



PHILIPPINES

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STATEMENT

by the

H.E. AMB. ANTONIO M. LAGDAMEO

Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations

Meeting to Launch the International Decade of Indigenous Languages
16 December 2022; 10:00 a.m.; General Assembly Hall; UNHQ

Madayaw na adlaw!

Mr. President,

The Philippines is home to more than 14 million indigenous peoples belonging to 110 ethno-linguistic groups. Guided by the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act, the Government steadfastly works towards the full realization of the human rights and development of all Filipino indigenous peoples.

Languages are important for sustainable development. Language is a fundamental pre-condition for tolerance, diversity and the peaceful existence of human societies. People need language to pass on knowledge and ideas.

Indigenous languages embody the culture of indigenous peoples. These are the instruments for passing on, from generation to generation, the knowledge, beliefs, and traditions of indigenous peoples. Through indigenous languages, artistic and musical traditions are shared to the next

generations and the world. The rich indigenous knowledge about caring for the environment and preserving the balance and harmony of nature can benefit our discussions and our efforts to address climate change. It is unfortunate that many indigenous languages are disappearing after falling out of daily use. Many are in danger of extinction.

The Philippines welcomes the International Decade of Indigenous Languages and we encourage all Member States, the UN System, indigenous peoples and other stakeholders to use this platform to raise awareness on the loss of indigenous languages and the urgent need to preserve them. We must promote global cooperation with the aim of revitalizing indigenous languages. We should take stock, analyze existing challenges, assess progress and share good practices and lessons learned. We must involve young people in our efforts. Mainstreaming indigenous languages in the life and interactions of young people is important in the preservation of indigenous languages.

The Filipino people celebrate indigenous culture and include indigenous peoples in all aspects of society. The Government and the private sector empower indigenous peoples to have a decent work without needing to leave their communities and give up their language.

Thank you. *Daghang salamat!*

