

Message of the Universal Esperanto Association on Human Rights Day, December 10, and Zamenhof Day, December 15, 2019

Each year, on December 10, we celebrate Human Rights Day, the date on which in 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

Fundamental to the work of the United Nations and written into its Charter is respect for human rights and the right of all people to lead their lives in freedom and dignity. Article 1.3 of the Charter refers to “promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.”

Human Rights Day is of special importance to our Association, the Universal Esperanto Association, for two reasons.

First, it reminds us that, as early as 1947, the new constitution of our Association included a statement that respect for human rights was a condition necessary for our work as an international nongovernmental organization. It has remained an essential element in our work ever since.

Secondly, Human Rights Day falls five days ahead of Zamenhof Day, December 15, the day on which the founder of the International Language Esperanto, L. L. Zamenhof, was born in 1859. Our local and national affiliates often celebrate Human Rights Day and Zamenhof Day together, stressing the connection between Zamenhof’s efforts on behalf of international understanding, and the recognition of universal human rights.

The UN Charter’s call for “respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion” reminds us that intolerance of language difference often lies at the root of xenophobia and can provoke violent conflict. That is why our Association calls for respect for everyone’s language, and promotes the International Language Esperanto as a bridge across language difference.

On Human Rights Day 2019, we call for respect for language difference, for the right of everyone to use their own language, and for efforts to find bridges across languages that promote equality, tolerance, and peace.

<http://www.linguistic-rights.org/zamenhof-tago/2019-dec-10-15-afisho-EN.jpg>

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