



Despite the increasing diversity of our societies, intolerance is still on the rise in many places around the world. Today, the United Nations marks the International Day for Tolerance to help promote the importance of understanding and acceptance.

"Tolerance is the strongest foundation for peace and reconciliation. At this time of rapid and often bewildering change, it has never been so important. On this International Day, I call on national and community leaders – and all those who wield influence through traditional and social media and among their peers – to embrace tolerance as the bond that will unite us on our common journey to a peaceful, sustainable future." – *Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon.*

16 November 1995, UNESCO's Member States adopted a Declaration of Principles on Tolerance. Among other things, the Declaration affirms that tolerance is neither indulgence nor indifference. It is respect and appreciation of the rich variety of our world's cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human.

Furthermore, the Declaration qualifies tolerance not only as a moral duty, but also as a political and legal requirement for individuals, groups and States. It places tolerance in relation to the international human rights instruments drawn up over the past fifty years and emphasizes that States should draft new legislation when necessary to ensure equality of treatment and of opportunity for all groups and individuals in society. As the diversity of our world's many religions, languages, cultures and ethnicities is not a pretext for conflict, but is a treasure that enriches us all.

Additional links:

[Video 7 billion Others: International Day for Tolerance](#)

[Declaration of Principles on Tolerance](#)

[Secretary-General's Message for 2013](#)

[UNESCO Director-General's Message for 2013](#)