



Universala Esperanto-Asocio

en oficialaj rilatoj kun UN kaj Unesko

Nieuwe Binnenweg 176, 3015 BJ Rotterdam, Nederlando

+31 10 436 10 44 +31 10 436 17 51 uea@co.uea.org

Statement to the Economic and Social Council: 5th Plenary Meeting (Coordination Segment)

31 January 2024

Delivered by Professor Francis M. Hult

Multilingualism is a core value of the United Nations. Yet it is rarely addressed in relation to the targets and indicators of the SDGs.

Recent milestones call attention to the relevance of multilingualism for SDGs 1 and 16, in particular:

- The 30th anniversary of the Declaration on Minority Rights in 2022
- The launch of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages also in 2022 and renewed attention to the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)
- The 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 2023

Each of these instruments have in common attention to language rights, including nondiscrimination with regard to language.

The Declaration on Minorities and UNDRIP, in turn, variously enshrine the rights of linguistic minorities and indigenous peoples to their own languages in settings such as education and media as well as the right to participate in all domains of society, including decision-making and political processes.

Dear friends, indigenous peoples and minorities suffer disproportionately from poverty. We cannot ignore language if we are to leave no one behind. “Equal access to justice for all” eludes us as long as linguistic discrimination continues, and “inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making” is impossible unless all voices can be heard.¹

The review of SDG 16 is an opportunity for a renewed conversation about implementing language rights and innovative multilingual solutions to poverty.

Video:

<https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k1w/k1wm2nojd?kalturaStartTime=3627>

¹https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16#targets_and_indicators