

## Reaffirming Human Rights For All Paris, UNESCO Headquarters

### Opening Session

At the beginning of the 61<sup>st</sup> Conference of the UN Department of Public Information, we heard opening addresses from UN representatives and the French government. This was followed by a message from Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations (via video message). Ms. Simone Veil gave the keynote address.

Ms. Veil recalled the Second World War, the genocide of the Jewish people, and the human rights still being flouted today. Think of the countries at war, those who do not enjoy freedom of thought, and the women's human rights that are widely disrespected. In this type of event, she insisted, there is a whole chain of responsibilities in which each one had a role to play. Then, she briefly enumerated the progress made over the past 60 years, the work of NGO's and that of the International Criminal Court.

### The Sessions

Throughout these three days, different aspects of human rights were discussed to highlight the efforts made and what was left to be done. This year, a great deal of time was given to interventions and dialogue, such that the discussions at the beginning of the sessions were shorter than usual. We were able to benefit from the experience of the people who work in the field and who come from different parts of the world. In all, 74 countries were represented.

### The leitmotiv of this Conference

It is not enough that the Member States signed the Declaration, civil groups must also get involved in the fight against injustice. We can work together with certain governments, but we cannot rely solely on them to carry out what is written in the Declaration. For the NGO's, the battle will be long and difficult.



**UNANIMA International delegation**

