



Observance of the International Mother Language Day (IMLD) 2024

**21 February 2024, 1600-1800 hrs,
Conference Room - 4, United Nations, New York**

Language serves as a powerful and unifying tool to connect people irrespective of their socio-economic and cultural differences. It transcends geographical barriers and brings people together to work for the greater cause of humanity. Thus, the power of language is universal. Each year, on 21 February, International Mother Language Day (IMLD) comes as a reminder of this power and the need for preserving the uniqueness of respective human societies and promoting their distinct values embodied in their languages.

The Day is being observed globally since 2000, following a proclamation by the UNESCO General Conference in 1999, declaring 21st of February as the International Mother Language Day. The initiative was taken by Bangladesh in honor of the martyrs who made supreme sacrifice to uphold the dignity of their mother tongue 'Bangla' in a language movement that took place in Dhaka in 1952. UNESCO's proclamation was subsequently welcomed by UN General Assembly in its multiple consensus resolutions. By observing IMLD each year, the UN aims to encourage linguistic diversity and multilingualism and highlights the importance of fraternity of languages and cultures in building a peaceful, tolerant, and inclusive world.

The theme of this year's International Mother Language Day is "*Multilingual education is the foundation of lifelong learning*". Today, 40% of the world's population does not have access to education in a language they speak or understand. In some countries this figure rises to over 90%. Yet research shows that the use of learners' own language(s) in schools provides a solid foundation for learning, boosts self-esteem and critical thinking skills, and opens the door for inter-generational learning, language revitalization, and the preservation of culture and intangible heritage. This year's celebration of International Mother Language Day is meant to highlight the importance of implementing multilingual education policies and practices as a pillar to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4.

To celebrate the occasion, the Permanent Missions of Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Romania, and South Africa to the United Nations, in collaboration with the UN Secretariat and the UNESCO invite all to an event, scheduled to be held on **21st of February 2024 at 1600 to 1800 hrs at Conference Room-4 of the United Nations Headquarters in New York.**

Tentative Programme

Opening Segment

	Opening of the event
	IMLD Theme Song by Sri Chinmoy Group [<i>Amar Bhaiyer Rokte Rangano Ekushe February</i>]
1600-1640 hrs	Welcome Remarks by H.E. Mr. Muhammad Abdul Muhith, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN
	Special Remarks by H.E. Mr. Dennis Francis, President of the United Nations General Assembly
	Performance by UN Chamber Music Society (TBC)

Discussion Segment

	Remarks by H.E. Mr. Jamal Fares Alrowaie, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the UN
	Remarks by H.E. Mr. Cornel Feruță, Permanent Representative of Romania to the UN
	Remarks by H.E. Mr. Diego Pary Rodríguez, Permanent Representative of Bolivia to the UN
	Remarks by H.E. Ms. Mathu Joyini, Permanent Representative of South Africa to the UN
	Remarks by Mr. Stefan Pretterhofer, Deputy Permanent Representative of Austria to the UN
1640-1730 hrs	Remarks by H.E. Mr. Movses Abelian, Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management and UN Coordinator for Multilingualism
	Remarks by the Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations
	Remarks by Eliot Minchenberg, Director, UNESCO, New York
	Remarks by the Representative of the Group of Friends of Spanish Language
	Remarks by the representatives of interested member states (based on requests made before the event)
	Remarks by CSO representative (NGO Committee on Language and Languages)
	Message from the Mayor of the New York City

Multilingual Cultural Performance Segment

	Performance by Sneh Art
1730-1800 hrs	Poetry recitation by Sri Chinmoy Group
	Folk songs by Bangladeshi singers
	Closing of the event