

## Message On The Occasion Of International Women's Day, 8 March 2020

The Universal Esperanto Association salutes the world's women, and particularly the members of the worldwide Esperanto community, on the occasion of International Women's Day 2020. Speakers of the International Language Esperanto, women and men alike, can be found in every corner of the world. In its role as an international language promoting direct and unfiltered dialogue, Esperanto is uniquely positioned to help women everywhere communicate with one another across the barriers of distance and language, to exchange views and ideas, and to organize for action on behalf of women everywhere.

There is much to be done: equal pay for equal work, access to education, adequate health services, equality before the law, equal schooling for girls and boys – the list is long. Of those children who have access to education, too many girls drop out of school early, before they are able to develop their own particular skills or prepare themselves for careers. While the United Nations is making progress, particularly through Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals, growing problems as a result of climate change, human displacement, military action, and epidemics undermine that progress – and are preventable. We need more dialogue, more willingness to compromise, greater understanding, among people and governments everywhere. We need to speak the language of peace.

“Real change,” says the United Nations, “has been agonizingly slow for the majority of women and girls in the world. Today not a single country can claim to have achieved gender equality.” Domestic and public violence against women continues, as does resistance to feminist gains. “It is time,” said Secretary-General António Guterres recently, “to stop trying to change women, and start changing the systems that prevent them from achieving their potential.”

UEA recognizes and honours the leading role women play in movements for linguistic and cultural revitalization, and for the protection of the domestic sphere from oppression and discrimination. Such efforts are an essential part of the struggle to establish a world where many cultures and languages can coexist in harmony, and where true gender equality is realized.

We express our solidarity with movements to end discrimination against women and girls, and to build a sustainable future in which all people are treated with equal care and respect, regardless of language, culture, gender, and other forms of diversity.

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