

THE EMORY DECLARATION ON THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS*

We, persons seeking to advance the consensus on human rights,

Affirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations,

And in consideration of the following:

Whereas, the UDHR emerged in a particular historical context, and the course of history is not static; and

Whereas, the consensus around the UDHR has been challenged by concerns about imposition upon and incompatibility with cultural or religious value systems; and

Whereas, enforcement of the UDHR standards has been challenged by the effects of globalization and the proliferation of non-state actors that violate human rights but are unaccountable under the current framework; and

Whereas, economic, social, and cultural rights have been treated with less urgency than civil and political rights, yet violations of economic, social, and cultural rights have increased in the wake of globalization; and

Whereas, violations of the UDHR are both cause and consequence of environmental destruction,

Declare the following:

All peoples and nations must renew their commitment to the UDHR as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations;

* A draft version of this Declaration was distributed to participants at *Advancing the Consensus: 60 Years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Emory University School of Law, October 16–18, 2008, and used as the basis for roundtable discussions. The conference organizers have distilled common themes from those discussions, as well as from plenary and panel presentations, to produce this final version. We encourage its use for discussion, adoption, advocacy, or innovation by all who seek to advance human rights. The Emory Declaration does not necessarily represent the specific viewpoints of all the authors published in this volume.

The UDHR must be acknowledged as necessary but not sufficient to address the challenges to human rights that have emerged in the sixty years since its adoption, and the international community must build an interpretive framework around the UDHR that will address contemporary challenges, such as environmental destruction, globalization, and the proliferation of non-state actors;

This interpretive framework must reflect the experiences of all peoples, particularly women, indigenous peoples, and others whose rights have been consistently neglected;

Religion must be neither privileged in nor excluded from human rights discourse and activity, and religious liberty must be upheld as a fundamental human right;

Economic, social, and cultural rights must be taken seriously by states and non-state actors, who must reconcile economic interests and human rights protection, and must not pursue economic interests at the expense of violations of the rights enumerated in the UDHR; and

The UDHR must not be compromised as the touchstone for the defense of human life and dignity around the world during both peacetime and war.