



Message of the Universal Esperanto Association on the occasion of the United Nations International Day of Friendship, 30 July 2022

July 30 is **Friendship Day**. Ten years ago, in 2011, the UN General Assembly declared this day the International Day of Friendship, building on UNESCO's call, some fourteen years before, for the creation of a Culture of Peace, "a set of values, attitudes and behaviours that reject violence and endeavour to prevent conflicts by addressing their root causes." International Friendship Day reminds us how important it is to work hard to cultivate friendship on a worldwide scale – so that we can tackle the problems that the world faces and seize the opportunities that can improve the state of the globe and all its inhabitants. It reminds us that co-operation is better than conflict, that recognizing the good in others is better than fighting over the bad, and that true international harmony and collaboration require trust.

It is a happy coincidence that the International Day of Friendship and Esperanto Day take place within a few days of one another.

July 26 is **Esperanto Day**. On that day in 1887, L.L. Zamenhof launched the international language Esperanto. Zamenhof maintained that the essence of trust is understanding – and that understanding is best achieved through a common language. He proposed Esperanto as an easily learned neutral language between speakers of different languages. Today, there are competent speakers of Esperanto all over the world, numbering in the millions and located in the majority of Member States of the United Nations. With the example of their founder Zamenhof, they work to bring people together in the spirit of peace and trust and to eradicate the root causes of conflict.

Among those root causes is a lack of understanding among the peoples of the world, and among the root causes of that lack of understanding is the issue of language.

We the people, quite literally, can't understand one another.

Speaking the same language does not necessarily bring peace, but linking it with friendship offers peace the best chance. That is why Esperanto speakers use their language to promote friendship across the world. We encourage others to join us, and we salute the United Nations on this special day.