



Permanent Mission of Norway  
Geneva

**15th session of the of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

**Item 7: International Decade of Indigenous Languages**

**JOINT NORDIC STATEMENT**

**by Denmark, Iceland, Finland, Sweden, and Norway**

**delivered by Ambassador Tine Mørch Smith,**

**Permanent Representative of Norway.**

Check against delivery

4 July 2022

Thank you Chair,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of Denmark together with Greenland, Iceland, Sweden, Finland, and my own country Norway.

We [will start by taking the opportunity to] thank UNESCO and the Steering Committee for their efforts to arrange the International Decade of Indigenous Languages.

The issue at stake – preservation, revitalization, and support of indigenous peoples' languages – is pressing.

Therefore, it is important that we fill the Decade with concrete actions, to save and strengthen indigenous peoples' languages. The Global Action Plan

gives valuable guidance on how to do this.

Our governments contribute to the Decade in several ways. For example, Norway contributes actively to the Global Task Force and has established a National Task Force to coordinate and plan events and actions in the decade. The National Task Force is co-chaired with the Sámediggi (the Sami Parliament), and relevant institutions and organizations are represented in the group. In Greenland, there are consistent efforts for keeping the Kalaallisut strong and vibrant, including through the development and use of digital technologies.

The states' involvement and active participation in the decade is essential. We encourage states and other stakeholders to develop regional and national action plans through transparent and inclusive processes, in consultations with Indigenous Peoples in order to obtain their free, prior, and informed consent.

Outcomes of the Global Action Plan are [among others]: increased language fluency, vitality, and new language users. We strongly support this, and we stress the importance of teaching children and youth the indigenous peoples' languages. The survival of the indigenous peoples' languages depends on this. Our goal must be that the indigenous peoples' languages shall be alive and in active use on all arenas alongside the non-indigenous majority language. In this regard, modern language technology is an important element.

Digitalisation and digital technologies change all aspects of our societies. Users of indigenous peoples' languages do not have equal access or opportunities online, for instance because many public services are not available in their language online, and partnerships are necessary to ensure that indigenous languages can be used on digital platforms.

During the decade we will have dialogue with large technological companies and representatives of indigenous peoples' language users to find solutions that are functional for all. The Nordic countries are committed to ensure that the indigenous peoples' languages spoken in our own countries and across the borders of our region are preserved, revitalized, and developed.

Thank you.