

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

**MESSAGE FOR THE WORLD DAY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE**

**New York, 20 February 2014**

The gap between the poorest and the wealthiest around the world is wide and growing. This situation is not only between countries but within them, including many of the most prosperous. The World Day of Social Justice is observed to highlight the power of global solidarity to advance opportunity for all.

Circumstances such as where a person is born, where they live or their gender and ethnicity should never determine their income or their opportunities for quality education, basic healthcare, decent work, adequate shelter, access to drinking water, political participation or living free from threatened, or actual, physical violence.

As inequalities widen, the social fabric of our societies is both stretched and strained. This often leads to a downward spiral of economic and social uncertainty and even unrest. Violent conflict in many parts of the world is often rooted in deep inequality, discrimination, and widespread poverty.

Yet there is nothing inevitable about inequality. Our shared goal should aim at taking practical steps to remove this formidable barrier to development and human dignity.

Experience shows that economic growth, on its own, is not sufficient. We must do more to empower individuals through decent work, support people through social protection, and ensure the voices of the poor and marginalised are heard. As we continue our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and shape a post-2015 development agenda, let us make social justice central to achieving equitable and sustainable growth for all.