

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Expert panel to address the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 60: *How far have we come? How far to go?***

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WATERLOO — To mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS) is convening a panel of experts on Dec. 10 to discuss the current state of human rights internationally.

This public event — titled, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 60: How far have we come? How far to go?* — will be held in the Paul Martin Centre at Wilfrid Laurier University, starting at 7 p.m.

On Dec. 10, 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The document has inspired people around the world with its recognition of “the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family.” Yet its promise is unfulfilled as vulnerable populations around the world still face humanitarian crises in their daily lives. Why is this so?

Panelists include:

- **Paul Heinbecker**, Canada’s former ambassador to the United Nations and currently a Distinguished Fellow, Centre for International Governance Innovation, and Director of the Laurier Centre for Global Relations.

- **Dr. Rhoda Howard-Hassmann**, Canada Research Chair in International Human Rights, Wilfrid Laurier University.

- **Dr. Ramesh Thakur**, Director of the Balsillie School of International Affairs and former Vice-Rector of the United Nations University.

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“We’ve made so much progress internationally on respect for human rights, and the Universal Declaration is a huge part of that. But, at the same time, we’re reading about displaced persons in the Congo and other humanitarian crises every day. Our panel will help us understand why a gap between international policy and personal experience still persists,” said Laurier professor Dr. Patricia Goff, executive director of ACUNS and a Senior Fellow at the Centre for International Governance Innovation.

The Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS) is an international association of educational and research institutions and individual scholars, teachers, and practitioners active in the work and study of multilateral relations, global governance, and international cooperation. The Council focuses special attention on the programs and agencies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations that play a role in managing common problems on the global agenda. After stints at Dartmouth, Brown, and Yale, the ACUNS Secretariat now resides at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. For more information, visit the website at: [www.acuns.org](http://www.acuns.org)