

2009 International Observances and Years

Date	Observance
27 January	International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust
20 February	World Day of Social Justice
21 February	International Mother Language Day
8 March	International Women's Day
21-27 March	Week of Solidarity with the Peoples Struggling against Racism and Racial Discrimination
21 March	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
22 March	World Water Day
23 March	World Meteorological Day
25 March	International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members
25 March	International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade
2 April	World Autism Awareness Day
4 April	International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action
7 April	World Health Day
23 April	World Book and Copyright Day
3 May	World Press Freedom Day
8-9 May	Time of Remembrance and Reconciliation for Those Who Lost Their Lives during the Second World War
15 May	International Day of Families
17 May	World Telecommunication and Information Society Day
21 May	World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development
22 May	International Day for Biological Diversity
25-31 May	Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories

Date	Observance
29 May	International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers
31 May	World No-Tobacco Day
4 June	International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression
5 June	World Environment Day
17 June	World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought
20 June	World Refugee Day
23 June	United Nations Public Service Day
26 June	United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture
26 June	International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking
4 July	International Day of Cooperatives
11 July	World Population Day
9 August	International Day of the World's Indigenous People
12 August	International Youth Day
23 August	International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition
8 September	International Literacy Day
15 September	International Day of Democracy
16 September	International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer
21 September	International Day of Peace
24 September	World Maritime Day
1 October	International Day of Older Persons
2 October	International Day of Non-Violence
4-10 October	World Space Week
5 October	World Habitat Day
5 October	World Teacher's Day
9 October	World Post Day
10 October	World Mental Health Day

Date	Observance
14 October	International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction
15 October	International Day of Rural Women
16 October	World Food Day
17 October	International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
24-30 October	Disarmament Week
24 October	United Nations Day
24 October	World Development Information Day
6 November	International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict
14 November	World Diabetes Day
15 November	World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims
16 November	International Day for Tolerance
20 November	Africa Industrialization Day
20 November	Universal Children's Day
21 November	World Television Day
25 November	International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
29 November	International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People
1 December	World AIDS Day
2 December	International Day for the Abolition of Slavery
3 December	International Day of Persons with Disabilities
5 December	International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development
7 December	International Civil Aviation Day
9 December	International Anti-Corruption Day
10 December	Human Rights Day
11 December	International Mountain Day
18 December	International Migrants Day

Date	Observance
19 December	United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation
20 December	International Human Solidarity Day

Others:

Date	Observance
24 March	World TB Day
7 April	Anniversary of the Genocide in Rwanda
25 May	Africa Day
19 August	Anniversary of the Baghdad bombing

International Years

The General Assembly has declared four international years for 2009: the International Year of Natural Fibres, the International Year of Reconciliation, the International Year for Human Rights Learning (beginning 10 December 2008), and the International Year of Astronomy. In addition, UNEP and UNESCO have declared 2009 as the International Year of the Gorilla. Please find below a brief description of the aims and purposes of these years. For more detailed information, please refer to the relevant resolutions in full (document numbers quoted) or the links to websites where available.

International Year of Natural Fibres

Lead agency: FAO

WEBSITE: <http://www.naturalfibres2009.org/en/index.html>

Noting that the diverse range of natural fibres produced in many countries provides an important source of income for farmers and can thus play an important role in improving food security, eradicating poverty and contributing to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the General Assembly, on 20 December 2006, decided to proclaim 2009 as the International Year of Natural Fibres ([resolution 61/189](#)). It invited the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations ([FAO](#)) to facilitate the observance of the Year, in collaboration with Governments, regional, international and non-governmental organizations, the private sector and relevant United Nations bodies.

International Year of Reconciliation

On 20 November 2006, the General Assembly decided to proclaim 2009 as the International Year of Reconciliation ([resolution 61/17](#)). It expressed its steadfast determination to pursue reconciliation processes in those societies affected or divided by

conflicts, describing such processes as necessary for the establishment of firm and lasting peace.

International Year of Human Rights Learning

Noting that human rights learning should contribute to the fulfillment of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a way of life for people everywhere, on 20 March 2008 the General Assembly proclaimed the year beginning 10 December 2008 – the 60th anniversary of the Declaration – the International Year of Human Rights Learning (A/RES/62/171). It called upon Members States to promote and deepen human rights learning and education at the local, national and international levels.

International Year of Astronomy

WEBSITE: <http://www.astronomy2009.org/>

Lead agency: UNESCO

2009 was proclaimed the International Year of Astronomy by the General Assembly on 29 February 2008 (A/RES/62/200). The Year is a global effort, led by UNESCO and the International Astronomical Union (IAU), to help the citizens of the world rediscover their place in the Universe through the day- and night-time sky, and thereby engage a personal sense of wonder and discovery.

International Year of the Gorilla

Lead agencies: UNEP, UNESCO

WEBSITE: <http://www.yog2009.org>

The International Year of the Gorilla 2009 was launched by UNEP, UNESCO and WAZA (World Association of Zoos and Aquariums) in Rome in December 2008. Throughout 2009, Governments, business, civil society groups and individuals are being encouraged to undertake various projects to support conservation of gorillas by preserving their natural habitats while boosting at the same time, the livelihoods and income of local people and communities.

**SCD/DPI
21 January 2009**