



INTERNATIONAL HUMAN SOLIDARITY DAY

20 DECEMBER



United Nations

Background

“In our interconnected world, the human family cannot enjoy security without development, cannot enjoy development without security, and cannot enjoy either without respect for human rights . . . to act on that understanding, we need a strong United Nations, and true solidarity among Governments and peoples working together to fulfil those goals.”

—United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan

In the Millennium Declaration, world leaders identified **solidarity** as one of the fundamental values essential to international relations in the twenty-first century and emphasized that *“Global challenges must be managed in a way that distributes the costs and burdens fairly in accordance with basic principles of equity and social justice. Those who suffer or who benefit least deserve help from those who benefit most.”* In the context of globalization and the challenge of growing inequality, the strengthening of international solidarity and cooperation is indispensable for the realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

Convinced that the promotion of the culture of solidarity and the spirit of sharing was important for combating poverty, the General Assembly proclaimed 20 December as **International Human Solidarity Day** (General Assembly resolution 60/209).

Solidarity in the work of the United Nations

The concept of solidarity has defined the work of the United Nations since the birth of the Organization. The creation of the United Nations drew the peoples and nations of the world together to promote peace, human rights and social and economic development. The Organization was founded on the basic premise of unity and harmony among its Members expressed in the concept of collective security that relies on the **solidarity** of its Members to unite “to maintain international peace and security”. It is in the spirit of solidarity that the Organization relies on “cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character” as well (Charter of the United Nations).

In the area of human rights, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights identifies an increased and sustained effort of international cooperation and solidarity as necessary for the achievement of substantial progress in human rights. Moreover, the international community has often affirmed its **“human solidarity with victims of violations of international law, including violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, as well as with humanity at large”** (Commission on Human Rights resolution 2005/35). Resolutions on human rights underlined *“the importance of mainstreaming the values of non-discrimination, equality, human dignity and **human solidarity** in the United Nations system”* (Commission on Human Rights resolution 2005/65).

The 1995 Programme of Action of the World Summit on Social Development emphasizes that *“Governments increasingly recognize that their responses to changing circumstances and their desires to achieve sustainable*

*development and social progress will require increased **solidarity**, expressed through appropriate multilateral programmes and strengthened international cooperation.”* World leaders acknowledged that the implementation of the Programme of action depended on **“solidarity, extending the concept of partnership and a moral imperative of mutual respect and concern among individuals, communities and nations”**.

Solidarity in practice

Solidarity, as a central pillar of international cooperation, acquires new meaning in the face of globalization and growing interdependence. In particular, a globalizing world offers new opportunities to forge innovative alliances that can unleash the potential for broader and faster economic and social development. Among the more important aspects of solidarity at the international level are assistance, development aid and cooperation. *“For the global community aid represents a mechanism for expressing **human solidarity** and for extending opportunity. Whether motivated by human rights, religious values or wider ethical systems, aid’s role in eliminating mass poverty, hunger and avoidable child deaths is a moral imperative”* (Human Development Report, 2005).

Since the concept of solidarity relates to the notion of cooperation, common rights and responsibilities as well as unity for the achievement of a common goal, it can be applied in many different spheres of human endeavour. Just as solidarity among workers unites them in their fight for better working conditions, it can also unite the global community in the fight against global threats, such as terrorism or the HIV/AIDS pan-