



African Perspectives on Human Dignity

FOR EVERYONE EVERYWHERE





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African Perspectives on Human Dignity

FOR EVERYONE EVERYWHERE

An endorsement and elaboration of the Punta del Este Declaration on Dignity for Everyone Everywhere by the African Consortium for Law and Religion Studies at its Seventh Annual Law and Religion in Africa Conference “Law, Religion, and Environment in Africa,” Gaborone, Botswana, 19–21 May 2019.

PREAMBLE

Whereas the Seventh Annual Law and Religion in Africa Conference of the African Consortium for Law and Religion Studies (ACLARS) was held in Gaborone, Botswana, on 19–21 May 2019, with the conference theme “Law, Religion, and Environment in Africa;”

Whereas the conference participants wish to add their collective voices to the commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by endorsing and elaborating upon the Punta del Este Declaration on Human Dignity for Everyone Everywhere;

Whereas there are many unique and characteristic understandings of human dignity that arise from African perspectives, and it is our hope that these perspectives can enhance and enrich the global and universal appreciation of human dignity as the foundational principle of human rights;

Now, therefore the following statement was drafted and adopted by delegates and participants at the ACLARS Seventh Annual Law and Religion in Africa Conference.

African Conceptions of Human Dignity. Human dignity is a foundational societal, religious, cultural, and legal concept in Africa. There is no single African concept of dignity, but rather many different and often complementary conceptions. Dignity is a concept that has widespread purchase in African cultures, religions, and languages. As with many concepts, there is in Africa an ongoing dialogue of the meaning of human dignity. Nevertheless, there are African characteristics of the concept that are widespread and widely shared. For example, Sir Seretse Khama, the first President of the Republic of Botswana, said, "Human dignity, like justice and freedom, is the common heritage of all men." The legacy of South African President Nelson Mandela is also as a champion of human dignity and freedom. As U.S. President Bill Clinton said upon President Mandela's passing, "History will remember Nelson Mandela as a champion for human dignity and freedom, for peace and reconciliation." We reiterate the Punta del Este Declaration's emphasis that human rights are interdependent, universal, indivisible, and interrelated, and each one is critical for achieving human dignity.

Relationships and Community. Africans think of dignity not solely as an individual human characteristic or right, but as a concept that implicates our most important relationships, including family, community, people, ethnic group, and nation. Human dignity is a concept that is understood as existing in relationship with others. As such, dignity implicates understandings of human duties and relationships, not just individual claims against others. There is a reciprocal understanding of human dignity. Part of our human dignity is recognizing and respecting the dignity of others. An African perspective on dignity is outward looking, not just inward reflecting.

For example, the Nguni Bantu concept of *Ubuntu* and Kiswahili concept of *Utu* are closely related to human dignity, and involve the relatedness of human lives existing in connection and community with others. In some African cultures, the concept of totems is closely related to the idea of familial ties, which extend broadly, creating connections with others. African thinking about dignity necessarily includes the


idea of equality—a concern for dignity is a concern for the equal dignity of all.

The meaning of dignity is taught first in the home, by parents and grandparents, and should then be reinforced by primary and secondary education and through societal institutions such as mosques and churches. In some African countries, the idea of dignity is closely associated with the idea of solidarity. This communal ideal of unity and sharing underscores a communal dimension of human dignity.

3 An Indigenous Concept. While “human rights” is a concept that can be difficult to translate into some African languages, the concept of human dignity is much easier to integrate linguistically. Rights are claims of what is allowed or owed to each of us, whereas dignity is something that is inherent in the human person. For example, in the Yorùbá language, rights (*eto*) are assertions of a claim of something owed to you, whereas dignity (*iyi*) lies at the foundation of rights. While the idea of rights resonates with Africans, in many African languages such as Yorùbá, dignity (*iyi*) is a noun, a state, or a quality of being. Even when there is no consensus about a specific definition of human dignity, it is a concept that resonates widely and meaningfully. We believe there is much that can be learned from various African perspectives on dignity that will enrich not only African understandings of this concept, but global understandings as well.

4 Many Meanings of Dignity. There are many different meanings of dignity in African contexts, including the idea of living a dignified life (which can be related to ceremony and honor), dignity as rank or status (which can be hierarchical), dignity as a moral ideal (reflected in dignified behavior, including dress), dignity as a right, dignity as a personal responsibility (the duty to behave in a dignified manner), as well as dignity as describing the inherent value and worth of the human person. In a fundamental sense, because they are human, all human beings have dignity, even if they behave in ways that are undignified. We can urge others, such as our children, to behave





with dignity without questioning the inherent human dignity of all regardless of how they behave.

There are dimensions of dignity that include living a complete and virtuous human life, as reflected in the Yorùbá people's concept of *omoluwabi*, which suggests the ideal of someone who has a good character in all dimensions of life. This idea of being completely trustworthy, courageous, hard-working, humble, of good character, and of treating others with respect, is also an ideal that is closely related to that of dignity.

Discussions of human dignity, as with discussions of human rights, should take place in a spirit of genuine dialogue, including between the northern and southern hemispheres, rather than in a spirit of instruction or direction. When we focus on one perspective of human dignity, we should not mistake it as a single African perspective, since there will be many African perspectives. Dignity eludes definition and capture by any one group or viewpoint.


Dignity as a Right and as a “Mother” of Rights. In some countries, such as South Africa and Nigeria, human dignity is a recognized fundamental constitutional right, and there are important judgments of these nations' highest courts elaborating the meaning of human dignity and related concepts such as *Ubuntu*. Even in places where human dignity is a recognized constitutional right, there are challenges in definition, scope, and implementation of the right. In other countries, human dignity is a foundational concept, but is not itself a legal right. It can be understood as the “mother” of rights or lying at the genesis of rights. While dignity is foundational, this is not to understate the importance of rights or of the duty of states to respect and protect rights. While dignity is a common concept in African societies and in the contemporary world, human rights can be seen as a way of operationalizing human dignity. The concept of human dignity can reinforce what we know and have as human rights. Human dignity should not be used as a nebulous concept that governments can invoke to limit or deny rights to people.

Concrete Concern for Basic Human Needs. African discussions of dignity are less abstract and theoretical than some other discussions of dignity, focusing on basic human needs that must be satisfied in order to be fully human and to enjoy one's basic human dignity. Those needs include clothing, shelter, gainful employment, and the ability to care for oneself and one's family. Social and economic rights are the cornerstone of human dignity. In many African contexts, dignity is understood as relating to the basic capacity to fulfill one's human needs, and then to be able to help fulfill the needs of others, including family and extended relations. Thus, discussions of dignity need to focus on basic human needs and capacities, such as the ability to find meaningful and remunerative work that is sufficient to provide for oneself and one's family. Discussions of human dignity will be regarded as too abstract if they do not include an emphasis on basic economic and social rights, including problems of poverty. The rising generation, including university students, will not have patience with theoretical discussions of human dignity when their education does not empower them with basic capacities to make a decent living.

An African perspective on human dignity is also to be mindful of the most serious violations of human dignity, including genocide and other atrocities, forced migrations and displacements, and extreme poverty. Hence, the saying among Kiswahili-speaking communities that, "a person possesses no *Utu*." Extreme disparities of wealth and poverty are viewed as a violation of human dignity.

State Obligations. An important obligation of states is to enable their people to live lives of dignity, in light of the broad African recognition of the importance of dignity. Former presidents Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Ian Khama of Botswana have respectively stressed its centrality. In Julius Nyerere's farewell 1985 speech he recalled that "the single most important task, which I set out in my inaugural address in December 1962 was that of building a united nation on the basis of human equality and dignity." Nyerere reinforced this goal in his socialist concept of *ujamaa*. For Ian Khama, dignity formed a part of the "5 Ds Roadmap": Democracy, Discipline, Dignity, Development, and Delivery.





In spite of the broad African recognition of the importance of dignity by many governments, there are areas in Africa where dignity is often violated and places where governments do not do enough to protect human dignity and ensure it is taken seriously. Occasionally, governments in Africa use references to duties in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights as a pretext for not protecting human rights, including human dignity.

8 Religious and Theistic Foundations. African understandings of human dignity are usually based upon a belief in God, a Creator who made human beings in God's image. As such, there is an element of reverence and a dimension of humility in understanding human dignity. The idea of human dignity implicates relationships beyond those in this life, including with our Creator, and with our ancestors who live in an afterlife beyond the visible world. Thus, dignity implicates the departed as well, recognizing that belonging and being recognized does not just involve the present.

In some parts of Africa, understandings of dignity are inextricably connected to Islam. Muslims in Africa are familiar with the Quranic verse that God honored human beings in creating Adam as God's vice-regent or steward, and that human beings reciprocate this by treating other human beings with dignity. This is evident even in architecture, where a room of the house is dedicated to providing hospitality to strangers. This has implications for how we should treat all people, including beggars. While from a Muslim perspective, human rights may seem like a foreign concept, the concept of human dignity is not foreign, but an accepted and intrinsic part of the Islamic faith.

Christianity and indigenous religions also have deep and meaningful teachings about human dignity, and each of these perspectives adds depth and breadth to an African understanding of dignity.

In spite of the sense of reverence and the sacred that infuses African understandings of dignity, it is not an exclusively religious concept; it is meaningful to those who have no religious beliefs but who are morally righteous.



Gender/Age Dimensions. Gender dimensions in discussions of dignity should be noted. If dignity is understood primarily as a matter of status (the dignity of the King or of tribal elders), it can have a gender dimension that distorts the universal and inherent value of all human beings that is the hallmark of dignity. We also caution that dignity should not be comprehended mainly as a matter of age, where the dignity of the elder is opposed to that of the young.

Human dignity has deep implications for relationships involving gender difference and age groups, including domestic violence, which is an affront to dignity. If, for example, a man disrespects a woman or a young girl, or if a child acts impolitely towards an elderly person, then that person is described as someone who has no *Utu*.

Human Dignity and Our Environments. This conference has focused on the relationships between law, religion, and the environment in Africa. An important recurring theme has been the relational character of human rights and human dignity, and that it implicates and impresses upon all of our relationships, not just with other people, but with other animals and with our natural environments. Just as concepts like isiXhosa's *Ubuntu*, Shona's *Unhu* and Kiswahili's *Utu* extend concern for human beings beyond rights and into relationships, they also extend our concern beyond human relationships and into other relationships, such as with God, with the wider world, and with the various environments we inhabit.



The Punta del Este Declaration on Human Dignity for Everyone Everywhere

December 2018

PREAMBLE

Whereas seventy years ago in the aftermath of World War II, the nations and peoples of the world came together in solidarity and solemnity and without dissent adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations;

Whereas the Preamble of the UDHR declares 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”;

Whereas Article 1 of the UDHR proclaims that “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”;

Whereas the equal human dignity of everyone everywhere is the foundational principle of


human rights and reminds us that every person is of value and is worthy of respect;

Whereas it is important to remember, reaffirm, and recommit ourselves to these basic principles;

Recalling that it was grave violations of human dignity during the wars of the twentieth century that preceded and precipitated the UDHR;

Recalling the international consensus that domestic law alone had not been sufficient to safeguard against and avoid the human rights violations of the World Wars;

Recalling that in spite of all of their differences, nations of the world concurred that the dignity of all people is the basic foundation of human rights and of freedom, justice, and peace in the world;



Recalling that human dignity is the wellspring of and underpins all the rights and freedoms recognized in the UDHR as fundamental;

Recalling that the UDHR has served as the inspiration for an array of international and regional covenants and other instruments, as well as numerous national constitutions, bills and charters of rights, and legislation protecting human rights;

Recognizing that human dignity is not a static concept but accommodates respect for diversity and calls for a dynamic approach to its application in the diverse and ever-changing contexts of our pluralistic world;

Recognizing that although the notion of dignity has been criticized by some as being too abstract, it actually has been and remains a powerful organizing force that points humanity towards its highest ideals and has proven itself as an influential heuristic in constitutional and human rights discourse;

Recognizing that the concept of human dignity emphasizes the uniqueness and irreplaceability

of every human being; that it implies a right of each individual to find and define the meanings of his or her own life; that it presupposes respect for pluralism and difference; and that it carries with it the responsibility to honor the dignity of everyone;

Recognizing that severe violations and abuses of human dignity continue to this day, including through wars, armed conflicts, genocides, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the global crises concerning refugees, migrants, asylum seekers, and human trafficking, and that such depredations continue to threaten peace, justice, and the rights of all;

Recognizing that human rights can easily be fragmented, eroded, or neglected and that constant vigilance is necessary for human rights to be implemented, realized, and carried forward in the world;

Recognizing that human dignity for everyone everywhere and at every level is threatened when the needs, interests, and rights of one group or individual are placed ahead of those of other groups and individuals;



Emphasizing that equal human dignity is a status with which all human beings are endowed, but also a value that must be learned, nurtured, and lived;

Emphasizing that violations of human dignity require appropriate redress;

Emphasizing that human dignity is now a time-tested principle that can help find common ground, reconcile competing conceptions of what justice demands, facilitate implementation of human rights, and guide adjudication in case of conflicts, and that can also help us respond to distortions, abuse, and hostility towards human rights;

Believing that human rights discourse might be less divisive than it often is and greater efforts might be made to find common ground;


Believing that human rights must be read and realized together;

Believing that the concept of human dignity can help us understand, protect, and implement human rights globally; and

Hoping that the present century will be more humane, just, and peaceful than the twentieth century;

We, the undersigned, do solemnly reaffirm:

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights continues to be “a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping the Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, local, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance.”




We, the undersigned, do solemnly issue the following Declaration on Human Dignity for Everyone Everywhere:

I Foundation, Objective, and Criterion.

The inherent human dignity of all people and the importance of respecting, promoting, and protecting human dignity for everyone everywhere is the foundational principle and the key objective or goal of human rights, as well as an invaluable criterion for evaluating laws, policies, and government actions for how well they accord with human rights standards. Protecting, promoting, and guaranteeing respect for the human dignity of everyone is a fundamental obligation of states, governments, and other public bodies, whether local, regional, national, or international. Promoting human dignity is also a responsibility of all sectors of society, and of each of us as human beings. Doing so is the key to protecting the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family, and remains the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world.

2 Generating Agreement and Building Common Understanding.

The inherent dignity of every human being was the key idea that helped generate agreement and a common understanding at the time of the adoption of the udhr about human rights of all people, in spite of diversity and deep differences, notwithstanding divergent political and legal systems. Human dignity for everyone everywhere is valuable as a point of departure for exploring and understanding the meaning of human rights, as a basis for finding common ground regarding human rights and consensus about their content and meaning. It provides an approach to building bridges between various normative justifications of human rights, including those with religious and secular theoretical groundings. Respecting human dignity for everyone



everywhere facilitates discussions on different conceptions of shared values. Human dignity is a broad concept that nevertheless invites in-depth reflection within differing traditions and perspectives. Human dignity for all reminds us that human rights are universal, inalienable, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated.

3 Defining and Specifying Human Rights.

Dignity is an essential part of what it means to be human. Respect for human dignity for everyone everywhere helps us define and understand the meaning and scope of all human rights. Focusing concretely and in actual situations on human dignity and its implications for particular human rights claims can help identify the specific content of these rights as well as how we understand human dignity itself.

4 Duties and Responsibilities.

Human dignity for everyone everywhere emphasizes the concept in the UDHR that rights include accompanying obligations and responsibilities, not just of states but also of all human beings with respect to the rights of others. Dignity is a status shared by every human being, and the emphasis on everyone and everywhere makes it clear that rights are characterized by reciprocity and involve corresponding duties. Everyone should be concerned not only with his or her own dignity and rights but with the dignity and rights of every human being. Nonetheless, human dignity is not diminished on the ground that persons are not fulfilling their responsibilities to the state and others.





5 **Education.**

Recognition of human dignity is a vital basis for teaching and education. Human rights education is of importance to promoting respect for the equal dignity of everyone. Such education is essential for sustaining dignity and human rights into the future. Equal access to education is a crucial aspect of respecting human dignity.

6 **Seeking Common Ground.**

Focusing on human dignity for everyone everywhere encourages people to search for ways to find common ground regarding competing claims and to move beyond exclusively legal mechanisms for harmonizing, implementing, and mutually vindicating human rights and finding solutions to conflicts.

7 **Implementing and Realizing Human Rights in Legislation.**

Recognition of human dignity for everyone everywhere is a foundational principle of law and is central to developing and protecting human rights in law and policy. The richness of the concept of dignity resists exhaustive definition, but it encourages the pursuit of optimum mutual vindication where conflicting rights and values are involved. It is critical for moving beyond thinking exclusively in terms of balancing and tradeoffs of rights and interests.

8 **Reconciliation and Adjudication.**

Recognition of human dignity for everyone everywhere is an important constitutional and legal principle for reconciling and adjudicating competing human rights claims, as well as claims between human rights and other important national and societal interests. Mutual vindication of rights may be possible in adjudication and may be further facilitated if all involved focus on respecting the

human dignity of everyone. When mutual vindication of rights is not possible, dignity for all can help us to delineate the scope of rights, to set the boundaries of permissible restrictions on the exercise of rights and freedoms, and to seek to bring into fair balance competing rights claims. Respect for dignity plays an important role not only in formal adjudication but also in mediation or other forms of alternative dispute resolution.

9 Potential Difficulties Involving Competing Human Rights Claims.

Respecting the human dignity of everyone everywhere supports effective human rights advocacy. Recognizing the universal and reciprocal character of human dignity is a corrective to positions claiming rights for some but not for others. It helps to defuse the hostility that is often associated with human rights controversies and to foster constructive dialogue. It also helps mitigate the distortion, avoidance, and selective recognition of human dignity.

10 Most Egregious and Most Feasible.

Human dignity for everyone everywhere reminds us to work toward the elimination of the most egregious abuses of the human rights of individuals and groups, including genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and other atrocities. It also reminds us to protect those human beings most at-risk of human rights violations. At the same time, it encourages efforts to respond to problems that may be amenable to practical and feasible solutions.





Universal Declaration of Human Rights

December 10, 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 co-operation 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 realisation 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

1. 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.



2. 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 or Non-Self-Governing territory, 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 of 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 realisation, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organisation 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.

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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

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.





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