



***Message of the Universal Esperanto Association on
the occasion of International Mother Language Day,
21 February 2026***

International Mother Language Day has its origins in the 1952 struggle for the right to use the native Bengali language in what was then East Pakistan and became Bangladesh. The day reminds us that language is an important part of the identity of peoples and communities. Languages convey traditions, knowledge and history. And the child who initially learns through their mother tongue learns most easily and with dignity.

To advance strong communities, we need to advance multilingualism. Everyone should have the right to learn and grow through their mother tongue, and also to acquire regional, national, and international languages. Through multilingualism, wisely used, every individual can participate, talk and be heard. Thus, everyone can decide together their common future.

A multilingual world requires multilingual education and multilateralism. This is the road to peace and justice, to sustainable development, and to realising the goals of the United Nations: peace, human rights, international cooperation and friendly relations among nations and peoples. Linguistic justice requires the creation of environments in which all languages and all voices are valued and have space to exist and prosper in dignity and equality.

To save the world's cultural diversity, we must also save its linguistic diversity.

Since its founding in 1908, the Universal Esperanto Association has been working to advance international communication, understanding and respect among peoples. Through the international language Esperanto and its shared equality, we propose an understanding among people where everyone may recognize one another in their humanity, and live together in harmony and peace.

We note that we will soon reach the midpoint in the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032), which, among other goals, seeks to conserve and strengthen the linguistic human rights of indigenous peoples and guarantee that they are able to preserve, strengthen and disseminate their languages.

We invite everyone to the World Congress of Esperanto, taking place on 1-8 August 2026 in Graz, Austria. We will meet to celebrate human diversity in an atmosphere of linguistic equality and respect, and will debate the topic of volunteerism in the service of sustainable development.