

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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VIDEO MESSAGE  
TO THE 61<sup>ST</sup> DPI/NGO CONFERENCE  
*“Reaffirming Human Rights for All:  
The Universal Declaration at 60”*  
3-5 September 2008, Paris

Dear friends,

You have gathered to commemorate one of humankind’s greatest achievements. How fitting that you have gathered close to the building where the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed on 10 December 1948. In this way, you reaffirm the human rights and freedoms enshrined in the Declaration.

Since 1948, human rights have been at the core of the work of the United Nations. At the same time, civil society has been on the front line. For six decades, human rights defenders have sacrificed liberty, comfort and even life to ensure that all human beings can enjoy the rights enshrined in the Declaration -- irrespective of their race, religion, ethnicity, gender, or other status.

As you know better than anyone, human rights and freedoms continue to be a distant reality for all too many people. It is our duty 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.

In this 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary year and beyond, I am committed to doing all I can to make the rights in Universal Declaration of Human Rights a reality. In this mission, I look forward to working with the new High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navanethem Pillay of South Africa. I am determined to give her full support, including with increased financial and human resources, as approved by the General Assembly.

I am grateful to every one of you for your commitment to our vital cause. I wish you a most stimulating conference.

Thank you very much.