



# INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

9 AUGUST



UNITED NATIONS

Media Advisory

## International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

*Indigenous languages*

Friday, 9 August, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

ECOSOC Chamber, UN Headquarters, New York

### BACKGROUND

Around the world, 9 August is observed as the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, commemorating the date of the inaugural session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations at the United Nations in 1982.

The focus of this year's International Day is Indigenous Peoples' Languages in view of 2019 being marked as the International Year of Indigenous Languages.

While Indigenous peoples are just 5% of the world's population, they speak 60% of its languages. Estimates however suggest that more than half of the world's languages will become extinct by 2100. Protecting indigenous languages from extinction means protecting unique cultures, heritage and identities of indigenous peoples. That is why, on this International Day, the goal is 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.

**SPECIAL EVENT:** As part of the commemoration, DESA's Indigenous Peoples and Development Branch - Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues/DISD, is organizing an event that will bring together indigenous peoples, UN agencies, Member States, civil society and relevant stakeholders within the framework of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages to share good practices through expert panels and presentation of innovative initiatives on indigenous languages.

The special event in the ECOSOC Chamber will feature high-level remarks and a panel of experts from indigenous experts and a panel with innovators on indigenous languages and technology.

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The event will also showcase creative initiatives and videos on indigenous languages in the United Nations Visitors' Lobby from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

## **SPEAKERS available for interviews:**

**Mr. Brian Keane** (*English*) is the rapporteur of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Mr. Keane has been working with indigenous communities around the world for nearly three decades. He is co-founder of the international organization Land is Life, and is currently serving as Advisor for Indigenous Peoples' Issues for USAID.

**Mr. Mathura Bikash Tripura** (*English*) belongs to the Tripura people in Bangladesh. He is an expert in education, education in indigenous languages, local government systems and research methodologies with an MA in history. He is the Executive Director of the NGO Zabarang Kalyan Samity and has a long experience working with indigenous peoples' organizations.

**Grand Chief Edward John (Tl'azt'en Nation)** (*English*) is a Hereditary Chief of Tl'azt'en Nation located in Northern BC. Chief John is a former Expert Member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Chief John is serving as leader on the First Nations Summit Political Executive and an indigenous Co-Chair of the International Year of Indigenous Languages.

**Mr. Luis Enrique Lopez** (*Spanish/English?*) is a Peruvian sociolinguist and educator specialized in intercultural bilingual education. He was a member of the Scientific Committee for the World Study of the State of the World's Languages and prepared the World Report on Cultural Diversity (UNESCO). He advises the Education and Life and Work Program (EDUVIDA) of the German Cooperation in Guatemala and he is president of the PROEIB Andes Foundation in Bolivia.

**Ms. Silvia Museiya** (*English*) is a teacher and lawyer by profession from the Yiaku indigenous community of the Mukogodo forest, Kenya. She advocates for the rights of indigenous peoples. She is serving in the Nairobi City Assembly and is the



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chairperson of the Indigenous People National Steering Committee on Climate Change.

**Mr. Reuben Fast Horse** (*English*) is a traditional Lakota singer, educator, dancer, drummer, craftsman, and storyteller. Certified as an educator by the Lakota and the North Dakota State Board of Education as an Eminent Scholar, he has taught Lakota culture at Standing Rock Elementary Grant School in Fort Yates. In 2001, he was a Grammy nominee with the group Lakota Thunder for Best Native American Music Album of the year.

## **PROJECTS on indigenous languages for interviews:**

**Google Voyager:** Educational storytelling platform within Google Earth to empower people to explore, create, and share the stories of our planet.

**Ms. Tania Wolfgramm, GRID Pacific /New Zealand**

**Ms. Raleigh Seamster, Google Earth Outreach / USA**

**Never Alone / Kisima Ingitchuna:** Game developed with the collaboration of Alaska Native elders, storytellers and community members.

**Mr. Steve Zimmermann, E-Line Media / Canada**

**Indigital Storytelling:** Augmented reality platform using 4D mapping software and image recognition technology to bring the world's cultural sites to life.

**Mr. Tatham Oddie, Readify Australia / Australia**

**Ms. Mikaela Jade, Indigital Storytelling / Australia**

**Rising Voices:** Initiative to bring speakers indigenous languages to the global conversation and extend the benefits and reach of citizen media.

**Mr. Eddie Avila, Director, Rising Voices / Bolivia**

**To schedule an interview,** please contact: Julia Hagl, UN Department of Global Communications at [hagl@un.org](mailto:hagl@un.org)

**For the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum,** please contact: Mira Kleist, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs at email: [mira.kleist@un.org](mailto:mira.kleist@un.org)



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**For more information**, please see:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/news/2019/07/international-day-of-the-worlds-indigenous-peoples-2019/>

[www.un.org/en/events/indigenousday](http://www.un.org/en/events/indigenousday)

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1022104261313562/>

On Twitter follow #WeAreIndigenous #IndigenousPeoplesDay #IndigenousLanguages

Live webcast: <http://webtv.un.org>

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