

Dear IAOHRA Members,

On September 1, 2009, in response to a [Report](#) issued by IAOHRA and Columbia Law Schools Human Rights Institute, the IAOHRA membership adopted a Resolution “to promote and encourage the use of international human rights by official state and local human rights agencies.” Through adoption of this Resolution, each IAOHRA member committed to take at least one action, big or small, to use international human rights in its work in the next year. This email provides ideas for how IAOHRA members can fulfill their commitment under the Resolution by commemorating Human Rights Day on December 10.

On December 10, 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations approved the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, declaring that “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.” In 1950, the General Assembly invited all nations and interested organizations to recognize December 10 as Human Rights Day, to celebrate the proclamation of the Universal Declaration and to promote efforts to improve human rights.

IAOHRA members can celebrate and promote Human Rights Day in several ways, such as:

- **AN OFFICIAL PUBLIC RESOLUTION:** By urging your local legislature/council/board of elected officials to pass a resolution declaring December 10, 2009 to be Human Rights Day
- **OP-ED TO YOUR LOCAL NEWS MEDIA:** By sending an op-ed to your local newspaper, for publication on December 10, commemorating the Universal Declaration, describing the importance of implementing human rights at the local level, noting that human rights are an American ideal, and urging federal support for local implementation of human rights
- **E-MAIL AGENCIES/PARTNERS/STAFF:** By sending an email communication to other governmental agencies and/or to your constituents reminding them that December 10 is Human Rights Day, urging them to recognize it officially, and describing work your Commission is already doing that addresses rights recognized in the Universal Declaration
- **HUMAN RIGHTS POSTERS:** By posting the Universal Declaration in your office or making copies available to your partners and constituents

Sample templates that you can use for each of these proposed actions are attached: a Resolution, an op-ed, an email communication, and a copy of the Universal Declaration (with space to add your own logo). A copy of the IAOHRA Resolution is also attached. We hope you will consider taking action to commemorate Human Rights Day, and we look forward to supporting you in your efforts to do so.

Please let us know how you celebrate and promote Human Rights Day in your community by responding to [IAOHRAoutreach@law.columbia.edu](mailto:IAOHRAoutreach@law.columbia.edu) and to [iaohra@sso.org](mailto:iaohra@sso.org). IAOHRA members' efforts will be included on the website for [The Campaign for a New Human Rights Agenda](#) as well as on the official website of the [International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies](#).

Sincerely yours,

Risa E. Kaufman  
Executive Director  
Columbia Law School  
Human Rights Institute

Leon Russell  
President  
International Association of  
Official Human Rights Agencies

For more information on how state and local human rights and human relations commissions can incorporate international human rights to advance equality and opportunity, please see "State and Local Human Rights Agencies: Recommendations for Advancing Opportunity and Equality Through an International Human Rights Framework." This report was released by the Columbia Law School Human Rights Institute and IAOHRA, under the auspices of the Campaign for a New Domestic Human Rights Agenda and can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

## APPENDIX I: SAMPLE RESOLUTION

**WHEREAS:** The General Assembly of the United Nations approved the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948, declaring that “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world;” and

**WHEREAS:** The United States played a pivotal role in the creation of the Universal Declaration; and

**WHEREAS:** A recommitment by the United States to the principles and ideals of the Universal Declaration is essential for its promise to ensure equality and justice for all at home; and

**WHEREAS:** The basic human rights addressed in the Universal Declaration include economic, social, and cultural rights, as well as civil and political rights, all considered to be equally important in fostering human dignity and freedom; and

**WHEREAS:** The Universal Declaration calls for all people and governments at all levels to promote and respect the rights that it recognizes, and provides a standard of achievement for governments throughout the world; and

**WHEREAS:** Each year on December 10, the international community commemorates this event and recommits itself to the broader achievement of human rights and lowering barriers to full public participation; and

**WHEREAS:** [City/County or State and name of your specific state, county or city human rights/human relations/community relations commission] are proud of their commitment to guarantee civil and human rights for all its residents; and

**WHEREAS:** Numerous community, civic, religious and non-profit organizations including the [names of state or local governmental organizations] and others work to ensure equal rights and protections for all residents; and

**WHEREAS:** December 10, 2009, is the 61st anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

**NOW, THEREFORE,** I, \_\_\_\_\_, [Mayor or Governor] of \_\_\_\_\_, do hereby proclaim December 10, 2009, as

### *Human Rights Day*

in [City/County or State]

**AND** pledge that the [city/county/or state] government will take one concrete step to support the principles recognized in the Universal Declaration, and will encourage all [city/county/ or state] departments to inform their employees of this day and to take one action to support the principles recognized in the Universal Declaration;

**AND** encourage all residents to work together in the coming year on ways that we can achieve greater progress in respecting, protecting, and fulfilling the full range of human rights contained in the Universal Declaration.

## APPENDIX II: SAMPLE OP-ED

On December 10th, the world will celebrate International Human Rights Day. Sixty-one years ago, in San Francisco, the nations of the world came together to proclaim that every individual, no matter where he or she lives, has fundamental rights that deserve protection. Enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, are, among others, the right to be free from racial discrimination, the right to think and write what you choose, and the right to fair working conditions. While the United States helped to draft the declaration, led the movement to pass it, and served as host to its ratification, today many people in this country now think that a human rights campaign means writing letters to a faraway land, rather than working to protect our own fundamental rights, that of our family and friends, and that of fellow Americans and all members of the human race.

The truth is that many of us have been working to promote and protect human rights for years, in our community and across America. These efforts reflect broad public support for human rights. In fact, recent polling shows that over eighty percent of Americans agree that “every person has basic rights regardless of whether their government recognizes those rights or not.”

At **[\*local agency name\*]**, we have **[\*describe one or two local initiatives that promote human rights), highlighting what you have done for people in your community]**. These efforts do not stand alone; in fact they are part of a growing national movement to bring human rights home.

A number of state and local governments use human rights standards to promote equality, dignity, fairness and opportunity in their communities. Chicago has adopted a resolution advancing policies that comply with the international treaty that protects children’s rights. Seattle is working to promote economic and social rights, and San Francisco has officially incorporated the language of treaties written to end sexual and racial discrimination. Just last month, the Eugene, Oregon city council unanimously approved an ordinance affirming the human rights of people in mental health treatment, offering them more choice in their treatment and care.

These local initiatives reflect the belief that protecting human rights begins at home. **[In our community, we can use a human rights framework to address [local issue/initiative].**

Eleanor Roosevelt, one of the founders of the human rights movement, understood that human rights not only begin at home, but are fundamental to how we function as a community and a country. She said that these rights occupy “the world of the individual person: the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination.” When we protect the rights of people in **[\*locality\*]** we are carrying on the mission and the message behind America’s participation in the drafting of the Universal Declaration.

International Human Rights Day is an opportunity to re-dedicate ourselves to further the goal of equality and fairness for all people in **[\*locality\*]**, America, and the entire world.

We ask you take a moment on December 10<sup>th</sup> to consider the importance of human rights to your country, your city, and your neighborhood and to join in the celebration of International Human Rights Day.

### APPENDIX III: SAMPLE EMAIL

Subject: December 10 is Human Rights Day

Today is Human Rights Day!

On December 10, 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, proclaiming that “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.”

Today is an opportunity to re-dedicate ourselves to further the goal of equality and fairness for all people in **[local area]**, and throughout the world. We urge each of you to take one action today to promote human rights at home. If you are interested in learning more about how you can support human rights in our community, please contact **[List local organizations involved in promoting human rights]** or go to [http://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/Take\\_Action918.html](http://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/Take_Action918.html); [http://www.udhr60.org/udhr\\_more.html](http://www.udhr60.org/udhr_more.html) **[can insert websites that provide information and ideas on promoting international human rights standards locally]**.

**[This Commission already addresses some of the fundamental rights recognized by the Universal Declaration by [ADD SOME OF YOUR ACTIVITIES].**

This message brought to you by  
**[Commission Contact Information]**



# *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

**Adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948**

## **Preamble**

*Whereas* recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

*Whereas* disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

*Whereas* it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

*Whereas* it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

*Whereas* the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

*Whereas* Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in cooperation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

*Whereas* a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

*Now, therefore,*

*The General Assembly*

*Proclaims* this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations,

to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

## **Article 1**

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

## **Article 2**

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

## **Article 3**

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

## **Article 4**

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

## **Article 5**

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

## **Article 6**

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

## **Article 7**

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

## **Article 8**

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

## **Article 9**

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

## **Article 10**

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

## **Article 11**

(1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.

(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed.

Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

## **Article 12**

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

### **Article 13**

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State.

(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

### **Article 14**

(1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

(2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

### **Article 15**

(1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

### **Article 16**

(1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

### **Article 17**

(1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

### **Article 18**

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

### **Article 19**

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

### **Article 20**

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

### **Article 21**

(1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

(2) Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country.

(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

### **Article 22**

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international cooperation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

### **Article 23**

(1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

### **Article 24**

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

### **Article 25**

(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

### **Article 26**

(1) Everyone has the right to education.

Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

### **Article 27**

(1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

### **Article 28**

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

### **Article 29**

(1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

(2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined 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.

(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

### **Article 30**

(1) Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

**For more information, please visit: <http://www.iaohra.org/index.htm>  
and [http://www.ushrnetwork.org/new\\_domestic\\_human\\_rights](http://www.ushrnetwork.org/new_domestic_human_rights)**

**IAOHRA 2009 RESOLUTION:**

**RESOLUTION # 9**

**Adopted by the  
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF OFFICIAL HUMAN RIGHTS AGENCIES  
September 1, 2009**

**TITLE: INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS**

**PURPOSE: TO PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE THE USE OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS BY OFFICIAL STATE AND LOCAL HUMAN RIGHTS AGENCIES**

**WHEREAS,** the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies (IAOHRA) is a professional association of over 160 state, county, and city governmental human rights commissions in the United States of America and several statutory human rights agencies in Canada;

**WHEREAS,** IAOHRA goals are “to foster human and intergroup relations, to enhance human rights practices under law, and to promote civil and human rights around the world;” and,

**WHEREAS,** international human rights are articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and a broad range of laws, norms and values - that recognize and promote the fundamental humanity and dignity of every person, as well as the necessity of fairness and opportunity for all people, and that enable people to meet their basic needs and to enjoy basic civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights; and,

**WHEREAS,** there is an international human rights system, of which the U.S. is a part, which includes a framework of charters, treaties, court cases and laws, international courts and monitoring bodies, and international programs and reports, all of which are recognized and accepted by the vast majority of the global community of nations and individuals; and

**WHEREAS,** the vast majority of people in the U.S. believe that human rights include equal opportunities regardless of gender and race, being treated fairly in the criminal justice system, freedom from discrimination, freedom from torture or abuse by law enforcement, equal access to quality public education, access to health care, living in a clean environment; fair pay for workers to meet the basic needs for food and housing, and keeping personal behavior and choices private; and

**WHEREAS,** a basic tenet of the human rights framework is that human rights must start at home, and must involve and reflect the needs and expertise of local communities, and that governments have an affirmative obligation to respect, protect and fulfill these rights; and

**WHEREAS,** as has been demonstrated in Washington, Illinois, Oregon and California, international human rights can provide a powerful framework for, and play an instrumental role in, state and local human rights commissions and other state and local agencies as they work to ensure opportunity and equality for their communities; and,

**WHEREAS,** IAOHRA has joined with the Human Rights Institute of Columbia Law School and The Campaign for a New Domestic Human Rights Agenda to produce the 2009 report entitled “State and Local Human Rights Agencies: Recommendations for Advancing Opportunity and Equality through an International Human Rights Framework;” and,

**WHEREAS,** state and local implementation of international human rights can influence national policy and broader acceptance of international human rights norms, as well as to expand what is included in domestic and international human rights;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** that the membership of IAOHRA hereby affirms the importance of integrating international human rights into the work of its member state and local governmental human rights agencies, and that each

member commits to take at least one action, big or small, this year to utilize international human rights in their agencies' work; and

**THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that IAOHRA shall make one of its top priorities to advocate for the Campaign for a New Domestic Human Rights Agenda and any other proposal that will provide for the utilization and adequate resourcing of state and local human rights agencies in any and all federal efforts to advance towards the full realization of civil and international human rights in our communities.

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**Leon W. Russell, President**