



FRIENDSHIP AND JUSTICE AMONG ALL PEOPLES

Message of the Universal Esperanto Association on the occasion of Esperanto Day, 26 July 2022

In 1887, L. L. Zamenhof published the first book on Esperanto. For this reason we annually celebrate July 26, the date of that publication, as the birthday of the international language Esperanto. Zamenhof dreamed of a world where its peoples could freely know and communicate with one another on a neutral basis: “The walls between the peoples – walls that we fight against – remain frighteningly high and thick.” Yet, 135 years later, and despite Zamenhof’s work, the walls remain as high and thick as ever.

Inequality of languages is among those walls. Language is everywhere in our daily life: it is the most important instrument for human relations, even though we usually do not think about it in those terms. For this reason, we also celebrate Esperanto Day as the day of linguistic justice.

Our Association disseminates and advances Esperanto not only because it is an instrument suitable for international communication but also because it brings us together in peace. For us, the spirit of Esperanto is friendship and justice among all peoples. This spirit links us to the goals of the United Nations and UNESCO.

Linguistic diversity is one of the world’s riches. Accordingly, we especially welcome the International Decade of indigenous Languages, launched by the UN and UNESCO. The Decade will form the theme of the 107th World Congress of Esperanto, to take place in Montreal from 6 to 13 August, 2022. Protection and advancement of indigenous languages and cultures is fundamentally important if we are to make peace with the Earth and its inhabitants of many species.

In a recent resolution, the UN General Assembly again emphasized the importance of multilingualism and respect for the world’s languages. It is not enough to *instruct* the world through the large languages: it’s essential to *listen* to the voices of even the smallest languages. There is a role for Esperanto here, as a link among all the languages of the world.

Only through the broadest dialogue among all the world’s peoples, through multilingualism and through Esperanto, will it be possible to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, to renew multilateralism, and to follow the words of Zamenhof: “Break down, break down the walls between the peoples.” In this sense, let us build peace through human rights and development for all, and let us do so in a spirit of collaboration and friendship.

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