



"Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home -- so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. [...] Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world." -- *Eleanor Roosevelt*

## THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS TURNS 70

Let's stand up for equality, justice and human dignity.

Human Rights Day is observed every year on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December – the day the United Nations General Assembly adopted, in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This year, Human Rights Day marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a milestone document that proclaimed the inalienable rights which everyone is inherently entitled to as a human being -- regardless of race, color, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. It is the most translated document in the world, available in more than 500 languages.

Drafted by representatives of diverse legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, the Declaration sets out universal values and a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations. It establishes the equal dignity and worth of every person. Thanks to the Declaration, and States' commitments to its principles, the dignity of millions has been uplifted and the foundation for a more just world has been laid. While its promise is yet to be fully realized, the very fact that it has stood the test of time is testament to the enduring universality of its perennial values of equality, justice and human dignity.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights empowers us all. The principles enshrined in the Declaration are as relevant today as they were in 1948. We need to stand up for our own rights and those of others. We can take action in our own daily lives, to uphold the rights that protect us all and thereby promote the kinship of all human beings.

## Preamble

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

To read the full Universal Declaration of Human Rights please visit

<http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html>