



***Message of the Universal Esperanto
Association for the International Day of
Friendship, 30 July 2024***

Friendship can be understood as a form of solidarity and recognition: friendship between individuals, friendship between peoples, friendship between countries and between cultures. Friendship is a value of the human spirit, essential for continuing peace, security and development: it is through friendship that we build strong ties of trust.

In today's world, in a time of growing conflicts and serious international challenges, when we tend to witness more accusation than co-operation, we might perhaps assume that talking about friendship is an illusion. However, as Unesco rightly understood when it was founded 79 years ago, if we want to build durable peace, we must build it in the minds of people, in the intellectual and moral solidarity of humankind.

The International Day of Friendship reminds us of our most noble aspirations: it invites us to international dialogue, solidarity, understanding and reconciliation. It pursues the idea, launched by Unesco, of a culture of peace: namely the development of values, attitudes and behaviours that reject violence and find peaceful ways of living together.

As the relevant resolution of the UN General Assembly asserts, working for friendship builds bridges between communities, strengthening the principles of the United Nations Charter and the Declaration of Human Rights. We should remember our humanity, which links us "regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status".

For us, as speakers of the international language Esperanto, this is a special day also because it comes soon after Esperanto Day, July 26, when we celebrate the friendship among people that is created by Esperanto. The Universal Esperanto Association uses this language to bring people together, to further international understanding, and to celebrate diversity. And we can point to successes in that regard. We aim to create a culture of peace not just on Friendship Day but throughout the year –in pursuit of a world in which trust can replace war, and friendship can enable cooperation for a more stable future.