

UNESCO and China Report Press team up to publish magazine in Esperanto



Ian Denison, chief of UNESCO Publishing and Branding, announces the new agreement in Beijing on Jan 7. [Photo provided to China Daily]

On Jan 7, the signing ceremony for an agreement on co-publishing the Esperanto edition of The UNESCO Courier was held at the offices of the China International Publishing Group (CIPG).

Organized by the China Report Press and China Esperanto Association, the ceremony marked the partnership between UNESCO and China Report Press under CIPG to translate and publish the Esperanto version of The UNESCO Courier, a flagship magazine of UNESCO.

The magazine is published as a platform of communication between different civilizations. It resumed publication in 2017 with support from the Chinese government and is now published in 11 languages.

The China Esperanto Association is an affiliate national organization of the Universal Esperanto Association. Since the Courier was revived in 2017, it has been published by UNESCO in cooperation with UEA. The new agreement makes the Esperanto edition official and guarantees its future publication.

According to Du Zhanyuan, president of CIPG, "The cooperation between CIPG and UNESCO is a good beginning, and an opportunity. In the future, the communication on this platform will enable both sides to cooperate in more areas."

"The publication of the Esperanto version of The UNESCO Courier complies with UNESCO's mission to promote cultural diversity and the use of Esperanto," says Ian Denison, chief of UNESCO Publishing and Branding.

(Wang Ru for China Daily, and other sources)

Conference of NGOs calls for strengthening the UN on its 75th Anniversary

The United Nations System must be strengthened, better structured, better used by governments, and considerably better financed, according to a declaration on the future of the United Nations, issued on October 12 by the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CoNGO). The declaration is now gathering signatures from NGOs around the world.

The declaration "salutes the achievements of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace and security, the promotion of human rights, and the advancement of sustainable development" but at the same time points to numerous shortcomings in worldwide support for the UN and in its ability to act. "On the occasion of the 75th Anniversary," the Declaration states, "we must move from a climate of nationalism, conflict and injustice to a culture of multilateralism, peace, and security, for the good of all humankind."

Presenting the declaration to an audience of CoNGO members in New York in December, Humphrey Tonkin, CoNGO board member representing the Universal Esperanto Association, pointed out that the United Nations has "despite all obstacles, kept us free of world war for the past 75 years." While praising those who have contributed to this "astounding achievement," he indicated that local and regional conflagrations continue, indeed multiply: "With their zero-sum mentality and their desire to divide their countries to retain power, the political elites are all too often turning their backs on international cooperation, inflaming nationalist sentiments, spreading fear of foreigners, and abandoning international agreements."

"Let us all resolve to talk less and listen more," Tonkin declared, echoing UN Secretary-General António Guterres's admonition that "We need to come together, not only to talk but to listen."

The CoNGO Declaration calls for the UN System to make greater use of the competence and experience of NGOs and the broader Civil Society as essential partners in ensuring a peaceful and just world built upon achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The declaration is available on the CoNGO website www.ngocongo.org in English, French and Spanish. An Esperanto translation will soon be added.

Message of the Universal Esperanto Association on Human Rights Day, December 10, and Zamenhof Day, December 15, 2019

Each year, on December 10, we celebrate Human Rights Day, the date on which in 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

Fundamental to the work of the United Nations and written into its Charter is respect for human rights and the right of all people to lead their lives in freedom and dignity. Article 1.3 of the Charter refers to “promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.”

DECEMBER 10 INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY



Human Rights Day is of special importance to our Association, the Universal Esperanto Association, for two reasons.

First, it reminds us that, as early as 1947, the new constitution of our Association included a statement that respect for human rights was a condition necessary for our work as an international nongovernmental organization. It has remained an essential element in our work ever since.

Secondly, Human Rights Day falls five days ahead of Zamenhof Day, December 15, the day on which the founder of the International Language Esperanto, L. L. Zamenhof, was born in 1859. Our local and national affiliates often celebrate Human Rights Day and Zamenhof Day together, stressing the connection between Zamenhof’s efforts on behalf of international understanding, and the recognition of universal human rights.

The UN Charter’s call for “respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion” reminds us that intolerance of language difference often lies at the root of xenophobia and can provoke violent conflict. That is why our Association calls for respect for everyone’s language, and promotes the International Language Esperanto as a bridge across language difference.

On Human Rights Day 2019, we call for respect for language difference, for the right of everyone to use their own language, and for efforts to find bridges across languages that promote equality, tolerance, and peace.

Symposium on Language Diversity and Sustainable Development, celebrating 75 years of the United Nations, to take place in Montreal, August 8-10, 2020

The Esperantic Studies Foundation (ESF), in cooperation with the Centre for Research and Documentation on World Language Problems (CED), is planning to organize its next Nitobe Symposium from August 8 to August 10, 2020, at the University of Montreal. The working languages of the event will be English, French, and Esperanto.

The Nitobe Symposia, named for the Japanese internationalist and diplomat Nitobe Inazo, who was Under-Secretary General in charge of cultural affairs in the early years of the League of Nations, are held every few years in various parts of the world. Symposia have taken place over the years in such cities as Prague, Berlin, Vilnius, Tokyo, Beijing, and Reykjavik.

The 2020 symposium will mark the 75th anniversary of the United Nations and its efforts to keep the peace, promote human rights, and advance sustainable development, in a multilingual world. Under the general title “Language Diversity and Sustainable Development” it will examine three principal topics:

- **Language and the Sustainable Development Goals**
- **Multilingual Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in sustainable development**
- **Grassroots multilingualism and the sustainable development challenge**

We invite all those interested in language policy, UN studies, development studies, communication technologies, and related fields to send us expressions of interest in participating in the Symposium and contributing to these and related topics. Please describe briefly how you might contribute and what your primary interests are. The symposium will be limited to around fifty invitees from throughout the world. The programme will include keynote talks, panels and round tables. There will be no registration fee, but participants will be expected to cover their own costs.

Please send your proposals to mtfettes@su.ca and tonkin@hartford.edu, preferably by March 15, 2020.

Mark Fettes, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada
Humphrey Tonkin, University of Hartford, Connecticut, USA

UEA celebrates the 60th Anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child

The Universal Esperanto Association, in a special message in Esperanto to its affiliated national associations, specialized organizations, and individual members across the world, called for celebrations on World Children's Day, November 20, to mark a major milestone: "Exactly sixty years ago, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. On the same day thirty years later, in 1989, the General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child."

"The coincidence of the month and day is no accident," UEA's message continued: "As early as 1954 the General Assembly designated November 20 as the Universal Day of the Child, aiming to promote international solidarity, awareness among children everywhere, and betterment of children's well-being. The Declaration of 1959 was a product of this raised awareness – as was the Convention of 1989."

The message pointed out that "the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations in 2015 to establish priorities in the area of development, give particular attention to children, their health, their education, and their general well-being. And of course one of the essential concerns of UNESCO is the education of our children."

"Parents, teachers, nurses and doctors, government leaders and civil society activists, religious and community leaders, business people and media professionals, along with young people and children themselves, can play an important role in raising appropriate awareness of Universal Children's Day in their own societies, communities, and nations," said the message – and added: "Esperanto speakers, who link people across national and generational boundaries, can put special emphasis on the situation of children across the world by intervening with the people mentioned above. They can also take entirely personal and modest action – thanking a teacher, doing something special for a child, giving money to help children, volunteering."

"Choose what you would like to do – but do something! And do your best to make people aware of the state of the world's children – and to build a world worthy of the hopes of our youngest citizens. Pass this message on, through social media, through your personal friends, Esperantists and non-Esperantists, through letters to the newspapers. And remember to say 'Thank you' today to at least one teacher or other professional who works with children!"

Judging by the response, the Esperanto-speaking community did just that – recognizing in the process the importance of the UN's work on behalf of children everywhere.

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