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## Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

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**Discussion on the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum (economic and social development, culture, environment, education, health and human rights), with reference to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development**

## Summary report on the International Year of Indigenous Languages, 2019

### Note by the Secretariat

#### *Summary*

In its resolution [71/178](#), on the rights of indigenous peoples, the General Assembly proclaimed 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages. This decision was based on a recommendation of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. In its resolution, the Assembly requested the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to serve as the lead agency for the Year, in collaboration with other relevant agencies, within existing resources.

The purpose of the present summary report is to present an overview of all the activities performed and measures taken by UNESCO together with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, other United Nations system entities, Governments, organizations of indigenous peoples, broader civil society, academia, the private sector and other interested actors in relation to the Year.

The summary report is aligned with the action plan for organizing the Year ([E/C.19/2018/8](#)), by which the foundation was laid for implementing resolution [71/178](#) and a contribution was made to raising awareness of the Year and mobilizing various players for coordinated action around the world in line with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

\* [E/C.19/2020/1](#).



UNESCO and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs facilitated dialogue, shared information, engaged with a range of stakeholders – in particular indigenous peoples – and strengthened international cooperation and partnerships as part of a range of initiatives around the world. The report covers the preparatory period, from January 2017 to December 2018, and the implementation period, which extended throughout 2019. UNESCO will conduct an internal and external evaluation later in 2020 and 2021 of the key outcomes and the impact of the Year, which has been a global initiative.

## I. Introduction

### A. Background

1. Language is one of the fundamental preconditions to human development, dialogue, reconciliation, tolerance, cultural and linguistic diversity, and the peaceful existence of human society. People need language to communicate with one another and also transmit from generation to generation knowledge, ideas, beliefs and traditions, which are essential for their recognition, well-being, evolution and peaceful coexistence.

2. Despite their immense value, languages around the world continue to disappear at alarming rates. This is a cause for serious concern. According to the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, no less than 40 per cent of the estimated 6,700 languages spoken in 2016 were in danger of disappearing.<sup>1</sup> The fact that many of those are indigenous languages places at risk the indigenous cultures and knowledge systems to which those languages belong.<sup>2,3</sup> Because many speakers of indigenous languages also use one or more other languages, there is a heightened risk that the indigenous languages disappear, since they become dispensable.

3. The reasons for the endangerment of languages vary across different communities and locations, but all indigenous peoples face tremendous challenges such as assimilation, enforced relocation, educational disadvantage, illiteracy, migration and other manifestations of discrimination that may eventually lead to the weakening of a culture or language almost to the point of disappearance. In practical terms, the risk is that parents and elders can no longer transmit indigenous languages to their children and that indigenous languages fall out of daily use.

4. In 2007, in its resolution [61/295](#), the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In so doing, the Assembly established a comprehensive framework of minimum standards for economic, social and cultural well-being and rights for the world's indigenous peoples, recognized the rights of indigenous peoples to revitalize, use, protect, preserve and transmit their histories, languages and oral traditions to future generations, and granted indigenous peoples the right to establish media and educational systems in their own languages.

5. In the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (General Assembly resolution [69/2](#)), the Assembly reiterated the important and continuing role of the United Nations in promoting and protecting the rights of indigenous peoples. Member States committed to developing, in consultation with indigenous peoples, policies, programmes and resources to preserve and promote the indigenous languages.

6. In 2016, the General Assembly, in its resolution [71/178](#), entitled "Rights of indigenous peoples" proclaimed 2019 the International Year of Indigenous Languages.

<sup>1</sup> Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, "Indigenous languages", backgrounder, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, "International expert group meeting on the theme indigenous languages: preservation and revitalization: articles 13, 14 and 16 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – 19 to 21 January 2016, New York", concept note, 2016.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), *Global Education Monitoring Report 2016: Education for People and Planet – Creating Sustainable Futures for All*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 2016).

## **B. Purpose**

7. The present report has been prepared further to resolutions [73/156](#) and [74/396](#), in which the General Assembly encouraged the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to submit a report on all activities undertaken to organize the International Year of Indigenous Languages. The aim is to present an overview of the joint collaborative activities organized around indigenous languages and those who speak and use them.

8. The report has also been prepared further to the recommendations of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, in particular those made at its sixteenth session (see [E/2017/43](#)). In those recommendations, Member States were invited, in close cooperation with indigenous peoples, UNESCO and other relevant United Nations system agencies, to participate actively in the planning of the Year and prepare a comprehensive action plan.

9. The report contains a summary of the concrete tasks, assignments, projects and initiatives undertaken to implement the main objectives of the Year – a global initiative – and presents the main results of the ongoing qualitative and quantitative analysis.

10. Later in 2020 and 2021, UNESCO will carry out a detailed analysis of the impact and key outcomes of the Year. The results of internal and external evaluations will be made public during the second part of 2021.

## **C. Main objectives of the International Year**

11. In 2016, the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution [71/178](#), on the rights of indigenous peoples proclaimed 2019 the International Year of Indigenous Languages. The Year is an important international cooperation mechanism dedicated to raising awareness of a particular topic or theme of international interest or concern and mobilizing different players for coordinated action around the world.

12. In paragraph 13 of the resolution, the General Assembly stated the main objectives underlying the International Year, namely:

(a) To draw attention to the critical loss of indigenous languages and the urgent need to preserve, revitalize and promote indigenous languages;

(b) To take further urgent steps at the national and international levels.

13. To attain the main objectives, UNESCO prepared an action plan for organizing the Year ([E/C.19/2018/8](#)) in consultation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, interested Member States, indigenous peoples, United Nations system agencies, funds and programmes, and the United Nations Permanent Forum, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples.

14. The action plan set out a comprehensive overview of key objectives, principles and actions to be taken during the International Year and after. The action plan also set out measurable objectives with completion dates and informed all stakeholders about planned activities that built on the experience that UNESCO had gathered as the lead United Nations entity for the International Year of Languages (2008). The action plan left room to adapt flexibly to emerging opportunities and challenges that might arise during the Year and outlined the main outcomes to be achieved in the biennium 2018–2020.

## D. Critical input for the organization of the Year

15. Various international development frameworks, as well as multilateral activities and agreements contributed to the Year, among them the Education 2030 Framework for Action, the World Summit on the Information Society, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Plan of Action of the World Summit on the Information Society, the Tunis Commitment adopted at the World Summit and other documents of the Open Consultation Process on Overall Review of the Implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society Outcomes, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (in particular target 18, on traditional knowledge) and the strategic plan under the UNESCO intergovernmental Information for All Programme.<sup>4</sup>

16. Financial contributions were critical to the organization of the International Year. More specifically, the Year greatly benefited from the generous support provided by Member States, government organizations, indigenous peoples' organizations, broader civil society and academic organizations, and other public and private partners.

17. UNESCO acted as the secretariat, using resources from its regular programme budget<sup>5</sup> and extrabudgetary resources provided by Member States and public organizations. One of the key recommendations regarding future action was to make additional efforts to seek extrabudgetary resources, including by examining the feasibility of establishing a multi-donor financial mechanism for the implementation of language-related initiatives and concrete projects, including in follow-up to the Year<sup>6</sup> and to the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022–2032).

18. To foster synergies, a large number of activities were co-organized with various partners by building on the strengths of multi-stakeholder partnerships at all levels. Many activities and events were organized by public and private bodies. In-kind support was provided for the organization of international and regional consultations, training workshops, media events and other activities.

19. In terms of human and institutional resources, to fulfil the secretarial functions needed for a smooth organization, UNESCO set up a team responsible for the International Year and for the implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/178 and the action plan for organizing the Year. An internal working group on the implementation of the UNESCO policy on engaging with indigenous peoples supported several targeted interventions and provided technical advice on various thematic and operational aspects. Events and activities to mark the Year were organized by a large number of UNESCO field offices, in particular those located in Addis Ababa, Apia, Bangkok, Beijing, Brasilia, Geneva, Guatemala City, Lima, Mexico City, New Delhi, New York, Quito, Rabat, Santiago, San José and Venice, Italy. UNESCO Chairs, Category-2 centres affiliated to UNESCO, non-governmental organizations, UNESCO national commissions and permanent delegations of members to UNESCO and permanent delegations to the United Nations in New York and Geneva were also involved.

20. As a member of the steering committee established for the organization of the Year, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Inclusive Social Development, Indigenous Peoples and Development Branch, has been actively involved. The Permanent Forum, the Expert Mechanism, the Special Rapporteur and

<sup>4</sup> See <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000261457>.

<sup>5</sup> See UNESCO, "Approved programme and budget 2018–2019 – First biennium of the 2018–2021 quadrennium", document 39 C/5.

<sup>6</sup> See UNESCO, "Strategic outcome document of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages", document 40 C/68.

the Human Rights Council were also involved. The Indigenous Peoples and Development Branch, in its capacity as permanent Co-Chair of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues, facilitated strategic partnerships with other United Nations system entities, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Telecommunication Union, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the World Intellectual Property Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the United Nations Development Programme.

21. The Department of Global Communications at United Nations Headquarters provided valuable support for the implementation of the global communication strategy and facilitated information-sharing at the global level. The network of United Nations information centres was directly involved in the global communication campaign.

22. Finally, the 18 members of the steering committee directly contributed to the attainment of the strategic objectives by providing human, institutional and financial resources. The steering committee was composed as follows: six representatives of Member States, two of whom acted as Co-Chairs; seven leaders and representatives of indigenous peoples and institutions from the seven sociocultural regions, two of whom also acted as Co-Chairs; three designated members representing, respectively, the Permanent Forum, the Special Rapporteur and the Expert Mechanism; and one representative each of the UNESCO secretariat and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (in an advisory role).

23. Many other regional and national organizations were also involved in various activities and provided in-kind contributions in the form of human, technical and financial resources.

## **II. General overview of activities**

### **A. Activities by main objective**

24. During the Year, a series of activities was held that contributed to the attainment of the main objectives set out in the action plan, thus laying the groundwork for the continuation of activities going forward. A database was set up, based on voluntary reporting, to map, monitor and evaluate the activities and events organized by various partners around the world.

25. The database gives an overview of the impact and outcomes of the reported 882 activities and targeted events held in support of the Year:

(a) 259 activities and events (29 per cent) were aimed at focusing global attention on the critical risks confronting indigenous languages and the significance of such risks for sustainable development, reconciliation, good governance and peacebuilding;

(b) 128 (15 per cent) were focused on targeted steps to improve quality of life, enhance international cooperation and strengthen intercultural dialogue, and reaffirm cultural and linguistic continuity;

(c) 483 (55 per cent) were aimed at delivering increased capacities on the part of all stakeholders to take concrete and sustainable measures at every level to support, access and promote indigenous languages around the world in accordance with the legitimate rights of indigenous peoples;

(d) For 12 (1 per cent), no main objective was indicated in the database.

## B. Activities by thematic area

26. According to the action plan, the Year was to take the form of action-oriented activities relating to one or more of three thematic areas, namely support for, access to and promotion of indigenous languages, covering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals contained therein. The 882 activities reported in the database were held under one or more of those three thematic areas as follows:

(a) 89 activities were held around the thematic area of support, described in the action plan as support for the revitalization and maintenance of indigenous languages through measures to guarantee more materials, expanded content and a wider range of services, using language technologies and information and communications technologies, where appropriate, in order to improve everyday use of indigenous languages and encourage good practice, equality and proficiency in their use;

(b) 70 activities were held around the thematic area of access: preservation of indigenous languages, access to education, information and knowledge in and about indigenous languages for indigenous children, young people and adults, through improvement of data collection and sharing of information in and about indigenous languages, using language technology and other communication and information mechanisms;

(c) 264 activities were held around the thematic area of promotion: mainstreaming the knowledge areas and values of indigenous peoples and cultures within broader sociocultural, economic and political domains, applying specific language technologies and other relevant methods of communication and information, as well as cultural practices such as traditional sports and games, which can provide enhanced access and empowerment for indigenous language speakers;

(d) For 15 activities no theme was indicated;

(e) 227 activities were held around all three thematic areas;

(f) 130 activities were held around access and promotion;

(g) 15 activities were around access and support;

(h) 72 activities were held around promotion and support.

## C. Actors involved in the activities

27. Some 102 activities and events (12 per cent of the worldwide total) were carried out by indigenous peoples or their representative organizations. The non-governmental sector, consisting of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector, was responsible for nearly 40 per cent of the activity count.

28. As a sign of their initiative and leadership in this area, national Governments supported 25 per cent of the final event count. Thirty-two per cent of the events were organized by international organizations (that number includes the 25 per cent organized by national Governments, as international organizations are primarily intergovernmental). Academia was the single biggest sector in that it accounted for 27 per cent of the events.

## D. Activities by main area of intervention

29. The following five main intervention areas, each with their own associated outcomes, outputs and activities, were included in the action plan and were set out in a subsequent workplan:

(a) Intervention area 1: increasing understanding, reconciliation and international cooperation – 77 activities were pursued exclusively in intervention area 1 and 297 activities in area 1 together with other areas;

(b) Intervention area 2: creation of favourable conditions for knowledge-sharing and dissemination of good practices on indigenous languages – 255 activities were pursued exclusively in area 2 and 391 activities in area 2 together with other areas;

(c) Intervention area 3: integration of indigenous languages into standard-setting – 20 activities were pursued exclusively in area 3 and 192 activities in area 3 together with other areas;

(d) Intervention area 4: empowerment through capacity-building – 15 activities were pursued exclusively in area 4 and 224 activities in area 4 together with other areas;

(e) Intervention area 5: growth and development through elaboration of new knowledge – 33 activities were pursued exclusively in area 5 and 297 activities in area 5 together with other areas;

(f) 16 activities were not categorized.

30. Most of the events and activities were pursued under more than one type of intervention. The creation of favourable conditions (intervention area 2) was by far the largest category, both in and of itself and in conjunction with other categories, followed by increasing understanding and cooperation (intervention area 1). Activities and events specifically aimed at more concrete achievements, such as the elaboration of new knowledge (presumably in an indigenous language and/or in an indigenous community setting), or usage of indigenous languages in standard setting, were less frequently used.

## E. Activities by category and geographical distribution

31. The action plan for the Year comprised a list of events, conferences and meetings scheduled according to 15 event categories<sup>7</sup> and expected outputs,<sup>8</sup> as well as a linkage to the road map towards strategic objectives. This categorization provided a useful framework and allowed for a greater coordination of efforts to achieve the strategic objectives and the desired impact.

32. Cultural events and activities constituted by far the most common type of activity undertaken (296 out of 683 for which a category was reported, or 34 per cent

<sup>7</sup> The event categories were the following: (a) international conference of States; (b) international meetings; (c) non-governmental organizations; (d) international congress; (e) advisory committees; (f) expert committees; (g) seminars and training/courses; (h) symposiums; (i) concerts; (j) performance/theatre; (k) exhibitions; (l) sports events, traditional sports and games; (m) film screenings; (n) media; and (o) online events.

<sup>8</sup> Expected outputs included decisions, recommendations and conclusions addressed to intergovernmental organizations, promotion of the exchange of knowledge at the international and national levels, advice on the execution programmes, advice on the formulation of programmes, training, promotion of cultural expression, promotion of sports and traditional sports and games, and dissemination of information.

of the total number 882). Within that category, exhibitions were the most popular, whereas sports events – which perhaps lend themselves less to language considerations, but are potentially more attractive to younger generations – were the least popular. The same applied to online events, which perhaps also reflects the relatively more disadvantageous economic status of indigenous communities. In all, 200 conferences and advisory meetings were organized (23 per cent). Capacity-building was included in 133 activities (15 per cent). Finally, 54 media-related activities were organized (6 per cent). For the remaining 199 activities (23 per cent), the organizers did not specify a category.

33. More than a third (327 activities, or 37 per cent) of all activities and events relating to the Year have been focused in Europe and North America involving essentially advanced economies. Latin America and the Caribbean region recorded 257 activities. The rarity of activities in Africa (30 activities, or 4 per cent) and Arab States (3 events) should be taken into consideration as part of the preparations for an International Decade of Indigenous Languages.

34. The following are the top 10 countries listed by the number of activities and events that they hosted as part of the Year: Mexico (159), United States of America (108), Australia (49), Canada (48), the Philippines (46), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (45), France (45), Norway (36), Brazil (24) and Germany (16). Their combined total amounted to 576 activities and events, or 65 per cent of the world total.

### **III. Key activities for the implementation of General Assembly resolution [71/178](#)**

#### **A. Introduction**

35. For the implementation of General Assembly resolution [71/178](#), the following activities and measures were undertaken by UNESCO with support from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in cooperation with a range of partners, to deliver the main objectives of the Year:

- (a) Preparation of the action plan for organizing the Year;
- (b) Establishment of the multi-stakeholder structure to provide guidance on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/178 further to the action plan;
- (c) Building of strategic partnerships with a range of partners;
- (d) Development of a global communication strategy and production of communication tools;
- (e) Preparation of the strategic outcome document through a series of regional and public online consultations, and establishment of an open-ended drafting group;
- (f) development of an information technology-based management system, and monitoring and evaluation tools, and implementation;
- (g) Implementation of targeted projects within the main lines of action;
- (h) Designation of and international cooperation with the UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Indigenous Peoples.

## **B. Action plan for organizing the International Year**

36. UNESCO facilitated the development of an action plan for organizing the Year (E/C.19/2018/8) under the guidance of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat through open consultations with interested Member States, indigenous peoples, representatives of United Nations system agencies, funds and programmes, the three United Nations system bodies with mandates specifically concerning indigenous peoples (the Permanent Forum, the Expert Mechanism and the Special Rapporteur) and other stakeholders. The work was done during the preparatory process, which lasted from January 2017 to December 2018.

37. The action plan set out a comprehensive overview of key objectives, principles and actions to be taken during the Year and after. The action plan also set out measurable objectives and informed all stakeholders about planned activities that built on the experience that UNESCO had gathered as the lead United Nations entity for the International Year of Languages (2008). The action plan left room to adapt flexibly to emerging opportunities and challenges that might arise within the Year and outlined the main outcomes to be achieved in the biennium 2018–2020.

38. In 2018 and 2019, the Permanent Forum and the Expert Mechanism welcomed the proposed action plan and encouraged partners to prepare appropriate national plans for the Year, as did the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples.

## **C. Establishment of a multi-stakeholder structure**

39. During the consultative period (2017–2018), a multi-stakeholder partnership was found to be a suitable approach for the involvement of all interested parties in mobilizing the support needed to implement the various initiatives associated with the Year. That multi-stakeholder partnership was translated into a structure comprising:

(a) A steering committee tasked with providing guidance and overseeing overall implementation of the action plan. Since its establishment in April 2019, the steering committee has met 12 times to provide guidance on the overall implementation of the Year, including of the action plan, on the preparation of the strategic outcome document, and on the organization of the high-level launch and closing events, and other activities;

(b) Ad hoc groups were established to provide advice on particular aspects of the action plan. Two ad hoc groups were established, one on language technology and one on the global communication strategy. Both ad hoc groups not only provided opportunities for other partners to contribute to the organization of the Year, but also contributed to the implementation of several important activities. More specifically, a network of organizations was formed to promote indigenous languages, help to coordinate actions in different regions and share content in and about indigenous languages through existing social media channels and communication tools and through new ones specifically dedicated to the Year. The ad hoc group on language technology stimulated global consultations and international cooperation through the organization of major gatherings on language technology in partnership with private sector organizations, indigenous peoples, academia and governmental partners. The ad hoc group also contributed to the strategic outcome document,<sup>9</sup> acknowledging that in today's world, digital technologies – in particular language technology, and content development and dissemination – had a growing influence on societal development and contributed to the intergenerational transmission of indigenous languages rather than their disappearance. It also encouraged the application of solutions whose

<sup>9</sup> UNESCO document 40 C/68.

delivery was based on open standards, in particular emerging technologies, artificial intelligence and blockchain technology.

#### **D. Global communication strategy**

40. A global communication strategy was prepared to raise awareness of the critical situation in which many indigenous languages find themselves, and mobilize necessary institutional, human and financial resources for joint action by preserving, supporting and promoting indigenous languages at the national, regional and international levels. The key message being communicated was that indigenous languages matter for development, peacebuilding and reconciliation in our societies.

41. The main objectives of the global communication strategy were to inform target audiences, create greater awareness, connect, stimulate dialogue, impart new knowledge, shape attitudes, engage, encourage the creation and dissemination of new content, tools and equipment, connect and mobilize diverse actors, and encourage international cooperation. A primary target audience were speakers and users of indigenous languages, based on the principle “nothing about us without us”. A secondary target audience was composed of Governments, public institutions and policymaking bodies, academia and educational organizations, and the private sector. Other target groups included media professionals, digital activists, opinion leaders, artists and the general public.

42. For the implementation of the global communication strategy, the following tools and resources were made available to the users and partners involved in the Year:

- (a) A website dedicated to the Year;
- (b) Hashtags and social media pages dedicated to the Year;
- (c) A logo for the Year;
- (d) Digital content about the Year;
- (e) A postage stamp dedicated to the Year;
- (f) A global calendar of events and initiatives.

43. The Year was promoted with the help of a dedicated and active programme of dissemination and feedback on the Internet through the website and through social media. The dedicated website offered a range of functionalities and tools for reporting, monitoring and collecting data about events, disseminating information about those events, and for sharing material and accessing social media channels. It was the main impetus behind an active online following.

44. During the calendar year 2019, the website ([en.iyil2019.org](http://en.iyil2019.org)) attracted some 276,000 unique visitors, who accounted for more than 700,000 page views. There have been distinct peaks in online traffic associated with major dissemination events in January, June, August and October 2019.

45. Based on the language preference set for visitors’ web browsers, there seems, at first sight, to have been an overwhelming share of English speakers: fully two thirds (67 per cent) of the total of 275,000 visitors who had set such a language preference. The French and Spanish versions of the website were less visited.

46. The top 25 countries based on the number of unique visitors were the United States, India, Australia, Canada, the Philippines, Mexico, Brazil, the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Argentina, Bangladesh, China, Germany, the Republic of Korea, Colombia, Italy, Peru, Pakistan, New Zealand, South Africa, the Russian Federation, Uruguay, Norway and Thailand.

47. Most registered users on the website came from developed countries, led by the United States, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and France. However, registered users from a number of middle- and high-income countries, including Brazil, India, Mexico and the Philippines, have also been active participants. Two regions with particularly high cross-border activity and/or a cross-border presence of closely related indigenous languages were the Scandinavian peninsula and the Andean area.

48. To promote the main objectives, two hashtags were created, a new one for indigenous languages (#IndigenousLanguages) and a previously used one for “we are indigenous” (#WeAreIndigenous). As a strategy for categorizing messages on Twitter, hashtags were used to promote, inform and engage online audiences in a range of language activities around the world. This measure helped interested users to find and share messages on a given theme. The hashtags were systematically promoted and their use was monitored to see which users used what hashtag and to interact with them by sharing targeted messages related to indigenous languages.

49. On the websites and mobile applications of the popular social media platforms Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, interested users could create and share content or participate in social networking and raise awareness of the critical situation of many indigenous languages. Throughout the Year, a systematic analysis of social media activities was carried out. Two hashtags (#WeAreIndigenous and “International Year of Indigenous Languages 2019” #IYIL2019) reached peaks at the global launch event, the global closing event, the celebration of the International Day of the World’s Indigenous People, the designation of the UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Indigenous Peoples and other notable online activities.

50. A logo was created to give the Year its visual identity, spread messages and images promoting action, and help users to better recognize the work done as part of the Year.

51. Based on the available data, the organizers of some 496 events and activities (56 per cent) requested permission to use the logo in their material, which was granted in 372 cases (42 per cent). The Year logo was made available in the six official languages of the United Nations, as well as in other languages.

52. The logo was used on promotional material by entities outside the United Nations system such as Governments, intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations. Versions of the logo in languages other than the six official languages of the United Nations were also designed in response to requests received from the partners. Some 26 events were held under UNESCO patronage and another 90 in partnership with it, thus involving the Organization directly in 13 per cent of worldwide activity in 2019. Another 394 events held in the context of the Year were reported as stand-alone, i.e., not directly related to the United Nations.

53. Digital content was produced in the form of e-cards containing presentations, images, playlists and audiovisual materials, including video messages.

54. A postage stamp was designed and was circulated by many national postal authorities. This was done in cooperation with the Universal Postal Union, which actively promoted the global campaign and encouraged national postal offices to raise awareness of the Year. Several countries, including Australia and France, produced the stamp and brought it into circulation. The results will be made available later in 2020.

55. A global calendar of events posted on the website showed all events by event category with a description, useful links, relevant documentation and the contact details of the organizers. This comprehensive overview allowed for greater coordination of efforts to achieve the strategic objectives and the desired impact.

## E. Road map for the preparation of the strategic outcome document

56. For the preparation of the strategic outcome document, a key output of the Year, a global consultative procedure was set up in consultation with the steering committee. The consultative procedure included several international and regional consultations,<sup>10</sup> held in cooperation with Member States, indigenous peoples, academic organizations, United Nations system entities and other public and private bodies. The results included key recommendations for the elaboration of the strategic outcome document and future actions.

57. The Permanent Forum, the Expert Mechanism and the Special Rapporteur contributed to the strategic outcome document. In addition, UNESCO and the steering committee established an open-ended drafting group that met during the annual session of the Permanent Forum and the Expert Mechanism in 2019. Furthermore, UNESCO held an online consultation from August to September 2019. Contributions were received from indigenous peoples, intergovernmental, research, national and regional organizations, and individual experts. As a result, the UNESCO General Conference adopted the strategic outcome document at its fortieth session, in 2019.<sup>11</sup>

58. One of the key recommendations for future action contained in the strategic outcome document was to make additional efforts to seek extrabudgetary resources, including by examining the feasibility of establishing a multi-donor financial mechanism for the implementation of language-related initiatives and concrete projects, including in follow-up to the International Year and to the International Decade of Indigenous Languages.

## F. Global call for research papers

59. Scientific research activity related to the Year involved 63 countries. Mexico was the most active, submitting 48 research papers on endangered language issues in the course of the Year, followed by the United States, India and the United Kingdom, which contributed, respectively, 31, 25 and 15 papers. The top 15 countries by the number of research papers accounted for a total of 203 research papers (71 per cent of the grand total of 284 papers submitted by all 63 countries combined).

60. A total of 195 articles were submitted in English (70 per cent), 77 articles were submitted in Spanish (28 per cent) and 6 articles were submitted in French (2 per cent).

61. The following seven themes were proposed for scientific research:

- (a) Humanitarian affairs and peacebuilding: 76 articles (12 per cent);

<sup>10</sup> The following international and regional consultative events contributed to the strategic outcome document: (a) International symposium entitled “Realization of international commitments for the empowerment of local language speakers, communities and nations”, Asunción, 3–5 July 2018; (b) International conference entitled “Role of linguistic diversity in building a global community with shared future: protection, access and promotion of language resources”, Changsha, China, 19–21 September 2018; (c) Fourth Andean peace meeting on the contribution of indigenous languages – from education to peacebuilding, conclusions and recommendations, Quito, 3 and 4 July 2019; (d) North American and Arctic regional meeting on the International Year of Indigenous Languages, held on the margins of the International Conference entitled “Heliset tte skál – Let the languages live”, Victoria, Canada, 23–26 June 2019; (e) African regional meeting on the International Year of Indigenous Languages organized in cooperation with the African Union and the African Academy of Languages, Addis Ababa, 30 and 31 July 2019, and the regional outcome document; (f) Regional congress on the indigenous languages of Latin America and the Caribbean to mark the International Year of Indigenous Languages, organized in cooperation with the Government of Peru, Cusco, 25–27 September 2019.

<sup>11</sup> UNESCO, document 40 C/68.

- (b) Indigenous education and knowledge: 167 articles (28 per cent);
- (c) Science and health: 46 articles (8 per cent);
- (d) Gender equality: 24 articles (4 per cent);
- (e) Social inclusion and urbanization: 78 articles (13 per cent);
- (f) Cultural heritage: 179 articles (30 per cent);
- (g) Technology and digital activism: 33 articles (5 per cent).

## **G. Key outputs**

62. The list of delivered outputs and activities given below is not necessarily comprehensive, but is aligned with the list specified in the action plan:

- (a) Communication kit (logo, guidelines and publicity materials);
- (b) Official website to showcase communication campaigns (including on social media), short documentary films and other audiovisual materials; a calendar of events, notably mobilizing cultural and traditional resources around the world; relevant research; and best practices;
- (c) Launch event, closing ceremony and other special events around the world;
- (d) Nomination of International Year ambassadors, language champions and promoters;
- (e) Involvement of UNESCO Artists for Peace and goodwill ambassadors for UNESCO and other United Nations system organizations for the promotion of the Year;
- (f) A series of media partnerships delivering both global and specialized media, cultural and film festivals;
- (g) Flagship initiatives launched by partners;
- (h) Linkages with side events, such as international, regional and national conferences, summits, meetings, gatherings, cultural and sports events, and commemoration of international days;
- (i) Series of cultural events associated with the Year, including exhibitions, concerts, film festivals and screenings, and traditional sports and games festivals and contests.

63. The following is a list of outputs still under preparation with an expected completion date in 2020:

- (a) Final report on the implementation of the action plan at the end of the Year, informational documents on follow-up after 2019 to meet the requirements of the UNESCO Executive Board and, if requested by Member States, of the General Assembly in 2020;
- (b) Flagship publication on indigenous languages around the world (paper and electronic versions);
- (c) Additional published data and research outcomes on traditional knowledge and issues relating to indigenous languages;
- (d) Showcase of new learning and teaching materials (such as teacher courses and dictionaries), several capacity-building workshops designed for teacher training institutions (including teachers in service) and launch of new language technologies.

64. In addition, a series of important measures were taken to ensure a results-based monitoring and implementation process. This included the development of computer-based management tools to follow and support the results-based management approach applied in projects implemented by the United Nations. The computer-based management system formed an integral part of the website and became a central pillar for the Year's programming, operations and monitoring, as well as for the accountability, effectiveness and efficiency of all partners involved.

65. The following two initiatives are outputs that have not yet been initiated:

(a) Involvement of indigenous Olympic athletes and of athletes and practitioners of traditional sports and games as role models or champions for indigenous languages, including those participating at the third World Indigenous Nations Games;

(b) Discussions on the designation of an indigenous languages day.

## IV. Conclusion

66. Since the launch, in 2017, of the preparations for the Year, a range of partners have taken ground-breaking steps forward in the area of supporting, providing access and promoting indigenous languages around the world. Substantial progress was made in drawing the attention of the global community to the critical situation of many indigenous languages and mobilizing resources for joint action. The key conclusion of the Year is that there is a need to maintain the momentum through the continued engagement of Member States, indigenous peoples, academia, public and private actors and other stakeholders.

67. By addressing the needs of users of indigenous languages and offering an adequate response to the challenges indigenous people face in maintaining and transmitting their languages from one generation to another, the global community acknowledges the wider and special significance of all indigenous languages and their role in and relevance to peacebuilding, good governance, sustainable development and reconciliation within our societies.

68. In the conclusions contained in the strategic outcome document, stock was taken of the progress made and further guidance was given with regard to the various strands of work on indigenous languages. The document also contained a call for the establishment of minimum standards, to be built on the existing framework of normative instruments and tools, to preserve, support and provide access to indigenous languages and their users. The impact of the International Year of Indigenous Languages as a mechanism for international cooperation and awareness-raising will also need to be carefully assessed for its potential as a launchpad for a new and longer-term sustainable response designed with specific goals, actions and timelines.

69. The findings will serve as input to the preparations of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022–2032).