



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
28 April 2022

Original: English

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Twenty-first session

New York, 25 April–6 May 2022

Draft report

Rapporteur: Ms. Tove Søvndahl Gant

Chapter I

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

B. Matters brought to the attention of the Council

Recommendations of the Permanent Forum

Dialogues: thematic dialogues (item 5 (f))

International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022–2032

1. The Permanent Forum welcomes the proclamation by the General Assembly in its resolution [74/135](#) of the period 2022–2032 as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages. The Permanent Forum also welcomes the global launch of the International Decade and commends the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Global Task Force for Making a Decade of Action for Indigenous Languages for leading the consultations with States and indigenous peoples in all sociocultural regions, as well as for developing the Global Action Plan of the International Decade.
2. The Permanent Forum encourages the General Assembly and UNESCO to organize high-level launch events for the International Decade, in cooperation with, and with the full and effective participation of, indigenous peoples.
3. The Permanent Forum recalls the establishment of the Ibero-American Institute of Indigenous Languages, the cornerstone of the International Decade, to promote the conservation, revitalization, promotion, use and development of indigenous languages.
4. The Permanent Forum recommends that all actors at all levels, in cooperation with indigenous peoples, issue their action plans by the end of 2022, and that they



subsequently monitor their implementation and update them with specific measurement indicators every three years during the International Decade.

5. The Permanent Forum welcomes the efforts of UNESCO to mobilize resources for the creation of a multi-donor financial mechanism for the International Decade. The Permanent Forum encourages Member States to contribute to the fund. Indigenous peoples' representatives should advise on the granting of funds to initiatives.

6. The Permanent Forum recognizes the important interconnections between the Sustainable Development Goals and indigenous languages, as well as the integration of gender equality principles, as described in the Global Action Plan, and proposes that such indicators be included in the post-2030 development agenda in order to ensure the sustainability of outcomes and the continuity of efforts established by the International Decade. The Permanent Forum recommends that UNESCO and its member States initiate work, with the possible assistance of the Statistical Commission, on indigenous language-related data, with adequate funding to support the post-2030 priorities. The Permanent Forum invites the Indigenous Navigator to offer its tools and data for the global collection of data on indigenous languages.

7. The Permanent Forum recalls that, under article 14 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning. Furthermore, the Permanent Forum recalls that, pursuant to article 39 of the Declaration, indigenous peoples have the right to have access to financial and technical assistance from States and through international cooperation.

8. The Permanent Forum recognizes the key role of indigenous peoples in launching initiatives and projects related to the International Decade, such as the Shawnee tribe's declaration of a decade of the Shawnee language and the establishment of a language immersion programme, as well as the initiative of the Cherokee Nation to establish a Cherokee language centre. Similarly, the Nganasan and Enets peoples in the Taimyr Peninsula have established "language nests" to support early immersion, based on the methodology used for the revitalization of Maori, Hawaiian, Karelian and Inari Sami languages. The Permanent Forum encourages other indigenous peoples, regions and other Member States to follow their example.

9. The Permanent Forum recommends that UNESCO and other United Nations entities facilitate the work of language activists, including through methodological, educational, scientific, psychosocial and financial support, within the framework of the International Decade. The Permanent Forum invites UNESCO and its Forum of National Commissions, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research to develop, in cooperation with experts and representatives of indigenous peoples, an incubator of international methodologies in multilingual education, including studies of language revitalization best practices, teacher training and cross-cultural learning tools by 2025.

10. The Permanent Forum recognizes the crucial role of academia in researching, documenting and teaching indigenous languages. It encourages UNESCO to duly consider and accept UNESCO Chair applications by universities and research institutions with a view to establishing UNESCO Chairs on indigenous languages and other educational initiatives that support the goals of the International Decade.

11. The Permanent Forum encourages Member States and relevant subnational governmental bodies and agencies to ensure the allocation of funding for the

establishment, at appropriate institutions, of permanent linguist positions responsible for saving indigenous languages on the brink of extinction.

12. The Permanent Forum also calls upon Member States to expand indigenous language immersion and bilingual schools and programmes to help indigenous young people to reclaim their languages. The Permanent Forum recommends that Member States, where appropriate, incorporate intercultural and bilingual education in national school curricula, including through language immersion programmes, and ensure that the language of the subnational region or area in which the school is located is part of the curricula. In this regard, the Permanent Forum recommends that Member States, in close cooperation with indigenous peoples, establish educational programmes on indigenous languages for indigenous teachers, filmmakers, translators and interpreters, scientists, information technology specialists and other professionals. Such efforts would help to generate new original content in indigenous languages and, consequently, contribute to language development and maintenance and the restoration of indigenous peoples' pride in their own languages.

13. Recognizing the central role of public and indigenous peoples' education systems, the Permanent Forum recommends that Member States collect disaggregated data, within the next two years, on the number of indigenous students who attend kindergartens, small ungraded schools, nomadic schools and boarding schools across the regions in order to secure opportunities for children to remain in their communities.

14. The Permanent Forum encourages Member States, local authorities and UNESCO to assist indigenous peoples in establishing working groups on language planning, development and modernization, with financial support. Furthermore, the Permanent Forum recommends that UNESCO undertake a study on best practices for language curriculum development and publicize its findings by 2024.

15. Given the unique role of information and communications technology companies in the design, development and use of contemporary language technologies, the Permanent Forum reiterates its invitation to the private sector to contribute to the International Decade. The Permanent Forum encourages these companies to continue to develop digital platforms, in cooperation with indigenous peoples and academic institutions, in order to compile information archives for the preservation and revitalization of indigenous languages, language corpora, speech recognition, machine translation and synthesis tools, digital dictionaries and online courses.

16. The Permanent Forum welcomes the importance that the Office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees attaches to the use of indigenous languages when working with indigenous peoples in emergency situations. The Permanent Forum encourages other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to follow that positive practice. For instance, the Permanent Forum recommends that the World Health Organization prioritize indigenous languages as a determinant of health.

17. The Permanent Forum calls upon UNESCO, in its coordination of the International Decade, to prioritize the vital role of indigenous languages in preserving the traditional food and knowledge systems that are important to climate change adaptation strategies.

18. The Permanent Forum encourages the commencement of discussions among Member States and indigenous peoples during the International Decade on the implications of a possible UNESCO convention on the safeguarding and revitalization of endangered languages.