

# Nitobe Symposia - Overview

---

The primary goal of the Symposia themselves, as events, is to promote dialogue among knowledgeable stakeholders who rarely meet in the normal course of their work, despite similar interests and concerns. Some of the Symposia have issued closing statements summarizing the discussions; others have led to publications, either as volumes of proceedings or in journals; but these are seen as secondary goals.

The first *Nitobe Symposium* was held in Prague in 1996, organized by the [Centre for Research and Documentation on World Language Problems](#) (CED), and supported by a grant from the Japan Foundation. Since then the Symposia have been held every few years, in different cities around the world, on a range of current issues related to language policy and language management in international contexts. Their goal is to bring together non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations, academics, civil servants and politicians to share their diverse perspectives and forms of expertise on such issues.

Named *Nitobe Symposia* are successors to a long line of conferences and symposia organised by CED beginning in the 1980s. Reports were issued annually during the 1980s. Later reports (1990s) appeared as volumes in the series *Papers of the Centre for Research and Documentation on World Language Problems* published by the University Press of America.

Usually there are between 50 and 80 attending invitees. A list of *Nitobe Symposia* to date is given below:

- 2018 **Lisbon, Portugal**, *Esperanto and Interlinguistics and Their Relationship to the Disciplines*
- 2013 **Reykjavik, Iceland**, *Languages and Internationalization in Higher Education: Ideologies, Practices, Alternatives*.  
> Resulting publication: Hultgren, Anna Kristina; Gregersen, Frans and Thøgersen, Jacob eds. (2014). *English in Nordic Universities: Ideologies and Practices*. Studies in World Language Problems, 5. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- 2007 **Tokyo, Japan**, *European Languages and Asian Nations: History, Politics, Possibilities*  
> *Concluding Document*: September 26, 2007. *Languages in Asia: A democratic and developmental challenge*.
- 2005 **Vilnius, Lithuania**, *Language Policy Implications of the Expansion of the European Union*  
In collaboration with *Vilnius University* and the *Lithuanian Academy of Sciences* .
- 2004 **Beijing, China**, *Towards a New International Language Order*.
- 1999 **Berlin, Germany**, *Globalisation and Language Diversity*.
- 1996 **Prague, Czech Republic**, *Language for Peace and Democracy: Communication and Linguistic Rights in International Organizations*  
> Resulting publication: Fettes, Mark and Bolduc, Suzanne (1998). *Al lingva demokratio / Towards Linguistic Democracy / Vers la démocratie linguistique*. Rotterdam: UEA.

The series takes its name from the Japanese scholar and diplomat *Inazô Nitobe*, who served as Under-Secretary-General of the *League of Nations* from 1920 to 1926. In 1921, Nitobe wrote a report for the League on his visit to the 13<sup>th</sup> *World Esperanto Congress* in Prague, expressing sympathy for the ideals of the movement, and recommending that the League take an active interest in its progress. Combining respect for facts on the ground with political and social analysis and concern with long-range trends and goals, Nitobe's report is a model for the kinds of work on language issues that the Symposia seek to cultivate and promote.

---

CED is grateful for the support of [Esperantic Studies Foundation](#) (ESF) in arranging *Nitobe Symposia*.