

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

**July 4 to 8, 2022**

**Palace of Nations**

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

**Dario Mejía Montalvo,  
President of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**

- Madam Chair,  
Distinguished members of the Expert Mechanism, Distinguished participants,
- —Chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues has asked me in my capacity as Forum's representative to the Decade's Steering Committee to share with you some ideas based on the outcomes of the 2022 session of the Permanent Forum, including the discussion we held on the International Decade of Indigenous Languages. We welcome EMRIP's organization of this discussion to, among others, elaborate on the necessary measures to be taken to maximize the impact of implementing the Global Action Plan with a human rights-based approach and in line with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- This discussion reflected the interdisciplinary nature of languages, and their importance for the implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples to health, education, access to justice, the relationship of languages with indigenous traditional knowledge, food systems, biodiversity, the SDGs and climate change.
- Considering the interconnectedness between languages and other rights, the Permanent Forum recommended to increase the meaningful participation of indigenous peoples in the design and implementation of activities under all four current UN Decades: Decade of Ocean Science, Decade for Action on Water, Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and Decade of Indigenous Languages, as well as to study how these decades provide synergies for the advancement of the indigenous peoples' agenda.
- In line with today's discussion, the Forum made a call to ground the Global Action Plan by adopting national, regional, local and institutional action plans by the end of 2022 and developing indicators to monitor their implementation.
- Moreover, the Forum encouraged States, local authorities and UNESCO to provide financial assistance to indigenous peoples in establishing working groups for the language planning, development and modernization. The Forum also recommended supporting indigenous peoples' initiatives to develop language immersion programs, particularly language nests, language centers and media in indigenous languages.
- Establishment of a financial mechanism for the Decade is a key in this regard. As stated in EMRIP's reports, there should be at least the same amount spent funding for language revitalization than had been spent over centuries to the ineffective language policies.

- Therefore, the Permanent Forum stressed the need to create a financial mechanism for the Decade and encouraged stakeholders to invest in it. A recommendation was also addressed to the private sector to support efforts to create modern digital technologies for studying and documenting indigenous languages.
- Furthermore, the Permanent Forum recommended that data collection about the situation of indigenous languages be strengthened. In particular, it was suggested to UNESCO and States, with the assistance of the Statistical Commission, work on data on indigenous languages to support post-2030 priorities.
- Some recommendations were directed to UN agencies other than UNESCO. For example, we recommended WHO to approach indigenous languages as determinants of health in their policies. In general, the UN system should better understand and use indigenous languages, that are not just a mean of communication but also have a role in understanding the world.
- The Permanent Forum devoted a number of recommendations to education in indigenous languages. It was also noted that investments in creative industries and measures to preserve traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples will support indigenous languages.
- Distinguished participants,
- The full text of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum is available in the report of the 21st session, published in all six official languages of the UN on the website of the Forum.
- I want to assure the readiness of the Permanent Forum to work closely in the implementation of the Global Action Plan of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages and to make the most of this Decade to strengthen the preservation and revitalization of indigenous languages. Three members of the Permanent Forum will continue to actively participate in the Global Task Force for making a Decade of Action for Indigenous Languages.
- Thank you, Madame Chair!