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|  | EUROPEAN UNION  Permanent Delegation to the United Nations Office  and other international organisations in Geneva |

**17th session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

**Item 7: International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032)**

**11 July 2024**

**EU statement**

Distinguished Members of the Expert Mechanism, distinguished Indigenous representatives,

In the context of the decade of Indigenous Languages, the European Union underscores its unwavering commitment to the rights of Indigenous Peoples as set out in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and international human rights law, to revitalize, use, develop and transmit their languages.

Indigenous Peoples’ languages are vital for the transmission of cultural knowledge, oral histories, and social values across generations. They also offer ecological insights and support effective, culturally sensitive natural resource governance and the promotion of an integrated and holistic environmental stewardship. However, these languages are increasingly endangered with some at the brink of extinction. Every single loss of an Indigenous language represents a significant cultural and intellectual impoverishment for humanity as a whole.

Therefore, the EU underscores the importance of providing access for Indigenous children to education and culture in their own language. This approach is crucial for preserving linguistic diversity and for fostering a sense of identity and belonging. Education in their own languages, is not only a right set out in UNDRIP, but also empowers Indigenous children to connect with their heritage, ensuring the transmission of knowledge, values and customs.

Distinguished Members of the Expert Mechanism,   
  
As the decade of Indigenous Languages progresses towards the end of its first three years, what key lessons from the Global Action Plan of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages can you share with regards to education in Indigenous languages?

I thank you.