



Message of the Universal Esperanto Association on the occasion of the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, 21 May 2024

Cultural values are important for social understanding, education and prosperity. Through such values we give coherence to life and we experience the world. In collaboration with UNESCO, on the occasion of the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, we draw attention to the richness of cultures around the world and the essential role of intercultural dialogue to achieve peace and sustainable development.

Such dialogue and such understanding must be guided by human rights and by awareness of the essential value of every person. By recognising the other, and by greater proximity, openness and tolerance, together we can build a better world for everyone and leave no one behind. In this way we celebrate this day and remind ourselves of our equality, our cultural diversity and the cultural values that we can bring to the essential task of improving the lot of humanity and the preservation of the planet.

Languages occupy an important and special place in the conversation on cultural diversity and dialogue. Languages are, at one and the same time, means of cultural expression and carriers of culture. For this reason, UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity asserts that "all persons have the right to express themselves and to create and disseminate their work in the language of their choice, and particularly in their mother tongue."

If this is to come about, we must guarantee the linguistic diversity and heritage of humankind through support, advancement and dissemination of all the world's languages. In addition, we must encourage linguistic diversity by advancing the broadest possible learning of languages, at all educational levels, beginning in early childhood.

Multilingualism is a fundamental value that implies dialogue and tolerance among different people, cultures, communities, and countries. In this spirit, we use and disseminate Esperanto to create paths to understanding, co-operation and unity in our humanity. And in this same spirit we invite participation in the 109th World Congress of Esperanto, in Arusha, Tanzania, from 3 to 10 August 2024, on the theme *People, Language and Environment for a Better World*.