

Short speeches by children, special guest speakers, prose readings, drama, features on literature, mime, traditional dancing, games and folklore, posters, displays, and children's creative writing including original poetry and class discussions, all in mother tongue.

### University students:

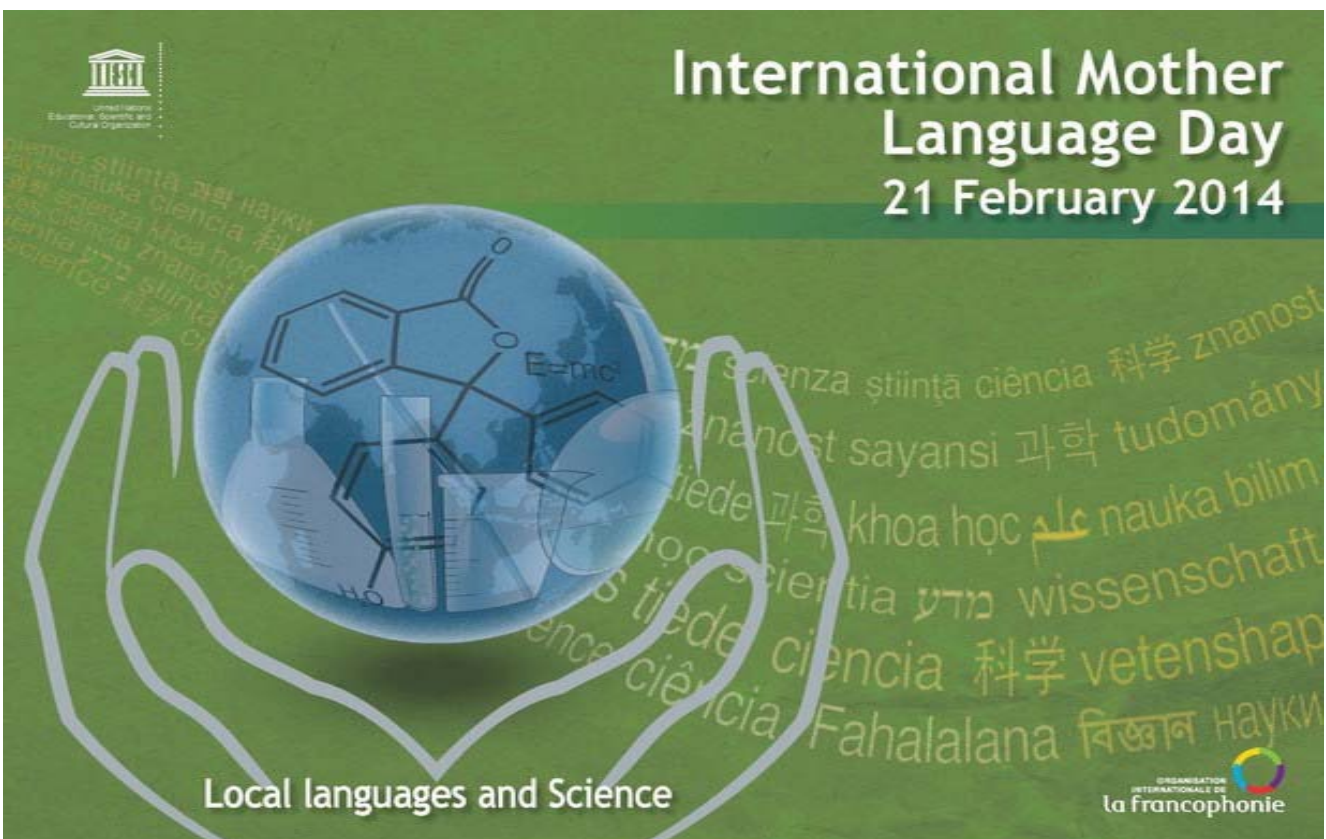
- Interaction and debate competitions in/on mother tongue; reading and writing competitions in/on mother tongue.
- A course/workshop/seminar/conference/panel discussion/video-conference in/on mother language.
- Cultural activities such as films, plays

and music that celebrate different languages.

- A survey of mother languages on campus by interviewing fellow students and publishing the results online

### The media:

- Exhibitions on linguistic and cultural diversity
- Local and national media articles on local languages spoken in their regions and the cultural expressions of these languages. It is particularly important that these be available not only in printed media, but also on radio, television and websites.



# International Mother Language Day, 21 February

International Mother Language Day (IMLD) was proclaimed by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1999 to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism. There is growing awareness that languages play a vital role in process of integration into all aspects of public life but particularly in education. It strengthens co-operation and contributes to attaining quality education for all, building inclusive knowledge societies and preserving cultural heritage, and mobilizing political will to apply the benefits of science and technology to sustainable development. Languages are among the most precious, and at the same time the most fragile, treasures of mankind.

We strongly encourage all countries in the region to celebrate this year's International Mother Language Day on 21 February. It is a Day for celebrating all mother tongues. In other words – a day to celebrate language diversity. Supporting language diversity is also about supporting inclusion and acknowledging that language diversity helps to enrich us all; that this diversity of languages is a treasure, not a barrier.

In the context of education, it is impossible to teach the majority of people to read and write in a language they don't understand. It is easier for you to learn a second language if you have

learnt your first language well.

What are you doing to celebrate IMLD this year? Below are examples of activities from past IMLD events:

## School teachers:

- ☉ A scavenger hunts to teach about languages and cultures from around the world.
- ☉ Mapping of your students' mother tongues to demonstrate that perhaps many of their classmates may have mother language(s) different from the languages used for teaching.
- ☉ Student introductions and descriptions of their families and cultures including teaching a little of their mother language to the other children.
- ☉ Student recitation of poetry and stories -- or singing of songs -- in their mother language.
- ☉ Paintings and drawings with captions in mother languages for display both inside and outside schools.