



United States Mission to the OSCE

International Human Rights Day

As delivered by Political Counselor Christopher Robinson
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
December 13, 2012

December 10 was International Human Rights Day and marked the 64th anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, a revolutionary document that recognized the inherent dignity and inalienable rights of all men and women and that is enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act. As we mark the anniversary of this historic act, we celebrate the rights the Declaration recognized and recommit ourselves to respect them while facing 21st Century challenges.

As President Obama noted in his proclamation commemorating the day, the United States was built on the promise that freedom and fairness are not guaranteed only for some. Societies across the globe are reaching toward a future where leaders are fairly and duly elected and where the voice of the people rings true and clear.

In Dublin last week, Secretary Clinton said that “human rights cannot be disconnected from other priorities. They are inextricably linked to all of the goals we strive for [at home] and around the world. The Universal Declaration is not just a catalog of rights and government obligations. It is a time-tested blueprint for successful societies.”

We join participating States and all people around the world in observing International Human Rights Day. We urge participating States to implement all existing commitments fully, to reaffirm that fundamental freedoms must be respected, whether they are exercised online or offline, to speak out against oppression and discrimination wherever it occurs, and to continue to work toward a more just and peaceful world.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.