

Agenda item 4 Discussion on the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum (economic and social development, culture, environment, education, health and human rights), with reference to the UNDRIP, the outcome document of the WCIP and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

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Thank you Mr. Chairman.

In the spirit of the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Los Pinos Declaration, with appreciation for Global Action Plan (GAP) of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages,

recognizing the UNESCO Bangkok Statement on Language and Inclusion--endorsed by 16 countries and highlighted in UNESCO's report on the 2019 Year of Indigenous Languages,

and inspired by policy reform in countries such as Thailand, Cambodia and the Philippines—where 80 indigenous languages are now used as languages of instruction in government primary schools through grade 3.

SIL, the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, the Salzburg Global Seminar and our expert advisors propose a four-year, by-invitation program to be called “The Indigenous Languages and Education Network for Policy and Practice (ILE Network).”

The ILE program will facilitate dialogue between indigenous representatives and high-ranking education officials from 15-20 countries, along with academics and donor agencies, to help realize Global Action Plan Outputs No. 1, 3 and 10 on education, digital empowerment, and public-private partnerships, plus GAP Output 1, Activity 1.1, which calls for:

"Development of education policies, plans and programmes alongside legislation in line with international frameworks as part of implementing Sustainable Development Goal 4 to support mother tongue-based and multilingual education..."

ILE will facilitate at least 6 online or in-person meetings annually, for 3-4 years, to facilitate cooperation, accountability and momentum. Additional countries may join ILE later, in consultation with the original cohort. The importance of indigenous voices (“Nothing about us without us”) will be integral to all ILE activities.

ILE will focus on both:

1. Inclusion of indigenous and minority languages in multilingual education (where the language is still vigorously used by the younger generation), and
2. Revitalization of indigenous languages (where intergenerational transmission has been interrupted)

The ILE institutional conveners are seeking donor organizations committed to mitigating language endangerment and improving the SDG4-related outcomes of indigenous children in a way that honors their language and culture.

We also request the support and cooperation of the participants of this important forum.

For, as Australian language policy expert Dr. Joseph Lo Bianco says, "Including an indigenous language in school does not guarantee its survival, but excluding a language from school greatly increases the likelihood of extinction."

Thank you. Current

ILE Network advisors include but are not limited to:

- Mr. Luis Felipe Duchicela, senior advisor for indigenous issues, USAID
- Ms. Rita Lasimbang, Partners of Community Organizations in Sabah (PACOS Trust) (Malaysia) and member, IDIL Global Task Force
- Ms. Suraporn Suriyamonton, country representative, Pestalozzi Children's Fund (Thailand) and advisor, Indigenous Education Network (Thailand)
- Mr. Fernand de Varennes, UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues

The ILE Network institutional conveners comprise the following organizations:

- Salzburg Global Seminar (Mr. Dominic Register, Ms. Faye Hobson)
- UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education (Ms. Margarete Sachs-Israel, Ms. Kyungah Kristy Bang)
- SIL International (Ms. Barbara Trudell, Mr. Kirk Person)