



# INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

9 AUGUST



UNITED NATIONS

Press release

## **On International Day, United Nations draws attention to migration and trans-border movement of indigenous peoples**

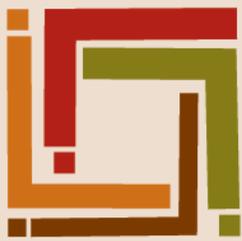
UNITED NATIONS, New York, 7 August 2018 – Indigenous peoples continue to face discrimination, marginalization, violence, and other infringements of their basic rights. These challenges are even greater when indigenous peoples migrate outside their traditional territories to urban areas or live across international borders.

The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples (9 August) this year "is an opportunity to explore the challenges and rapid responses to protect indigenous peoples' rights within and outside of their traditional territories and to revitalize indigenous identities and cultures," more than 40 United Nations system entities and other international organizations said in a joint statement. "It is important to highlight the need to protect indigenous migrants against all forms of violence and economic exploitation as a potential cause and consequence of migration," they said.

Many indigenous peoples are displaced or migrate from their ancestral lands, including due to the increasing loss of their lands and resources, impacts of climate change, and the arbitrary establishment of national borders that divide their territories. Many of them end up in sprawling urban areas. In Latin America, at least 40 per cent of indigenous peoples live in urban areas today, according to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

In a separate joint statement, the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Chairperson of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples said: "We wish to remind States that all indigenous peoples, whether they migrate or remain, have rights under international instruments, including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples."

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in article 36, states that indigenous peoples, in particular those divided by international borders, have the right to maintain and develop contacts, relations and cooperation with their own members as well as other peoples across borders. The Declaration was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 13 September 2007, establishing a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of indigenous peoples. The landmark document is the most comprehensive international instrument on indigenous peoples' collective rights, including the rights to self-determination, traditional lands, territories and resources, education, culture, health and development.



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## Special event at United Nations Headquarters

At a special event at UN Headquarters on 9 August, 3-6 p.m., indigenous experts from Ecuador, Mali, Mexico, Thailand, and the United States will highlight the causes, challenges and opportunities of migration and trans-border movement of indigenous peoples, and discuss ways forward to promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples in those contexts. The discussion will be preceded by a high-level segment with remarks by Mr. Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Ms. Mariam Wallet Aboubakrine, Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, H.E. Mr. Rubén Armando Escalante Hasbún, Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the United Nations, and Ms. Rosa Montezuma, Miss Panama 2018. Chief Tadodaho Sidney Hill from the Onondaga Nation, United States, will deliver the ceremonial call to order.

## Partnering with Twitter to amplify visibility

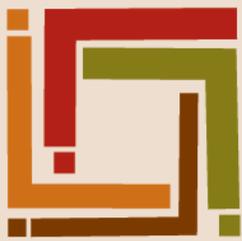
To elevate the profile of the International Day on social media, the Department of Public Information partnered with Twitter to create and promote a branded emoji for the hashtags #WeAreIndigenous, #IndigenousPeoplesDay and #IndigenousDay that will be live from 8 August to 17 September 2018, covering both the International Day (9 August) and the date of the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (13 September).

"We are grateful to Twitter for partnering with the United Nations once again by activating a special emoji for the International Day," said Alison Smale, UN Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications. "The emoji is a fun way to raise the profile of the International Day and engage broader audiences in promoting indigenous peoples' rights," she added.

"Twitter serves the public conversation around the world. Empowering indigenous peoples to share their unique cultures and perspectives in a global conversation using #WeAreIndigenous and #IndigenousDay is consistent with that mission," said Colin Crowell, Global Vice President of Public Policy and Philanthropy of Twitter. "We are pleased to partner again with the UN to help drive change and amplify awareness about the importance of the International Day."

## About the International Day

The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples is commemorated annually on 9 August, in recognition of the first meeting of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations, held in Geneva in 1982. The International Day was established by the General Assembly in December 1994. There are at least 370 million indigenous people in some 90 countries around the world. Practicing unique traditions, they retain social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live.



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## Launch of the website for the International Year of Indigenous Languages (2019)

Languages around the world continue to disappear at alarming rates. According to the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, no less than 40 per cent of the estimated 6,700 languages spoken as of 2016 were in danger of disappearing. The fact that many of these are indigenous languages places at risk the indigenous cultures and knowledge systems to which those languages belong.

To draw attention to the critical loss of indigenous languages and the urgent need to preserve, revitalize and promote them at both national and international levels, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 2019 as International Year of Indigenous Languages.

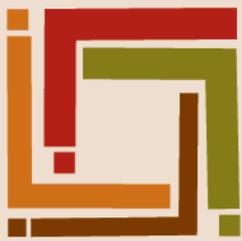
The website for the year is now available here: [www.iyil2019.org](http://www.iyil2019.org)

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## Experts available for interviews:

**Mariam Wallet Aboubakrine** is a Tuareg medical doctor from Tombouctou, Mali and current Chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. She holds a medical degree from the University of Tizi-Ouzou (Algeria) and 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 defense, promotion and development of indigenous peoples in Africa, in particular the Tuareg. Mariam has worked on many issues related to health, such as nutrition, malaria prevention, and education on sexual and reproductive health among the Tuareg. She has participated in trainings on ILO Convention 169 and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. She has also volunteered with African NGOs for advocacy on human rights at sessions of the UN Human Rights Council and in the Universal Periodic Review. In addition, she is an independent consultant on gender issues, health, and conflict resolution/peace agreements in indigenous communities.

**Amy R. Juan** is from the Tohono O'odham (Desert People) Nation of Southwest Arizona, United States. She graduated from Tohono O'odham Community College and helped establish its Borderland Studies Program, which promotes local and indigenous based citizens on science and research of the impacts of Border Policy on O'odham lands and people. She is founding member of the Tohono O'odham Hemajkam Rights Network, a grassroots collective advocating for O'odham rights and freedom of movement across borders, end to militarization of border communities and protection of O'odham lands and members in Mexico. She is a member of the Indigenous Food Knowledge Network Steering Committee, and Advisor for the I'iolgam Youth Alliance. She is also the CEO of Sovereign Remedies, which specializes in trainings for restorative justice practices, traditional O'odham food and medicine education and youth led organization and leadership. Amy currently works for the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC).



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**Prasert Trakansuphakon**, of Karen origin, is a specialist on Indigenous Studies in Thailand and South-East Asia. He holds a PhD in Sociology and has extensive expertise, both in the academic world and in civil society, as researcher and senior indigenous NGO activist. He is the author of many articles on local knowledge and traditional modes of subsistence and has held numerous honor positions in various organizations at the national and international levels since the 1990's. He served as the Director of the regional Indigenous Knowledge and Peoples Network in Mainland Montane South-East Asia (IKAP) for many years, and is the current Chairperson of Pgakenyaw Association for Sustainable Development (PASD) and of the Inter Mountain Peoples Education and Culture in Thailand Association (IMPECT). He also serves on the Advisory Board Committee of the Asia Indigenous People Pact Foundation (AIPP).

**Toa Elisa Maldonado Ruiz** is an indigenous Kichwa woman from Otavalo, Ecuador. Sociologist with mention in Development (PUCE- Ecuador); Master in Social Anthropology (CIESAS – México); and Master candidate in Culture Studies at the Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, Ecuador. Her research work has focused on youth, transnational migration, trade networks, identity and intra-ethnic tensions of the Kichwa people of Otavalo. Her occupational experience includes designing public policies and projects focused on indigenous peoples, collective rights, rights of youth, the rights of nature and environment, educational processes, conflict resolution, director and manager of intercultural projects and, protection and guardianship of the rights of Ecuadorian citizens in the context of migration in Central America.

**Carlos Yescas** is a researcher, entrepreneur, and food advocate. Mr. Yescas has worked with food producers in Latin America, Europe, and the United States for over fifteen years and is recognized as the Latin American leading expert working with rural and artisan cheese producers. As a researcher, he explores questions of collective rights and communal knowledge. He focuses on Latin American food politics, heritage, and denominations of origin/geographical indications regimes. He has published on such varied topics as migration, indigenous peoples, race/ethnicity & transnational affiliation, and most recently food policy and heritage. He is the author of *Indigenous Routes: A Framework for Understanding Indigenous Migration* (Geneva: International Organization for Migration 2008) and co-author of *Mexican Consular Diplomacy and Indigenous Migration: A Pending Agenda* (101 Revista Mexicana de Política Exterior 2014).

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**More information** on the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples: [www.un.org/en/events/indigenousday](http://www.un.org/en/events/indigenousday)

**Joint statement** by the Inter-Agency Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues:

**Joint statement** by four UN Experts: <https://bit.ly/2niKeSV>

**On Twitter**, follow #WeAreIndigenous #IndigenousDay #IndigenousPeoplesDay @UN4Indigenous

**Live webcast:** <http://webtv.un.org>; 9 August: 1:00 p.m. press conference; 3:00 pm special event

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