

In the framework
of the closing of the
**2019 International Year
of Indigenous Languages**

H I G H
L E V E L
E V E N T

“Making a Decade of Action
for Indigenous Languages”

February 27 – 28, 2020

Los Pinos, Mexico City
Mexico

CONCEPT NOTE

ORGANIZED BY

UNESCO and the Government of Mexico, Ministry of Culture
Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Foreign Affairs

27 – 28 February 2020

Los Pinos, Cultural Complex

Mexico City, Mexico

ON THE MARGINS OF

the International Congress on Languages at Risk
organized by the National Institute of Indigenous Languages (INALI)

25 – 26 February 2020

Los Pinos, Cultural Complex

Mexico City, Mexico



2019 | INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
Indigenous Languages

CONFERENCE WEBSITE

<https://en.iyil2019.org>

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Join the IYIL2019 “**#IndigenousLanguages**” campaign

#WeAreIndigenous

Twitter :

@IYIL2019

Follow on Facebook:

[@indigenousslanguages](#)

@IYIL2019

Instagram:

@indigenousslanguages

Official website:

<https://en.iyil2019.org/>

<https://fr.iyil2019.org/>

<https://es.iyil2019.org/>

High-level event on UNESCO website:

[High-level event](#) (English)

[High-level event](#) (French)

[High-level event](#) (Spanish)

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BACKGROUND

Languages, with their complex implications for identity, cultural diversity, spirituality, communication, social and political integration, education and development, are of crucial importance for people and the planet. People not only embed in languages their history, traditions, memory, indigenous knowledge, unique modes of thinking, meaning and expression, but they also construct their future through them.

Language is a core component of human rights and fundamental freedoms and is essential to realizing sustainable development, cultural diversity, community well-being and good governance, peace and reconciliation. A person's freedom to use his or her chosen language is a prerequisite to freedom of thought, freedom of opinion and expression, access to education and information, cultural expression, access to employment and other values enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Indigenous peoples' right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit their languages to future generations is enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Despite their immense value, languages around the world continue to disappear at alarming rates. This is a cause for serious concern. According to the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, no less than 40 percent of the estimated 6,700 languages spoken as of 2016 were in danger of disappearing.¹ Many of these are indigenous languages^{2,3}. Because many speakers of indigenous languages also use one or more other languages, there is a heightened risk that indigenous languages will be lost if other languages are more accessible as a means to communicate across and between cultures.



“The challenges of preserving the diversity of languages go far beyond just the linguistic question - that is the meaning of the title given to this Year: “Indigenous languages matter for sustainable development, peace building and reconciliation”.

Audrey Azoulay
Director-General of UNESCO

“My goal is that that no girl or boy grows ashamed of his or her roots and that they know that speaking an indigenous language is a source of pride as it reveals the world from a richer perspective.”

Yalitza Aparicio
Actress
UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador

- 1** Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Document entitled “Indigenous languages”. Available at www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/documents/2016/Docs-updates/backgroundunderL2.pdf.
- 2** Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, “International expert group meeting on the theme Indigenous languages: preservation and revitalization: articles 13, 14 and 16 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – 19 to 21 January 2016, New York”, concept note. Available at www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/documents/2016/egm/.
- 3** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Global Monitoring Report 2016: Education for People and Planet – Creating Sustainable Futures for All (Paris, 2016), available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002457/245752e.pdf>.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The General Assembly of the United Nations (UNGA), by its Resolution of 19 December 2016 (resolution 71/178), proclaimed 2019 as the International Year of the Indigenous Languages, in order to draw attention to the serious loss of Indigenous languages and the urgent need to preserve, revitalize and promote them. It also aimed to raise awareness about the need to adopt urgent measures to protect and promote indigenous languages and provide support to the speakers and learners of these languages at the national and international levels.

For the implementation of the above-mentioned UN General Assembly Resolution, the Action Plan for Organizing the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages (E/C.19/2018/8) was elaborated by UNESCO, UNDESA and a range of stakeholders which laid down the foundation for implementing the resolution and constituted a road map towards its strategic objectives.

The 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL2019) constituted a unique opportunity to support indigenous language users to continue using their languages and transmit them to the next generation. In addition, it was to stimulate a constructive dialogue, knowledge-sharing and formulation of new socio-cultural, economic and strategic policy frameworks, concrete community and research projects and development of new tools and services to further recognition and importance of linguistic diversity and multilingualism. Such activity and the importance of respecting and recognizing indigenous languages as a strategic resource for social, economic and political development, for peaceful coexistence and for reconciliation in our societies must be further realized.

Throughout 2019, a series of international and regional consultations were organized to identify recommendations for future actions, Key conclusions on development, human rights, strategies, empowerment, progress, synergy and sustainability were integrated into the Strategic Outcome Document of the IYIL2019 (UNESCO General Conference C40/68), as a product of a collaborative effort involving representatives of Member States and government organizations, indigenous peoples from around the world, experts, researchers, UN-system entities and other partners.

The IYIL2019 represents a historic opportunity to reflect collectively on what we are doing as a humanity that is leading us to the loss of this great wealth that linguistic diversity means; wealth in terms of knowledge, cultural practices and ways of seeing and naming the world, particularly relevant in the context of the current global social and environmental crisis, by constituting the perfect antidote to the risks of unique thinking.

TOWARDS THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

The IYIL2019 culminated into a proclamation of an International Decade on Indigenous Languages (2022-2032) which was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly on 18 December 2019 (resolution 74/135). An immediate start is needed to initiate the preparatory process for the organization of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages commencing on 1 January in 2022.



LOS PINOS CULTURAL COMPLEX, former *Official Residence of Los Pinos*.

MAJOR OBJECTIVES OF THE HIGH-LEVEL EVENT

Building on the legacy of the IYIL2019 and as follow up to a decision on United Nations General Assembly (resolution 74/135), UNESCO and the Government of Mexico, in cooperation with a range of national, regional and international partners, are organizing a High-level event “Making a Decade of Action for Indigenous Languages” from 27 to 28 February 2020, on the margins of the International Congress on Languages at Risk from 25 to 26 February 2020 in Mexico City, Mexico.

The High-Level Event will capture the momentum and knowledge-based resulting from the IYIL2019. Detailed analysis of the Year’s outcomes will provide a solid basis for the prioritization, identification of future strategies and working modalities, securing the commitment of key stakeholders and necessary assured funding. These parameters could serve for the development of the future Global Action Plan (2022-2032). The High Level Event will conclude the IYIL2019 with a comprehensive review of the outcomes, lessons learnt on the impact and provide concrete recommendations for the preparatory and transitional process of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages.

While constituting a meeting space to gather the diverse experiences and results generated by all the stakeholders involved throughout this International Year, the High-level event will generate a Los Pinos Declaration (Outcome Document) that presents the milestones of the elaboration of the future Global Action Plan for the International Decade of the Indigenous Languages 2022-2032 (GAP4IDIL).

OVERARCHING OBJECTIVES

The High-level event aims to contribute to the:

- **Assessment** of the implementation of the Action Plan for Organizing the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages ([E/C.19/2018/8](#)), in particular to the established roadmap towards achieving strategic objectives and expected impacts based on the Strategic Outcome Document (UNESCO General Conference 40 C/68);
- **Exchange of views** on the necessary milestones during a transitional period of 2020 to 2021 and elaboration of a new Global Action Plan, as well organizational structures, thematic priorities, financial mechanisms and other components which would be crucial for the organization of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032);
- **Setting a future direction** for the elaboration of the first lines of action of the future Global Action Plan for the organization of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2023-2032).

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of the High-level event in Mexico City are to:

- Bring together a diverse range of stakeholders, including representatives of national governments, indigenous peoples, indigenous organizations, scholars and experts in the field of indigenous languages, and others for a **constructive dialogue** on indigenous languages to assess the impact made towards supporting and promoting indigenous languages worldwide within the context of the IYIL2019 and the upcoming decade; a special attention will be paid to the identification of the common factors that cause endangerment to indigenous languages.
- Reflect on the existing **challenges**, identify practical **solutions** and good practices, and **opportunities** among different stakeholders, working in the field of human rights, language transmission, documentation, safeguarding, policy development, education, research, promotion as well as development of language technology solutions, for the elaboration of the future Global Action Plan of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages; and,
- Raise **awareness** on the importance of indigenous languages, linguistic diversity and multilingualism for sustainable development and provide guidance to the stakeholders in the implementation of international, regional and national commitments and standards related to language development and mainstreaming across all domains.
- Present key **features of linguistic diversity in Mexico** as a part of the development of UNESCO World Atlas of Languages.

MAJOR OUTCOMES

The expected Outcomes of the High-level event in Mexico City are to:

- Elaborate a **Los Pinos Declaration - Outcome Document**, including concrete recommendations for the organization of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages;
- **Identify main milestones of future actions** for the organization of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages;
- Provide an opportunity to forge new **partnerships and networks** among various stakeholders to further strengthen the exchange of best practices, information sharing and collaboration.

FORMAT AND STRUCTURE

The High-level event will be held on the margins of the International Congress on Languages at Risk organized by the Ministry of Culture of the Government of Mexico. The agenda of the High-level event will consist of plenary sessions, group discussions and Outcome Document Drafting Group sessions. The Drafting group will be established to prepare the Outcome Document.

This event will propose two days of analysis, discussions and elaboration of concrete proposals around the global perspectives and challenges facing the revitalization and safeguarding of indigenous languages worldwide, through plenary and high-level segments, thematic panels as well as a cultural and artistic program, which includes an exhibition space and artistic and cultural presentations, among others.

The High-level event will be focused on two overarching themes:

- **ASSESSMENT** - the assessment of progress made in five key areas presented in the Action Plan of the IYIL2019 and recommendations elaboration by the Strategic Outcome Document;
- **FUTURE DIRECTIONS** - the elaboration of future Global Action Plan for the organization of the International Decade on Indigenous Languages.

The working languages of the High-Level Event are English and Spanish.

PARTICIPANTS

The High-level event foresees an attendance of national, regional and international participants who represent their national governments, indigenous leaders and elders, indigenous peoples' organizations, civil society, members of non-governmental organizations, academics and researchers, international cooperation organizations and youth from different regions.

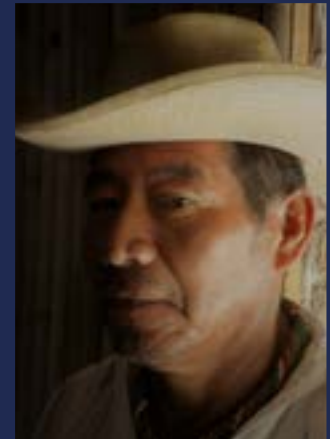
PROGRAMME

High-level event “Making a Decade of Action for Indigenous Languages”

26 February 18:00-20:00 Registration of international participants at Hotel Camino Real Polanco

TIME	DAY ONE - 27 February 2020
9.00-11.00	Registration of participants at Los Pinos
10.30 – 11.00	Indigenous traditional rite at Los Pinos (Conference Room: Adolfo López Mateos)
11.00 – 12.00	Opening session of the High-level event at Los Pinos (Conference Room: Adolfo López Mateos)
12.00 – 13.30	High Level Event: Strategic Vision for Making a Decade of Action for Indigenous Languages (Conference Room: Adolfo López Mateos)
13.30 – 14.45	Lunch break
14.45-15.00	Keynote Address: Indigenous Languages Matter for Peace Building, Sustainable Development and Reconciliation in our Societies (Conference Room: Adolfo López Mateos)
15.00 – 16.30	Plenary session 1: Taking Stock of Lessons Learnt from the IYL2019 (Conference Room: Adolfo López Mateos)
16.30 – 17.00	Break
17.00 – 19.00	Panel discussion: Building New Scenarios for a Decade of Action (IDIL 2022-2032) (Conference Room: Adolfo López Mateos)
19.00 – 20.00	Bus transfer to National Arts Museum in Mexico City
20.00 – 22.00	Evening Event

TIME	DAY TWO – 28 February 2020
8.00 – 9.00	Registration of participants
9.00 – 10.00	Keynote Presentation: UNESCO World Atlas of Languages (WAL): New Ways for Responding to Global Challenges and Emerging Opportunities (Conference Room: Adolfo López Mateos)
10.00 – 11.15	Discussion Forums (parallel sessions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Session 1. Regional approach: Engaging with Indigenous Peoples’ through Regional Mechanisms (Conference Room: Adolfo López Mateos) Session 2. Thematic approach: Inclusive and Equitable Education and Learning Environments for Promoting Indigenous Languages (formal and informal education, youth, gender equality and inclusion) (Conference Room: Manuel Ávila Camacho) Session 3. Stakeholder approach: Building Coordination Mechanism for the IDIL2022-2032 (Conference Room: Venustiano Carranza)
11.15 – 11.45	Break
11.45 – 13.00	Discussion Forums (cont.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Session 4. Thematic approach: Indigenous Languages in Justice and Public Services (Conference Room: Adolfo López Mateos) Session 5. Thematic approach: Digital Empowerment, Language Technology and Indigenous Media (Conference Room: Manuel Ávila Camacho) Session 6. Thematic approach: Protection and Safeguarding Cultural and Linguistic Heritage (Conference Room: Venustiano Carranza)
13.00 – 14.30	Lunch break
14.30 – 15.45	Discussion Forums (Cont.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Session 7. Thematic approach: Indigenous Languages, Climate Change and Biodiversity (Conference Room: Adolfo López Mateos) Session 8. Thematic approach: Indigenous Languages for Better Health, Social Cohesion and Humanitarian Response (Conference Room: Manuel Ávila Camacho) Session 9. Financial approach: Multi-donor Financial Mechanism (Conference Room: Venustiano Carranza)
15.45 – 16.15	Break
16.15 – 17.30	Plenary session Outcomes of the discussion forums (Conference Room: Adolfo López Mateos)
17.30 – 18.30	High-level closing session: From los pinos to a decade of action (Conference Room: Adolfo López Mateos)



Photos: UNESCO



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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la Ciencia y la Cultura



2019 | INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
Indigenous Languages



GOBIERNO DE
MÉXICO

CULTURA
SECRETARÍA DE CULTURA

RELACIONES EXTERIORES
SECRETARÍA DE RELACIONES EXTERIORES

INPI
INSTITUTO NACIONAL
DE LOS PUEBLOS
INDÍGENAS



Sustainable
Development
Goals



INALJ
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