



***Message of the Universal Esperanto Association on
the occasion of International Mother Language Day,
21 February 2025***

In 2025 we celebrate the 25th International Mother Language Day. This special day, designated by the United Nations and UNESCO at the very beginning of the 21st century, reminds us of the importance of languages for personal development and social participation, and particularly of the right to begin one's education in one's native language, thereby maximizing self-development and participation in society from the beginning of life.

Decline in linguistic diversity is often related to decline in cultural diversity and biodiversity. Languages carry knowledge and experience from generation to generation: languages accompany us everywhere and in every action of life: in the home, in education, in political participation, in the arts and sciences.

We note that we are now living in the International Decade of Indigenous languages (2022-2032), whose goal is to advance the linguistic human rights of indigenous peoples and to guarantee the conservation, revival and expansion of mother tongues. The Universal Esperanto Association devoted its congress of 2022 to the International Decade.

Languages are important for sustainable development and for full participation in society. Questions of language have not received sufficient attention in the general debate on the Sustainable Development Goals.

In 2020 our Association published in Esperanto its *Guide to the 17 Goals for Sustainable Development*. The Guide pointed out that without effective linguistic communication the Goals cannot be fully realized – because languages form the basis of communication, and communication in both directions is necessary for working together: languages are for speaking but also for listening. The Guide underlines the importance of language learning to maximize dialogue aimed at achieving a common goal: peace, prosperity and mutual understanding. It notes that, among such languages, the idea behind the international language Esperanto particularly emphasizes equality, peace and cooperation.

We repeat: language rights fulfill an essential role in advancing dialogue, cooperation, inclusivity and just societies. Let us particularly remember that truth on the occasion of International Mother Language Day 2025.