

INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY • 8 September

HISTORY

In September 1965, the World Conference of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy met in Tehran and recommended that 8 September, the date of the inauguration of the Conference, be proclaimed **International Literacy Day** and be observed worldwide.

It was decided that, on this day each year, individuals, organisations, and countries throughout the world would renew their efforts to combat illiteracy and would demonstrate their commitment to providing education for all.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) began officially observing International Literacy Day in 1966.

"LITERACY IS THE BEST REMEDY"

The theme for International Literacy Day 2008 is "**Literacy is the best remedy**", placing a special focus on the important relationship between literacy and health – the theme for the 2007-2008 biennium of the United Nations Literacy Decade.

Literacy has a significant role in building healthy societies, with a strong emphasis on epidemics and communicable diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis and malaria. These are some of the world's most important public health concerns.

WHY LITERACY IS IMPORTANT

Literacy is a human right, a tool of personal empowerment and a means for social and human development. Educational opportunities depend on literacy.

Literacy is at the heart of basic education for all, and essential for eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy.

There are good reasons why literacy is at the core of Education for All (EFA).

A good quality basic education equips pupils with literacy skills for life and further learning; literate parents are more likely to send their children to school; literate people are better able to access continuing educational opportunities; and literate societies are better geared to meet pressing development challenges.

