

Message from the Universal Esperanto Association on the occasion of International Translation Day, 30 September 2020

When in 2017 the United Nations General Assembly established International Translation Day it recognised the particular importance of linguistic communication in international affairs generally and the United Nations in particular.

For far too long we have taken language, the very foundation of communication, for granted. Difference of language can be used to cut people off from communication, as a means of unfair discrimination, as a way of silencing those we do not wish to hear, and as a way of empowering some and disempowering others. Few matters are of greater importance to the UN than its language policy.

Translators and interpreters are key actors in equalising language difference, communicating across language barriers, giving everyone a voice and a chance to be heard. They work behind the scenes – and not only in booths and offices but also in peacekeeping efforts and in war zones.

In praising the work of translators and interpreters, the Universal Esperanto Association calls on the United Nations to look more closely at the difficulties caused by language difference and the importance of seeking inclusive and equalising solutions – among them the International Language Esperanto, which links millions of people across the world in balanced and open communication.

We welcome all efforts that remove linguistic barriers to equality of communication and we salute the translators and interpreters of the United Nations on World Translation Day.

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