



IOM International Organization for Migration  
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations  
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

Message from Mr. Brunson McKinley, Director General of the  
International Organization for Migration (IOM)

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It is in a context of increased dialogue and partnership with indigenous communities that IOM joins in observing the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous peoples are closely linked to their communities and lands, and migration from their physical and cultural environment, whether voluntary or forced, often has a deep collective and cultural impact. Indigenous peoples who migrate face important challenges which, while not different from those faced by migrants in general, do have special characteristics because of their ties to their ancestral territories and lands. All stakeholders need to take these into account as we work together to design and implement programmes to address the needs and concerns of indigenous peoples.

The migration of indigenous peoples has often been characterized as a negative experience that portrays them as passive agents of the migration process and, unfortunately, in many cases, this is accurate. However, there are also examples of indigenous communities who have put their culture and unique way of life to the benefit of successful migration. The community organization of many indigenous groups, for example, may help cultivate the impact of remittances and may also aid in the transfer of skills circulating throughout the entire community. When they migrate, indigenous peoples can promote their social and cultural capital in destination countries or communities, while at the same time furthering international attention to, and knowledge of, indigenous peoples. When examining the migration of indigenous peoples, it is thus important to bear in mind their resilience, and to acknowledge the uniqueness and adaptability which have helped sustain them for centuries and contributed to their own development.

It is in this spirit that IOM remains committed to working in partnership with indigenous peoples around the world as they face the challenges of migration in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

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