



PRESS RELEASE

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

FOR RELEASE IN A.M. EDITIONS
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1958

ON DECEMBER 10, 1948, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS ADOPTED THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND PROCLAIMED IT "AS A COMMON STANDARD OF ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL PEOPLES AND ALL NATIONS, TO THE END THAT EVERY INDIVIDUAL AND EVERY ORGAN OF SOCIETY...SHALL STRIVE...TO PROMOTE RESPECT FOR THESE RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS AND...TO SECURE THEIR UNIVERSAL AND EFFECTIVE RECOGNITION AND OBSERVANCE..."

TODAY ON THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADOPTION OF THE DECLARATION, THE CANADIAN DELEGATION TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS WILL JOIN WITH OTHER DELEGATIONS IN OBSERVING THE OCCASION AT A SPECIAL SESSION HELD TO HONOUR THE PRINCIPLES OF DECLARATION AND THE IDEALS OF HUMAN FREEDOM AND DIGNITY WHICH IT ASSERTS.

DETERMINATION TO DEFEND HUMAN FREEDOM FOUND EXPRESSION IN THE ATLANTIC CHARTER AND THE DECLARATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN 1942 AND IN 1945 WAS REFLECTED IN THE DRAFTING OF THOSE ARTICLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER, ESPECIALLY ARTICLES 55 AND 56, WHICH PLACE AN OBLIGATION ON MEMBER STATES TO PROMOTE UNIVERSAL RESPECT FOR AND OBSERVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS.

DEFINITION AND FORMULATION OF THESE RIGHTS HAS BEEN THE TASK OF THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS SINCE ITS ESTABLISHMENT ON JUNE 21, 1946. AT ITS SECOND SESSION IN DECEMBER, 1947, THE COMMISSION CONCLUDED THAT THE DRAFTING OF AN INTERNATIONAL BILL OF RIGHTS SHOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED IN THREE PARTS: A "DECLARATION" (A STATEMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES), A "CONVENANT" (THE BASIS FOR A SUBSEQUENT

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INTERNATIONAL TREATY), AND "MEASURES OF IMPLEMENTATION" (OUTLINING THE MANNER IN WHICH BOTH THE DECLARATION AND THE COVENANT COULD BE MADE EFFECTIVE).

ON DECEMBER 10, 1948, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS WHICH HAD BEEN PREPARED BY THE COMMISSION. BETWEEN 1949 AND 1954, THE COMMISSION DEVOTED ITS ATTENTION TO THE PREPARATION OF THE COVENANTS. AT ITS NINTH SESSION, IN 1954, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY EMBARKED ON THE FIRST READING OF THESE COVENANTS, WHICH ARE STILL UNDER DISCUSSION.

THE DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS PROCLAIMS MAN'S PERSONAL, CIVIL, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS. IT PROVIDES FOR THEIR ENJOYMENT WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION AS TO RACE, SEX, LANGUAGE AND RELIGION, SUBJECT ONLY TO SUCH LIMITATIONS AS ARE DEFINED BY LAW SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF SECURING DUE RECOGNITION AND RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS OF OTHERS AND OF MEETING THE JUST REQUIREMENTS OF MORALITY, PUBLIC ORDER AND THE GENERAL WELFARE IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY.

IN THE TEN YEARS SINCE ITS ADOPTION, THE DECLARATION HAS BECOME WIDELY KNOWN. IT HAS BEEN TRANSLATED INTO ALL THE MAIN LANGUAGES OF THE WORLD AND THE DATE OF ITS ADOPTION IS CELEBRATED ANNUALLY IN MANY COUNTRIES AS HUMAN RIGHTS DAY. THE DECLARATION IS FREQUENTLY QUOTED IN U.N. RESOLUTIONS. INDIVIDUAL ARTICLES APPEAR AS PROVISIONS IN SOME NATIONAL CONSTITUTIONS DRAFTED SINCE 1948, AND IN A NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND AGREEMENTS.