



**THE KISHINEV DECLARATION
"FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE AND DIALOGUE OF
CIVILIZATIONS"**

(Kishinev, Republic of Moldova, 18 May 1998)

We, the participants in the International Forum "For a Culture of Peace and Dialogue of Civilizations, against a Culture of War and Violence", assembled in Kishinev, capital of the Republic of Moldova, from 16 to 18 May 1998, on the initiative of Moldovan figures of culture and at the invitation of the President of the Republic of Moldova, Mr Petru Lucinschi, and the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr Federico Mayor,

Warmly supporting the efforts of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization aimed at developing and disseminating the concept of a culture of peace, elaborating the Declaration on the Human Right to Peace as the Foundation of the Culture of Peace and implementing the project "Towards a culture of peace" which, on the threshold of a new century and a new millennium, express the desire and determination of the international community to put an end to the culture of war and violence, so as to save future generations from the scourge of war;

Acknowledging that, in order to achieve this goal, it is necessary not only to change military structures and doctrines but also to bring about radical changes in culture itself, replacing the culture of violence and war with a culture of peace, and reinforcing in people's consciousness respect for cultural and religious diversity, a caring attitude towards the unique character of human individuality, a tolerant and benevolent attitude towards all members of the human family, regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, political and other convictions, national or social origin, and status with regard to property, social condition or any other factor;

Convinced that, without education in the spirit of human rights, there can be no education in the spirit of a culture of peace and, in the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, entirely dedicated to its ideals affirming the inherent dignity of all members of the human family, their equal and inalienable rights which are the foundation of freedom, justice and universal peace;

Believing that the best way of responding to the challenges of today and tomorrow is the building of a culture of peace and, consequently, the recognition and fulfilment of the human right to peace;

Sincerely welcoming resolution 52/15 adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20 November 1997 on the initiative of UNESCO, proclaiming the year 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace;

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We must assimilate and promote the basic precepts of a culture of peace:

- *to respect human life, dignity and rights;*
- *to reject all forms of violence and prevent conflicts by eliminating their root causes through dialogue and negotiation;*
- *to observe equality of rights and opportunities for men and women;*
- *to observe the individual's right to freedom of opinion and information;*
- *to abide by the principles of democracy, freedom and tolerance, cultural diversity and dialogue between peoples, between ethnic, religious and other groups, and between individuals;*
- *to abide by the principles of social justice, solidarity and assistance to the weak and disadvantaged;*
- *to contribute to the humane development of society and the protection of the environment, for the benefit of the present and future generations;*
- *to promote and to implement the right of all human being to peace, which constitutes the foundation of a genuine culture of peace.*

Under the new conditions of a global, interdependent world, the conclusion arrived at by the International Commission on Education for the XXIst Century in its report to UNESCO. that we must "learn to live together", takes on overriding significance.

This means - beginning with education and teaching within the family and at school and in people's subsequent social activities, including those conducted through the media - inculcating the most important interconnected principles of a culture of peace:

- there is no lasting peace without respect for the dignity of individuals and peoples;
- there is no lasting peace without freedom and democracy;
- there is no lasting peace without justice and sustainable development.

A culture of peace is not a final goal, it is a long-term process of change in the values, attitudes and relations of individuals and communities.

The chief aim pursued by a culture of peace is to encourage the present and future generations to play an active part in creating a more humane, just, free and more prosperous world without war and violence.

To consolidate a culture of peace it is necessary:

- *in respect of education and teaching*, to effect the corresponding changes in content, methods and relations between the administration, teachers and students, between educational establishments, families and the world of work;
- *in respect of the construction of a civil society*, to achieve active participation by each citizen in decision-making on political, economic, social and cultural issues in the spirit of

- democracy and harmony between man, society and the environment which is the basis of a culture of peace;
- *in respect of safeguarding human rights*, to secure from the State and from the legislative and executive authorities respect for and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as guarantees of a culture of peace;
 - *in respect of information*, to safeguard freedom of opinion and of expression of convictions and the right to reliable information, in order to facilitate the strengthening of mutual understanding, respect and tolerance;
 - *in respect of philosophical, scientific and creative activity*, to endeavour to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, experience and artistic riches to the benefit of the mutual understanding and rapprochement of individuals and peoples.

For dialogue between different cultures and civilizations

Under the conditions of growing interdependence in the world, increasing importance is attached to the principle, corroborated by the experience of human civilization, that diversity constitutes the wealth of the world and belongs to all. The conclusion reached in the report submitted to UNESCO by the World Commission on Culture and Development is important in this connection: "...it is precisely thanks to culture that diverse and peaceful ways of living together can be developed".

Diversity can be source of mutual interest and, hence, of new motivation and energy for the interaction of different cultures.

The objective process of rapprochement between countries through information and communication makes us neighbours, in the literal sense of the term, and facilitates mutual dialogue and co-operation. It is important that this dialogue should be conducted in the spirit of the principles of mutual respect, tolerance and solidarity of joint action to counteract global threats.

We regard the conclusions of the Tbilisi International Forum "For Solidarity against Intolerance, for a Dialogue between Cultures" (1995) as relevant in this connection: "In the global world of today, tolerance becomes not only a virtue but a condition for the survival of mankind. Tolerance is the understanding of and respect for the respect for cultures, beliefs and styles of others. Tolerance is the acceptance of differences which exist within our societies and between our cultures. Tolerance is an attitude which considers the diversity of the world as a part of our common heritage".

We, the participants in the Forum, greatly appreciate and actively support the efforts of UNESCO and the United Nations to promote the ideals of a culture of peace, tolerance and dialogue between different civilizations on the road towards the building of a more humane, a more just and prosperous world, therefore we, the participants in this Forum, call upon the United Nations Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations to adopt a decision proclaiming a Decade for the Education on Culture of Peace and Non-violence beginning in the year 2001.

We proceed therein from the premise that this would give great effectiveness to the celebration of the International Year for the Culture of Peace and would facilitate the mobilization of international efforts to eradicate violence and prevent wars, and to create and develop a lasting culture of peace.