

For Immediate Release  
February 5, 2008

## International Mother Language Day - Feb. 21 Symposium and Panel Discussion

CALGARY- Calgary Multicultural Centre will celebrate the International Mother Language Day on Feb.21, with a symposium and panel discussion “**Beyond Bilingual Canada - Impact of Mother Tongue**”

By sharing ideas, stories and experience the symposium and panel discussion will enhance the international language education in Calgary, encourage all ethnic communities, educational and cultural institutions in their efforts to develop awareness of linguistic and cultural traditions as a means of communication, interaction and understanding among different people.

The panel discussion will feature the keynote speaker Dr. John Archibald, Professor and Head of the Department of Linguistics, and Associate Director of the Research Language Centre, University of Calgary; Serafino Scarpino, Vice Chair, Catholic Separate School District; Sigrid Olsen, Team Leader, International Languages, Alberta Education; Michael Gretton, Coordinator, Southern Alberta Heritage Language Association (SAHLA); and Heather Glennie, Calgary Public Library.

**The event is open to the public. Free Admission.**  
**John Dutton Theatre – Central Library (616 Macleod Trail SE)**  
**Thursday, February 21, 1:30 – 4:30 p.m.**

The project is funded by Family & Community Support Services (FCSS) and presented in partnership with Calgary Public Library, The Southern Alberta Heritage Language Association (SAHLA), University of Calgary-Department of Linguistics, and Canadian Commission for UNESCO.

February 21, was proclaimed the **International Mother Language Day** by UNESCO on 17 November 1999 to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism. The United Nations proclaimed 2008 as a Year of International Languages. It has been estimated that between 6,000 and 7,000 languages are spoken in the world today and, that many more have become extinct. According to SAHLA, in Calgary, there are over 36 community-based language schools teaching 44 languages. The CMC sent a proposal to Mayor for proclamation of International Mother Language Day in Calgary and recognizing multilingualism in our city.

**For more information:**  
**Sinela Dzhurkova**, Project Coordinator  
Calgary Multicultural Centre  
[cmcres@calgarymulti.com](mailto:cmcres@calgarymulti.com)  
(403) 237-5850