

# What Is Human Rights Day?



ON DECEMBER 10, 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations, meeting that year in Paris, adopted and proclaimed the historic Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration had been in the making for three years. Word for word it had been fashioned by representatives from many countries so that it could be accepted as an agreed set of standards and goals by peoples of different nationalities and different cultures. Its formal adoption was, therefore, to achieve freedom and security. To celebrate it, the General Assembly in 1950 asked that in future years 10 December be set aside as Human Rights Day by governments and interested organizations, and that reports on these celebrations be made to the Secretary-General by governments.

This day has been celebrated since 1949 in an increasing number of countries. Last year eighty nations and territories reported to the United Nations a wide variety of official and unofficial celebrations on the third anniversary. The suggestions which follow are based on these reports.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR CELEBRATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

### *How Government and UNESCO National Commissions Celebrate the Anniversary*

Proclaim 10 December Human Rights Day.

Sponsor official ceremonies, concerts, receptions, public meetings, exhibitions.

Issue special postage stamps or use special postage cancellations.

Issue special instructions or suggestions and teaching materials to schools.

Issue new language texts or editions of the declaration.

Issue posters for display in public places.

Sponsor Human Rights exhibits in government buildings, libraries and museums.

Sponsor UNESCO Album display on Human Rights.

Sponsor special observances at national shrines.

Illuminate national monuments on 10 December.

Sponsor special displays of United Nations flag.

Call upon non-governmental organizations to help plan and execute celebrations.

Sponsor study groups or Human Rights institutes.

### *How State, Provincial, Territorial or Municipal Authorities Celebrate the Anniversary*

Chief authority issues Human Rights Day proclamation.

Legislature or Council adopts Human Rights Day resolution.

Local educational authorities stimulate celebrations in schools.

State or Municipal government

sponsors concert, public meetings or Human Rights study groups.

State or Municipal government sponsors broadcast of international, national or local celebration.

State or Municipal government sponsors exhibits in libraries, museums, or other public buildings or places.

State or Municipal government sponsors film showing.

State or Municipal government calls on non-governmental organizations to co-operate in planning and executing celebration.

*How Colleges and Universities Celebrate the Anniversary*

Sponsor public lectures and symposia by members of the faculty on historical and other aspects of the Declaration.

Sponsor student assemblies or university-wide ceremonies.

Sponsor student debating, essay, fine arts, dramatic or musical contests on the theme of Human Rights.

Arrange Human Rights exhibits in college libraries.

Sponsor Human Rights broadcasts.

Sponsor student model meeting of Commission on Human Rights.

Publish Universal Declaration of Human Rights in college paper or periodical.

*How Schools Celebrate the Anniversary*

Distribute text widely in the schools.

Arrange a pageant in which all schools in the community take part.

Prepare several weeks in advance for celebration in the school, through class activities such as history, art, music.

Display posters and other exhibit material prepared by pupils.

Hold a school assembly, including music, reading all or part of the Declaration, talk by a teacher, reading of statements by national leaders.

Study text of the Declaration in higher classes. Each student selects one article and gives his own interpretation which is discussed by class.

In class, relate selected articles to history, literature, civics.

Study the connection between rights and duties, with examples drawn from pupil's experience.

In school assemblies or class work, show how the work of the United Nations and the specialized agencies helps to establish conditions under which Human Rights can be widely achieved.

Sponsor intramural or interscholastic debating, essay or poster contests.

*How Non-Governmental Organizations Celebrate the Day*

Hold special local, state or national meetings.

Reprint the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in organization journals.

Co-operate with government, UNESCO National Commissions, U.N. Information Centres in national celebrations.

Join with other organizations in planning local activities, such as concerts, human rights institutes, conferences or other special observances.

Prepare and release special press and radio material.

Organize public exhibitions, art competitions, essays or debating contests.

Conduct community action projects or surveys.

*How Press, Radio, Television and Cinema Celebrate the Anniversary*

Press reproduces the text of the Declaration.

Press reports celebrations.

Press prints editorials on Human Rights, photo features, stories and cartoons.

Radio broadcasts U.N. Headquarters celebrations.

Radio broadcasts special U.N., UNESCO radio documentaries and features.

Radio and television broadcast special anniversary events.

Radio and television originate and broadcast feature of programmes.

Radio and television use Human Rights Day spot announcements.

Radio and television broadcast reading of the Declaration by eminent actors.

Cinemas show special Human Rights films.

## The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

### 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 among 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 cooperation 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 DECLARA-