



CONFERENCE RESOLUTION ON INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

“Then the word arrived; Tepew and Q'uj'kumatz came together, in the darkness, in the night, and spoke to each other. They spoke, consulting each other and meditating. They agreed, and they put together their words and their thoughts” (excerpt from the sacred book of the Maya K'iche' People, the Popol Wuj).

Delegates representing 61 Indigenous Peoples and Nations from North, Central and South America, the Arctic and the Caribbean participating in International Indian Treaty Council (IITC) 47th Anniversary Conference in the sacred place called Lake Atitlán, Panajachel, Sololá, Guatemala, after thoughtful deliberations, adopted by consensus the following resolution to defend the inherent rights and ways of life of Indigenous Peoples and support the continuity of life for our future generations:

The International Indian Treaty Council (IITC) expresses its joy for the existence of multiple Indigenous languages around the world, but at the same time expresses its concern for the little attention given to them in the public policies of many States and that, as a consequence, languages are disappearing by the day.

For Indigenous Peoples, language is the vehicle to communicate, transmit, value, revive, learn and teach their collective systems of thought, their scientific knowledge, their cosmovision, philosophy, spirituality, science, technology and innovations, as well as their identity. Language has been the essence of the existence of Indigenous Peoples for thousands of years and, thanks to it, the cultural richness of our peoples is transmitted from generation to generation.

However, Indigenous Peoples face great challenges due to historical and structural racism and racial discrimination. This includes the monocultural policies that States continue to promote, in addition to the dispossession of our identity and cultures, the technological warfare against Indigenous Peoples through globalization, and the dispossession of our lands, territories and natural assets. Many Indigenous Peoples have been displaced and live dispersed without the possibility of continuing to use their language to transmit their scientific knowledge and ancient wisdom.

We appreciate the effort by the United Nations to declare the day, the year and the decade of Indigenous languages. But we call attention to the fact that most States do not take strong actions to create national policies to ensure the use and transmission of our various languages, to strengthen and guarantee their use in public institutions including as the educational and justice systems and programs and agencies for land management and environmental protection.



Consejo Internacional de Tratados Indios CONFERENCIA 47TH ANIVERSARIO



On the International Mother Language Day,¹ which is celebrated in the context of the first year of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Languages,² IITC reiterates to the States that they must urgently adopt, establish and implement norms, institutions, procedures, programs and plans, and allocate adequate budgets, among other corresponding actions. Furthermore, the planning and implementation of activities for the Decade on the National and International levels must take place with the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples as rights holders, and with respect for their autonomy, self-governance and self-determination.

It is also urgent that States comply with their commitments to recognize ILO Convention 169, the United Nations' and the American Declarations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the recommendations of specialized studies, Treaty Bodies and UN mechanisms such as the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, as well as the rulings of regional human rights systems such as the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.³

We denounce and strongly reject the political maneuvers of the Guatemalan Congress and other entities of the Guatemalan government that seek to strip the historical role of the Academy of Mayan Languages of Guatemala (ALMG). It is the sole guide in the definition, recognition, conservation and strengthening of Mayan and indigenous languages in Guatemala. We do not recognize any other authority in this matter and therefore we support all actions taken and to be taken in the future by the ALMG.

We encourage the Indigenous Peoples of Guatemala and the world, their authorities, leaders, organizations and other mechanisms of representation to develop efforts to ensure the systematic use and practice of our languages in the workplace, in homes, communities and wherever they are spoken, as well as to participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of national actions related to the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Languages.

*Adopted by consensus in Paxil Kayala, Ixim Ulew (Panajachel, Sololá) Guatemala,
March 3, 2022.*

¹ Approved at the [UNESCO General Conference in 1999](#).

² United Nations resolution A/RES/74/135

³ Indigenous Peoples and the Inter-American Court: Merits and Reparations. Oswaldo Ruiz Chiriboga & Gina Donoso. Pages 37 to 40.