



CANADIAN COMMISSION FOR UNESCO  
COMMISSION CANADIENNE POUR L'UNESCO

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**PRESS RELEASE**  
For immediate release

## **February 21<sup>st</sup> - International Mother Language Day**

**Ottawa, February 21, 2011.** International Mother Language Day, which is celebrated throughout the world on 21 February, was proclaimed by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](http://www.unesco.org)) in November 1999.

International Mother Language Day seeks to promote linguistic diversity and multilingual education, and to raise awareness of linguistic and cultural traditions based on understanding, tolerance and dialogue. This year's International Mother Language Day focuses on the theme: ***The information and communication technologies for the safeguarding and promotion of languages and linguistic diversity.***

"Mother languages, along with linguistic diversity, matter for the identity of individuals. As sources of creativity and vehicles for cultural expression, they are also important for the health of societies," stated UNESCO Director-General, Mrs. Irina Bokova. Referring to the theme of this year's International Mother Language Day, she noted that "Languages provide the software for information and communication technologies (...) Information and communication technologies can be [especially] useful in promoting mother languages. We must harness the power of progress to protect diverse visions of the world and to promote all sources of knowledge and forms of expression".

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO is grateful to ***Neighborhood Care International Association***, for organizing the International Mother Language Day, and invites and encourages all residents of the City of Vancouver to take an active part in the celebration.

On 16 May 2009 the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution\* that called upon Member States "to promote the preservation and protection of all languages used by peoples of the world". By the same resolution, the General Assembly proclaimed 2008 as the International Year of Languages, to promote unity in diversity and international understanding, through multilingualism and multiculturalism.

\*Resolution [A/RES/61/266](http://www.un.org/Docs/assembly/resolutions/2009/res2009.html)

For more information about International Mother Language Day 2011, go to:

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/themes/languages-and-multilingualism/international-mother-language-day/>

*The Canadian Commission for UNESCO operates under the aegis of the Canada Council for the Arts. Its role is to act as a forum for governments and civil society, and to mobilize the participation of Canadian organizations and committed individuals in UNESCO's mandated areas: education, natural and social sciences, culture and communication and information. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is the only member of the United Nations System to have National Commissions performing this role in each of its Member States.*

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