



**THE UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM
ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES**
TOGETHER WE ACHIEVE

Media Advisory

PRESS CONFERENCE

Indigenous Languages: Preservation and Revitalization

Thursday, 21 January, 11:30 a.m.

Room S-237, UN Headquarters, New York

Tatiana Degai

Youth coordinator, Council of the Itelmens of Kamchatka, Russia

Grand Chief Edward John

Hereditary Chief of Tl'azt'en Nation in British Columbia, Canada
Expert Member of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Amy Kalili

Executive Director, Makauila, Hawai'i, USA

BACKGROUND:

Indigenous languages are key to ensuring the continuation and transmission of culture, customs, and history of indigenous peoples. But many are in danger of becoming extinct.

At its fourteenth session in April-May 2015, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues recommended a three-day international expert group meeting on the theme "Indigenous languages: preservation and revitalization (articles 13, 14 and 16 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples)". The recommendation was approved by the UN Economic and Social Council (decision 2015/43). The expert group meeting is taking place at United Nations Headquarters on 19-21 January 2016 and is organized by the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

The meeting will highlight good practices of preservation and revitalization of indigenous

languages, including new opportunities brought by information and communication technology. The meeting builds upon the recommendations of the 2008 expert group meeting on indigenous languages as a way to promote intercultural dialogue and affirm indigenous peoples' identity.

The three speakers at the press conference are:

Tatiana Degai, Kamchatka, Russian Federation

Ms. Degai is an Itelmen woman and the youth coordinator of "Tkhsanom," the Council of the Itelmens of Kamchatka, Russia. She is a PhD candidate in American Indian Studies at the University of Arizona and holds a Master of Arts in anthropology from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. In Kamchatka she works at the Community House of Kovran village facilitating projects on language and culture development and has worked on various research projects for the Itelmen language and culture revitalization in Kamchatka.

Amy D Kalili, Hawai'i, USA

Ms. Kalili is a fluent speaker of the Hawaiian language and has been part of the Hawaiian language movement since the mid-1990s. She currently works as the Executive Director of the educational media non-profit, Makauila, which does Hawaiian language news programming and supports media work of Native Hawaiian organisations. Previously, she was the on-camera host on the Hawaiian language and culture content station at Oiwi TV, Honolulu – and played a central role as the broadcast media program director the 'Aha Pūnana Leo, the first ever Hawaiian-language news segment broadcasted on a network affiliated with CBS.

Edward John, Tl'azt'en Nation in British Columbia, Canada

Grand Chief Edward John (Akile Ch'oh) is a Hereditary Chief of Tl'azt'en Nation located in northern British Columbia (BC). He is an indigenous leader who has dedicated his life to the pursuit of social and economic justice for Canada's Indigenous people, having worked as a leader in Indigenous politics, business and community development. He is as member of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and a prominent voice for the survival and revitalization of indigenous languages. Grand Chief John has been a lawyer for over 30 years. He holds a B.A. from the University of Victoria (UVIC), an LL.B from the University of British Columbia and Honorary Degrees from UVIC and the University of Northern BC.

Additionally, the following experts are available for interviews at UN Headquarters on 19 - 21 January:

Craig Cornelius, Google software engineer, USA

Mr. Cornelius is a senior software engineer on the International Engineering team at Google, Inc. He works on language support across Google, including Android, Search, Gmail, and Google Translate. He worked with the Cherokee Nation to create Google search and Gmail in the Cherokee language. Mr. Cornelius has enjoyed a variety of academic and industry positions, from teaching to research and medical imaging. He holds a B.A. in chemistry and mathematics from Luther College, a Ph.D. in Chemistry, and an M.S. in Computer Science from Stanford University.

Richard Grounds, Yuchi, USA

Mr. Grounds, Ph.D., is the Executive Director of the non-profit Yuchi Language Project, which works to create new fluent speakers through immersion teaching between fluent elders and children. He served as convener for the University of Pennsylvania conference, "Native American Languages in Crisis: Academia, Technology and Smaller Language Communities," as consultant for the Smithsonian's "Recovering Voices" Initiative, and as co-planner for the "National Native Language Revitalization Summit" in Washington, DC.

Mathura Bikash Tripura, Tripura, Bangladesh

Mr. Tripura belongs to the Tripura people in Bangladesh. He is the Executive Director of the NGO Zabarang Kalyan Samity. Currently he is leading a group of young professionals in carrying out different

programs on the issues of community empowerment, good governance and sustainable development, as well as support to mother tongue based multilingual education.

Clint Bracknell, Australia

Mr. Bracknell is a Senior Lecturer for the Division of Architecture and Creative Arts based at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and the Arts Music Unit in Australia. His research focuses on Aboriginal Australian languages and music, exploring the links between emerging technologies and indigenous creative futures. A musician and educator, he was nominated for 'Best Original Score' in the 2012 Helpmann Awards and received the Department of Education WA 'Barry Hayward Outstanding Aboriginal Educator Award' in 2010.

Elisa Loncon Antileo, Mapuche, Chile

Ms. Antileo is a Mapuche woman from the Araucanía Region of Chile. She is a teacher on language and Mapuche culture at the Catholic University of Chile, and a PhD candidate on Linguistics at the University of Leiden, The Netherlands. Currently, she teaches at the University of Santiago in Chile as coordinator of Intercultural Studies on Education. She also runs an indigenous social organization for linguistic rights and has developed academic research projects on the promotion of indigenous languages, cultures and bilingual intercultural education in Chile and Mexico.

Alberto Muenala, Kichwa, Ecuador

Mr. Muenala is a Kichwa film maker from Ecuador. He has directed a number of documentary and dramatic videos on subjects important to indigenous communities in Latin America. He recently directed KILLA ÑAWPUMUKUN (Before Moonrise), the first ever feature-length movie done in Kichwa, the variant of Quechua spoken in Ecuador. KILLA, as the movie is simply known, is acted in both Kichwa and Spanish, and is an action story dealing with identity, loyalty and the tension between industrial development, tradition and the protection of the environment.

Luis Enrique Lopez, Peru

Mr. Lopez is a sociologist, educator and linguist from Peru. He has specialized in the design, development and evaluation of educational programs in indigenous multilingual and multicultural contexts. He worked in Cochabamba, Bolivia, as Principal Advisor at the Programa de Formación en Educación Intercultural Bilingüe para los Países Andinos, and promoted the development of a specialized regional network between universities, ministries of education and indigenous organizations of Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador and Peru for the development of intercultural bilingual education. He also designed a joint indigenous tertiary education project with the Fondo para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas de América Latina y el Caribe. He currently is the coordinator of the Programa de Apoyo a la Calidad de la Educación in Guatemala, where special attention is given to the implementation of quality language education programs in multiethnic contexts.

Megan Davis, Australia

Professor Davis is the Chairperson of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. She is an Associate Professor and Director of the Indigenous Law Centre, Faculty of Law at the University of New South Wales and is a Commissioner of the New South Wales Land and Environment Court, and an Australian member of the International Law Association's Indigenous Rights Committee.

Mariam Wallet Aboubakrine, Tombouctou, Mali

Ms. Aboubakrine is an expert member of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. She is a medical doctor from Tombouctou in Mali. She holds a degree from University of Tizi-Ouzou (Algeria) with several researches in ophthalmology, obstetrics and gynaecology, paediatrics and general medicine. She also holds a Masters in Humanitarian Action from the University of Geneva, focusing on interventions in crisis: armed conflict, marginalization/exclusion and natural disasters. Mariam is a member of Tin Hinan, a women's association working for the defence, promotion and development of indigenous peoples in Africa, in particular the Tuareg.

Aisa Mukabenova, Russian Federation

Ms. Mukabenova is an expert member of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. She is the First

Secretary of the Department for Compatriot Affairs and Human Rights in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. She is a leading expert in inter-ethnic relations and the author of a number of publications on minorities and small indigenous populations.

Oliver Loode, Estonia

Mr. Loode is an expert member of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous issues. He is a tourism development consultant and an activist of the international Finno-Ugric movement that unites indigenous Finno-Ugric peoples in the European Union and Russia. Mr. Loode studied at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, graduating in 1997 with a Bachelor of Sciences in Economics degree (Magna Cum Laude).

To schedule an interview with the experts, please contact: Martina Donlon, UN Department of Public Information: +1 212-963-6816 or email: donlon@un.org

For the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, please contact: Mirian Masaquiza, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs: +1 917-367-5100 or email: masaquiza@un.org

For more information on the Expert Group Meeting, please see www.un.org/indigenous

The press conference will be webcast live at webtv.un.org

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