethnic Affairs, Chair of the Russian Organizing Committee for the preparation of the IYIL 2019 (Russian Federation)
- Ms Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- H.E. Mr Thiru K. Pandiarajan, Minister of Tamil Language and Culture, State of Tamil Nadu (India)
- Mr Juan Gregorio Regino, Director-General, National Institute of Indigenous Languages (INALI) (Mexico)
- Mr Hjalmar Dahl, Vice-president of the Inuit Circumpolar Council and President of the Inuit Circumpolar Council of Greenland
- Mr Craig Ritchie, CEO, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (Australia) and Co-chair of the Steering Committee for the organization of the International Year of Indigenous Languages
- Mr Wilton Littlechild, Grand Chief representing the Assembly of First Nations (Canada)

Special thematic session :

“Establishing digital gateways for indigenous languages users”

Moderator: Ms Amy Kalili, Director, Mokuola Honua, Center for Excellence in Indigenous Languages, Hawaii (USA) and a Member of the Steering Committee for the organization of the IYIL2019

17.00 – 17.30

- Mr Juan Carlos Romero Ventura, Digital language activist, Global Voices (Bolivia)
- Ms Zarifa Mgoyan, UNESCO Artist for Peace and Emeritus (Russian Federation)
- Mr Pierre-Yves Beaudouin, President of Wikimedia France (France)
- Ms Kristen Tcherneshoff, Community coordinator, Wikitongues (Finland)
- Ms Martine Perret, Photographer, producer and multimedia artist (France/Australia).

The speaker will introduce Ms Edie Ulrich, Tjupan Aboriginal speaker and elder from Kalgoorlie Western Australian Goldfields (Australia) and Mr Gary Cooper Wangkatha, Aboriginal speaker and elder from Kalgoorlie Western Australian Goldfields (Australia)

Interactive multi-stakeholder dialogue :

“Support, access and promotion of indigenous languages: empowering all stakeholders and building new synergies”

Moderator: Mr Nigel Thomas Crawhall, Chief, Section for Small Islands and Indigenous Knowledge, Natural Sciences Sector, UNESCO

17.30 – 18.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• H.E. Mr Ibrahim Albalawi, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate, Permanent Delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to UNESCO• Dr Michel Kenmogne, Executive Director, Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL International)• Mr Wend Wendland, Director, Traditional Knowledge Division, Department for Traditional Knowledge and Global Challenges, Global Issues Sector, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)• Ms María de las Nieves Montiel Domínguez, Director-General of Documentation and Promotion of Indigenous Languages (Paraguay)• Ms Mona Rishmawi, Chief of the Rule of Law, Equality and Non-Discrimination Branch, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)• Mr Handaine Mohammed, Representative of Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee (Morocco) and a Member of the Steering Committee for the organization of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages• Mr Elías Caurey, Bolivian Guarani, sociologist working linguistic revitalization (Plurinational State of Bolivia) and a member of the Steering Committee for the organization of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages• Mr Nicolas Barla, Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) (India) and a Member of the Steering Committee for the organization of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages
18.30 – 18.40	Break

Cultural programme :
“Celebrating indigenous languages through artistic expression and creativity”

Moderator: Mr Boyan Radoykov, Director a.i., Knowledge Societies Division, UNESCO

18.40 – 19.30

Musical performance by indigenous artists:

- Folk music group “Twin Flames”, Mr Jaaji an Inuk Mohawk, Inuktitut artist from Quaqtaq and Ms Chelsey June Algonquin, Michif artist (Canada)
- Ms Katarina Barruk, Ume Sámi language artist (Sweden) and Mr Arnljot Lindsjørn Nordvik, musician (Norway)
- Music group “Alaya”, a group of Aymara language artists promoting cultural and linguistic diversity through music, songs and dance (Plurinational State of Bolivia)
- Ms Ragtyna Tymkyl, Yukaghir language artist and student of the Institute of the Peoples of the North in Saint Petersburg (Russian Federation)
- Ms Zarifa Mgoyan (Zara), UNESCO Artist for Peace and Emeritus (Russian Federation)

Global Social Media Campaign

Throughout 2019, UNESCO, in collaboration with a range of partners, will facilitate the organization of the International Year of Indigenous Languages.

To ensure IYIL2019 has global outreach, relevance, engagement and sustainability among indigenous language users, UNESCO encourages networks of indigenous peoples, civil society organizations, language activists and other social media partners to join a global social media “#IndigenousLanguages” campaign.

All partners who have established grassroots networks and have shown commitment, availability and long-lasting support in their approach to language activism are welcome to join UNESCO’s efforts to promote the use of indigenous languages by taking advantage of technological development and spread of social media around the world.

A group of dedicated partners will be involved in the global social media “#IndigenousLanguages” campaign. Throughout the year, this coalition will be launching various campaigns and events, leveraging the internet as a force for good for indigenous languages around the world, while also bridging gaps between different stakeholders around the world.

Join the IYIL2019 “#IndigenousLanguages” campaign

#WeAreIndigenous

Twitter :

@IYIL2019

Access UNESCO webcast:

<http://webcast.unesco.org/live/room-02/en>

<http://webcast.unesco.org/live/room-02/fr>

Follow on Facebook:

@indigenoulanguages

@IYIL2019

Instagram:

@indigenoulanguages

Official website:

<https://en.iyil2019.org/>

<https://fr.iyil2019.org/>

<https://es.iyil2019.org/>

Partners of the Global Social Media Campaign



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Online registration

- **Prior online registration** : all participants are requested to register and provide information using the following link: <https://en.unesco.org/feedback/official-global-launch-event-2019-international-year-indigenous-languages>

Registration onsite

- Registration begins at 9.30 for the **Open Roundtable Discussions** starting from 10.00 (Room VI). Please use the main entrance to UNESCO, 7 place de Fontenoy, 75007 Paris, France.
- Registration begins at 14.00 for the **Official Ceremony** starting from 15.00 (Room II). Please use the following entrance to UNESCO, 125 avenue de Suffren, 75007 Paris, France.
- Valid passport or national identity card is required when entering UNESCO Headquarters.

Nearby Metro Stations

- Line 6 Cambronne
- Line 6 La Motte Picquet-Grenelle
- Line 10 Segur



Advice for speakers at technical international meetings with simultaneous interpretation

You will shortly be attending a technical bilingual/ multilingual meeting. Some of the delegates will be unable to understand you. This is why your message will be conveyed to them through simultaneous interpretation.

Interpreters need access to working documents in order to prepare for the meeting. Interpreters must have access to as much information as you can provide on the topic of your presentation (text of the speech, power points, slides, abstract, background) in order to do a good job. They are bound to the strictest level of confidentiality and will check against delivery. Please send all relevant documents in advance (interpretation.services@unesco.org) – and indicate the subject of your meeting or dates.

If you speak freely, your tone and body language will help you communicate with your audience. But, if you read a text, you will tend to speak in a 'written style', your delivery will be faster and unmodulated. This makes it much harder to follow if the interpreter doesn't have the text you are reading from, and this applies to slides which are often read very quickly from a screen interpreters cannot see.

Do remember that some delegates will be listening to you directly in what is effectively for them a foreign language. So if you do read, try to adapt your pace and modulate your tone to reach out to all delegates. Remember some delegates might be less familiar with your branch of surgery so do not hesitate to provide explanations (names and acronyms in particular).

Finally remember that the interpretation team is at your service and will do its best to help you communicate and follow the discussion. Do not hesitate to contact the head of team in the interpretation booths if necessary.