



International Indian Treaty Council
Consejo Internacional de Tratados Indios

2940 16th Street, Suite 305
San Francisco, CA 94103-3664
Phone: (415) 641-4482
Fax: (415) 641-1298
Email: iitc@treatycouncil.org
www.treatycouncil.org

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"Without Our Languages our Nations will Cease to Be"

- Rodney Factor, Assistant Band Chief of the Tusekia Harjo Band of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma
and Board Member of the International Indian Treaty Council

Re: Invitation to the United Nations International Year of Indigenous Languages: Tribal Nations in Oklahoma Working to Preserve, Protect and Revitalize Our Languages

Respectful Greetings,

The International Indian Treaty Council, Chickasaw Nation, Great Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, Global Indigenous Languages Caucus and Yuchi Language Project are pleased to announce that we will be co-hosting the "United Nations International Year of Languages: Tribal Nations in Oklahoma Working to Preserve, Protect and Revitalize Our Languages" Conference at the Chickasaw Cultural Center in Sulphur Oklahoma on November 15 and 16, 2019.

Our languages are inextricably linked to our cultures and identities. Oklahoma has been identified as one of the top 10 locations around the world where Indigenous languages are most threatened. Almost half of the world's estimated 6,700 languages – of which most are indigenous -- are in danger of disappearing. In May 2011, Ban Ki-moon, the U.N. Secretary-General, stated the reality of Indigenous languages, "Today, one Indigenous language dies every two weeks. Indigenous cultures are threatened with extinction." With every language that disappears, the world loses a wealth of traditional knowledge.

The International Year of Indigenous Languages was declared by the United Nations General Assembly on Dec. 19, 2016 to draw attention to the urgent need to preserve, revitalize and promote Indigenous languages.

Community members, Tribal citizens, and Tribal programs are now claiming our rights to our Indigenous languages and traditional cultures **proudly speaking 24 Indigenous languages within the state of Oklahoma**. This conference will bring language practitioners, tribal language program representatives, and language rights advocates from in and outside Oklahoma together to share challenges, success stories and ongoing work to restore and protect Indigenous languages and build fluency to ensure that our ways of life stay alive.

Topics for presentation and discussion will include the right to language, the impacts of historical trauma on Indigenous languages in Oklahoma, and ensuring the next generation of fluent speakers, among many other topics. Recommendations made during this conference will be brought back to our Tribes and presented to the United Nations for the International Year of Indigenous Languages.

Working for the Rights and Recognition of Indigenous Peoples
Trabajando por el reconocimiento y los derechos de los Pueblos Indígenas



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Special guest of honor at the conference will be Grand Chief Ed John of the Tl'azt'en Nation who serves at the Indigenous Co-Chair of UNESCO International Year of Indigenous Languages Steering Committee. In this context, Grand Chief John has noted the core importance of developing fluency in our communities: "There's been a large focus on literacy, developing books and calendars and dictionaries in indigenous languages... but not as much of an effort in fluency."

The event is FREE and, registration to attend is required as space is limited. Food will be provided for the first 180 registered participants. Register using this link: [REGISTER HERE](#). If you would like to present, register as a presenter, and we will be in contact with you.

For more information on booking lodging with a special rate at the nearby hotel go to: [Accommodations](#).

If you have any questions contact:

Tushka Hill, tushka@treatycouncil.org; (405) 585-7901 and/or

Nicole Yanes, nicole@treatycouncil.org; 520-248-7402.

ÔnzO gOchathla gO'wAdAnAha Ôk'ajU k'aÔk'ânEya TahA Ôk'âfATAnE
"If we work together we can keep our Indigenous languages moving forward," as expressed in
Yuchi language.

We look forward to seeing you in Oklahoma.

With warm regards,

Coordinating Committee



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