



Australian
Human Rights
Commission

Professor Gillian Triggs

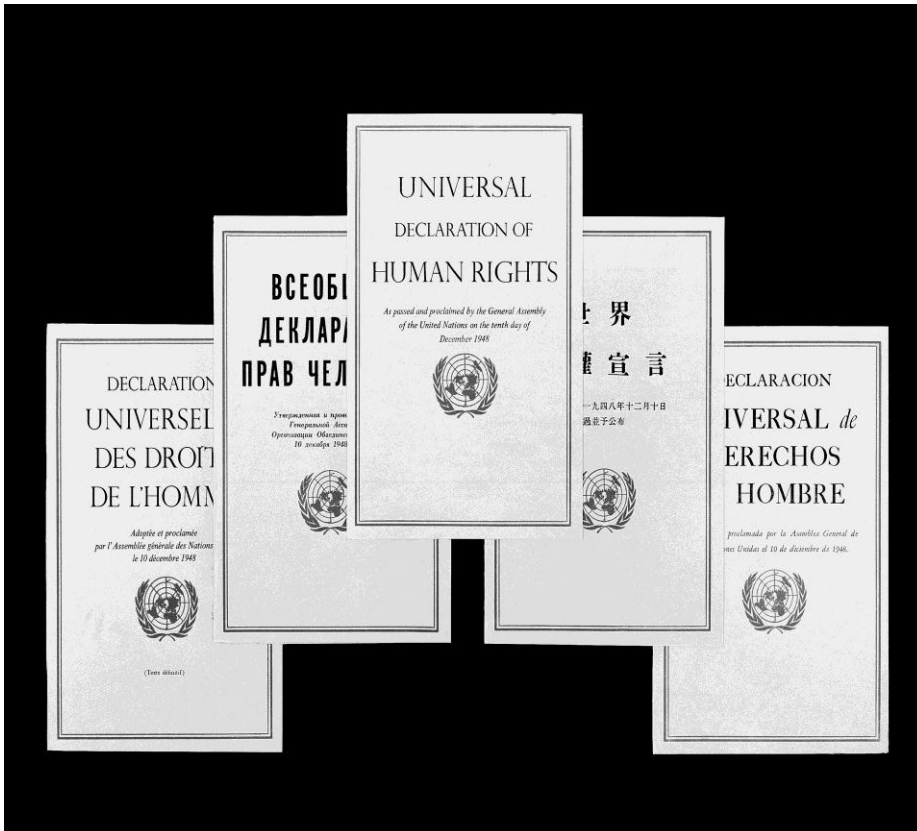
President

10 August 2013

Australia and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

***United Nations Association of Australia
National Conference***

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights





UN Photo/Greg Kinch

Early version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights



UN Photo/McLain

Doc Evatt signing the UN Charter, June 1945

In giving our approval to the declaration today, it is of primary importance that we keep clearly in mind the basic character of the document.

It is not a treaty; it is not an international agreement. It is not and does not purport to be a statement of law or of legal obligation.

- Eleanor Roosevelt, 1948

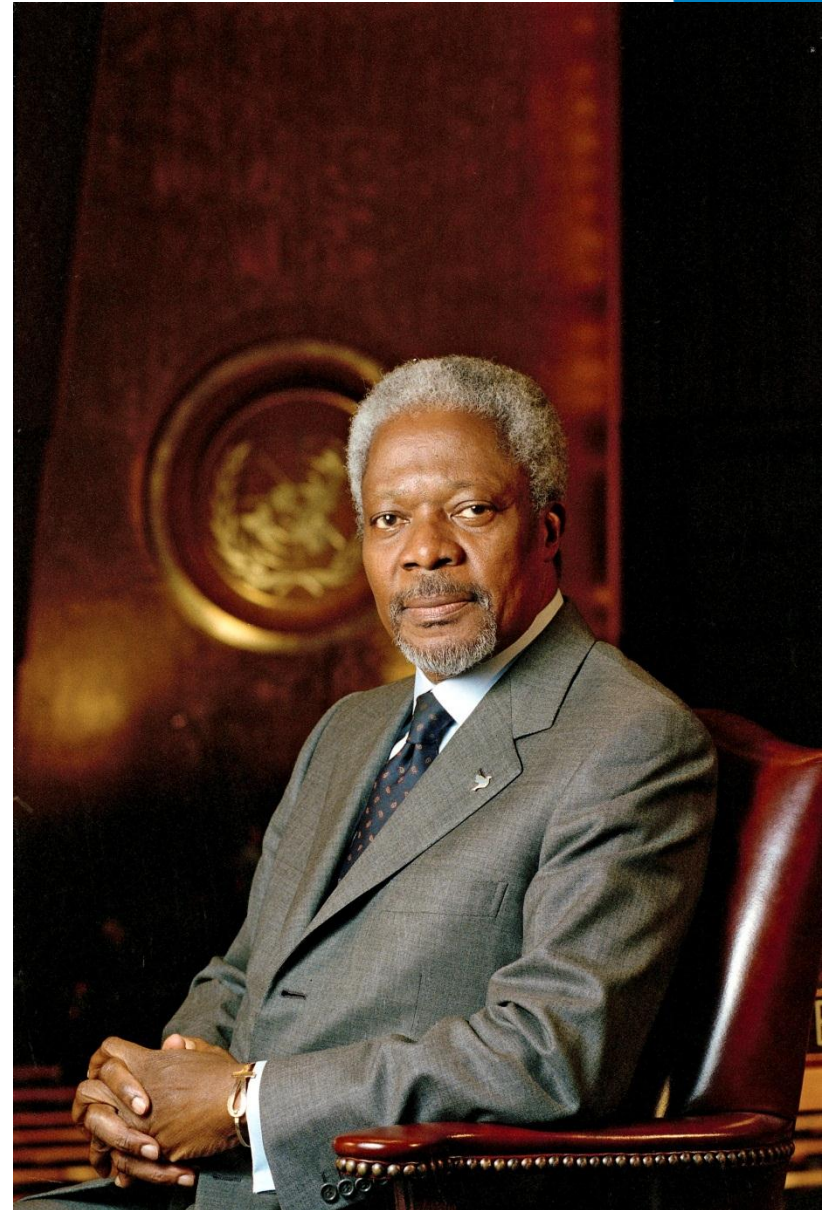


When it comes to laws on the books (at the international level), no generation has inherited the riches that we have. We are blessed with what amounts to an international bill of human rights, among which are impressive norms to protect the weakest among us, including victims of conflict and persecution... But without implementation, our declarations ring hollow. Without action, our promises are meaningless...

The time has come for Governments to be held to account, both to their citizens and to each other, for respect of the dignity of the individual, to which they too often pay only lip service.

We must move from an era of legislation to an era of implementation. Our declared principles and our common interests demand no less

– Kofi Annan, 2005



The Commission has statutory responsibilities under the following federal anti-discrimination and human rights laws:

- [Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986](#)
- [Racial Discrimination Act 1975](#)
- [Sex Discrimination Act 1984](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)
- [Age Discrimination Act 2004](#)

Australian Human Rights Commission Act

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
- Convention Concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation (ILO 111)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Declaration of the Rights of the Child
- Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons
- Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons,
- Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief

Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
- Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities