

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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VIDEO MESSAGE ON HUMAN RIGHTS DAY
10 December 2007

On this Human Rights Day, we launch a year-long commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The entire UN family will take part in a campaign to promote the Declaration's ideals and principles of justice and equality for everyone.

The campaign reminds us that in a world still reeling from the horrors of the Second World War, the Declaration was the first global statement of what we now take for granted -- the inherent dignity and equality of all human beings.

The extraordinary vision and determination of the drafters produced a document that for the first time set out universal human rights for all people in an individual context. Now available in more than 360 languages, the Declaration is the most translated document in the world -- a testament to its universal nature and reach. It has inspired the constitutions of many newly independent States and many new democracies. It has become a yardstick by which we measure respect for what we know, or should know, as right and wrong.

The Declaration remains as relevant today as it did on the day it was adopted. But the fundamental freedoms enshrined in it are still not a reality for everyone. Too often, Governments lack the political will to implement international norms they have willingly accepted.

This anniversary year is an occasion to build up that will. It is a chance to ensure that these rights are a living reality -- that they are known, understood and enjoyed by everyone, everywhere. It is often those who most need their human rights protected, who also need to be informed that the Declaration exists -- and that it exists for them.

May this year reinvigorate us in that mission. Let us make the Universal Declaration of Human Rights an integral part of everyone's life.