

Newsletter for July-August 2020

Newsletter of the Universal Esperanto Association's Office of Liaison with the United Nations

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UEA launches massive three-month World Festival of Esperanto

Cancellation of the World Congress of Esperanto, which had been due to take place in the first week of August in Montreal, Canada, has led to a reverse response: there is more going on in the Esperanto world than ever before – and it is quite literally circling the world. Launched on June 20, a three-month virtual World Festival of Esperanto is embracing not only a whole series of events related to the United Nations, but tying in numbers of other activities by numerous other organizations. The Esperantist Teachers' League ILEI is holding its one-week annual conference on line, thereby increasing its numbers far beyond those expected for an in-person conference. The 76th International Youth Congress has similar expectations – and more and more organizations are taking advantage of this worldwide festival, which will include lectures, discussions, artistic events, concerts, and a host of other occasions to hear and speak Esperanto.



The opening ceremony on June 20 attracted an audience of several thousand people across the world. The Festival will feature both fully international events and also regional gatherings, allowing for more effective contact with Esperanto speakers at all levels. Among those addressing the opening ceremony was Under-Secretary-General **Fabrizio Hochschild**, of the United Nations, who praised the Esperanto movement for its international dialogue and engagement and encouraged Esperanto speakers to participate in the worldwide survey now being conducted on the future of the UN (<https://un75.online/?lang=epo>). USG Hochschild's message is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFufDNdgrXo>.

UEA President **Duncan Charters** called on all speakers of Esperanto to work together to overcome the crises of today, including not only COVID-19 but also armed conflict and climate change. Former UEA President and current Representative of the Association to the United Nations, **Humphrey Tonkin**, reinforced USG Hochschild's message, and announced a series of events looking at the United Nations today and offering visions of its future. The text of his speech, in English translation, is at <http://en.esperantoporun.org/address-by-humphrey-tonkin-opening-mondafest-20-june-2020/>. Additional comments on the relationship with the United Nations were given by **Rakoen Maertens** and **Sara Spanò**.

The opening ceremony, coordinated by First Vice President **Fernando Maia**, featured contributions and music from many parts of the world, among them greetings from UEA board member **Jérémie Sabiyumva** (Burundi), and music from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Brazil, France, and the Republic of Korea. The past few days have seen a Middle Eastern and North African Day organized by UEA's regional commission for that area, and an Asia and Oceania Day. For future events see <https://mondafest.net/programo/>

The World Congress of Esperanto will none the less take place as a virtual event from August 1 to 8. Details will be announced later this month.

Facebook page gathers comments in Esperanto on the UN's future

The Facebook page **UN75 en Esperanto**, launched in connection with the United Nations' survey of civil society's views on the future of the UN, already has members in 54 countries, namely:

Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Laos, Liberia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Moldavia, Morocco, Nepal, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Palestine, Peru, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Kingdom, USA.

All speakers of Esperanto are encouraged to take part in this campaign to define the future of the United Nations over the next 2 years. Please also participate in the survey at <https://un75.online/?lang=epo>.

My Hero is You: How Kids Can Fight COVID-19! now available in Esperanto



The Esperanto version of a children's book on fighting COVID-19 is now available, thanks to the work of Trezoro Huang Yinbao, Second Vice-President of UEA, and a team of translators, who worked with UNESCO to produce the Esperanto version. The book, written by Helen Patuck, is a project of the UN-related Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings. *Vi estas mia heroo: Kiel infanoj povas batali kontraŭ KOVIM-19* is available in text, pictures and sound, read by Elsa Torres, at youtu.be/piFWPLjglCg, and in text and pictures on the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's website at <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-05/My%20Hero%20is%20You%2C%20Storybook%20for%20Children%20on%20COVID-19%20%28Esperanta%29.pdf>

The spoken version is the first in a series of such audiobooks now being prepared by UEA in cooperation with the International League of Blind Esperantists (LIBE).

UNESCO and UEA jointly publish prestigious volume

From ideas to actions, 70 years of UNESCO is an important trilingual (English, French, Portuguese) book on the complete history of UNESCO, first published by UNESCO in Brazil in 2015. In 2019 Trezoro Huang Yingbao, vice-president of UEA, proposed translating the book into Esperanto, and in November 2019 UEA and UNESCO signed a contract for joint publication. Soon after, a translation into Chinese was added, with the idea of possible future publication in additional languages. UNESCO requested that an additional organization review the text – a task carried out by the Esperanto PEN Centre. The translation is on schedule for publication in July 2020, as specified in the contract.

Under-Secretary-General Fabrizio Hochschild: Esperanto is more than a language

"Esperanto is more than a language," declared UN Under-Secretary-General Fabrizio Hochschild in remarks at the opening of MondaFest, the World Festival of Esperanto, on June 20. "It's an expression of global solidarity and a call for action for global understanding and citizenship. Now, more than ever, the UN needs support from the global community of Esperanto speakers." He spoke of his disappointment at the cancellation of the World Esperanto Congress in Montreal, which he planned to attend. Here is the full text of his comments:

Koran saluton. Mi ĝojas sendi ĉi tiun mesaĝon pri la lanĉo de la virtuala mondfestivalo de Esperanto.

My name is Fabrizio Hochschild. I come from Chile, and I am leading the United Nations' efforts to mark its 75th anniversary this year in 2020.

I know that this Festival was born of necessity as the World Congress of Esperanto, which I was to attend, had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19. But I think that what has replaced it – three months of lectures and discussions on the United Nations at 75 – is even better, and I very much look forward to seeing the results of your deliberations.

Esperanto has always been more than a language. It's an expression of global solidarity and a call to action for global understanding and citizenship. Now more than ever, the UN needs support from the global community of Esperanto speakers.

The United Nations turns 75 this year and it's a time of great upheaval for the world, as it was when we were founded in 1945.

Many of the trends we grapple with today could not have been imagined by our founders:

- *that human action would fuel global temperature rise, putting one million species at risk, including our own;*
- *that new technologies would radically reshape how we live, work, and engage with one another.*

But many of the problems we face today would also be all too familiar: war, displacement, big power rivalries, corrosive nationalism, discrimination and abuse.

We have come a long way over the past 75 years. We've made huge strides forward in education and in tackling poverty and hunger. We've won great victories. The eradication of smallpox alone has saved millions of lives. Yet progress has been uneven and failures often tragic. After three decades of working for the United Nations in the field, I carry with me the privilege and burden of both failures and successes.

Ultimately the United Nations represents people's hopes and aspirations for a better future. But it was also a pragmatic response by world leaders who realized that co-operation and compromise were less costly than war.

Seventy-five years on, the costs of war and of not working together have risen astronomically. Climate change and nuclear weapons are existential threats. Pandemics and cybercrime do not respect borders. They cannot be solved by any country, no matter how big or

powerful, acting alone. We need international co-operation to galvanize action and to harness the opportunities the future holds, whether that's leveraging the benefits of new technologies or building a carbon-neutral world.

COVID-19 has shown us how crucial it is for us to work across borders, sectors and generations. It has laid bare our underlying interdependencies. We're only as strong as the most vulnerable among us. We need a whole-of-society response to address this crisis and to ensure we recover better.

The past months have shown us that huge transformations are possible when political leadership is aligned with public support. We must build on this. Now is the time to end with business as usual. Now is the time to put into practice the commitment to future generations that is essential to the Charter of the United Nations.

That is the spirit in which the Secretary-General wants us to mark this anniversary – not as a celebration but as a moment of reflection, listening to “We the Peoples.”

We've launched a global consultation to gather the views of people from all walks of life and to crowdsource your solutions to the challenges we face. I hope that all of you will participate by taking our one-minute survey available at [UN75.online](https://un75.online), including in Esperanto (<https://un75.online/?lang=epo>).

The results will be presented to world leaders in September 2020 when states will adopt a declaration on the 75th Anniversary. That declaration is an opportunity to set out a call for action to secure a future and to send a message of hope to people across the world. Please help us make this moment count.

Dankon.

Message of the Universal Esperanto Association on World Refugee Day 20 June 2020

According to United Nations statistics, today 71 million people across the world have been forcibly displaced by wars, natural disasters, and expulsion from their homelands. Most are living in refugee camps, often with the lifesaving support of the UN. Their situation has been made even more difficult by the arrival of COVID-19. For many refugees, social distancing is not a possibility, there is no way to quarantine, and there are inadequate health and hospital services. In many parts of the world national boundaries are closed even to the prosperous; refugees are actively spurned and vilified. While everyone is at risk from COVID-19, the world's refugees are among those most in peril.

As the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, has pointed out, “If ever we need reminding that we live in an interconnected world, the novel coronavirus has brought that home.” COVID-19, says the Commission “knows no borders, no language barriers. It threatens everyone on this planet – including refugees and other displaced people.”

The United Nations has designated June 20 as World Refugee Day. On this day we particularly remember the many millions of people who have been displaced from their homes by war, violence, and natural disasters. The Universal Esperanto Association joins many other organizations in pointing to the necessity of international cooperation to address the needs of refugees and to work for their peaceful and secure return to their places of origin or their asylum in the countries in which they find themselves through no fault of their own.

Among many issues that need to be more vigorously confronted is the language problem: many refugees find themselves in situations in which they cannot communicate with those around them, including government officials, teachers, health workers, and relief workers. As speakers of the International Language Esperanto, we are particularly aware of this failure to address language differences adequately.

On the occasion of World Refugee Day 2020, we call on governments, non-governmental organizations and the United Nations itself to address language issues more directly and in a spirit of linguistic justice, non-discrimination, and humane concern.

And, above all, we call on everyone to support the work of the United Nations in alleviating the plight of refugees in today's perilous world environment.

Universal Esperanto Association Office for Liaison with the United Nations, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017. [1] 212-687-7041. www.esperantoporun.org.

Office of the Universal Esperanto Association at the United Nations
777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017.
212-687-7041