



Message of the Universal Esperanto Association on the occasion of International Translation Day

September 30 is International Translation Day, when the United Nations honours translators and interpreters across the world, expressing support for their important but often invisible, or even mishandled, work of bridging the languages of the world.

Languages are important because people need to understand and be understood. They are important so that no one is left behind, so that we can all talk together and listen to all. They are important because everyone must have a voice in building a better world. But, without bridges among the various local and national languages, languages can all too easily separate and isolate people. Translation and interpretation are essential work in uniting nations and bringing people together – and to facilitate dialogue, understanding, and collaboration.

Languages play a fundamental role in cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue, and education. Through languages, we can strengthen collaboration, build more inclusive societies, preserve our cultural heritage and assemble political will. But all this can occur only if dialogue occurs also across language differences.

Multilingualism is a core value for the United Nations. We particularly welcome the efforts of Secretary-General António Guterres to further multilingualism at the UN. But the road ahead is long. This is evident from the Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on multilingualism in the UN system (2020). According to the Report, there is still a lack of coherent thinking about multilingualism, and of system-wide initiatives, strategies and plans to support multilingualism as a fundamental value.

The Universal Esperanto Association, using the International Language Esperanto, already participates in a fully international dialogue among our members and affiliated organizations across the world. We are also particularly aware of the misuse of languages to exclude, to discriminate negatively, and to divide people. Those who work to destroy such barriers are self-evidently our allies in the struggle to find the common ground where, in a spirit of peace and trust, we can urgently confront and overcome the problems of our fragile planet.