

Newsletter for March 2014

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Association President to Speak at Language Symposium

“Language and Equality” will be the topic of a symposium organized by the Study Group on Language and the United Nations at 777 United Nations Plaza on Tuesday, April 29. The symposium will address inequalities in education, inequalities in international communication, and issues of language policy at the national and international level. Professor Mark Fettes, newly elected as president of the Universal Esperanto Association, will give the keynote address. Fettes, a specialist in issues of language in education especially in relation to minorities, is a professor of education at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada. He will be joined by such distinguished speakers as Terrence Wiley, president of the Washington-based Center for Applied Linguistics, and Daniel Ward, editor of Language Magazine. Scholars from a number of countries will contribute papers, including Germany, the UK, Belgium, and Australia.

This is the second symposium organized by the Study Group on Language and the United Nations, whose first symposium took place two years ago at the same venue. The group is particularly interested in both the application and the administration of official language policy at the United Nations, and also in the ad hoc solutions to language differences required in such situations as peacekeeping, development projects, and public information.

Also sponsoring the symposium will be the University of Hartford and the Centre for Research and Documentation on World Language Problems, publisher of the journal Language Problems and Language Planning. Details on the symposium are available at <http://www.languageandtheun.org/>.

Director-General of UNESCO Celebrates International Mother Language Day in Eight Languages – Including Esperanto

“The protection and promotion of mother languages are keys to global citizenship and authentic mutual understanding,” according to Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, in her message on the occasion of International Mother Language Day, February 21.

“Understanding and speaking more than one language leads to a greater understanding of the wealth of cultural interactions in our world,” she adds. Her message, with its emphasis on education rooted in the cultural and linguistic heritage of young people, is a strong endorsement of the multilingualism supported also by the Universal Esperanto Association. “Excluding languages means excluding those who speak them,” she suggests. Ms Bokova’s message this year was issued in the six languages of the UNESCO General Conference, with the addition of two further languages, both of them of symbolic as well as practical importance – her own native language, Bulgarian, and the International Language, Esperanto. This cooperative effort attests to the strong relationship between UNESCO and the Universal Esperanto Association and to the efforts of the Association on behalf of language rights. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/international-mother-language-day/>

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