



Languages – conveyors of cultures

Message of the Universal Esperanto Association on World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, 21 May 2022

Culture surrounds us and is part of our identity. It influences what we think about ourselves and others. Culture helps us understand the world and decide how to act. In truth, languages and cultures convey all human experience. Thus, intercultural dialogue is essential for building peace and significant development.

We recall the words of UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (available also in Esperanto translation): *"In our increasingly diverse societies, it is essential to ensure harmonious interaction among people and groups with plural, varied and dynamic cultural identities as well as their willingness to live together. Policies for the inclusion and participation of all citizens are guarantees of social cohesion, the vitality of civil society and peace."*

Although most conflicts in the world have a cultural dimension, all cultures also include concepts of mutual understanding and dialogue. Cultural diversity and dialogue advance human rights and fundamental freedoms and offer a more aware intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual life.

As repositories and carriers of cultures, languages need stronger support from governments and international organizations – particularly with regard to innovative use of mass media and communication technologies, including the establishment of public spaces for the use, teaching and dissemination of languages.

Multilingualism is a way of protecting and conserving the diversity of languages and cultures, and advancing understanding. The peoples of the world have a right to the full use of their own languages, and to have at their disposal the means to move easily among languages, including the international language Esperanto.

The cultural and linguistic diversity of the world is particularly evident among indigenous peoples, and their cultures and languages are the most at risk. The year 2022 is the first year of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages. The decade will form the main theme of the World Congress of Esperanto, taking place from 6 to 13 August in Montreal, Canada.

Through the international language Esperanto, created to advance peace and full international non-partisan communication, the speakers of Esperanto facilitate relations among people throughout the world and cultivate a sense of solidarity and respect among peoples.