

Opening Remarks by Dr Sev Ozdowski AM of Western Sydney University, Australia

At the 8TH International Human Rights Education Conference

Montreal, 30 November 2017

My warm welcome goes:

- **To the members of opening ceremony panel.**
- **To all the people whose work made this conference possible.**
- **And in particular to young people, students and volunteers who are here with us.**

Welcome everyone.

It is great to be here in Montreal. Quite a change from the hot Sydney two days ago.

It is also good to see so many familiar faces of people who attended previous conferences – too many to name you all!

Yes, the International Hyman Rights Education conferences started at Western Sydney University in 2010. Then, it was Durban, Cracow, Taipei, Washington DC, Middleburg, Santiago & now Montreal.

And I am pleased that Montreal has agreed to host the 2017 conference as Montreal has a history of peacemaking and celebrates its diversity.

Montreal is also an important city in a country that has human rights record that is envy of the word. Just two days ago the Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau apologised for decades of LGBTQ2 past discrimination and promised compensation. This must be a first such undertaking in the world!

The 8th IHRE conference is also clearly a path breaker.

For the first time, the conference was organised by a non-government organisation and not by an academic institution.

Many warm thanks go to Ian Hamilton and his Equitas team for their vision and excellence.

Another first, it is the use the conference app to stimulate communications between us. Well done!

Finally, contrary to the program format of past conferences, this conference program centers on advancement of practical skills to be learnt at a series of workshops.

The timing of the IHRE conferences is not accidental.

December is a very special month for the human rights movement. 10 December 1948 is the birthday of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The declaration, for the first time, recognized in international law that human rights are universal and apply to everyone, everywhere and always.

Since 1948, and in particular since the Sydney 2010 conference, much has been achieved.

- **We have built a world movement to advance human rights education.**
- **We have contributed to the strengthening of the UN human rights education framework.**
- **We have put human rights education into domestic curricula of our respective countries.**

To sum up, we contributed to better understanding of human rights world-wide and through it we advanced justice and peace for all.

Let us work together to ensure that this conference is another milestone on the road to advancement of human rights education worldwide.

Again, thank you Ian. Welcome to you all!

I wish you a very successful conference.