

## **Message of the Universal Esperanto Association on the occasion of Human Rights Day, 10 December 2020**

Exactly one hundred years ago, on December 9, 1920, eleven member-states of the League of Nations presented a draft resolution to that organization's Assembly drawing attention to the need for a practical remedy to the linguistic obstacles facing the various nations and referring to recent experiments with the teaching of Esperanto in schools. A report was accordingly commissioned from the deputy secretary-general, Inazo Nitobe, but, despite that report's favourable conclusions, the draft resolution was ultimately rejected.

However, the presentation of that draft resolution began the association between the Esperanto movement and international organizations. The connection continues down to today. We are proud of our record of support for international human rights and understanding and for the work of the United Nations. We look forward to continuing our efforts in the coming years.

This year, as the global community once again celebrates Human Rights Day, the United Nations has reached its seventy-fifth anniversary. The UN community is grappling with massive problems around the world: climate change, war, refugees, inequalities of all kinds, and, now, a global pandemic. Never has the UN needed our support more than it does now.

Yet the old problems, which have plagued the international community for years, continue to haunt us. One of them is an inability to achieve the mutual understanding that is needed to confront the world's many difficulties and to apply the solutions that scientists and philosophers make available to us. A second is a failure to draw the ordinary people across the world into that global dialogue. We believe that the United Nations needs a more forward-looking language policy, designed to enlarge and enrich world dialogue, and to give to the peoples of the world the voices that are their human right.

As speakers of Esperanto, part of a worldwide network of individuals using a common language that is easy to learn and use, we believe that an expanded role for Esperanto in world affairs would help give the peoples a voice. On this Human Rights Day 2020, we welcome the efforts already underway in UNESCO and elsewhere to make greater use of Esperanto and we call on all people of goodwill to do the same. Languages are for both speaking and listening: the UN must listen to the voices of the ordinary citizens of the world.

Above all, we call on all people everywhere, and particularly speakers of the International Language Esperanto, to support the work of the United Nations and to help that world body build the safe, equitable and peaceful world that we all need for the survival of humankind. We all have a right to speak and a right to be listened to – along with the responsibility to make the world a better home for us all.

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