

**High Level Event to mark 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
A Prevention Tool to Achieve Peace and Sustainable Development**

**Statement by Guðlaugur Þór Þórðarson,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland
New York, 26 September 2018**

Mr. Secretary-General, ladies and gentlemen,

This year Iceland celebrates the centenary of becoming a free and sovereign nation. We have emphasized freedom and democracy from the outset and striven to honor the fundamental values of human rights. Through the progress we have made, we have seen how increased respect for the human rights of all, and more equal participation of each and every person in our society, has underpinned prosperity and well-being.

The lessons we have drawn from our own history and from the history of the last seventy years is that only through international cooperation, by promoting human rights and democracy and working towards a more equal world, can we maintain peace and prosperity. An inclusive peace has proven to be a more lasting peace – a message that Iceland emphasises in the United Nations Human Rights Council where we have recently taken a seat.

The birth of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was a landmark event in this context. It is the foundation document for our efforts to promote human rights and equality for all, as well as sustainable development.

Unfortunately, we seem to be witnessing an erosion of respect for the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is no coincidence that this development has brought uncertainty and anxiety – deep down we all know that without focus on human rights we will find it hard to improve our world and reach peace where there is currently none.

Only by respecting the principles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights can we ensure a more peaceful future.

Thank you.

**EVENT “THE UNIVERSAL
DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS: A
PREVENTION TOOL TO ACHIEVE
PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT”**

26 September, h. 11.15 – 11.35 CR2

**Intervention by Undersecretary of State for
Foreign Affairs of Italy,**

Mr. Manlio Di Stefano

- *At the outset, I would like to thank all the organizers for this very timely event.*
- *As we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, one of the most translated and best-known documents in the world, I am honored to join all of you in focusing on the Declaration as a key prevention tool to achieve peace and sustainable development.*

- *As the Declaration stipulates, human rights should be enjoyed by everyone, no matter who they are or where they live, reminding us of the important values of humanity, dignity, peace and development.*
- *The Declaration was the international community's first act toward recognizing the existence of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the starting point for the development of international humanitarian law, thereby laying down the foundations for a more just and secure world.*
- *The rights and principles set forth in the Declaration, together with the many international agreements that followed, are at the heart of Italy's international action for the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, which are a priority of our foreign policy.*
- *We strongly believe that the protection and promotion of human rights throughout the world are not only a legal obligation and a*

moral imperative, but also a key tool in fostering peace and security, as well as the prosperity and development of every country and every individual and community within it.

- *There can be no true lasting peace without respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The recognition of the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of everyone is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. Sustainable development, in line with the universal and multi-dimensional approach of Agenda 2030, is closely linked to respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms of all, without "anyone left behind."*
- *This event will highlight experiences from the five regions of the world and emphasize the progress made in the protection and promotion of human rights, focusing on key areas such as the fight against all forms of discrimination, which is crucial to ensuring that our societies are resilient, fair and inclusive.*

- *The fact that the Declaration has passed the test of time is the strongest testament to the enduring universality of its perennial values of equality, justice and human dignity. Despite emerging global threats, we must continue to work with determination not only to guarantee and promote the rights set forth in the Declaration – which in the past 70 years have helped improve the lives of people throughout the world – but also to advance and strengthen them. The universality and the indivisibility of the fundamental freedoms are a reminder of what binds us together, with all our differences, in the core of human value.*
- *I thank you.*

Mr. Yoshifumi OKAMURA, Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude to the sponsors of this event. It is a great honor for Japan to participate in this event as one of the members of the Human Rights/Conflict Prevention Caucus. I would also like to warmly congratulate Ms. Michelle Bachelet on her assignment as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Since the end of World War II, Japan has consistently taken measures at home and abroad to achieve a free and open society based on the rule of law, while upholding freedom, human rights, and other ideals enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Nevertheless, such fundamental values are facing challenges worldwide, and we need to redouble our efforts to maintain and promote such values and prevent violations. Japan will continue its tireless efforts through such means as taking the lead in discussions in the international community, development assistance based on international rules with a view to achieving the SDGs, and technical cooperation including institution-building in its many aspects.

In this commemorative year of the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Japan renews its determination to work even harder to protect and promote human rights worldwide in cooperation with various actors, including the UN, civil society, the private sector and people concerned.

Thank you.

Remarks by H.E. Edgars Rinkēvičs
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia

at High-level side event at the 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: A Prevention Tool to achieve Peace and Sustainable Development

26 September 2018

Latvia is strongly committed to human rights and the values enshrined in **the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**.

Latvia knows firsthand the **importance of human rights** in advancing the development of a nation. When the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted 70 years ago, my country Latvia was still under occupation and repression was rife. We were deprived of many basic rights: liberty, political freedoms, rule of law.

The non-recognition of the Soviet annexation of the Baltic states by many Western countries and the efforts of Baltic exiles to sustain this policy **contributed to the development of international law and** can serve as an example to some contemporary situations (in Ukraine and Georgia). In the waning years of the Soviet Union, all three Baltic independence movements led the broader push to assert freedom of expression, assembly, and association, as well as the right to free elections.

Since regaining independence the integration policy has been a key issue in the my country's domestic affairs. It has been challenging but always - within a democratic framework, and with due respect for the rule of law, human rights and international practice. Our primary goal is to give each person **an equal opportunity in Latvia. Through education, Latvia, as a multicultural country that cherish ethnic diversity**, ensures both- the preservation and development of national minority languages, their ethnic and cultural identity; and integration of national minorities into Latvian society. I would like to highlight that the Latvian government with state funds supports national minority education programmes in minority languages, currently - in 7 languages. **That exceeds similar support in many countries and the government is determined to continue such support.**

Speech by State Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Norway, Mr Audun Halvorsen, at the side event: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: A Prevention Tool to achieve Peace and Sustainable Development

26 September 2018

Thank you.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Peace and development will only be truly successful and sustainable when human rights are respected. We have to work much more closely together and embrace the linkages between the three UN pillars if we are to succeed in achieving the UN's goals and the ambitions set out in the 2030 Agenda. We are therefore very pleased that this meeting is being held.

We believe that greater investment in the human rights pillar of the UN is of crucial importance. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is a key body in this regard, but it is also important to highlight the role of other UN agencies in promoting and protecting human rights, and to strengthen their ability to do so.

A resolution was adopted in Geneva in June this year on the role of the Human Rights Council in preventing human rights violations. The aim is to establish a structured, inclusive and transparent dialogue process with states, civil society organisations, national human rights institutions and other relevant stakeholders on how the Council can become better and more efficient in delivering on its prevention mandate.

Intersessional seminars will consider how the Human Rights Council can work effectively with all three pillars of the UN system on prevention of human rights violations. Key factors are strengthening system-wide coherence, and contributing to sustainable peace and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. This work will culminate in a report

As you know, this year also marks the 20th anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. We firmly believe that creating and maintaining a safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders is crucial, not only for preventing human rights violations, but also for promoting stability and prosperity.

Thank you.

Mr. Mark Field, Minister of State, United Kingdom

73rd Session of the General Assembly – high level side event on: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: A Prevention Tool to achieve Peace and Sustainable Development.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was conceived 70 years ago as the centrepiece of a better future. It laid a common foundation for the rights that any human being should expect to enjoy. It saw nations - across the globe - commit to providing and protecting those rights.

Today, the UK Government continues to champion universal human rights, not only because it is the right thing to do, but also because they nurture and underpin peace, security and prosperity.

When states have failed to live up to their commitments, countless brave people have stepped in over the last 70 years to support the repressed and the persecuted. So it is fitting that 2018 also marks the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. Let us never forget their bravery and courage, and the hard fought changes and reforms they have brought about.

We are privileged today to hear from four female practitioners who have stood up for human rights and improved countless lives in the process.

Imagine what we could achieve together if we could unlock the potential of every woman and every girl around the world....which is why the United Kingdom is committed to ensuring that all girls receive 12 years of quality education.

There are no insurmountable barriers to improving human rights globally. We have a robust international human rights framework that underpins the work of the UN. All states have it within their power to protect and promote those rights. All that is needed is good conscience and the will to act.

261 words

UNGA Side Event
**The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: A Prevention Tool to
achieve Peace and Sustainable Development**

Delivered by:
Ms Savita Pawnday
Deputy Executive Director
Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect

26 September 2018

Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much.

Norms like the Responsibility to Protect are built upon the values embodied within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Upholding these rights remains a core aspect of a state's responsibility to protect its populations from mass atrocities.

As we mark the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration, the international community continues to fail to address systematic violations and abuses of human rights, as exemplified by last year's genocide of the Rohingya people in Myanmar and the countless civilian deaths through airstrikes in Yemen and Syria.

Dear friends,

Now, more than ever, there is a need for greater systematic collaboration and coordination between the Human Rights Council in Geneva and the UN Security Council, in order to bridge the gap between human rights and the issues of international peace and security.

I would like to leave you by recalling the words of Kofi Annan: security without development is not possible, development without security is not possible, and nothing is possible without human rights.

Thank you very much.



Statement by H. E. Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher

Secretary for Relations with States, Head of the Delegation of the Holy See
to the Seventy-third Session of the United Nations General Assembly
at the High-Level Side Event entitled “**The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: A
Prevention Tool to achieve Peace and Sustainable Development**”
United Nations, New York, 26 September 2018

Mr. Chairperson,

Over the last 70 years, we have seen in time and in practice that the founding pillars of the United Nations are not only interconnected, but also mutually reinforcing. Today we reflect on this important fact and take a further step by considering how human rights contribute to the achievement of lasting peace and sustainable development.

Human rights and human dignity can never be allowed to become empty words, uttered and affirmed simply to assuage our collective conscience, in what Pope Francis has called “declarationist nominalism.”¹

To avoid this, we must remember that rights always imply responsibilities, and responsibilities are fulfilled through concrete commitments and actions. As the Preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms, our “faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person” also reflects our “determination to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.”²

¹ Pope Francis, Address to the United Nations General Assembly, 25 September 2015.

² Preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

For this reason, a functioning international human rights framework requires that society not only recognize the human rights of its people but be resolute in meeting their basic needs and promoting their integral human development. This includes the commitment to securing civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights, a crucial dimension of human expression and fulfillment.

These commitments, owed to each person, must not be based on narrow self-interest, or on merely achieving a balance between competing rights. Rather they must be founded on the principles of justice, solidarity and the common good, principles that require addressing inequalities and creating healthy environments that allow all people to become protagonists of their own development, and ultimately of society at large. This is the real foundation of lasting peace.

Therefore, when viewed together, the UN's foundational pillars form a virtuous cycle. Where human rights are respected and fulfilled development leaves no one behind. When development embraces all of society and everyone is given the opportunity to flourish, peace becomes sustainable.

In conclusion, difficulties in respecting and implementing international human rights laws are no excuse for ignoring them. On the contrary, they must lead to an even greater effort to factor these considerations into an operational reality. To narrow the gap between theory and practice: this is what is urgently needed to advance the cause of human rights today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

“La Déclaration universelle des droits de l’Homme : un outil de prévention pour parvenir à la paix et au développement durable”

**Événement de haut niveau
Mercredi 26 septembre 2018, de 11h15 à 13h15, CR 2**

Message de l’Organisation internationale de la Francophonie

Excellences,

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Au nom de S.E. Madame Michaëlle Jean, Secrétaire générale de la Francophonie, j’ai l’honneur de vous exprimer le soutien indéfectible de l’Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) au travail inlassable et irremplaçable des Nations Unies pour défendre et promouvoir, partout dans le monde, les droits de l’Homme. Comme cela a été rappelé avec force, la réalisation de tous les droits constitue le meilleur outil de prévention.

Le 70^{ème} anniversaire de la Déclaration universelle des droits de l’Homme nous saisit de l’important chemin qui reste à parcourir.

L’OIF, communauté rassemblant 84 Etats et gouvernements, a placé les valeurs d’universalité et d’indivisibilité des droits de l’Homme, d’égalité et de non-discrimination, au cœur de son identité et, par conséquent, de son action.

La Déclaration de Bamako du 3 novembre 2000, qui témoigne de la volonté francophone de faire progresser la mise en œuvre des principes démocratiques et

des droits de l'Homme comme des pratiques qui y sont liées, souligne que « la démocratie et le développement sont indissociables » et qu'ils sont « les facteurs d'une paix durable ». Sur ce fondement, la Francophonie prend des positions claires à l'occasion des Sommets des Chefs d'Etats et de gouvernement et mène un plaidoyer constant auprès de ses membres aux fins de la ratification et de la mise en œuvre des principaux instruments internationaux en matière de droits de l'Homme, rappelant, en toute occasion, que ces droits sont aussi ceux des femmes et des filles.

Parce qu'elle rassemble les expertises adaptées aux besoins des pays francophones, la Francophonie est en mesure de soutenir la création et le renforcement des capacités des institutions nationales des droits de l'Homme et des sociétés civiles dans leurs efforts menés avec constance et fermeté afin de conforter l'universalité des droits. Elle fait en sorte, également, que le mécanisme de l'Examen périodique universel se traduise par des actions qui transforment réellement la vie des populations.

Dans toute cette action, la Francophonie compte sur un partenariat multiforme avec le Haut-Commissariat des Nations unies aux droits de l'Homme, ainsi qu'avec d'autres institutions des Nations Unies ayant toutes, collectivement, le mandat de ne laisser personne de côté.

A travers ces illustrations, je veux donc vous exprimer la conscience aigüe que nous avons de notre responsabilité partagée, et l'esprit d'écoute et de dialogue qui nous anime sur ce chemin à poursuivre sans relâche.

Je vous remercie.



UNGA remarks – September 26th, 2018

Margaux Ewen, Executive Director, Reporters Without Borders North America

Journalists play a crucial role as early-warning mechanisms for conflict, and as such, they incur increasing risks to their safety in striving to report information on uncovering injustices worldwide. To date, 2018 has already been a deadlier year for journalists than 2017; at this time last year we had only 55 journalists killed in connection with their work, and today we are already at 57.. Approximately 697 journalists, citizen journalists, and media workers have been killed worldwide since the 2012 adoption of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.

The UN must play a crucial role in protecting journalists, and RSF leads a coalition of more than 130 NGOs and media outlets in calling for the appointment of a Special Representative to the UN Secretary General on journalists' safety. We believe that only this high level role with the necessary political weight will have the capacity to provide an adequate emergency, rapid-response mechanism and will empower and coordinate existing systems in place across the whole of the UN, including Geneva and Paris, which until now have not truly been able to provide this.

We are asking you to support this initiative, if you have not already done so.