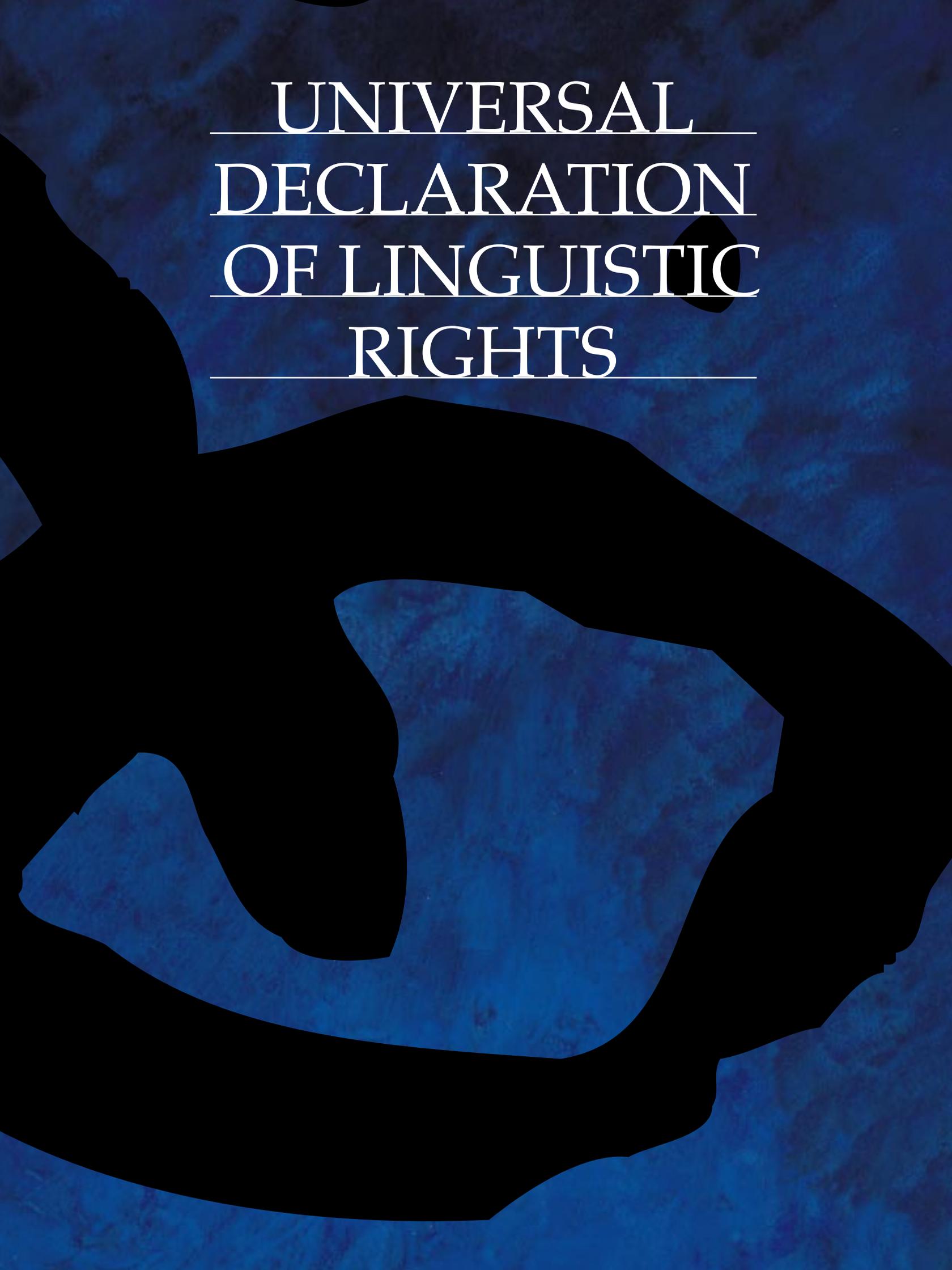


UNIVERSAL  
DECLARATION  
OF LINGUISTIC  
RIGHTS



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UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF LINGUISTIC RIGHTS  
Follow-up Committee

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# Index

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<b>Preface</b> , by Carles Torner Pifarré	9
<b>The text and the process</b> , by Oriol Ramon Mimó	11
<b>Presentation</b> , by Rigoberta Menchú Tum	17
<b>Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights</b>	19
<b>Support of international personalities</b>	33
Wisława Szymborska	34
Nelson Rolihlahia Mandela	36
Buthelezi Mangosuthu Gatsha	38
Ronald Harwood	40
Homero Aridjis	42
Noam Chomsky	44
José Ramos Horta	46
Dalai Lama	48
Dr. M. Aram	50
Desmond Tutu	52
Lászlo Tóké	54
Ricard Maria Carles i Gordó	56
Adolfo Pérez Esquivel	58
Josep Carreras	60
Seamus Heaney	62
Ngugi Wa Thiong’o	64
Shimon Peres	66
Yasser Arafat	68
Octavio Paz	70
Judit Mascó	72
Peter Gabriel	74
Joan Oró	76
<b>Members of the Follow-up Committee and the Scientific Council of UDLR</b>	79

# Preface

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**Carles Torner**  
*International PEN Club  
President of the Follow-up Committee  
of the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights*

An old legend says that, a long time ago, there was a king who heard that in his country there lived a truly wise man. He was so wise, they said, that he could speak all the languages in the world. He knew the song of the birds and understood it as if he were one of them. He knew how to read the shape of the clouds and immediately understand their meaning. Any language he listened to, he could answer without hesitation. He could even read the thoughts of men and women wherever they came from. The king, impressed by all the qualities that were attributed to him, called him to his palace. And the wise man came.

When he was there, the king asked him:

“Wise man, is it true that you know all the languages of the world?”

“Yes, Sir,” was the answer.

“Is it true that that you listen to the birds and you can understand their song?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“That you know how to read the shape of the clouds?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“And, as I have been told, that you can even read people’s minds?”

“Yes, Sir.”

The king still had a last question...

But, which question would we put to the wisest of all the wise men?

Which languages from all over the world are spoken by the authors of the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights? Countless, we would dare to say. In any case, from more than 90 states and 5 continents, more than 200 people gathered on June 6th, 1996, in Barcelona to proclaim the Declaration. Some represented small local NGOs committed to teaching a language not recognized by the official education system of their country. There were writers in many different languages who use their language every day to create literary universes open to all. Others represented international NGOs whose mission is the defence of linguistic rights. Others were experts in law, in languages, in sociolinguistics and in various fields of knowledge which converge in the academic study of linguistic rights.

For all of them, the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights promises a future of coexistence and peace thanks to the recognition of the right that each linguistic community has to shape its own life in its own language in all fields. And so they proclaimed. Since then, the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights has spread: each month there is news about its translation into a new language, a new affiliation of some organization that might not have been associated to the process, or about an international personality who has decided to support the Declaration and with it the defence of all languages in an international context which threatens the survival of many of them.

That original text, written, amended, approved and proclaimed at non-governmental level wants never-

theless to contribute to the work of the United Nations. It aims to be a strong motivation, an appeal to the states so that, in the dynamics started by the Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, they would recognize the linguistic rights of the individuals and of their communities. The association of UNESCO to our process from the very beginning and the work it has been doing along these lines gives us hope that some day a normative body of the United Nations regulating the defence of linguistic rights all over the world will be approved. This book wants to contribute to this work.

In this book the text of the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights appears and it is explained how it was written and proclaimed in the World Conference on Linguistic Rights. It is the work done by 61 NGOs, 41 PEN Club centres and over 40 experts in linguistic rights, coming from the five continents. The testimony of well-known personalities from all over the world also appears, as well as that of writers and people who fight for rights, for peace and who wanted to join us in this project.

We all, like that king in the fairy tale, may put the last question to that wise man who knew all the languages of the world. The king looked at him as if defying him, as if testing him, and asked him the final question:

“In my hands, which are hidden behind my back, there is a bird. Wise man, answer me: is it alive or dead?”

The answer of the wise man was addressed to everybody. In our case, to everybody who has any responsibility in promoting linguistic rights, from the activist to the writer, from the teacher to the legislator. For that wise man, surprisingly, felt scared. He knew that, whatever the answer, the king could kill the bird. He looked at the king and remained silent for a long time. Finally, in a very serene voice he said,

“The answer, Sir, is in your hands.”

The answer is in our hands.

# The text and the process

---

**Oriol Ramon i Mimó**

CIEMEN

*Secretary General of the Universal Declaration  
of Linguistic Rights Follow-up Committee*

## 1. The process

From the 6th to the 8th of June, 1996, 61 NGOs, 41 PEN Centers and 40 experts in linguistic rights from all over the world met in Barcelona. The convocation of the World Conference on Linguistic Rights (WCLR) was an initiative of the Translations and Linguistic Rights Commission of the International PEN Club and the CIEMEN (Centre Internacional Escarré per a les Minories Ètniques i les Nacions) with the moral and technical support of UNESCO.

The Assembly of Participants at the WCLR approved the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights (UDLR) in a ceremony held on June 6th at the Auditorium of the University of Barcelona. The delegates of the NGOs, PEN Centers and experts signed the document during the same ceremony, at the end of which they presented the text and the document containing the signatures to Mr. Andri Isaksson, official representative of the UNESCO Director General. In this way, the non-governmental associative sphere has handed over a text to UNESCO that will become the starting point for the work of the governmental experts. All of this would not have been possible without a common working aim which, within UNESCO, was begun by the Linguapax Project.

Two days later, on June 8th, at the La Pedrera Auditorium, NGOs, PEN Centers and experts decided to create a Follow-up Committee of the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights (FCUDLR). A month later, Mr. Federico Mayor Zaragoza, Director General of UNESCO, received the organizers of the WCLR and, with them, the text and the process.

## 2. The context

The Declaration is a long and complex document. It could not be otherwise, for the subject in itself is complex and it is even more so because the aim of the writers has been to gather, as democratically as possible, the opinions expressed by many people and organizations from all over the world.

The proposal to write the Declaration was prompted by an extraordinary session of the Translations and Linguistic Rights Commission of the PEN Club International held in Palma de Mallorca in December 1993. At the beginning of 1994, an organizing committee was created and in September that year process of reflection on the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights was begun when the organizers promoting the Conference ordered it to be written by a team of experts from various fields and working spheres. Forty experts from various countries participated in the elaboration of the first twelve drafts.

The new communication technology made possible a wide debate on the contents of the Declaration between individuals and institutions of all continents.

The diversity of the contributions that the team of experts received progressively throughout the

process of compilation was a determining factor for the Declaration's reflecting the multiplicity of sociological contexts and maintaining a balance of perspective, unusual hitherto.

One of the aims of the writers was to define equitable linguistic rights, but not by subordinating them to the political or administrative status of the territory to which a given linguistic community belongs, nor to criteria such as the degree of codification or the number of speakers; these criteria have not been taken into consideration legally. For this reason, the Declaration proclaims the equality of linguistic rights, without any non-pertinent distinctions between official / non-official / regional / local, majority / minority, or modern / archaic languages.

One of the most important contributions to Linguistic Law is found in the fact that the Declaration considers inseparable and interdependent the collective and individual dimensions of linguistic rights, for language is collectively constituted within a community; it is also within this community that people make a personal use of it. In this way, the practice of individual linguistic rights can only be made effective if the collective rights of all communities and all linguistic groups are respected by everyone.

The articulation of the linguistic rights of communities, groups and individuals, while cohabiting the same space, is essential to guarantee coexistence, but it appears to be extremely complex. This is the reason why the Declaration takes into account the rights of linguistic communities historically established in their territory in order to set up a scale of references, to be applied in each individual case, of the rights of linguistic groups with various degrees of historicity and self-identification, as well as of the individuals who live outside their native community.

12

Although the practice of linguistic rights may depend on the available resources, it would be unfair to negate the validity of these rights by claiming a lack of means. For this reason, the Declaration reminds us that to apply rights so universally recognized today such as the right to life, health, work and education it requires considerable financing; it asks for a unified international commitment which would compensate, also in this domain, the deficits and promote the rights of the most disadvantaged people.

The variety of factors that condition the position of languages, the difficult convergence of community, group and individual interests and the necessary interrelation between linguistic rights and other fundamental rights, make it impossible to define equal measures to be applied in all cases. This is the reason why the Declaration, although underlining the unavoidable obligations of public power, is centered around rights and not around obligations or prohibitions; it puts the emphasis on seeking solutions adapted to each case starting from a democratic consensus.

### **3. Linguistic peace**

Therefore, the Declaration is a text that becomes necessary, as manifested in its Preliminaries "to correct linguistic imbalances with a view to ensuring the respect and full development of all languages and establishing the principles for a just and equitable linguistic peace throughout the world as a key factor in the maintenance of harmonious social relations".

And if this peace is to be fair and equitable it is because in the bases of the Declaration lies the basic principle of the equality of all peoples and languages. Neither economic, social, religious, cultural,

demographic, etc. features nor linguistic features justify any sort of discrimination; therefore, all linguistic communities are subject to the same rights.

All predictions indicate that during the XXI century, 80% of the languages from all over the world may disappear. This highlights an unavoidable issue: that multilingualism and linguistic diversity must contribute to the culture of peace in the same way as the latter must contribute to preserve diversity.

This reciprocal relationship will be achieved if the development of a culture of peace explores the values provided by languages as elements for integration. In this sense, the UDLR favours a new perception of the concept of linguistic diversity: that which understands that ALL languages are patrimony of mankind and transmits the conviction that this patrimony is not a property but a legacy and must not be squandered. With each language that disappears, the world ecolinguistic balance is altered and the rapidity and proliferation of the substitution processes may imply unforeseeable consequences that have already been detected in various collective pathologies. It is here where the great contribution that the UDLR may make to the culture of peace is found: to promote the awareness that linguistic diversity is not only necessary but that it is an essential contribution to mankind's knowledge for it provides us with one of the many ways of understanding the world.

Besides, present conditions of life facilitate the acceleration of linguistic substitution processes and it is for this reason that our perception of language has to be modified; the myth of linguistic diversity as a barrier for communication and integration is not true: on the contrary, the fact that language is a tangible reality makes it a fundamental element for integration. And, indeed, what makes language essential in a culture of peace is the fact that it can be transmitted and accumulated: it is wealth which is accessible to all and its acquisition does not imply any renunciation.

13

The Declaration has been produced at a time when the linguistic diversity of the Earth is seriously threatened. Many factors have brought about this situation:

“• The age-old unifying tendency of the majority of states to reduce diversity and to foster attitudes opposed to cultural plurality and linguistic pluralism.

• The trend towards a worldwide economy and consequently towards a worldwide market of information, communications and culture, which disrupts the spheres of interrelation and the forms of interaction that guarantee the internal cohesion of language communities.

• The economicist growth model put forward by transnational economic groups and which seeks to identify deregulation with progress and competitive individualism with freedom generates serious and growing economic, social, cultural and linguistic inequality.” (Preamble)

The Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights opposes these factors with a conception of universalism based on linguistic and cultural diversity which together would overcome the homogenizing tendencies and the those towards exclusive isolation. It has as fundamental axes:

“• In the political perspective, the goal of conceiving a way of organizing linguistic diversity so as to permit the effective participation of language communities in this new growth model.

- In a cultural perspective, the goal of rendering the worldwide communications space compatible with the equitable participation of all peoples, language communities and individuals in the development process.
- In an economic perspective, the goal of fostering sustainable development based on the participation of all and on respect for the ecological balance of societies and for equitable relationships between all languages and cultures.” (Preamble)

#### 4. The Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights

The Declaration aims to be applicable to a great diversity of linguistic situations. It has therefore given special attention to the definition of the conceptual apparatus on which its articles are based. Thus, it considers as axes of a linguistic community: historicity, territoriality, self-identification as a people and the fact of having developed a common language as normal means for communication between its members. Consequently, the Declaration always defines under its Preliminaries Heading, the native language of a given territory as the language of the community historically established in a specific space. The necessity of preserving the linguistic rights of collectivities displaced from their historic territory (be it due to migration, deportation or other reasons) so that they are compatible with the rights of the linguistic community of the destination place has been taken into consideration in the conceptualization of the linguistic group, which is understood as a human collectivity which shares the same language and which is established in the territorial space of another linguistic community but without an equivalent historicity.

14

The Declaration does not consider the territory only as a geographic area but also as a social and functional space essential to the full development of a language. This makes it possible, for instance, to consider as linguistic communities the nomad peoples in their historical areas of displacement, and we may understand that the communities which.

- “• when they are separated from the main body of their community by political or administrative boundaries;
- when they have been historically established in a small geographical area surrounded by members of other languages communities; or
  - when they are established in a geographical area which they share with the members of other languages communities with similar historical antecedents.” (Article 1.3)

The Declaration is based on a balanced articulation between the rights of the communities and linguistic groups, and the rights of the individuals which belong to them. For this reason, besides the relative historicity and the democratically expressed will, the factors that may matter compensatory treatment are taken into consideration. The universalist volition of the Declaration implies in itself a correction of imbalances so that respect and full development of all languages is assured.

Another matter to which the Declaration has given special attention is the articulation between the rights of communities and linguistic groups and the rights of the individuals which belong to them; therefore neither one nor the other can represent an obstacle to interrelation and integration with the receiving linguistic community, nor restrict the rights of this community or of its members in the full public use of their own languagethroughout of their territorial space. Thus, it makes explicit a series of inalienable personal rights which may be exercised in any situation, rights such as:

“the right to be recognized as a member of a language community;  
the right to the use of one’s own language both in private and in public;  
the right to the use one’s own name;  
the right to interrelate and associate with other members of one’s language community of origin;  
the right to maintain and develop one’s own culture;  
and all the other rights related to language which are recognized in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 16 December 1966 and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the same date.” (Article 3.1)

At the same time, it considers a right and an obligation of the individuals who establish themselves in the territory of a different linguistic community to maintain there in relationships promoting integration, understood as a resocialization of these individuals in the society that receives them, while accepting assimilation only as the result of a totally free individual option, assimilation being understood “as the acculturation of the individuals within the society that receives them, so that they substitute their own original cultural features with the references, values and behaviour proper to the receiving society.” (Article 4.2) To these personal rights, the Declaration adds as rights of linguistic groups:

“the right for their own language and culture to be taught;  
the right of access to cultural services;  
the right to an equitable presence of their language and the culture in the communications media;  
the right to receive attention in their own language from government bodies and in socioeconomic relations.” (Article 3.2)

Besides the general principles, the headings of the Declaration define linguistic rights in the fields of public administration and official bodies, education, onomastics, mass media and new technology, culture and the socioeconomic sphere. The Transitory Provisions refer to the obligation of public powers to do everything possible to ensure the application of the rights proclaimed in the Declaration and to see that authorities, organizations and individuals are informed on the rights and correlative obligations that derive from the Declaration.

Finally, in the Final Provisions, the creation of a Council of the Languages within the United Nations is proposed; the creation of a World Commission for Linguistic Rights is also advocated and initiated.

## **5. The follow-up**

The Assembly of Participants of the World Conference for Linguistic Rights created a Follow-up Committee of the Declaration with the twofold aim of accompanying the text along its way into UNESCO and obtaining the maximum support of institutions and bodies from all over the world, a support that would reinforce the moral weight of the Declaration and would help to propagate its contents.

The Follow-up Committee created a Scientific Council consisting of experts in Linguistic Law from all over the world. The aim of this Council is to collect new ideas and contributions to complete and improve the contents of the Declaration and to be at the service of UNESCO as long as it requires.

In this book we present all the well-known personalities from around the world who have given their

support to the Declaration and who ask international organizations to take note and work along the lines already initiated by civil society with this UDLR. These personalities represent the great amount of support that we have received during this first year of life of the Declaration, from public bodies as well as from democratic parliaments, NGOs, other PEN Centers and private individuals.

The book, which is to be distributed to state delegations of UNESCO, seeks with great modesty to propagate the principles of the Declaration among the members of UNESCO and to contribute to the creation of a working group on linguistic rights within this organization. All of this should bring us a little bit closer to a Linguistic Rights International Convention.

## **6. Hope**

When one speaks about preserving linguistic diversity and the right of all communities to live in their own language, one frequently appeals to the economic cost that all this could imply. However, it would also be necessary to evaluate the economic cost of language substitution:

How much does marginality cost?

What price do we pay for the loss of a tool such as language for adjusting to environment?

What is the cost of an education that uses a code which does not fit the environment?

What is the cost of a pseudo-education in predominating languages which does not capacitate one use them properly?

How much...?

16

If we are capable of evaluating these costs we will have a convincing argument for those who are still not clearly convinced about the advantages of preserving linguistic diversity and who believe that it is possible to offset the cost of homogenization. Despite the fact that the prognosis for linguistic diversity is not so encouraging, we believe that the situation is still not irreversible. To stop the process will not be easy but it is possible. UNESCO has a lot to say on this subject.

# Presentation

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**Rigoberta Menchú Tum**  
*Nobel Peace Prize 1992*

Letter sent by Rigoberta Menchú  
on the occasion of the Proclamation  
of the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights  
on June 6, 1996.

Participants  
World Conference of Linguistic Rights  
Barcelona



Dear participants,

In the first place, I wish to apologise for not being here with you in this important forum on the fight for the linguistic rights of all the peoples of the world, but unavoidable previous commitments have prevented me from coming. I would like to express my best wishes for the success of the Conference that begins today.

The Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights that will be approved during these four days, is no doubt an important tool for the diversity of communities and linguistic groups -such as they are defined in the document- who are bravely fighting for preserving one of the basic expressions of their culture: their language.

I am convinced that language is the vehicle that permits thought to be in accordance with the knowledge and the world vision of a given culture, of a given people, who have inherited this from their ancestors and which, at the same time, makes it possible to pass it on to the new generations.

In language lies the main weapon of resistance of those cultures which for centuries have suffered the imposition of alien cultural values, as is the case of the native peoples of Latin America; the fact of just employing language for transmitting their thinking and knowledge implies that the contents of their culture is maintained despite the efforts made to destroy it. Since oral tradition is a feature of native peoples, language occupies a privileged place within our culture because, through it, it has been possible to preserve our historical memory which we pass from one generation to the other. Also, language is important because oral tradition is a basic aspect in the process of our upbringing and education.

In Guatemala, one of the main concerns of native peoples has always been the preservation of their languages which are as different as the great diversity of cultures existing in the country. It is true that we have lost a lot, but today there is a movement of recovery that I believe is very important for the survival of our cultures. (...)

As far as I can understand, the contents of the text acknowledge the importance of language as a basic cultural element; for this reason it is not discriminatory. That is to say, it does not establish privileges for any culture over another one but it simply establishes equal rights for all cultures in the use of their language. The Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights is a tool that establishes regulations which, among other things, prevents the various existing languages, due to extralinguistic reasons, from being either marginalised or degraded, or even disappearing completely. It does so by establishing several international and regional agreements, declarations and pacts.

It is a well-known fact that, for centuries, the rights of native peoples have been negated and violated; they are neither acknowledged nor respected. It is also known that these peoples have not remained passive in the face of the discrimination and racism on which their exploitation is based. They have always found the strength to resist oppression and marginalisation. They have played a main role not only in their history but in the very same history of the countries where they live and, thus, they have contributed to the universal historical process.

At the turn of the XXI century, it is extremely painful and immoral that the situation of many peoples is still a situation of discrimination, marginalisation and exploitation. So runs the life of native peoples. Their rights are neither acknowledged nor respected. This cannot go on. It is necessary to construct new spaces and mechanisms for intercultural relation on the basis of absolute respect among cultures and peoples.

In the international sphere, a tendency can now be observed to construct and adopt juridical instruments in relation to the respect and validity of native peoples' rights. This tendency implies that the traditional silence existing in relation to the problems of native peoples has been broken. This has been possible thanks to our unyielding will and faith in our struggle. This does not mean that native people see a clear and open path towards an absolute solution to their historical problems or that their economic, political, social and cultural rights will achieve a state of full acknowledgement and respect.

18

Between progress made at an international level and the national situation still present in many countries, especially in Latin America, there is a great gap which is characterized by constant violation, non-acknowledgement and a lack of respect for our rights.

This has to be considered very carefully and with great concern, for this evolution may determine to a large extent whether a constructive and cooperative dialogue may or may not be established between the different cultures of the planet; it will also determine the possibility for building the space and the mechanisms for intercultural relation on equal terms and rights for all peoples and cultures.

The Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights is a very important step in the struggle to attain equality between cultures and peoples. The path that leads to the creation of a world convention will be long and full of difficulties. I am sure that the participants in this Conference will know how to define the suitable mechanisms to achieve this aim.

All the same, the Universal Declaration is a valuable contribution to the necessary work for constructing this intercultural relationship based on respect and an acknowledgement of cultural diversity, as well as for constructing multiethnic pluricultural and multilingual nations.

Guatemala, June of 1996

UNIVERSAL  
DECLARATION  
OF LINGUISTIC  
RIGHTS

## PRELIMINAIRES

The institutions and non-governmental organizations, signatories to the present Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights, meeting in Barcelona from 6 to 9 June 1996,

Having regard to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights which, in its preamble, expresses its (faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women(; and which, in its second article, establishes that (everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms( regardless of (race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status(;

Having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 16 December 1966 (Article 27), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the same date which, in their preambles, state that human beings cannot be free unless conditions are created which enable them to enjoy both their civil and political rights and their economic, social and cultural rights;

Having regard to Resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992 of the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization which adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National, Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities;

Having regard to the declarations and conventions of the Council of Europe, such as the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, of 4 November 1950 (Article 14); the Convention of the Council of Ministers of the Council of Europe, of 29 June 1992, approving the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages; the Declaration on National Minorities made by the Summit Meeting of the Council of Europe on 9 October 1993; and the Framework Convention for the

Protection of National Minorities of November 1994;

Having regard to the Santiago de Compostela Declaration of the International PEN Club and the Declaration of 15 December 1993 of the Translations and Linguistic Rights Committee of the International PEN Club concerning the proposal to hold a World Conference on Linguistic Rights;

Considering that, in the Recife, Brazil, Declaration of 9 October 1987, the 12th Seminar of the International Association for the Development of Intercultural Communication recommended the United Nations Organization to take the necessary steps to approve and implement a Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights;

Having regard to Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization of 26 June 1989 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries;

Having regard to the Universal Declaration of the Collective Rights of Peoples, Barcelona, May 1990, which declared that all peoples have the right to express and develop their culture, language and rules of organization and, to this end, to adopt political, educational, communications and governmental structures of their own, within different political frameworks;

Having regard to the Final Declaration adopted by the General Assembly of the International Federation of Modern Language Teachers in Pécs (Hungary) on 16 August 1991, which recommended that linguistic rights be considered as fundamental rights of the individual;

Having regard to the report of the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, of 20 April 1994, concerning the draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which viewed individual rights in the light of collective rights;

Having Regard to the draft Declaration of the Inter-American Human Rights Commission on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, approved at session 1278 on 18 September 1995;

Considering that the majority of the world's endangered languages belong to non-sovereign peoples and that the main factors which prevent the development of these languages and accelerate the process of language substitution include the lack of self-government and the policy of states which impose their political and administrative structures and their language;

Considering that invasion, colonisation, occupation and other instances of political, economic or social subordination often involve the direct imposition of a foreign language or, at the very least, distort perceptions of the value of languages and give rise to hierarchical linguistic attitudes which undermine the language loyalty of speakers; and considering that the languages of some peoples which have attained sovereignty are consequently immersed in a process of language substitution as a result of a policy which favours the language of former colonial or imperial powers;

Considering that universalism must be based on a conception of linguistic and cultural diversity which prevails over trends towards homogenization and towards exclusionary isolation;

Considering that, in order to ensure peaceful co-existence between language communities, overall principles must be found so as to guarantee the promotion and respect of all languages and their social use in public and in private;

Considering that various factors of an extralinguistic nature (historical, political, territorial, demographic, economic, sociocultural and sociolinguistic factors and those related to collective attitudes) give rise to problems which lead to the extinction, marginalization and degeneration of numerous languages, and that linguistic rights

must therefore be examined in an overall perspective, so as to apply appropriate solutions in each case;

In the belief that a Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights is required in order to correct linguistic imbalances with a view to ensuring the respect and full development of all languages and establishing the principles for a just and equitable linguistic peace throughout the world as a key factor in the maintenance of harmonious social relations;

HEREBY DECLARE THAT

#### PREAMBLE

The situation of each language, in view of the foregoing considerations, is the result of the convergence and interaction of a wide range of factors of a political and legal, ideological and historical, demographic and territorial, economic and social, cultural, linguistic and sociolinguistic, interlinguistic and subjective nature.

At the present time, these factors are defined by:

- The age-old unifying tendency of the majority of states to reduce diversity and foster attitudes opposed to cultural plurality and linguistic pluralism.
- The trend towards a worldwide economy and consequently towards a worldwide market of information, communications and culture, which disrupts the spheres of interrelation and the forms of interaction that guarantee the internal cohesion of language communities.
- The economicist growth model put forward by transnational economic groups which seeks to identify deregulation with progress and competitive individualism with freedom and generates serious and growing economic, social, cultural and linguistic inequality.

Language communities are currently threatened by a lack of self-government, a limited population or one that is partially or wholly dispersed, a fragile economy, an uncodified language, or a cultural model opposed to the dominant one, which make it impossible for many languages to survive and develop unless the following basic goals are taken into account:

- In a political perspective, the goal of conceiving a way of organizing linguistic diversity so as to permit the effective participation of language communities in this new growth model.
- In a cultural perspective, the goal of rendering the worldwide communications space compatible with the equitable participation of all peoples, language communities and individuals in the development process.
- In an economic perspective, the goal of fostering sustainable development based on the participation of all and on respect for the ecological balance of societies and for equitable relationships between all languages and cultures.

For all these reasons, this Declaration takes language communities and not states as its point of departure and is to be viewed in the context of the reinforcement of international institutions capable of guaranteeing sustainable and equitable development for the whole of humanity. For these reasons also it aims to encourage the creation of a political framework for linguistic diversity based upon respect, harmonious coexistence and mutual benefit.

## PRELIMINARY TITLE

### Concepts

1. This Declaration considers as a *language community* any human society established historically in a particular territorial space, whether this space be recognized or not, which identifies itself as a people and has developed a common language as a natural means of communication and cultural

cohesion among its members. The term *language proper to a territory* refers to the language of the community historically established in such a space.

2. This Declaration takes as its point of departure the principle that linguistic rights are individual and collective at one and the same time. In defining the full range of linguistic rights, it adopts as its referent the case of a historical language community within its own territorial space, this space being understood, not only as the geographical area where the community lives, but also as the social and functional space vital to the full development of the language. Only on this basis is it possible to define the rights of the language groups mentioned in point 5 of the present article, and those of individuals living outside the territory of their community, in terms of a gradation or continuum.

3. For the purpose of this Declaration, groups are also deemed to be in their own territory and to belong to a language community in the following circumstances:

- i. when they are separated from the main body of their community by political or administrative boundaries;
- ii. when they have been historically established in a small geographical area surrounded by members of other language communities; or
- iii. when they are established in a geographical area which they share with the members of other language communities with similar historical antecedents.

4. This Declaration also considers nomad peoples within their areas of migration and peoples established in geographically dispersed locations as language communities in their own historical territory.

5. This Declaration considers as a *language group* any group of persons sharing the same language

which is established in the territorial space of another language community but which does not possess historical antecedents equivalent to those of that community. Examples of such groups are immigrants, refugees, deported persons and members of diasporas.

#### Article 2

1. This Declaration considers that, whenever various language communities and groups share the same territory, the rights formulated in this Declaration must be exercised on a basis of mutual respect and in such a way that democracy may be guaranteed to the greatest possible extent.

2. In the quest for a satisfactory sociolinguistic balance, that is, in order to establish the appropriate articulation between the respective rights of such language communities and groups and the persons belonging to them, various factors, besides their respective historical antecedents in the territory and their democratically expressed will, must be taken into account. Such factors, which may call for compensatory treatment aimed at restoring a balance, include the coercive nature of the migrations which have led to the coexistence of the different communities and groups, and their degree of political, socioeconomic and cultural vulnerability.

#### Article 3

1. This Declaration considers the following to be inalienable personal rights which may be exercised in any situation:

- the right to be recognized as a member of a language community;
- the right to the use of one's own language both in private and in public;
- the right to the use of one's own name;
- the right to interrelate and associate with other members of one's language community of origin;
- the right to maintain and develop one's own culture;

and all the other rights related to language which are recognized in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 16 December 1966 and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the same date.

2. This Declaration considers that the collective rights of language groups may include the following, in addition to the rights attributed to the members of language groups in the foregoing paragraph, and in accordance with the conditions laid down in article 2.2:

- the right for their own language and culture to be taught;
- the right of access to cultural services;
- the right to an equitable presence of their language and culture in the communications media;
- the right to receive attention in their own language from government bodies and in socioeconomic relations.

3. The aforementioned rights of persons and language groups must in no way hinder the interrelation of such persons or groups with the host language community or their integration into that community. Nor must they restrict the rights of the host community or its members to the full public use of the community's own language throughout its territorial space.

#### Article 4

1. This Declaration considers that persons who move to and settle in the territory of another language community have the right and the duty to maintain an attitude of *integration* towards this community. This term is understood to mean an additional socialization of such persons in such a way that they may preserve their original cultural characteristics while sharing with the society in which they have settled sufficient references, values and forms of behaviour to enable them to function socially without greater difficulties than those experienced by members of the host community.

2. This Declaration considers, on the other hand, that *assimilation*, a term which is understood to mean acculturation in the host society, in such a way that the original cultural characteristics are replaced by the references, values and forms of behaviour of the host society, must on no account be forced or induced and can only be the result of an entirely free choice.

#### Article 5

This Declaration is based on the principle that the rights of all language communities are equal and independent of the legal or political status of their languages as official, regional or minority languages. Terms such as regional or minority languages are not used in this Declaration because, though in certain cases the recognition of regional or minority languages can facilitate the exercise of certain rights, these and other modifiers are frequently used to restrict the rights of language communities.

#### Article 6

This Declaration considers that a language cannot be considered proper to a territory merely on the grounds that it is the official language of the state or has been traditionally used within the territory for administrative purposes or for certain cultural activities.

### TITLE ONE General Principles

#### Article 7

1. All languages are the expression of a collective identity and of a distinct way of perceiving and describing reality and must therefore be able to enjoy the conditions required for their development in all functions.

2. All languages are collectively constituted and

are made available within a community for individual use as tools of cohesion, identification, communication and creative expression.

#### Article 8

1. All language communities have the right to organize and manage their own resources so as to ensure the use of their language in all functions within society.

2. All language communities are entitled to have at their disposal whatever means are necessary to ensure the transmission and continuity of their language.

#### Article 9

All language communities have the right to codify, standardize, preserve, develop and promote their linguistic system, without induced or forced interference.

#### Article 10

1. All language communities have equal rights.

2. This Declaration considers discrimination against language communities to be inadmissible, whether it be based on their degree of political sovereignty, their situation defined in social, economic or other terms, the extent to which their languages have been codified, updated or modernized, or on any other criterion.

3. All necessary steps must be taken in order to implement this principle of equality and to render it effective.

#### Article 11

All language communities are entitled to have at their disposal whatever means of translation into and from other languages are needed to guarantee the exercise of the rights contained in this Declaration.

## Article 12

1. Everyone has the right to carry out all activities in the public sphere in his/her language, provided it is the language proper to the territory where s/he resides.

2. Everyone has the right to use his/her language in the personal and family sphere.

## Article 13

1. Everyone has the right to acquire knowledge of the language proper to the territory in which he/she lives.

2. Everyone has the right to be polyglot and to know and use the language most conducive to his/her personal development or social mobility, without prejudice to the guarantees established in this Declaration for the public use of the language proper to the territory.

26

## Article 14

The provisions of this Declaration cannot be interpreted or used to the detriment of any norm or practice deriving from the internal or international status of a language which is more favourable to its use within the territory to which it is proper.

## SECOND TITLE Overall linguistic regime

### Section I

#### Public administration and official bodies

## Article 15

1. All language communities are entitled to the official use of their language within their territory.

2. All language communities have the right for legal and administrative acts, public and private documents and records in public registers which

are drawn up in the language of the territory to be valid and effective and no one can allege ignorance of this language.

## Article 16

All members of a language community have the right to interrelate with and receive attention from the public authorities in their own language. This right also applies to central, territorial, local and supraterritorial divisions which include the territory to which the language is proper.

## Article 17

1. All language communities are entitled to have at their disposal and to obtain in their own language all official documents pertaining to relations which affect the territory to which the language is proper, whether such documents be in printed, machine-readable or any other form.

2. Forms and standard administrative documents, whether in printed, machine-readable or any other form, must be made available and placed at the disposal of the public in all territorial languages by the public authorities through the services which cover the territories to which each language is proper.

## Article 18

1. All language communities have the right for laws and other legal provisions which concern them to be published in the language proper to the territory.

2. Public authorities who have more than one territorially historic language within their jurisdiction must publish all laws and other legal provisions of a general nature in each of these languages, whether or not their speakers understand other languages.

## Article 19

1. Representative Assemblies must have as their

official language(s) the language(s) historically spoken in the territory they represent.

2. This right also applies to the languages of the communities established in geographically dispersed locations referred to in Article 1, Paragraph 4.

#### Article 20

1. Everyone has the right to use the language historically spoken in a territory, both orally and in writing, in the Courts of Justice located within that territory. The Courts of Justice must use the language proper to the territory in their internal actions and, if on account of the legal system in force within the state, the proceedings continue elsewhere, the use of the original language must be maintained.

2. Everyone has the right, in all cases, to be tried in a language which he/she understands and can speak and to obtain the services of an interpreter free of charge.

#### Article 21

All language communities have the right for records in public registers to be drawn up in the language proper to the territory.

#### Article 22

All language communities have the right for documents authenticated by notaries public or certified by other authorized public servants to be drawn up in the language proper to the territory where the notary or other authorized public servant performs his/her functions.

## Section II Education

#### Article 23

1. Education must help to foster the capacity for

linguistic and cultural self-expression of the language community of the territory where it is provided.

2. Education must help to maintain and develop the language spoken by the language community of the territory where it is provided.

3. Education must always be at the service of linguistic and cultural diversity and of harmonious relations between different language communities throughout the world.

4. Within the context of the foregoing principles, everyone has the right to learn any language.

#### Article 24

All language communities have the right to decide to what extent their language is to be present, as a vehicular language and as an object of study, at all levels of education within their territory: preschool, primary, secondary, technical and vocational, university, and adult education.

#### Article 25

All language communities are entitled to have at their disposal all the human and material resources necessary to ensure that their language is present to the extent they desire at all levels of education within their territory: properly trained teachers, appropriate teaching methods, text books, finance, buildings and equipment, traditional and innovative technology.

#### Article 26

All language communities are entitled to an education which will enable their members to acquire a full command of their own language, including the different abilities relating to all the usual spheres of use, as well as the most extensive possible command of any other language they may wish to know.

#### Article 27

All language communities are entitled to an education which will enable their members to acquire knowledge of any languages related to their own cultural tradition, such as literary or sacred languages which were formerly habitual languages of the community.

#### Article 28

All language communities are entitled to an education which will enable their members to acquire a thorough knowledge of their cultural heritage (history, geography, literature, and other manifestations of their own culture), as well as the most extensive possible knowledge of any other culture they may wish to know.

#### Article 29

1. Everyone is entitled to receive an education in the language proper to the territory where he/she resides.

2. This right does not exclude the right to acquire oral and written knowledge of any language which may be of use to him/her as an instrument of communication with other language communities.

#### Article 30

The language and culture of all language communities must be the subject of study and research at university level.

### **Section III** **Proper names**

#### Article 31

All language communities have the right to preserve and use their own system of proper names in all spheres and on all occasions.

#### Article 32

1. All language communities have the right to use place names in the language proper to the territory, both orally and in writing, in the private, public and official spheres.

2. All language communities have the right to establish, preserve and revise autochthonous place names. Such place names cannot be arbitrarily abolished, distorted or adapted, nor can they be replaced if changes in the political situation, or changes of any other type, occur.

#### Article 33

All language communities have the right to refer to themselves by the name used in their own language. Any translation into other languages must avoid ambiguous or pejorative denominations.

#### Article 34

Everyone has the right to the use of his/her own name in his/her own language in all spheres, as well as the right, only when necessary, to the most accurate possible phonetic transcription of his/her name in another writing system.

### **Section IV** **Communications media and new technologies**

#### Article 35

All language communities have the right to decide the extent to which their language is present in the communications media in their territory, whether local and traditional media, those with a wider scope, or those using more advanced technology, regardless of the method of dissemination or transmission employed.

#### Article 36

All language communities are entitled to have at

their disposal all the human and material resources required in order to ensure the desired degree of presence of their language and the desired degree of cultural self-expression in the communications media in their territory: properly trained personnel, finance, buildings and equipment, traditional and innovative technology.

#### Article 37

All language communities have the right to receive, through the communications media, a thorough knowledge of their cultural heritage (history, geography, literature and other manifestations of their own culture), as well as the greatest possible amount of information about any other culture their members may wish to know.

#### Article 38

The languages and cultures of all language communities must receive equitable and non-discriminatory treatment in the communications media throughout the world.

#### Article 39

The communities described in Article 1, paragraphs 3 and 4, of this Declaration, and the groups mentioned in paragraph 5 of the same article, are entitled to an equitable representation of their language in the communications media of the territory where they are established or where they migrate. This right is to be exercised in harmony with the rights of the other language groups or communities in the territory.

#### Article 40

In the field of information technology, all language communities are entitled to have at their disposal equipment adapted to their linguistic system and tools and products in their language, so as to derive full advantage from the potential offered by such technologies for self-expression, edu-

cation, communication, publication, translation and information processing and the dissemination of culture in general.

### **Section V Culture**

#### Article 41

1. All language communities have the right to use, maintain and foster their language in all forms of cultural expression.

2. All language communities must be able to exercise this right to the full without any community's space being subjected to hegemonic occupation by a foreign culture.

#### Article 42

All language communities have the right to full development within their own cultural sphere.

#### Article 43

All language communities are entitled to access to the works produced in their language.

#### Article 44

All language communities are entitled to access to intercultural programmes, through the dissemination of adequate information, and to support for activities such as teaching the language to foreigners, translation, dubbing, post-synchronization and subtitling.

#### Article 45

All language communities have the right for the language proper to the territory to occupy a pre-eminent position in cultural events and services (libraries, videothèques, cinemas, theatres, museums, archives, folklore, cultural industries, and all other manifestations of cultural life).

## Article 46

All language communities have the right to preserve their linguistic and cultural heritage, including its material manifestations, such as collections of documents, works of art and architecture, historic buildings and inscriptions in their own language.

## Section VI

### The socioeconomic sphere

## Article 47

1. All language communities have the right to establish the use of their language in all socioeconomic activities within their territory.

2. All members of a language community are entitled to have at their disposal, in their own language, all the means necessary for the performance of their professional activities, such as documents and works of reference, instructions, forms, and computer equipment, tools and products.

3. The use of other languages in this sphere can only be required in so far as it is justified by the nature of the professional activity involved. In no case can a more recently arrived language relegate or supersede the use of the language proper to the territory.

## Article 48

1. Within the territory of his/her language community, everyone has the right to use his/her own language with full legal validity in economic transactions of all types, such as the sale and purchase of goods and services, banking, insurance, job contracts and others.

2. No clause in such private acts can exclude or restrict the use of the language proper to the territory.

3. Within the territory of his/her language community, everyone is entitled to have the documents required for the above-mentioned operations at his/her disposal in his/her own language. Such documents include forms, cheques, contracts, invoices, receipts, delivery notes, order forms, and others.

## Article 49

Within the territory of his/her language community, everyone has the right to use his/her own language in all types of socioeconomic organizations such as labour and union organizations, and employers', professional, trade and craft associations.

## Article 50

1. All language communities have the right for their language to occupy a pre-eminent place in advertising, signs, external signposting, and in the image of the country as a whole.

2. Within the territory of his/her language community, everyone has the right to receive full oral and written information in his/her own language on the products and services proposed by commercial establishments, such as instructions for use, labels, lists of ingredients, advertising, guarantees and others

3. All public indications affecting the safety of persons must be expressed at least in the language proper to the territory, in conditions which are not inferior to those of any other language.

## Article 51

1. Everyone has the right to use the language proper to the territory in his/her relations with firms, commercial establishments and private bodies and to be served or receive a reply in the same language.

2. Everyone has the right, as a client, customer, consumer or user, to receive oral and written

information in the language proper to the territory from establishments open to the public.

#### Article 52

Everyone has the right to carry out his/her professional activities in the language proper to the territory unless the functions inherent to the job require the use of other languages, as in the case of language teachers, translators or tourist guides.

### ADDITIONAL DISPOSITIONS

#### First

The public authorities must take all appropriate steps to implement the rights proclaimed in this Declaration within their respective areas of jurisdiction. More specifically, international funds must be set up to foster the exercise of Linguistic Rights in communities which are demonstrably lacking in resources. Thus the public authorities must provide the necessary support so that the languages of the various communities may be codified, transcribed, taught, and used in the administration.

#### Second

The public authorities must ensure that the official bodies, organizations and persons concerned are informed of the rights and correlative duties arising from this Declaration.

#### Third

The public authorities must establish, in the light of existing legislation, the sanctions to be applied in cases of violation of the linguistic rights laid down in this Declaration.

### FINAL DISPOSITIONS

#### First

This Declaration proposes the creation of a *Council of Languages* within the United Nations Organization. The General Assembly of the United Nations Organization is to be responsible for setting up this Council, defining its functions and appointing its members, and for creating a body in international law to protect language communities in the exercise of the rights recognized in this Declaration.

#### Second

This Declaration recommends and promotes the creation of a *World Commission on Linguistic Rights*, a non-official, consultative body made up of representatives of non-governmental organizations and other organizations working in the field of linguistic law.

SUPPORT  
OF  
INTERNATIONAL  
PERSONALITIES



# Wisława Szymborska

Was born in Kórnik (Poland) in 1923. She studied Polish Literature and Sociology.

Szymborska made her debut in March 1945 with a poem "Szukam słowa" (I'm looking for a Word) in the daily *Dziennik Polski*.

She has published 16 collections of poetry. Her poems have been translated into English, German, Swedish, Italian, Spanish, Danish, Hebrew, Catalan, Hungarian, Czech, Serbo-croatian, Romanian, Bulgarian and other languages.

Wisława Szymborska is the Goethe Prize winner (1991) and Herder Prize winner (1995). She has the title of Doctor Honoris Causa of Poznan University (1995). In 1996 she received the Polish PEN Club prize and the Nobel Prize for Literature.

## Into the Ark

*An endless rain is just beginning.  
Into the ark, for where else can you go,  
you poems for a single voice,  
private exultations,  
unnecessary talents,  
surplus curiosity,  
short-range sorrows and fears,  
eagerness to see things from all six sides.*

*Rivers are swelling and bursting their banks.  
Into the ark, all you chiaroscuros and half-tones,  
you details, ornaments, and whims,  
silly exceptions,  
forgotten signs,  
countless shades of the color gray,  
play for play's sake,  
and tears or mirth.*

*As far as the eye can see, there's water and hazy  
horizon.*

*Into the ark, plans for the distant future,  
joy in difference,  
admiration for the better man,*

*choice not narrowed down to one of two,  
outworn scruples,  
time to think it over,  
and the belief that all this  
will still come in handy someday.*

*For the sake of the children  
that we still are,  
fairy tales have happy endings.  
That's the only finale that will do here, too.  
The rain will stop,  
the waves will subside,  
the clouds will part  
in the cleared-up sky,  
and they'll be once more  
what clouds overhead ought to be:  
lofty and rather lighthearted  
in their likeness to things  
drying in the sun-  
isles of bliss,  
lambs,  
cauliflowers,  
diapers.*

(Translated by Stanislaw Baranczak and Clare Cavanagh)

*I give my support to the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights*



WISŁAWA SZYMBORSKA  
Nobel Literature Prize 1996



# *Nelson Rolihlahia Mandela*

South African politician. Since 1944 he has been a member of the African National Congress. In 1956 he was accused of high treason, but acquitted in 1961. Nevertheless, in 1964 he was condemned to life imprisonment. Leader of the ANC since 1967, he became a symbol of the anti-apartheid struggle. In February 1985 he refused the freedom the government offered him under the condition that he gave up his political demands thereafter. In February 1990, he was unconditionally released after almost 28 years in prison. In March the same year he was elected vice-president of the ANC. In May he held a first meeting with De Klerk to discuss future reforms for the country. Later on, he agreed to renounce of violence in exchange for the abolition of apartheid (achieved in 1992). In 1991 he was elected president of the ANC. In 1993 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize which he shared with F. De Klerk, the last president of the segregationist South African regime, for his contribution to the abolition of apartheid. In 1994, as a consequence of the ANC victory in the first multiracial elections in South Africa, he became president of the State. He is the author of *No Easy Walk to Freedom* (1965).

*The ideal of formulating linguistic human rights is indeed a magnificent undertaking and also long overdue. However, in view of the fact that the Declaration is still under discussion. I am at this stage only prepared to endorse the general spirit of the undertaking.*

*I wish you well with this project.*

*Yours sincerely,*



NELSON MANDELA  
President of the Republic of South Africa  
Nobel Peace Prize 1993



## *Buthelezi Mangosuthu Gatsha*

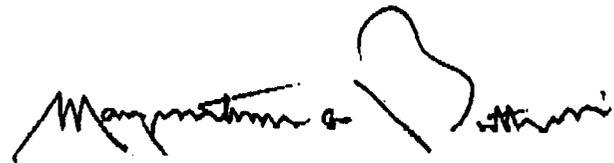
He was born in 1928. At present he is Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of South Africa, President of Inkatha Yenkululeko Yesizwe, Prime Minister of the Zulu People and Advisor to the Zulu King.

Upholder of the Christian tradition of non-violent action to bring about radical change in South Africa, he is distinctive and acclaimed in his own contributions to unity and peace, a champion of trade union and civic rights causes, fearless opponent of apartheid and deeply committed to an open, just and non racist society.

He is a founder of Inkatha as a movement with over one and a half million members and unifying force bridging the schisms apartheid has produced in South African society.

*I am aware that language rights form part of one's fundamental human rights as enshrined in our Constitution. I do therefore support the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights.*

*With my warm regards.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mangosuthu Buthelezi', with a large, stylized flourish on the right side.

MANGOSUTHU BUTHELEZI  
Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of South Africa



*Witold Jarosław Szylecki/Arma*

# Ronald Harwood

He was born in Cape Town in 1934.

He is a writer of novels like: *All the Same Shadows*, *The Girl in Melanie Klein*, *Articles of Faith*, *The Genoa Ferry*, *Caesar and Augusta*, *Home...*

But his most important works are the plays: *Country Matters*, *A Family*, *The ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* (from Evelyn Waugh), *The Dresser*, *After the Lions*, *Tramway Road*, *The Deliberate Death of a Polish Priest*, *Interpreters*, *J.J. Farr*, a new version of *Ivanov* (from Chekhov), *Another time*, *Reflected Glory*, *Poison Pen*, *The Collected...* and films like: *A High Wind in Jamaica*, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, *Operation Daybreak*, *The Dresser*, *The Browning version*, *Cry, the Beloved Country*.

He was President of English PEN Club from 1989 until 1993.

He was President of International PEN Club from 1993 until 1997.

## Opening Address on the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights

*It is because we are writers that our commitment for linguistic rights exists. And it is because we are writers that we know full well we cannot influence in isolation, cannot live in a vacuum, or reside in a tour d'Ivoire. We cannot flourish as some self-regarding elite, separate and above the rest of society. Which is why we are here this evening. Because we have understood the need for and worked hard for cooperation and collaboration with all the Non-Governmental Organizations you represent, to come together to write and support the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights.*

41



RONALD HARWOOD  
President of International PEN Club 1993-1997



*José Luis Magaño, © Diario El País Internacional, S.A.*

# Homero Aridjis

Homero Aridjis was born in Contepec, Michoacán, April 6th, 1940.

Poet and narrator. He has held different diplomatic positions through his career: he was cultural attache from México in Holland and ambassador in Switzerland. He also worked as director of the Instituto Michoacano de Cultura and guest professor in the United States. His literary work has been translated into several languages and included in different anthologies.

Literary prizes for: *Mirándola dormir*, Premio Xavier Villaurrutia, 1964; *Memorias del Nuevo Mundo*; *Los hombres que cayeron del cielo*, Premio Internacional de Novela Novedades/Diana, 1988; and the Premio Grizanne Cavour, for the same work, as the best foreign novel published in Italy.

His Anthology of Poetry 1960-1964 includes the books *Los ojos desdoblados*, *Antes del reino*, *Ajedrez-Navegaciones*, *Los espacios azules*, *El poeta niño*, *Quemar las naves*, *Vivir para ver*, *Construir la muerte*, *Imágenes para el fin del milenio*, *Nueva expulsión del paraíso*, *El poeta en peligro de extinción*, *Arzobispo haciendo fuego* and *Tiempo de ángeles*.

He was elected president of the International PEN Club in August 1997.

## An Angel Speaks

*With words, with colours, in silence  
they drew nigh, gave me hair and wing  
locked me into human form.*

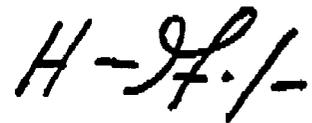
*And now like any mortal  
with silhouette and shadow  
I am inside me.*

*Stonemasons, painters and poets  
laboured day and night  
to shape me out of their dreams.*

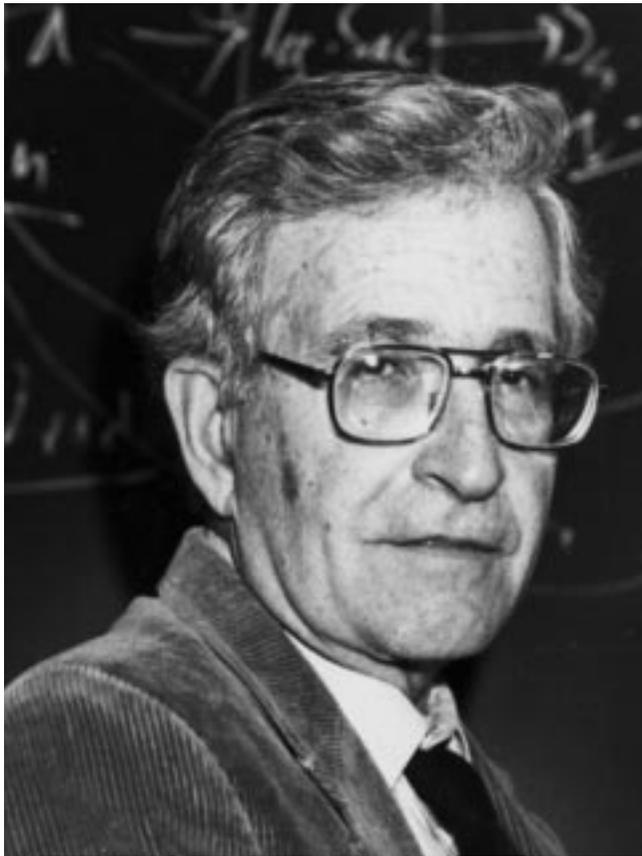
*I want to escape the body's cage,  
take back my original being: that  
pure invisibility.*

(Translated by George McWhirters)

*I give my support to the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights.*



HOMERO ARIDJIS  
President of International PEN Club



*Lluís Serrat*

# Noam Chomsky

He was born in Philadelphia in 1928. He is a professor in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and since 1966 he has occupied the Ferrari P. Ward Chair of Modern Languages and Linguistics.

Chomsky has revolutionized linguistics. For him, the task of linguistics is not merely to describe language but to establish the grammatical rules that may allow the generation of all the linguistic constructions that are grammatical and none that are not grammatical.

For Chomsky, the problems of knowledge and those of freedom do not belong to two different sets of problems: they are two faces of the same problem -so to interpret the world and change it are two faces of the same thing.

Chomsky believes that freedom goes together with creativity, which is something different from a series of random and arbitrary actions.

*I think it is a project very much worth implementing, reaching to crucial issues of human rights, and very timely as well*



NOAM CHOMSKY

Ferrari P. Ward Chair of Modern Languages and Linguistics  
(Massachusetts Institute of Technology)



*Carles Torner*

# *José Ramos Horta*

Born December 1949 in Dili, East Timor.

He is Special Representative of the National Council of Maubere Resistance of East Timor. CNRM is a non-partisan supreme national body based inside East Timor comprising all East Timorese nationalist political forces and resistance groups.

He is lecturer in Diplomacy at the University of New South Wales in Sydney.

He was Minister of External Relations and Information of the first government of East Timor, prior to the Indonesian invasion in 1975. He was also Permanent Representative to the United Nations for the East Timorese independence movement from 1975 onwards for over a decade.

He is author of *FUNU: The Unfinished Saga of East Timor*.

He has been awarded: Professor Thorolf Rafto 1993 Human Rights Prize, Gleitzman Foundation Award 1995, UNPO Award 1995 and the Nobel Peace Prize 1996 together with Bishop Belo from Dili.

## **Fragment from the Nobel Lecture**

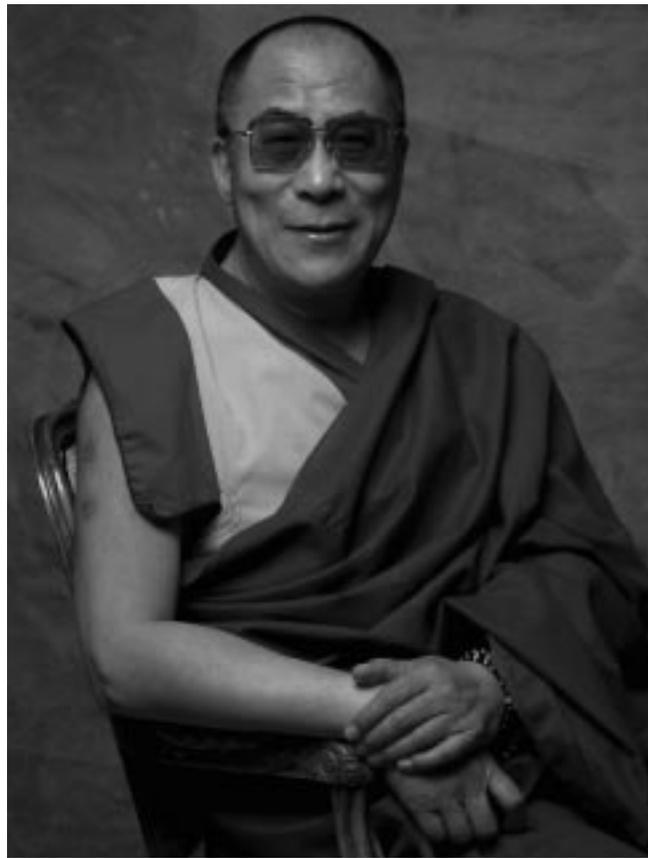
*More than half a century after the Jewish holocaust and centuries after the genocide of the indigenous peoples of Australia and the Americas, the same attitude that has allowed these crime to take place persists today. Opinion-makers and leaders, academics, writers and journalists who pretend to be objective and neutral in the face of racism and discrimination, the rape of a small nation by a larger power, the persecution of a weaker people by a ruthless army, must share the guilt. No amount of intellectual arguments will suffice to erase their responsibility.*

*Synagogues are still being desecrated. Gypsies are still discriminated against. Indigenous peoples continue to see their ancestral land taken over by developers, their culture and beliefs, and their very existence reduced to a tourist commodity.*

*I give my support to the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights.*



JOSÉ RAMOS HORTA  
Nobel Peace Prize 1996

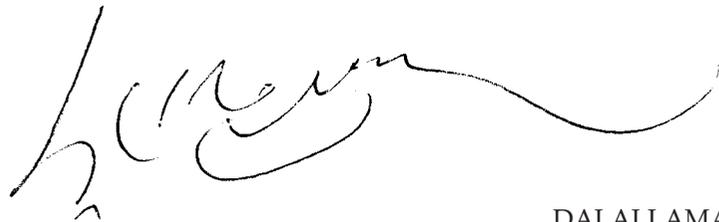


# *Dalai Lama*

Tenzin Gyatso, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet, is the spiritual and temporal leader of the Tibetan people. He was born in 1935.

In 1950, His Holiness was called upon to assume full responsibility when Tibet was threatened by the might of Communist China. However, his efforts to bring about a peaceful solution to the Tibetan problem were thwarted. In 1959 there was a Tibetan national uprising to reaffirm Tibet's independence. A week later, His Holiness escaped to India where he was given political asylum. Since 1960, His Holiness has resided in Dharamsala, in northern India, the seat of the Tibetan government in exile. His Holiness has successfully led his people in the field of education, rehabilitation and preservation of their ancient and unique Tibetan culture. For his leading role in the non-violent Tibetan struggle for freedom, global human understanding and concern for the environment, His Holiness has received many international awards, including the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize. His Holiness has written several books on Buddhism, philosophy, human nature and universal responsibility.

*I am honoured to receive a copy of the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights and would like to extend my full support for it. I believe that all language communities have the right to preserve their linguistic and cultural heritage. The encouragement and promotion of these will go a long way in enriching the linguistic and cultural diversity of our common world.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of fluid, connected loops and lines, characteristic of the Dalai Lama's signature.

DALAI LAMA  
Nobel Peace Prize 1989



## *Dr. M. Aram*

He was born in 1927. President of the World Conference of Religion and Peace (International), President of Shanti Ashram, member of Parliament (nominated by President of India), among others. He has held posts of responsibility in education, peace and public service. We should emphasize his work as: Secretary of the Asian Peace Council, Member of the Gandhi Peace Foundation, President of the Sarvodaya Peace Movement. He has been made an Honorary Doctor by the North-Eastern Hill University in recognition of his Peace Mission work in Nagaland and he received the Gandhi Peace Award 1996, Dr. Ramachandra Award for International Peace and Understanding, Twelfth Niwano Peace Prize for selfless service in the cause of development, human rights, environment and education. He died in May 1997.

**This letter was sent by Ms. Minoti Aram, July 8, 1997**

*Dear Mr.,*

*It is with deep regret that I inform you of the sudden passing away of my husband Dr. M. Aram in the early hours of 24th May. My husband had spoken often to me of his work with the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights.*

*Shanti Ashram and I look forward to our partnership in the future too.*

*Thanking you, with kind regards.*

*Yours sincerely,*

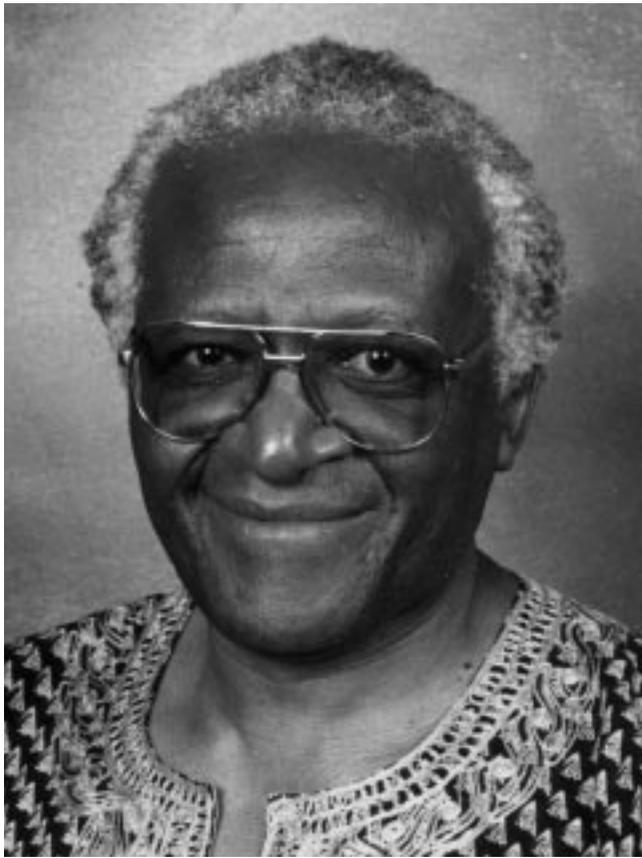


MINOTI ARAM

**Passage from the papers presented at the Seminar  
"The contribution by religions to the culture of peace" of UNESCO, April 1993**

*"Religion has always looked upon education as one of the major areas of service. Sometimes education imparted by religious bodies may acquire an exclusive perspective. In view of the urgent need to build a culture of peace, educational institutions should review the curricula and syllabi from the standpoint of promoting a global culture of peace".*

DR. M. ARAM  
President of World Conference of Religion and Peace



# Desmond Tutu

He was born in 1931. He is a South African ecclesiastic. He was ordained as a priest in 1960. His name has become synonymous with the fight for reconciliation among white and black people in South Africa. He often appealed to the South African government, the African National Congress and the Inkhata Freedom Party in favour of peace and a change towards non-violence in South Africa. Such a contribution to the cause of racial justice led to him being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984. In 1987 he was made president of the Council of African Churches. He has been bishop of Johannesburg (1984), archbishop of Cape Town (1985) and, as such, head of the Anglican Church of South Africa. Some of his sermons have been collected in books such as: *Crying in Wilderness, The Struggle for Justice in South Africa, Hope and Suffering...*

*I am pleased to endorse the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights. I believe it is the right of every person to be able to express themselves in the language of their choice. This right has been enshrined in the new South African Constitution and my sincere hope is that may be accepted at the next UNESCO General Meeting. In recognising the value of individual languages we acknowledge the dignity and worth of our fellow human beings.*

*I appreciate your effort to promote this basic right.*

*God bless you.*

*Yours sincerely*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Desmond Tutu", followed by a large, stylized flourish or scribble.

ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU  
Nobel Peace Prize 1984



*Francesc de Dalmau*

## László Tókés

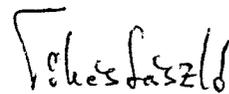
He was born in Romania, 1952. He served as assistant minister in the communities of Brasov, Dej and, from 1986, as pastor in Timisoara, suffering harassment by both the civil authorities and ecclesiastical hierarchy.

The peaceful protest and resistance in December of 1989 to the relentless abuses of the Ceausescu dictatorship made the name of Rev. László Tókés a household word, not only in the town of Timisoara and throughout Romania but, for a brief moment, all over the world. The protest against the enforced internal exile of Rev. Tókés was a rare display of unity and common purpose against arbitrary rule, as well as an unprecedented act of bravery on the part of the local population of Romanians and ethnic Hungarians.

Rev. Tókés sought to build a bridge of understanding and reconciliation between ethnic Hungarians and the Romanian authorities. In 1990, Rev. Tókés was elected Bishop of Nagyvárad (Oradea). He has been particularly active in promoting an ecumenical movement in support of cooperation among Romania's religious communities. He has been honored with numerous prizes and academic recognition. He is the author of numerous articles and books.

*I acknowledged with satisfaction and delight that the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights was approved in Barcelona last June 1996, in the framework of the World Conference of Linguistic Rights. The time has come to make this decision of utmost importance. In several corners of the world language discrimination still exists, in this century of communication. In spite of spreading democracy, millions of people are restricted in their mother-tongue usage. In my function as a church and public leader of the Hungarian national community in Romania, I am particularly aware of the importance of this issue, since our people have lived with minority status for 75 years and they have been compelled to fight battles for their basic human, national and linguistic rights.*

*With this document I give my full support to the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights and agree that this Declaration leads to an International Convention of the United Nations.*



LÁZSLÓ TÓKÉS  
Bishop of Oradea

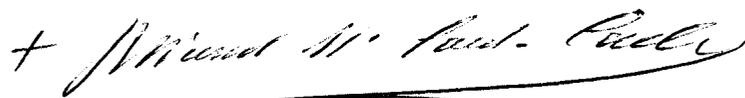


## *Ricard Maria Carles i Gordó*

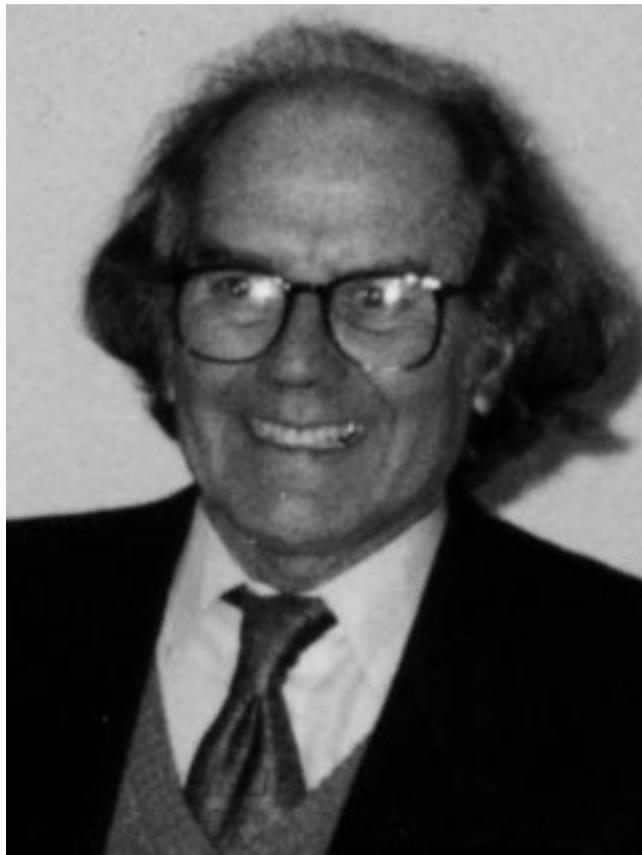
Born in Valencia in 1926. He has always been especially concerned with the apostolate among young people and was chaplain of the Young Christian Workers (YCW). He was appointed bishop of Tortosa in 1969. His conciliatory style helped reinforce the communion and participation of priests and laymen in the good functioning of the diocese.

In 1990 he was appointed archbishop of Barcelona by the Pope. Cardinal Carles has continued in Barcelona his pastoral style inspired by spiritual renovation and by the commitment of Catholics to confront the problems of society today, mainly in solidarity with the poorest and the helpless. He was made cardinal by Pope John Paul II in 1994 with the title of Saint Mary of Consolation. As such, he has been designated member of the Congregation for Catholic Education of the Pontifical Commission of Justice and Peace.

*I am happy to express my support to the above –mentioned Declaration for I am sure that everything that is done in the field of acknowledging of linguistic, cultural or any other kind of diversity will have an effect on improving human relationships and in obtaining freedom and rights for the individual, as well as for peoples.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ricard M. Carles i Gordó". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

RICARD MARIA CARLES  
Cardinal and Archbishop of Barcelona



## *Adolfo Pérez Esquivel*

He was born in Buenos Aires in 1931. He worked as a teacher for 25 years in primary and secondary education and, as a university professor. As an artist, he is the author of the Monument to Refugees, at the Central Headquarters of the UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees).

During the sixties, he began his intensive labour with organizations of Christian-based movements and, in particular, with the poorest sectors. Later, he participated in non-violence movements and in 1973 he published the periodical *Paz y Justicia* to divulge this philosophy. Pérez Esquivel has contributed to the organization of bodies who work for the defence of Human Rights.

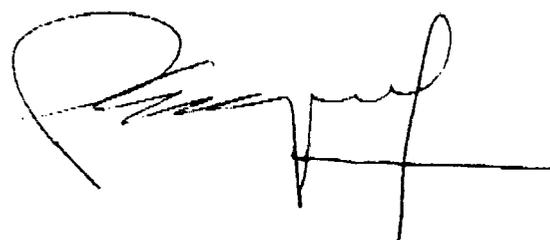
In 1980 he received the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in defending Human Rights. When he received this distinction he said: "... I accept it in the name of all the peoples of Latin America, especially of the poorest and of all of those who are committed to their peoples...". At present, together with the Paz y Justicia Service, he heads the Project Aldea Niños para la Paz, whose aim is to work with children in situations of social risk.

He is a member of the jury of UNESCO's Peace Fostering Award Felix Houphouet Boigny.

*I am writing to express my support for your initiative of the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights which was approved in Barcelona in June 1996 in the framework of the World Conference on Linguistic Rights.*

*What is more, I hope that unlimited respect for linguistic rights becomes a reality for it is a basis for coexistence and pacific cultural exchange between countries.*

PEACE AND GOODWILL

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'A' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

ADOLFO PÉREZ ESQUIVEL  
Nobel Peace Prize 1980



Set

# Josep Carreras

Josep Carreras occupies a privileged place in the world of music. He was born in Barcelona where he studied music. In 1970 he started his musical career in the Gran Teatre del Liceu of Barcelona with the works *Nabucco* and *Lucrezia Borgia*.

His meteoritic musical career led him to make his debut when he was very young in the greatest and most important theaters and festivals all over the world, including the Teatro alla Scala of Milan, the New York Metropolitan Opera House, the Munich Opera, the Chicago Lyric Opera and the festivals of Salzburg, Aix-en-Provence, Edinburgh and Verona.

Among the great number of national as well as international awards and distinctions that Josep Carreras has received are: the United States' Emmy of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences; the Grand Prix du Disque de l'Académie of Paris; the Luigi Illica Award; the 1991 Grammy; the Sir Lawrence Olivier Award and he is an Honorary Member of the London Royal Academy of Music.

He has received the Gold Medal from the New York Spanish Institute, the Gold Medal of the City of Vienna; the Gold Medal of Fine Arts awarded by His Majesty the King of Spain; the Gold Medal of the City of Barcelona; the Gold Medal of the Generalitat de Catalunya; the 1991 Príncipe de Asturias Award. He has been appointed Good Will Ambassador of UNESCO and has received the Albert Schweizer Music Award.

Since 1988, and with full dedication and enthusiasm, he has presided over the Josep Carreras International Foundation for the Fight against Leukemia established in Barcelona, with representations in the United States, Switzerland and Germany. This Foundation is most certainly one of his main priorities today.

61

*I endorse the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights approved in Barcelona last June 1996, in the frame of the World Conference of Linguistic Rights.*

*With this document I give my support and ask for the commitment of UNESCO to ensure that this Declaration becomes an Internacional Convention of the United Nations.*



JOSEP CARRERAS  
Tenor and Ambassador of UNESCO



*Caroline Fobes*

# Seamus Heaney

Seamus Heaney was born in 1939 in County Derry in Northern Ireland. He grew up on a farm, in touch with a traditional rural way of life which he wrote about in his first book *Death of a Naturalist* (1966). He was teacher but in 1972, he stopped teaching in order to devote more time to his writing. Seamus Heaney began to write in 1962, publishing first in Irish magazines. During the early and mid-sixties, he was connected with a group of writers in Belfast which included Derek Mahon, Michael Longley and James Simmons and subsequently, the meetings continued under Seamus Heaney's chairmanship until 1970 with Paul Muldoon, Frank Ormsby and Michael Foley.

He has won numerous awards, including the Somerset Maugham Award (1968), the Denis Devlin Award (1973), the Duff Cooper Memorial Prize (1975), the American Irish Foundation Literacy Award (1973), and the W H Smith Annual Award (1976). In 1987 he was awarded the Whitbread Award for The Haw Lantern.

From 1989 to 1994 Seamus Heaney was Professor of Poetry at Oxford University. In October 1995, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

## Alphabets

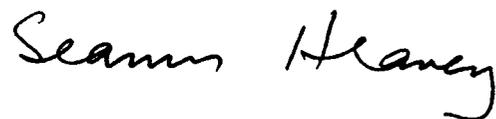
*A shadow his father makes with joined hands  
And thumbs and fingers nibbles on the wall  
Like a rabbit's head. He understands  
He will understand more when he goes to school.*

*There he draws smoke with chalk the whole first week,  
Then draws the forked stick that they call a Y.  
This is writing. A swan's neck and swan's back  
Make the 2 he can see now as well as say.*

*Two rafters and a cross-tie on the slate  
Are the letter some call ah, some call ay.  
There are charts, there are headlines, there is a right  
Way to hold the pen and a wrong way.*

*Firts it is "copying out", and then "English"  
Marked correct with a little leaning hoe.  
Smells of inkwells rise in the classroom hush.  
A globe in the window tilts like a coloured O.*

*I give my support to the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights.*



SEAMUS HEANEY  
Nobel Literature Prize 1995



*Francesc de Dalmasas*

# Ngugi Wa Thiong'o

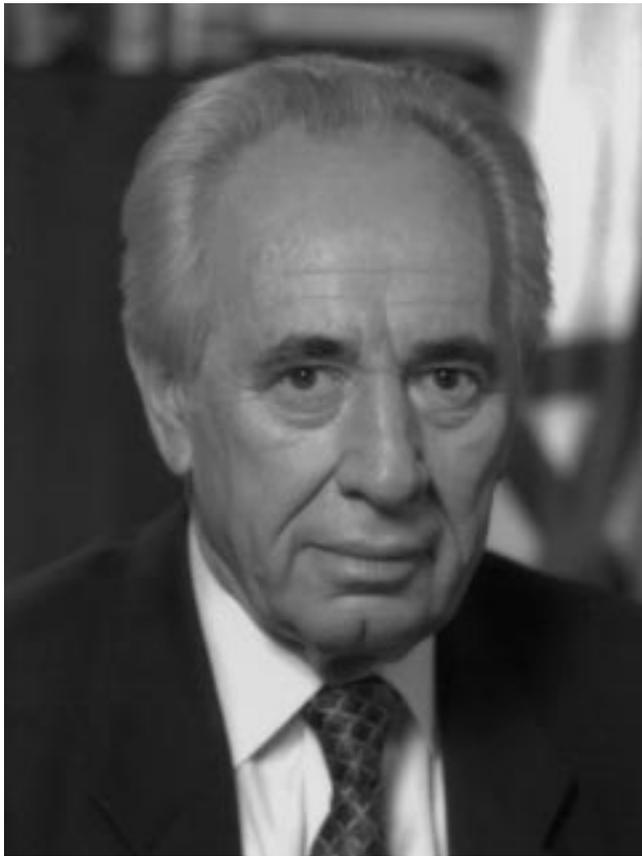
He was born in 1938. He is a Kenyan writer in exile. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o began writing with various books and articles in English for newspapers such as *The Sunday Post*, *The Daily Nation* and *The Sunday Nation* under the name of James Ngugi. The last book he wrote in English was *Petals of Blood*. He decided then to start writing in his mother tongue, Kikuyu. He wrote: "If a Kenyan writer expresses himself or herself in English -independently of the radicalism from which he or she writes-, he or she cannot directly reach the workers and the peasants of Kenya". The first work written in this language was *Ngaahika Ndeenda* which was performed in the Kammirithu Theatre to great acclaim. A week later, Ngugi was imprisoned. Ngugi was declared Honorary member of the International PEN Club and prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International. Since then, he has been living in exile in the United States and works at New York University.

*This Declaration of Linguistic Rights may be a good starting point for the liberation of all languages. It is an important complement to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Even before being incorporated by the world's highest institutions, it must already be considered as a first-class document for its contents and because it has obtained the support of significant non-government organizations from all over the world. I hope that it will very soon be officially approved as it deserves to be and that it becomes a good reference for everybody. At the same time, I hope that it will be part of a whole body of other declarations that should accompany the Universal Declaration of Human Rights such as those related to social and economic rights.*

65



NGUGI WA THIONG'O  
Kenyan writer in exile



## Shimon Peres

He was born in Bielorussia in 1923 and emigrated to Palestina in 1934. Since 1949 he has occupied various ministries in Israel, especially the Defence Ministry. In 1968, he joined the Labour Party of Israel, which he presided over between 1977 and 1992. He became Prime Minister and leader of the opposition during the period of the right-wing government of the Likud (1977-84). Between 1984 and 1986 he presided over a national coalition government, with the participation of Labour supporters and the Likud. In 1992, after the Labour victory, he was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs. He worked towards dialogue and negotiated with the PLO the application of the agreements established in September 1993 which granted autonomy to the occupied territories. In 1994, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to him, a prize he shared with Y. Arafat and I. Rabin. Following the assassination of I. Rabin he accepted the prime-ministership (1995-1996).

*Man has the right not only to be equal but also to be different. By the same token, man has the right not only to speak the language of the country in which he lives, but also the language of his personal heritage. A democratic community is measured not only by its freedom of speech, but also by the freedom of its citizens to express themselves in the language of their ancestors. The Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights is a valuable tool in allowing man this privilege.*

*I wish you every success in your endeavours, and remain,*

*Yours sincerely,*



SHIMON PERES  
Nobel Peace Prize 1994



# *Yasser Arafat*

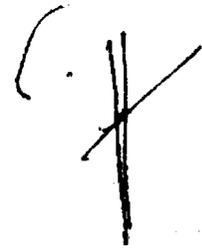
He was born in 1929 in Jerusalem. In 1944 he joined the Palestinian Students' League, which he later led from 1952 to 1956. Since 1968 he has presided over the Palestinian Liberation Organization. After 1975 he intervened in the war in Lebanon. In 1983 he broke with the Syrian regime which supported the radical wing of the PLO. Expelled from Lebanon by Syria and by Israel, he accepted the coexistence of a Palestinian state together with Israel. Arafat looked for the support of the UN for the application of its resolutions on the occupied territories. In 1993, an agreement was signed between Arafat and the Israeli Prime Minister, I. Rabin, by which Palestinian autonomy was established in the occupied territories of Gaza and Jericho. This led to him being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, together with I. Shamir and S. Peres. Arafat has become the head of the new autonomous government of those territories.

*Dear friends,*

*Thank you for forwarding to me Documentation concerning the Declaration of Linguistic Rights, and for the information concerning the work of the Follow-up Committee, all of which I have read with great interest. I am appreciative of the work that has been undertaken towards achieving the ratification of such a Declaration.*

*The Palestinian people enjoy a rich cultural and literary tradition, and the Arabic language is one of the major and most poetic languages in the world. As a people whose language has frequently been placed under attack, we are committed to literary freedoms, and to the free expression of all nations and states. Language is the living expression of a people's heritage and cultural identity. The commitment to such human and civilized values encourages a promising and peaceful future for us all. It is from this premise that I enthusiastically endorse the spirit of your work and I am sure your efforts will be richly rewarded.*

*Yours sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'Y' with a horizontal crossbar and a vertical stem, followed by a small flourish.

YASSER ARAFAT  
President of Palestine National Authority  
Nobel Peace Prize 1994



*Círculo de Lectores*

# Octavio Paz

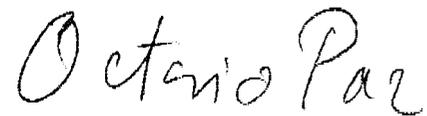
Poet, essayist and Mexican diplomat. He directed the magazines *Taller* (1938-1941), *El Hijo Pródigo* (1943) and directs *Vuelta*. In 1944 he obtained the North American Guggenheim Award. As a poet, he made his debut with his political commitment to living conditions in Mexico and the Spanish Civil War: *Raíz del hombre* (1937), *Bajo tu clara sombra* (1937), *Entre la piedra y la flor* (1941), *A la orilla del mundo* (1942). Being more interested later in personal freedom and the infinite possibilities of words, he experimented with all the "isms" though he did not adhere to any of them, as we may observe in *Libertad bajo palabra* (1949) in relation to Marxism.

His brilliant lyrical journeys always revolve around the Ego: hope and despair, loneliness and communion, innocence and science, silence and sound, West and East, language as individual energy and as collective structure.

In 1981 he was awarded the Premio Cervantes and in 1990 the Nobel Prize for Literature.

*Octavio Paz adheres to the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights which was approved in Barcelona in June 1996 in the framework of the World Conference on Linguistic Rights.*

*This is to testify my support to the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights and I request from UNESCO its commitment so that this Declaration becomes a United Nations International Convention.*



OCTAVIO PAZ  
Nobel Literature Prize 1990



## *Judit Mascó*

Judit Mascó has been working in various fields. However, most noteworthy has been her work as a model, appearing in more than fifty advertisements, playing leading parts on television and in video-clips for musical groups, and appearing on covers of international and national fashion magazines. She has participated in fashion shows all over the world for well-known designers. She has worked with photographers such as Bruce Weber, Steven Meisel, Patrick Demarchelier and Albert Watson, among others.

Furthermore, she took part in the Opening Ceremony of the Barcelona Olympic Games of 1992. She has also played secondary roles in movies (*El largo invierno* of Jaime Camino and *Después del sueño* of Mario Camús) and she has worked for TV3, in the show *Belles i Bèsties*.

*I want to give my support to the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights for many reasons. Essentially, I think that one has to help any project that proclaims the equality of linguistic rights without distinction: the right and the freedom to express oneself in the language any linguistic community has chosen.*

*For this reason, very much convinced by this Universal Declaration, I fully support it.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Judit Mascó', with a large, stylized flourish underneath.

JUDIT MASCÓ  
International model



*David Scheinmann*

# Peter Gabriel

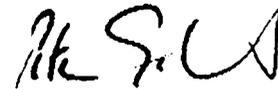
Peter Gabriel has earned a worldwide reputation for his innovative work as a musician, writer and video maker.

He co-founded the group Genesis, which he left in 1975.

In 1982 he founded WOMAD (World of Music, Arts and Dance) and has initiated many other projects. In 1986 his album *So* won him his first Grammy. He established Real World Studios, which became the base for Real World Records, a label which is dedicated to promoting a wide range of different artists from all over the world. His song *Biko* was the first pop song which talked about apartheid, and in 1988 and 1990 he was involved in the Nelson Mandela concerts at Wembley. In 1988 he worked with Amnesty International to set up the Human Rights Now! tour. Following this, in 1992, he initiated the Witness program, which provides video 8 cameras to Human Rights activists around the world.

*The influence of technology, trade and big business is linking up the world in many interesting ways. One danger is that we end up with a unified, homogenous and boring place to live in, in which one country's city street looks very much like every other.*

*We must value and protect our cultural differences. A gene pool is not capable of producing vital and vibrant new life unless it has a wide variety of gene diversity. It is the same for culture and language.*



---

PETER GABRIEL  
Musician and founder of WOMAD



# Joan Oró

Founder and first director of the Biochemical and Biophysical Sciences Department at Houston University. He is author and coauthor of approximately thirty books on biochemistry and space research and of more than 250 scientific articles published in specialized magazines.

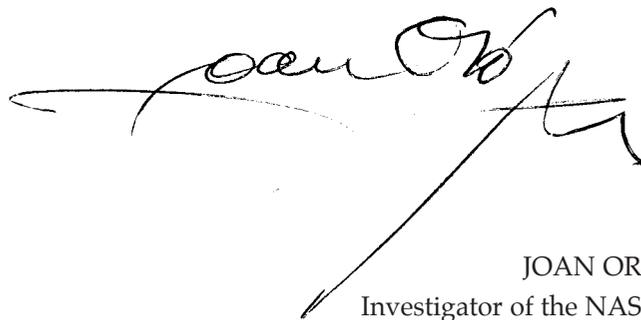
He is the President of the International Society for the Study of the Origin of Life (ISSOL), 1989-1993. He has discovered the synthesis of adenine in prebiotic conditions, and theorized on the important role comets play in the formation of biochemical components required for the appearance of life on primitive Earth.

As a member of NASA, from 1964 until 1994 he has collaborated with this agency in the Apollo and Viking space programmes. At present he is Professor Emeritus of Houston University.

## **In the defence of the right to one's own language**

*Spoken language and, above all, written language, is the most intimate expression of the personality and identity of a people. Language is also the most clear expression of freedom, culture, wisdom and knowledge of the peoples and of their creative spirit. Without one's language, the linguistic creations of mankind (The Iliad, The Odyssey, Tirant lo Blanc, Don Quixote, Othello, Hamlet...) could not be conceived.*

*Language helps to build up the collective consciousness of a people and to reflect on it. From this reflection democracy was born in Ancient Greece, in the same way the systems of humanitarian government such as the constitutions of Pau i Treva (Peace and Truce) which were born in Lleida. It was the basis of the first Corts Generals of Catalonia, of the Magna Charta in England, of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights in the United States of America, and of the Constitutions of the United Nations and UNESCO. Language is the basis for intellectual challenge and philosophical depth in addition to the poetic beauty of the Cant Espiritual of Joan Maragall.*



JOAN ORÓ  
Investigator of the NASA  
Professor Emeritus of Houston University

# UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF LINGUISTIC RIGHTS

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International PEN

Committee for translation and linguistic rights

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# UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF LINGUISTIC RIGHTS

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**Ngugi Wa Thiong'o** (New York University)

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Diputació de Barcelona



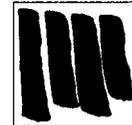
Generalitat de Catalunya

Ajuntament  de Barcelona

*Centre Català del PEN Club*

centre internacional escarré  
per a les minories ètniques i les nacions

**ciemen**



FUNDACIÓ  
JAUME I

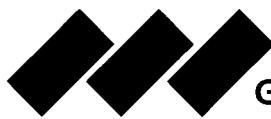


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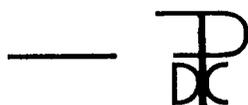
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