

# Newsletter for March 2015

Issue 15, March 2015

## Working Group on Language at the United Nations Plans May 2015 Symposium

**March 1.** "Language and Exclusion" is the title of this year's symposium to be organized (on Thursday, May 7), at the Church Center, 777 UN Plaza, by the Working Group on Language at the United Nations. The Universal Esperanto Association is a member of the group and has been active in drawing attention to the importance of language in the UN's work.

Keynote speaker for the Symposium will be Fernand de Varennes, Extraordinary Professor at the University of Pretoria and Visiting Professor at the University of Hong Kong. As an international legal expert on human rights and the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples, Fernand de Varennes has appeared on a number of occasions before UN committees in Geneva and the European Parliament in Brussels, worked with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, as well as prepared a number of UN (linguistic rights of indigenous peoples and minorities; prevention of ethnic conflicts; political participation of minorities) and UNESCO (rights of migrants) papers; and been involved in a dialogue seminar on minority rights with the judges of the African Court on Human and Peoples Rights. He is currently preparing a practical handbook on language rights for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Among the papers to be presented at the symposium are several concerned with UN language policy and several on language and peacekeeping. The eleven presenters are drawn from seven countries: Iceland, the UK, Hungary, France, Kazakhstan, China, and the USA.

Details on the symposium are available at [www.languageandtheun.org](http://www.languageandtheun.org)

## Recent UEA Participation in UN Meetings

In addition to regular attendance at the Thursday NGO briefings of the Department of Public Information. Association representatives have attended several recent UN meetings. In February, Francesco Maurelli, board member of TEJO, the youth section of the Universal Esperanto Association, was in New York to attend the ECOSOC Youth Forum and to participate in discussions on the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals.

## Esperanto in the News Once Again

Following the attention paid to Esperanto recently in both the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*, a new article on first-language speakers of Esperanto appeared in *The New Republic*, under the title "What It's Like to Raise Your Children Speaking Esperanto." It is estimated that around 1000 Native speakers of Esperanto exist around the world, a tiny fraction of the worldwide Esperanto-speaking community. The *New Republic* article is at:

<http://www.newrepublic.com/article/121095/what-its-raise-your-children-speaking-esperanto>

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