

Message of the Universal Esperanto Association on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 21 March 2020

March 21 is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, an annual United Nations observance that focuses attention on the scourge of racism. This year, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is focused on the midterm review of the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2025) undertaken by the Human Rights Council in Geneva. This review will take stock of the progress made, and call for further action.

According to the United Nations, "Around 200 million people identifying themselves as being of African descent live in the Americas. Many millions more live in other parts of the world, outside the African continent."

The United Nations points out that "Whether as descendants of the victims of the transatlantic slave trade or as more recent migrants, people of African descent constitute some of the poorest and most marginalized groups. They still have limited access to quality education, health services, housing and social security and their degree of political participation is often low. In addition, people of African descent can suffer from multiple forms of discrimination based on age, sex, language, religion, political opinion, social origin, property, disability, birth, or other status."

The Universal Esperanto Association, in accordance with its constitution, is unalterably opposed to all forms of discrimination, including racial discrimination. Fundamental to its belief is a vision of a world community living in harmony and mutual understanding. The rapid expansion of the International Language Esperanto in Africa in recent years testifies to the strength of this vision.

According to the founder of Esperanto and its movement for peace, Dr. L. L. Zamenhof, in a message to the Universal Races Congress in London in 1911, over a hundred years ago, "The conflicts that we find between the various races and peoples are the greatest evil that afflicts humanity." This evil of racism lives on, breeding hatred and fostering inequality. We call on people everywhere to come together to defeat this evil through the spirit of understanding, including linguistic understanding, among all peoples and races across the world.

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