

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

NEW YORK

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

4 December 2008

Excellency,

In the context of the commemorations of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the General Assembly resolution A/63/25 of 19 November 2008 states: "decides that the commemorative event will consist of a plenary session included the ceremony of awarding the prize to the United Nations in the field of Human Rights, and two debates interactive informal thematic consecutive"; "decides that the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights will address the commemorative plenary meeting." "Further requests the President of the General Assembly to hold open consultations with Member States and observers in order to prepare a brief declaration reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the commitment for its full implementation, to be adopted by consensus at the commemorative plenary meeting."

In compliance with this resolution the Office of the President of the General Assembly is organizing the commemorative event that will comprise a plenary meeting, including two consecutive interactive panel discussions and the presentation of awards. The detailed information related to the commemorative event is attached.

The presidency expects that this event is not only a celebration, but also a commitment from all Member States to strengthen the respect of human rights of all people all over the world.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Norman Miranda".

Norman Miranda  
Ambassador  
Chef de Cabinet

All Permanent Representatives  
and Permanent Observers  
to the United Nations

**Informative Note:**

**Commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the  
Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

**Wednesday, 10 December 2008, United Nations Headquarters**

**Tentative programme**

**9 a.m. to 11 a.m. (Trusteeship Council Chamber)**

Panel I      Theme:      Sixty years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: lessons learned

Moderator: Ms. Julia Dolly Joiner (Gambia)

Panelists:   Mrs. Caroline Gomez (Jamaica - TBC)  
                 Mrs. Mary Robinson (Ireland)  
                 Mr. Denis Mukwege (Democratic Republic of the Congo)

**11:00 a.m. to 1 p.m. (Trusteeship Council Chamber)**

Panel II      Theme:      The full implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: challenges ahead and ways forward

Moderator: To be decided

Panelists:   Ms. Maude Barlow (Canada)  
                 Mr. Latif Hüseyinov (Azerbaijan - TBC)  
                 Mr. Ghassan Salame (Lebanon)

**3 to 6 p.m. (General Assembly Hall)**

Plenary meeting      Opening statement by the President of the General Assembly

Statements by:      Secretary-General of the United Nations  
                                 President of the Human Rights Council  
                                 United Nations High Commissioner of  
                                 Human Rights

Presentation of the Human Rights Awards (7 recipients)

Adoption of the draft declaration

Conclusion of the Commemoration

## **Panels**

**Panel I** - Sixty years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: obstacles, challenges and lessons learned

**Panel II** - Full implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: challenges ahead. It will address major problems afflicting humanity today.

These presentations will include panelists from different geographical regions and individuals committed to human rights.

Brief Profile of the Panelists and facilitators

### **Panel 1:**

Mary Robinson:

Born in Ireland in 1944. In 1990-1997 she was the first woman to become President of the Republic of Ireland. As a human rights advocate she was the first head of state to visit Rwanda after the genocide. She was also in Somalia in 1992 during a period of crisis. During her term of office she also supported the creation of the International Criminal Court.

At the end of her presidency, the then Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, appointed her as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on September 12 1997, a post she held until 2002.

In 2006 she was elected president of the Initiative for Ethical Globalization, an international organization responsible for pressuring governments who are signatories to international agreements on protecting human rights. She is also a professor at Columbia University and extraordinary professor at the University of Pretoria. She continues to advocate for human right across the world.

Denis Mukwege

Born in the Democratic Republic of Congo, as medical doctor and as a specialist in obstetrics and gynecology, he has dedicated his life to the service of the poor. He has worked for many years at the Hospital Panzi with rural women, children and elderly victims of war, civilian victims of sexual violence (women and adolescents with their genitals mutilated) among other groups. He has fought against feminicides and is a symbol in the fight against violence towards women and prevention and care of HIV-AIDS. He was a candidate for the 2008 Nobel Peace Prize. On December 10, 2008 he will receive the UN Human Rights Award.

**Panel 2:**

Maude Barlow

Born in Canada in 1947. She is an activist for the Right to Water, author of several books, including "Blue Gold". Founder and Chairperson of the Council of Canadians. Founder of Blue Planet Project, working internationally for the right to water. Member of the Board of the International Forum on Globalization; President of the Center on Water and Food. On October 21, 2008, was named senior adviser on water issues by the President of the sixty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly, His Excellency Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann.

Ghassan Salame

Born in Lebanon, has been a recognized University Professor of International Relations at the Institute for Public Policy Studies. He has been an advisor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on issues relating to cultural diversity. Former Minister of Culture of Lebanon. He was Chairman and spokesman of the Organizing Committee of the Arab Summit and the Francophone Summit (October 2002) in Beirut. He led missions to France, Italy, Germany, and to a large number of Arab and African countries. He was also a member of several inter-ministerial committees, in particular on reform of higher education in his country.

Moderator:

Ms. Julia Dolly Joiner

Promoter of Human Rights in Africa, former Minister of Youth. Commissioner of Political Affairs for the African Union.