



Universala Esperanto-Asocio

Message of the Universal Esperanto Association on the occasion of Human Rights Day, 10 December 2021

The Universal Esperanto Association greets the United Nations on the occasion of Human Rights Day 2021. Human Rights Day celebrates the adoption by the United Nations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 1948.

When Hector Hodler founded the Universal Esperanto Association in 1908, human rights were a part of the Association's internationalist agenda from the beginning: Hodler believed strongly in tolerance, in equality (including gender equality) and in peaceful relations among nations. He saw in Esperanto a means of realizing these ideals.

Respect for human rights was formally written into the basic principles of the Universal Esperanto Association when, in its first congress after the Second World War, in Bern in July-August 1947, it approved a resolution declaring that respect for human rights was an essential condition for the work of the Association. It accordingly accepted with enthusiasm the news of the adoption of the Universal Declaration a year later.

Respect for human rights continues as a fundamental condition for UEA's work. The Association welcomes the attention given to human rights in Secretary General António Guterres's recent plan for the future, *Our Common Agenda*, with his call for "a renewed social contract anchored in human rights."

In this same spirit, the Secretary General declares that "people wish to be heard and to participate in the decisions that affect them." They can exercise the right to be heard only if the United Nations listens in their languages, and only if the UN explores all linguistic avenues, including the International Language, in its search for genuine and substantive two-way communication.

Too much of our global communication is from the top down. We must, in the spirit of Hector Hodler and of today's movement for Esperanto, respect that part of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that calls for equality of language. The Esperanto movement, a model of international civil society, is tied to no government, subject to no country's political agenda, and spans the world, with speakers in most countries of the world. Our Association will continue to work with the United Nations and all people of good will to bring about that spirit of trust and of respect for human rights that the world so desperately desires and needs.