

Maputo Declaration

4 September 1997

Launched in 1995 on the initiative of the President of Mozambique with the support of the Director-General of UNESCO and the Secretary-General of OAU, an International Conference on the Culture of Peace and Good Governance was held in Maputo from 1 to 4 September 1997.

Mindful that the transition from a culture rooted in war, prejudice and violence to a culture of peace and tolerance can be achieved only with the help of all peoples of the region, the decision-makers, the elected representatives, the educators and particularly young people and women,

Convinced that a necessary accompaniment to peace-building is sustainable economic and social development and a system of participatory democracy based on governance informed by the democratic principles of justice, freedom, tolerance and solidarity,

Noting with satisfaction the encouraging shift towards peace that the southern region of the continent is experiencing,

Bearing in mind that the huge social disparities existing at the national and international levels constitute one of the main sources of conflict, together with the highly disturbing plight of the victims of violence and, more particularly, of the vulnerable sectors of the population,

Convinced that the spirit of intellectual and moral solidarity of UNESCO is destined to help make the human being the focus of all cultural, social, political and economic action,

Aware of our responsibility towards future generations and their right to live in peace in a healthy environment,

Recalling that UNESCO's mission, as enshrined in its Constitution, is to construct 'the defences of peace' in 'the minds of men', that peace is a pre-condition for ensuring respect for human rights, and that without peace there can be neither development nor democracy,

Further reminding the international community that only a new surge of solidarity can help the countries of the subregion to consolidate a peace that has been dearly won and is daily threatened by poverty and exclusion,

We, the participants in this Conference:

Pledge to champion education for tolerance, human rights and democracy throughout life, to foster reconciliation through the sharing and equitable distribution of resources of all kinds, and to stimulate the practice of democracy on a day-to-day basis, and support studies and experiments in reconciliation that can serve to prevent conflicts;

Launch an urgent appeal to the populations of the subregion and to decision-makers to work for an effective and rapid transition to a culture of peace, in particular by paying special attention to the victims of war and first and foremost to those belonging to the vulnerable sectors of the population;

Recommend the establishment of a network to consider the problems of governance and democratic principles, following the example of the DEMOS project which already exists in Latin America, and the creation of UNESCO Chairs in the Culture of Peace and Democratic Governance in the countries of the subregion;

Recommend, further, that an overhaul of curricula be undertaken in order to strengthen programmes of civic and moral education, and encourage the expansion of UNESCO Clubs while at the same time noting with satisfaction the OAU initiative to set up similar Clubs;

Concerned, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, to pass on to future generations a world rid of the faults and failings of which we have been the victims, express the wish that UNESCO explore ways and means of attaining this goal, which we regard as our duty but also, and above all, as a right for future generations;

Affirm our resolve to work to enhance the moral and ethical dimension of political management;

At a time when humankind is preparing to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, reaffirm that the human right to peace is an inalienable right, without which respect for the other rights cannot be guaranteed;

Recommend, finally, to UNESCO, OAU and all other regional, international and non-governmental organizations that they do their utmost to ensure that follow-up action is taken on the recommendations of this important Conference.

Maputo, Mozambique - 4 September 1997