

Message of the Universal Esperanto Association on the International Day of Families, May 15, 2020

The International Day of Families on May 15 is an occasion to recognize the importance of the family as the basic unit of society. This year it takes on special significance as the world deals with the COVID-19 outbreak. Across the world, families are divided by war, by natural disasters, by famine – and now by an inability to move freely across distances because of fear of infection. And the International Day of Families comes just days after a horrific and cowardly attack on a maternity hospital in Afghanistan, bringing death to mothers and making babies orphans even where new life is brought into the world.

When L.L. Zamenhof created Esperanto, in 1887, he dreamed of a world united by communication across ethnic languages to create what would in effect be a single worldwide family. His idealism has been hampered over the years by the insistent emphasis by many of our leaders on difference rather than similarities, and on independence rather than co-operation. Successful families know how to share, know how to communicate, and know how to accommodate difference. The family remains a model for what we might achieve in an open, democratic, and co-operative world. We call on speakers of Esperanto to work to achieve this ideal, and on the United Nations to continue and intensify its work for families and for children everywhere. Never was there a time when hope was more important than now, and hopeful action more important than mindless division. With Esperanto, the language of hope, our Association works to unite the world for a better and more humane tomorrow.

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