

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

--

**MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY
OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

9 August 2018

Indigenous peoples have a profound spiritual connection to their lands and resources. Yet, increasingly, indigenous persons are migrating within their countries and across international borders. The reasons are complex and varied. Some are subject to displacement or relocation without their free, prior and informed consent. Others are escaping violence and conflict or the ravages of climate change and environmental degradation. Many migrate in search of better prospects and employment for themselves and their families.

Migration is an opportunity, but it also carries inherent risks. Many indigenous migrants find themselves living in unsafe and insanitary conditions in urban areas. Indigenous women and girls experience disproportionately high rates of trafficking and other forms of violence. Indigenous youth are faced with complex questions regarding their identity and values.

In some countries, indigenous peoples' territories are divided by international borders. Cooperation across these borders is important to safeguard their identity, occupations and traditional practices.

Later this year, Member States are expected to adopt a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. This will establish an international framework for regional and global cooperation. It will provide a platform to maximize the benefits of migration and support vulnerable migrant groups, including indigenous peoples. It is essential that the rights and identities of indigenous peoples are protected.

On this annual observance, let us commit to fully realizing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the rights to self-determination and to traditional lands, territories and resources. And, wherever they live, let us ensure that indigenous peoples enjoy recognition for their contributions and the opportunity to thrive and prosper in peace on a healthy planet.