



IBERO-AMERICAN FORUM OF OMBUDSMEN  
(Procurators, Commissioners, Arbitrators, Human  
Rights Defenders and Presidents of Human Rights  
Commissions) on Human Rights and a Culture of Peace  
**DECLARATION OF ANTIGUA GUATEMALA  
ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND A CULTURE OF PEACE**

Antigua, Guatemala, 30 July 1996.

The Ombudsmen of Argentina, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Spain, Guatemala, Mexico and Puerto Rico,

Wishing to foster the implementation of the principles which underpin the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights, the American Convention on Human Rights (Pact of San José) and other international principles related to the ideals of peace, mutual respect and understanding among the peoples,

Recalling that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims in its second preambular paragraph that 'disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind',

Aware of their commitment as Ombudsmen (Procurators, Commissioners, Arbitrators, Human Rights Defenders and Presidents of Human Rights Commissions), united in the Ibero-American Federation to defend human rights, and reaffirming their faith in the principles of peace, human dignity and worth and social justice,

Recalling that the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization - UNESCO - stipulates that: 'since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed' and bearing in mind that peace must be based on the solidarity, respect and mutual understanding of humanity,

Convinced that the quest for peace, on the one hand, and the furtherance of and respect for human rights, on the other, are closely interlinked and interacting and convinced, moreover, that men and women can only fully satisfy their aspirations in a just social order and, therefore, that the furtherance of and respect for economic, social and cultural rights are of vital importance to peace-building,

Aware that education for human rights and a culture of peace is of vital importance to establish respect for different cultural values, with a view to achieving peaceful coexistence, social harmony and effective participation in the institution of democracy,

Bearing in mind the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, June 1993), the World Plan of Action on Education for Human Rights and Democracy adopted by the International Congress on Education for Human Rights and Democracy (Montreal, March 1993), and the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), which represent significant attempts to meet the challenge of promoting peace, human rights, democracy and development,

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Bearing in mind the recommendations of the 44th session of the International Conference on Education, held in Geneva in October 1994, on education for peace, human rights and democracy,

Recognizing UNESCO's contribution to intercultural dialogue and to regional co-operation and integration in Latin America and the Caribbean, and appreciating the philosophy and contents of the Culture of Peace programme recommended by UNESCO's Executive Board and approved at the 27th session of the General Conference,

Considering that, in accordance with Article 7, paragraph (d), of the Statutes of the Ibero-American Federation of Ombudsmen (Procurators, Arbitrators, Commissioners or Presidents of Human Rights Commissions), one of the Organization's objectives is precisely to maintain relations of co-operation with international and intergovernmental institutions and organizations such as UNESCO,

Recalling, as UNESCO has done, that Ombudsmen as an institution have experience in spreading and strengthening a culture of peace which they apply on a daily basis in dealing with complaints, disseminating and disclosing their findings and playing an educational role, and that such experience should be beneficial and useful in terms of UNESCO's aims,

Taking into consideration that, as a result of this meeting, UNESCO appreciates and supports the Ibero-American Ombudsmen's movement owing to its significant role in safeguarding and strengthening the rule of law and preserving peace, which tasks are undertaken in an independent and autonomous manner,

**PROCLAIM THE FOLLOWING DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND A CULTURE OF PEACE:**

1. The construction and consolidation of a culture of peace entails a knowledge of human rights and the observance, protection and furtherance of such rights, be they civil, political, economic, social, or cultural rights, or the rights of generations to come; thus it is necessary to instil, through human rights education, a constant and instinctive attitude of respect towards the values and principles of human rights.
2. Building a culture of peace requires continuous and constructive action on the part of states and peoples, geared towards preventing conflict, eradicating various threats to peace, upholding the principle of rejection of the use of force, resolving conflicts and settling disputes by peaceful means, and promoting tolerance, disarmament and sustainable economic and social development.
3. Exercising freedom of opinion, expression and information, as an integral part of human rights and fundamental freedoms, is an essential factor in strengthening a culture of peace. In its daily undertakings, the mass media must be unstinting in its efforts, in order to contribute effectively towards consolidating the idea of peace, supporting human rights, establishing a fair and equitable economic order, promoting respect for cultural diversity and preventing incitement to war.
4. The full participation and empowerment of women is crucial to the development of a culture of peace. Social history, exclusion, marginalization and discrimination have imposed a host of challenges and drawbacks on women. Overcoming so many obstacles intellectually and culturally makes women essential partners in building a culture of peace based on respect for and acknowledgement of their human rights.
5. UNESCO's effort to establish a new intellectual conception of peace is welcomed, a conception which, as a culture of peace, will breathe new life into the fundamental universal values of respect for life, liberty, social justice, solidarity, tolerance, equity and equality

between men and women, and respect for the rights of children, persons belonging to minorities, indigenous and displaced populations.

6. In order to establish a permanent culture of peace, it is necessary that states and peoples introduce concrete measures to eradicate hunger and malnutrition and to ensure that basic human needs are satisfied. Illiteracy must also be eliminated as soon as possible.
7. Human rights and a culture of peace can only be made a reality by applying the democratic principles of justice, equity, liberty and solidarity, as stipulated in the Preamble of UNESCO's Constitution, and not by applying or imposing models that are alien to the cultural and historical background of peoples.
8. The human or material resources invested in building a culture of peace should at least match those allocated for the purpose of war, in order to offset the relative advantage of the latter. To this effect, the successful construction of a culture of peace requires support for initiatives aimed at effectively controlling the arms trade, reducing military budgets and making use of these resources for health and education and in order to promote other economic, social and cultural rights. The need to limit and, in the long run, to put an end to arms manufacturing has never been so pressing.
9. Advocating values which promote peace, human rights and democracy represents a vital challenge for education. Education should foster the ability to resolve conflicts by non-violent methods. It should, therefore, encourage the development of peace in the minds of students to enable them to cultivate their own qualities of tolerance, solidarity, sharing, and caring for others. Education should teach citizens to respect their cultural heritage, to protect the environment and to adopt production methods and consumption patterns which are conducive to social development. It should also promote stability and harmony between individual and collective values.
10. A culture of peace is a human process which develops through the collective practice of and experience of human rights. Since the Ombudsmen of Ibero-America appreciate the philosophical concepts which guide UNESCO's Culture of Peace programme, they consider it appropriate, in view of their double mission as human rights supporters and defenders, to form, within the framework of this programme, an international movement which, through the exchange and contribution of experience, would help to effect the cultural change whereby the recourse to violence and exclusion, as a solution to differences, would be replaced by an approach based on dialogue, tolerance, consensus and participation.

To this end, they hereby agree to set up the 'Ibero-American Network of Ombudsmen for a Culture of Peace', whose objectives shall be laid down at the next meeting of the Ibero-American Ombudsmen Federation.

11. The Ombudsmen of Ibero-America appreciate UNESCO's technical co-operation in integrating the objectives of the programme's Plan of Action into strategies for education, training and the promotion of human rights.
12. They consider that, in regard to the establishment of a culture of peace, it should always be borne in mind that the role of the armed forces should be confined to safeguarding democracy, whereas civil police forces should be responsible for public safety and crime prosecution. In all cases, the armed forces should be subject to the civil authority specified in fundamental laws governing the national states of the region.

13. The Ombudsmen of Ibero-America agree to publish this Declaration in each of their countries and to give it the widest possible dissemination, in order that the public campaign for a culture of peace may gain momentum. They express their gratitude to UNESCO for publishing a volume containing presentations, deliberations, conclusions and the present Declaration, giving it the widest possible dissemination amongst academic institutions, non-governmental organizations, governmental and intergovernmental institutions.
14. This Declaration should be presented at the Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government to be held in the Republic of Chile in October this year as a contribution to the agenda.
15. The Ombudsmen hereby decide to publicize their utter condemnation of the death threats made by Fascist groups against Procurators for Human Rights in the region, particularly Victoria Marina de Avilés, Procurator for Human Rights of El Salvador.
16. Finally, the Ombudsmen of Ibero-America wish to express their profound appreciation to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization - UNESCO - for devising and undertaking this important event. The Ombudsmen would particularly like to express their gratitude to the Procurator for Human Rights of Guatemala and to the people of Guatemala for their hospitality throughout the duration of the Forum.

Antigua Guatemala, Cultural Heritage of Humanity, 30 July 1996.

(signed)

Dr Jorge Luis Maiorano  
Ombudsman of Argentina

(signed)

Dr Rodrigo Alberto Carazo Zeledón  
Ombudsman of Costa Rica

(signed)

Dr Victoria Marina de Avilés  
Procurator for Human Rights of  
El Salvador

(signed)

Dr Fernando Alvarez de Miranda  
Ombudsman of Spain

(signed)

Dr Jorge Mario García Laguardia  
Procurator for Human Rights of  
Guatemala

(signed)

Dr Jorge Madrazo  
Chairperson of the National  
Commission on Human Rights  
Mexico

(signed)

Dr R. Adolfo de Castro  
Ombudsman of Puerto Rico

(signed)

Dr Federico Mayor Zaragoza  
Director-General of UNESCO