

## Human Rights Council: FORM for Submitting an NGO written statements

NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC (General, Special or Roster status) may submit written statements to the Human Rights Council (HRC).

The written statement is formatted and issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting NGO. English, Spanish and French versions can be published at this time.

In order for your statement to be published before the session, the deadline for submission is exactly two weeks prior to the start of a session. See the deadline on the web site. All submissions are final.

Please fill out **this** FORM and CHECKLIST to submit your statement and send it to the address indicated below. Your information goes after each arrow.

1. Please indicate the contact information for representative submitting written statement (i.e. name, mobile, email) here: → Ulrich Delius, 0049-16095671403, asien@gfbv.de

2. Indicate the Standing Agenda item number (1-10) of statement here: → 5

3.a) If this is an individual statement, indicate here your organization's name as in the ECOSOC NGO database and indicate its consultative status in brackets (i.e. General, Special, or Roster).

→ (Special Consultative Status)

or,

3.b) If this is a joint statement, list here the co-sponsoring ECOSOC NGO as they appear in the ECOSOC database and status (in brackets): Group all General NGOs first, group the Special second and group the Roster third. →

4. Indicate here any non-ECOSOC NGO(s) supporting this statement (they will appear as a footnote to the statement title): →

5. Indicate the exact TITLE for this statement here: → Indigenous peoples and extinction of their languages

### Please make sure that:

This statement is in MS WORD document format (Font Times New Roman 10; no bold; no underline; no italics).

Check word count: (Go to Tools, Word count, # of words) Indicate the length of text (including footnotes/endnotes) here: →

-NGOs in general consultative status are allowed 2,000 words

-NGOs in special consultative status and on the roster are allowed 1,500 words

Please use the Spell/grammar check on your text. (Go to Tools, Spelling & Grammar)

Different language versions of one statement should be sent in the same email, but using **a separate form** for each.

Email this document to: **[hrcngo@ohchr.org](mailto:hrcngo@ohchr.org)**

**PLEASE PASTE THE FINAL TEXT BELOW:** ↓

Statistically speaking, every fortnight one of the 7000 languages still in existence dies out. It is expected that at the end of the 21<sup>st</sup> century only around 3,000 will remain. Small peoples with fewer than 1,000 speakers are most strongly affected. When a language dies out this is a bad sign for the situation of those speaking it. Often they suffer from infringements of human rights, are discriminated, driven out of their territory or threatened.

Members of minority languages often suffer from less access to education and job opportunities. Sometimes they give up their language in order not to be discriminated against. There are also historical and political reasons for the extinction of languages. The colonization of large parts of the world, be it Latin America, the russification of Siberia or the settlement in North America was accompanied by a brutal repression and the partial eradication of the indigenous population and their languages.

With their language the people lose the most important expression of their culture. They lose the names of plants, animals, places, feelings, religious values and most of the stories which have been handed down and which form the link with their origins. For this reason the loss of a language leads also to the loss of identity and often means a collective trauma which lasts for generations. But this affects the whole of humanity. For when a language dies out there is likewise an irrevocable disappearance of examples of human thought, ideas and modes of expression.

To keep a language alive it is not only imperative that the society concerned does its best to preserve it. Languages spoken by fewer people must be on a par both legally and in everyday life. Their educational institutions and media must be given financial support. Regional self-government for regions with minority languages is a sturdy and essential pillar of support for "small languages".

In Africa more than 350 languages are currently in danger of extinction. In Ethiopia, Sudan, Chad, Kenya and Tanzania smaller peoples are endangered due to war, shortage of grazing land and water resources. Hence, many members of indigenous peoples give up their traditional way of life and move to bigger cities. In their new environment they give up their traditional language and lose their identity.

In the Niger delta and in Nigeria's northeast the languages of smaller indigenous peoples are acutely endangered. The situation of Berber languages in North Africa is especially difficult. Even though the Masir/Berber are indigenous peoples of North Africa, the Arab-ruled governments continue their policy of Arabization. While in Morocco during the past ten years has made some concessions towards the masir in the matter of language policy, the government of Algeria still refuses to bring about equality in the matter of Arab and Masir cultures. The Masir language was recognized as a national language, however, the government of Algeria refuses to establish Masir as a official language. Movements for the advancement of language rights are restricted in their activities by the government. Until today those who are responsible for violent death of more than 120 demonstrators who in 2001 were killed after having protested against the government's language policy have not been brought to justice.

In Asia there are some 900 languages threatened with extinction. In India alone, where some 90 million indigenous Adivasi live, some 190 languages are threatened with extinction. In Indonesia some 140 languages are endangered. The ongoing destruction of the rain forests and the establishment of large-scale plantations has resulted in the loss of traditional livelihoods of many indigenous peoples and increased the pressure for them to assimilate themselves into the majority society. In Papua-New Guinea more than 90 languages are in danger.

In the People's Republic of China the government systematically suppresses and destroys the Tibetan and the Uyghur languages. Even though it is claimed by the Chinese authorities that these languages are taught in the schools of the two Autonomous Regions, in reality the Chinese language has become the standard language in primary schools. The state-sponsored migration of Han Chinese to the two Autonomous regions has helped to establish the supremacy of the Chinese in these areas. Some 140 more languages are threatened with extinction in the South of the People's Republic of China.

There are approximately 150 languages in Australia. Today bilingual education in schools in order to preserve indigenous languages is on the rise in the country.

The conquering of Siberia, the Far East and the Caucasus by the Russian Czars was accompanied by massive persecution of the indigenous peoples living in those areas, resulting in the extinction of many indigenous languages. During most of the Soviet period the persecution continued, e.g. all Shamans of

indigenous peoples were deported to Gulags. Nowadays many indigenous peoples in Russia are threatened by a lack of jobs, alcohol abuse and the loss of their land. They lack the resources to preserve their languages.

The situation of native Indian languages North America is alarming. Though there is a law to protect languages, but a lack of meaningful implementation due to a lack of funds. Between 1997 and 2009 more than 20 native Indian languages perished in North America. More than half of the native speakers of indigenous languages are over 70 years old.

Central and South America are regions with many threatened languages. For almost all indigenous languages of Central and South America the greatest threat to indigenous languages is the respective official language.