

15th EMRIP – Item 7 – 4 July 2022

Statement of the Conselho Indigenista Missionário – CIMI

Delivered by Mr Paulo Lugon Arantes

Distinguished Chair,

Our warm greetings from the Conselho Indigenista Missionário – CIMI Brazil. Congratulations on your appointment.

We welcome this momentous debate on the Decade on Indigenous Languages, underscoring the importance of protecting them and promoting their use.

In the Brazilian territory, there is a great diversity of indigenous languages. Nowadays 222 native languages are actively spoken.

Indigenous peoples in Brazil have been active in promoting and preserving their own languages, which is an integral part of their own traditional way of living.

However, as in the case of fighting against the pandemics, indigenous peoples and partners in Brazil are taking the lead in protecting their languages, in view of Brazil's current hostile indigenous policies.

This year, indigenous teachers from the peoples Jamamadi, Apurinã, Jarawara e Paumari, the from the Puru River, in the Amazon region, produced four bilingual school books. The aim of these books is to enhance the development and understanding of oral and written knowledge, as well as book cataloguing and specific indigenous book pedagogy.

This diversity is at risk in view of the integrationist narratives by the Federal government itself, combined with hate speech at the highest level of command. Besides, there is a need to ensure the availability of basic services in indigenous languages, such as health care, education and justice system in order to fully comply with international indigenous law standards.

During an art exposition, in the space of Embú das Artes, São Paulo, organized to celebrate the International Year of Indigenous Languages, 30 art pieces dedicated to indigenous languages were damaged by anonymous vandals. While direct attribution to public officials cannot be established, it is certain that the integrationist approach and the hate speech by the government in Brazil legitimizes such violent acts and decreases the costs of perpetration, in detriment of the preservation and promotion of the rich diversity of indigenous lands in Brazil.

Chair, this is a sad example on how a hostile environment to indigenous peoples can be detrimental to their language, culture and survival.

Thank you