

**Address by Jón Atli Benediktsson, Rector of the University of Iceland, at the event Dictionaries: Multilingualism, Translations and Terminology, Celebrating the International Mother Language Day.**

**Held at Veröld, Wednesday 21 February, 2.30 p.m.**

Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, former president of Iceland and UNESCO goodwill ambassador for languages, participants from abroad and from Iceland, Ladies and gentlemen.

On behalf of the University of Iceland, I welcome you all to the celebration of the International Mother Language Day.

This is the first time that we celebrate this day in the building Veröld – hús Vigdísar, or Vigdís' House, here at the University of Iceland.

This symbolises nicely that this day of the mother languages has two aspects: to celebrate one's own language, i.e., and the local mother tongue, and to praise linguistic diversity worldwide.

Iceland and Icelanders have indeed very special relationships with both their language and foreign languages: on one hand, the Icelandic language, preserves the Nordic heritage, so rich in expressions and so rich in literature, recognised worldwide, and plays an important role in the life of most Icelanders. On the other hand, Icelanders always have recognised the need for mastering other

languages and the enrichment that they bring to society and to individuals.

This year we commemorate the International Mother Language Day with this distinguished symposium on a special topic: dictionaries. The occasion is to celebrate the acquisition of a unique collection of dictionaries by the Vigdís World Language Centre at the University of Iceland, together with partners. During the symposium, we will learn more about this collection, and why Icelandic society should very much welcome this acquisition.

The symposium will also provide a broad overview on the history and current trends and activities in lexicography, terminology and translation studies in both, Iceland and Europe. We are very pleased to be able to find ourselves in the presence of so many high-ranking specialists and representatives of leading institutions in Iceland and Europe. In particular, we would like to thank all the speakers for their contributions, especially those who have travelled from far. We also thank all of you in the audience for your interest, and wish you all a stimulating symposium and an engaging discussion.