

*"Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of **freedom, justice and peace** in the world..."*
Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948



On December 10, the 56th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, I invite you to join me in reflecting upon the aspirations of the Declaration and its relevance to our actions today. Proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in the aftermath of World War II, the Declaration sets out the rights and obligations of both individuals and communities, reflecting an awareness of their interdependence.



The vision of the Declaration is one of a harmonious society, which protects the equal rights and dignity of all its members while strengthening the fabric of the community as a whole. In keeping with this vision, one of our most pressing priorities is to develop a culture of inclusion where everyone has a sense of belonging, where all groups can succeed, and to which all persons can contribute.



There is a growing uneasiness about how we will live together in future, as individuals and groups. The Stonechild inquiry and other public bodies have exposed deep divisions caused by Saskatchewan's failure to deal with the impact of racism, poverty and other inequities.



Major changes are needed to restore a shared sense of community. On that journey, it is important to bridge rather than widen social divisions and to seek solutions through partnerships, mutual respect and the pursuit of equal opportunities for all groups. There is a need for clear information and honest debate as we negotiate the process and parameters of change.



In this task, our province should be able to draw on certain strengths. Saskatchewan has a history of innovation and cooperative endeavour, and a commitment to human rights dating back to proclamation of the Saskatchewan Bill of Rights Act in 1947. Today, we are challenged to redefine Saskatchewan as a province for all its peoples, one that values all groups for their differences as well as their similarities. I ask for your help in pursuing that goal.

Donna Scott, Q.C.
Chief Commissioner
Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission