



Terralingua Annual Report, 1997-1998

Annual Presidential Address — September 1998.

Dear Terralingua Members,

It has been a year since my first report on Terralingua activities, and I come to you again with an account of what we have done during the past year and an appeal for you to renew your support for what we seek to accomplish in the future. Terralingua has been working extremely hard, and our efforts have begun to pay off in terms of widespread attention to our perspectives on linguistic diversity, linguistic human rights, and the relationships between linguistic, cultural, and biological diversity. Our expertise begins to be sought at multiple levels, from the local to the international, as I will explain in the two reports below. In other words, we begin to be actually able to make a difference on the matters of our, and your, concern.

On the other hand, we cannot sustain this effort without your help. As you know, we are a purely volunteer organization. We have been stretching ourselves to the limit working overtime on a regular basis, trying to take advantage of every opportunity for free use of resources, and making miracles with a budget that can only be described as minuscule, deriving as it does exclusively from paying memberships set as low as US \$10/year at the basic level. We do continue to have a steady, if small stream of new memberships. However, we are not seeing an equally steady flow of renewals. Although we extended all initial memberships through the end of 1997 and launched a membership renewal campaign earlier this year, the number of renewals for 1998 has so far been very limited, and our funds are dwindling to very low levels (as the Treasurer's Report below shows) — so low that, without additional support, we will soon become unable to perform even the most basic functions involved in our work, such as sending mail to members and interested others who are not on the Internet. We currently have one grant proposal under consideration, and will be making others in the months to come. But whether or not these

come through, we need steady financial support from those of our members who can afford to give it — and thus show their support to our cause!

Although many of you have not renewed for 1998, we have so far not taken anyone off our membership list, because we wanted to give you a fair chance to continue to support our efforts, and you have still been receiving the quarterly issues of *Langscape* that we normally reserve to our members in good standing. But we will not be able to continue to do so indefinitely.

I believe my two reports below will give you ample reason to continue to put your trust in us and therefore continue to sustain us with your

membership fees. Please do take the time to send in your 1998 contribution now — again, as low as US\$10 if you can't afford more! But of course we will be deeply grateful for any contribution higher than that if you can. As before, contributions of US\$100 or more will qualify you as a Donor Member. Institutional memberships are US\$35. Also, since we are approaching the end of 1998, you may wish to consider sending us your 1998 and 1999 membership fees at the same time. This will be one less hassle for you, and a BIG help for us!! Also, please do let potentially interested others know about us. My warmest thanks and best regards to all of you.

Luisa Maffi, President.

Annual Report of Activities — September 1998.

From the beginning, Terralingua's work has been carried out at multiple levels: information, research, and advocacy. Over the past year, we have further pursued our activities in all these areas.

Information.

In addition to an ever-higher volume of correspondence with our network of members and sympathizers, Terralingua's information-related activities have continued to develop via our newsletter and

Web site. The newly named newsletter, *Langscape*, has been flourishing under the editorship of Anthea Fallen-Bailey, with plenty of news and interesting feature articles. The Web site was recently upgraded by Dave Harmon, and is now fuller of useful resources and more user-friendly. It includes our expanding database of organizations working on language maintenance and revitalization and listings of other web sites, e-mail lists, funding institutions, and other relevant organizations, with links to many of these. We also have a growing number of translations of our statement of purpose into languages from all parts of the world — our small but significant contribution to putting the world's languages on the Internet! We have posted a number of discussion papers and the text of the

Terralingua submission on linguistic human rights in education to the U.N. Working Group on Indigenous Populations (see below). Terralingua Board members have also been spreading relevant information and doing awareness-raising through their writings and participation in a number of international conferences on linguistic human rights, bilingual education, indigenus education, indigenus peoples' rights, and the relationships between linguistic and biological diversity (see below). Among the many people who have contacted us for information on these issues have been two journalists from two major U.S. newspapers: the New York Times and the Los Angeles Times. An article by the former journalist, Paul Lewis, appeared in the August 15, 1998, issue of the N.Y.T. under the title "Too late to say 'extinct' in Ubykh, Eyak, or Ona", and mentions Terralingua and its objectives, citing your very own Dave Harmon and Luisa Maffi. The L.A.T. article is expected to come out some time in October.

Research.

Board members have continued their respective and joint research activities on the issues of our common concern and produced a vast array of publications. Among these, two in particular, currently in press, contain explicit mention of Terralingua and will bring its perspectives to the attention of a vast international public: (1) the article "Language: a resource for nature" by L. Maffi, which will appear in the U.N.E.S.C.O. journal "Nature and Resources", and (2) the chapter "Linguistic Diversity", by L. Maffi, T. Skutnabb-Kangas, and J. Andrianarivo, to be published in the U.N.E.P. [United Nations Environment Programme] book "Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity", edited by Terralingua Advisory Panel member Darrell Posey. Also, the book "Language, Knowledge and the Environment: the Interdependence

of Biological and Cultural Diversity" (L. Maffi, ed.), based on the "Endangered Languages, Endangered Knowledge, Endangered Environments" conference, and containing chapters by several Terralingua Board and Advisory Panel members, is about to be submitted to Oxford University Press. (We'll have the table of contents in the next Langscape and also soon on the web.) We have reason to believe that the book will have a significant impact in scholarly and policy circles alike. Also significant has been the publication of Dave Harmon's paper "The status of the world's languages as reported in *Ethnologue*" in the long-delayed 1995 issue 14 of *Southwestern Journal of Linguistics*. His companion paper "Losing species, losing languages: Connections between biological and linguistic diversity" will appear in the next issue of *Southwest Journal of Linguistics*. Both papers were presented by Dave at the Symposium "Language Loss and Public Policy" held in Albuquerque in 1995, where the co-founders of Terralingua met. Our research work has also yielded contacts and collaborations, or prospects for collaboration, with a number of major U.S. and international institutions, amongst which are:

Smithsonian Institution;

Field Museum of Natural History;

Canadian Museum of Nature;

Conservation and Development Forum;

International Botanical Congress;

International Society of Ethnobiology;

International Union for the Conservation of Nature
(I.U.C.N.);

World Wide Fund for Nature (W.W.F.);

U.N. World Intellectual Property Organization
(W.I.P.O.);

Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the
U.N. Centre for Human Rights;

U.N.E.S.C.O. (Languages Division; Culture Sector;
Ecological Sciences Division);

European Commission.

Among the planned activities: a workshop "Supporting cultural and environmental diversity through indigenous language development and protection of linguistic human rights" (International Congress of Ethnobiology, Aotearoa/New Zealand, November 1998); a symposium "Language, knowledge and understandings of the environment: lessons for environmental policy and education" (Field Museum, Chicago, April 1999); and a symposium "Ethnobotany and biocultural diversity conservation" (International Botanical Congress, St. Louis, August 1999). (Other activities are described in the next report).

Advocacy.

Over the past year, Terralingua responded to numerous appeals in support of linguistic communities whose linguistic and cultural rights were being violated, and of grassroots organizations whose language maintenance and revitalization activities were in jeopardy. Notable amongst these, because we received responses suggesting that our intervention played a significant role, was our letter in support of the Welsh National Language Centre (Nant Gwrtheyrn), that was being threatened with closure, putting an end to Welsh language courses. The Centre ultimately underwent some restructuring, but the teaching of Welsh continues. Most significantly at the international level, Terralingua was invited to present a submission on linguistic human rights in education (text found on our Web site) to the Working Group on Indigenous Populations (W.G.I.P.) of the U.N. Centre for Human Rights, in view of our participation in the 16th. Annual Session of W.G.I.P., held in Geneva in July 1998, whose principal theme was "Indigenous Peoples: education and Language". Terralingua was also invited to participate in the Roundtable on Intellectual Property and Indigenous Peoples organized by the Global Intellectual Property Issues Division of the World Intellectual Property Organization (W.I.P.O.), also held in Geneva in July 1998, to explore matters of intellectual property as they relate to the protection of indigenous languages and traditional knowledge. Still in July 1998, Terralingua carried out advocacy in favor of the integrated protection of linguistic, cultural and biological diversity at the Forum "Biodiversity: treasures in the World's Forests", organized by the Alfred Toepfer Academy for Nature Conservation in Schneverdingen, Germany, and closely related to the processes concerned with the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. (More on these three events in the following

report).

Plans for the future abound, from upgrading Langscape to expansion of our Web site and particularly of the language maintenance/revitalization database, to realization of videos, tutorials, community workshops, Internet classes, to further Terralingua publications, to continued participation in international processes related to linguistic human rights and the protection of the linguistic and cultural heritage of indigenous peoples and minorities. For this, once again, we need your generous financial support!

Organizational Report.

Over the last year, Terralingua completed its initial organization by holding the first-ever election for a Board of Directors (including officers). The initial election was held in October and November 1997. All Terralingua members were invited to vote for a slate of candidates; the balloting was done via e-mail, a special Web site, and regular surface mail. Thirty-three votes were received, representing a "turnout" of about 33% of the membership. The officers elected were Luisa Maffi (president), Tove Skutnabb-Kangas (vice president), and Dave Harmon (secretary-treasurer); the other Board members elected were Anvita Abbi, Alejandro de Avila, Marie Battiste, James Youngblood Henderson, Martha J. Macri, Gary Martin, and Mari Rhydwen.

From 30 March - 15 April 1998, the Board held its first meeting, which took place electronically through the exchange of e-mail. Six agenda items were discussed: defining the Terralingua mission; Board member duties and assignments; forming an Advisory Panel; policy on membership dues; seeking other financing for Terralingua activities; and policy on speaking on behalf of Terralingua. A number of "action items" were assigned to Board members, and four standing committees were formed: Executive; Grassroots Relationships/Humanitarian Appeals; Publications/Information/Translations; and Funding/Finances.

Following the meeting, invitations were sent out to a number of distinguished people who were asked to serve on the Terralingua Advisory Panel. All of these invitations were accepted. The Advisory Panel consists of: Pekka Aikio; E. Annamalai; Nancy C. Dorian; Joshua Fishman; Margaret J. Florey; François Grin; Ole Henrik Magga; Jeffrey A. McNeely; Denny Moore; Peter Mühlhäusler; Gary Nabhan; Andrew Pawley; Darrell Posey; and

Victor M. Toledo.

In September 1997, Anthea Fallen-Bailey, one of the founders of Terralingua, took over editorship of the Terralingua quarterly newsletter which, from June 1998, is titled *Langscape*.

The organization maintained its corporate registration with the state of Michigan through the filing of the requisite paperwork in September 1997.