



# High-level Dialogue International Decade of Indigenous Languages

In the context of the WSIS Forum 2022

**CONCEPT NOTE AND PROGRAMME**

1 June 2022

Room C1, ITU Tower, WSIS Forum,  
Geneva, Switzerland

[Zoom link](#) to the virtual meeting

## Background

People's ability and freedom to use their chosen language is essential for human dignity, peaceful co-existence, reciprocal action, and for the general wellbeing and sustainable development of society at large. Language, as a systematic form of communication facilitates people's meaningful interactions with one another. Language also enables cultural expressions in a variety of forms, as well as the transmission of centuries-long knowledge, history, and traditions. It is through languages that people embed their worldviews, memory and traditional knowledge, alongside their unique modes of thinking, meaning and expression, whilst – even more significantly – it is through language too that they construct their future.

Despite their immense value, many of the more than 7,000 languages currently in use around the world are in danger of disappearing. Language communities, and particularly Indigenous Peoples, face a series of challenges, including digital exclusion. There is an urgent need to address the growing digital divide between users of major languages and lesser-used languages, as they do not have the same access to broadband connectivity, digital technologies and digital content in their own languages.

UNESCO has placed at the heart of its mandate the preservation, revitalization and support to linguistic diversity and multilingualism, both online and offline. The Organization acted as lead UN Agency for the implementation of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages and has been tasked to continue leading global efforts in the framework of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (IDIL2022-2032) as per United Nations General Assembly's decision ([A/RES/74/135](#)). UNESCO also facilitates the implementation of the WSIS Action Line no C8 on Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity, local content (WSIS Plan of Action, Action Line C8. 23 d, e, k, l).

**In the framework of the International Decade, UNESCO, in cooperation with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and in the context of the 2022 World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum, will organize a High-level dialogue on 1 June 2022 from 14.00 to 15.30 in Room C1, ITU Tower, in Geneva, Switzerland.**

The event will provide an open space for discussions and sharing of good practices on the promotion of linguistic diversity and multilingualism in cyberspace. A special focus will be placed on the access to multilingual information services, systems, and production of linguistically appropriate e-context for the speakers and signers of Indigenous languages. One of the outputs of the Global Action Plan of the International Decade of Indigenous (no 3) emphasises the importance of creation of favourable conditions for the digital empowerment and capacity building of digital competencies of Indigenous peoples. UN-system wide cooperation and public-private partnerships will be important to realize the capacity building initiatives, but also in promoting advocacy and awareness-raising as advocated in the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). The UNESCO's Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace, (2003) also provides for additional guidance for language digitization, documentation, and innovation.

In the second part of the event, the agenda will include a closing segment dedicated to the Award Ceremony of the winners of the WSIS Prize on ICTs and Indigenous Languages. This initiative is part of the WSIS Forum 2022 Special Track on ICTs and Indigenous Languages, co-organized by UNESCO, which launched a Hackathon inviting all interested stakeholders to ideate and create ICT solutions that contribute to the intergenerational transmission, preservation, revitalization, and promotion of Indigenous languages.

The High-level dialogue scheduled to take place on 1 June 2022 within WSIS Forum 2022, will primarily target Member States, Indigenous Peoples organizations, the UN system, civil society, researchers, digital activists, and representatives from the private sector. A global social media campaign will be carried out in conjunction with the high-level dialogue, to increase awareness about the International Decade and the WSIS Forum multi-stakeholder platform.

# Agenda

## 14.00 – 14.20 Opening remarks

- Mr Tawfik Jelassi, Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, UNESCO (in presential)
- Ms Sarah Armstrong, Executive Director, Internet Society Foundation (remote)
- H.E. Mr. Alejandro Salas, Minister of Culture, Peru (video)

## 14.20 – 15.00 High-level roundtable discussion “Making A Decade of Action for Indigenous Languages through Digital Solutions”

Moderator: Mr Tawfik Jelassi, Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, UNESCO

- Mr Alfonso Hernandez Maya, General Coordination of User Policy, Federal Telecommunications Institute (IFT), Mexico (in presential)
- Ms Mikaela Jade, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Indigital, Australia (in presential)
- Ms Rebecca Ryakitimbo, Chief Executive Officer and Fellow, Kuza STEM Generation and Mozilla Foundation (remote)
- Mr Valts Ernštreits, Director, University of Latvia, Livonian Institute, Latvia (video)

## 15.00 – 15.15 WSIS Hackathon Prize Award Ceremony

- Ms Holly Helton-Anishinaabeqwa, Executive Secretary, Global Indigenous Languages Caucus (USA) and representative of the International Jury of the WSIS Hackathon Prizes (remote)
- Mr Hosein Badran, Senior Director, Internet Growth and Trust, Internet Society (remote)
- WSIS Hackathon Prize winners (video presentations):
  - Challenge “Knowledge” winner: BestTEAm, Austria
  - Challenge “Empowerment” winner: Tech for Good, Nigeria
  - Challenge “Preservation” winner: Aditya6210\_2831, India

## 15.15 – 15.30 Moderator’s closing remarks

- Mr Tawfik Jelassi, Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information (UNESCO) (in presential)
- Mr Houlin Zhao, Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union (ITU) (in presential)

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## Registration

[Link to the online registration](#)

## Interpretation

Real-time human captioning services will be provided in English.

## Social Media

### Facebook:

@IndigenousLanguagesDecade  
@UNESCO

### Twitter:

@ILDecade  
@UNESCO

### Instagram:

@indigenousslanguages  
@unesco

#IndigenousLanguages #WeAreIndigenous

### Official website:

<https://en.idil2022-2032.org/>  
<https://fr.idil2022-2032.org/>  
<https://es.idil2022-2032.org/>

## Resources

[WSIS Hackathon on ICTs for Indigenous Languages](#)

[Event page on WSIS Website](#)

[Global Action Plan of the IDIL2022-2032 \(UNESCO, 41 C/INF.14\)](#)

The International Year of Indigenous Languages: mobilizing the international community to preserve, revitalize and promote indigenous languages / [Flagship Report of the IYIL2019](#) (UNESCO, 2021)

International Decade of Indigenous Languages, 2022-2032: Global Action Plan: Note by the Secretariat [AR](#) | [EN](#) | [ES](#) | [FR](#) | [RU](#) | [ZH](#) (E/C.19/2022/5)

## Contact Information

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