

## **International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples**

### **Joint Statement of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues**

We the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues (IASG), consisting of over 40 United Nations system entities and other international organizations, wish to use the occasion of the World Day of Indigenous Peoples to congratulate indigenous peoples and institutions all over the world on this important milestone.

The theme of the occasion: "Ten years of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" is an opportunity to reflect and take stock of achievements, lessons learned and challenges as we continue our efforts to strengthen the protection and promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples.

The Declaration was the culmination of tireless efforts by indigenous peoples and Member States, among others, to design an instrument that would recognize both the individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples.

As a result of such efforts, today, the rights contained in the Declaration constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity, well-being and rights of the world's indigenous peoples. Enjoying broad support, these rights include the right to self-determination, and, in exercising this right, the right to autonomy and self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs; the right to development; the right to health; the right to participate in decision-making and to be consulted regarding legislative and administrative measures that may affect indigenous peoples directly; the right to lands, territories and resources; the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, traditional systems of justice and related intellectual property; the right to live in freedom, peace and security; and the right to protection from violence. Importantly, several of the Declaration's provisions refer to indigenous peoples' free, prior and informed consent.

A range of United Nations bodies, mandates and mechanisms actively promote the implementation of the Declaration and action to follow-up on the 2014 World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, including the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the human rights treaty bodies, the Universal Periodic Review, as well as the Commission on the Status of Women. These bodies and processes contribute to enhanced accountability for respecting the rights of indigenous peoples, offer strategic platforms for creating awareness and addressing salient issues affecting them.

While indigenous peoples have made significant advancements in advocating for their rights in international and regional fora, implementation of the Declaration is impeded by persisting vulnerability and exclusion, particularly among indigenous women, children, youth and persons with disabilities. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a unique opportunity

for placing indigenous peoples at the center of development as rights-holders and empowered agents of change. The 2030 Agenda and the Declaration are inseparable instruments for the implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples. The active participation of indigenous peoples in processes such as the High-level Political Forum and other global, regional and national processes, are crucial. The recent decision of the General Assembly to proclaim the year 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages, furthermore, presents a unique opportunity to draw attention to the critical loss of indigenous languages and the urgent need to preserve, revitalize and promote indigenous languages and to take further urgent steps at the national and international levels.

Making progress in realizing the objectives of the 2030 Agenda and the Declaration will require significant investments in building strong mechanisms and procedures for indigenous peoples' meaningful participation, as a central pillar of engagement. This is needed to ensure that public policies, legislation and development plans take indigenous peoples' priorities and concerns into account. Strengthening partnerships and cooperation with the private sector and stepping-up disaggregated data collection is equally essential.

The IASG is committed to continuing partnerships with Member States, indigenous peoples' organizations and all other relevant partners to accelerate progress in the implementation of the Declaration in a meaningful, coherent and sustained manner. The Secretary-General's UN system-wide action plan for ensuring a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the Declaration serves as the catalytic medium through which the IASG will achieve tangible results. Under their respective mandates, the members of the IASG will intensify their efforts where it matters the most—on the ground—so that Member States and indigenous peoples can rely on strategic, concrete and coordinated support. In working towards this common goal, the IASG commits itself to ensuring that indigenous peoples are visible and that their voices are heard and taken into account.

By working together, we can contribute to the effective implementation of the Declaration and through this, make a transformative difference in the lives of all indigenous peoples.

For more information about the IASG, see:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/about-us/inter-agency-support-group.html>