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H. Thomas Wells Jr.

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As president of the American Bar Association, let me welcome our distinguished hosts, speakers, and guests to this examination—and celebration—of the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

I come to you with a message from the ABA Board of Governors—which represents our 400,000-member organization. The Board met earlier this month and adopted the following resolution:

"Resolved, that the American Bar Association urges the U.S. and other

countries to renew their commitment to the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—December 10, 1948, in Paris."

Our resolution clearly reaffirms the ABA's commitment to and work on behalf of the principles we have long espoused and defended.

Throughout the ABA and our partner organizations, policies, programs, and public advocacy support the nexus

between the law and human rights in the context of countless areas of concern— among them are access to justice, women's and children's welfare, protection of the poor, immigration, genocide, racial discrimination, sexual orientation, capital punishment, human trafficking, antiterrorism surveillance and detention, and other areas.

Although many groups throughout the ABA conduct activities that support human rights, we are grateful for the leadership role of the ABA Section of International Law and its chair, Aaron

Schildhaus, and the ABA Center for Human Rights and its co-chairs, Jerry Shestack and Steve Walther, and their support in organizing this conference.

Let me also thank the Association of the Bar of the City of New York and President Hynes, the Paris Bar and President Bournazel, and the Italian Bar and President Alpa, for their support—along with the leaders of the world's bars and major associations of lawyers who are cooperating with today's commemoration.

**I look forward to being in Paris—
where the Universal Declaration was
signed 60 years ago—to attend Rentree
and participate in the historic
commemorative activities there. And I am
glad to be here with you here in New
York City.**

**As lawyers—and more importantly, as
an independent profession that holds
governments accountable under law—we
work in the forefront of developing,
protecting, and enforcing human rights
throughout the world. Because the
Universal Declaration of Human Rights is**

our inspiration and guidepost, it is fitting that we acknowledge this milestone anniversary with such an impressive line-up of speakers and panelists. Our voices are heard around the world.

The American Bar Association always stands ready to assist your efforts. Thank you for being here.