

SPECIAL DECLARATION 11: OF THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

The Heads of State and Government of Latin America and the Caribbean, gathered in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, on the occasion of the Fifth Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), held on January 25, 2017;

Reaffirming that the Declaration of United Nations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which recognizes and reaffirms that indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions to provide education in their own languages, in line with their cultural methods of teaching and learning.

Recalling the final document of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly, known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 22 and 23 September, 2014.

We recall and take note as well, of the importance of cultural diversity in the full implementation of all Human Rights for all, and the provisions included in the pertinent UNESCO conventions.

Recognizing the adoption of other initiative at a regional and sub-regional level to contribute to the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples in a specific manner.

Taking note of the American Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous People as the mechanism that promotes and protects the rights of the indigenous people, specifically in the Americas.

Reaffirming the right of indigenous peoples to preserve, use, develop, revitalize and transmit to their future generations their own histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, systems of knowledge, writing and literature, and to designate and maintain names they choose for their Communities, places and individuals.

1. We welcome the decision of the United Nations General Assembly to proclaim 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages, which aims to draw attention to the serious loss of indigenous languages and the urgent need to preserve, revitalize and promote them as well as to adopt new measures, which are urgent, at the national, regional and international levels.
2. We highlight the importance of preserving the linguistic rights of the indigenous peoples throughout the world.

3. We recognize that in the region there are millions of people who speak some native language, and we commit to develop initiatives and activities which increase public awareness of the importance of indigenous languages and interculturality, promoting the exchange of experiences and good practices on public policies.
4. We Invite all governments, representatives of Indigenous Peoples and regional and international organizations, to provide support, in diverse ways, the success of the celebration of the International Year of Indigenous Languages.
5. We will work together with the indigenous peoples to take part in this initiative, and in that sense, play an important role in the preservation, transmission and development of their own languages and cultures in their homes, community life and in society as a whole.
6. We will promote in all, national, regional and international mass media, public policies and successful experiences that strengthen the use and development of the indigenous languages, so that this celebration is known to the largest number of people living in Latin America and the Caribbean, and throughout the world.

Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, January 25th, 2017.