

Statement of the Universal Esperanto Association on Human Rights Day 2018 and the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

On the occasion of Human Rights Day, **December 10, 2018**, and celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, accepted on this date in 1948, the Universal Esperanto Association at once congratulates the United Nations on its constant, firm and persistent defence of human rights across the world, and points out that, more than ever before, the world's peoples have need of the Declaration and the principles it enshrines.

Everywhere, humankind is faced with discrimination (including discrimination on the basis of language), the use of force instead of peaceful dialogue, and forgetfulness regarding the lessons of history.

The Universal Esperanto Association (UEA) declares its solidarity with the principles of human rights and with the United Nations in its struggle to realise these principles.

Founded in 1908, UEA – the principal world association for the use and dissemination of the international language Esperanto – has, from its beginning, worked for the ideas of human equality and worldwide understanding.

Forty years after its founding, and before the official acceptance of the Universal Declaration by the United Nations, the Association included respect for human rights in its Constitution as a basic condition for its activities. Today it works to circulate information on human rights in over 120 countries.

Human Rights Day closely coincides with another annual celebration – that of the birth of the initiator of Esperanto, Dr. Ludwik Zamenhof, who dedicated his life to the brotherhood and sisterhood of humankind, and whose birth is celebrated on 15 December. “Absolute justice, equality and fraternity among the peoples is fully possible in practice,” Zamenhof asserted in 1905.

“Every country,” he declared in 1906, “belongs not to this or that people but with equal right to all its inhabitants,” and “in their family life all people have a full, natural and incontestable right to speak whatever language or dialect they wish and to confess any religion that they wish” – but to do so in harmony with those who practice another language or another religion. For this reason he recommended Esperanto for all humankind.

Today UEA stresses the congruence of Zamenhof's efforts and the struggle for fully universalizing human rights. The Association invites all defenders of human rights to an awareness of the importance of language rights and language equality in the work to achieve a more just and peaceful world, and pledges its full support for the ideals of the Universal Declaration.

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