**UNESCO supports linguistic diversity as an irreplaceable tool of sustainability and peace**

UNESCO has been celebrating International Mother Language Day for nearly 20 years now with the aim of preserving linguistic diversity and promoting mother tongue-based multilingual education.

Linguistic diversity is increasingly threatened as more and more languages ​​disappear. One language disappears on average every two weeks, taking with it an entire cultural and intellectual heritage. Protecting linguistic diversity is a challenge.

With regard to multilingual education based on mother tongue or first language, progress is being made. Overall, there is a better perception of mother tongues, more commitment to their development in public life, and more measures taken to ensure mother tongue education in the early years of schooling.

On the occasion of International Mother Language Day 2018, UNESCO reiterates its commitment to linguistic diversity and invites its Member States to celebrate the day in as many languages ​​as possible as a reminder that linguistic diversity and multilingualism are essential for sustainable development.

This year, we commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and we welcome its translation into more than 500 languages. Its Article 2 states “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, (...) »

We live in multilingual and multicultural societies with multilingual citizens. We exist through our languages; it is through language we express ourselves, we communicate, we participate in social and public life, and we transmit traditional knowledge, knowledge and cultures in a sustainable way.

Languages ​​are an irreplaceable tool for sustainability; each and every one conveys a different pattern of thoughts and worldviews. The realisation of sustainable development depends on linguistic diversity and multilingualism and the contribution it makes to global citizenship education as it promotes intercultural encounters and better ways of living together