

Newsletter for September 2015

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100th World Esperanto Congress Approves Resolution on Intercultural Dialogue

August 1. At its recent congress, the Universal Esperanto Association accepted the following resolution addressed to its member associations and to UNESCO:

The 2,695 participants from 80 countries in the 100th World Esperanto Congress, meeting in Lille, France, from 25 July to 1 August 2015,

following discussions on the topic “**Language, arts and values in the dialogue of cultures**” in seven separate sessions during the congress week,

wishing to contribute to the development of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures proclaimed by UNESCO,

note that intercultural dialogue is as urgently needed today as it was 110 years ago, when the first World Esperanto Congress was held in Boulogne-sur-Mer;

declare that for people to achieve real understanding such dialogue must touch not just the head but also the heart, linking teaching with discussion, art with friendship;

point out that precisely that kind of multifaceted intercultural dialogue is practised and developed by the worldwide Esperanto movement and the hundreds of conferences and meetings it holds every year;

urge all activists and movements involved in intercultural dialogue to devote greater attention to the language dimension of their work and to the actual functioning of Esperanto as an inclusive and egalitarian language whose use can facilitate and deepen such dialogue;

reaffirm their commitment to cultivating and disseminating the values of mutual respect, peace and justice among all people, in accordance with the objectives of UNESCO and in association with the current efforts of the United Nations to build a sustainable world society.

Meeting Commemorates Esperanto and UNESCO

August 1. The past forty years of cooperation with UNESCO were celebrated in a special meeting held during the 100th World Congress of Esperanto in Lille, France, on Monday, July 27. The economist Barbara Despigny, a member of the working group on Esperanto at UNESCO that was established in 1974-75, paid tribute to the half-dozen members of the team that brought Esperanto to the attention of UNESCO leaders and led to its involvement with the efforts to create a New International Information and Communication Order. These efforts included a visit to the World Congress of Esperanto by UNESCO Director-General Amadou Mahtar M'Bow in 1977, and the inclusion of at least a passing reference to inequality of language in the MacBride Report of 1980 which dealt with disparities in the flow of information between developed and developing countries. As Humphrey Tonkin, president of the Universal Esperanto Association at the time and now the Association's representative at the UN in New York, pointed out, the idea of a new relationship between the Third World and the First never came about as MacBride envisioned, nor was language accorded the importance it deserved, nevertheless a resolution of the UNESCO General Conference in 1985 acknowledged the importance of Esperanto for international understanding and called on member states to join in celebrating its 100th anniversary.

Other speakers at the event included Probal Dasgupta, a former president of the Association, who worked as an intern at UEA's office in New York during this period, Renée Triolle, currently the Association's representative at UNESCO, and Stefano Keller, the Association's representative at the UN in Geneva and board member in charge of external relations. The session was chaired by Mark Fettes, current president of the Association.

The meeting also provided a good opportunity to describe to congress participants the Association's current involvement in UN and UNESCO programs and its support for the UN and UNESCO in these areas.

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