



## **Message of the Universal Esperanto Association on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 21 March 2023**

From its foundation, the United Nations has worked for the elimination of racial discrimination, and this principle underlies all international instruments for human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights explicitly states that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights,” and it specifically forbids differentiation based on race. Although racism laws and behaviours have been abolished in many countries, racism has not disappeared, and in all countries people, communities and societies suffer from this injustice.

The constitution of the Universal Esperanto Association (UEA), accepted in 1947, one year before the Universal Declaration, noted that “good international relations and respect for human rights are essential conditions for the work of UEA.” This remains an essential principle of our work, which fully embodies the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The battle against racism involves us all. Governments, organizations and individuals must not only acknowledge but also confirm the rights of all. New laws, customs and attitudes are needed if we are to prevent and finally eradicate racism. In 2021, a report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights proposed an agenda for racial justice and equality, with four points: to reverse cultures of denial and dismantle systemic racism through structural, institutional, and behavioural change; to end immunity and build confidence; to listen to and respect anti-racism activists; to confront the past and accelerate redress.

The International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination defines racial discrimination as “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin.” Such discrimination appears in different forms, often linguistically. Recently, the UN Special Rapporteur for Minorities, Fernand de Varennes, declared that language rights are vital for minorities and indigenous peoples: “Languages are essential tools to communicate and share knowledge, memory and history, but they are also key to full and equal participation.”

The elimination of racism and all discrimination is essential for creating a better world for all – a world of freedom and equality. We must work together to advance our progress, including linguistic progress, toward living together in harmony, understanding and solidarity.

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