



UNIVERSITY
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60th anniversary of the Human Rights Declaration - Living Together as Equals in Dignity

In 1948 great men from around the world met to sign the Universal declaration of Human Rights. 60 years later 300 great young women and men from more than 90 countries are gathered in the University of Youth and Development. We are celebrating the anniversary of one of human kind's greatest milestones while asking how youth organisations and intercultural dialogue can contribute to the genuine access to and extensions of Human Rights.

We emphasise that the principle of universal, interdependent, interrelated, indivisible and inalienable human rights must prevail in a real and genuine manner everywhere in our world. Our multitude of experiences, realities and identities has to be a strong contribution for achieving Human Rights for all. Young people are often seen as those most susceptible to influence and of having their opinions and ideas swayed by trends, but it is us, in fact, that can provide a sense of stability and cling to long-held visions of peace and cooperation. We are the ones that have already understood that **Sustainable Development is a basis for all political work**. All political decisions must be marked by the right of all coming generations to shape their world without being required to face the consequences of an earlier generation's ecological, social or economic activities.

Our generation has developed an understanding that poverty is an outrageous multi-layered violation of human rights, and that climate change is a threat to humanity. **Where underdevelopment, corruption or poverty reigns, Human Rights will never be realised**. Our solution is a global partnership for development. The work of the University of Youth and Development clearly contributes through giving young people the means, the space, the resources and where needed the support to be protagonists for a better world - agents of change.

Intercultural Dialogue is a key to overcoming barriers for achieving Human Rights for all. Intercultural Dialogue should be based on the principal **"nothing about us without us"** which is essential for its sustainability. Through Intercultural Dialogue we seek to approach multiple viewpoints with a desire to understand and learn from those who do not see the world in the way we do. A good 'dialogue', therefore, is an enriching and opening interaction which encourages the respectful sharing of ideas and an exploration of the different thought-processes through which the world is perceived and understood.

While the list of problems that need to be tackled continues to grow, **the willingness and enthusiasm of young people to contribute to the global partnership for development remains unbroken**. It is imperative that all possible means and tools are mobilised to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The slow, delayed - and in some regions even reversal - progress in achieving the MDGs is a major disappointment for us all, and particularly, for the youth of the world; this failure in acting to solve humanity's most agonising problems is unsatisfactory and dangerous.

Many Agencies and Programmes of the UN system, as well as governments, have already acknowledged that youth is key to development. It is essential that Governments and the UN System also support and recognize arenas for young people's active citizenship and make sure young people are not only a rhetorical priority in speeches, but a genuine priority in policies and budgets.

Respect for the rule of law, pluralist democracy, the protection of rights and property, fighting corruption and promoting good governance - these are all essentials for a sustainable future. We young people have to show this ourselves, by ensuring **our organisations act as true learning spaces for democracy**, and assuring our legitimacy to ask the same from governments. Without developing solutions to the negative impact of both protectionist and imperialist trade policies, the global north is not only exporting poverty, environmental problems and instability to other countries, but is also aggravating problems. Existing trade barriers, agricultural subsidies and restrictive rules on intellectual property rights reinforce global inequality. Sadly these measures are often implemented by the same decision-makers claiming to contribute to the elimination of hunger and poverty from our world.

Having a job does not only mean receiving an income, a decent job means dignity for a person and his or her family and it leads to stability of communities. Having a decent job includes the right to organise into a free trade union, removing glass ceilings for women, having social security and protection. **Human Rights will remain a dream to many if they cannot get a decent job and therefore a decent living.**

In an increasingly interdependent world walls, fences and visa barriers are not the necessary tools to solve our common challenges. Policies relying on violent deterrence and the wish to hinder migration will only raise the death toll and increase the exploitation of vulnerable people. It is intercultural Dialogue that must be strengthened to take away fears from people, to allow a peaceful living together and guarantee that there is no hierarchy in the access to Human Rights along ethnic or gender boundaries.

Peace, in itself, will not remove the pain of torture, is of little help to someone who is dying of hunger or cold, and may not comfort those who have lost everything because of senseless deforestation. Peace can only last where human rights are respected, where people have enough to eat, where they have a roof under which to live, and where freedom and liberty reign.

Establishing lasting peace and combating poverty and unemployment demand an emphasis on education and economic and social cooperation and we must remain cognisant that these will not be easy tasks; whatever solutions we come up with will require consensus among groups with divergent interests. That means everybody has to contribute, and this is why, in the interest of all, the work of each of us, individually and collectively, is so fundamental for the achievement of these goals and intercultural dialogue will help us on this long way.

Youth cooperation is integral for achieving Human rights; an African maxim illustrates why Human rights will never be achieved without a well functioning intercultural dialogue. **"Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu"** – meaning, in essence, "a person is a person through other persons." The practice of *ubuntu* is fundamentally inclusive, involving respect and concern for one's family and one's neighbours. *Ubuntu* defines the individual as a component of a greater inclusive collective whole, and it stresses social consciousness and unity. This is the spirit of the University for Youth and Development.

We agree with the civil rights activist Marian Wright Edelman who said:
It's time for greatness -- not for greed.

It's a time for idealism -- not ideology.

It is a time not just for compassionate words, but [for] compassionate action.