



***Message of the Universal Esperanto Association on
the occasion of the International Day of the World's
Indigenous Peoples, August 9, 2022***

Indigenous peoples play an important role in the conservation of natural resources and are the bearers of fundamental knowledge for our sustainable existence on earth. Despite many obstacles and attacks on their rights, these peoples are organizing to continue their traditional occupations, maintain their cultural practices, and assert their rights to their lands.

Language is one of the key resources whereby indigenous peoples structure their cultures, knowledge, values and ways of life. Languages are essential for conservation, development and public awareness of traditional indigenous knowledge.

For these reasons, we strongly welcome the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032). The Decade is the theme of the 107th World Congress of Esperanto now taking place in Montreal (6-13 August 2022), which includes discussion of the relationship among language, way of life, ecological knowledge, indigenous rights, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Among activities around this theme, the Congress is publishing a new Esperanto translation of the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and discussing ways of taking action for indigenous rights by way of this important document.

The Congress, in the presence of indigenous guest speakers and experts, includes discussions and presentations on: a panorama of indigenous languages in North America; activities of Esperanto speakers for indigenous languages throughout the world, and prospects for language learning and language revival.

For speakers of Esperanto, who generally set high value on cultural and linguistic diversity, indigenous peoples merit particular support as guardians of some ninety percent of the linguistic heritage of humankind.

Our Association works to promote linguistic diversity and linguistic democracy, and supports indigenous peoples, whose languages, cultures, traditions and world views bring virtually unending riches to the world's heritage.