

# Newsletter for March 2016

*Issue 21, March 2016*

## **Universal Esperanto Association Marks International Mother Language Day**

**February 21.** It was on February 21, 1952, that students demonstrating for the recognition of Bengali as one of the two national languages of East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, were shot down by police near the Dakha High Court. In 1999 UNESCO called for the recognition of this day as International Mother Language Day, celebrating the right of all people to the use of their mother tongue. In 2008 the United Nations General Assembly formally recognized UNESCO's initiative.

Esperanto speakers around the world are celebrating International Mother Language Day, as they do each year. Fundamental to the beliefs of speakers of Esperanto is the idea that multilingualism, far from being a liability, is something to be celebrated, and that linguistic diversity is an important part of the preservation of cultural diversity. Esperanto, the international language, is intended to bridge language differences while allowing those differences to flourish. Today, 90 percent of the world's languages are at risk of extinction, mostly because of the encroachment of other, larger languages.

This year, Esperantist recognition of Mother Language Day includes a public celebration in Kluekanmè, Benin, in cooperation with Benin's UNESCO Commission, with presentations on Esperanto in several local languages. Activities in many other countries around the world include distribution and publication of an Esperanto translation of the message of Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director-General, and publication of a poster, also in Esperanto (see page 2 of this newsletter).

## **Universal Esperanto Association Co-sponsors Session on Refugee Education**

February 11. UEA was one of six sponsoring organizations of an NGO panel at the recent New York meeting of the United Nations Commission on Social Development. The session, "Education for the Sustainable Inclusion of Displaced Persons," took place under the auspices of the NGO Committee on Education, in which UEA's UN Representative Dr. Humphrey Tonkin serves as a member. Other sponsoring organizations included the Legion of Good Will, an organization that makes use of Esperanto in its educational work.

## **Internacia Tago de la Gepatra Lingvo 2016**

  
 En oficialaj rilatoj  
 kun UN kaj Unesco

# Internacia TAGO de la GEPATRA LINGVO

21-a de februaro 2016

*La internacia lingvo **Esperanto** respektas  
kaj subtenas lingvan kaj kulturan diversecon  
tra la mondo.*



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 Pri lingvoj: [www.lingvo.info](http://www.lingvo.info)  
 Pri interreta komunikado: [www.esperanto.net](http://www.esperanto.net) | [www.uea.org](http://www.uea.org)

## Symposium on Language and the Sustainable Development Goals

**February 10.** Well-known specialist on sociolinguistics and language policy Suzanne Romaine, Merton Professor of English Language at Oxford University from 1984 to 2014, will give the keynote address at a Symposium on Language and the Sustainable Development Goals, to take place at the UN Church Center, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, on Thursday and Friday, April 21 and 22, 2016. The Symposium will stress the importance of language and of two-way linguistic communication in the achievement of the 17 Goals. The Goals were approved by the UN General Assembly at its most recent session and will remain valid for the period 2015-2030.

The Symposium, convened by the Study Group on Language and the United Nations and sponsored by the Universal Esperanto Association, along with the Center for Applied Linguistics (Washington, DC), the Center for Research and Documentation on World Language Problems, and other organizations, will also feature among its major speakers Michael Ten-Pow, recently appointed Senior Adviser on Multilingualism in the UN's Department of General Assembly and Conference Management.

Additional speakers will include Lisa McEntee-Atalianis (University of London), Carolyn Benson (Teachers College, Columbia University), Rosemary Salomone (St. John's University School of Law), and Kurt Müller (National Defense University). The full programme will be announced in early March.

Participation in the symposium is open to all UN personnel, members of UN Missions, NGO representatives, and the general public. Visit [www.languageandtheun.org](http://www.languageandtheun.org) for information on registration.

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