

Recommendations to UNESCO of the FEL XII Conference

The XIIth Conference of the Foundation for Endangered Languages was held at the Fryske Akademy in Ljouwert/Leeuwarden (The Netherlands), 25 – 27 September 2008. The Conference gathered more than eighty representatives from fourteen countries who addressed the issue “Endangered Languages and Language Learning”. The participants held three days of plenary meetings where about thirty speakers introduced topics related to the conference theme.

In concluding its work, the Conference participants agreed on the following resolution:

The participants of the FEL XII Conference on Endangered Languages and Language Learning,

Recalling the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) and the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2005), which states that “cultural diversity as a source of exchange, innovation and creativity is just as indispensable for humanity as biological diversity for Nature, and is a treasure shared by the entire human race”.

Emphasizing the need to continue preserving the world’s linguistic resources because languages are stores of a rich and vast amount of human heritage and knowledge,

Recognizing that the knowledge and understanding of other languages contribute to the promotion of tolerance and mutual understanding and contribute to a peaceful and sustainable development,

Consider it necessary:

to promote the preservation of linguistic diversity in the world by intensifying the activities for endangered languages within the framework of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage and other relevant UNESCO programs,

Suggest in particular

- (a) to invite the National Commissions of UNESCO to stimulate the elaboration of educational and cultural programs promoting linguistic and cultural diversity;
- (b) to step up activities for the introduction, promotion and enhancement of endangered minority languages, for the transmission of those languages to the next generations and for the expansion of their application and use in educational processes;
- (c) to call the attention of governmental and other organizations regulating television, radio and mobile telephones environments to the necessity of considering the use of the latest technologies for broadcasting in minority languages;
- (d) to promote the elaboration and dissemination of relevant open- source software, fonts and other technical means necessary for the use of minority languages in cyberspace;
- (e) to consult on measures to provide longitudinal statistics on language populations in order to get more reliable data on the trends of language endangerment and language survival;
- (f) to further invite all interested organizations and private persons to contribute to the valuable UNESCO activities, such as the UN International Year of Languages, the website “Languages Are Important”, revitalization programs and further support for endangered languages.

Ljouwert/Leeuwarden, 27 September 2008