

February 2008



## Press Release Reference Paper No. 47

---

Department of Public Information • News and Media Division • New York

Prepared and issued by  
Meetings Coverage Section, DPI

### United Nations Conferences and Observances

The General Assembly has declared three new United Nations Decades. It has marked the third decade after the 26 April 1986 disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant as the Decade of Recovery and Sustainable Development of the Affected Regions. It has proclaimed 2008-2017 as the second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty. And it has declared 2010-2020 as the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification.

Reaffirming the universal principle of non-violence, the General Assembly has declared 2 October -- Mahatma Gandhi's birthday -- as the International Day of Non-Violence. It has declared 15 September as the International Day of Democracy, designated 25 March as an annual International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and proclaimed 15 October as the International Day of Rural Women.

Deeply concerned by the prevalence and high rate of autism, a developmental disability that affects children worldwide, the Assembly has designated 2 April as World Autism Awareness Day. It has decided to rename the International Day of Disabled Persons, observed annually on 3 December, as the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. It has also declared 20 February as the World Day of Social Justice, beginning in 2009.

Marking the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the Assembly has proclaimed the International Year of Human Rights Learning, to begin on 10 December 2008. It will hold a special plenary meeting on that day to commemorate the anniversary, and another at the end of the Year, to review activities undertaken in support of it.

The Assembly has proclaimed 2008 as the International Year of Languages, calling for measures to preserve and protect all languages used by peoples of the world. It has also proclaimed 2008 as the International Year of Planet Earth, to raise awareness of Earth processes and the sustainable management of resources; as the International Year of Sanitation, to focus on provision of basic sanitation services in developing countries; and as the International Year of the Potato, in view of the role the potato can play in providing food security, eradicating poverty and achieving development goals.

In addition, the Assembly has recognized the period from 12 September 2007 to 11 September 2008 as the year commemorating the Ethiopian Millennium, and it has welcomed the decision by the World Health Assembly to commemorate Malaria Day annually on 25 April, or any day or days as individual Member States may decide.

The Assembly will also hold a number of high-level meetings during 2008.

On 2 and 3 October, it will address the needs of landlocked developing countries with a midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action. On 10 and 11 June 2008, it will review progress in realizing its Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS. No later than the first half of 2009, it will convene a United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation.

The Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus will be held in Doha, Qatar, from 29 November to 2 December 2008. The Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will hold its second session from 28 April to 9 May 2008, in Geneva.

Looking beyond 2008, the Assembly has declared 2009 as the International Year of Reconciliation, to highlight to necessity of reconciliation processes in societies affected by conflicts. Noting that natural fibres, an important source of income for farmers, can play an important role in improving food security and eradicating poverty, it has proclaimed 2009 as the International Year of Natural Fibres. It has also declared 2009 the International Year of Astronomy, to promote widespread access to the fruits of astronomical observation.

During 2010, the Assembly focuses attention on the importance of mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue, with the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, and on the continued loss of biodiversity, with the International Year of Biodiversity. The contribution of forests to sustainable development, poverty eradication and development will be highlighted in 2011, which has been declared the International Year of Forests.

Meanwhile, the international community continues to observe the Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa (2001-2010); the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (2001-2010); the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010); the United Nations Literacy Decade: Education for All (2003-2012); the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (2005-2014); the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014); and the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life"(2005-2015).

The following pages contain information on United Nations conferences and special observances scheduled for 2008 and ensuing years, listed by theme. Under each subject heading, conferences and meetings are listed first, followed by special decades, years, weeks and days, in that order.

Strictly chronological listings appear at the end of this document.

## **AIDS**

### **High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS ( New York, 10 and 11 June 2008)**

The General Assembly, on 19 December 2007, decided to convene a high-level meeting on 10 and 11 June 2008 to undertake a comprehensive review of the progress achieved in realizing its Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS, and to promote the continued engagement of leaders in a comprehensive global response to AIDS (resolution 62/178).

The high-level meeting will comprise plenary meetings, five thematic panel discussions, and an informal interactive hearing with civil society. The informal hearing will include the active participation of people living with HIV/AIDS and of broader civil society.

### **World AIDS Day (1 December)**

The General Assembly, in 1988, stated its deep concern about the pandemic proportions of the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). Noting that the World Health Organization (WHO) had declared 1 December 1988 World AIDS Day, the Assembly stressed the importance of observing that occasion (resolution 43/15). Today, some 40 million people are living with HIV/AIDS.

## **CHILDREN**

### **International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression (4 June)**

On 19 August 1982, at its emergency special session on the question of Palestine, the General Assembly, "appalled at the great number of innocent Palestinian and Lebanese children victims of Israel's acts of aggression", decided to commemorate 4 June of each year as the International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression (resolution ES-7/8).

### **Universal Children's Day (20 November)**

The General Assembly recommended in 1954 (resolution 836 (IX)) that all countries institute a Universal Children's Day, to be observed as a day of worldwide fraternity and understanding between children and of activity promoting the welfare of the world's children. It suggested to Governments that the Day be

observed on the date which each considers appropriate. The date of 20 November marks the day in which the Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, in 1959, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in 1989.

## **CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

### **International Year of Languages**

**(2008)**

On 16 May 2007, the General Assembly proclaimed 2008 as the International Year of Languages and called upon Member States and the United Nations Secretariat to promote the preservation and protection of all languages used by peoples of the world (resolution 61/266). It invited the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to serve as lead agency for the Year.

Recalling that linguistic diversity is an important element of cultural diversity, the Assembly took note of the entry into force of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. It invited Member States, the United Nations system and all other relevant stakeholders to develop, support and intensify activities aimed at fostering respect for and the promotion and protection of all languages -- in particular endangered languages, linguistic diversity and multilingualism.

## **International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures**

**(2010)**

The General Assembly, on 17 December 2007, declared 2010 the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures (resolution 62/90). It recommended that events be organized on interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace during the year, including a high-level dialogue and/or informal interactive hearings with civil society.

Affirming that mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue constitute important dimensions of the dialogue among civilizations and the culture of peace, the Assembly encouraged Member States to consider initiatives that identify areas for practical action at all levels of society to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue, tolerance, understanding and cooperation. It also encouraged the promotion of dialogue among the media from all cultures and civilizations.

## **World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development**

**(21 May)**

Emphasizing the need to enhance the potential of culture as a means of achieving prosperity, sustainable development and global, peaceful coexistence, the General Assembly, on 20 December 2002, proclaimed 21 May the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development (resolution 57/249). Acting during the closing days of the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage (2002), the Assembly recognized the close link between protecting cultural diversity and the larger framework of the dialogue among civilizations.

## **DECOLONIZATION**

### **Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism**

**(2001-2010)**

On 8 December 2000, as the General Assembly observed the fortieth anniversary of its adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, it declared 2001-2010 the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (resolution 55/146).

On 22 December 2004, the Assembly urged Member States to contribute to the United Nations efforts to usher in a world free of colonialism within the Second International Decade, giving their full support to the Special Committee on decolonization in that endeavour (resolution 59/134). Addressing the situation of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Pitcairn, Saint Helena, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands, the Assembly reaffirmed the inalienable right of the peoples of the Territories to self-determination in conformity with the United Nations Charter and the General Assembly Declaration on decolonization (resolution 1514 (XV)).

The Assembly reaffirmed that there is no alternative to self-determination, and called on the administering Powers, in cooperation with the territorial governments, to facilitate political education programmes in the Territories to foster awareness among their peoples of their right to self-determination. It also reaffirmed the responsibility of the administering Powers to promote the socio-economic development and preserve the cultural identity of the Territories, and request the Territories and administering Powers to protect the environment of the Territories under their administration against environmental degradation.

The first International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, 1990-2000, was declared in 1988 (resolution 43/47).

### **Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories (beginning 25 May)**

The General Assembly in 1999 requested the Special Committee on decolonization to observe annually the Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories commencing on the week beginning 25 May 1999 (resolution 54/91 of 6 December). The Week had been proclaimed in 1972 (resolution 2911 (XXVII)) as the Week of Solidarity with the Colonial Peoples of Southern Africa and Guinea (Bissau) and Cape Verde Fighting for Freedom, Independence and Equal Rights, to begin on 25 May, Africa Liberation Day.

### **DISABLED PERSONS International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 December)**

On 18 December 2007, the Assembly decided to rename the International Day of Disabled Persons, observed every year on 3 December, as the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (resolution 62/127). It also called upon States that had not yet done so to consider signing and ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol as a matter of priority. The Convention was adopted on 13 December 2006.

The Assembly proclaimed the Day in 1992, at the conclusion of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992), by its resolution 47/3. The Decade had been a period of raising awareness and enacting measures to improve the situation of persons with disabilities and provide them with equal opportunities. Subsequently, the Assembly appealed to Member States to highlight the observance of the Day in order to further integrate people with disabilities into society (resolution 47/88).

### **DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY Second Session of Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons ( Geneva, 28 April-9 May 2008)**

On 5 December 2007, the General Assembly welcomed the holding of the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It called upon all States parties to work together to ensure that its second session -- to be held in Geneva from 28 April to 9 May 2008 -- is held constructively (resolution 62/37).

Reaffirming the importance of the Treaty's universality, the Assembly called upon States not parties to the Treaty to accede to it as non-nuclear-weapon States without delay or conditions. It also stressed the importance of further efforts for non-proliferation, including universalization of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) comprehensive safeguards agreements.

### **Disarmament Week (24-30 October)**

The annual observance of Disarmament Week, which begins on the anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, was called for in the Final Document of the General Assembly 1978 special session on

disarmament (resolution S-10/2). States were invited to highlight the danger of the arms race, propagate the need for its cessation and increase public understanding of the urgent tasks of disarmament.

In 1995, the Assembly invited Governments, as well as non-governmental organizations, to continue taking an active part in Disarmament Week (resolution 50/72 B of 12 December). It invited the Secretary-General to continue using the United Nations information entities as widely as possible to promote a better understanding among the public of disarmament problems and the aims of the Week.

### **International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action (4 April)**

On 8 December 2005, the General Assembly declared that 4 April of each year shall be officially proclaimed and observed as International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action (resolution 60/97). It called for continued efforts by States, with the assistance of the United Nations and relevant organizations, to foster the establishment and development of national mine-action capacities in countries where mines and explosive remnants of war constitute a serious threat to the safety, health and lives of the civilian population, or an impediment to social and economic development at the national and local levels.

### **DISASTERS AND DISASTER REDUCTION Decade of Recovery and Sustainable Development of the Affected Regions (relating to the Chernobyl disaster) (2006-2016)**

On 20 November 2007, the General Assembly proclaimed the third decade after the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant(2006-2016) as the Decade of Recovery and Sustainable Development of the Affected Regions, aimed at achieving the goal of a return to normal life for the affected communities as far as is possible within that time frame (resolution 62/9).

Profoundly concerned at the ongoing consequences of the accident on the lives and health of people, particularly children, in the affected areas of Belarus, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and other countries, the Assembly requested that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) coordinate the efforts of the United Nations system and other relevant actors with respect to the Decade. Welcoming UNDP's proposal to coordinate the drafting of a United Nations action plan for Chernobyl recovery to 2016, the Assembly asked UNDP to present its draft plan for review by the Chernobyl Inter-Agency Task Force by 26 April 2008 -- the twenty-second anniversary of the disaster.

### **International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction (second Wednesday of October)**

In 2001, the General Assembly decided to maintain the observance of the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction on the second Wednesday of October (resolution 56/195 of 21 December), as a vehicle to promote a global culture of natural disaster reduction -- including disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness. The Assembly had designated that Day to be observed during the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, 1990-1999 (resolution 44/236).

### **DRUG ABUSE CONTROL International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (26 June)**

The General Assembly, in 1987, decided to observe 26 June as International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking as an expression of its determination to strengthen action and cooperation to achieve the goal of an international society free of drug abuse. It took that action on 7 December 1987 (resolution 42/112), following a recommendation of the 1987 International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, which, on 26 June, had adopted the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline of Future Activities in Drug Abuse Control.

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**  
**Midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing**  
**the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries**  
**( New York, 2 and 3 October 2008)**

On 19 December 2007, the General Assembly decided to hold two days of high-level plenary meetings, on 2 and 3 October 2008, devoted to the midterm review of the Programme of Action that emerged from the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation, held at Almaty, Kazakhstan, on 28 and 29 August 2003 (resolution 62/204). Known as the Almaty Programme of Action, it aims at "addressing the special needs of landlocked developing countries within a new global framework for transit transport cooperation for landlocked and transit developing countries".

Reaffirming the right of access of landlocked countries to and from the sea and freedom of transit through the territory of transit countries by all means of transport, in accordance with the applicable rules of international law, the Assembly encouraged donor countries and multilateral and regional financial and development institutions to provide landlocked and transit developing countries with technical and financial assistance in the form of grants or concessionary loans -- in particular for the construction, maintenance and improvement of their transport, storage and other transit-related facilities, including alternative routes and improved communications, to promote subregional, regional and interregional projects and programmes.

**Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development**  
**to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus**  
**( Doha, Qatar, 29 November-2 December 2008)**

The Assembly continues to focus attention on the process begun at the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002, and its subsequent "Monterrey Consensus". On 19 December 2007, the Assembly decided that the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus will be held in Doha, Qatar, from 29 November to 2 December 2008 (resolution 62/187). It also decided that the Conference will be held at the highest possible political level, including Heads of State or Government, ministers, special representatives and other representatives, as appropriate.

The Assembly further decided that the Conference will include plenary meetings and six interactive multi-stakeholder round tables based on the six major thematic areas of the Monterrey Consensus. They were, specifically: mobilizing domestic financial resources for development; mobilizing international resources (such as foreign direct investment and other private flows); international trade; international financial and technical cooperation for development; external debt; and systemic issues, including the coherence and consistency of the international monetary, financial and trading systems in support of development.

**High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation**  
**(no later than the first half of 2009, in Argentina)**

On 19 December 2007, the General Assembly decided to convene a high-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, no later than the first half of 2009 (resolution 62/209). It also welcomed the offer of the Government of Argentina to host the Conference.

While stressing the importance of South-South cooperation in international cooperation for development, the Assembly also stressed that such cooperation is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North-South cooperation. It encouraged the international community, including the international financial institutions, to support the developing countries' efforts, including through triangular cooperation. It invited the donor community, including Member States, to contribute generously to the United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation and the Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund for Economic and Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries.

**Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries,  
Particularly in Africa  
(2001-2010)**

On 19 December 2007, the General Assembly welcomed the increased funding for malaria interventions and for research and development in support of the goals of the Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa (resolution 62/180). It called upon the international community to continue to support the "Roll Back Malaria" partner organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), as vital complementary sources of support for the efforts of malaria-endemic countries.

The Assembly urged the international community to become fully knowledgeable about WHO technical policies and strategies, including for indoor residual spraying, insecticide-treated nets and case management. It called upon the international community, through helping to meet the financial needs of the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, to intensify access to affordable, safe and effective antimalarial combination treatments, intermittent preventive treatment in pregnancies, long-lasting insecticide-treated mosquito nets, and insecticides for indoor residual spraying for malaria control.

The General Assembly proclaimed the period 2001-2010 as the Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa, on 7 September 2001 (resolution 55/284). In its efforts to address one of the most deadly tropical diseases -- which causes some 1 million deaths each year in Africa where nine out of 10 cases occur -- the Assembly called for joint comprehensive efforts by Africa and the international community to reach specific goals aimed at rolling back this disease.

**United Nations Literacy Decade: Education for All  
(2003-2012)**

On 19 December 2001, the General Assembly proclaimed 2003 to 2012 as the United Nations Literacy Decade: Education for All (resolution 56/116). It reaffirmed that literacy for all was at the heart of the notion of basic education for all, and that creating literate environments was essential to eradicating poverty, achieving gender equity and ensuring sustainable development.

On 19 December 2006, the Assembly appealed to all Governments to develop reliable literacy data and information and to devise innovative strategies to achieve the goals of the Decade (resolution 61/140). It appealed to all Governments and to economic and financial organizations and institutions, both national and international, to lend greater financial and material support to efforts to increase literacy. The Assembly invited Member States, United Nations bodies and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to intensify their efforts to implement the International Plan of Action for the Decade.

**Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty  
(2008-2017)**

On 19 December 2007, the General Assembly proclaimed 2008 to 2017 as the second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, in order to support efficient and coordinated action for attaining internationally agreed development goals on poverty reduction, including the Millennium Development Goals (resolution 62/205). In doing so, the Assembly described the eradication of poverty as "the greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, in particular for developing countries".

While reaffirming that each country must take primary responsibility for its development and that sustained economic growth is essential for eradicating poverty and hunger, the Assembly stressed that national efforts should be complemented by an enabling international environment. It called upon donor countries to continue giving priority to poverty eradication in their assistance programmes and budgets. The Assembly also recognized that for poverty eradication strategies to be effective, developing countries must be integrated into the world economy and share equitably in the benefits of globalization.

**International Year of Sanitation  
(2008)**

Deeply concerned by insufficient progress in providing access to basic sanitation services in developing countries, and conscious of the impact of the lack of sanitation on people's health, poverty

reduction and economic and social development, and the environment, the General Assembly, on 20 December 2006, decided to proclaim 2008 as the International Year of Sanitation (resolution 61/192). The Assembly requested that the Department of Economic and Social Affairs serve as focal point for the Year.

The Assembly encouraged all States, as well as the United Nations system and all other relevant stakeholders, to take advantage of the Year to increase awareness of the importance of sanitation and to promote action at all levels. It called upon States, as well as subregional, regional and international organizations and other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society, to make voluntary contributions in support of the Year.

### **International Year of the Potato (2008)**

The General Assembly has declared 2008 as the International Year of the Potato, by its resolution 60/191 of 22 December 2005. In taking this action, the Assembly affirmed the need to focus world attention on the role that the potato can play in providing food security and eradicating poverty, and in achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. It invited the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to facilitate the implementation of the Year, in collaboration with Governments, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research Centres, and other relevant United Nations system and non-governmental organizations.

Previously, the Assembly had declared 2004 as the International Year of Rice, noting that rice is the staple food of more than half of the world's population (resolution 57/162 of 16 December 2002). Then, too, it affirmed the need to heighten awareness of the role of rice in alleviating poverty and malnutrition and reaffirmed the need to focus world attention on the role it can play in attaining internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.

### **International Year of Natural Fibres (2009)**

Noting that the diverse range of natural fibres produced in many countries provides an important source of income for farmers and can thus play an important role in improving food security, eradicating poverty and contributing to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the Assembly, 20 December 2006, decided to proclaim 2009 as the International Year of Natural Fibres (resolution 61/189). It invited the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to facilitate the observance of the Year, in collaboration with Governments, regional, international and non-governmental organizations, the private sector and relevant United Nations bodies.

The Assembly encouraged all Governments, the United Nations system and all other actors to take advantage of the Year to increase awareness of the importance of these natural products. It called upon Governments and relevant regional and international organizations, and invited non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to make voluntary contributions and lend other forms of support to the Year.

### **World Day of Social Justice (20 February, beginning in 2009)**

The General Assembly has decided to celebrate 20 February each year as the World Day of Social Justice, beginning in 2009. By its resolution 62/10 of 26 November 2007, the Assembly recognized that the attainment of social development and social justice are indispensable for the achievement and maintenance of peace and security and yet cannot be attained without peace, security and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Assembly recognized that broad-based and sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development is necessary to sustain social development and social justice, but that serious challenges remain, including serious financial crises, insecurity, poverty, exclusion and inequality within and among societies, and considerable obstacles to the further integration and full participation of developing countries and some countries with economies in transition in the global economy.

### **International Day of Cooperatives** **(first Saturday of July)**

In 1992, the General Assembly proclaimed the first Saturday of July 1995 to be International Day of Cooperatives (resolution 47/90 of 16 December). The date marked the centenary of the International Cooperative Alliance, an umbrella group of organizations comprising 760 million members in 100 countries.

In 1994, recognizing that cooperatives were becoming an indispensable factor of economic and social development, the Assembly invited Governments, international organizations, specialized agencies and national and international cooperative organizations to observe the Day every year (resolution 49/155 of 23 December).

### **International Day for the Eradication of Poverty** **(17 October)**

In 1992, the General Assembly, welcoming the fact that certain non-governmental organizations, on the initiative of one of them (the French-based International Movement ATD Fourth World), had, in many States, observed 17 October as World Day for Overcoming Extreme Poverty, declared that date the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (resolution 47/196 of 22 December). The observance aims to promote awareness of the need to eradicate poverty and destitution in all countries, particularly in developing countries -- a need that has become a development priority.

### **Africa Industrialization Day** **(20 November)**

Within the framework of the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa (1991-2000), the General Assembly proclaimed 20 November as Africa Industrialization Day (resolution 44/237 of 22 December 1989). The Day is intended to mobilize the commitment of the international community to the industrialization of Africa.

### **International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development** **(5 December)**

The General Assembly has invited Governments to observe the International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development on 5 December each year (resolution 40/212 of 17 December 1985). It urged them to heighten awareness of the contribution made by volunteer service, thereby stimulating people in all walks of life to offer their services as volunteers, both at home and abroad. In 2001, the International Year of Volunteers, the Assembly adopted a set of recommendations on ways that Governments and the United Nations system could support volunteering and asked that they be widely disseminated (resolution 56/38 of 5 December 2001).

### **International Human Solidarity Day** **(20 December)**

In connection with its observance of first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006), the General Assembly, on 22 December 2005, decided to proclaim 20 December of each year as International Human Solidarity Day (resolution 60/209). In taking that action, it recalled that the Millennium Declaration identified solidarity as one of the fundamental and universal values that should underlie relations between peoples in the twenty-first century.

## **ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development** **(2005-2014)**

The General Assembly, on 20 December 2002, proclaimed the 10-year period beginning on 1 January 2005 as the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (resolution 57/254). The Assembly designated the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as

lead agency for promotion of the Decade, asking it to develop a draft International Implementation Scheme, clarifying the Decade's relationship with such existing educational processes as the Dakar Framework for Action adopted at the World Education Forum in 2002 and the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012).

On 22 December 2004, the Assembly requested that the Secretary-General call upon UNESCO to finalize the draft Implementation Scheme as soon as possible, preferably by the beginning of the Decade, with a view to its submission to UNESCO's governing bodies for its final consideration and adoption (resolution 59/237). It invited Governments to promote public awareness and wider participation in the Decade, including cooperation with and initiatives engaging civil society and other relevant stakeholders, especially at the beginning of the Decade.

### **International Decade for Action, "Water for Life"** **(2005-2015)**

On 23 December 2003, the General Assembly proclaimed the period from 2005 to 2015 as the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", commencing on World Water Day, 22 March 2005 (resolution 58/217). It welcomed the decision of the Commission on Sustainable Development to consider water, sanitation and human settlements as the thematic cluster in the first cycle, 2004-2005, and invites the Commission to work within existing resources to identify possible activities and programmes in connection with the Decade within the framework of its consideration of that cluster at its twelfth and thirteenth sessions.

The Assembly invited the Secretary-General to take the appropriate steps to organize the activities of the Decade, taking into account the results of the International Year of Freshwater and the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its twelfth and thirteenth sessions. It also called upon the relevant United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, regional commissions and other organizations of the United Nations system to deliver a coordinated response, utilizing existing resources and voluntary funds, to make "Water for Life" a decade for action. By its resolution 59/228 of 22 December 2004, the Assembly called on the United Nations system to step up efforts to make the International Decade a period for delivering on promises through the use of existing resources and voluntary funds.

### **United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification** **(2010-2020)**

On 19 December 2007, the General Assembly declared the period 2010-2020 as the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification, on the recommendation of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (resolution 62/195). In making that recommendation, the Governing Council, by its resolution 24/14 of 9 February 2007, reasserted its commitment to promoting desertification control, eradicating extreme poverty, promoting sustainable development in deserts and arid areas, and improving the lives of affected populations. It also expressed its determination to maintain and boost the spirit of international solidarity that was generated by the designation of 2006 as the International Year of Deserts and Desertification.

### **International Year of Planet Earth** **(2008)**

On 22 December 2005, the General Assembly declared 2008 as the International Year of Planet Earth (resolution 60/192). In so doing, it took account of the crucial role the Year could play in raising public awareness of the importance for sustainable development of the Earth's processes and resources; disaster prevention, reduction and mitigation; and capacity-building for the sustainable management of resources; as well as its important contribution to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014).

The Assembly designated the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as the lead agency and focal point for the Year, to organize related activities in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other relevant UN bodies, as well as the International Union of Geological Sciences and other Earth science societies and groups worldwide.

### **International Year of Biodiversity (2010)**

On 20 December 2006, the General Assembly declared 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity (resolution 61/203). It designated the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity as the focal point for the Year and invited the secretariat to cooperate with other relevant United Nations bodies, multilateral environmental agreements, international organizations and other stakeholders, with a view to bringing greater international attention to the continued loss of biodiversity.

The Assembly encouraged Member States and other stakeholders to take advantage of the Year to increase awareness of the importance of biodiversity by promoting actions at the local, regional and international levels. It invited Member States to consider establishing national committees for the Year, and invited Member States and relevant international organizations to support the activities to be organized by developing countries -- especially least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States -- and countries with economies in transition.

### **International Year of Forests (2011)**

Recognizing that forests and sustainable forest management can contribute significantly to sustainable development, poverty eradication and the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, the General Assembly, on 20 December 2006, decided to proclaim 2011 as the International Year of Forests (resolution 61/193). It requested that the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, serve as the focal point for the Year, in collaboration with Governments, international, regional and subregional organizations and processes, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, and relevant major groups.

The Assembly invited the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in particular, as the Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, to support implementation of the Year. It encouraged voluntary partnerships among Member States, international organizations and major groups to facilitate and promote activities related to the Year at the local and national levels, including by creating national committees or designating focal points in their respective countries.

### **World Day for Water (22 March)**

The General Assembly has declared 22 March as World Day for Water (resolution 47/193 of 22 December 1992). The observance aims at promoting awareness of the extent to which water resource development contributes to economic productivity and social well-being.

### **International Day for Biological Diversity (22 May)**

On 20 December 2000, the General Assembly proclaimed 22 May, the date of adoption of the Convention on Biological Diversity, as the International Day for Biological Diversity (resolution 55/201). The Day was previously observed on 29 December (resolution 49/119 of 19 December 1994). In 2000, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, at its fifth meeting, had recommended that the date be changed to give it greater visibility.

### **World Environment Day (5 June)**

By resolution 2994 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972, the General Assembly designated 5 June as World Environment Day to deepen public awareness of the need to preserve and enhance the environment. That date recalls the opening day of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm, 1972), which led to the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

### **World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought (17 June)**

The World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, 17 June, was proclaimed by the General Assembly in 1995 (resolution 49/115), marking the adoption of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification on 17 June 1994. The Assembly invited States to use devote the World Day to promoting awareness of the need for international cooperation to combat desertification and the effects of drought, including implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification.

### **International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer (16 September)**

In 1994, the General Assembly proclaimed 16 September the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, commemorating the date of the signing, in 1987, of the Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer (resolution 49/114). States were invited to devote the Day to promote activities in accordance with the objectives of the Protocol and its amendments. The ozone layer, a fragile shield of gas, protects the Earth from the harmful portion of the rays of the sun, thus, helping preserve life on the planet.

### **International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict (6 November)**

On 5 November 2001, the General Assembly declared 6 November of each year as the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict (resolution 56/4). In taking this action, it considered that damage to the environment in times of armed conflict impairs ecosystems and natural resources long after the period of conflict, often extending beyond the limits of national territories and the present generation. It also recalled the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which emphasized the necessity of working to protect our common environment.

### **United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation (19 December)**

On 23 December 2004, the General Assembly declared 19 December of each year as the United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation (resolution 58/220). This marks the date, in 1978, when the General Assembly endorsed the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (resolution 33/134).

### **HEALTH World Autism Awareness Day (2 April)**

Deeply concerned by the prevalence and high rate of autism in children in all regions of the world, the General Assembly has designated 2 April as World Autism Awareness Day. By its resolution 62/139 of 18 December 2007, the Assembly encouraged Member States to take measures to raise awareness throughout society regarding children with autism.

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that manifests itself during the first three years of life and results from a neurological disorder. It affects the functioning of the brain and is characterized by impairments in social interaction, problems with verbal and non-verbal communication, and restrictive, repetitive behaviour, interests and activities. Autism affects children in all regions, irrespective of gender, race or socio-economic status. It poses challenges to long-term health care, education, training and intervention programmes, and has a tremendous impact on children, their families, communities and societies.

**World Diabetes Day**  
**(14 November)**

Welcoming the fact that the International Diabetes Federation has been observing World Diabetes Day globally since 1991, with co-sponsorship of the World Health Organization (WHO), the General Assembly, on 20 December 2006, designated 14 November, the current World Diabetes Day, as a United Nations Day, to be observed every year beginning in 2007 (resolution 61/225).

Recognizing that diabetes is a chronic, debilitating and costly disease which poses serious challenges to development, the Assembly encouraged Member States to develop national policies for its prevention, treatment and care in line with the sustainable development of their health-care systems, taking account of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

The Assembly also invited all Member States, relevant organizations of the United Nations system and other international organizations, as well as civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to observe World Diabetes Day in an appropriate manner, including through education and the mass media.

**HUMAN RIGHTS**  
**International Year of Human Rights Learning**  
**(one year, beginning on 10 December 2008)**

The General Assembly has proclaimed the year commencing on 10 December 2008 as the International Year of Human Rights Learning, to be devoted to activities to broaden and deepen human rights learning based on the principles of universality, indivisibility, interdependency, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity, constructive dialogue and cooperation (resolution 62/171 of 18 December 2007). It aims to enhance the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development.

**Plenary meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**  
**( New York, 10 December 2008)**

Also by resolution 62/171, the General Assembly decided to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in a plenary meeting to be held on 10 December 2008, and encouraged the participation of Member States at the highest level possible.

**Special meeting of the General Assembly to review activities undertaken during the International Year of Human Rights Learning**  
**( New York, around 10 December 2009)**

The General Assembly also decided, by resolution 62/171, to devote a special meeting at the end of the International Year of Human Rights Learning, during its sixty-fourth session, to reviewing activities undertaken by Member States, relevant United Nations agencies and civil society during the Year. It decided to determine the format of the meeting at a later date.

**World Refugee Day**  
**(20 June)**

On 4 December 2000, the General Assembly noted that 2001 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, and that the Organization of African Unity (OAU) had agreed to have International Refugee Day coincide with Africa Refugee Day on 20 June. It, therefore, decided that, as from 2001, 20 June would be celebrated as World Refugee Day (resolution 55/76). [Note: The OAU was replaced by the African Union on 9 July 2002.]

### **International Day in Support of Victims of Torture** **(26 June)**

The Assembly in 1997, on the recommendation of the Economic and Social Council (decision 1997/251), proclaimed 26 June United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture (resolution 52/149 of 12 December). The Day aims at the eradication of torture and the effective functioning of the 1984 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which entered into force on 26 June 1987.

### **International Day for Tolerance** **(16 November)**

In 1996, the General Assembly invited Member States to observe the International Day for Tolerance on 16 November, with activities directed towards both educational establishments and the wider public (resolution 51/95 of 12 December). This action came in the wake of the United Nations Year for Tolerance, 1995, proclaimed by the Assembly in 1993 (resolution 48/126). The Year had been declared on the initiative of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); on 16 November 1995, the UNESCO member States had adopted the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance and Follow-up Plan of Action for the Year.

### **International Day for the Abolition of Slavery** **(2 December)**

The International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, 2 December, recalls the date of the adoption, by the General Assembly, of the United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of Others (resolution 317 (IV) of 2 December 1949).

### **Human Rights Day** **(10 December)**

All States and interested organizations were invited by the General Assembly in 1950 to observe 10 December as Human Rights Day (resolution 423 (V)). The Day marks the anniversary of the Assembly's adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

### **International Migrants Day** **(18 December)**

As recommended by the Economic and Social Council (decision 2000/288 of 28 July 2000), the General Assembly has proclaimed 18 December International Migrants Day (resolution 55/93 of 4 December 2000). On that day in 1990, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families was adopted (resolution 45/158). The Assembly has stressed the need to make further efforts to ensure respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants. It is estimated that one in every 35 persons in the world is a migrant, living and working in a country other than his or her own. All countries have migrants among their population.

## **HUMAN SETTLEMENTS**

### **World Habitat Day** **(first Monday of October)**

In 1985, acting on a recommendation of the Commission on Human Settlements, the General Assembly designated the first Monday of October as World Habitat Day (resolution 40/202 A). The first observance of the Day, in 1986, marked the tenth anniversary of the first international conference on the issue -- Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Vancouver, Canada, 1976).

**HUNGER**  
**World Food Day**  
**(16 October)**

The aim of World Food Day, proclaimed in 1979 by the Conference of the FAO of the United Nations, is to heighten public awareness of the world food problem and strengthen solidarity in the struggle against hunger, malnutrition and poverty. The Day marks the date of the founding of the FAO in 1945. In 1980, the General Assembly endorsed observance of the Day in consideration of the fact that “food is a requisite for human survival and well-being and a fundamental human necessity” (resolution 35/70 of 5 December).

**INDIGENOUS PEOPLE**  
**Second International Decade of the World’s Indigenous People**  
**(2005-2014)**

On 16 December 2005, the General Assembly adopted the Programme of Action for the Second International Decade of the World’s Indigenous People (document A/60/270, sect. II), and adopted “Partnership for action and dignity” as its theme (resolution 60/142). It appealed to the international community at large to provide financial support to the Programme of Action, including through contributions to the Voluntary Fund for the Second Decade, and urged all Governments and indigenous organizations concerned to take action to facilitate adoption of the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples as soon as possible.

The Assembly proclaimed the first International Decade of the World’s Indigenous People on 21 December 1993, with the goal of strengthening international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous people in such areas as human rights, the environment, development, education and health (resolution 48/163). It proclaimed the Second International Decade on 20 December 2004, with the goal of further strengthening cooperation in those areas, including economic and social development (resolution 59/174). It asked the Secretary-General to appoint the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs as the Coordinator for the Second Decade, and invited Governments to ensure that activities and objectives for the Second Decade are planned and implemented in full collaboration with indigenous people.

**International Day of the World’s Indigenous People**  
**(9 August)**

On 23 December 1994, the General Assembly decided that the International Day of the World’s Indigenous People shall be observed on 9 August every year during the International Decade of the World’s Indigenous People (resolution 49/214). By its resolution 59/174 of 20 December 2004, in which the Assembly proclaimed the Second International Decade of the World’s Indigenous People (2005-2014), it also decided to continue observing the International Day of Indigenous People every year during the Second Decade, in New York, Geneva and other offices of the United Nations. The Assembly asked the Secretary-General to support observance of the Day from within existing resources, and to encourage Governments to observe the Day at the national level.

**INFORMATION**  
**World Press Freedom Day**  
**(3 May)**

The General Assembly in 1993 declared 3 May as World Press Freedom Day (decision 48/432 of 20 December). This action stemmed from the UNESCO General Conference, which, by a 1991 resolution on “Promotion of press freedom in the world”, had recognized that a free, pluralistic and independent press was an essential component of any democratic society. The General Conference had transmitted to the General Assembly the wish of UNESCO member States to have 3 May declared “International Press Freedom Day”.

That date commemorates the Windhoek Declaration on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press, adopted on 3 May 1991 by the Seminar on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press, organized by UNESCO and the United Nations in Windhoek, Namibia.

### **World Information Society Day** **(17 May)**

On 27 March 2006, the General Assembly decided to proclaim 17 May annual World Information Society Day, to help to raise awareness of the possibilities that the use of the Internet and other information and communication technology can bring to societies and economies, as well as of ways to bridge the digital divide (resolution 60/252). It took this action as part of its follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society, which was held from 10 to 12 December 2003 in Geneva, and from 16 to 18 November 2005 in Tunis.

Welcoming the strong development orientation of the outcomes of both phases of the Summit, the Assembly asked the Economic and Social Council to oversee their system-wide follow-up and urged their full implementation. It welcomed the Digital Solidarity Fund, established in Geneva, as an innovative financial mechanism of a voluntary nature, and invited the Secretary-General, in an open and inclusive process, to convene a new forum for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue called the Internet Governance Forum, in accordance with the decisions made at Tunis.

The Assembly also decided to conduct an overall review of the implementation of the Summit outcomes in 2015.

### **World Development Information Day** **(24 October)**

The General Assembly in 1972 instituted World Development Information Day to draw the attention of world public opinion to development problems and the need to strengthen international cooperation to solve them (resolution 3038 (XXVII)). The Assembly decided that the date for the Day should coincide in principle with United Nations Day, 24 October, which was also the date of the adoption, in 1970, of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade. The Assembly felt that improving the dissemination of information and the mobilization of public opinion, particularly among young people, would lead to greater awareness of the problems of development, thus, promoting efforts in the sphere of international cooperation for development.

### **World Television Day** **(21 November)**

In 1996, the General Assembly proclaimed 21 November as World Television Day, commemorating the date on which, in 1996, the first World Television Forum was held at the United Nations. States were invited to observe the Day by encouraging global exchanges of television programmes focusing on issues such as peace, security, economic and social development, and the enhancement of cultural exchanges (resolution 51/205 of 17 December).

### **OLDER PERSONS** **International Day of Older Persons** **(1 October)**

The General Assembly designated 1 October the International Day of Older Persons by resolution 45/106 of 14 December 1990, following up on United Nations initiatives such as the Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing, adopted by the 1982 World Assembly on Ageing and endorsed later that year by the General Assembly.

### **OUTER SPACE** **International Year of Astronomy** **(2009)**

By its resolution 62/200 of 19 December 2007, the General Assembly declared 2009 the International Year of Astronomy. Designating the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as lead agency and focal point for the Year, the Assembly invited UNESCO to organize activities

to be realized during the Year, in collaboration with other relevant entities of the United Nations system, the International Astronomical Union, the European Southern Observatory, and astronomical societies and groups throughout the world.

The Assembly encouraged all Member States, the United Nations system and all other actors to take advantage of the Year to promote action at all levels to increase public awareness of the importance of astronomical sciences and promote widespread access to new knowledge and experiences of astronomical observation. Activities of the Year will be funded from voluntary contributions, including from the private sector.

### **World Space Week** **(4-10 October)**

By resolution 54/68 of 6 December 1999, the General Assembly proclaimed World Space Week, to be observed between 4 and 10 October, to celebrate the contributions of space science and technology to the betterment of the human condition. The dates recall the launch, on 4 October 1957, of the first artificial satellite, Sputnik I, and the entry into force, on 10 October 1967, of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space.

### **PALESTINE QUESTION** **International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People** **(29 November)**

In 1977, the General Assembly called for the annual observance of 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (resolution 32/40 B). On that day, in 1947, the Assembly had adopted the resolution on the partition of Palestine (resolution 181 (II)).

On 10 December 2007, by its resolution 62/81, the Assembly encouraged Member States to continue to give the widest support and publicity to the observance of the Day of Solidarity. It requested that the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat, under the guidance of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, continue to organize an annual exhibit on Palestinian rights or a cultural event in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, as part of the observance of the Day.

### **PEACE** **International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence** **for the Children of the World** **(2001-2010)**

On 17 December 2007, the General Assembly again stated that the objective of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World is to further strengthen the global movement for a culture of peace (resolution 62/89). The Assembly invited States to continue to expand their activities promoting such a culture and encouraged UNESCO, as lead agency for the Decade, to further strengthen its activities to promote a culture of peace. It also encouraged the Peacebuilding Commission to promote a culture of peace and non-violence for children.

The Assembly proclaimed the International Decade in 1998, following the observance of the International Year for the Culture of Peace in 2000 (resolution 53/25 of 10 November). It invited non-governmental organizations, religious bodies and groups, educational institutions, artists and the media to support the Decade for the benefit of every child of the world.

### **International Year of Reconciliation** **(2009)**

On 20 November 2006, the General Assembly decided to proclaim 2009 as the International Year of Reconciliation (resolution 61/17). It expressed its steadfast determination to pursue reconciliation processes in those societies affected or divided by conflicts, describing such processes as necessary for the establishment of firm and lasting peace.

The Assembly invited concerned Governments and international and non-governmental organizations to support reconciliation processes among such societies. It also invited them to implement adequate cultural, educational and social programmes to promote the concept of reconciliation, including the holding of conferences and seminars, and the dissemination of information on the subject.

### **International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers** (29 May)

The Assembly has designated 29 May of each year as the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers, to pay tribute to all the men and women who have served in United Nations peacekeeping operations for their high level of professionalism, dedication and courage, and to honour the memory of those who have lost their lives in the cause of peace (resolution 57/129, 11 December 2002). The Assembly invited all Member States, organizations of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and individuals to observe the Day in an appropriate manner.

### **International Day of Peace** (21 September)

In 1981, the General Assembly declared that the opening day of its regular session in September “shall be officially dedicated and observed as the International Day of Peace and shall be devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples” (resolution 36/67). In 1998, the Assembly reaffirmed that the Day should continue to be observed on the opening day of its annual regular session (resolution 52/232 of 4 June).

On 7 September 2001, the Assembly decided that, beginning in 2002, the International Day of Peace shall be observed on 21 September each year, with this date to be brought to the attention of all people for the celebration and observance of peace (resolution 55/282). It declared that the Day shall, henceforth, be observed as a day of global ceasefire and non-violence, an invitation to all nations and people to honour a cessation of hostilities throughout the Day. It also invited Member States, United Nations bodies, regional and non-governmental organizations to commemorate the Day and to cooperate with the United Nations in establishing the global ceasefire. On 17 December 2007, it again invited Member States to observe the International Day as a day of global ceasefire and non-violence (resolution 62/89).

### **International Day of Non-Violence** (2 October)

Reaffirming the universal relevance of the principle of non-violence, and desiring to secure a culture of peace, tolerance, understanding and non-violence, the General Assembly has decided to observe 2 October as the International Day of Non-Violence. By its resolution 61/271 of 15 June 2007, the Assembly invited all Member States, organizations of the United Nations system, regional and non-governmental organizations and individuals to commemorate the Day in an appropriate manner and to disseminate the message of non-violence, including through education and public awareness.

The resolution originated from a Declaration adopted at the “International Conference on Peace, Non-Violence and Empowerment -- Gandhian Philosophy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”. Mahatma Gandhi was born on 2 October 1869.

### **RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION** **Week of Solidarity with the Peoples Struggling** **against Racism and Racial Discrimination** (beginning 21 March)

As part of its programme for the first Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, the General Assembly in 1979 called for the observance by all States of a Week of Solidarity with the Peoples Struggling against Racism and Racial Discrimination, beginning on 21 March (resolution 34/24).

**International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**  
**(21 March)**

The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed annually on 21 March. On that day, in 1960, police opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration in Sharpeville, South Africa, against the apartheid “pass laws”. Proclaiming the Day in 1966, the General Assembly called on the international community to redouble its efforts to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination (resolution 2142 (XXI)).

**International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade**  
**(25 March)**

Recognizing how little is known about the 400-year-long transatlantic slave trade and its lasting consequences, felt throughout the world, the General Assembly has designated 25 March as an annual International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade (resolution 62/122 of 17 December 2007). The Assembly asked the Secretary-General to establish a programme of educational outreach to mobilize educational institutions and civil society, among others, on the subject of remembering the transatlantic slave trade and slavery, in order to inculcate future generations with the causes, consequences and lessons of the transatlantic slave trade and to communicate the dangers of racism and prejudice.

This designation makes perennial the Assembly’s observance of 25 March 2007 as the International Day for the Commemoration of the Two-hundredth Anniversary of the Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

**SECOND WORLD WAR**  
**International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust**  
**(27 January)**

On 1 November 2005, the General Assembly designated 27 January as an annual International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust conducted during the Second World War by the Nazi regime (resolution 60/7). In doing so, the Assembly rejected any denial of the Holocaust as an historical event, either in full or part. By its resolution 61/255 of 26 January 2007, the Assembly condemned without any reservation any denial of the Holocaust. It urged all Member States unreservedly to reject any denial of the Holocaust as a historical event, either in full or in part, or any activities to that end.

By other terms of resolution 60/7, the Assembly urged Member States to develop educational programmes to inculcate future generations with the lessons of the Holocaust, in order to help prevent future acts of genocide. It commended those States which have actively engaged in preserving those sites that served as Nazi death camps, concentration camps, forced labour camps and prisons during the Holocaust. It requested that the Secretary-General establish a programme of outreach on the subject of “the Holocaust and the United Nations”, as well as measures to mobilize civil society for Holocaust remembrance and education.

**Time of Remembrance and Reconciliation for Those Who Lost Their Lives during the Second World War**  
**(8 and 9 May)**

By its resolution 59/26 of 22 November 2004, the General Assembly declared 8 and 9 May as a time of remembrance and reconciliation, and invited Member States, United Nations bodies, non-governmental organizations and individuals to observe annually either one or both of those days in an appropriate manner, to pay tribute to all those who lost their lives in the Second World War.

## **WOMEN**

### **United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace**

**(8 March)**

In 1977 (resolution 32/142), the General Assembly invited States to proclaim, in accordance with their historical and national traditions and customs, any day of the year as United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace. States were called upon to contribute to creating conditions for the elimination of discrimination against women and for their full and equal participation in social development. That action came on the wake of the International Women's Year (1975) and the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985), both proclaimed by the Assembly. The United Nations began observing International Women's Day, 8 March, in 1975 -- the International Women's Year.

### **International Day of Rural Women**

**(15 October)**

The General Assembly has declared that 15 October of each year shall be officially proclaimed and observed as the International Day of Rural Women. By its resolution 62/136 of 18 December 2007, the Assembly urged Member States, in collaboration with the organizations of the United Nations and civil society, to undertake measures to improve the situation of rural women, including indigenous women, in their national, regional and global development strategies.

These measures include: creating an enabling environment to improve the situation of rural women; pursuing their political and socio-economic empowerment; supporting their full and equal participation in decision-making at all levels; integrating a gender perspective in the design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of development policies and programmes; addressing their specific health needs; ensuring the rights of older women in rural areas to basic social services; mobilizing resources for increasing women's access to existing savings and credit schemes; and integrating increased employment opportunities for rural women in all international and national development and poverty eradication strategies.

### **International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women**

**(25 November)**

The General Assembly has designated 25 November as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and has invited Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations to organize on that day activities to raise public awareness on the problem (resolution 54/134 of 17 December 1999). Women's activists have marked 25 November as a day against violence since 1981.

The date came from the brutal 1961 assassination of the three Mirabal sisters, political activists in the Dominican Republic, on orders of Dominican ruler Rafael Trujillo.

## **YOUTH**

### **International Youth Day**

**(12 August)**

The General Assembly, on 17 December 1999 (resolution 54/120 I), endorsed the recommendation made by the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth (Lisbon, 8-12 August 1998) that 12 August be declared International Youth Day. It recommended that public information activities be organized to support the Day as a way to promote better awareness of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, adopted by the Assembly in 1995 (resolution 50/81).

## **OTHER OBSERVANCES**

### **International Day of Families**

**(15 May)**

In 1993, the General Assembly decided that 15 May of every year should be observed as the International Day of Families (resolution 47/237 of 20 September). In 1989, by resolution 44/82, the

Assembly had proclaimed 1994 the International Year of the Family, to increase awareness of family issues and improve the capability of nations to tackle family-related problems with comprehensive policies.

### **United Nations Public Service Day** **(23 June)**

On 30 November 2005, the Assembly stressed the importance of making more effective use of United Nations Public Service Day and the United Nations Public Service Awards in the process of revitalizing public administration by building a culture of innovation, partnership and responsibility (resolution 60/34).

The Assembly designated 23 June of each year as United Nations Public Service Day on 20 December 2002 (resolution 57/277). It encouraged Member States to organize special events on that Day to highlight the contribution of public service in the development process.

### **World Population Day** **(11 July)**

In 1989, the Governing Council of the UNDP recommended that 11 July be observed as World Population Day. An outgrowth of the Day of Five Billion, celebrated on 11 July 1987, the Day seeks to focus attention on the urgency and importance of population issues, particularly in the context of poverty reduction and development strategies and plans. World population totalled 6.7 billion in 2007, and was growing by some 78 million a year. The United Nations estimates that there will be between 7.7 billion and 10.6 billion people in 2050, with 9.1 billion the most likely projection.

### **International Day of Democracy** **(15 September)**

The General Assembly has decided to observe 15 September of each year as the International Day of Democracy, to be brought to the attention of all people for its celebration and observance (resolution 62/7 of 8 November 2007). The Assembly encouraged Governments to strengthen national programmes devoted to the promotion and consolidation of democracy. It encouraged regional and other intergovernmental organizations to share their experiences in the field of democracy promotion with each other and with the United Nations system where appropriate. It also urged them to actively participate in future meetings and activities of the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies.

The Assembly invited all Member States, organizations of the United Nations system, regional and intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and individuals to commemorate the International Day of Democracy in an appropriate manner that contributes to raising public awareness. It also invited Member States to continue to ensure that parliamentarians and civil society organizations are given appropriate opportunity to be involved in, and to contribute to, the celebration of the International Day.

### **United Nations Day** **(24 October)**

The anniversary of the entry into force of the United Nations Charter on 24 October 1945 has been celebrated as United Nations Day since 1948. It has traditionally been marked throughout the world by meetings, discussions and exhibits on the achievements and goals of the Organization. In 1971, the General Assembly recommended that Member States observe it as a public holiday (resolution 2782 (XXVI)).

### **World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims** **(third Sunday of November, annually)**

On 26 October 2005, the General Assembly invited Member States and the international community to recognize the third Sunday in November of every year as the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims, as acknowledgement for victims of road traffic crashes and their families (resolution 60/5).

### **International Civil Aviation Day** (7 December)

In 1996, the General Assembly proclaimed 7 December as International Civil Aviation Day, and urged Governments, as well as national, regional, international and intergovernmental organizations, to take steps to observe it (resolution 51/33 of 6 December). The Day had been declared in 1992 by the Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), a United Nations specialized agency, to highlight and advance the benefits of international civil aviation. Observation of the Day started on 7 December 1994 -- the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Convention on International Civil Aviation, which established ICAO.

### **International Anti-Corruption Day** (9 December)

On 31 October 2003, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention against Corruption and requested that the Secretary-General designate the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as secretariat for the Convention's Conference of States Parties (resolution 58/4). The Assembly also designated 9 December as International Anti-Corruption Day, to raise awareness of corruption and of the role of the Convention in combating and preventing it. The Convention entered into force in December 2005.

### **Other International Days**

Other international days observed throughout the United Nations system include: International Mother Language Day (21 February); World Meteorological Day (23 March); World Health Day (7 April); World Book and Copyright Day (23 April); World Telecommunication Day (17 May); World No-Tobacco Day (31 May); International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and Its Abolition (23 August); International Literacy Day (8 September); World Maritime Day (during last week of September); World Teachers' Day (5 October); World Post Day (9 October); World Mental Health Day (10 October); and International Mountain Day (11 December).

## **INDEX**

### **Conferences, Events and Special Meetings**

Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons ( Geneva, 28 April-9 May 2008)

High-level Meeting of the General Assembly: a comprehensive review of the progress achieved in realizing the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS on HIV/AIDS ( New York, 10 and 11 June 2008)

High-level Meeting of the General Assembly for a Midterm Review of the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries ( New York, 2 and 3 October 2008)

Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus ( Doha, Qatar, 29 November-2 December 2008)

Plenary meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ( New York, 10 December 2008)

High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (no later than the first half of 2009, to be hosted by Argentina)

Special meeting of the General Assembly to review activities undertaken during the International Year of Human Rights Learning ( New York, December 2009)

## International Decades and Years

- 2001-2010 Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa
- 2001-2010 Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism
- 2001-2010 International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World
- 2003-2012 United Nations Literacy Decade: Education for All
- 2005-2014 Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People
- 2005-2014 United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
- 2005–2015 International Decade for Action, “Water for Life” (from 22 March 2005)
- 2006–2016 Decade of Recovery and Sustainable Development of the Affected Regions (relating to the Chernobyl disaster)
- 2008–2017 Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty
- 2010–2020 United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification
  - 2008 International Year of the Potato
  - 2008 International Year of Planet Earth
  - 2008 International Year of Sanitation
  - 2008 International Year of Languages
- 2008-2009 International Year of Human Rights Learning (for one year, beginning on 10 December 2008)
  - 2009 International Year of Reconciliation
  - 2009 International Year of Natural Fibres
  - 2009 International Year of Astronomy
  - 2010 International Year of Biodiversity
  - 2010 International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures
  - 2011 International Year of Forests

## Annual Days and Weeks

- 27 January** International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust
- 20 February** World Day of Social Justice  
(beginning in 2009)
- 21 February** International Mother Language Day
- 8 March** United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace (International Women's Day)
- 21 March** International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- Beginning 21 March** Week of Solidarity with the Peoples Struggling against Racism and Racial Discrimination
- 22 March** World Day for Water
- 23 March** World Meteorological Day
- 25 March** International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade
- 2 April** World Autism Awareness Day
- 4 April** International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action
- 7 April** World Health Day
- 23 April** World Book and Copyright Day
- 3 May** World Press Freedom Day
- 8 and 9 May** Time of Remembrance and Reconciliation for Those Who Lost Their Lives during the Second World War
- 15 May** International Day of Families
- 17 May** World Telecommunication Day
- 17 May** World Information Society Day
- 21 May** World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development
- 22 May** International Day for Biological Diversity
- Beginning 25 May** Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories
- 29 May** International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers
- 31 May** World No-Tobacco Day
- 4 June** International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression
- 5 June** World Environment Day

- 17 June** World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought
- 20 June** World Refugee Day
- 23 June** United Nations Public Service Day
- 26 June** International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking
- 26 June** International Day in Support of Victims of Torture
- 5 July (first Saturday of July)** International Day of Cooperatives
- 11 July** World Population Day
- 9 August (through 9 August 2014)** International Day of the World's Indigenous People
- 12 August** International Youth Day
- 23 August** International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and Its Abolition
- 8 September** International Literacy Day
- 15 September** International Day of Democracy
- 16 September** International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer
- 21 September** International Day of Peace
- September (during last week of September)** World Maritime Day
- 1 October** International Day of Older Persons
- 2 October** International Day of Non-Violence
- 4-10 October** World Space Week
- 5 October** World Teachers' Day
- 6 October (first Monday of October)** World Habitat Day
- 8 October (second Wednesday of October)** International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction
- 9 October** World Post Day
- 10 October** World Mental Health Day
- 15 October** International Day of Rural Women

- 16 October** World Food Day
- 17 October** International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
- 24 October** United Nations Day
- 24 October** World Development Information Day
- 24-30 October** Disarmament Week
- 6 November** International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict
- 14 November** World Diabetes Day
- 16 November** International Day for Tolerance
- 16 November (third Sunday of November)** World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims
- 20 November** Africa Industrialization Day
- 20 November** Universal Children's Day
- 21 November** World Television Day
- 25 November** International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
- 29 November** International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People
- 1 December** World AIDS Day
- 2 December** International Day for the Abolition of Slavery
- 3 December** International Day of Persons with Disabilities
- 5 December** International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development
- 7 December** International Civil Aviation Day
- 9 December** International Anti-Corruption Day
- 10 December** Human Rights Day
- 11 December** International Mountain Day
- 18 December** International Migrants Day
- 19 December** United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation
- 20 December** International Human Solidarity Day

\* \* \* \* \*