



COALITION OF LARGE TRIBES

Blackfeet Nation • Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe • Crow Nation • Eastern Shoshone Tribe
Fort Belknap Indian Community • Mandan, Hidatsa & Arikara Nation • Navajo Nation • Northern Arapaho Tribe
Oglala Sioux Tribe • Rosebud Sioux Tribe • Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux Tribe
Shoshone Bannock Tribes • Spokane Tribe • Ute Indian Tribe • Walker River Paiute Tribe

**16th Session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
(July 17 to 21, 2023)**

Item 7: International Decade of Indigenous Languages

***Intervention of Lisa White Pipe, The Blackfeet Nation Delegation, Coalition of
Large Tribes; Councilwoman, Rosebud Sioux Tribe***

July 18, 2023

Geneva, Switzerland -

Greetings, Chair and Excellencies. Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. I am a council member for the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. Today, I am speaking as part of the Blackfeet Nation delegation which chairs the Coalition of Large Tribes, for which I serve as an officer, representing the interests of the more than 50 U.S. tribes that have reservations of 100,000 acres or more. These tribes govern more than 95% of Indian Country lands in the United States and serve approximately one million Native American citizens.

I am a council member for the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. My grandfather, Charles White Pipe Sr., was a WWII combat veteran and gained national recognition by receiving a posthumous congressional medal of honor as a Lakota Sioux Code Talker. Our language played an important part in saving the world in WWII.

While the United States has made recent strides to repudiate its longstanding and widespread assimilationist Federal Indian Boarding School Policy, the United States has failed to address its mass dispossession of our lands, cultures, and languages. It has not returned the lands on which boarding schools were built, even though federal law requires it.

While Secretary Haaland has toured the nation listening to endless days of horror stories from Boarding School survivors and the descendants of victims, detailing physical, sexual and emotional abuse and even murder, the United States has failed to provide resources for healing. The federal government has exposed the



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deep wounds and Native people have an immediate and just right to healing resources under Article 11.

We call on the United States to establish an action plan to support indigenous language programs in partnership with Tribal Nations. And to recognize the International Decade of Indigenous Languages and commit resources to commemorate the Decade. The request stems from the fact that our indigenous languages are central to our healing. Our languages tell us who we are and how to relate to the world. Our languages are medicine. Boarding schools cruelly beat the indigenous languages out of Native children. Restoring our languages is the start of our healing.

Thank you.

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