



2022-2032 | INTERNATIONAL DECADE OF  
Indigenous Languages



# Proposed National Action Plan of the Afrikaans Languages



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# GLOBAL ACTION PLAN OF THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES (2022-2032)

## INTRODUCTION:

As an outcome of the International Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL2019), proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in resolution 71/178 (A/RES/71/178<sup>1</sup>), the UNGA, by its resolution 74/135 (A/RES/74/135<sup>2</sup>) of December 2019, proclaimed the period 2022-2032 as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (hereafter referred to as “IDIL 2022-2032”) and invited UNESCO to serve as its lead agency, in collaboration with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and other United Nations system entities.

Pursuant to the resolution which called for “urgent steps at the national and international levels” to “preserve, revitalize and promote indigenous languages”, a Global Action Plan of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages<sup>1</sup> (hereafter referred to as “the Global Action Plan”) was drafted to provide all stakeholders with the essential principles for embarking on joint action, as well as guidance on a conceptual framework, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and governance structures.

## ROADMAP FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE GLOBAL ACTION PLAN:

To prepare the Global Action Plan, UNESCO collaborated with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the Office of the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/71/178> - Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2016

<sup>2</sup> <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/71/178> - Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 18 December 2019

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High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), other United Nations system entities through the United Nations Inter-agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues, and members of the Global Task Force for Making a Decade of Action for Indigenous Languages which was established by UNESCO in March 2021 to provide guidance on the preparation, planning, implementation and monitoring of progress towards attainment of the objectives of the Global Action Plan, as well as with other relevant stakeholders. The preparation of the Global Action Plan was also informed by the recommendations contained in the Internal Oversight Service (IOS) Evaluation of UNESCO's action to revitalize and promote indigenous languages within the framework of the IYIL2019 (211 EX/11<sup>3</sup>), as well as with the principles enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the outcomes of other key documents such as the Strategic Outcome Document of the IYIL2019 (40 C/68<sup>4</sup>) and the Los Pinos Declaration <sup>5</sup>[Chapoltepek] – “Making a Decade of Action for Indigenous Languages”.

Consultative processes were designed in line with the principles of openness, inclusion and multi-stakeholder participation, to ensure the integration of all stakeholder perspectives:

- In July 2020, UNESCO established an internal Intersectoral Task Team to ensure a multi-disciplinary and transversal approach to the organization of the IDIL 2022-2032. The Task Team is composed of 63 staff from Headquarters and field offices and is co-chaired by the Assistant Directors-General for Communication and Information, Culture and Education. It has aimed at fostering intersectoral cooperation around the Decade, following up on the recommendations of the IOS Evaluation, and organizing consultations for the preparation of the Global Action Plan for the International Decade.
- Also, in July 2020, an Ad-hoc group for the preparation of the Global Action Plan was established. Its 81 members include representatives of governments, national and regional public organizations working on indigenous language issues, Indigenous Peoples' organizations,

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<sup>3</sup> [https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000375809\\_eng](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000375809_eng) - Internal Oversight Service (IOS) Evaluation of UNESCO's action to revitalize and promote indigenous languages within the framework of the International Year of Indigenous Languages 2019

<sup>4</sup> [https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000371494\\_eng](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000371494_eng) - Strategic outcome document of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Language

<sup>5</sup> [https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/los\\_pinos\\_declaration\\_170720\\_en.pdf](https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/los_pinos_declaration_170720_en.pdf) -

academia, civil society and other public and private institutions, as well as international organizations.

- From November 2020 to May 2021, a global online survey was made available in English, French, Russian and Spanish, providing representatives of Member States, Indigenous Peoples' organizations, academia, civil society, and other public and private institutions, as well as international organizations, the opportunity to share their views and ideas for the preparation of the Global Action Plan. The survey generated 821 responses on the priority areas to be addressed in the Global Action Plan.
- UNESCO organized a series of consultative meetings for each socio-cultural region of Indigenous Peoples<sup>2</sup>, in cooperation with members of the Global Task Force and other public, civil society, United Nations system entities. The consultations were carried out between March 2021 and June 2021.
- The UN Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues, including United Nations system entities, were invited in July 2020 and September 2021 to contribute to the preparation of the Global Action Plan.
- The Global Task Force for Making a Decade of Action for Indigenous Languages was established by UNESCO on 22 March 2021. It consists of 19 representatives from UNESCO Member States, Indigenous Peoples' organizations, designated members of United Nations indigenous mechanisms, UNESCO (serving as Secretariat of the Global Task Force), UNDESA and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The draft Global Action Plan was shared with members of the Global Task Force in September 2021, to obtain their input
- The online public peer review consultations were launched in October 2021 providing an opportunity for all interested stakeholders to contribute to the finalization of the Global Action Plan.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE GLOBAL ACTION PLAN:**

The Global Action Plan is structured around four main parts, in addition to technical annexes:

- I) The Introduction provides background information on the importance of linguistic diversity and multilingualism for societal development and draws attention to the critical situation of indigenous languages around the world. It also provides a rationale for undertaking immediate action to preserve,

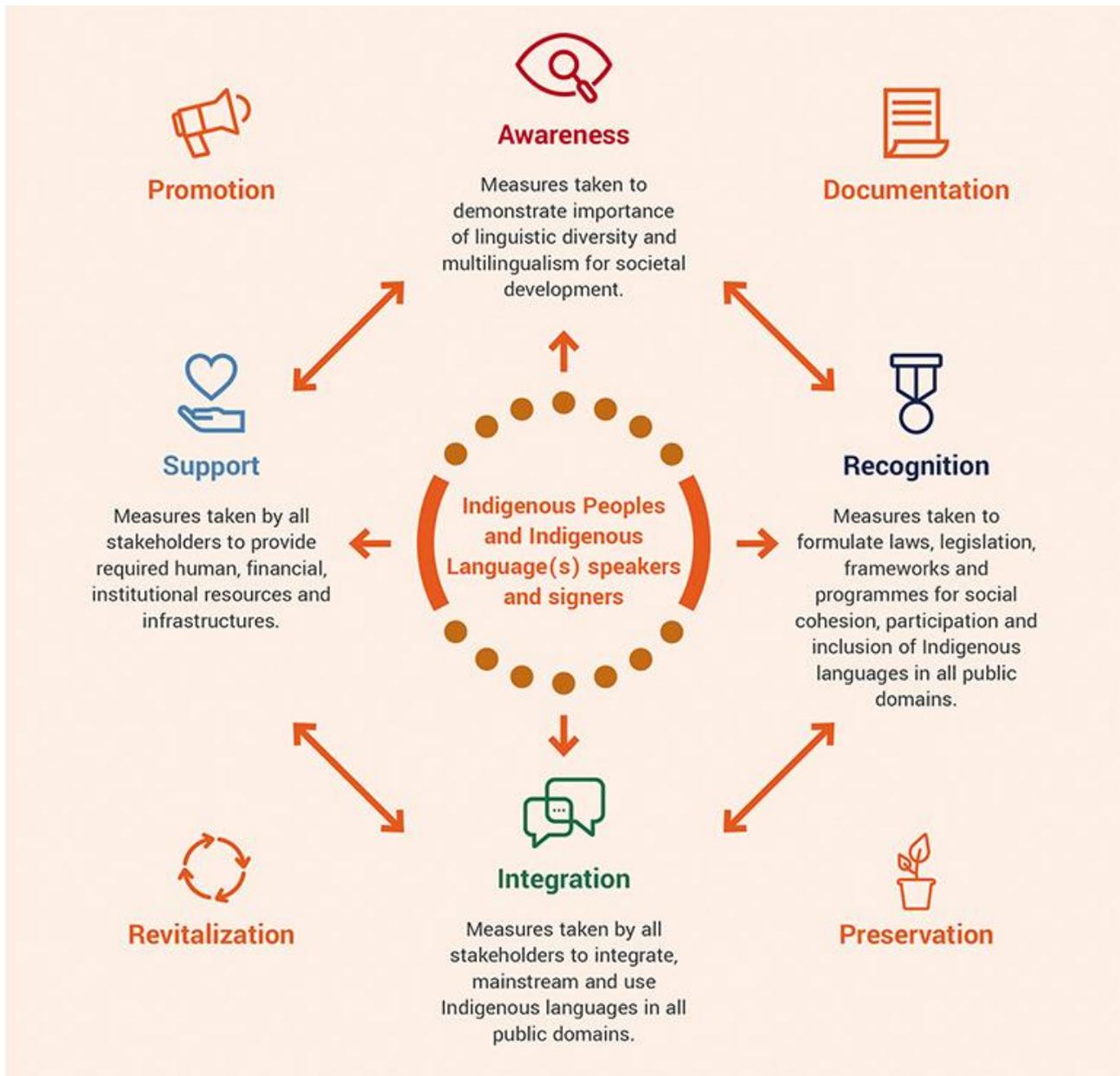


revitalize and promote indigenous languages. Finally, it summarizes the preparation process of the Global Action Plan.

- II) The second section outlines the Theory of Change that defines the vision and impact statements for the International Decade and provides a methodology for all involved stakeholders to guide their participation, as well as their planning, implementation, evaluation and monitoring processes during the International Decade. This section also presents foreseen activities, outputs and outcomes and highlights linkages with other global development frameworks.
- III) The third section presents the Implementation Framework including the multi-stakeholder partnership mechanism, timeframe, key milestones, as well as governance and coordination frameworks for the IDIL 2022-2032. It also introduces other strategic frameworks developed to support the implementation of the Global Action Plan, namely a Resource Mobilization Strategy and a Global Communication Strategy.
- IV) Section four is focused on Monitoring and Evaluation and provides a set of measures to support continuous assessment of progress made.
- V) The technical annexes include lists of used terms, key documents and frameworks, a roadmap towards the Global Action Plan and a summary table of the theory of change.

The Global Action Plan is the result of extensive, collaborative and collective deliberations among all concerned stakeholders. It sets the direction for joint action and has been developed to serve as a guiding framework for all stakeholders to prepare regional, national, local and/or institutional plans, adjusted to identified priorities and specificities, for the implementation of the IDIL2022-2032.

## Step Cycle of Indigenous Languages (How to ensure that your language is protected)



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# National Action Plan

## Focus Areas & Goals

The main breakthrough which gave way to this project, was the declaration from the PanSALB (Pan South African Language Board) in 2021<sup>6</sup>. This declaration indicated that Afrikaans was an indigenous language of South Africa.

This declaration has inspired hope that even though historically Afrikaans has been used as a medium and was globally recognised to be a main role player in the history of Apartheid. However, the language itself should not carry this burden.

The language has come a long way and historically, these factors have been neglected and forgotten. The language needs to be preserved and protected.

What the language is currently facing, is proof that any indigenous language, no matter the number of speakers, can be placed under threat

The basic goals and principles of this action plan has been put together by a user of an indigenous language who has experience first-hand, the issues outlined within the Global Action Plan.

This individual has been doing extensive research and has been looking at various ways to not only promote the use of the language, but also to preserve and protect the language itself.

One thing that is very certain, the language has face severe criticism in the past due to its role as a medium in Apartheid, however, this does not exclude Afrikaans from being an indigenous language that is currently facing numerous threats, such as many other languages across the world.

The threats which such a large indigenous language is facing, is an indication that no matter the size of the community, any language can face these threats.

The purpose of this project is therefore to outline the issues which Afrikaans is facing as a language, and to outline the factors which contribute to the endangerment and threats to the language.

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<sup>6</sup> The Status of Afrikaans as an Indigenous South African Language - [https://pansalb.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Status-of-Afrikaans-as-an-Indigenous-Language\\_final.pdf](https://pansalb.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Status-of-Afrikaans-as-an-Indigenous-Language_final.pdf)

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The focus areas of this project are as follows:

### *Education*

The educational system in South Africa has changed drastically over the past 2 decades, this has contributed to the limitations listed below:

- Limited use of Afrikaans within education (Basic Education and Higher Education)
- Limited appointment of Afrikaans-speaking individuals within the educational field
- Implementation of Language Policies which have resulted in the removal of Afrikaans as a teaching medium
- Removal and changes to Afrikaans figures within the geographical namespace (Name Changes of schools named after historical figures)

This list is just an outline of the main issues which are known, the full and further extent of this issue is to be addressed within the course of the program.

### *Human Rights*

Human Rights in relation to the language itself are very limited.

The protection and enforcement of Human Rights as stipulated within the Constitution of South Africa, as well as the Declaration of Human Rights, are not enforced within the justice systems, this has been seen in relation to various cases which have been brought to the SAHRC (South African Human Rights Commission) as well as the Constitutional Court within South Africa,

Afrikaans-speaking individuals have limited access to the justice system (courts do not operate in this language and therefore limit access to the courts), there have also been signs of limiting the practice of Afrikaans and white individuals within the justice system in terms of proposed national legislation.

Human Rights mechanisms have also been investigated and the conclusion to this matter is that the use of Afrikaans, limits the interaction and effectiveness of interacting with local Human Rights organizations (SAHRC – South African Human Rights Commission)

Various Constitutional bodies established through the Constitution will be investigated in terms of their effectiveness and operability in relation to their mandate and functions.

### *Employment*

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The employment of Afrikaans-speaking individuals and white individuals has been limited in terms of national legislation (BBBEE – Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act – which gives preferred employment opportunity to Black individuals). The corresponding legislation (Employment Equity Act) indicates that discrimination in terms of Employment Equity is not discrimination as defined by law.

National legislation has been adopted and has been worded in such a way that it makes the citizens believe that this law is justified, even though the principles of the act itself are in violation of several international laws and treaties (E.g., International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination)

### *Culture*

Afrikaans culture is currently under threat.

This is proven by the actions of the local government of South Africa which have acted against the will of the people and communities and has also limited public consultation and participation of the Afrikaans community in several aspects, such as:

- Forced changes in Geographical Names representing Afrikaans culture and historical events
- Forced removal of Afrikaans monuments
- Forced intervention in Afrikaans cultural events and institutions (such as the suggested removal of the word Afrikaans of the Afrikaans Language Monument)

These are just some of the challenges that the Afrikaans community is facing, and even with strong opposition, the fact that the Afrikaans community is a minority in the country, there is limited to zero probability of opposing the majority.

### *Sport*

The participation of Afrikaans and white individuals has been placed under severe pressure from the local government in terms of quotas. The quota system will be investigated in terms of the sole application of this system only on white participation.

This system is not applied to soccer for instance, where there is a majority of black participation.

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### *Justice*

The judiciary and related institutions and bodies will be investigated in terms of their functions, standards, and effectiveness in relation to their mandate and purpose.

The Judiciary will be the main focal point as the Judiciary is to be an independent body that ensures an equitable and effective justice system within the country.

The standards of the Judiciary will be investigated and compared against international standards and the minimum requirements to be considered an independent and effective judiciary and democracy.

### *Public Service & Benefits*

The effectiveness of all public service departments and institutions will be investigated.

The policies of each department will be scrutinized and investigated in depth to ensure that the public service bodies operate in terms of effectiveness and professional standards.

Public benefit programs will be investigated in terms of standards, requirements, and effectiveness.

This investigation will be carried out across all departments and institutional bodies and independent

### *Historical Accuracy*

The true history of the country will be investigated as the information which is being broadcasted to the citizens is highly inaccurate and biased as the history is only given from the 1900s. The entire history of the country prior to 1910, is being pushed aside, indicating that the government has used the history as a medium for personal gain.

### Consultation Sources

The following sources will be consulted:

Communities within the Country	Civil Organizations
Public Bodies & Institutions	Educational Institutions
International Communities	International Organizations
Private Bodies within the Country	Afrikaans Communities Worldwide
Afrikaans Institutions	Afrikaans Museums & Related Institutions
Historical Records (Archives and Community Records)	Any recommended sources from consultations and public participation

This action plan is brought together by the hopes of one individual, who has been fighting for his right to fully participate in all fields of the public, who wished that the language is protected, promoted, preserved, and will continue to grow.

But the challenges we are facing as an Afrikaans-speaking community is facing difficult times if we do not stand together.

We are not alone, communities across the world are fighting to ensure that their rights are protected. Why should we give up on that hope?

Why should we be forced to believe that our language is a disgrace and should be discouraged? This is something that is said to us, who are we to believe this?

I as an individual believe that if we can stand together as a community, as a united front. Why should any of our language people, feel abandoned and forgotten?

This project is not only an outcry for assistance, but this is also an opportunity for us to stand up against what is wrong, speak our minds, and place the control and governance of our own language back in our hands. No language should be subject to external review or governance.