



PR#409

PRESS RELEASE

Governor General of Belize Presents at the OAS

Belmopan. August 12, 2021. 11:25 a.m.

On August 11, 2021, the Governor General of Belize H.E. Froyla Tzalam made a presentation at the Organization of American States (OAS) Special Meeting of the Permanent Council to commemorate the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples and the fourth Inter-American Week for Indigenous Peoples under the theme "Leaving no one behind: Indigenous peoples and the call for a new social contract in the Americas".

The Governor General remarked on the constant challenges encountered in protecting indigenous knowledge, which she described as similar to the long fight to secure the legal recognition and protection of communal ownership of land and resources. She also spoke on the continuing need for resources to bridge the gap between practice and policy and emphasized that indigenous people require specific support to enable meaningful engagement.

In concluding her presentation, the Governor General expressed her concern that it took almost two decades of negotiations for the OAS General Assembly to adopt the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. She urged the OAS to do more to promote those rights, particularly in the crisis-filled environment in which it can be easy to further marginalize indigenous people.

Supporting the Governor General was His Excellency Lynn Young, Belize's Permanent Representative to the OAS, who called for a new social contract in the Americas.

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