



uea

UNIVERSALA ESPERANTO-ASOCIO

International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, 9 August 2021

On the occasion of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, 9 August 2021, the Universal Esperanto Association greets the United Nations, the UN High Commission on Human Rights, UNESCO, and all indigenous peoples throughout the world.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, also translated into Esperanto, recognizes the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples, and also the right to self-determination, autonomy and self-government. An important part of those rights is the conservation, revival and development of their languages, traditions and institutions. We remind the States of the obligations they have undertaken, and at the same time draw attention to the role of civil society in the implementation of the Declaration.

At this time, we are particularly aware of the importance of diversity and of the link between cultural diversity and biodiversity. Indigenous knowledge often plays an important part in conserving biodiversity. Also through their languages, indigenous peoples are the conveyors of values and practical knowledge that show how human societies can live in harmony with nature. This is a further reason why indigenous peoples should have full ability to decide what is effective on their lands, waters and communities, in the context of the harmonious co-existence of all living things on our planet. All peoples are equal in their humanity.

To respect, conserve and develop diversity, and to find good ways of communicating, understanding and working together form the very basis of Esperanto as a linguistic and cultural phenomenon. The international language Esperanto does not seek to remove the languages of individual communities but to facilitate contacts between communities, while all languages have the right to develop in their own territories. In this sense, the speakers of Esperanto defend linguistic and cultural diversity, in contrast to the frequent practice of the major national languages, whose speakers do indeed occupy more and more space at the cost of smaller languages.

The Decade of Indigenous Languages proclaimed by the United Nations and UNESCO will begin on January 1, 2022. Our Association has chosen as the theme of the World Congress of Esperanto in Montreal in 2022 "Language, Life, Earth: The Decade of Indigenous Languages". The Congress is one of the international events that will help to launch the Decade for the period 2022-2032. In celebrating the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples 2021, we announce our strong support for the Decade, which will form an occasion to celebrate and strengthen cultural and linguistic diversity, promote inclusion and human rights, and build peace and development.