



EUROPEAN UNION

Permanent Delegation to the United Nations Office
and other international organisations in Geneva

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European Union Intervention

Panel on the role of languages and culture in the promotion and protection of the well-being and identity of indigenous peoples

Madame President, distinguished panelists,

The EU believes that it is important to promote dialogue between Governments, the UN and indigenous peoples and while thanking panelists for their interventions, it warmly welcomes the opportunity to engage in a discussion with different mechanisms and institutions working in this field.

The EU remains committed to promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples as set out in DRIP and seeks to integrate their issues into political dialogues with governments and multilateral cooperation. We support the full implementation of UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and give practical and financial assistance to indigenous peoples around the world under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights. This includes among others programmes in Colombia, Nepal, and in the Philippines. Our goals are to implement the rights of indigenous peoples as set out in DRIP and ensure that indigenous peoples are actively engaged in determining their own social, economic and cultural development.

The EU opposes all forms of discrimination, marginalisation, racism and intolerance that are too often faced by indigenous peoples throughout the world and affect their cultures and traditional ways of life. The EU respects linguistic diversity as stated in article 22 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights and has numerous language communities, including indigenous language communities, and seeks to further a constructive policy in this regard.

We welcome the focus of today's panel on the role of languages and culture in the promotion and protection of the well-being and identity of indigenous peoples. As cultures and languages are among the most important distinctive features of indigenous peoples, they are essential for upholding their identity, we fully respect cultural and linguistic diversity as stated in the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. We base our national policies, legislation and practice on the recognition of different languages as an expression of cultural wealth and try to facilitate their use as a way to promote and protect human rights, and at the same time try to ensure there are no obstacles for their development.

Education is an important way to maintain and promote cultures and languages and in this regard we would like to highlight the useful contribution made by the EMRIP in the form of its thematic *Study on lessons learned and challenges to achieve the implementation of the right of indigenous peoples to education*. The study gives a preliminary overview of the way forward and identifies challenges and priorities. In this context, we would be interested in panelists' views on viable approaches to education and the best ways to enhance the quality of education with a view to the cultural and social circumstances of indigenous peoples. We would also like to ask for panelists' perspectives on best practices regarding indigenous language and culture policies that address the situation of indigenous peoples.

We look forward to this interesting debate.

Thank you Madame President.