

BACKGROUND

2008 Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Languages.

What are the findings and recommendations?

The report documents a wide variety of concerns about indigenous languages and linguistic rights, and warns that the erosion of indigenous languages is accelerating throughout the world. It also affirms that new legislation, policies and more stable long-term funding are necessary to reverse these trends and revitalize indigenous languages.

The report emphasizes the key role that language has to play in sustainable development and resource management, and urges the integration of policy to promote and protect indigenous language and culture, in development, education and broadcasting.

The report's recommendations are directed toward national and regional governments, the international community and to indigenous peoples themselves.

The report is intended to serve as guidance to policy-makers throughout the world concerned with indigenous language revitalization and promotion.

What will be the next steps?

At the end of the current session, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues will decide how to respond to the Report.

Future developments on the international scene may include:

- an international convention for the protection of indigenous languages, identities and cultural rights;
- the creation of a Special UN Rapporteur on language rights, and other measures to ensure that the status and needs of indigenous languages are more effectively monitored;
- a world conference on linguistic diversity, indigenous languages, identity and education.

These and other initiatives that may be proposed at the United Nations may offer an important enabling environment, and unprecedented opportunities to improve the protection available for indigenous languages, including for the Inuit Language and its speakers.

More on the 7th Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues can be found here:

http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/session_seventh.html