



Side event in conjunction with 73rd session of the Third Committee
of the UN General Assembly

**The Universality of Human Rights,
Cultural Diversity and Cultural Rights:
A Cultural Rights Celebration of the 70th Anniversary of
the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

**23 October 2018
5.30 pm - 6.30 pm
Church Centre, 10th floor (777 UN Plaza)**

The universality of human rights is one of the most important principles codified in international law. It is the central idea of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and a foundational aspect of the entire human rights system. But as we mark the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948, universality is under sustained attack, from both the political right and left, from State and non-State actors, including extremists, fundamentalists and populists around the world, and even from some academics, including those who misuse culture and cultural rights justifications.

Simultaneously, respect for cultural diversity is also threatened. For some, cultural diversity is still wrongly understood as being in opposition to universality, who misuse it as an excuse for violations of the very universal human rights within which its enjoyment is explicitly embedded. It is also denied by those who seek to impose monolithic identities and ways of being, and who advocate various forms of supremacy and discrimination.

The side event panel will examine the cultural rights approach to the universality of human rights, and the close interrelationship between universality and cultural diversity. The UN Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, Karima Bennouna, will also discuss her current report to the General Assembly (A/73/227) focusing on the current threats to universality, calling for foundational renewal and vigorous defence of this principle, and recognition of its close interrelationship with cultural diversity.

Panellists

- Wole Soyinka, Nigerian playwright, poet and essayist, Literature Nobel Prize winner (1986)
- Karima Bennouna, Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights
- Zarizana Abdul Aziz, Director of the Due Diligence Project

***No registration required. For more information, please email Omair.unrep@mpvusa.org*