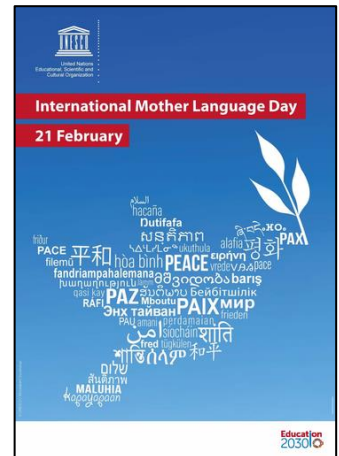


**Commonwealth Parliamentarians celebrate the diversity of languages in the Commonwealth on International Mother Language Day**

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) is proud to support the United Nations and UNESCO’s **International Mother Language Day** on 21 February which promotes the preservation and protection of all languages used by peoples of the world. Commonwealth Parliamentarians celebrate the diversity of languages in the Commonwealth amongst its 2.4 billion people and the role of language in building inclusive and democratic societies as well as preserving both our heritage and diverse cultures.

The theme of the 2021 International Mother Language Day is ‘**Fostering multilingualism for inclusion in education and society**’ which recognises that languages and multilingualism can advance inclusion, and the Sustainable Development Goals’ focus on leaving no one behind. The CPA supports UNESCO’s goal that education, based on the first language or mother tongue, must begin from the early years as early childhood care and education is the foundation of learning.



The CPA has released a special video message to mark International Mother Language Day with Commonwealth Parliamentarians from Cameroon, Australia and Canada explaining how language diversity is celebrated in their Parliaments.

To view the video please [click here](#) or visit [www.cpahq.org/cpahq/IMLDay](http://www.cpahq.org/cpahq/IMLDay). You can also access on the CPA’s YouTube channel at [www.cpahq.org/cpahq/youtube](http://www.cpahq.org/cpahq/youtube).

The video features:

- CPA President, Hon. Anthony Rota, MP, Speaker of the House of Commons of Canada.
- Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee, Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, MP, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Cameroon.
- CPA Vice-Chairperson, Hon. John Ajaka, MLC, President of the Legislative Council of New South Wales.
- Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) Chairperson, Hon. Kevin Murphy, MLA, Speaker of the House of Assembly of Nova Scotia.

Linguistic diversity is increasingly threatened as more and more languages disappear. Globally 40% of the population does not have access to an education in a language they speak or understand. Nevertheless, progress is being made in mother tongue-based multilingual education with growing understanding of its importance, particularly in early schooling, and more commitment to its development in public life.

The idea to celebrate [International Mother Language Day](#) was the initiative of Bangladesh and it was approved at the 1999 UNESCO General Conference and has been observed throughout the world since 2000.

**-ENDS-**

The **Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)**, now in its 110<sup>th</sup> year, exists to develop, promote and support Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff to identify benchmarks of good governance and to implement the enduring values of the Commonwealth. The CPA is an international community of around 180 Commonwealth Parliaments and Legislatures working together to deepen the Commonwealth’s commitment to the highest standards of democratic governance. Visit [www.cpahq.org](http://www.cpahq.org) for further information. Join the conversation online: Twitter [@CPA\\_Secretariat](#) | [Facebook.com/CPAHQ](https://www.facebook.com/CPAHQ) | Instagram [@cpa\\_secretariat](#) | [LinkedIn](#)