



### RENÉ CASSIN ET L'UNIVERSALITÉ DES DROITS DE L'HOMME : LE COMBAT D'UNE VIE

The French scholar René Cassin (1887-1976) won the Peace Nobel Prize in 1968 for his lasting dedication to Democracy, Rule of Law and Human Rights. Fifty years after his death, it is a duty to pay tribute to his life legacy but also to assess the work ahead. in the field of international law.

As a member of the Human Rights Commission since 1946, Cassin was involved from the start in masterplan of the “International Bill of Human Rights, with its three steps. The drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly, in Paris, on the 10th December 1948 was a very important political and moral starting point, with the need to create legal obligations on the basis of a treaty. Two Covenants were adopted in 1966 and entered into force in 1976, the same year than the death of René Cassin. Other basic instruments were adopted in the UN system till 2006. In the same time, legal remedies were provided by optional declarations or protocols to fulfil the initial plan of the Human Rights Commission.

But today, new challenges are menacing the UN system. The institutional framework needs more consistency, with debates about the “reform” or the strengthening of the treaty bodies system, in order to avoid duplications, gaps or discrepancies. But this “rationalisation” take place in a climate of financial crisis, due to the budgetary cuts imposed by the United States and the political pression of “like-minded” States. The last challenge is the crisis about western values within ideological gap between United States and European Countries, stressed by the Trump administration. It ought to be a priority for all the stakeholders to stick to the universal values enshrined in the UN Charter and the Declaration 1948, as the “foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world”.