

**ACHPR/Res. 430 (LXV) 2019 : Resolution on the Recognition, Promotion and Protection of Indigenous Languages**

***The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (the Commission), meeting at its 65<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session held from 21 October to 10 November 2019, in Banjul, The Gambia:***

**Recalling** its mandate to promote and protect human and peoples' rights in Africa under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Charter);

**Considering** that the Commission established an Expert Working Group on Indigenous Populations/Communities in Africa (Working Group) in 2001 with a view to promoting and protecting the rights of indigenous populations/communities on the continent;

**Bearing in mind** the Report of the Working Group on the Rights of Indigenous Populations/Communities in Africa that was adopted by the Commission in 2003 at its 28<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session, and which, among others, recognizes the importance of promoting and protecting indigenous languages and cultures;

**Recalling** the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted in 2007, in particular articles 13, 14 and 16 that recognize the right of indigenous peoples to revitalize, use, develop and transmit their languages, including the right to be taught in their language, as well as commitments made in the Outcome Document of the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples of 22 September 2014;

**Further recalling** that in 2016 the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution proclaiming 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages;

**Considering** the conclusions and recommendations of the regional workshop organised by the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN-AU) in collaboration with UNESCO on 30 and 31 July 2019 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, as part of the commemoration of International Year of Indigenous Languages 2019;

**Considering** the vital importance, for indigenous populations, of languages for the survival and preservation of their sociocultural and spiritual identities;

**Concerned** by the fact that out of the 40 percent of the world's endangered languages the majority are indigenous languages, which puts at risk their cultures and knowledge systems;

**Deeply concerned** about the risk of the gradual disappearance of some indigenous languages in Africa if nothing is done to ensure their effective promotion and protection;

**Convinced** that the International Year of Indigenous Languages 2019 has helped to build a good momentum for the protection and promotion of indigenous languages, and that the period may not be sufficient to consolidate the achievements;

**Takes note of** the efforts made in 2019 by governments, indigenous populations, intergovernmental organisations, in particular UNESCO, and civil society organisations in revitalising and developing indigenous languages;

**Also welcoming** the fact that the relevant UN institutions, in particular the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) have already expressed support for an International Decade of Indigenous Languages;

#### **The Commission:**

1. **Expresses** its full support to the United Nations' initiative to declare 2022-2032 as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages;
2. **Urges** States Parties to give legal recognition to indigenous languages and allocate the necessary budget for the preservation and enjoyment of the languages and cultures of indigenous populations;
3. **Strongly encourages** African governments, indigenous populations, intergovernmental organisations, national human rights institutions, civil society organisations and academic institutions to increase efforts towards the sustainable preservation, protection and promotion of indigenous languages; and
4. **Calls upon** the AU to promote indigenous languages in Africa as part of its mandate.

**Done in Banjul, The Gambia, 10 November 2019**