

Yamoussoukro Declaration on Peace in the Minds of Men

I

Peace is reverence for life.

Peace is the most precious possession of humanity.

Peace is more than the end of armed conflict.

Peace is a mode of behaviour.

Peace is a deep-rooted commitment to the principles of liberty, justice, equality and solidarity among all human beings.

Peace is also a harmonious partnership of humankind with the environment.

Today, on the eve of the twenty-first century, peace is within our reach.

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The International Congress on Peace in the Minds of Men, held on the initiative of UNESCO in Yamoussoukro in the heart of Africa, the cradle of humanity and yet a land of suffering and unequal development, brought together from the five continents men and women who dedicate themselves to the cause of peace.

The growing interdependence between nations and the increasing awareness of common security are signs of hope.

Disarmament measures helping to lessen tensions have been announced and already taken by some countries. Progress is being made in the peaceful settlement of international disputes. There is wider recognition of the international machinery for the protection of human rights.

But the Congress also noted the persistence of various armed conflicts throughout the world. There are also other conflictual situations: apartheid in South Africa; non-respect for national integrity; racism, intolerance and discrimination, particularly against women; and above all economic pressures in all their forms.

In addition, the Congress noted the emergence of new, non-military threats to peace. These new threats include: unemployment; drugs; lack of development; Third-World debt, resulting in particular from the imbalance between the industrialized countries and the developing countries together with the difficulties encountered by the countries of the Third World in turning their resources to account; and, finally, man-induced environmental degradation, such as the deterioration of natural resources, climatic changes, desertification, the destruction of the ozone layer and pollution, endangering all forms of life on Earth. The Congress has endeavoured to generate awareness of these problems.

Humans cannot work for a future they cannot imagine. Therefore, the task of this Congress has been to devise visions in which all can have faith.

Humanity can only secure its future through a form of co-operation that: respects the rule of law, takes account of pluralism, ensures greater justice in international economic exchanges and is based on the participation of all civil society in the construction of peace. The Congress affirms the right of individuals and societies to a quality environment as a factor essential to peace.

Additionally, new technologies are now available to serve humankind. But their efficient use is dependent on peace — both in their being used for peaceful purposes and in the need for a peaceful world to maximize their beneficial results.

Finally, the Congress recognizes that violence is not biologically determined and that humans are not predestined to be violent in their behaviour.

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The pursuit of peace is an exhilarating adventure. The Congress therefore proposes a new programme that makes practical and effective provision for new visions and approaches in co-operation, education, science, culture and communication, taking into account the cultural traditions of the different parts of the world. These measures are to be implemented in co-operation with international organizations and institutions, including the United Nations University, the University for Peace in Costa Rica and the Fondation internationale Houphouët-Boigny pour la recherche de la paix in Yamoussoukro.

UNESCO by virtue of its Constitution is engaged in the cause of peace. Peace is likewise the calling of Yamoussoukro. The Congress is a confirmation of the hopes of humankind.

II

PROGRAMME FOR PEACE

The Congress invites States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the scientific, educational and cultural communities of the world, and all individuals to:

- (a) help construct a new vision of peace by developing a peace culture based on the universal values of respect for life, liberty, justice, solidarity, tolerance, human rights and equality between women and men;
- (b) strengthen awareness of the common destiny of humanity so as to further the implementation of common policies ensuring justice in the relations between human beings and a harmonious partnership of humankind with nature;
- (c) include peace and human rights components as a permanent feature in all education programmes;
- (d) encourage concerted action at the international level to manage and protect the environment and to ensure that activities car-

ried out under the authority or control of any one State neither impair the quality of the environment of other States nor harm the biosphere.

The Congress recommends that UNESCO make the fullest possible contribution to all peace programmes. It recommends in particular that the following proposals be examined:

1. The endorsement of the Seville Statement on Violence (1986) — a first stage in an important process of reflection tending to refute the myth that organized human violence is biologically determined. This Statement should be disseminated in as many languages as possible together with appropriate explanatory material. The process of reflection should be pursued through the convening of an interdisciplinary seminar to study the cultural and social origins of violence.
2. The promotion of education and research in the field of peace. This activity should be conducted using an interdisciplinary approach and should be aimed at studying the interrelationship between peace, human rights, disarmament, development and the environment.
3. The further development of the UNESCO-UNEP International Environmental Education Programme, in co-operation with Member States, in particular to implement the International Strategy for Action in the Field of Environmental Education and Training for the 1990s. This should incorporate fully the new vision of peace.
4. Study of the establishment with the United Nations University of an international institute of peace and human rights education, particularly aimed at training future cadres through a system of exchanges, teaching and internships.
5. The compilation of texts from all cultures, highlighting the common lessons they yield on the themes of peace, tolerance and fraternity.
6. The development of measures for the enhanced application of existing and potential United Nations — and, in particular, UNESCO — international instruments relating to human rights, peace, the environment and development and those encouraging recourse to legal remedies, dialogue, mediation and the peaceful settlement of disputes.