



EUROPEAN UNION

STATEMENT

09/08/2016

Declaration by the High Representative, Federica Mogherini, on behalf of the European Union on the occasion of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, 9 August 2016

On the occasion of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, we join indigenous peoples around the world in celebrating the richness of their cultures and their unique contributions to the world's cultural diversity. The European Union reaffirms its commitments to promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples.

Despite the many positive developments in recognising the rights of indigenous peoples, there are persistent human rights violations, including killings and abuses against indigenous Human Rights Defenders in a range of countries. The EU is therefore stepping up its efforts to protect Human Rights Defenders working on behalf of the most vulnerable and marginalized, including indigenous peoples, and those campaigning on land rights issues.

The EU is also stepping up its engagement with indigenous peoples, in line with the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy. Before the end of the year the EU intends to prepare an overview of its policies and actions supporting indigenous peoples as well as a list of best practices. The promotion of cultural rights in accordance with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is also at the heart of peace-building through inter-cultural dialogue, as set out in the new European Union Strategy on international cultural relations. At multilateral level, the EU engages in a consensual manner in the ongoing debates at the United Nations concerning the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In June of this year, the Organisation of the American States adopted the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The declaration is the first instrument in the history of the Organisation of the American States which specifically addresses the rights of the indigenous peoples of the Americas. The EU congratulates the OAS and its Member states, as well as the indigenous peoples of the Americas, on this achievement. The Declaration will add a new dimension to the EU's relations with its partner countries in the Americas.

For more information: Ms. Luana REALE, Head of Political, Press and Information Section- Delegation of the European Union to Tanzania
Email: Luana.REALE@eeas.europa.eu **Direct Line:** +255 22 2164503
Website: http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/tanzania/index_en.htm
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanUnionTanzania> **Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/EUinTZ>

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