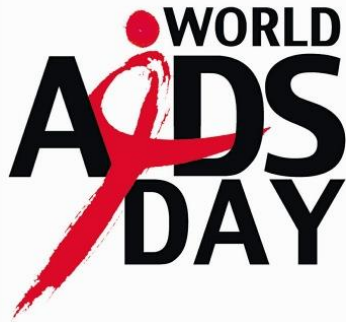


Participation-December 2017

December 1—World AIDS Day

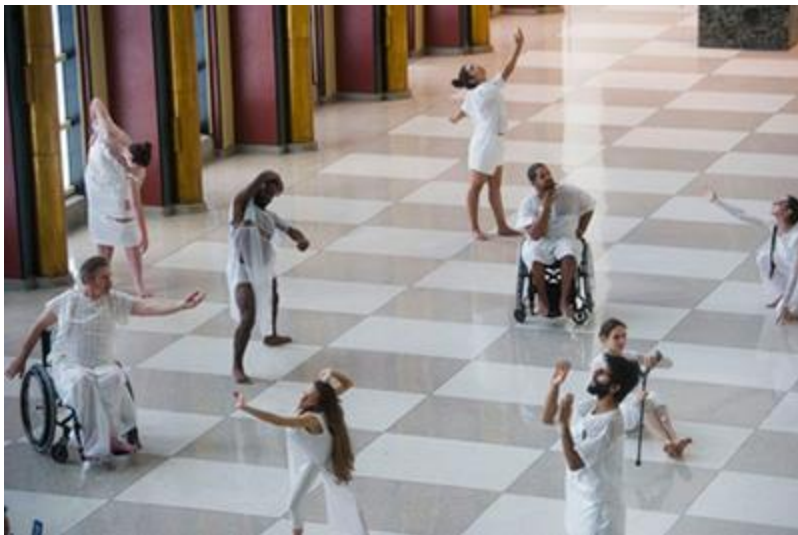


December 1, 2017 marks the 29th global World AIDS Day, to raise awareness about the continued epidemic affecting over 34 million people currently living with HIV worldwide. Since the disease was first recognized in 1981, over 35 million people have died from AIDS. Stigma and discrimination continue to affect those living with HIV/AIDS in many parts of the world. Although great advances have been made in combatting the virus causing AIDS, there is still no cure. This is a day to learn the facts about AIDS and to put those learnings into action. Let us reach out to those affected and infected,

so that their human dignity is respected and protected. Let us take time today to remember the many family members, friends and loved ones who have died. Most of all, let us continue to provide the resources that are needed, not only to care for people living with HIV, but to find a cure.

We pray for researchers and caregivers that they will continue to work to find a cure for HIV/AIDS and will continue to treat those infected and affected with love and compassion. We pray for those living with HIV/AIDS, that they may experience the compassion of others, and that they may continue to live healthy and happy lives, despite their illness. We pray that each of us dedicate ourselves to AIDS prevention and education so that our world will one day be HIV free.

December 3—International Day of Persons With Disabilities



Heidi Latsky Dance, a New York-based modern dance company, performs in the Visitors Lobby of UN Headquarters. UN Photo/Amanda Voisard

December 3 is a day for raising awareness of, and helping to create real opportunities for, people with disabilities. This year's theme is: **“Transformation towards a sustainable and resilient society for all”**. There are approximately one billion people worldwide living with disabilities. This day aims at recognizing their gifts and capacities and supporting them in setting their own priorities. This involves investing in people – in jobs, health, nutrition, education, and social protection. People with disabilities do not enjoy access to society on an equal basis with others, which includes areas of transportation, employment, education, and social and political participation. Full integration and participation in society means removing barriers and ensuring accessibility in all areas of life. The Convention on the Rights of

Persons with Disabilities was adopted by the United Nations in 2006, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 further advance the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities.

Holy one, we praise you for the many gifts that you give us each day and we recognize that each of us has a contribution to make to life on this planet. We also recognize that we all have limitations of one kind or another. Help us to recognize structures and situations that may exclude others so that we can make changes that enhance the fullest participation possible. Let us hear the needs of those living with disabilities, by listening with open hearts. Inspire us all to act together for the good of all.

December 9—International Anti-corruption Day



Corruption involves an abuse of entrusted power by dishonest or unethical conduct that leads to personal gain. The United Nations Convention Against Corruption was passed in 2009. The convention recognizes corruption as a crime that undermines social and economic development. It occurs in both rich and poor countries and disproportionately affects the poorest people. The UN realizes that it is impossible to reach the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals unless corruption is eliminated from both governmental, non-governmental, judicial, educational, healthcare and business organizations. Transparency in the allocation and use of public funds is a good first step in putting an end to corruption. Education so that all social participants refuse to co-operate

with corruption, as well as putting systems in place to protect those who report corruption, will also help to stop these practices.

God, we ask you to help us create just and free societies where every person and the environment are protected by just laws applied with transparency. Help each of us to have the courage to refuse to cooperate with corruption, so that all people may live in security and freedom. Inspire elected leaders to govern with integrity.

December 10—Human Rights Day



Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt of the United States, chair of the drafting committee, holding a Universal Declaration of Human Rights poster in English. UN Photo (1949)

This day marks the beginning of a year-long celebration of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948, culminating in the 70th anniversary in 2018. This document proclaimed the inalienable rights which everyone is inherently entitled to as a human being. It establishes the equal dignity and worth of every person as the foundation for a more just world. This declaration enshrined the values of equality, justice and human dignity as

universal values for all nations. Although not yet fully realized, these principles have stood the test of time and continue to serve as the international standard against which progress is measured. This is a day to encourage people around the world to learn about their human rights and to courageously take action to create a society that respects and honors human rights.

We pray for all oppressed people around the world, realizing that we are all united as one human family. We ask blessing on all our brothers and sisters, so that all may live in peace, without fear, and in harmony with one another and with creation. We pray that our hearts will be welcoming and compassionate. May all human beings have access to the basic resources that they need to live, freedom to develop their gifts to the full, and freedom from fear, oppression and intimidation.

December 18—International Migrants Day



On December 18, 1990, the General Assembly adopted the international convention on the protection of the rights of migrant workers and members of their families. Economic migration has been increasing in recent years as poor people move away from their traditional home areas in search of work and a means to support themselves and their families. Corruption has led to economic collapse in some countries of the world. In other cases, climate change has led to flooding or desertification, displacing many families. The UN invited all UN member states, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to observe this day by disseminating information on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of migrants, sharing experiences, and undertaking action

to ensure the protection of migrants. This day is also a time to recognize the contributions made by millions of migrants to the economies of their host and home countries. There are many complex factors contributing to migration, which greatly impacts the countries of origin, the countries of transit and the destination countries. Understanding these factors and cooperatively addressing some of these issues are needed to craft solutions that are just.

Holy One, we pray for your protection and blessing on migrants throughout the world. Keep them safe from exploitation and abuse. Help them to find the work, housing, nutrition and healthcare that they need to support themselves and their families. Help us to open our hearts and our homes to welcome the stranger in our midst, in whatever ways we can. Give hope to those who feel lost and hopeless. Give joy to the sorrowing and security to the vulnerable. Most of all, make me a channel of your peace, understanding and love.

December 20—International Human Solidarity Day



International Human Solidarity Day is a day dedicated to celebrating unity in diversity. Since 2005, this day has been a day to remind people about the important role that solidarity plays in realization of all international agreements and programs. According to the UN General Assembly resolution, solidarity is one of the fundamental values of all humankind and it should be the basis of all modern international relations. Only solidarity can help people overcome global problems. The Paris Climate Agreement is a good example of an international global effort that resulted from many years of growing solidarity among people the world over calling for governments to face the crisis of climate change through action.

God, we ask that you bless all your people throughout the world in their desire for justice, peace, freedom and protection of the environment. Continue to inspire solidarity among us so that together we can face the many challenges of our global community. Help us to listen to the myriad perspectives that our diversity brings to the conversation. Open us to new ways of thinking and being in solidarity with one another.

December 25

Merry Christmas!

*May the Prince of Peace, whose birth we celebrate today,
Bless us all with compassion, joy, peace and love.*