BUILDING A CULTURE OF PEACE FOR THE PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS

PEACE DAY ESSAYS, POEMS AND EXCERPTS ON WORLD PEACE AND SECURITY

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE AND THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE AND NON-VIOLENCE FOR THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD
PRELUDE

Culture of Peace: what is it?

As defined by the United Nations, the Culture of Peace is a set of values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and ways of life that reject violence and prevent by tackling the root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations (UN Resolutions A/RES/52/13: Culture of Peace and A/RES/53/243, Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace). For peace and non-violence to prevail, we need to:

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Foster a culture of peace through education

by revising the educational curricula to promote qualitative values, attitudes and behaviours of a culture of peace, including peaceful conflict-resolution, dialogue, consensus-building and active non-violence. Such an educational approach should also be geared to:

Promote sustainable economic and social development

by reducing economic and social inequalities, by eradicating poverty and by assuring sustainable food security, social justice, durable solutions to debt problems, empowerment of women, special measures for groups with special needs, environmental sustainability....

Protect respect for all human rights

human rights and a culture of peace are complementary: whenever war and violence dominate, there is no possibility to ensure human rights; at the same time, without human rights, in all their dimensions, there can be no culture of peace.....

Ensure equality between women and men

through full participation of women in economic, social and political decision-making, elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women, support and assistance to women in need....

Foster democratic participation

indispensable foundations for the achievement and maintenance of peace and security are democratic principles, practices and participation in all sectors of society, a transparent and accountable governance and administration, the combat against terrorism, organised crime, corruption, illicit drugs and money...
Advance understanding, tolerance and solidarity

to abolish war and violent conflicts we need to transcend and overcome enemy images with understanding, tolerance and solidarity among all peoples and cultures. Learning from our differences, through dialogue and the exchange of information, is an enriching process…. 

Support participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge

freedom of information and communication and the sharing of information and knowledge are indispensable for a culture of peace. However, measures need to be taken to address the issue of violence in the media, including new information and communication technologies...

Promote international peace and security

the gains in human security and disarmament in recent years, including nuclear weapons treaties and the treaty banning land mines, should encourage us to increase our efforts in negotiation of peaceful settlements, elimination of production and traffic of arms and weapons, humanitarian solutions in conflict situations, post-conflict initiatives....

A UNESCO Document
Introduction

The Peace Day Essay Project is an initiative of Nigerian Group for Goodwill in commemoration of the International Day of Peace 2004 and in cooperation with the aims and objectives of the UN Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World. It occurred to us in the group that we share in the responsibility of enhancing the public awareness of peace, peace-building and non-violence in our environment in some practical way.

The world today is full of conflicts, violence, wars and man-made disasters. Due to the pervasive influence of selfish materialism, ignorance, greed, hatred, corruption and lust for power in our communities, there is peace neither in human heart, in the society, in the nation nor in the world at this time. It is impossible to have any meaningful human progress when the society is riddled with injustice, man’s inhumanity to man, poverty, hunger, illiteracy, disease and violence; and without peace and security in the society and in the world the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) set out for human betterment and well being by the United Nations will be nigh impossible to achieve.

We recognised that it is the responsibility of thinking men and women of goodwill in the world to work together in order to ensure that coming generations of humanity live in peace, harmony and security so that they may have the enabling personal, communal, national and global environment in which to unfold the wonderful spirituality implanted by God in all men, and thus build that special and new civilisation which will be the hallmark of the incoming Aquarian Age.

In order to make an impact on the public awareness and evoke some response, we requested the general public through the news media to write and send us essays and poems on the topic: “Building a Culture of Peace for the Present and Future Generations”. Our objectives for this project are:

- To bring the International Day of Peace, which takes place on 21 September every year, and the peace-building initiatives and efforts of the UN, UNESCO and other UN Agencies to the general public awareness,

- To challenge men and women of goodwill to think, reflect and meditate on the theme of peace and peace-building and the role of peace and security in our contemporary evolving society.

- To encourage men and women of goodwill in our community to formulate their own thoughts on peace in practical terms and to express and share them with others vocally or in writing.

- To produce a book on the topic which shall be given wide circulation to sensitise our community about the need for peace and peace-building, and our collective responsibility to make the world a better, safer and more peaceful environment.
for the present and future generations.

We have received enthusiastic response from the public, and selected contributions of our respondents are posted in this compilation. We have also included many useful declarations, statements, programmes of action, other extracts and quotes from the UN and UNESCO literatures, pages of Ageless Wisdom, and other sources to provide the necessary framework for, and to enhance the quality of this presentation and thereby make it a useful contribution to the work of peace-building in our community and in the world.

We sincerely hope that this booklet will give our readers some useful food for thought and some pleasurable reading just as it has been our deep pleasure and privilege to put this compilation together.

Nigerian Group for Goodwill

May Peace Prevail on Earth

This booklet is dedicated to the United Nations and UNESCO in their untiring quest for world peace and security.
Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the co-operation, advice and encouragement given to us during the work on this project by Steve Nation of Intuition in Service New Zealand, Christine Morgan of Lucis Trust London, Avon Mattison of Pathways to Peace and “We the Peoples” Initiative in California, Gordon Davidson and Corinne McLaughlin of the Centre for Visionary Leadership, and many others who have supported this work in spirit and in thought.

We also acknowledge the editorial support given to us by Ijeoma Arguba during the production of this book.

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Disclaimer

The essays and poems presented in this compilation are purely the views and expressions of their authors which are not necessarily endorsed by Nigerian Group for Goodwill.
"We the peoples of the United Nations,

determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in the fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

And for these ends,

to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples,

Have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims.

*Charter of the United Nations 1945, Preamble*

“Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.”

*Constitution of UNESCO, 1945, Preamble*

“Peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.”

*Founding Statement of UNESCO*
Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly Resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948

PREAMBLE

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, therefore,

The General Assembly,

Proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.
Article 2
Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without
distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other
opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or
international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be
independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3
Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4
No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be
prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5
No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or
punishment.

Article 6
Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7
All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal
protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in
violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8
Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for
acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9
No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10
Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and
impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal
charge against him.

Article 11
1 Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until
proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the
guarantees necessary for his defence.
No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

**Article 12**

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

**Article 13**

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State.

2. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

**Article 14**

1. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

2. This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

**Article 15**

1. Everyone has the right to a nationality.

2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

**Article 16**

1. Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

2. Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

3. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

**Article 17**

1. Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.
Article 18
Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19
Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20
1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
2. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21
1. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
2. Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country.
3. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22
Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23
1. Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
2. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
3. Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
4. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.
**Article 24**

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

**Article 25**

1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

2. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

**Article 26**

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

**Article 27**

1. Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

2. Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

**Article 28**

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

**Article 29**

1. Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

2. In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just
requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

3 These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

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THE FOUR FREEDOMS

In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms.

The first is freedom of speech and expression—everywhere in the world.

The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way—everywhere in the world.

The third is freedom from want—which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants—everywhere in the world.

The fourth is freedom from fear—which, translated into world terms, means a worldwide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbour—anywhere in the world.

Franklin D. Roosevelt - January 6, 1941
Promoting A Culture of Peace As A Challenge For The UN System

1. In response to General Assembly resolution 52/13, which calls for the promotion of a culture of peace as an integral approach to preventing violence and armed conflicts, the Secretary-General, in co-ordination with the Director-General of UNESCO, submits herewith a consolidated report containing a draft declaration and programme of action on a culture of peace. This report builds upon the previous report submitted to the General Assembly (A/52/292) and upon inputs from numerous entities of the United Nations system and other international organisations.

2. The United Nations is challenged to take up with renewed commitment and resources its fundamental task – “to save future generations from the scourge of war”. This task requires transforming not only the institutional structures and manifestations of war, but also its deep cultural roots, the culture of violence and war, into a culture of peace and non-violence.

3. The transition from the culture of war to a culture of peace, initially taken up as a priority by UNESCO, has now been taken up by the United Nations as well. A culture of peace ‘consists of values, attitudes and behaviours that reflect and inspire social interaction and sharing, based on the principles of freedom, justice and democracy, all human rights, tolerance and solidarity, that reject violence, endeavour to prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation and that guarantee the full exercise of all rights and the means to participate fully in the development process of their society’.

4. Violence is not inevitable. Rather than intervening in violent conflicts after they have erupted and then engaging in post-conflict peace-building, it is more efficient to prevent such violence in the first place by addressing its roots – this is the essence of a culture of peace approach.

5. The challenge of promoting a culture of peace is so broad and far-reaching that it can only be met if it becomes a priority for the entire United Nations system. This is a process that is already under way. The creation of the United Nations system based upon universally shared values and goals has been per se a major act of a culture of peace. The international instruments adopted under its auspices and the declarations and action plans of its recent world conferences reflect the development and deepening of commonly shared norms, values and aims which may be considered as the core of the evolving concept of a culture of peace.

6. These norms, values and aims constitute the basis of a global ethics and show that fundamentally many of the most important values are common to all great moral traditions and that there is no sharp cleavage between values of various groups of countries, between the North and South, the East and the West. The promotion of a culture of peace provides a common task, which can foster an atmosphere of true equality and unity among the Member States. This is a
challenge to which every nation, large or small, is equally rich in the contributions it can make. Similarly, the attainment of a culture of peace will benefit every nation and its people without diminishing any other.

7. In a rapidly and deeply changing world characterised by the growing importance of ethical issues, a culture of peace provides future generations with values that can help them to shape their destiny and actively participate in constructing a more just, humane, free and prosperous society and a more peaceful world. The General Assembly, in proclaiming the Year 2000, at the turn of the century, as the International Year for the Culture of Peace, has recognised the importance of mobilising public opinion for a culture of peace. The Assembly has also envisaged a central role for the United Nations system in its realisation.

MAY PEACE PREVAIL ON EARTH
The General Assembly,

*Recalling* the Charter of the United Nations including the purposes and principles contained therein,

*Recalling* the constitution of the UNESCO which states that 'since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed',

*Recalling* also the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and other relevant international instruments of the United Nations system,

*Recognizing* that peace is not only the absence of conflict, but requires a positive, dynamic participatory process where dialogue is encouraged and conflicts are solved in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation,

*Recognizing* also that the end of the cold war has widened possibilities for strengthening a culture of peace,

*Expressing* deep concern about the persistence and proliferation of violence and conflict in various parts of the world,

*Recognizing* further the need to eliminate all forms of discrimination and intolerance, including those based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status,

*Recalling* its resolution 52/15 proclaiming the year 2000 the 'International Year for the Culture of Peace' and its resolution 53/25 proclaiming the period 2001-2010 as the 'International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World',

*Recognizing* the important role UNESCO continues to play in the promotion of a culture of peace,

*Solemnly proclaims* this *Declaration on a Culture of Peace* to the end that governments, international organizations and civil society may be guided in their activity by its provisions to promote and strengthen a culture of peace in the new millennium.

“Article 1: a culture of peace is a set of values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behaviour and ways of life based on:

- Respect for life, ending of violence and promotion and practice of non-violence through education, dialogue and cooperation.
- Full respect for and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms;
Commitment to peaceful settlement of conflicts;
Efforts to meet the developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations;
Respect for and promotion of the right to development;
Respect for and promotion of equal rights of and opportunities for women and men;
Respect for and promotion of the rights of everyone to freedom of expression, opinion and information;
Adherence to the principles of freedom, justice, democracy, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation, pluralism, cultural diversity, dialogue and understanding at all levels of society and among nations;

and fostered by an enabling national and international environment conducive to peace;

Article 2: Progress in the fuller development of a culture of peace comes about through values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and ways of life conducive to the promotion of peace among individuals, groups and nations;

Article 3: The fuller development of a culture of peace is integrally linked to:

Promoting peaceful settlement of conflicts, mutual respect and understanding and international cooperation;
Compliance with international obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and international law;
Promoting democracy, development and universal respect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms;
Enabling people at all levels to develop skills of dialogue, negotiation, consensus building and peaceful resolution of differences;
Strengthening democratic institutions and ensuring full participation in the development process;
Eradicating poverty and illiteracy and reducing inequalities within and among nations;
Promoting sustainable economic and social development;
Eliminating all forms of discrimination against women through their empowerment and equal representation at all levels of decision-making;
Ensuring respect for and promotion and protection for the rights of children;
Ensuring free flow of information at all levels and enhancing access thereto;
Increasing transparency and accountability in governance;
Eliminate all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;
Advancing understanding, tolerance and solidarity among all civilisations, peoples and cultures, including towards ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities;
Article 4: Education at all levels is one of the principal means to build a culture of peace. In this context, human rights education is of particular importance;

Article 5: Governments have an essential role in promoting and strengthening a culture of peace;

Article 6: Civil society needs to be fully engaged in fuller development of a culture of peace;

Article 7: The educative and informative role of the media contributes to the promotion of a culture of peace;

Article 8: A key role in the promotion of a culture of peace belongs to parents, teachers, politicians, journalists, religious bodies and groups, intellectuals, those engaged in scientific, philosophical and creative and artistic activities, health and humanitarian workers, social workers, managers at various levels as well as to non-governmental organisations;

Article 9: The United Nations should continue to play a critical role in the promotion and strengthening of a culture of peace worldwide.”
UN Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace

The General Assembly,

*Bearing in mind* the Declaration on a Culture of Peace adopted on 13 September 1999;

*Recalling* its resolution 52/15 of 20 November 1997, by which it proclaimed the year 2000 the International Year for the Culture of Peace, as well as its resolution 53/25 of 10 November 1998, by which it proclaimed the period 2001 – 2010 as the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World;

1. Adopts the following Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace,

A. Aims, strategies and main actors

1. The Programme of Action should serve as the basis for the International Year for the Culture of Peace and the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World.

2. Member States are encouraged to take actions for promoting a culture of peace at the national level as well as at the regional and international levels.

3. Civil society should be involved at the local, regional and national levels to widen the scope of activities on a culture of peace.

4. The United Nation system should strengthen its on-going efforts promoting a culture of peace.

5. UNESCO should continue to play its important role in and make major contributions to the promotion of a culture of peace.

6. Partnerships between and among the various actors as set out in the Declaration should be encouraged and strengthened for a global movement for a culture of peace.

7. A culture of peace could be promoted through sharing of information among actors on their initiatives in this regard.

8. Effective implementation of this Programme of Action requires mobilisation of resources, including financial resources, by interested governments, organisations and individuals.

B. Strengthening actions at the national, regional and international levels by all relevant actors through:
9. Actions fostering a culture of peace through education:

- Reinvigorate national efforts and international cooperation to promote the goals of education for all with a view to achieving human, social and economic development and for promoting a culture of peace;

- Ensure that children, from an early age, benefit from education on the values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and ways of life to enable them to resolve any dispute peacefully and in a spirit of respect for human dignity and of tolerance and non-discrimination.

- Involve children in activities for instilling in them the values and goals of a culture of peace;

- Ensure equality of access for women, especially girls, to education;

- Encourage revision of educational curricula, including textbooks bearing in mind the 1995 Declaration and Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy for which technical cooperation should be provided by UNESCO upon request;

- Encourage and strengthen efforts by actors as identified in the Declaration, in particular UNESCO, aimed at developing values and skills conducive to a culture of peace, including education and training in promoting dialogue and consensus-building;

- Strengthen the ongoing efforts of the relevant entities of the United Nations system aimed at training and education, where appropriate, in the areas of conflict prevention/crisis management, peaceful settlement of disputes as well as in post-conflict peace-building;

- Expand initiatives promoting a culture of peace undertaken by institutions of higher education in various parts of the world including the United Nations University, the University for Peace and the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme;

10. Actions to promote sustainable economic and social development:

- Undertake comprehensive actions on the basis of appropriate strategies and agreed targets to eradicate poverty through national and international efforts, including through international cooperation;

- Strengthening the national capacity for implementation of policies and programmes designed to reduce economic and social inequalities within
nations through, inter alia, international cooperation;

- Promoting effective and equitable development-oriented and durable solutions to the external debt and debt-servicing problems of developing countries, inter alia, through debt relief;

- Reinforcement of actions at all levels to implement national strategies for sustainable food security including the development of actions to mobilise and optimise the allocation and utilisation of resources from all sources, including through international cooperation such as resources coming from debt relief;

- Further efforts to ensure that development process is participatory and that development projects involve the full participation of all;

- Integrating a gender perspective and empowering women and girls should be an integral part of the development process;

- Development strategies should include special measures focusing on needs of women and children as well as groups with special needs;

- Development assistance in post-conflict situations should strengthen rehabilitation, reintegration and reconciliation processes involving all engaged in the conflict;

- Capacity-building in development strategies and projects to ensure environmental sustainability, including preservation and regeneration of the natural resource base;

- Removing obstacles to the realisation of the rights of peoples to self-determination, in particular of peoples living under colonial or other forms alien domination or foreign occupation, which adversely affect their social and economic development;

11. Actions to promote respect for human rights

- Full implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action;

- Encourage development of national plans for action for the promotion and protection of all human rights;

- Strengthening of national institutions and capacities in the field of human rights, including through national human rights, including through national
human rights institutions;

- Realisation and implementation of the right to development, as established in the Declaration on the Rights to Development and the *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action*;

- Achievement of the goals of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995 – 2004);

- Disseminate and promote the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* at all levels;

- Further support to the activities of the *United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights* in the fulfilment of her/his mandate as established in UNGA resolution 48/141 as well as the responsibilities set by subsequent resolutions and decisions;

12. Actions to ensure equality between women and men:

- Integration of gender perspective into the implementation of all relevant international instruments;

- Further implementation of international instruments promoting equality between women and men;

- Implementation of the *Beijing Platform for Action* with adequate resources and political will, and through, inter alia, the elaboration, implementation and follow-up of the national plans of action;

- Promote equality between women and men in economic, social and political decision making;

- Further strengthening of efforts by the relevant entities of the United Nations system for the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women;

- Provision of support and assistance to women who have become victims of any forms of violence, including in the home, workplace and during armed conflicts;
13. Actions to foster democratic participation

- Reinforcement of the full range of actions to promote democratic principles and practices;

- Special emphasis on democratic principles and practices at all levels of formal, informal and non-formal education;

- Establishment and strengthening of national institutions and processes that promote and sustain democracy through, inter alia, training and capacity-building of public officials;

- Strengthening democratic participation through, inter alia, the provision of electoral assistance upon the request of States concerned and based on relevant United Nations guidelines;

- Combat terrorism, organised crime, corruption as well as production, trafficking and consumption of illicit drugs and money laundering as they undermine democracies and impede the fuller development of a culture of peace;

14. Actions to advance understanding, tolerance and solidarity

- Implementation of the Declaration of Principles of Tolerance and Follow-up Plan for the United Nations Year of Tolerance (1995);

- Support activities in the context of the United Nations International Year of Dialogue among Civilisations in the year 2001;

- Study further the local or indigenous practices and traditions of dispute settlement and promotion of tolerance with the objective of learning from those;

- Support actions that foster understanding, tolerance and solidarity throughout society, in particular with vulnerable groups;

- Further supporting the attainment of the goals of the International Decade of the World’s Indigenous People;

- Support actions that foster tolerance and solidarity with refugees and displaced persons bearing in mind the objective of facilitating their voluntary
return and social integration;

- Support actions that foster tolerance and solidarity with migrants;

- Promotion of increased understanding, tolerance, and cooperation among all peoples, inter alia, through appropriate use of new technologies and dissemination of information;

- Support actions that foster understanding, tolerance and cooperation among peoples and within and among nations;

15. Actions to support participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge:

- Support the important role of the media in the promotion of peace;

- Ensure the freedom of the press and freedom of information and communication;

- Making effective use of the media for advocacy and dissemination of information on a culture of peace involving, as appropriate, the United Nations and relevant regional, national and local mechanisms;

- Promoting mass communication that enable communities to express their needs and participate in decision-making;

- taking measures to address the issue of violence in the media including new communication technologies, inter alia, the Internet;

- Increased efforts to promote the sharing of information on new information technologies, including the Internet.

16. Actions to promote international peace and security:

- Promote general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control taking into account the principles established by the United Nations in the field of disarmament;

- Draw on, where appropriate, lessons conducive to a culture of peace learned from “military conversion” efforts as evidenced in some countries of the world;
• Emphasise the inadmissibility of acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in all parts of the world;

• Encourage confidence building measures and efforts for negotiating peaceful settlements;

• Take measures to eliminate production and traffic of small arms and light weapons;

• Support for initiatives, at national regional and international levels, to address concrete problems arising from post conflict situations, such as demobilisation, reintegration of former combatants into society as well as refugees and displaced persons, weapon collection programmes, exchange of information and confidence building;

• Discourage the adoption of and refrain from any unilateral measure, not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations, that impedes the full achievement of economic and social development by the population of the affected countries, in particular women and children, that hinders their well-being that creates obstacles to the full enjoyment of their human rights, including the right of everyone to standard of living adequate for their health and well-being and their right to food, medical care and the necessary social services, while reaffirming food and medicine must not be used as a tool for political pressure;

• Refrain from military, political, economic or any other form of coercion, not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations, aimed against political independence or territorial integrity of any state;

• Recommends to give proper consideration to the issue of humanitarian impact of sanctions, in particular on women and children, with a view of minimising humanitarian effects of sanctions;

• Promoting greater involvement of women in prevention and resolution of conflicts and in particular, in activities promoting a culture of peace in post-conflict situations;

• Promote initiatives in conflict situation such as days of tranquillity to carry out immunisation and medicine distribution campaigns; corridors of peace to ensure delivery of humanitarian supplies and sanctuaries of peace to respect the central role of health and medical institutions such as hospitals and clinics;
• Encouraging training in techniques for the understanding, prevention and resolution of conflict for the concerned staff of the United Nations, relevant regional organisations and Member States, upon request, where appropriate.

Statement on Women’s Contribution to a Culture of Peace

United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Note: This Declaration, while written in 1995, is still very relevant today. It is hoped that you will support it by signing the form on the website: http://www.unesco.org/cpp/uk/declarations/wcpbei.htm

On the eve of the twenty-first century, a dynamic movement towards a culture of peace derives inspiration and hope from women's visions and actions.

It is important to draw strength from cultural diversity and redefine the concept of security so that it encompasses ecological, economic, social, cultural and personal security. To replace unequal gender relations with authentic and practical equality between women and men is imperative in order to allow for true participatory democracies.

Ours is still an armed and warring planet. In the first half of this decade alone, more than 90 conflagrations of various kinds have taken a vast toll of human life, impeded social and economic development and depleted the world's resources. Women continue to experience systematic violations of their human rights and to be largely excluded from decision-making. In situations of war and military occupation, women are to an alarming degree the victims and targets of atrocities and aggression.
To combat war as the ultimate expression of the culture of violence, we must address issues such as violence against women in the home, acts and reflexes of aggression and intolerance in everyday life, the banalization of violence in the media, the implicit glorification of war in the teaching of history, trafficking in arms and in drugs, recourse to terrorism and the denial of fundamental human rights and democratic freedoms.

A culture of peace requires that we confront the violence of economic and social deprivation. Poverty and social injustices such as exclusion and discrimination weigh particularly heavily on women. Redressing the flagrant asymmetries of wealth and opportunity within and between countries is indispensable to addressing the root causes of violence in the world.

Equality, development and peace are inextricably linked. There can be no lasting peace without development, and no sustainable development without full equality between men and women.

The new millennium must mark a new beginning. We must dedicate ourselves to averting violence at all levels, to exploring alternatives to violent conflict and to forging attitudes of tolerance and active concern towards others. Human society has the capacity to manage conflict so that it becomes part of a dynamic of positive change. Always provided it involves the full participation of women, action to remedy a pervasive culture of violence is not beyond the capacity of the people and governments of the world.

Efforts to move towards a culture of peace must be founded in education; as stated in UNESCO's Constitution: since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.

Girls and women constitute a large majority of the world's educationally excluded and unreached. Ensuring equality of educational access and opportunity between the sexes is a prerequisite for achieving the changes of attitudes and mind-sets on which a culture of peace depends.

Equality in education is the key to meeting other requirements for a culture of peace. These include: full respect for the human rights of women; the release and utilisation of women's creative potential in all aspects of life; power sharing and equal participation in decision-making by women and men; the reorientation of social and economic policies to equalise opportunities and new and more equitable patterns of gender relations - presupposing a radical reform of social structures and processes.

Women's capacity for leadership must be utilised to the full and to the benefit of all in order to progress towards a culture of peace. Their historically limited participation in governance has led to a distortion of concepts and a narrowing of processes. In such areas as conflict prevention, the promotion of cross-cultural dialogue and the redressing of socio-economic injustice, women can be the source of innovative and much needed approaches to peace-building.
Women bring to the cause of peace among people and nations distinctive experiences, competence, and perspectives. Women's role in giving and sustaining life has provided them with skills and insights essential to peaceful human relations and social development. Women subscribe less readily than men to the myth of the efficacy of violence, and they can bring a new breadth, quality and balance of vision to a joint effort of moving from a culture of war towards a culture of peace.

To this end, we the undersigned, commit ourselves to:

- support national and international efforts to ensure equal access to all forms of learning opportunities, with a view to women's empowerment and access to decision-making;
- promote relevant quality education that imparts knowledge of the human rights of men and women, skills of non-violent conflict resolution, respect for the natural environment, intercultural understanding and awareness of global interdependence, which are essential constituents of a culture of peace;
- encourage new approaches to development that take account of women's priorities and perspectives;
- oppose the misuse of religion, cultural and traditional practices for discriminatory purposes;
- seek to reduce the direct and indirect impact of the culture of war on women - in the form of physical and sexual violence or the neglect of social services for excessive military expenditure;
- increase women's freedom of expression and involvement in the media as well as the use of gender-sensitive language and images;
- promote knowledge and respect for international normative instruments concerning the human rights of girls and women and ensure widespread dissemination in order to further the well-being of all, men and women, including the most vulnerable groups of societies;
- support governmental and intergovernmental structures as well as women's associations and NGOs committed to the development of a culture of peace based on equality between women and men.
- We, the signatories, appeal to women and men of goodwill and of diverse cultural backgrounds, religious beliefs, ethnic and social origins to join us in a global endeavour to build, in solidarity and compassion, a culture of peace in the domestic realm and in the public sphere.
- Only together, women and men in parity and partnership, can we overcome obstacles and inertia, silence and frustration and ensure the insight, political will, creative thinking and concrete actions needed for a global transition from the culture of violence to a culture of peace.

To sign this commitment, go to:
http: www.unesco.org/cpp/uk/declarations/wcpbei.htm
Declaration on the role of religion in the promotion of a culture of peace

“We, participants in the meeting ‘The Contribution by Religions to the Culture of Peace’, organized by UNESCO and the Centre UNESCO de Catalunya, which took place in Barcelona from 12 to 18 December, 1994; Deeply concerned with the present situation of the world, such as increasing armed conflicts and violence, poverty, social injustice, and structures of oppression; Recognizing that religion is important in human life; Declare:

Our World

1. We live in a world in which isolation is no longer possible. We live in a time of unprecedented mobility of peoples and intermingling of cultures. We are all interdependent and share an inescapable responsibility for the well-being of the entire world.

2. We face a crisis which could bring about the suicide of the human species or bring us a new awakening and a new hope. We believe that peace is possible. We know that religion is not the sole remedy for all the ills of humanity, but it has an indispensable role to play in this most critical time.

3. We are aware of the world’s cultural and religious diversity. Each culture represents a universe in itself and yet it is not closed. Cultures give religions their language, and religions offer ultimate meaning to each culture. Unless we recognize pluralism and respect diversity, no peace is possible. We strive for the harmony which is at the very core of peace.

4. We understand that culture is a way of seeing the world and living in it. It also means the cultivation of those values and forms of life which reflect the world-views of each culture. Therefore neither the meaning of peace nor of religion can be reduced to a single and rigid concept, just as the range of human experience cannot be conveyed by a single language.

5. For some cultures, religion is a way of life, permeating every human activity. For others, it represents the highest aspirations of human existence. In still others, religions are institutions that claim to carry a message of salvation.

6. Religions have contributed to the peace of the world, but they have also led to division, hatred, and war. Religious people have too often betrayed the high ideals they themselves have preached. We feel obligated to call for sincere acts of repentance and mutual forgiveness, both personally and collectively, to one another, to humanity in general, and to Earth and all living beings.
Peace

7. Peace implies that love, compassion, human dignity, and justice are fully preserved.

8. Peace entails that we understand that we are all interdependent and related to one another. We are all individually and collectively responsible for the common good, including the well-being of future generations.

9. Peace demands that we respect Earth and all forms of life, especially human life. Our ethical awareness requires setting limits to technology. We should direct our efforts towards eliminating consumerism and improving the quality of life.

10. Peace is a journey -- a never ending process.

Commitment

11. We must be at peace with ourselves; we strive to achieve inner peace through personal reflection and spiritual growth, and to cultivate a spirituality which manifests itself in action.

12. We commit ourselves to support and strengthen the home and family as the nursery of peace.

In homes and families, communities, nations, and the world:

13. We commit ourselves to resolve or transform conflicts without using violence, and to prevent them through education and the pursuit of justice.

14. We commit ourselves to work towards a reduction in the scandalous economic differences between human groups and other forms of violence and threats to peace, such as waste of resources, extreme poverty, racism, all types of terrorism, lack of caring, corruption, and crime.

15. We commit ourselves to overcome all forms of discrimination, colonialism, exploitation, and domination and to promote institutions based on shared responsibility and participation. Human rights, including religious freedom and the rights of minorities, must be respected.

16. We commit ourselves to assure a truly humane education for all. We emphasize education for peace, freedom, and human rights, and religious education to promote openness and tolerance.

17. We commit ourselves to a civil society which respects environmental and social justice. This process begins locally and continues to national and trans-national levels.
18. We commit ourselves to work towards a world without weapons and to dismantle the industry of war.

**Religious responsibility**

19. Our communities of faith have a responsibility to encourage conduct imbued with wisdom, compassion, sharing, and charity.

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*The true expression of this realized brotherhood must inevitably come through the establishing of right human relations and the cultivation of goodwill. Churchmen have forgotten the sequence in the angel's song: "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill towards men". They have failed to realize and, therefore, to teach that only as goodwill is manifested in the daily lives of men are right human relations thereby established and peace on earth can come; they have failed also to realize that there is no glory to God until there is peace on earth through goodwill among men. The churches have forgotten that all men are sons of the Father and, therefore, brothers; that all men are divine, that some men are already God-conscious and expressing divinity and that some are not; they have overlooked the fact that because of their point in evolution some men know Christ, because the Christ in them is active while others are only struggling to bring the Christ life into activity; still others are entirely unaware of the divine Being hidden deep within their hearts. There is only difference in degree of consciousness; there is no difference in nature.*

_Problems of Humanity by Alice Bailey pg 148_
AN AFFIRMATION OF GOODWILL

We, the people of goodwill, convinced

- That there is potential for good in every human being,
- That the human family can live together in right relations and at peace,
- That right relationship between peoples and nations and between humanity and the earth is the key to world peace and progress,
- That practical goodwill is the key to right relationships,

Recognising that:

- The only way to guarantee a future peace and progress for the whole human race is for enough men and women of goodwill to accept responsibility for the establishing of right relations, and to work actively with the principles of unity and goodwill.

Affirm our intention:

- To practise goodwill in all our relationships, in all daily affairs and in our attitudes and actions towards those of other nations, ethnic groups, religious and social backgrounds and towards the earth.
- To support and cooperate with those in positions of influence and responsibility who use goodwill and reason instead of force and coercion.
- To encourage, publicise and work for an attitude of practical goodwill in local, national and international groups and institutions.

WORLD GOODWILL LONDON
Spiritual Values to Live By in the New Age

A Love of Truth – essential for a just, inclusive and progressive society

A Sense of Justice – recognition of the rights and needs of all.

A Spirit of Co-operation – based on active goodwill and the principle of right human relations.

A Sense of Personal Responsibility – for group, community and national affairs

Serving the Common Good – through the sacrifice of selfishness. Only what is good for all is good enough for each one

These are spiritual values, inspiring the conscience and the consciousness of those who serve to create a better way of life.

The fate of peoples and nations is determined by the values which govern their decisions.

This is a crisis period of significance for the peoples of the world. It should be a time for re-evaluation. A value is the relative worth we assign to some aspect of life, or a recognised intrinsic excellence or usefulness. These may be matters of opinion and, therefore, debatable. But many values in human life are basic to the “general welfare of all the people” lying above the daily round and the common task. The principles set out in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights are a constant reminder to all the people of the world of the fundamental goals and purity of motive that influence decisions.

Today, in a rapidly changing world we see a basic confrontation between the old and the new; crystallised, outworn forms and progressive ideas, self-interest and human welfare, nationalism and a planetary consciousness, material values and spiritual values.

Material values confine an individual, a group or a nation within limits determined by the forms of life created to serve its own interests. Forms may change; but if motives of narrow self-interest remain, nothing of value to human culture and civilisation results.

Spiritual values relate to the enlightenment, the freedom and the creative growth of the human race. They promote the innate human tendency toward synthesis and wholeness. They expand rather than limit the horizons of human vision and capacity. They can be symbolised as an upward spiral of infinite potentiality.
The spiritual values of greatest importance are those that lift us out our self-centred preoccupations. Self-interest benefits no one, including oneself, so interdependent and interrelated has human society become.

The “sacrifice of selfishness” would release new values into national and international life. It could hasten the end of the arms race, still perpetuated by the power and profit motive, and lead the way towards world disarmament and world peace, envisioned and provided for in the Charter of the United Nations.

The sacrifice of selfishness provides for the sharing and contribution of all parts of society in the growth and prosperity of the whole. It provides for responsibility, concern and commitment, for wholeness in attitudes and actions, for a new perspective on life and its true values. The true values of the peoples of the world lie in a few principles or qualities: unity, tranquillity – social harmony, security, freedom, and a general well-being – “for all the people”. In such a framework, a sense of responsibility develops side by side with the rights and freedoms to which all are entitled; mutual trust and respect provide safeguard.

Each nation, great or small, can play its part. Focused, determined, enlightened public opinion is the most potent force in the world and can produce the needed moral leadership. Let our renunciation of selfishness and of materialism light the way into a better future for humanity.

*The Sacrifice of Selfishness*

The hindrances to a new and better world order for all mankind can be summed up in one word, *selfishness* – national, racial, political, religious, economic and individual selfishness.

New values to live by are desperately needed if our planet as we know it is to survive. Selfishness can be transcended and the vision of better world can become factual. The time has come in this interdependent world for individuals to submerge their personal interests in the good of the group; for the group or groups to merge their interests in the national good; for nations to relinquish their selfish purposes and goals in the interests of right international relationships and the good of humanity as a whole.

There is a growing tide of aspiration towards new vision for better ways of life for all people everywhere in the world. Human consciousness is opening to spiritual impression and to the realisation that there are desirable spiritual values to be built into every aspect of life, superseding the materialism which has controlled mankind for centuries. These values concern essential attitudes of mind and heart which determine actions and create the circumstances of daily life.

The sacrifice of selfishness would increase the bonds of understanding between peoples of the world, through the practical substitution of international cooperation, mutual tolerance and sharing between peoples and nations. It can liberate the men and women
of all nations from limitation into freedom from fear and from want, freedom of speech and of worship, and freedom to expand mentally and spiritually.

**Human Values in Daily Life**

The time must come in the history of the human race when so large a number of people have awakened to the finer spiritual issues and values that the old attitudes and activities will be rendered eternally impossible on a large scale.

The goal of the new world order is surely that every nation, large and small (with minorities given equal and proportionate rights) should pursue its own individual culture and work out its own salvation, but that each and all should develop the realisation that they are organic parts of one corporate whole and should consciously and selflessly contribute to that whole. This realisation is already present in the hearts of countless numbers all over the world; it carries with it great responsibility. When intelligently developed and wisely handled it will lead to right human relationships, economic stability based on the spirit of sharing, and a new orientation of person to person, of nation to nation, and of all to that supreme power to which we give the name God.

Translated into national terms, these realisations take the conflict and competition out of the many facets of society. While each group fights for itself and its own self-interest, there can be no “social harmony”, no tranquillity, no security or unity, no freedom or well-being. The fundamental human value needed today as the basis for a better life in the society in which we live is the simple, practical use of the energy of goodwill. Goodwill is an inclusive, cooperative attitude of mind; “it is love in action”; it encourages justice and integrity in those with influence and authority. It is truly the cornerstone of a human society responding to the values of the new age.

Let us support in thought and action those who act with goodwill on behalf of “the general welfare of all the people”.

*World Goodwill – Lucis Trust London*
Prayer for Peace

Lord,
Make me an instrument of Thy peace
Where there is hatred let me sow love,
Where there is injury pardon,
Where there is doubt, faith
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light; and
Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much
Seek to be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and
It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

St Francis of Assisi
The United Nations has called on all member states to observe 21 September as the International Day of Peace. In the framework of its Decade to Overcome Violence, the World Council of Churches, associating itself with the international community, has called on its member churches to observe the same day as an International Day of Prayer for Peace.

Peace is a gift of God to humanity through the Incarnation of Christ. The birth of Christ was announced by the angels as the restoration of peace in this world. A God-given reality cannot be usurped by man. This is a sin against God.

Peace is a divine promise. It will be granted to those who are ready to accept it in humility and obedience, and to preserve, enhance and enrich it as a sacred treasure.

Peace is also a God-given mission that must be fulfilled. Hence, peace-making is integral to the Christian vocation. It is an essential dimension of the proclamation of the Gospel.

Peace primarily means respect for life. This requires us to renounce violence against life and to preserve its sacredness and integrity.

Peace means doing justice. Justice is a sine qua non condition for peace. It is the only way to peace. True and permanent peace is undergirded by justice.

Peace means accepting each other the way we are, by respecting our differences and seeking common goals and values in the midst of differences.

Peace means building community by recognizing the rights and obligations of each other, and promoting creative interaction and coherent relationships.

Peace does not mean that enemies are conquered; it means that enmity is overcome through mutual understanding and trust.

Peace does not mean absence of conflict, but right relationships with God, with neighbours, and with the creation. Peace prevails wherever and whenever there is freedom in truth (John 14:16), equality in justice (Col. 4:1), and harmony in life (1 John 4:8).

A vision of true peace rejects unilateralism and promotes multilateralism. It rejects all "ism"s that ignore the God-given gift of life, dignity, justice and freedom. It rejects all forms of governance that deny participation and community.
A vision of true peace strives for a society governed by the rule of law and sustained by basic moral values and fundamental human rights.

In a world torn apart by the rhetoric of hate, mistrust and alienation, the churches must become more vigorously engaged in peacemaking.

Religions are challenged to work together for a just, participatory and morally sustainable society. They are urged to promote dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions by leading humanity from a culture of death to a culture of life, from a culture of violence to a culture of peace.

Religions must support the United Nations in its attempt to transform its peace-keeping mandate into a peace-building mission. Such a mission implies addressing seriously the root causes of violence, hate and distrust, which have become dominant features of contemporary societies. It also implies advocating for justice by eradicating all forms of poverty, racism and ignorance.

This is the way to build peace.

The International Day of Prayer for Peace is a day of prayer and hope. It is also a day of re-committing ourselves to a global covenant for building peace with justice.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matt. 5:9).

*His Holiness Aram I is Catholicos of Cilicia (Armenian Apostolic Church) and moderator of the WCC Central Committee.*
What a Wonderful Topic!

What a wonderful topic this is for reflection and focus! It gives us a way of thinking about time – in particular the present reality of our lives and the future that is emerging out of this reality.

What do we think about time – as we experience it as human beings? If we think of the passage of time from now into the future in terms of the emergence of a culture of peace this will have a radical effect on the way we live and experience life. It gives a sense of purpose. The question, will this emergence be ‘fast’ or ‘slow’ really depends on all those who share the dream of a culture of peace. It is our responsibility, no-one else’s. That need not be daunting. It does not mean that we have to become anything that we are not. It simply means that we begin to live our lives (and experience the present) as if we were a part of the process of the emergence of a culture of peace.

Culture of peace is not some metaphysical abstraction for theologians to sit around and debate. It is a particular type of culture. The Oxford Dictionary defines culture in a number of ways, but there are two broad meanings which apply here:

1. the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively
2. the customs, civilization and achievement of a particular time or people.

A culture of peace means that the customs, civilization and achievements of a people (including the arts and the fields of intellectual achievement) tend to foster and enhance ‘peace’.

We all know about cultures that tend, in the main, to foster and enhance conflict and competition. But we are not so familiar with cultures that enhance peace. And the reason for this is that we tend to think so vaguely and sentimentally about peace. Peace does not mean the absence of conflict. In itself conflict is a reality of human experience. We all know conflict within ourselves, between different parts of our being (for example our conscience and our desire for comfort and harmony) – and we know about conflict within our families and in all our human relations. The problem is that we think of conflict as a ‘bad thing’. Yet we grow through conflict; creativity is generated by conflict; if it wasn’t for conflict we would tend to sit back, relax, fall into a peaceful slumber. The issue is, how do we handle conflict?

A culture of peace is a culture in which there are a multitude of approaches to the resolution of conflict in every dimension of life. Think for a moment about such a culture. In the inner dimensions of religion, psychology, spirituality, the arts, we would expect to find a wide diversity of teachings, practices and customs which help people to creatively resolve their inner conflicts and to build a sense of self-esteem, harmony and integration. A culture of peace would stimulate the higher virtues, explore these virtues, support and nourish them. Such a culture would constantly expose us to images and insights reflecting the beauty and divinity which lies within each person. It would support everybody in their efforts to bring these higher aspects of their being into expression in their life – help them deal with the conflicts that this involves.

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In education a culture of peace will help people deal with conflict in their life and will encourage study and reflection on conflicts within the community, emphasising everything that fosters unity, co-operation and the peaceful resolution of disputes. In a culture of peace economics, politics and law will be designed to enhance and facilitate the peaceful resolution of conflict and a sense of community and togetherness.

This is what we can all contribute to – the emergence of a culture in which the dominant forces of society stimulate and reinforce our sense of human unity, co-operation and respect for each other. We do this by the way we think and live our lives in the present. To the extent that we can become points of goodwill in all situations (it’s not the easy relationships that matter so much – but the challenging, difficult ones) so do we truly contribute to the building of cultures of peace for present and future generations.

If we focus on the process of building a culture of peace we put all our energies into doing what needs to be done now to create a world in which people can grow and develop to their full potential. We can make the world a better, more peaceful place – it is happening all the time, all around us.

As Mikhail Gorbachev has said:

*Great are the dangers facing mankind. There are enough elements of confrontation, but the forces wishing and capable of stopping and overcoming that confrontation are growing in strength and scope before our very eyes.*

*Moving from suspicion and hostility to confidence, from a ‘balance of fear’ to a balance of reason and good will… This is the goal of our peace initiative and for this we shall continue tirelessly to work.*

*Steve Nation, Intuition in Service, New Zealand*

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The Teaching of Wisdom is not a textbook with numbered pages.  
The teaching is the decree of life applied to each necessity.  
As lighting flashes wherever sufficient electricity has accumulated,  
So the command speeds to where possibility has gathered.

While affirming the common unity,  
The Teaching of Life must respond to each individuality.  
The Teaching provides a solution to the daily problems.  
Every particle understood and applied will give new life.

*Agni Yoga #304 Agni Yoga Society*
Who are the Peacemakers?

Who are the peacemakers?
So many are they - the people of goodwill
Who act with compassion
And vision the oneness of life,
Whose hearts are open to the plight of others,
Who respond with wisdom to their needs.

And the paths to peace, where are they?
Wherever true service marks the way,
So easy to find, so hard to travel.

And when will peace come?
When real needs are met, only then.
For justice and trust set the pace
Of the human journey to peace, justice, trust and the spirit of unity,
These goals of the peacemakers
For peace through goodwill.

Jan Nation
Past Chair of Lucis Trust Limited
TODAY

The gods have gone to sleep
The night has been long.
A price too high we have paid;
Hunger, homelessness, hopelessness
The rivers drew off infants, women and men
Young and old

Too many lives lost, too many hopes unrealised
Now we shall purge our curse;
We shall beat the drums of peace;
We shall dance to the rhythm
Of peace, and love in our hearts
Shall grace our days

With these wondrous divine gifts
And we shall change our today,
And shall transform our lives
And build the future for the good
Of the present and future generations

Kate Biame, Lagos Nigeria

CARE

I want to sing a song
with a voice loud and strong
and tell a story
to change all wrong

I want to be a friend
a hand I hope to lend
no matter what pain, trouble
And sorrow, we'll last till the end

I want to stop the fight
take away the gruesome sight
to heal the wounds
and bring succour to your plight

I want to show I care
My home and my bread I'll share;
this heart I know leads
to a place verdant and clear.

Kate Biame, Lagos Nigeria

PRINCIPLES OF UNION: A THRESHOLD OF PEACE

Today we stand on the cusp of a new era, called many names by the various peoples of the earth among them are: The great millennium, the Age of Peace, the New Age, the Golden Age, the dispensation of the fullness of times and the Age of Aquarius. What matters in the end is not what we call it but that all people whether they be Jews, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, adherents of New Age philosophy and even atheists are looking forward to the great day and that this long – awaited event does materialize.

Sadly, many people have failed to see and understand that the manner of the manifestation of this glorious Age is dependent upon the Principles of UNION through freewill and right relations of human kind. It is commonly agreed that the need for Union is the greatest desire of man among the other identified seven NEEDS of man which J. J Dewey classified as: The need for Union, The need for Love, The need for Experience, The need for Creative expression, The need for knowledge, The need for emotional fulfilment and The need for Order.

The deprivation of these needs give rise to the list of numerous causes and effects of discord, enmity, disharmony, intolerance, conflicts, wars, etc., about which a lot have been written and published. In the beginning, families of with similar interests merge into tribes and enhanced their life quality through UNION. Tribes merged into nations and again enhanced their life quality through UNION. Not too long ago Nations gathered together to form UNITED NATIONS and again the quality of life was and is still being enhanced. It is the same opportunity that precedes any great evolutionary event: the opportunity for UNION.

Now the grand QUESTION is: How Will Human Kind Build A Culture Of Peace For The Present And Future Generations In Line With The Purpose Of God; How Do We Unite and Under What Principles, because each group be it spiritual, secular, nationals, etc. seems to
have its own peculiar philosophy or area of interest? Despite their diversity, there are amazing numbers of points they all have in common. There are basic unifying principles under which no enlightened person would shrink from supporting. These principles are so universal that they may well draw numerous supporters from all walks of life, and should be included in school curriculum to raise the level of awareness of the present and future generations. These higher principles, contrary to lesser principles, have to do with the highest good for the greatest possible number.

THE TWELVE PRINCIPLES OF SYNTHESIS

1. We believe in the equality of men and women, the equal rights of each race and in the sacredness of all life.
2. We believe that we have the capacity to see eye to eye with each other through the application of the principles of non-deception, open communication and contact of higher intelligence that lies within.
3. We accept the responsibility of maintaining our bodies, emotions and minds in a state of maximum health and vitality. We seek not to hurt but to heal.
4. We believe in the principle of Harmlessness, for when we harm another person, we only harm ourselves. We shall not inhibit, restrain, or oppress the free will or privilege of any individual to explore new concepts and philosophies.
5. We believe in the principle of Free Agency, and that there is a power within that enables us to proceed with purpose and accomplish many great and important works pertaining to the coming Age of Enlightenment.
6. We desire to initiate a New Age of Peace, prosperity and spiritual attainment through the intelligent application of the principles of Love, Knowledge and Wisdom.
7. We acknowledge the Christ-God-consciousness as the single creative source manifesting through the Universe, and that this Power lies within each one of us.
8. We affirm that the power of Love is the greatest unifying principle and send only the pure Love of Christ/God to all.
9. We believe in the Principle of Service, for when we serve one another, we serve ourselves. We retain only that which we have given away.
10. We disclaim all totalitarian and secular controls over our lives, and affirm the power to enjoy a free, democratic society with maximum liberty for the individual.
11. We promote world peace through the complete elimination of nuclear and doomsday weapons, international aggression, and the eradication of world hunger and poverty.
12. We seek not to be separative and isolated but to unite and join hands with all spiritually-minded groups and individuals who desire to bring peace on earth and goodwill to all mankind.

May Peace Prevail on Earth.

Nedu Oriaku - Port Harcourt Nigeria
Peace and Environment

Looking for the environment to be friendly with;
The way of life built for global association,
The social standard accepted to be followed;
Peace cries, humanity cries.

Looking for the environment to be friendly with;
The fertile soil cultivated in hope of great harvest;
The tender vegetation nurtured by the past heroes;
Peace cries, land cries.

Looking for the environment to be friendly with;
The policies adopted with insight on achievement of
The goals set as a strategy for various institutions;
Peace cries, vision cries.

Peace is environment friendly,
A unique culture to be celebrated;
A monumental attitude to be realised by all,
A real peace, that provides true spiritual environment

For the wellbeing of all mankind,
The healing of all human cleavages and ailments,
The prosperity and joy of the present generation,
The hope and fulfilment of future generations.

Olubunmi A. Duduyemi Obafemi Awolowo University Ile Ife, Nigeria
Culture is as old as humanity itself. A very popular definition of culture sees it as the way of life of a people. Put simply, it is the totality of the people’s norms and practices which they cherish and employ for their continuous existence in the society. (Bechamp Thorpe 1977). When culture is not maintained, there is an anathema.

In the context of building a culture of peace for present and future generations, many things come into play. Peace is an inevitable additive in the society and its importance cannot be over emphasized.

Nigeria is a democratic entity (so to speak) and it is meet and proper to cull examples from it. It is sad beyond controversy that while some people are fighting to make the Nigerian State indivisible, there are some who, due to their privileged position, do not feel the crunch of economic adversity and therefore behave like “bulls in a china shop.”(Comrade Onuoha; Daily Times Nigeria Ltd. page 18, 1988). From the above assertion, all is not well with the Nigerian society. There is tacit alienation that has not allowed the centre to hold. This is traceable to rash, incompetent and rapacious officials whose actions negate the very basis of the Nigerian society. Has the government been able to weld the state together? The answer is in the negative. The government seems impervious to the plight of the people. This is the core of the problem.

For peace to be anchored in the State there is the need to scrutinize some sensitive areas that have been neglected in the past. Universities and other higher institutions churn out graduates whose future seem bleak due to lack of jobs. There is too much greed on the part of private and public officials. This has created a class gap in the society. Much emphasis is on wealth irrespective of how it is acquired. Ethnicity and selfish interests have not allowed unity to see the light of day. Due to unemployment the young people has channelled their energies wrongly and this has manifested in forms of thuggery and all kinds of immorality, prostitution inclusive.

Political bickering and the win-at-all-cost syndrome has tinkered the Nigerian nation to a state of disrepair, with money laundering and fraudulent activities playing sinister roles in the society. Indeed there are myriad of problems facing the nation-state that will not allow peace to thrive and be fully realised. Until these and other problems are addressed, peace will remain elusive to the nation-state of Nigeria. To promote true peace in our society, the present generation should be made to see themselves as part and parcel of the Nigerian society. Their problems should be addressed and good reasons should give way to better ones. Ethnic discrepancies emanating from social discontent can be eradicated if the youth are united as one and indivisible. An example will suffice here for sometime now, the Itsekiris and the Ijaws have been at daggers drawn and this has dealt a mighty blow on the national psyche and the proper development of that region.

Painfully, Nigerian politics is played along ethnic lines and the three major groups of Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa are at each others throat struggling for sensitive position like the presidency, the senate presidency and others. These three major ethnic groups also have a domineering influence on the heterogeneous structure of the state and this has created a chasm of hatred in the polity.
In all, no Nigerian should be alienated in his or her own homeland. Tyranny, oppression and suppression should be sent to the grave while ethnic and political disaffection should be eradicated in the land. With the disappearance of these societal cankerworms, peace will prevail. There is an urgent need to foster peace in the nation-state by evolving the spirit of “human equality” among all in the nation. This is indeed the panacea that will ensure that present and future generations live in peace and harmony. There should be even development in the states, and merit should be given cognizance. Public opinion should be respected and all communication gaps in the nation should be bridged.

James Oludare - Ijegun Road. Ikotun Lagos

A Prayer for Responsibility

We cannot merely pray to you, O God, to end all war;
For we know that you have made the world in a way
That humanity must find our own path to peace
Within ourselves and with our neighbour.

We cannot merely pray to You, to end starvation
For you have given us the resources
With which to feed the entire world
If we would only use them wisely.

We cannot pray to you, O God, to root out prejudice;
For you have already given us eyes
With which to see the good in others
If only we would use them rightly.

We cannot merely pray to you, to end disease;  
For you have given us great minds with which  
to search out ways of healthy living and healing  
If only we would use their wisdom constructively.

Therefore, we pray to You,  
For strength, determination and willpower  
to do, instead of just to pray,  
to become instead of merely to wish.

- Adapted from a prayer by Jack Reimer

Bill Parfrey’s Family of Friends County Cork, Ireland

A PRACTICAL WAY FORWARD TO RELIGIOUS PEACE IN NIGERIA

Nigeria has demonstrated a very high propensity for religious violence during the past three decades. Violent religious conflicts that have been growing in frequency and intensity are fast becoming a feature of the contemporary national scene with devastating consequences on social relationships. Apart from the frequent loss of life and property, communities that have lived together peacefully and harmoniously over the years, are turning against themselves in violence, destroying everything including the goodwill that could have facilitated reconciliatory moves. The prevailing trends threaten both the state and civil society, driving home in a telling manner the danger of negative perceptions and mobilisation of religion.

There is no disputing the fact that the most knotty and disturbing cases of religious violence in recent times are the constant conflicts between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria. The avenues for these uprisings are schools and public places. There is also a growing concern that divides between Nigerian Christian and Muslim communities will remain an important and growing source of antagonism and violent conflict for years to come. Clearly, rising alienation between the adherents of these religions already has reinforced negative stereotypes about religion and culture on both sides of the divide, and has created dangerous challenges to national peace and stability that must be addressed.
Since the problem of recurring religious violence in Nigeria can be attributed to the plural nature of the country, which highlights the various religious differences, there is no way we can escape secularism in our attempts to achieve lasting peace. As a corollary of this, Nigeria must remain a multi-religious entity with emphasis on secularity of the state. Besides, religious peace can be achieved through the facilitation of regular dialogue among different religious groups. The aim of dialogue should not be to compromise or diminish the identity of any participating religious group. Rather, its objective should be to discuss the various aspects of the problem that pose a threat to religious and social peace.

Of course, tolerance is a quintessential factor in the effort towards religious peace in Nigeria. All religious bodies could promote peace if only their teeming followers are informed of the erroneous conception that any one outside their faith is an antagonist. In contradistinction to this notion, however, leaders of various religious groups should sensitize their numerous followers on the great value of religious tolerance in a pluralistic society.

They could do this by denouncing religious intolerance in any form and upholding the positive values and functions of all religion. Some of these values are peace, unity, harmony, forgiveness, love and tolerance among others. Members of the each religious group in Nigeria should be informed of and reformed by these noble values. For example it is envisaged that Islamic leaders would constantly remind their followers of the true meaning of Islam which is peace. Peace in the actual sense cannot be achieved by religious violence and terrorism, for Qur’an says: “And seek not mischief in the land, for Allah loves not those who do mischief” (Surah 28:77).

Christian leaders on the other hand should constantly remind the flocks of Christ of the essence of Christ’s teaching – love of God and love of neighbour. The neighbour as exemplified in the parable of the Good Samaritan (LK 10:29-37) is all inclusive and not exclusive; it includes both the Christians and non-Christians alike. In this connection, the Holy Bible says: “Follow peace with all men without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14). The African traditional believers should also be thoroughly acquainted with the essential teaching of African Religion (Afrej) which is justice to God, divinities, spirits, ancestors and men. In conclusion, if the positive elements in the teachings and practices of various religious groups in Nigeria are harnessed for the common good, frequent eruption of religious violence and their effects will be prevented, controlled, eliminated or transformed.

Muhammad Nasiru Adeoye  
Lagos Nigeria
Peace and Perceptions of Peace

There are two kinds of people in this world; those that make war and are called terrorists, and those that make war and are called peacemakers. I find it difficult to make a clear definition of peace. This is because one man’s way of seeking peace could be another man’s way of making war. But some people have been able to say something about peace. Some say peace is freedom from war; some say it is freedom from misunderstanding. So, when differences and misunderstanding die, peace is born. According to Dale Carnegie,

‘If we could stop and come together to understand ourselves when in conflict, we would come to realize that the areas where we have the same point far exceed that which our point differs’.

According to an ancient saying,

‘Faith maketh all things possible; Love maketh all things easy; Hope maketh all things work; and Peace maketh all things complete’.

But the bridge to peace is narrow and shaky. On the road to peace we pass through hell. Such that it becomes so terrible that sometimes we feel like giving up. One thing I feel is inevitable – Peace. Since the world was made, all we lived for and struggled for has been for the sake of peace.

Adam ate the forbidden fruit in order to be at peace with Eve; in order to build a culture of Peace, the world was almost destroyed with flood – during the time of Noah. Also, to build a world of Peace, various great leaders, prophets and Masters came to the world to teach man – like Christ, Mohammed, Buddha etc. All these great people have come as gentle wind to nudge humanity through the pathways of understanding to eternal peace.

As Mahatma Gandhi said during his quest for Peace in India,

“… all through history, truth and love always won, tyranny, murdering and chaos at first seem invincible but end up falling”.

Indeed, Truth plus Love equals Peace.
For the sake of Peace, there are churches, temples, mosques, conclaves and even dangerous weapons etc, everywhere. As Confucius would say,

“…you must work harder to achieve inner Peace …’

Until we achieve inner Peace we cannot achieve a true culture of peace in the world. Peace lies within us, we have to find and recognize the

“Peace that passeth understanding, which lives and abides in us”.

Until then we cannot know ourselves as one. If we don’t see and recognize the oneness in us, we cannot build the foundation of a culture of peace for our present and future generations.

*Juwé Christian - Madonna University Okija, Nigeria*

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**THE OLD PHONE - Other worlds to sing in.**

When I was quite young, my father had one of the first telephones in our neighbourhood. I remember the polished, old case fastened to the wall. The shiny receiver hung on the side of the box. I was too little to reach the telephone, but used to listen with fascination when my mother talked to it. Then I discovered that somewhere inside the wonderful device lived an amazing person. Her name was "Information Please" and there was nothing she did not know. Information Please could supply anyone’s number and the correct time.

My personal experience with the genie-in-a-bottle came one day while my mother was visiting a neighbour. Amusing myself at the tool bench in the basement, I whacked my finger with a hammer, the pain was terrible, but there seemed no point in crying because there was no one home to give sympathy.
I walked around the house sucking my throbbing finger, finally arriving at the stairway. The telephone! Quickly, I ran for the footstool in the parlour and dragged it to the landing. Climbing up, I unhooked the receiver in the parlour and held it to my ear.

"Information, Please" I said into the mouthpiece just above my head. A click or two and a small clear voice spoke into my ear. "Information."

"I hurt my finger..." I wailed into the phone, the tears came readily enough now that I had an audience.

"Isn't your mother home?" came the question.

"Nobody's home but me," I blubered.

"Are you bleeding?" the voice asked.

"No," I replied. "I hit my finger with the hammer and it hurts."

"Can you open the icebox?" she asked. I said I could.

"Then chip off a little bit of ice and hold it to your finger," said the voice.

After that, I called "Information Please" for everything. I asked her for help with my geography, and she told me where Philadelphia was. She helped me with my math. She told me my pet chipmunk that I had caught in the park just the day before, would eat fruit and nuts. Then, there was the time Petey, our pet canary, died. I called, "Information Please," and told her the sad story. She listened, and then said things grown-ups say to soothe a child. But I was not consoled.

She must have sensed my deep concern, for she said quietly, "Paul always remember that there are other worlds to sing in." Somehow I felt better.

Another day I was on the telephone, "Information Please." "Information," said in the now familiar voice. "How do I spell fix?" I asked.

All this took place in a small town in the Pacific Northwest. When I was nine years old, we moved across the country to Boston. I missed my friend very much. "Information Please" belonged in that old wooden box back home and I somehow never thought of trying the shiny new phone that sat on the table in the hall.

As I grew into my teens, the memories of those childhood conversations never really left me. Often, in moments of doubt and perplexity I would recall the serene sense of security I had then. I appreciated now how patient, understanding, and kind she was to have spent her time on a little boy.
A few years later, on my way west to college, my plane put down in Seattle. I had about a half-hour or so between planes. I spent 15 minutes or so, on the Phone with my sister, who lived there now. Then without thinking what I was doing, I dialled my hometown operator and said, "Information Please."

Miraculously, I heard the small, clear voice I knew so well. "Information." I hadn't planned this, but I heard myself saying, "Could you please tell me how to spell fix?" There was a long pause. Then came the soft spoken answer, "I guess your finger must have healed by now." I laughed, "So it's really you," I said. "I wonder if you have any idea how much you meant to me during that time."

I wonder," she said, "if you know how much your call meant to me. I never had any children and I used to look forward to your calls." I told her how often I had thought of her over the years and I asked if I could call her again when I came back to visit my sister. "Please do," she said. "Just ask for Sally."

Three months later I was back in Seattle. A different voice answered, "Information." I asked for Sally. "Are you a friend?" she said. "Yes, a very old friend," I answered. "I'm sorry to have to tell you this," she said. "Sally had been working part-time the last few years because she was sick. She died five weeks ago."

Before I could hang up she said, "Wait a minute, did you say your name was Paul?" "Yes." I answered.

"Well, Sally left a message for you. She wrote it down in case you called. Let me read it to you." The note said, "Tell him there are other worlds to sing in. He'll know what I mean." I thanked her and hung up. I knew what Sally meant.

Never underestimate the impression you may make on others. Whose life have you touched today? Why not pass this on? I just did... Lifting you on eagle's wings. May you find the joy and peace you long for. Life is a journey, NOT a guided tour. I loved this story and just had to pass it on. I hope you enjoy it and get a blessing from it just as I did.

Bill Parfrey's Family of Friends County Cork, Ireland
Message of His Beatitude Petros VII, Pope & Patriarch of Alexandria and all Africa for the Day of Prayer for Peace in the World, Assisi, January 24th, 2002:

It is with great joy and brotherly love that we send you our warmest greetings from the See of the Patriarchate of Alexandria and all Africa.

In these times of war and terrorist attacks, times that are contrary to the spirit of God's love and peace, we turn our hearts and minds towards the Creator and seek His mercy and patience, so that peace and brotherly love will reign in this turmoil and much afflicted society of ours.

We who believe in God's condescension and philanthropy, offer praise to Him and ask that He grant us His peace, for He is the fountain of peace and the salvation of man.

In doxologies and hymns we thank God, for He grants to all of us, in our human frailty, His abundant mercy, love and compassion. He is the one who gives us strength to live in unity and mutual understanding which we especially need in these times of fear and disaster.

We give praise to God and ask Him to grant peace, love, equality and solidarity to people of different races and to those practicing different religious so we can see the peace of God reign in the hearts of us all.

We seek a society that consists of people of a different race, color, descent and language living in brotherly love. We seek a world where one upholds the sickness, trouble, weakness and imperfection of the other, so we can taste the benefits of peace, justice, love, philanthropy and equality.

In order to reach this kind of peace we need the mercy and presence of God, Who is the Master of Peace. Truly, He is the peace among us. He is the One Who can bestow in the depths of our hearts the real and eternal peace, the light and life. May those who govern us learn His way, a way of perfect co-operation, of acceptance of all of us who live in this world, so that we may live in a world free of any oppression, injustice, war, race discrimination and discomfort.

We toil and work all day and night to aid man and to respect his dignity. We are against war. We do not want to see man suffering from war as it can only bring hate and disaster.

We pray to the Lord to illuminate the hearts and minds of our leaders so that the holy and life-giving spirit of God may bring the peace and grace to people in the world.

We beseech our Lord and God, the Governor of the whole universe, to grant peace, love, justice, equality and fraternity among people in this New Year.

Live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. (2 Corinthians, 13:11).
His Beatitude Pope Petros VII, Greek Orthodox patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, was killed on September 11, 2004 in a helicopter crash over the Aegean Sea while he was travelling to the Mount Athos monastery in northern Greece. Along with him, 17 other people were killed in the accident.

Chief Seattle’s Understanding of God in all Things

There is a great deal of controversy surrounding Chief Seattle’s speech in 1854. There are many sources of information, various versions of the speech, and debates over its very existence. This document is so informing in terms of nature and sustainable existence that we have decided to reproduce and present two versions in this handbook.


Yonder sky that has wept tears of compassion upon my people for centuries untold, and which to us appears changeless and eternal, may change. Today is fair. Tomorrow it may be overcast with clouds. My words are like the stars that never change.

Whatever Seattle says, the great chief in Washington can rely upon with as much certainty as he can upon the return of the sun or the seasons. The white chief says that Big Chief at Washington sends us greetings of friendship and goodwill. This is kind of him for we know he has little need of our friendship in return. His people are many. They are like the grass that covers vast prairies. My people are few. They resemble the scattering trees of a storm swept plain.

The great and I presume, good White Chief sends us words that he wishes to buy our land but is willing to allow us enough to live comfortably. This indeed appears just, even generous, for the Red Man no longer has rights that he need respect, and the offer may be wise, also, as we are no longer in need of an extensive country.

There was a time when our people covered the land as the waves of a wind-ruffled sea cover its shell-paved floor, but that time long since passed away with the greatness of tribes that are now but mournful memory. I will not dwell on, nor mourn over, our untimely decay, nor reproach my paleface brothers with hastening it, as we too may have been somewhat to blame.

Youth is impulsive. When our young men grow angry at some real or imaginary wrong, and disfigure their faces with black paint, it denotes that their hearts are black, and that they are often cruel and relentless, and our old men and old women are unable to
restrain them. Thus it has ever been. Thus it was when the white man began to push our forefathers ever westward.

But let us hope that the hostilities between us may never return. We would have everything to lose and nothing to gain. Revenge by young men is considered gain, even at the cost of their own lives, but old who stay at home in times of war, and mothers who have sons to lose, know better.

Our good father in Washington – for I presume he is now our father as well as yours, since King George has moved his boundaries further north – our great and good father, I say, sends us word that if we do as he desires he will protect us. His brave warriors will be to us a bristling wall of strength, and his wonderful ship will fill our harbours, so that our ancient enemies far to the northward – the Haidas and Tsimshians – will cease to frighten our women, children, and old men. Then in reality shall he be our father and we his children.

But can that ever be? Your God is not our God! Your God loves your people and hates mine! He unfolds his strong protecting arms lovingly about the paleface and leads him by the hand as a father leads an infant son. But, he has forsaken his Red children, if they really are His. Your God makes your people wax stronger everyday. Soon they will fill the land. Our people are ebbing away like a rapidly receding tide that will never return.

The white man’s God cannot love our people or He would protect them. They seem to be orphans who can look nowhere for help. How then can we be brothers? How can your God become our God? How can your God become our God and renew our prosperity and awaken in us dreams of returning greatness? If we have a common Heavenly Father He must be partial, for He came to His paleface children. We never saw Him. Your God makes your people wax stronger everyday. Soon they will fill the firmament. No; we are two distinct races with separate origins and separate destinies. There is little in common between us.

To us the ashes of our ancestors are sacred and their resting place is hallowed ground. You wander far from the graves of your ancestors and seemingly without regret. Your religion was written upon tablets of stone by the iron fingers of your God so that you could not forget. The Red Man could never comprehend or remember it. Our religion is the tradition of our ancestors – the dreams of our old men, given them in solemn hours of the night by the Great Spirit; and the visions of our sachems, and is written in the hearts of our people.

Your dead cease to love you and the land of their nativity as soon as they pass the portals of the tomb and wander away beyond the stars. They are soon forgotten and never return. Our dead never forget this beautiful world that gave them being. They still love its verdant valleys, its murmuring rivers, its magnificent mountains, sequestered vales and verdant lined lakes and bays, and ever yearn in tender fond affection over the lonely hearted living, and often return from the happy hunting ground to visit, guide, console and comfort them.
Day and night cannot dwell together. The Red Man has ever fled the approach of the White Man, as the morning mist flees before the morning sun. However, your proposition seems fair and I think that my people will accept it and will retire to the reservation you offer them. Then we will dwell apart in peace, for the words of the Great White Chief seem to be the words of nature speaking to my people out of dense darkness.

It matters little where we pass the remnant of our days. They will not be many. The Indian’s night promises to be dark. Not a single star of hope hovers above his horizon. Sad-voiced winds moan in the distance. Grim fate seems to be on the Red Man’s trail, wherever he will hear the approaching footsteps of his fell destroyer and prepare stolidly to meet his doom, as does the wounded doe that hears the approaching footstep of the hunter.

A few more moons, a few more winters, and not one of the descendants of the mighty hosts that once moved over this broad land or lived in happy homes, protected by the Great Spirit, will remain to mourn over the graves of a people once more powerful and hopeful than yours. But why should I mourn at the untimely fate of my people? Tribe follows tribe, nation follows nation, like the waves of the sea. It is the order of nature, and regret is useless. Your time of decay may be distant, but it will surely come, for even the White Man whose God walked and talked with him as friend to friend, cannot be exempt from the common destiny. We may be brothers after all. We will see.

We will ponder your proposition and when we decide we will let you know. But should we accept it, I here and now make this condition that we will not be denied the privilege without molestation of visiting at any time the tombs of our ancestors, friends, and children. Every part of this soil is sacred in the estimation of my people. Every hillside, every valley, every plain and grave, has been hallowed by some sad or happy event in days long vanished. Even the rocks, which seem to be dumb and dead as the swelter in the sun along the silent shore, thrill with memories of stirring events connected with the lives of my people, and the very dust upon which you now stand responds more lovingly to their footsteps than yours, because it is rich with the blood of our ancestors, and our bare feet are conscious of the sympathetic touch.

Our departed braves, fond mothers, glad, happy hearted maidens, and even the little children who lived here and rejoiced here for a brief season, will love these sombre solitudes and at eventide they greet shadowy returning spirits. And when the last Red Man has perished, and the memory of my tribe shall have become a myth among the White Men, these shores will swarm with the invisible dead of my tribe, and when your children’s children think themselves alone in the field, the store, the shop, upon the highway, or in the silence of the pathless woods, they will not be alone. In all the earth there is no place dedicated to solitude. At night when the streets of your cities and villages are silent and you think them deserted, they will throng with the returning hosts that once filled them and still love this beautiful land. The White Man will never be alone.
Let him be just and deal kindly with my people, for the dead are not powerless. Dead, did I say? There is no death, only a change of worlds.

Version 2

Chief Seattle, Chief of the Suquamish Indians allegedly wrote to the American Government in the 1800’s – In this letter he gave the most profound understanding of God in all Things. Here is his letter, which should be installed in the hearts and minds of every parent and child in all the Nations of the World.

CHIEF SEATTLE’S LETTER

The President in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land. But how can you buy or sell the sky, the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them?

Every part of the earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every meadow, every humming insect. All are holy in the memory and experience of my people.

We know the sap which courses through the trees as we know the blood that courses through our veins. We are part of the earth and it is part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters. The bear, the deer, the great eagle, these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the dew in the meadow, the body heat of the pony, and man all belong to the same family.

The shining water that moves in the streams and rivers is not just water, but the blood of our ancestors. If we sell you our land, you must remember that it is sacred. Each glossy reflection in the clear waters of the lakes tells of events and memories in the life of my people. The water’s murmur is the voice of my father’s father.

The rivers are our brothers. They quench our thirst. They carry our canoes and feed our children. So you must give the rivers the kindness that you would give any brother.

If we sell you our land, remember that the air is precious to us, that the air shares its spirit with all the life it supports. The wind that gave our grandfather his first breath
also received his last sigh. The wind also gives our children the spirit of life. So if we sell our land, you must keep it apart and sacred, as a place where man can go to taste the wind that is sweetened by the meadow flowers.

Will you teach your children what we have taught our children? That the earth is our mother? What befalls the earth befalls all the sons of the earth.

This we know: the earth does not belong to man, man belongs to the earth. All things are connected like the blood that unites us all. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

One thing we know: our God is also your God. The earth is precious to him and to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its creator.

Your destiny is a mystery to us. What will happen when the buffalo are all slaughtered? The wild horses tamed? What will happen when the secret corners of the forest are heavy with the scent of many men and the view of the ripe hills is blotted with talking wires? Where will the thicket be? Gone! Where will the eagle be? Gone! And what is to say goodbye to the swift pony and then hunt? The end of living and the beginning of survival.

When the last red man has vanished with this wilderness and his memory is only the shadow of a cloud moving across the prairie, will these shores and forests still be here? Will there be any of the spirit of my people left?

We love this earth as a newborn loves its mother’s heartbeat. So if we sell you our land, love it as we have loved it. Care for it, as we have cared for it. Hold in your mind the memory of the land as it is when you received it. Preserve the land for all children, and love it, as God loves us. As we are part of the land, you too are part of the land. This earth is precious to us. It is also precious to you.

One thing we know – there is only one God. No man, be he Red man or White man, can be apart. We ARE all brothers after all.
PEACE INDEED

Peace is when the soul is at rest.
The soul being the inner most conscious and sub-conscious part of Man;
Its state determines the composure and the appearance of Man.
A man that is at peace within will surely be at peace without.
Without in the sense that all around him will experience and see peace in him.
He needs no preaching or sermonizing then to be at peace with all around him.

He strives to keep his world in peace because,
He will not want anything to destroy the peace within.
He maintains his peace within because,
He will not want to loose his joy and serenity.
He propagates and induces others with peace because,
He wants to keep his flow of peace from within through without.

Peace keeps the world at peace.
Peace makes the world a better place.
Get peace!
Be at Peace!
Keep your Peace!
Maintain Peace and spread the Peace;
This is Peace Indeed
That makes the world a Peaceful place to be.

Kikekon Opeyemi St. Nicolas – Lagos Nigeria

Nurturing Children To Participate For A Better World For Everyone
Peace

From a speech Dr Robert Muller made to educators at the Institute for Ethical Leadership in Vancouver, Canada:

"Do not let the children despair about the world. Tell them it is through their participation, through their will and action that things will change. If you let them drift and say that the whole situation is hopeless because of governments, because of institutions you are not helping children.

You have to tell them it is a matter they will have to take in their own hands, that it is going to be their world and the securing of peace is a great challenge. Tell them they will be the peacemakers and good managers of our global world, of tomorrow, the first generation ever in human history."

From Dr. Robert’s Muller’s 6500 Ideas and Dreams for a Better World
The world’s patience is running out on war-torn Darfur “is the lead story of Punch” a Nigerian Newspaper on 21st September, 2004

According to Kolawole Olaniyan, Amnesty International Legal Adviser on Africa, “the world is tired of people being raped, tortured, killed and driven out of their homes. The patience of the international community is not unlimited. At the rate we are going, there is no longer a safe place in the world”. This depicts the dangerous situation the world is in.

War came during the barbarian times as a result of the quest to satisfy the need for food, shelter, and perhaps, clothing. At that period, there was nothing like the technological revolutions we have today; food production can be mechanized; structures like the world trade centre can be built and clothes can be massively produced. Limited availability of these created wars in the past but today the trend has changed. But still there are wars.

Since Operation Desert Storm in the 20th century, if it is not the Liberian war, it would be Israeli–Palestinian conflict. If it is not the September 11 terrorist attack, it would be the quest to flush out Osama Bin Laden or overthrow of the Taliban in Afghanistan or Saddam Hussein in Iraq. Every year the world is confronted with one conflict or the other, sometimes, three conflicts at the same time. It has been stated that “man’s enemy is man”. In all these, mankind is the loser when approximately over $100 billion dollars is wasted each year either in prosecuting the wars in which millions of lives and properties are lost or spent salvaging the aftermath of the orgy.

According to Awake Magazine September 22, 2004 edition, the world has only succeeded in raising $2 billion dollars of the $30 billion dollars needed to fight the scourge of HIV/AIDS yet we waste much more money waging wars. The environment is not spared as chemicals released into the atmosphere introduce more dangerous microbes into the world.

The question the world should ask itself at this juncture is what kind of culture are we creating for the future generations since the past has a way of linking the present and the future? The second question is what kind of children are we breeding in this conflict situation when they are the leaders of tomorrow? It is when these pertinent questions are answered, that the world can begin to appreciate all that of International Day of Peace stands for. Observing the United Nations call for a global ceasefire on 21st September is a way to start. Who knows, we may even get a year of ceasefire eventually!
“Building a Culture of Peace for Present and Future Generations” is a must. To achieve this, the developed world should help developing nations, particularly in Africa, to fight corrupt and selfish rulers who, by their actions, enmesh the world in war in their bid to gain, keep or control powers for self-aggrandizement at the expense of peace and progress of their own nation. Peace-loving people should educate the likes of George Bush and Tony Blair to listen to world opinion before throwing the world into the massacre witnessed in Iraq. Listening to opinion will cushion terrorist acts because they are usually a reaction against the dictatorial tendencies of USA and their ilk on the world. In dialoguing and compromising, we would be building a culture of peace for ourselves and the children coming tomorrow as it would be the best legacy far greater than the whole crude oil money in the world. After all, true peace is not the absence of conflict but the presence of justice, love, equity and the joy to share one another’s burdens and problems.

Okoko Anthony Chinedu, Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria

PEACE AND UNITY ON EARTH

God is one and His creations one
Though the manifestations be many
    Black, white, Red and yellow
    All from Him and through him
    All in Him and to him.

One basking family under one sun;
    With all the heat to share.
    The love, the pain, the hurt.
    Hand in hand, heart to heart,
        Eyes to eyes.
    It’s the melody of PEACE
One symphony; but many instruments.
    All middle walls broken.

Life like a broken oil jar poured out and
Given to heal, to love, to soothe and to share.
To what avail is the one without the many
To what avail is the part without the whole.
There is no rainbow without seven colours
There is no white light when one colour is missing.

To you all I turn my clarion call to peace
The high, the low, the weak, and the strong.
   The wounded and the healer.
   Hand in Hand, Heart to Heart
   Mind to Mind, one family, one life
   One hope, one destiny

In PEACE we take our firm steps
To the Heart of the Sun we arrive
With one face, radiant and glowing
In the heart of the sun we are one.

_Solomon Agah, Port Harcourt Nigeria_

We need to understand that without peace we are not fulfilled in life no
superiority among us all even when we fill aggrieved our needs could be met
through dialogues. Peace should be our way of life. If we keep fighting each other
our future generations will never forgive us for limiting their friendship.

Building a culture of peace for present and future generation is a post-conflict
endeavour that identifies and supports structures that will tend to strengthen and
solidify peace in order to avoid relapse into conflict, nuclear threats and war. Peace
building forestalls diplomacy, socio-economic stability and development, national
security, humanitarian and moral consideration.

The only hope for the present and future lies in co-operative actions that is legitimized
by democracy to survive in the world we have transformed we must learn to think in a
new way. Peace missions should take into cognizance the cause of the conflict, the
people used, parties involved, and finding lasting solution to the problem and how a
healthy atmosphere can be created by peaceful means.

There should be full disarmament in cases of war, negotiation and dialogue on full
resolution to achieve cease-fire, peace and non-violence; creation of relevant political
and economic conditions to facilitate preservation of territorial integrity and security;
promotion and improvement of the socio-economic well being of the citizens can be affected through gainful employment.

World-wide, awareness, education and information via the Internet and other possible means which would cut across all ages and gender; orientating people on world peace and security

Seun Taylor, Dugbe, Ibadan

We stand on hazy heights
We see with veiled sights
Though we think we focus on all
Yet see no one at all
Except that which is only us
We thus invite violence
On all and us
As we fail to embraces God’s all
- - - - - - - - - -
Veiled eyes only raise controversies
Only clear minds raze down such
We isolate
Yes, we demonise all
We exclude all others but ourselves
Fear rule us
Where Love should reign
Entwining our hearts as one under God
- - - - - - - - - -
Between hazy hearts and darkly sight
Mankind dismembers God’s Big Family -
(And forfeit peace like one flight!)
Where all are accepted
But none, save he who excludes others,
Is excluded!
Let this key of knowledge
Remove all our covering veils, Now!

Sesan Folorunso Lagos Nigeria
Jesus said: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." Today there are many hundreds coming under the influence of the Law of Loving Understanding. Many in every nation are responding to the broader synthetic brotherly note, but the masses as yet understand nothing of this. They must be led in right ways gradually, by the steady development of right understanding by their own nationals. Bear this in mind, all you who work for peace and right relations, for harmony and for synthesis. This quote comes from Esoteric Psychology, by Alice Bailey page 381.

Joyce Green, County Cork, Ireland

Each moment one thinks about peace, so many questions come into mind. When one considers the enormous factors affecting our society and daily existence, such as ethnic clashes, religious intolerance, terrorism, political and socio-economic problem, the mere thought about peace seems as an illusion.

Peace is defined as the state of total freedom from war or disturbance. It can also be described as the absence of conflicts and disharmony. A critical look at our society in the day-to-day occurrences, the things we observe are events which bring painful memories and tears to our eyes, an indication of a polluted and unhealthy society with a lot of insecurity, conflicts and disharmonies.

We have leaders who usurped power at all cost with conceits, only to enslave and exploit the people they were meant to serve. There are so many negative tendencies, misdirected energies and the concept of a just society with peaceful co-existence has become a thing of the past.

The masses lives in fear, abject poverty and constantly driven by harsh economic policies, corruption and dishonesty in high and low places, seem to be in abundance and the cries of the traumatized less privileged masses, are yet unheard.

Peace is indeed, far-fetched and illusive in our present generation.
With the above prevailing circumstances, building a culture of peace is of utmost necessity, if we must save our decaying society and future generations. The values of a well-structured society must be put in place, right from our homes because it is the core of any society. Mutual and peaceful co-existence should be allowed to thrive. Humanity must be re-awakened in their consciousness towards the building of a peace culture for our present and future generations. We must toil for global peace.

_Udo Williams, Lagos, Nigeria._

**WE NEED PEACE, NOT WAR**

Let peace be echo,
Upon the minds of men,
In the hearts of infants and youths,
We need peace, not war,

Let it sound like the drumbeats,
Across the deserts and mountain peaks,
We need peace, not war.

Let it be sung upon our lips,
In the temples, homes and schools,
We need peace, not war.

Let it be written upon every path we tread,
And stamped on every tree that grows,
We need peace, not war.

Let all our minds be purged,
And our every thought renewed,
Let the good things be spread abroad,
We need peace, not war.

Let all the nations unite,
And diverse politics be checked,
Let every feigned religion be curbed,
And all arms of destructions put to rest,
We need peace, not war.
Let there be peace in every homes,
And our society reigned supreme,
Let every heart that breathes,
And all souls that loves,
Re-echo it, once again,
         Alas!
         We need peace, not war.

This prayer authored by Christian, Jewish and Muslim clergy was used in many places in inter-religious worships around the time of the Gulf War in 1991:

Eternal God, Creator of the universe, there is no God but You.
Great and wonderful are Your works, wondrous are your ways.
Thank You for the many splendoured variety of Your creation.
Thank You for the many ways we affirm Your presence and purpose, and the freedom to do so.
Forgive our violation of Your creation.
Forgive our violence toward each other.
We stand in awe and gratitude for Your persistent love
for each and all of Your children:
Christian, Jew, Muslim,
as well as those with other faiths.
Grant to all and our leaders attributes of the strong:
mutual respect in words and deed,
restraint in the exercise of power, and
the will for peace with justice, for all.
Eternal God, Creator of the universe, there is no God but You. Amen.

(Excerpted from Current Dialogue 24/93, p.36)
Although our globe appears tranquil and elegant from the surface of the moon, on earth her beauty is marred; her inhabitants are experiencing huge problems and one of the most difficult, insidious and complex of problem to solve is the quest for peace and security. Mankind’s search for peace is as old as war itself. Our modern times are therefore no exception.

To this end mankind is confronted with a choice: that of building a culture of peace for present and future generations, or perpetuating the retrogressive culture of violence and war. Removing the threat of a world war is the most acute and urgent task of the present day. We must halt the arm race and proceed with total disarmament. People's heart must be reached, educated and transformed. We want a fundamental mental transformation in people's consciousness. An immediate freeze of the current nuclear arsenals of the U.S.A, the Russia, and the rest of the world will be a huge step toward world peace and security. More so a better future depends on people's willingness to make sacrifices and change way of life, then we can become optimistic for the future. It's clear that we are looking at a world that was just the way that GOD made it without those boundaries that we see on the globes and maps that we have in our homes and school. For peace to prevail there must be moral justice, for the rich and the poor, and the developed countries and the under-developed countries must be involved. We're going to have to get along as a crew or it's not going to be a successful flight for any of us unless we all share the ideals of the charter "they will beat there swords into plow shears" peace cannot prevail on the earth.

Justice Lebepa Lagos. Nigeria

Throughout history, human beings have sought to improve their ability to live in peace and harmony but the corruption in leadership and governance will for ever make it impossible especially since the cost of education remains so high and unreachable for the labouring masses.

Building a culture of peace for present and future generations will mean developing the intellectual and moral faculty; providing enlightenment and equal opportunity to all peoples. It will mean freedom from civil disturbance, total absence of oppressive thoughts and actions, harmony in personal relations, order provided by law and custom, mutual concord between governments and eradication of hostilities between those in the state of enmity.
Culture is activating the human knowledge to emulate the belief system and behaviour of an existing people, to learn and transmit knowledge to succeeding generations. Culture comprises the shared attitudes, values, goals and practices that characterises a people.

To build a culture of peace means organizing our economic, political and socio-cultural life and a total wipe out of the dominant corrupting culture of gluttonous greed of our leaders who preach populist orientation and practice just the opposite. The lack of belief in honest work or personal rectitude, as a means to personal success in society must also be wiped out.

Education is not just the acquisition of knowledge and facts. It is about learning in its broadest sense and about preparing one for the demands of life after school. This includes receiving the skills you will need to succeed in whatever your chosen career path may be. In a rapidly changing world, where work and life-styles are increasingly becoming global, it enhances character development and the ability to work and live with others. Educate the people and the culture of peace will seep down from generation to generation.

EKAM E’Fluince A. Lagos Nigeria

At its 10th session devoted to disarmament, the United Nations General assembly noted: "mankind is presented with a choice; we must halt the arms race and proceed to disarmament or face annihilation".

The axiom: "if you want peace, prepare for war” has never been the subject of adulation in any period as it is now. The rise in militarization has lent weight to the legitimacy of this adage. However, it is not smooth sailing for war mongers because, the corresponding upsurges in anti-military and anti-nuclear demonstrations indicate that even if war mongers stream roll the budget proposals, public outcry cannot be under-written.

The generality of people are unanimous on the point that disarmament is about the only way out of this impending doom which hangs over our heads like the sword of Damocles.

What is required is a complete reassessment of the current global economic system, with the goal of promoting genuine human security and development. Global financial institutions, such as the world trade organization, that do not promote these goals must
be revised or scrapped completely and replaced with a system based upon principle of equity peace and development.

No doubt, the present political dispensation has inherited a daunting burden of re-integrating Nigeria back into the community of democratic nations; re-engineering the dissipate goodwill we used to enjoy. Nigeria should plead with the world to help sustain not only the infant democracy, but indeed the weak and disintegrating economic foundation. An immediate and issue, of course, is the plea which we must sustain for debt relief, i.e., reduction and eventually forgiveness. For those who know rightly have informed us that if the hunch-back, that is, huge international debt profile is not eliminated, our economy can at best only stagger-on.


The Man Who wept Over Jerusalem

Once upon two Millennia past
Ere many Christian religious sects were birthed,
When as yet bombs were undiscovered.
In Bethlehem and in a Manger, He was born.
In Galilee He grew.

In the Synagogues He taught, preached
And reasoned with the people from Samaria, to Bethsaida,
From Genesaret to Capernaum, to Decapolis
And through all regions round about Judea.
There He healed and cured the sick, raised the dead;
He went about doing good and no fault was found in Him.

A little before His death and resurrection
He walked through the streets of Jerusalem.
Through “Yerushallaim” He walked.
As He walked, He piped but she did not listen;
He sang but she danced not.
He moreover mourned, but she refused to lament.
Then He lamented but she was not remorseful.
Then He wept!
Some call Him Rabbi; some call Him that Prophet, others call Him Christ -
The long awaited Messiah; I call Him Jesus;
My Saviour, My Redeemer and My Lord.
Why did He weep over thee, O Jerusalem?
He knew that Jerusalem is Shalom meaning Peace.
He knew what will befall Yerushallaim.

Millennia after He knew that the World would be divided over thee, O City of Peace.
He knew that thy Peace shall into pieces be torn.
And that thy Peace shall from thee depart O, Salem.
As He walked across Jerusalem He wept
As He wept He walked and His tears dropped and flowed freely.
Then He spoke unto her and said: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,
Which kills thy prophets and stones them which are sent unto thee.
How often I would have gathered thy Children together, even as a hen
Gathers her chickens under her wings But ye would not.

He sobbed, soliloquised and continued saying: “If thou hadst known,
Even thou, at least, in this thy day the thing which make for or belong unto
Thy peace. But now, they are hidden from thy eyes”
“For the days will come”, He continued,
“When your enemies will build an embankment around you,
Surround you and close in on every side and level you and your children within you to
the ground and they will not leave in you one stone upon another,
Because you do not know the time of your Visitation

Suddenly, He sighed and groaned heavily and said, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem...
Behold, your house is left to you desolate!!
“For I say unto you”. He asserts
“Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say,
Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the LORD”
World Peace is hinged on Jerusalem’s peace;
Jerusalem’s peace is tantamount to World’s peace.
History and historical records and facts cannot deny that He was here.
Arabs and Palestinians have Him written in their Holy Books and Injil
Jews and Greeks and Gentiles know He was here
Why then do you refuse Him?
Why then do you reject Him?
How long shall you despise Him
In Whom resides true Peace and eternal bliss?

Isaac Adedigba, Abeokuta Nigeria
Peace may be defined as a state of harmony; a state of tranquil; freedom from war, violence, noise, worries, troubles, fears and a state of peace of mind. It is also a condition where there is freedom from all forceful engagements.

If peace is not breached in any form by racial discrimination, religious fanaticism, politics, extremism; and if every man living is willing to make peace with one another, then violent pariahs will be rendered redundant while peaceful extroverts will be groomed amongst us.

Thus, let us avoid all pinpricks that precede wars because peace is a condition for the survival for any generation, either past, present or future. Make a positive decision for this cause today and the unseen guest of every moment will be glad you did. Even posterity will remember you as a true great one.

Taiwo Amusan

Peace is defined as a state of calm, quietness, tranquillity, balance or equilibrium. It is the existence of good relationship between one another. It is equally a state of mutual understanding between neighbours, Nations, and international communities.

It is the will of God that there should be peace within all His creations. The WILL TO GOOD has been the Will of God to humanity because goodness is the quality of God. We are told by the Christian scripture that God was pleased with all His creations because they enjoyed abundant peace and harmony. God however set the Universe in the form that it must be governed by natural laws. These laws are known to be the laws of checks and balances and any infringement of the law necessitates uncomfortable or negative reaction.

The problems facing mankind started through the abuse of man’s free will and privileges. Man as a creature and creator has the power to construct and destroy. Man, through his power of commission and omission developed the habit of hatred, selfishness, greed and separation and thus diverted his attention towards his personal interests against the Divine purpose.

Humanity started to think in terms of lower values like the love of money and the acquisition of material resources. This love for material wealth developed man’s jealousies fed his hatred and caused his dislike of others. These developments culminated into strife and wars between one another, nation and nation and race against race. Man’s inhumanity to man became the order of the day.
It will not be possible for the culture of peace to exist in this state of hostile atmosphere because the forces militating against it are many. It is generally agreed that man is the problem and until man becomes the solution to the problems he has created, peace and unity will continue to elude humanity. The realization of culture of peace in the world will take a long time because of the fundamental economic problems that bedevil parts of our World, Africa in particular. The vices that caused the separation of communities, Nations and Races are still with us and no where in the world can peace be guaranteed in the presence of hunger and poverty. It is an old saying that a hungry man is an angry man and thus peace and unity cannot be assured where basic necessities of life are denied majority of people.

It is impossible for peace to dwell where there is uneven distribution of World’s wealth. And neither could peace thrive where the Church, the supposed light bearer has become light extinguisher through its practical exhibition of hatred and intolerance. The Church now constitutes itself as hindrance to right spiritual development. Leadership without plan and democracy without principle as obtained in many African states including Nigeria cannot equally give us enduring peace.

Humanity is not however abandoned; we are moving according to the drawn Plan. There is always hope. The United Nations Charter and activities confirmed this hope by assuring us that they are to maintain international peace and security and bring collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace and for the suppression of acts of aggression, *inter alia*.

The right human relationship between peoples and nations is the key to peace and unity, and practical goodwill is the key to right relationship. The United Nations should move towards the direction of intervening early for the prevention of some avoidable crises in the world. By so doing many lives would be saved for it is better to save lives than to send relief.

The culture of peace could be established when we make ourselves instruments of peace through allowing peace to start from us. If peace starts from us individually, it will extend to our families. When we have peaceful communities, we shall have peaceful Nations. The resultant effect of being peaceful Nations will be an outcome of peaceful World and before you know it we have developed a culture of peace for the present and future generations.

When humanity lives within the pursuance of high values like love of truth, sense of justice, spirit of cooperation, sense of personal responsibility and serving common good as principles governing our organization, the culture of peace will firmly be established.

Lastly, let me briefly quote some passages from the inspiration of Ralph M. Lewis titled “Contribution to Peace”:

- “I contribute to peace when I feel compassion towards all who suffer.
- “I contribute to peace when I look upon all men as my brethren regardless of race, culture, and religion.
“I contribute to peace when I listen with tolerance the opinions that differ from mine or even oppose them.

“...I contribute to peace when I resort to dialogue rather than to force to settle any conflict.

“...I contribute to peace when I do not seek to impose my conception of God upon others.

“...I contribute to peace when I make peace the foundation of my ideals and philosophies.”

When these virtues remain permanently with us, we are already living in the kingdom of God --- the atmosphere of goodness, peace and harmony.

Mr. Michael Muomara. Agbor Unit of Service, Nigeria

Everywhere in the world people seem to search for peace. Someone has defined peacekeeping as a conflict control mechanism designed to diffuse tension and provide peaceful environment conducive for the peaceful resolution of dispute or conflict.

The primary responsibility of the world body as enshrined in the UN charter is the maintenance of international peace and security. World peace is the most sought after item today. At peace summits, leaders from all over the world put their minds on the incessant problem of government and politics. But peace in that realm shall not be found regardless of who meets or for how long.

The Bible teaches us that peace do not simply mean absence of war or quarrelling. It has a much more positive meaning. Peace involves total well-being and harmony, first of all between man and his creator, and also between man and his fellow human beings.

A person that is not at peace with himself (not having peace within) is not likely to live in peace with others. (2 Corinthians 13:11). When peace finally flows into the heart of individual men and women that is when there shall be peace in this broken world.

May God bless those whose lives are examples of peace and all those who contributed in no small way to see this work attained its degree of success.

I present this paper praying that God will use it to restore peace to homes, lives and the world at large.

Olusola Olaitan Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria.
Building a culture of peace must begin with the individual, the personal cosmos, because “charity begins at home”. True peace is a state of the mind and heart that is completely free from all conflicts, anxiety and fear. Therefore building a culture of peace goes far beyond and much deeper than the elimination of physical violence and wars. Inner peace is the genuine wholeness and serenity of mind and heart, a wholeness which is experienced and expressed as inner harmony and joy and outer creativity. This peace begins with the personal cosmos, within each individual human being. The cultivation of this inner peace lies behind the existence and teachings of all the world religions because it affirms that inner wholeness which signifies identification and oneness with God, with our fellow human beings and with the cosmic environment in which we live and move and have our being.

How do we cultivate this inner peace? The answer is clearly annunciated and loudly proclaimed by the great world religions and in the pages of Ageless Wisdom of the world from time immemorial. The problem is that there is a pronounced disparity between what people believe and profess in their religious tenets and what they actually practise in their daily lives. If all men and women in the world were to put into practice a reasonable proportion of the truth and admonitions preached and extolled by their religions in their lives and relationships, there would be true peace in their communities and the world would be a better, more peaceful and safer environment. Regrettably, this is not so.

In this brief essay we shall endeavour to outline and deliberate on some of the most obvious and common elements and teachings of all religions; the golden thread that winds through and holds together the precious gems of the various presentations of human approach to Reality and to the Creator of the universe, by whatever name He may be known in each tradition, and how this relates to the building of a culture of peace in the world.

♫ Truthfulness: all the religious traditions in the world teach the virtue of truthfulness. We are admonished to be true to ourselves, because if we are genuinely true to ourselves, we cannot be untrue to others. Imagine how the world would be if people were true to one another! However, if we examine ourselves with sincerity and detachment, we will probably find that it is very difficult to comply fully with this admonition in our contemporary society. We are therefore faced with the formidable challenge of living up to the Truth that we know no matter the circumstance if we to be reconciled within ourselves, resolve inner conflicts and be at peace with ourselves. If there is no peace within, there can be no peace outside.
Love and Compassion: there is no religion in the world that does not preach love and compassion to our fellow human beings and to all creations. Indeed love is extolled by all religions as the cornerstone of their existence and the greatest quality of God which should be reflected in the lives of all His children, all human beings, irrespective of nationality, race, colour, creed, gender or any outward distinction! “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” and “you shall love your neighbour as yourself”.

On these two commandments hangs all the Law and the Prophets.” (Matt: 22: 37-40). These are the words of the Christ Himself, and He meant them!

The uncomfortable question we must now ask ourselves is obvious: do we really love God that we cannot see or our fellow human beings that we see and interact with everyday? If we can answer this question at least to ourselves in all sincerity, whatever the answer may be, and are prepared to do something about it, then we are on the way of cultivating peace within ourselves and contributing towards the building of a culture of peace in the world. Why? Because the sincerity of our self-questioning and the inner response will prompt us to start thinking more seriously about God and our fellow human beings – and perhaps less about ourselves!

Humility, Harmlessness and Service: all the great religious leaders of the world down the ages have been humble and harmless people who served their people and their generation with dedication, utter self-forgetfulness and without asking for or seeking reward. They were selfless men and women who devoted their lives to the welfare and wellbeing of their fellowmen, and in most cases sacrificed their lives that others may live. Through their lives and the high spiritual values they lived by, they set down great examples and expected us to follow them and “do likewise”. Are we as adherents of these religious traditions sincerely making effort to practice this humility and harmlessness in our daily lives? Do we ever serve others or our communities in which we live with sincerity without demanding recognition and, perhaps, more reward than we are entitled to? Do we ever ask what we can do for our society instead demanding what our society can do for us?

If we can learn to be truly humble and harmless in all our relationships, we will be building the foundations of peace within our homes, our communities and in the world. True humility should not be misunderstood for negative acquiescence or any form of inferiority complex at all. Humility really means a developed sense of right proportions in all relationships and the due recognition of our responsibilities and their diligent fulfilment.

Having dealt somewhat with cultivating peace within the personal cosmos, how can we contribute to building a culture of peace in the world for the present and future generations? Let me outline a few concrete measures that come to mind:

Enlightenment: we should contribute to the enlightenment of our community by first of all seeking enlightenment within ourselves and then demonstrating that
enlightenment in our daily lives so that others may benefit thereby. Enlightenment is the letting in of the light of understanding into the mind and consequently dissipating the glamour and illusion which have deceived humanity down the ages and blocked out the true light of vision. Enlightenment involves and affects all aspects of life: the way we perceive life and circumstances; the values we accept and live by; how we handle the challenges of daily life, including difficult and uncompromising people and circumstances so as to uphold the spiritual qualities that we cherish.

**Education:** In reality, education is the foundation of enlightenment and it is therefore one of the most important factors in the building a culture of peace. The first step in education is the ability to read and write – literacy. Right. But that is only the beginning. True education involves the enlightenment of the human mind and the right development of the whole human being so that the inner spiritual potentials inherent in man are fully unfolded and appropriated for the general good of the Whole.

Sometimes one is tempted to agree that contemporary education has lost its value and has become useless. Increasingly, education has become trivialised, commercialised and therefore no longer meets the needs of the evolving human consciousness and contemporary global environment. Education is rapidly degenerating into simply going to school as a traditional routine whose relevance is becoming questionable.

Our institutions of learning produce, in large quantities, graduates, majority of whom are no longer quite literate, regrettably ignorant, lacking in simple ethics of decent living, undisciplined, unemployable and therefore restive in the society. All because education has lost its sense of direction and purpose! How can this ever-unfolding problem be solved? The answer to this question begs the genuine and urgent attention of the government of the nation, educational institutions, governmental and non-governmental organisations, the civil society and each family unit in the community. There is need for a radical paradigm shift in our collective conception, planning and implementation of educational policies, procedures and practices. True education has to begin at home and continue throughout the entire human life-cycle on earth.

This new paradigm and “vision of education requires a holistic interdisciplinary approach. It also requires us to reorient education systems, policies and practices in order to empower everyone, young and old, to make decisions and act in culturally appropriate and locally relevant ways to redress the problems that threaten our common future” (Introduction to ‘Teaching and Learning for a sustainable future’ by UNESCO)

To appreciate more fully how this paradigm shift can be realised in the world, the reader is referred to the extensive work being done by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). If the governments of the world, educational institutions, educators, parents and the civil society will give sufficient time and effort to study the work of UNESCO, and perhaps
participate in their ongoing projects within their local environments, world attitude to education will take a dramatic turn for good. The most current projects, amongst others, of UNESCO include the United Nations Decade for Literacy, 2003 – 2012; Education for All by 2015; United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. For further information, visit the following website: www.unesco.org.

Unity in Diversity: We need to recognise, appreciate and educate others on the reality of unity in diversity, and indeed the importance of diversity in the existence and evolution of the Universe in which we live. Just think for a minute how bleak, monotonous, featureless and unattractive the world would have looked like without the kaleidoscope of colours and infinite varieties and diversities of life and forms which grace the heavens and the earth!

Yet while humanity enjoys the beauty of cosmic diversity in the form of the harmony reflected and expressed in world arts and music, there is a collective reluctance to extend this enjoyment and celebration to human diversity by creating harmony between peoples, nations, races, religions, tribes and tongues! The bane of humanity and the root of many problems of humanity today lie in all forms of discrimination, distrust, fear, xenophobia, prejudice and group selfishness.

All those who seek to be peace-builders of the world must fight against discrimination and xenophobia in all its forms, and the surest weapons for this battle are understanding and tolerance. Understanding and tolerance lead to true dialogue between people, communities, civilisations and nations of the world. Such intercultural dialogues are invaluable tools in resolving conflicts and therefore indispensable pillars in building a culture of peace for the present and future generations.

Rule of Law: Join in the war against corruption and indiscipline. It is impossible and even naïve to completely dissociate oneself from the ills of society, like indiscipline and corruption, because we are living within that corrupted spiritual and psychological environment. It is all too simple to criticise other people for sins to which we are all very vulnerable. Corruption and indiscipline are so ingrained and endemic in our contemporary society that any frontal attack on these enemies of progress is bound to be counter-productive and futile.

Corruption is the result of unbridled selfishness, reprehensible ignorance, disrespect for human dignity, utter disregard for human rights and the rule of law that should govern the attitudes and behaviour of all civilised human beings. In the last analysis, lack of spiritual discipline leads to the evils that pervade our human society today.

How then can the war against indiscipline and its attendant ills be successfully waged? I would suggest by war of attrition! The war needs to be fought through right education as outlined in this essay, and through the good examples of our
leaders, educators, parents, and all those who hold positions of some authority. This war involves a frontal attack on poverty and hunger in our society and in this war every body can participate because it is through understanding, cooperation and sharing that the problems of poverty and hunger can find lasting solution. These spiritual values must now replace the age old and outmoded material values of selfishness, competition and greed.

**Support the Work of the United Nations**: The UN was created after the Second World War primarily to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Since then, this august world body has not only become the Peace Maker of the world and the custodian of global security, but also the world’s Voice of Conscience and the repository of all the knowledge and cultural heritage of mankind. Under the umbrella of the UN the many issues of concern for humanity – development, population, health, international trade, economy and finance, education and research, communication and technology, etc – are focussed upon and handled by international experts on behalf of humanity as a whole.

In order words, the UN is gradually evolving as a budding world democratic and free government where rich and poor, weak and strong nations of the world can have a say and contribute their quota of energy to global governance and development. The UN, as it is today, may not be perfect like any other human institution in time and space; there will continue to be criticisms of plans, procedures, practices and individuals within the system, but the UN remains the sole bastion of world peace and security today and all men and women of goodwill should therefore support the spirit of the United Nations.

**See ourselves as the future generation**! Most people think that they can get away with whatever evil they may be doing for selfish reasons now, provided they have enough power and money to side track the rule of law; some even think they can bribe ‘God’ by giving some of their ill-gotten money to the Church or by doing some good that is convenient for their large pockets. But can we really ever get away with the wrongs we do against our fellowmen? Ageless Wisdom and all the great world religious traditions disagree!

Some people, most unfortunately, think that when we die, that is the end! But this cannot be possible because all the world religions believe in and profess some form of life after death. Well, if there is indeed life after death, we really have to more careful and diligent about how we live our lives today because as the saying goes, “as a man sows so shall he reap”.

Some religious traditions hold that there is re-incarnation; that man is an immortal soul which is born and reborn in different bodies, at different times and ages and under different circumstances until it achieves the goal of perfection as a Son of God. Other traditions do not share this belief. They believe that when people die they go to heaven or to hell depending on whether or not they followed their beliefs and dogmas to the letter. Either way, there remains
some unavoidable merit or penalty for the quality of life a person lived on earth after the physical death. Karma!

Let us take the hypothetical theory of heaven and hell: if sleeping is some kind of foretaste of what death could be like, we need to be very careful indeed because when we sleep, we hardly drop into oblivion; we dream and our dreams are always reflections of our state of mind before we go to sleep. For example, if one goes to sleep hungry, one is likely to dream of sumptuous meals one can’t quite eat, and a wrong doer will always have a nightmare, a dream of being chased around by whatever he fears most with no hope of escape. Certainly if such dreams becomes permanent, that would be hell, wouldn’t it?

Now suppose that the theory of re-incarnation is real as many believe, the situation then becomes even more thought-provoking. This would mean that whatever we sow in this life, we would certainly reap in the next; the quality of our life today and the values we accept and live by; whatever we do to our fellowmen the society and environment today will be fully reflected and condition our next incarnations. Of course we may not be aware of how we have caused our joy and success, or our sorrow and pain in the present life by our actions in a forgotten lifetime!

If we work diligently now to build a culture of peace, love and harmony in this life time, we could even be among the future generations to reap the reward of a peaceful, secure and beautiful world of expanding possibilities for spiritual and material development and wonder.

Sunny Juwe - Port Harcourt Nigeria

“There cannot be sustainable peace without sustainable development. There cannot be development without life-long education. There cannot development without democracy, without a more equitable sharing of resources, without elimination of disparities which separate the most advanced countries from the least developed ones.”

Frederico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO.
"Does evil exist?" The university professor challenged his students with this question. Did God create everything that exists?

A student bravely replied, "Yes, He did!"

The professor asked, "God created everything?" "Yes sir," replied the student. The professor answered, "If God created everything, then God created evil since evil exists, and according to the principle that our works define who we are, then God is evil."

The student became quiet before such an answer. The professor was quite pleased with himself and boasted to his students that he has proven once more that the Christian faith was a myth.

Another student raised his hand and said, "Can I ask you a question, professor?" "Of course", replied the professor. The student stood up and asked, "Professor, does cold exist?" "What kind of question is this? Of course it exists. Have you never been cold?"

The students snickered at the young man's question. The young man replied, "In fact sir, cold does not exist. According to the law of physics, what we consider cold is in reality the absence of heat. Everybody or object is susceptible to study when it has or transmits energy, and heat is what makes a body or matter have or transmit energy. Absolute zero (-460 degrees F) is the total absence of heat; all matter becomes inert and incapable of reaction at that temperature.

"Cold does not exist. We have created this word to describe how we feel if we have no heat. The student continued, "Professor, does darkness exist?" The professor responded, "Of course it does". The student replied, "Once again you are wrong, sir, darkness does not exist either. Darkness is in reality the absence of light. Light we can study, but not darkness. In fact we can use Newton's prism to break white light into many colours and study the various wavelengths of each colour.

"You cannot measure darkness. A simple ray of light can break into a world of darkness and illuminate it. How can you know how dark a certain space is? You measure the amount of light present. Isn't this correct? Darkness is a term used by man to describe what happens when there is no light present."

Finally the young man asked the professor. "Sir, does evil exist?" Now uncertain, the professor responded, "Of course as I have already said. We see it every day. It is in the daily example of man's inhumanity to man. It is in the multitude of crime and violence everywhere in the world. These manifestations are nothing else but evil."

To this the student replied. "Evil does not exist, sir, or at least it does not exist unto itself. Evil is simply the absence of God. It is just like darkness and cold, a word that man has created to describe the absence of God. God did not create evil. Evil is not like faith, or love that exist just as do light and heat. Evil is the result of what happens when man does not have God's love present in his heart. It's like the cold that comes when there is no heat or the darkness that comes when there is no light."

The professor sat down. The young man's name – Albert Einstein!

Courtesy Bill Parfrey's Family of Friends County Cork, Ireland
Manifesto 2000 for a culture of Peace and Non-violence

Because the year 2000 must be a new beginning, an opportunity to transform - all together - the culture of war and violence into a culture of peace and non-violence.

Because this transformation demands the participation of each and every one of us, and must offer young people and future generations the values that can inspire them to shape a world based on justice, solidarity, liberty, dignity, harmony and prosperity for all.

Because the culture of peace can underpin sustainable development, environmental protection and the well-being of each person.

Because I am aware of my share of responsibility for the future of humanity, in particular to the children of today and tomorrow.

I pledge in my daily life, in my family, my work, my community, my country and my region, to:

Respect the life and dignity of each human being without discrimination or prejudice;

Practise active non-violence, rejecting violence in all its forms: physical, sexual, psychological, economical and social, in particular towards the most deprived and vulnerable such as children and adolescents;

Share my time and material resources in a spirit of generosity to put an end to exclusion, injustice and political and economic oppression;

Defend freedom of expression and cultural diversity, giving preference always to dialogue and listening without engaging in fanaticism, defamation and the rejection of others;

Promote consumer behaviour that is responsible and development practices that respect all forms of life and preserve the balance of nature on the planet;
Contribute to the development of my community, with the full participation of women and respect for democratic principles, in order to create together new forms of solidarity;

*   *   *   *   *   *   *   *

DECADE OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (DESD)

Draft International Implementation Scheme (ISS)

Executive Summary

The Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) is a far-reaching and complex undertaking. Its conceptual basis, socio-economic implications, and environmental and cultural connections make it an enterprise, which potentially touches on every aspect of life. The basic vision of DESD is a world where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from education and learn the values, behaviour and lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transformation. This translates into five objectives, to:

1. Give an enhanced profile to the central role of education and learning in the common pursuit of sustainable development;

2. Facilitate links and networking, exchange and interaction among stakeholders;

3. Provide a space and opportunity for refining and promoting the vision of, and transition to sustainable development – through all forms of learning and public awareness;

4. Develop strategies at every level to strengthen capacity in DESD

The concept of sustainable development continues to evolve. In pursuing education for sustainable development, therefore there must be some clarity in what sustainable development means and what it is aiming at. This plan presents three key areas of sustainable development – society, environment and economy with culture as an underlying dimension.


Society: an understanding of social institutions and their role in change and development, as well as the democratic and participatory systems which give opportunity for the expression of opinion, the selection of governments, the forging of consensus and the resolution of differences.

Environment: an awareness of the resources and fragility of the physical environment and the effects on it of human activity and decisions, with a commitment to factoring environmental concerns into social and economic
policy development.

Economy: a sensibility to the limits and potential of economic growth and their impact on society and on the environment, with a commitment to assess personal and societal levels of consumption out of concern for the environment and for social justice.

The values, diversity, knowledge, languages and worldviews associated with culture predetermine the way issues of education for sustainable development are dealt with in specific national contexts. In this sense, culture is not just a collection of particular manifestations (song, dance, dress.....), but a way of being, behaving and acting which people live out their lives and which is in constant process of change and exchange with other cultures.

ESD is basically about values, with respect at the centre: respect for others, including those of the present and future generations, for difference and diversity, for the environment, for the resources of the planet we inhabit. Education enables us to understand ourselves and others and our links with the wider natural and social environment, and this understanding serves as a durable basis for building respect. Along with the sense of justice, responsibility, exploration and dialogue, ESD aims to move us to adopting behaviours and practices which enable all to live a full life without being deprived of basics.

ESD mirrors the concern for education of high quality, demonstrating characteristics: such as

- Interdisciplinary and holistic learning: learning for sustainable development embedded in the whole curriculum, not as a separate subject;
- Values-driven: sharing the values and principles underpinning sustainable development.
- Critical thinking and problem solving: leading to confidence in addressing dilemmas and challenges of sustainable development;
- Multi-method: work, art, drama, debate, experience….different pedagogies;
- Participatory decision-making: learners participate in decisions on how they are to learn;
- Locally relevant: addressing local as well as global issues, and using the language(s) which listeners most commonly use.

ESD will be shaped by a range of perspectives from all fields of human development and including all the acute challenges, which the world faces. ESD cannot afford to ignore their implications for a more just and more sustainable process of change. The
plan notes the important perspectives provided by human rights, peace and human security, greater gender equality, cultural diversity and intercultural understanding, health, HIV/AIDS, governance, natural resources, climate change, rural transformation, sustainable urbanisation, disaster prevention and mitigation, poverty reduction, corporate accountability, market economy.

ESD is for everyone, at whatever stage of life they find themselves. It takes place therefore within a perspective of lifelong learning, engaging all possible spaces of learning, formal, non-formal and informal, from early childhood to adult life. ESD calls for a re-orientation of educational approaches – curriculum and content, pedagogy and examinations. Spaces for learning include non-formal learning, community-based organisations and local civil society, the workplace, formal education, technical and vocational training, teacher training, higher education, educational inspectorate, policy making bodies.....and beyond

It is true to say that everyone is a stakeholder in education for sustainable development. All of us will feel the impact its success or failure, and all of us affect the impact of ESD by our behaviour which may be supportive or undermining. Complementary roles and responsibilities devolve to a number of bodies and groups at different levels: local (sub-national), national, regional and international. At each level, stakeholders may be part of government (or inter-governmental at regional and international levels), civil society and non-governmental organisations, or in the private sector. The media and advertising agencies will support broad public awareness. In addition, indigenous peoples have a particular role, having an intimate knowledge of the sustained use of their environments, and being particularly vulnerable to unsustainable development.

Seven interlinked strategies are proposed for the decade: advocacy and vision building; consultation and ownership; partnership and networks; capacity building and training; research and innovation; information and communication technologies; monitoring and evaluation. Together they form a coherent approach to the incremental increase over the Decade of the promotion and implementation of ESD. They will ensure that change in public attitudes and educational approaches keep pace with the evolving challenges of sustainable development.

DESD implementation will depend on the strength of stakeholder commitment and cooperation at local (sub-national), national, regional and international levels. Networks and alliances will be the crucial element, forming a common agenda in relevant forums. A small but high-quality ESD Hub at national level will bring energy to promotion and implementation, receiving input regularly from a multi-stakeholder ESD Consultative Group. At the regional and international levels, an ESD Caucus and DESD Inter-Agency Coordination Committee respectively will push the ESD agenda forward through focused meetings and events responding to particular concerns. A high-profile international group of ESD Champions, well known and committed personalities, will serve to spearhead the movement.

The outcomes of the DESD will be seen in the lives of thousands of communities and millions of individuals as new attitudes and values inspire decisions and actions making
sustainable development a more attainable ideal. For the DESD process as such, eleven expected outcomes from the DESD objectives and relate to changes in public awareness, in the education system and in the integration of ESD into all development planning. These outcomes form the basis for indicators used in monitoring and evaluation, however, stakeholder groups at each level will decide specific indicators and the kinds of data needed to verify them. Qualitative indicators must figure equally with quantitative indicators to capture the multiple connections and societal depth of ESD and its impact.

In assessing the need for resources, full account must be taken of existing programmes and available personnel. The need for additional resources should be driven by the need to facilitate action and interaction around specific ESD challenges and issues. The proposed timeline shows ESD forums, events and activities over the first five years, emphasising the necessary linkages between, on the one hand, local, national, regional, international levels, and, on the other hand, DESD and other initiatives such as the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) and Education for All (EFA). Key events towards the end of the Decade are also indicated.

**UNESCO October 2004**

Those who work for goodness and peace suffer many hardships; where do such unbearable burdens come from? Every evolutionary step evokes the fury of chaos, and such fury is a response to every benevolent aspiration. But peacemakers can testify that their best efforts for peace remain with them as their best memories. These efforts are not only recorded in the histories of nations, they are reflected also in the life of the people.

Is not the serenity that is derived from harmonious sounds within the grasp of all? But first someone first has to discover ways of attaining peace through music. While many songs were sung in ancient times, it was considered necessary to point out their ability to evoke peace of mind. In this way a new harmony was introduced into the world.

In the same way, the command to use every possible resource for keeping the peace stands for all time to come. Although mankind seems to have forgotten Him who gave this command, it has nonetheless entered into human consciousness. One should always question whether all peaceful measures have been applied, but without causing the loss of human dignity. One should understand both the mundane and the Supermundane measures; only through harmony and dignity can the beauty of peace be realised. Disregard for human dignity can only result in ugliness. He who knows nothing of beauty cannot think of peace, nor can the concept of unity be realised by the ignorant. Yet all people have reverence for the Unifiers. Thus We labour for peace.

The Thinker contributed greatly, daring to imagine a government of peace. What if people call such daring a dream? We know that dreams pave the road to Eternity!

*Supermundane – The Inner Life by Agni Yoga Society #320*
DEVELOPMENT ON THE RESPONSIBILITIES
OF THE PRESENT GENERATIONS
TOWARDS FUTURE GENERATIONS

Mindful of the will of the peoples, set out solemnly in the Charter of the United nations, to ‘save succeeding generations from the scourge of war’ and to safeguard the values and principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and all other relevant instruments of international law,


Concerned by the fate of future generations in the face of the vital challenges of the next millennium,

Conscious that, at this point in history, the very existence of humankind and its environment are threatened,

Stressing the full respect for human rights and ideals of democracy constitute an essential basis for the protection of the needs and interests of future generations,

Assessing the necessity for establishing new, equitable and global links of partnership and inter-generational solidarity, and for promoting inter-generational solidarity for the perpetuation of humankind,


Determined to contribute towards the solution of current world problems through increased international co-operation, to create such conditions as will ensure that the needs and interests of future generations are not jeopardised by the burden of the past, and to hand on a better world to future generations,
Resolved to strive to ensure that the present generations are fully aware of their responsibilities towards future generations,

Recognising that the task of protecting the needs and interests of future generations, particularly through education, is fundamental to the ethical mission of UNESCO, whose Constitution enshrines the ideals of ‘justice and liberty and peace’ founded on ‘the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind’

Bearing in mind that the fate of future generations depends to a great extent on decisions and actions taken today, and that present-day problems, including poverty, technological and material underdevelopment, unemployment, exclusion, discrimination and threats to the environment, must be solved in the interest of both present and future generations,

Convinced that there is a moral obligation to formulate behavioural guidelines for the present generations within a broad, future-oriented perspective,

Solemnly proclaims on this twelfth day of November 1997 this Declaration on the Responsibilities of the Present Generations Towards Future Generations

Article 1 – Needs and Interests of Future Generations

The present generations have the responsibility of ensuring that the needs and interests of present and future generations are fully safeguarded.

Article 2 – Freedom of Choice

It is important to make every effort to ensure, with due regard to human rights and fundamental freedoms, that future as well as present generations enjoy full freedom of choice as to their political, economic and social systems and are able to preserve their cultural and religious diversity.

Article 3 – Maintenance and Perpetuation of Humankind

The present generations should strive to ensure the maintenance and perpetuation of humankind with due respect for the dignity of the human person. Consequently, the nature and form of human life must not be undermined in any way whatsoever.

Article 4 – Preservation of Life of Earth

The present generations have the responsibility to bequeath to future generations an Earth which will not one day be irreversibly damaged by human activity. Each generation inheriting the Earth temporarily should take care to use natural resources reasonably and ensure that life is not prejudiced by harmful modifications of the ecosystems and that scientific and technological progress in all fields does not harm life on Earth.
Article 5 – Protection of the Environment

1. In order to ensure that future generations benefit from the richness of the Earth’s ecosystems, the present generations should strive for sustainable development and preserve living conditions, particularly the quality and integrity of the environment.

2. The present generations should ensure that future generations are not exposed to pollution which may endanger their health or their existence itself.

3. The present generations should preserve for future generations natural resources necessary for sustaining human life and for its development.

4. The present generations should take into account possible consequences for future generations of major projects before they are carried out.

Article 6 – Human Genome and Biodiversity

The human genome, in full respect of the dignity of the human person and human rights, must be protected and biodiversity safeguarded. Scientific and technological progress should not in any way impair or compromise the preservation of the human and other species.

Article 7 – Cultural Diversity and Cultural Heritage

With due respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the present generations should take care to preserve the cultural diversity of mankind. The present generations have the responsibility to identify, protect and safeguard the tangible and intangible cultural heritage and to transmit this common heritage to future generations.

Article 8 – Common Heritage of Mankind

The present generations may use the common heritage of humankind, as defined in international law, provided that this does not entail compromising it irreversibly.

Article 9 – Peace

1. The present generations should ensure that both they and future generations learn to live together in peace, security, respect for international law, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

2. The present generations should spare future generations the scourge of war. To that end, they should avoid exposing future generations to the harmful consequences of armed conflicts as well as all other forms of aggression and use
of weapons, contrary to humanitarian principles.

Article 10 – Development and Education

1. The present generations should ensure the conditions of equitable, sustainable and universal socio-economic development of future generations, both in its individual and collective dimensions, in particular through a fair and prudent use of available resources for the purpose of combating poverty.

2. Education is an important instrument for the development of human persons and societies. It should be used to foster peace, justice, understanding, tolerance and equality for the benefit of present and future generations.

Article 11 – Non-Discrimination

The present generations should refrain from taking any action or measure which would have the effect of leading to or perpetuating any form of discrimination for future generations.

Article 12 – Implementation

1. States, the United Nations system, other intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, individuals, public and private bodies should assume their full responsibilities in promoting, in particular through education, training and information, respect for the ideals laid down in this Declaration, and encourage by all appropriate means their full recognition and effective application.

2. In view of UNESCO’s ethical mission, the Organisation is, requested to disseminate the present Declaration as widely as possible, and to undertake all necessary steps in its fields of competence to raise public awareness concerning the ideals enshrined therein.
A CHALLENGE

I challenge the thinkers of the world to drop their sectarianism, their nationalism, and their partisanships, and in the spirit of brotherhood to work in their particular nations, regarding it as integral part of a great federation of nations, - a federation that now exists on the inner side, but waits for the activity of the world thinkers to bring it to materialisation on the outer side.

I charge them to work in the cause of religion, and in the field of that particular religion in which they, by an accident of birth or choice, are interested, regarding each religion as part of the great world religion. They must look upon the activities of their group, society or organisation, as demanding their help, just in so far, as the principles on which they are founded, and the techniques which they employ, serve the common good, and develop the realisation of Brotherhood.

I ask you to drop your antagonisms and your antipathies, your hatreds and your racial differences, and to attempt to think in terms of the one family, the one life, and the one humanity. I would remind you that hatred and separateness have brought humanity to the present condition. I would add to that reminder, however, the fact that there is in the world today a large number of liberated men (and women), to produce a change in the attitudes of mankind and in public opinion, if they measure up by an act of the will to what they know and believe.

I challenge you also to make sacrifices, to give yourself and your time, and your money, and your interest, to carry these ideas to those around you, in your own environment, and to the group in which you find yourself, thus awakening your associates. I call you to a united effort to inculcate anew the ideas of brotherhood and of unity. I ask you to recognise your fellow workers in all the groups and to strengthen their hands. I ask you to seal your lips to words of hatred and of criticism, and to talk in terms of brotherhood and of group relationships. I beg of you to see to it that every day is for you a new day, in which you face new opportunity. Lose sight of your own affairs, your petty sorrows, worries and suspicions, in the urgency of the task to be done, and spread the cult of unity, of love and of harmlessness.

I also ask you to sever your connection with all groups which are seeking to destroy and to attack, no matter how sincere their motive. Range yourself on the side of the workers for constructive ends, who are fighting no other groups or organisations, and who have eliminated the word “anti” out of their vocabulary. Stand on the side of those who are silently and steadily building for the new order – an order which is founded on love, which builds under the impulse of brotherhood, and which possesses a realisation of brotherhood, which is based on the knowledge that we are, each and all, no matter our race, the children of the One Father, and who have come to the realisation that the old way of working must go, and the newer methods must be given a chance.
If you cannot yourself teach or preach or write, give of your thought and of your money, so that others can. Give of your hours and minutes of leisure so as to set others free to serve the Plan; give of your money, so that the work of those associated with the New Group of World Servers may go forward with rapidity. Much time you waste in non-essentials. Many of you give little or nothing of time. The same is the case with money. Give as never before, and so make the physical aspects of the work possible. Some give of their very need, and the power they thereby release is great. Those on the inner side are grateful for the giving by those who can give only at great personal cost. Others give of what they can spare, and only when it needs no sacrifice to give. Let that condition also end, and give to the limits with justice and understanding, so that the age of love and light may be more rapidly ushered in. I care not to whom you give, only that you give – little if you have little of time and money, much if you have much. Work and give, love and think, and aid those groups who are building and not destroying, loving and not tearing down.

I challenge you above all to a deeper life, and I implore you for the sake of your fellowmen to strengthen your contact with your own soul, so that you will have done your share in making revelation possible, so that you will have served your part in bringing in the light, and will therefore be in a position to take advantage of that new light and new information, and so be better able to point the way and clear the path for the bewildered seeker at that time. Those who are not ready for the coming events, will be blinded by the emerging light, and bewildered by the revealing wonder; they will be swept by the living breath of God, and it is to you that we look to fit them for the event.

THE TIBETAN
APPENDIX A

THE SEVILLE STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Believing that it is our responsibility to address from our particular disciplines the most dangerous and destructive activities of our species, violence and war; recognising that science is a human cultural product which cannot be definitive or all encompassing; and gratefully acknowledging the support of the authorities of Seville and representatives of the Spanish UNESCO, we, the undersigned scholars from around the world and from relevant sciences, have met and arrived at the following Statement on Violence. In it, we challenge a number of alleged biological findings that have been used, even by some in our disciplines, to justify violence and war. Because the alleged findings have contributed to an atmosphere of pessimism in our time, we submit that the open, considered rejection of these misstatements can contribute significantly to the International Year of Peace.

Misuse of scientific theories and data to justify violence and war is not new but has been made since the advent of modern science. For example, the theory of evolution has been used to justify not only war, but also genocide, colonialism, and suppression of the weak.

We state our position in the form of five propositions. We are aware that there are many other issues about violence and war that could be fruitfully addressed from the standpoint of our disciplines, but we restrict ourselves here to what we consider a most important first step.

FIRST PROPOSITION

IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY INCORRECT to say that we have inherited a tendency to make war from our animal ancestors. Although fighting occurs widely throughout animal species, only a few cases of destructive intraspecies fighting between organised groups have ever been reported among naturally living species, and none of these involve the use of tools designed to be weapons. Normal predatory feeding upon other species cannot be equated with intraspecies violence. Warfare is a peculiarly human phenomenon and does not occur in other animals.

The fact that warfare has changed so radically over time indicates that it is a product of culture. Its biological connection is primarily through language which makes possible the co-ordination of groups, the transmission of technology, and the use of tools. War is biologically possible, but it is not inevitable, as evidenced by its variation in occurrence and nature over time and space. There are cultures which have not engaged in war for
centuries, and there are cultures which have engaged in war frequently at some times and not at others.

SECOND PROPOSITION

IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY INCORRECT to say that war or any other violent behaviour is genetically programmed into our human nature. While genes are involved at all levels of nervous system function, they provide a developmental potential that can be actualised only in conjunction with the ecological and social environment. While individuals vary in their predispositions to be affected by their experience, it is the interaction between their genetic endowment and conditions of nurturance that determines their personalities. Except for rare pathologies, the genes do not produce individuals necessarily predisposed to violence. Neither do they determine the opposite. While genes are co-involved in establishing our behavioural capacities, they do not by themselves specify the outcome.

THIRD PROPOSITION

IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY INCORRECT to say that in the course of human evolution there has been a selection for aggressive behaviour more than for other kinds of behaviour. In all well-studied species, status within the group is achieved by the ability to co-operate and to fulfil social functions relevant to the structure of that group. Dominance involves social bondings and affiliations; it is not simply a matter of the possession and use of superior physical power, although it does involve aggressive behaviours. Where genetic selection for aggressive behaviour has been artificially instituted in animals, it has rapidly succeeded in producing hyper-aggressive individuals; this indicates that aggression was not maximally selected under natural conditions. When such experimentally-created hyper-aggressive animals are present in a social group, they either disrupt its social structure or are driven out. Violence is neither in our evolutionary legacy nor in our genes.

FOURTH PROPOSITION

IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY INCORRECT to say that humans have a 'violent brain.' While we do have the neural apparatus to act violently, it is not automatically activated by internal or external stimuli. Like higher primates and unlike other animals, our higher neural processes filter such stimuli before they can be acted upon. How we act is shaped by how we have been conditioned and socialised. There is nothing in our neurophysiology that compels us to react violently.

FIFTH PROPOSITION

IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY INCORRECT to say that war is caused by 'instinct' or any single motivation. The emergence of modern warfare has been a journey from the primacy of emotional and motivational factors, sometimes called 'instincts,' to the primacy of cognitive factors. Modern war involves institutional use of personal characteristics such
as obedience, suggestibility, and idealism, social skills such as language, and rational considerations such as cost-calculation, planning, and information processing. The technology of modern war has exaggerated traits associated with violence both in the training of actual combatants and in the preparation of support for war in the general population. As a result of this exaggeration, such traits are often mistaken to be the causes rather than the consequences of the process.

CONCLUSION

We conclude that biology does not condemn humanity to war, and that humanity can be freed from the bondage of biological pessimism and empowered with confidence to undertake the transformative tasks needed in this International Year of Peace and in the years to come. Although these tasks are mainly institutional and collective, they also rest upon the consciousness of individual participants for whom pessimism and optimism are crucial factors. Just as 'wars begin in the minds of men', peace also begins in our minds. The same species who invented war is capable of inventing peace. The responsibility lies with each of us.

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APPENDIX B

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Convention on the Rights of the Child

Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989

Entry into force 2 September 1990, in accordance with article 49

Preamble

The States Parties to the present Convention,

Considering that, in accordance with the principles proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Bearing in mind that the peoples of the United Nations have, in the Charter, reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person, and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Recognizing that the United Nations has, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Covenants on Human Rights, proclaimed and agreed that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status,

Recalling that, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations has proclaimed that childhood is entitled to special care and assistance,

Convinced that the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community,

Recognizing that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding,
Considering that the child should be fully prepared to live an individual life in society, and brought up in the spirit of the ideals proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, and in particular in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity,

Bearing in mind that the need to extend particular care to the child has been stated in the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1924 and in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child adopted by the General Assembly on 20 November 1959 and recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (in particular in articles 23 and 24), in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (in particular in article 10) and in the statutes and relevant instruments of specialized agencies and international organizations concerned with the welfare of children,

Bearing in mind that, as indicated in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, "the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth",

Recalling the provisions of the Declaration on Social and Legal Principles relating to the Protection and Welfare of Children, with Special Reference to Foster Placement and Adoption Nationally and Internationally; the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (The Beijing Rules) ; and the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict,

Recognizing that, in all countries in the world, there are children living in exceptionally difficult conditions, and that such children need special consideration,

Taking due account of the importance of the traditions and cultural values of each people for the protection and harmonious development of the child,

Recognizing the importance of international co-operation for improving the living conditions of children in every country, in particular in the developing countries,

Have agreed as follows:

**PART I**

**Article 1**

For the purposes of the present Convention, a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.
**Article 2**

1. States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members.

**Article 3**

1. In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

2. States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for him or her, and, to this end, shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures.

3. States Parties shall ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform with the standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision.

**Article 4**

States Parties shall undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention. With regard to economic, social and cultural rights, States Parties shall undertake such measures to the maximum extent of their available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international co-operation.

**Article 5**

States Parties shall respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents or, where applicable, the members of the extended family or community as provided for by local custom, legal guardians or other persons legally responsible for the child, to provide, in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights recognized in the present Convention.
Article 6

1. States Parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life.

2. States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.

Article 7

1. The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents.

2. States Parties shall ensure the implementation of these rights in accordance with their national law and their obligations under the relevant international instruments in this field, in particular where the child would otherwise be stateless.

Article 8

1. States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognized by law without unlawful interference.

2. Where a child is illegally deprived of some or all of the elements of his or her identity, States Parties shall provide appropriate assistance and protection, with a view to re-establishing speedily his or her identity.

Article 9

1. States Parties shall ensure that a child shall not be separated from his or her parents against their will, except when competent authorities subject to judicial review determine, in accordance with applicable law and procedures, that such separation is necessary for the best interests of the child. Such determination may be necessary in a particular case such as one involving abuse or neglect of the child by the parents, or one where the parents are living separately and a decision must be made as to the child's place of residence.

2. In any proceedings pursuant to paragraph 1 of the present article, all interested parties shall be given an opportunity to participate in the proceedings and make their views known.

3. States Parties shall respect the right of the child who is separated from one or both parents to maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents on a regular basis, except if it is contrary to the child's best interests. 4. Where such separation results from any action initiated by a State Party, such as the detention, imprisonment, exile, deportation or death (including death arising from any cause while the person is in the custody of the State) of one or both parents or of the child, that State Party shall, upon request,
provide the parents, the child or, if appropriate, another member of the
family with the essential information concerning the whereabouts of the
absent member(s) of the family unless the provision of the information would
be detrimental to the well-being of the child. States Parties shall further
ensure that the submission of such a request shall of itself entail no adverse
consequences for the person(s) concerned.

**Article 10**

1. In accordance with the obligation of States Parties under article 9, paragraph 1, applications by a child or his or her parents to enter or leave a State Party for the purpose of family reunification shall be dealt with by States Parties in a positive, humane and expeditious manner. States Parties shall further ensure that the submission of such a request shall entail no adverse consequences for the applicants and for the members of their family.

2. A child whose parents reside in different States shall have the right to maintain on a regular basis, save in exceptional circumstances personal relations and direct contacts with both parents. Towards that end and in accordance with the obligation of States Parties under article 9, paragraph 1, States Parties shall respect the right of the child and his or her parents to leave any country, including their own, and to enter their own country. The right to leave any country shall be subject only to such restrictions as are prescribed by law and which are necessary to protect the national security, public order (ordre public), public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others and are consistent with the other rights recognized in the present Convention.

**Article 11**

1. States Parties shall take measures to combat the illicit transfer and non-return of children abroad.

2. To this end, States Parties shall promote the conclusion of bilateral or multilateral agreements or accession to existing agreements.

**Article 12**

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.
Article 13

1. The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child’s choice.

2. The exercise of this right may be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:

   (a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others; or

   (b) For the protection of national security or of public order (ordre public), or of public health or morals.

Article 14

1. States Parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

2. States Parties shall respect the rights and duties of the parents and, when applicable, legal guardians, to provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her right in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child.

3. Freedom to manifest one’s religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

Article 15

1. States Parties recognize the rights of the child to freedom of association and to freedom of peaceful assembly.

2. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of these rights other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order (ordre public), the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

Article 16

1. No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation.

2. The child has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.
**Article 17**

States Parties recognize the important function performed by the mass media and shall ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health. To this end, States Parties shall:

(a) Encourage the mass media to disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child and in accordance with the spirit of article 29;

(b) Encourage international co-operation in the production, exchange and dissemination of such information and material from a diversity of cultural, national and international sources;

(c) Encourage the production and dissemination of children's books;

(d) Encourage the mass media to have particular regard to the linguistic needs of the child who belongs to a minority group or who is indigenous;

(e) Encourage the development of appropriate guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being, bearing in mind the provisions of articles 13 and 18.

**Article 18**

1. States Parties shall use their best efforts to ensure recognition of the principle that both parents have common responsibilities for the upbringing and development of the child. Parents or, as the case may be, legal guardians, have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child. The best interests of the child will be their basic concern.

2. For the purpose of guaranteeing and promoting the rights set forth in the present Convention, States Parties shall render appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities and shall ensure the development of institutions, facilities and services for the care of children.

3. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that children of working parents have the right to benefit from child-care services and facilities for which they are eligible.

**Article 19**

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.
2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

**Article 20**

1. A child temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment, or in whose own best interests cannot be allowed to remain in that environment, shall be entitled to special protection and assistance provided by the State.

2. States Parties shall in accordance with their national laws ensure alternative care for such a child.

3. Such care could include, inter alia, foster placement, kafalah of Islamic law, adoption or if necessary placement in suitable institutions for the care of children. When considering solutions, due regard shall be paid to the desirability of continuity in a child’s upbringing and to the child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background.

**Article 21**

States Parties that recognize and/or permit the system of adoption shall ensure that the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration and they shall:

(a) Ensure that the adoption of a child is authorized only by competent authorities who determine, in accordance with applicable law and procedures and on the basis of all pertinent and reliable information, that the adoption is permissible in view of the child's status concerning parents, relatives and legal guardians and that, if required, the persons concerned have given their informed consent to the adoption on the basis of such counselling as may be necessary;

(b) Recognize that inter-country adoption may be considered as an alternative means of child's care, if the child cannot be placed in a foster or an adoptive family or cannot in any suitable manner be cared for in the child's country of origin; (c) Ensure that the child concerned by inter-country adoption enjoys safeguards and standards equivalent to those existing in the case of national adoption;

(d) Take all appropriate measures to ensure that, in inter-country adoption, the placement does not result in improper financial gain for those involved in it;
(e) Promote, where appropriate, the objectives of the present article by concluding bilateral or multilateral arrangements or agreements, and endeavour, within this framework, to ensure that the placement of the child in another country is carried out by competent authorities or organs.

**Article 22**

1. States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure that a child who is seeking refugee status or who is considered a refugee in accordance with applicable international or domestic law and procedures shall, whether unaccompanied or accompanied by his or her parents or by any other person, receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of applicable rights set forth in the present Convention and in other international human rights or humanitarian instruments to which the said States are Parties.

2. For this purpose, States Parties shall provide, as they consider appropriate, co-operation in any efforts by the United Nations and other competent intergovernmental organizations or non-governmental organizations cooperating with the United Nations to protect and assist such a child and to trace the parents or other members of the family of any refugee child in order to obtain information necessary for reunification with his or her family. In cases where no parents or other members of the family can be found, the child shall be accorded the same protection as any other child permanently or temporarily deprived of his or her family environment for any reason, as set forth in the present Convention.

**Article 23**

1. States Parties recognize that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community.

2. States Parties recognize the right of the disabled child to special care and shall encourage and ensure the extension, subject to available resources, to the eligible child and those responsible for his or her care, of assistance for which application is made and which is appropriate to the child's condition and to the circumstances of the parents or others caring for the child.

3. Recognizing the special needs of a disabled child, assistance extended in accordance with paragraph 2 of the present article shall be provided free of charge, whenever possible, taking into account the financial resources of the parents or others caring for the child, and shall be designed to ensure that the disabled child has effective access to and receives education, training, health care services, rehabilitation services, preparation for employment and recreation opportunities in a manner conducive to the child's achieving the fullest possible social integration and individual development, including his or her cultural and spiritual development.
4. States Parties shall promote, in the spirit of international cooperation, the exchange of appropriate information in the field of preventive health care and of medical, psychological and functional treatment of disabled children, including dissemination of and access to information concerning methods of rehabilitation, education and vocational services, with the aim of enabling States Parties to improve their capabilities and skills and to widen their experience in these areas. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

**Article 24**

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health. States Parties shall strive to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right of access to such health care services.

2. States Parties shall pursue full implementation of this right and, in particular, shall take appropriate measures:

   (a) To diminish infant and child mortality;

   (b) To ensure the provision of necessary medical assistance and health care to all children with emphasis on the development of primary health care;

   (c) To combat disease and malnutrition, including within the framework of primary health care, through, inter alia, the application of readily available technology and through the provision of adequate nutritious foods and clean drinking-water, taking into consideration the dangers and risks of environmental pollution;

   (d) To ensure appropriate pre-natal and post-natal health care for mothers;

   (e) To ensure that all segments of society, in particular parents and children, are informed, have access to education and are supported in the use of basic knowledge of child health and nutrition, the advantages of breastfeeding, hygiene and environmental sanitation and the prevention of accidents;

   (f) To develop preventive health care, guidance for parents and family planning education and services.

3. States Parties shall take all effective and appropriate measures with a view to abolishing traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children.

4. States Parties undertake to promote and encourage international co-operation with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the right recognized in the present article. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.
**Article 25**

States Parties recognize the right of a child who has been placed by the competent authorities for the purposes of care, protection or treatment of his or her physical or mental health, to a periodic review of the treatment provided to the child and all other circumstances relevant to his or her placement.

**Article 26**

1. States Parties shall recognize for every child the right to benefit from social security, including social insurance, and shall take the necessary measures to achieve the full realization of this right in accordance with their national law.

2. The benefits should, where appropriate, be granted, taking into account the resources and the circumstances of the child and persons having responsibility for the maintenance of the child, as well as any other consideration relevant to an application for benefits made by or on behalf of the child.

**Article 27**

1. States Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

2. The parent(s) or others responsible for the child have the primary responsibility to secure, within their abilities and financial capacities, the conditions of living necessary for the child's development.

3. States Parties, in accordance with national conditions and within their means, shall take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing.

4. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to secure the recovery of maintenance for the child from the parents or other persons having financial responsibility for the child, both within the State Party and from abroad. In particular, where the person having financial responsibility for the child lives in a State different from that of the child, States Parties shall promote the accession to international agreements or the conclusion of such agreements, as well as the making of other appropriate arrangements.

**Article 28**

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:

   (a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;
(b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;

(c) Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;

(d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;

(e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.

3. States Parties shall promote and encourage international cooperation in matters relating to education, in particular with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world and facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern teaching methods. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

**Article 29**  
**General comment on its implementation**

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

   (a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;

   (b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;

   (c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;

   (d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;

   (e) The development of respect for the natural environment.
2. No part of the present article or article 28 shall be construed so as to interfere with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions, subject always to the observance of the principle set forth in paragraph 1 of the present article and to the requirements that the education given in such institutions shall conform to such minimum standards as may be laid down by the State.

**Article 30**

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.

**Article 31**

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.

**Article 32**

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

2. States Parties shall take legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to ensure the implementation of the present article. To this end, and having regard to the relevant provisions of other international instruments, States Parties shall in particular: (a) Provide for a minimum age or minimum ages for admission to employment;

(b) Provide for appropriate regulation of the hours and conditions of employment;

(c) Provide for appropriate penalties or other sanctions to ensure the effective enforcement of the present article.

**Article 33**

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislative, administrative, social and educational measures, to protect children from the illicit use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances as defined in the
relevant international treaties, and to prevent the use of children in the illicit production and trafficking of such substances.

**Article 34**

States Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. For these purposes, States Parties shall in particular take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent:

(a) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity;

(b) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices;

(c) The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.

**Article 35**

States Parties shall take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent the abduction of, the sale of or traffic in children for any purpose or in any form.

**Article 36**

States Parties shall protect the child against all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child’s welfare.

**Article 37**

States Parties shall ensure that:

(a) No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without possibility of release shall be imposed for offences committed by persons below eighteen years of age;

(b) No child shall be deprived of his or her liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily. The arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child shall be in conformity with the law and shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time;

(c) Every child deprived of liberty shall be treated with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person, and in a manner which takes into account the needs of persons of his or her age. In particular, every child deprived of liberty shall be separated from adults unless it is considered in the child’s best interest not to do so and shall have the right to maintain contact with his or her family through correspondence and visits, save in exceptional circumstances;
(d) Every child deprived of his or her liberty shall have the right to prompt access to legal and other appropriate assistance, as well as the right to challenge the legality of the deprivation of his or her liberty before a court or other competent, independent and impartial authority, and to a prompt decision on any such action.

**Article 38**

1. States Parties undertake to respect and to ensure respect for rules of international humanitarian law applicable to them in armed conflicts which are relevant to the child.

2. States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that persons who have not attained the age of fifteen years do not take a direct part in hostilities.

3. States Parties shall refrain from recruiting any person who has not attained the age of fifteen years into their armed forces. In recruiting among those persons who have attained the age of fifteen years but who have not attained the age of eighteen years, States Parties shall endeavour to give priority to those who are oldest.

4. In accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect the civilian population in armed conflicts, States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure protection and care of children who are affected by an armed conflict.

**Article 39**

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.

**Article 40**

1. States Parties recognize the right of every child alleged as, accused of, or recognized as having infringed the penal law to be treated in a manner consistent with the promotion of the child's sense of dignity and worth, which reinforces the child's respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of others and which takes into account the child's age and the desirability of promoting the child's reintegration and the child's assuming a constructive role in society.

2. To this end, and having regard to the relevant provisions of international instruments, States Parties shall, in particular, ensure that:
(a) No child shall be alleged as, be accused of, or recognized as having infringed the penal law by reason of acts or omissions that were not prohibited by national or international law at the time they were committed;

(b) Every child alleged as or accused of having infringed the penal law has at least the following guarantees:

(i) To be presumed innocent until proven guilty according to law;

(ii) To be informed promptly and directly of the charges against him or her, and, if appropriate, through his or her parents or legal guardians, and to have legal or other appropriate assistance in the preparation and presentation of his or her defence;

(iii) To have the matter determined without delay by a competent, independent and impartial authority or judicial body in a fair hearing according to law, in the presence of legal or other appropriate assistance and, unless it is considered not to be in the best interest of the child, in particular, taking into account his or her age or situation, his or her parents or legal guardians;

(iv) Not to be compelled to give testimony or to confess guilt; to examine or have examined adverse witnesses and to obtain the participation and examination of witnesses on his or her behalf under conditions of equality;

(v) If considered to have infringed the penal law, to have this decision and any measures imposed in consequence thereof reviewed by a higher competent, independent and impartial authority or judicial body according to law;

(vi) To have the free assistance of an interpreter if the child cannot understand or speak the language used;

(vii) To have his or her privacy fully respected at all stages of the proceedings. 3. States Parties shall seek to promote the establishment of laws, procedures, authorities and institutions specifically applicable to children alleged as, accused of, or recognized as having infringed the penal law, and, in particular:

(a) The establishment of a minimum age below which children shall be presumed not to have the capacity to infringe the penal law;

(b) Whenever appropriate and desirable, measures for dealing with such children without resorting to judicial proceedings, providing that human rights and legal safeguards are fully respected.

4. A variety of dispositions, such as care, guidance and supervision orders; counselling; probation; foster care; education and vocational training programmes and other alternatives to institutional care shall be available to
ensure that children are dealt with in a manner appropriate to their well-being and proportionate both to their circumstances and the offence.

Article 41

Nothing in the present Convention shall affect any provisions which are more conducive to the realization of the rights of the child and which may be contained in:

(a) The law of a State party; or

(b) International law in force for that State.

PART II

Article 42

States Parties undertake to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike.

Article 43

1. For the purpose of examining the progress made by States Parties in achieving the realization of the obligations undertaken in the present Convention, there shall be established a Committee on the Rights of the Child, which shall carry out the functions hereinafter provided.

2. The Committee shall consist of ten experts of high moral standing and recognized competence in the field covered by this Convention. The members of the Committee shall be elected by States Parties from among their nationals and shall serve in their personal capacity, consideration being given to equitable geographical distribution, as well as to the principal legal systems. (amendment)

3. The members of the Committee shall be elected by secret ballot from a list of persons nominated by States Parties. Each State Party may nominate one person from among its own nationals.

4. The initial election to the Committee shall be held no later than six months after the date of the entry into force of the present Convention and thereafter every second year. At least four months before the date of each election, the Secretary-General of the United Nations shall address a letter to States Parties inviting them to submit their nominations within two months. The Secretary-General shall subsequently prepare a list in alphabetical order of all persons thus nominated, indicating States Parties which have nominated them, and shall submit it to the States Parties to the present Convention.

5. The elections shall be held at meetings of States Parties convened by the Secretary-General at United Nations Headquarters. At those meetings, for
which two thirds of States Parties shall constitute a quorum, the persons
elected to the Committee shall be those who obtain the largest number of
votes and an absolute majority of the votes of the representatives of States
Parties present and voting.

6. The members of the Committee shall be elected for a term of four years. They
shall be eligible for re-election if re-nominated. The term of five of the
members elected at the first election shall expire at the end of two years;
immediately after the first election, the names of these five members shall be
chosen by lot by the Chairman of the meeting.

7. If a member of the Committee dies or resigns or declares that for any other
cause he or she can no longer perform the duties of the Committee, the State
Party which nominated the member shall appoint another expert from
among its nationals to serve for the remainder of the term, subject to the
approval of the Committee.

8. The Committee shall establish its own rules of procedure.

9. The Committee shall elect its officers for a period of two years.

10. The meetings of the Committee shall normally be held at United Nations
    Headquarters or at any other convenient place as determined by the
    Committee. The Committee shall normally meet annually. The duration of
    the meetings of the Committee shall be determined, and reviewed, if
    necessary, by a meeting of the States Parties to the present Convention,
    subject to the approval of the General Assembly.

11. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall provide the necessary staff
    and facilities for the effective performance of the functions of the Committee
    under the present Convention.

12. With the approval of the General Assembly, the members of the Committee
    established under the present Convention shall receive emoluments from
    United Nations resources on such terms and conditions as the Assembly may
    decide.

Article 44

1. States Parties undertake to submit to the Committee, through the Secretary-
    General of the United Nations, reports on the measures they have adopted
    which give effect to the rights recognized herein and on the progress made
    on the enjoyment of those rights:

(a) Within two years of the entry into force of the Convention for the State Party
    concerned;
(b) Thereafter every five years.

2. Reports made under the present article shall indicate factors and difficulties, if any, affecting the degree of fulfilment of the obligations under the present Convention. Reports shall also contain sufficient information to provide the Committee with a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of the Convention in the country concerned.

3. A State Party which has submitted a comprehensive initial report to the Committee need not, in its subsequent reports submitted in accordance with paragraph 1 (b) of the present article, repeat basic information previously provided.

4. The Committee may request from States Parties further information relevant to the implementation of the Convention.

5. The Committee shall submit to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, every two years, reports on its activities.

6. States Parties shall make their reports widely available to the public in their own countries.

Article 45

In order to foster the effective implementation of the Convention and to encourage international co-operation in the field covered by the Convention:

(a) The specialized agencies, the United Nations Children's Fund, and other United Nations organs shall be entitled to be represented at the consideration of the implementation of such provisions of the present Convention as fall within the scope of their mandate. The Committee may invite the specialized agencies, the United Nations Children's Fund and other competent bodies as it may consider appropriate to provide expert advice on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their respective mandates. The Committee may invite the specialized agencies, the United Nations Children's Fund, and other United Nations organs to submit reports on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities;

(b) The Committee shall transmit, as it may consider appropriate, to the specialized agencies, the United Nations Children's Fund and other competent bodies, any reports from States Parties that contain a request, or indicate a need, for technical advice or assistance, along with the Committee's observations and suggestions, if any, on these requests or indications;
(c) The Committee may recommend to the General Assembly to request the Secretary-General to undertake on its behalf studies on specific issues relating to the rights of the child;

(d) The Committee may make suggestions and general recommendations based on information received pursuant to articles 44 and 45 of the present Convention. Such suggestions and general recommendations shall be transmitted to any State Party concerned and reported to the General Assembly, together with comments, if any, from States Parties.

PART III

Article 46
The present Convention shall be open for signature by all States.

Article 47
The present Convention is subject to ratification. Instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Article 48
The present Convention shall remain open for accession by any State. The instruments of accession shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Article 49
1. The present Convention shall enter into force on the thirtieth day following the date of deposit with the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the twentieth instrument of ratification or accession.

2. For each State ratifying or acceding to the Convention after the deposit of the twentieth instrument of ratification or accession, the Convention shall enter into force on the thirtieth day after the deposit by such State of its instrument of ratification or accession.

Article 50
1. Any State Party may propose an amendment and file it with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Secretary-General shall thereupon communicate the proposed amendment to States Parties, with a request that they indicate whether they favour a conference of States Parties for the purpose of considering and voting upon the proposals. In the event that, within four months from the date of such communication, at least one third of the States Parties favour such a conference, the Secretary-General shall convene the conference under the auspices of the United Nations. Any amendment adopted by a majority of States Parties present and voting at the conference shall be submitted to the General Assembly for approval.
2. An amendment adopted in accordance with paragraph 1 of the present article shall enter into force when it has been approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations and accepted by a two-thirds majority of States Parties.

3. When an amendment enters into force, it shall be binding on those States Parties which have accepted it, other States Parties still being bound by the provisions of the present Convention and any earlier amendments which they have accepted.

Article 51

1. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall receive and circulate to all States the text of reservations made by States at the time of ratification or accession.

2. A reservation incompatible with the object and purpose of the present Convention shall not be permitted.

3. Reservations may be withdrawn at any time by notification to that effect addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who shall then inform all States. Such notification shall take effect on the date on which it is received by the Secretary-General.

Article 52

A State Party may denounce the present Convention by written notification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Denunciation becomes effective one year after the date of receipt of the notification by the Secretary-General.

Article 53

The Secretary-General of the United Nations is designated as the depositary of the present Convention.

Article 54

The original of the present Convention, of which the Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts are equally authentic, shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.
APPENDIX C

WORLD SUMMIT ON INFORMATION SOCIETY

Declaration of Principles
Building the Information Society: a global challenge in the new Millennium

A. Our Common Vision of the Information Society

1. We, the representatives of the peoples of the world, assembled in Geneva from 10-12 December 2003 for the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, declare our common desire and commitment to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life, premised on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respecting fully and upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

2. Our challenge is to harness the potential of information and communication technology to promote the development goals of the Millennium Declaration, namely the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; achievement of universal primary education; promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women; reduction of child mortality; improvement of maternal health; to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; and development of global partnerships for development for the attainment of a more peaceful, just and prosperous world. We also reiterate our commitment to the achievement of sustainable development and agreed development goals, as contained in the Johannesburg Declaration and Plan of Implementation and the Monterrey Consensus, and other outcomes of relevant United Nations Summits.

3. We reaffirm the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelation of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, as enshrined in the Vienna Declaration. We also reaffirm that democracy, sustainable development, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as good governance at all levels are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. We further resolve to strengthen respect for the rule of law in international as in national affairs.

4. We reaffirm, as an essential foundation of the Information Society, and as outlined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; that this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.
Communication is a fundamental social process, a basic human need and the foundation of all social organization. It is central to the Information Society. Everyone, everywhere should have the opportunity to participate and no one should be excluded from the benefits the Information Society offers.

5. We further reaffirm our commitment to the provisions of Article 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of their personality is possible, and that, in the exercise of their rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society. These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. In this way, we shall promote an Information Society where human dignity is respected.

6. In keeping with the spirit of this declaration, we rededicate ourselves to upholding the principle of the sovereign equality of all States.

7. We recognize that science has a central role in the development of the Information Society. Many of the building blocks of the Information Society are the result of scientific and technical advances made possible by the sharing of research results.

8. We recognize that education, knowledge, information and communication are at the core of human progress, endeavour and well-being. Further, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have an immense impact on virtually all aspects of our lives. The rapid progress of these technologies opens completely new opportunities to attain higher levels of development. The capacity of these technologies to reduce many traditional obstacles, especially those of time and distance, for the first time in history makes it possible to use the potential of these technologies for the benefit of millions of people in all corners of the world.

9. We are aware that ICTs should be regarded as tools and not as an end in themselves. Under favourable conditions, these technologies can be a powerful instrument, increasing productivity, generating economic growth, job creation and employability and improving the quality of life of all. They can also promote dialogue among people, nations and civilizations.

10. We are also fully aware that the benefits of the information technology revolution are today unevenly distributed between the developed and developing countries and within societies. We are fully committed to turning this digital divide into a digital opportunity for all, particularly for those who risk being left behind and being further marginalized.

11. We are committed to realizing our common vision of the Information Society for ourselves and for future generations. We recognize that young people are the
future workforce and leading creators and earliest adopters of ICTs. They must therefore be empowered as learners, developers, contributors, entrepreneurs and decision-makers. We must focus especially on young people who have not yet been able to benefit fully from the opportunities provided by ICTs. We are also committed to ensuring that the development of ICT applications and operation of services respects the rights of children as well as their protection and well-being.

12. **We affirm** that development of ICTs provides enormous opportunities for women, who should be an integral part of, and key actors, in the Information Society. We are committed to ensuring that the Information Society enables women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis on equality in all spheres of society and in all decision-making processes. To this end, we should mainstream a gender equality perspective and use ICTs as a tool to that end.

13. In building the Information Society, **we shall pay particular attention** to the special needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups of society, including migrants, internally displaced persons and refugees, unemployed and underprivileged people, minorities and nomadic people. We shall also recognize the special needs of older persons and persons with disabilities.

14. **We are resolute** to empower the poor, particularly those living in remote, rural and marginalized urban areas, to access information and to use ICTs as a tool to support their efforts to lift themselves out of poverty.

15. In the evolution of the Information Society, particular attention must be given to the special situation of indigenous peoples, as well as to the preservation of their heritage and their cultural legacy.

16. **We continue to pay** special attention to the particular needs of people of developing countries, countries with economies in transition, Least Developed Countries, Small Island Developing States, Landlocked Developing Countries, Highly Indebted Poor Countries, countries and territories under occupation, countries recovering from conflict and countries and regions with special needs as well as to conditions that pose severe threats to development, such as natural disasters.

17. **We recognize** that building an inclusive Information Society requires new forms of solidarity, partnership and cooperation among governments and other stakeholders, i.e. the private sector, civil society and international organizations. Realizing that the ambitious goal of this Declaration - bridging the digital divide and ensuring harmonious, fair and equitable development for all – will require strong commitment by all stakeholders, we call for digital solidarity, both at national and international levels.

18. Nothing in this Declaration shall be construed as impairing, contradicting, restricting or derogating from the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.
and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, any other international instrument or national laws adopted in furtherance of these instruments.

B. An Information Society for All: Key Principles

19. We are resolute in our quest to ensure that everyone can benefit from the opportunities that ICTs can offer. We agree that to meet these challenges, all stakeholders should work together to:
   a) improve access to information and communication infrastructure and technologies as well as to information and knowledge; build capacity; increase confidence and security in the use of ICTs;
   b) create an enabling environment at all levels; develop and widen ICT applications;
   c) foster and respect cultural diversity; recognize the role of the media; address the ethical dimensions of the Information Society; and
   d) encourage international and regional cooperation. We agree that these are the key principles for building an inclusive Information Society.

1) The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development

20. Governments, as well as private sector, civil society and the United Nations and other international organizations have an important role and responsibility in the development of the Information Society and, as appropriate, in decision-making processes. Building a people-centred Information Society is a joint effort which requires cooperation and partnership among all stakeholders.

2) Information and communication infrastructure: an essential foundation for an inclusive information society

21. Connectivity is a central enabling agent in building the Information Society. Universal, ubiquitous, equitable and affordable access to ICT infrastructure and services, constitutes one of the challenges of the Information Society and should be an objective of all stakeholders involved in building it. Connectivity also involves access to energy and postal services, which should be assured in conformity with the domestic legislation of each country.

22. A well-developed information and communication network infrastructure and applications, adapted to regional, national and local conditions, easily-accessible and affordable, and making greater use of broadband and other innovative technologies where possible, can accelerate the social and economic progress of countries, and the well-being of all individuals, communities and peoples.

23. Policies that create a favourable climate for stability, predictability and fair competition at all levels should be developed and implemented in a manner that not only attracts more private investment for ICT infrastructure development but
also enables universal service obligations to be met in areas where traditional market conditions fail to work. In disadvantaged areas, the establishment of ICT public access points in places such as post offices, schools, libraries and archives, can provide effective means for ensuring universal access to the infrastructure and services of the Information Society.

3) **Access to information and knowledge**

24. The ability for all to access and contribute information, ideas and knowledge is essential in an inclusive Information Society.

25. The sharing and strengthening of global knowledge for development can be enhanced by removing barriers to equitable access to information for economic, social, political, health, cultural, educational, and scientific activities and by facilitating access to public domain information, including by universal design and the use of assistive technologies.

26. A rich public domain is an essential element for the growth of the Information Society, creating multiple benefits such as an educated public, new jobs, innovation, business opportunities, and the advancement of sciences. Information in the public domain should be easily accessible to support the Information Society, and protected from misappropriation. Public institutions such as libraries and archives, museums, cultural collections and other community-based access points should be strengthened so as to promote the preservation of documentary records and free and equitable access to information.

27. Access to information and knowledge can be promoted by increasing awareness among all stakeholders of the possibilities offered by different software models, including proprietary, opensource and free software, in order to increase competition, access by users, diversity of choice, and to enable all users to develop solutions which best meet their requirements. Affordable access to software should be considered as an important component of a truly inclusive Information Society.

28. We strive to promote universal access with equal opportunities for all to scientific knowledge and the creation and dissemination of scientific and technical information, including open access initiatives for scientific publishing.

4) **Capacity building**

29. Each person should have the opportunity to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge in order to understand, participate actively in, and benefit fully from, the Information Society and the knowledge economy. Literacy and universal primary education are key factors for building a fully inclusive information society, paying particular attention to the special needs of girls and women.
Given the wide range of ICT and information specialists required at all levels, building institutional capacity deserves special attention.

30. The use of ICTs in all stages of education, training and human resource development should be promoted, taking into account the special needs of persons with disabilities and disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

31. Continuous and adult education, re-training, life-long learning, distance-learning and other special services, such as telemedicine, can make an essential contribution to employability and help people benefit from the new opportunities offered by ICTs for traditional jobs, self-employment and new professions. Awareness and literacy in ICTs are an essential foundation in this regard.

32. Content creators, publishers, and producers, as well as teachers, trainers, archivists, librarians and learners, should play an active role in promoting the Information Society, particularly in the Least Developed Countries.

33. To achieve a sustainable development of the Information Society, national capability in ICT research and development should be enhanced. Furthermore, partnerships, in particular between and among developed and developing countries, including countries with economies in transition, in research and development, technology transfer, manufacturing and utilization of ICT products and services are crucial for promoting capacity building and global participation in the Information Society. The manufacture of ICTs presents a significant opportunity for creation of wealth.

34. The attainment of our shared aspirations, in particular for developing countries and countries with economies in transition, to become fully-fledged members of the Information Society, and their positive integration into the knowledge economy, depends largely on increased capacity building in the areas of education, technology know-how and access to information, which are major factors in determining development and competitiveness.

5) Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs

35. Strengthening the trust framework, including information security and network security, authentication, privacy and consumer protection, is a prerequisite for the development of the Information Society and for building confidence among users of ICTs. A global culture of cybersecurity needs to be promoted, developed and implemented in cooperation with all stakeholders and international expert bodies. These efforts should be supported by increased international cooperation. Within this global culture of cyber-security, it is important to enhance security and to ensure the protection of data and privacy, while enhancing access and trade. In addition, it must take into account the level of social and economic development
of each country and respect the development-oriented aspects of the Information Society.

36. While recognizing the principles of universal and non-discriminatory access to ICTs for all nations, we support the activities of the United Nations to prevent the potential use of ICTs for purposes that are inconsistent with the objectives of maintaining international stability and security, and may adversely affect the integrity of the infrastructure within States, to the detriment of their security. It is necessary to prevent the use of information resources and technologies for criminal and terrorist purposes, while respecting human rights.

37. Spam is a significant and growing problem for users, networks and the Internet as a whole. Spam and cyber-security should be dealt with at appropriate national and international levels.

6) Enabling environment

38. An enabling environment at national and international levels is essential for the Information Society. ICTs should be used as an important tool for good governance.

39. The rule of law, accompanied by a supportive, transparent, pro-competitive, technologically neutral and predictable policy and regulatory framework reflecting national realities, is essential for building a people-centred Information Society. Governments should intervene, as appropriate, to correct market failures, to maintain fair competition, to attract investment, to enhance the development of the ICT infrastructure and applications, to maximize economic and social benefits, and to serve national priorities.

40. A dynamic and enabling international environment, supportive of foreign direct investment, transfer of technology, and international cooperation, particularly in the areas of finance, debt and trade, as well as full and effective participation of developing countries in global decision-making, are vital complements to national development efforts related to ICTs. Improving global affordable connectivity would contribute significantly to the effectiveness of these development efforts.

41. ICTs are an important enabler of growth through efficiency gains and increased productivity, in particular by small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). In this regard, the development of the Information Society is important for broadly-based economic growth in both developed and developing economies. ICT-supported productivity gains and applied innovations across economic sectors should be fostered. Equitable distribution of the benefits contributes to poverty eradication and social development. Policies that foster productive investment and enable firms, notably SMEs, to make the changes needed to seize the benefits from ICTs, are likely to be the most beneficial.
42. Intellectual Property protection is important to encourage innovation and creativity in the Information Society; similarly, the wide dissemination, diffusion, and sharing of knowledge is important to encourage innovation and creativity. Facilitating meaningful participation by all in intellectual property issues and knowledge sharing through full awareness and capacity building is a fundamental part of an inclusive Information Society.

43. Sustainable development can best be advanced in the Information Society when ICT-related efforts and programmes are fully integrated in national and regional development strategies. We welcome the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and encourage the international community to support the ICT-related measures of this initiative as well as those belonging to similar efforts in other regions. Distribution of the benefits of ICT-driven growth contributes to poverty eradication and sustainable development.

44. Standardization is one of the essential building blocks of the Information Society. There should be particular emphasis on the development and adoption of international standards. The development and use of open, interoperable, non-discriminatory and demand-driven standards that take into account needs of users and consumers is a basic element for the development and greater diffusion of ICTs and more affordable access to them, particularly in developing countries.

International standards aim to create an environment where consumers can access services worldwide regardless of underlying technology.

45. The radio frequency spectrum should be managed in the public interest and in accordance with principle of legality, with full observance of national laws and regulation as well as relevant international agreements.

46. In building the Information Society, States are strongly urged to take steps with a view to the avoidance of, and refrain from, any unilateral measure not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations that impedes the full achievement of economic and social development by the population of the affected countries, and that hinders the well-being of their population.

47. Recognizing that ICTs are progressively changing our working practices, the creation of a secure, safe and healthy working environment, appropriate to the utilisation of ICTs, respecting all relevant international norms, is fundamental.

48. The Internet has evolved into a global facility available to the public and its governance should constitute a core issue of the Information Society agenda. The international management of the Internet should be multilateral, transparent and democratic, with the full involvement of governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations. It should ensure an equitable distribution of resources, facilitate access for all and ensure a stable and secure functioning of the Internet, taking into account multilingualism.
49. The management of the Internet encompasses both technical and public policy issues and should involve all stakeholders and relevant intergovernmental and international organizations. In this respect it is recognized that:

   a) Policy authority for Internet-related public policy issues is the sovereign right of States. They have rights and responsibilities for international Internet-related public policy issues;
   b) The private sector has had and should continue to have an important role in the development of the Internet, both in the technical and economic fields;
   c) Civil society has also played an important role on Internet matters, especially at community level, and should continue to play such a role;
   d) Intergovernmental organizations have had and should continue to have a facilitating role in the coordination of Internet-related public policy issues;
   e) International organizations have also had and should continue to have an important role in the development of Internet-related technical standards and relevant policies.

50. International Internet governance issues should be addressed in a coordinated manner. We ask the Secretary-General of the United Nations to set up a working group on Internet governance, in an open and inclusive process that ensures a mechanism for the full and active participation of governments, the private sector and civil society from both developing and developed countries, involving relevant intergovernmental and international organizations and forums, to investigate and make proposals for action, as appropriate, on the governance of Internet by 2005.

7) **ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life**

51. The usage and deployment of ICTs should seek to create benefits in all aspects of our daily life. ICT applications are potentially important in government operations and services, health care and health information, education and training, employment, job creation, business, agriculture, transport, protection of environment and management of natural resources, disaster prevention, and culture, and to promote eradication of poverty and other agreed development goals. ICTs should also contribute to sustainable production and consumption patterns and reduce traditional barriers, providing an opportunity for all to access local and global markets in a more equitable manner.

Applications should be user-friendly, accessible to all, affordable, adapted to local needs in languages and cultures, and support sustainable development. To this effect, local authorities should play a major role in the provision of ICT services for the benefit of their populations.
8) Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content

52. Cultural diversity is the common heritage of humankind. The Information Society should be founded on and stimulate respect for cultural identity, cultural and linguistic diversity, traditions and religions, and foster dialogue among cultures and civilizations. The promotion, affirmation and preservation of diverse cultural identities and languages as reflected in relevant agreed United Nations documents including UNESCO’s Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, will further enrich the Information Society.

53. The creation, dissemination and preservation of content in diverse languages and formats must be accorded high priority in building an inclusive Information Society, paying particular attention to the diversity of supply of creative work and due recognition of the rights of authors and artists. It is essential to promote the production of and accessibility to all content—educational, scientific, cultural or recreational—in diverse languages and formats. The development of local content suited to domestic or regional needs will encourage social and economic development and will stimulate participation of all stakeholders, including people living in rural, remote and marginal areas.

54. The preservation of cultural heritage is a crucial component of identity and self-understanding of individuals that links a community to its past. The Information Society should harness and preserve cultural heritage for the future by all appropriate methods, including digitisation.

9) Media

55. We reaffirm our commitment to the principles of freedom of the press and freedom of information, as well as those of the independence, pluralism and diversity of media, which are essential to the Information Society. Freedom to seek, receive, impart and use information for the creation, accumulation and dissemination of knowledge are important to the Information Society.

We call for the responsible use and treatment of information by the media in accordance with the highest ethical and professional standards. Traditional media in all their forms have an important role in the Information Society and ICTs should play a supportive role in this regard. Diversity of media ownership should be encouraged, in conformity with national law, and taking into account relevant international conventions. We reaffirm the necessity of reducing international imbalances affecting the media, particularly as regards infrastructure, technical resources and the development of human skills.
10) **Ethical dimensions of the Information Society**

56. The Information Society should respect peace and uphold the fundamental values of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, shared responsibility, and respect for nature.

57. We acknowledge the importance of ethics for the Information Society, which should foster justice, and the dignity and worth of the human person. The widest possible protection should be accorded to the family and to enable it to play its crucial role in society.

58. The use of ICTs and content creation should respect human rights and fundamental freedoms of others, including personal privacy, and the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion in conformity with relevant international instruments.

59. All actors in the Information Society should take appropriate actions and preventive measures, as determined by law, against abusive uses of ICTs, such as illegal and other acts motivated by racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, hatred, violence, all forms of child abuse, including paedophilia and child pornography, and trafficking in, and exploitation of, human beings.

11) **International and regional cooperation**

60. We aim at making full use of the opportunities offered by ICTs in our efforts to reach the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, and to uphold the key principles set forth in this Declaration. The Information Society is intrinsically global in nature and national efforts need to be supported by effective international and regional cooperation among governments, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders, including the international financial institutions.

61. In order to build an inclusive global Information Society, we will seek and effectively implement concrete international approaches and mechanisms, including financial and technical assistance. Therefore, while appreciating ongoing ICT cooperation through various mechanisms, we invite all stakeholders to commit to the “Digital Solidarity Agenda” set forth in the Plan of Action.

We are convinced that the worldwide agreed objective is to contribute to bridge the digital divide, promote access to ICTs, create digital opportunities, and benefit from the potential offered by ICTs for development. We recognize the will expressed by some to create an international voluntary “Digital Solidarity Fund”, and by others to undertake studies concerning existing mechanisms and the efficiency and feasibility of such a Fund.
Regional integration contributes to the development of the global Information Society and makes strong cooperation within and among regions indispensable. Regional dialogue should contribute to national capacity building and to the alignment of national strategies with the goals of this Declaration of Principles in a compatible way, while respecting national and regional particularities. In this context, we welcome and encourage the international community to support the ICT-related measures of such initiatives.

We resolve to assist developing countries, LDCs and countries with economies in transition through the mobilization from all sources of financing, the provision of financial and technical assistance and by creating an environment conducive to technology transfer, consistent with the purposes of this Declaration and the Plan of Action.

The core competences of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in the fields of ICTs—assistance in bridging the digital divide, international and regional cooperation, radio spectrum management, standards development and the dissemination of information—are of crucial importance for building the Information Society.

C. Towards an Information Society for All Based on Shared Knowledge

We commit ourselves to strengthening cooperation to seek common responses to the challenges and to the implementation of the Plan of Action, which will realize the vision of an inclusive Information Society based on the Key Principles incorporated in this Declaration.

We further commit ourselves to evaluate and follow-up progress in bridging the digital divide, taking into account different levels of development, so as to reach internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, and to assess the effectiveness of investment and international cooperation efforts in building the Information Society.

We are firmly convinced that we are collectively entering a new era of enormous potential, that of the Information Society and expanded human communication. In this emerging society, information and knowledge can be produced, exchanged, shared and communicated through all the networks of the world. All individuals can soon, if we take the necessary actions, together build a new Information Society based on shared knowledge and founded on global solidarity and a better mutual understanding between peoples and nations. We trust that these measures will open the way to the future development of a true knowledge society.
APPENDIX C

WORLD SUMMIT ON INFORMATION SOCIETY

PLAN OF ACTION

A. Introduction

1. The common vision and guiding principles of the Declaration are translated in this Plan of Action into concrete action lines to advance the achievement of the internationally-agreed development goals, including those in the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Declaration and Plan of Implementation, by promoting the use of ICT-based products, networks, services and applications, and to help countries overcome the digital divide. The Information Society envisaged in the Declaration of Principles will be realized in cooperation and solidarity by governments and all other stakeholders.

2. The Information Society is an evolving concept that has reached different levels across the world, reflecting the different stages of development. Technological and other change is rapidly transforming the environment in which the Information Society is developed. The Plan of Action is thus an evolving platform to promote the Information Society at the national, regional and international levels. The unique two-phase structure of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) provides an opportunity to take this evolution into account.

3. All stakeholders have an important role to play in the Information Society, especially through partnerships: a) Governments have a leading role in developing and implementing comprehensive, forward looking and sustainable national e-strategies. The private sector and civil society, in dialogue with governments, have an important consultative role to play in devising national e-strategies. b) The commitment of the private sector is important in developing and diffusing information and communication technologies (ICTs), for infrastructure, content and applications. The private sector is not only a market player but also plays a role in a wider sustainable development context. c) The commitment and involvement of civil society is equally important in creating an equitable Information Society, and in implementing ICT-related initiatives for development. d) International and regional institutions, including international financial institutions, have a key role in integrating the use of ICTs in the development process and making available necessary resources for building the Information Society and for the evaluation of the progress made.
B. Objectives, goals and targets

4. The objectives of the Plan of Action are to build an inclusive Information Society; to put the potential of knowledge and ICTs at the service of development; to promote the use of information and knowledge for the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration; and to address new challenges of the Information Society, at the national, regional and international levels. Opportunity shall be taken in phase two of the WSIS to evaluate and assess progress made towards bridging the digital divide.

5. Specific targets for the Information Society will be established as appropriate, at the national level in the framework of national e-strategies and in accordance with national development policies, taking into account the different national circumstances. Such targets can serve as useful benchmarks for actions and for the evaluation of the progress made towards the attainment of the overall objectives of the Information Society.

6. Based on internationally agreed development goals, including those in the Millennium Declaration, which are premised on international cooperation, indicative targets may serve as global references for improving connectivity and access in the use of ICTs in promoting the objectives of the Plan of Action, to be achieved by 2015. These targets may be taken into account in the establishment of the national targets, considering the different national circumstances:
   a) to connect villages with ICTs and establish community access points;
   b) to connect universities, colleges, secondary schools and primary schools with ICTs;
   c) to connect scientific and research centres with ICTs;
   d) to connect public libraries, cultural centres, museums, post offices and archives with ICTs;
   e) to connect health centres and hospitals with ICTs;
   f) to connect all local and central government departments and establish websites and email addresses;
   g) to adapt all primary and secondary school curricula to meet the challenges of the Information Society, taking into account national circumstances;
   h) to ensure that all of the world’s population have access to television and radio services;
   i) to encourage the development of content and to put in place technical conditions in order to facilitate the presence and use of all world languages on the Internet;
   j) to ensure that more than half the world’s inhabitants have access to ICTs within their reach.

7. In giving effect to these objectives, goals and targets, special attention will be paid to the needs of developing countries, and in particular to countries, peoples and groups cited in paragraphs 11-16 of the Declaration of Principles.
C. Action Lines

C1. The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development

8. The effective participation of governments and all stakeholders is vital in developing the Information Society requiring cooperation and partnerships among all of them.

a) Development of national e-strategies, including the necessary human capacity building, should be encouraged by all countries by 2005, taking into account different national circumstances.

b) Initiate at the national level a structured dialogue involving all relevant stakeholders, including through public/private partnerships, in devising e-strategies for the Information Society and for the exchange of best practices.

c) In developing and implementing national e-strategies, stakeholders should take into consideration local, regional and national needs and concerns. To maximize the benefits of initiatives undertaken, these should include the concept of sustainability. The private sector should be engaged in concrete projects to develop the Information Society at local, regional and national levels.

d) Each country is encouraged to establish at least one functioning Public/Private Partnership (PPP) or Multi-Sector Partnership (MSP), by 2005 as a showcase for future action.

e) Identify mechanisms, at the national, regional and international levels, for the initiation and promotion of partnerships among stakeholders of the Information Society.

f) Explore the viability of establishing multi-stakeholder portals for indigenous peoples at the national level.

g) By 2005, relevant international organizations and financial institutions should develop their own strategies for the use of ICTs for sustainable development, including sustainable production and consumption patterns and as an effective instrument to help achieve the goals expressed in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

h) International organizations should publish, in their areas of competence, including on their website, reliable information submitted by relevant stakeholders on successful experiences of mainstreaming ICTs.

i) Encourage a series of related measures, including, among other things: incubator schemes, venture capital investments (national and international), government investment funds (including micro-finance for Small, Medium-sized and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs), investment promotion strategies, software export support activities (trade counselling), support of research and development networks and software parks.
C2. Information and communication infrastructure: an essential foundation for the Information Society

Infrastructure is central in achieving the goal of digital inclusion, enabling universal, sustainable, ubiquitous and affordable access to ICTs by all, taking into account relevant solutions already in place in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, to provide sustainable connectivity and access to remote and marginalized areas at national and regional levels.

a) Governments should take action, in the framework of national development policies, in order to support an enabling and competitive environment for the necessary investment in ICT infrastructure and for the development of new services.

b) In the context of national e-strategies, devise appropriate universal access policies and strategies, and their means of implementation, in line with the indicative targets, and develop ICT connectivity indicators.

c) In the context of national e-strategies, provide and improve ICT connectivity for all schools, universities, health institutions, libraries, post offices, community centres, museums and other institutions accessible to the public, in line with the indicative targets.

d) Develop and strengthen national, regional and international broadband network infrastructure, including delivery by satellite and other systems, to help in providing the capacity to match the needs of countries and their citizens and for the delivery of new ICT-based services. Support technical, regulatory and operational studies by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and, as appropriate, other relevant international organizations in order to:

   i) broaden access to orbital resources, global frequency harmonization and global systems standardization;
   ii) encourage public/private partnership;
   iii) promote the provision of global high-speed satellite services for underserved areas such as remote and sparsely populated areas;
   iv) explore other systems that can provide high-speed connectivity.

e) In the context of national e-strategies, address the special requirements of older people, persons with disabilities, children, especially marginalized children and other disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, including by appropriate educational administrative and legislative measures to ensure their full inclusion in the Information Society.

f) Encourage the design and production of ICT equipment and services so that everyone, has easy and affordable access to them including older people, persons with disabilities, children, especially marginalized children, and other disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, and promote the development of technologies, applications, and content suited to their needs, guided by the Universal Design Principle and further enhanced by the use of assistive technologies.
g) In order to alleviate the challenges of illiteracy, develop affordable technologies and non-text based computer interfaces to facilitate people’s access to ICT,

h) Undertake international research and development efforts aimed at making available adequate and affordable ICT equipment for end users.

i) Encourage the use of unused wireless capacity, including satellite, in developed countries and in particular in developing countries, to provide access in remote areas, especially in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, and to improve low-cost connectivity in developing countries. Special concern should be given to the Least Developed Countries in their efforts in establishing telecommunication infrastructure.

j) Optimize connectivity among major information networks by encouraging the creation and development of regional ICT backbones and Internet exchange points, to reduce interconnection costs and broaden network access.

k) Develop strategies for increasing affordable global connectivity, thereby facilitating improved access. Commercially negotiated Internet transit and interconnection costs should be oriented towards objective, transparent and non-discriminatory parameters, taking into account ongoing work on this subject.

l) Encourage and promote joint use of traditional media and new technologies.

C3. Access to information and knowledge

10. ICTs allow people, anywhere in the world, to access information and knowledge almost instantaneously. Individuals, organizations and communities should benefit from access to knowledge and information.

a) Develop policy guidelines for the development and promotion of public domain information as an important international instrument promoting public access to information.

b) Governments are encouraged to provide adequate access through various communication resources, notably the Internet, to public official information. Establishing legislation on access to information and the preservation of public data, notably in the area of the new technologies, is encouraged.

c) Promote research and development to facilitate accessibility of ICTs for all, including disadvantaged, marginalized and vulnerable groups.

d) Governments, and other stakeholders, should establish sustainable multi-purpose community public access points, providing affordable or free-of-charge access for their citizens to the various communication resources, notably the Internet. These access points should, to the extent possible, have sufficient capacity to provide assistance to users, in libraries, educational institutions, public administrations, post offices or other public places, with special emphasis on rural and underserved areas, while respecting intellectual property rights (IPRs) and encouraging the use of information and sharing of knowledge.

e) Encourage research and promote awareness among all stakeholders of the possibilities offered by different software models, and the means of their
creation, including proprietary, open-source and free software, in order to increase competition, freedom of choice and affordability, and to enable all stakeholders to evaluate which solution best meets their requirements.

f) Governments should actively promote the use of ICTs as a fundamental working tool by their citizens and local authorities. In this respect, the international community and other stakeholders should support capacity building for local authorities in the widespread use of ICTs as a means of improving local governance.

g) Encourage research on the Information Society, including on innovative forms of networking, adaptation of ICT infrastructure, tools and applications that facilitate accessibility of ICTs for all, and disadvantaged groups in particular.

h) Support the creation and development of a digital public library and archive services, adapted to the Information Society, including reviewing national library strategies and legislation, developing a global understanding of the need for “hybrid libraries”, and fostering worldwide cooperation between libraries.

i) Encourage initiatives to facilitate access, including free and affordable access to open access journals and books, and open archives for scientific information.

j) Support research and development of the design of useful instruments for all stakeholders to foster increased awareness, assessment, and evaluation of different software models and licences, so as to ensure an optimal choice of appropriate software that will best contribute to achieving development goals within local conditions.

C4. Capacity building

11. Everyone should have the necessary skills to benefit fully from the Information Society. Therefore capacity building and ICT literacy are essential. ICTs can contribute to achieving universal education worldwide, through delivery of education and training of teachers, and offering improved conditions for lifelong learning, encompassing people that are outside the formal education process, and improving professional skills.

a) Develop domestic policies to ensure that ICTs are fully integrated in education and training at all levels, including in curriculum development, teacher training, institutional administration and management, and in support of the concept of lifelong learning.

b) Develop and promote programmes to eradicate illiteracy using ICTs at national, regional and international levels.

c) Promote e-literacy skills for all, for example by designing and offering courses for public administration, taking advantage of existing facilities such as libraries, multipurpose community centres, public access points and by establishing local ICT training centres with the cooperation of all
stakeholders. Special attention should be paid to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

d) In the context of national educational policies, and taking into account the need to eradicate adult illiteracy, ensure that young people are equipped with knowledge and skills to use ICTs, including the capacity to analyse and treat information in creative and innovative ways, share their expertise and participate fully in the Information Society.

e) Governments, in cooperation with other stakeholders, should create programmes for capacity building with an emphasis on creating a critical mass of qualified and skilled ICT professionals and experts.

f) Develop pilot projects to demonstrate the impact of ICT-based alternative educational delivery systems, notably for achieving Education for All targets, including basic literacy targets.

g) Work on removing the gender barriers to ICT education and training and promoting equal training opportunities in ICT-related fields for women and girls. Early intervention programmes in science and technology should target young girls with the aim of increasing the number of women in ICT careers. Promote the exchange of best practices on the integration of gender perspectives in ICT education.

h) Empower local communities, especially those in rural and underserved areas, in ICT use and promote the production of useful and socially meaningful content for the benefit of all.

i) Launch education and training programmes, where possible using information networks of traditional nomadic and indigenous peoples, which provide opportunities to fully participate in the Information Society.

j) Design and implement regional and international cooperation activities to enhance the capacity, notably, of leaders and operational staff in developing countries and LDCs, to apply ICTs effectively in the whole range of educational activities. This should include delivery of education outside the educational structure, such as the workplace and at home.

k) Design specific training programmes in the use of ICTs in order to meet the educational needs of information professionals, such as archivists, librarians, museum professionals, scientists, teachers, journalists, postal workers and other relevant professional groups. Training of information professionals should focus not only on new methods and techniques for the development and provision of information and communication services, but also on relevant management skills to ensure the best use of technologies. Training of teachers should focus on the technical aspects of ICTs, on development of content, and on the potential possibilities and challenges of ICTs.

l) Develop distance learning, training and other forms of education and training as part of capacity building programmes. Give special attention to developing countries and especially LDCs in different levels of human resources development.

m) Promote international and regional cooperation in the field of capacity building, including country programmes developed by the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies.
n) Launch pilot projects to design new forms of ICT-based networking, linking education, training and research institutions between and among developed and developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

o) Volunteering, if conducted in harmony with national policies and local cultures, can be a valuable asset for raising human capacity to make productive use of ICT tools and build a more inclusive Information Society. Activate volunteer programmes to provide capacity building on ICT for development, particularly in developing countries.

p) Design programmes to train users to develop self-learning and self-development capacities.

C5. **Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs**

12. Confidence and security are among the main pillars of the Information Society.

   a) Promote cooperation among the governments at the United Nations and with all stakeholders at other appropriate fora to enhance user confidence, build trust, and protect both data and network integrity; consider existing and potential threats to ICTs; and address other information security and network security issues.

   b) Governments, in cooperation with the private sector, should prevent, detect and respond to cybercrime and misuse of ICTs by: developing guidelines that take into account ongoing efforts in these areas; considering legislation that allows for effective investigation and prosecution of misuse; promoting effective mutual assistance efforts; strengthening institutional support at the international level for preventing, detecting and recovering from such incidents; and encouraging education and raising awareness.

   c) Governments, and other stakeholders, should actively promote user education and awareness about online privacy and the means of protecting privacy.

   d) Take appropriate action on spam at national and international levels.

   e) Encourage the domestic assessment of national law with a view to overcoming any obstacles to the effective use of electronic documents and transactions including electronic means of authentication.

   f) Further strengthen the trust and security framework with complementary and mutually reinforcing initiatives in the fields of security in the use of ICTs, with initiatives or guidelines with respect to rights to privacy, data and consumer protection.

   g) Share good practices in the field of information security and network security and encourage their use by all parties concerned.

   h) Invite interested countries to set up focal points for real-time incident handling and response, and develop a cooperative network between these focal points for sharing information and technologies on incident response.

   i) Encourage further development of secure and reliable applications to facilitate online transactions.
j) Encourage interested countries to contribute actively to the ongoing United Nations activities to build confidence and security in the use of ICTs.

C6. Enabling environment

13. To maximize the social, economic and environmental benefits of the Information Society, governments need to create a trustworthy, transparent and non-discriminatory legal, regulatory and policy environment. Actions include:

a) Governments should foster a supportive, transparent, pro-competitive and predictable policy, legal and regulatory framework, which provides the appropriate incentives to investment and community development in the Information Society.

b) We ask the Secretary General of the United Nations to set up a working group on Internet governance, in an open and inclusive process that ensures a mechanism for the full and active participation of governments, the private sector and civil society from both developing and developed countries, involving relevant intergovernmental and international organizations and forums, to investigate and make proposals for action, as appropriate, on the governance of Internet by 2005. The group should, inter alia:

i) develop a working definition of Internet governance;

ii) identify the public policy issues that are relevant to Internet governance;

iii) develop a common understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of governments, existing intergovernmental and international organisations and other forums as well as the private sector and civil society from both developing and developed countries;

iv) prepare a report on the results of this activity to be presented for consideration and appropriate action for the second phase of WSIS in Tunis in 2005.

c) Governments are invited to:

i) facilitate the establishment of national and regional Internet Exchange Centres;

ii) manage or supervise, as appropriate, their respective country code top-level domain name (ccTLD);

iii) promote awareness of the Internet.

d) In cooperation with the relevant stakeholders, promote regional root servers and the use of internationalized domain names in order to overcome barriers to access.

e) Governments should continue to update their domestic consumer protection laws to respond to the new requirements of the Information Society.

f) Promote effective participation by developing countries and countries with economies in transition in international ICT forums and create opportunities for exchange of experience.
g) Governments need to formulate national strategies, which include e-government strategies, to make public administration more transparent, efficient and democratic.

h) Develop a framework for the secure storage and archival of documents and other electronic records of information.

i) Governments and stakeholders should actively promote user education and awareness about online privacy and the means of protecting privacy.

j) Invite stakeholders to ensure that practices designed to facilitate electronic commerce also permit consumers to have a choice as to whether or not to use electronic communication.

k) Encourage the ongoing work in the area of effective dispute settlement systems, notably alternative dispute resolution (ADR), which can promote settlement of disputes.

l) Governments, in collaboration with stakeholders, are encouraged to formulate conducive ICT policies that foster entrepreneurship, innovation and investment, and with particular reference to the promotion of participation by women.

m) Recognising the economic potential of ICTs for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs), they should be assisted in increasing their competitiveness by streamlining administrative procedures, facilitating their access to capital and enhancing their capacity to participate in ICT-related projects.

n) Governments should act as model users and early adopters of e-commerce in accordance with their level of socio-economic development.

o) Governments, in cooperation with other stakeholders, should raise awareness of the importance of international interoperability standards for global e-commerce.

p) Governments, in cooperation with other stakeholders, should promote the development and use of open, interoperable, non-discriminatory and demand-driven standards.

q) ITU, pursuant to its treaty capacity, coordinates and allocates frequencies with the goal of facilitating ubiquitous and affordable access.

r) Additional steps should be taken in ITU and other regional organisations to ensure rational, efficient and economical use of, and equitable access to, the radio-frequency spectrum by all countries, based on relevant international agreements.

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life

14. ICT applications can support sustainable development, in the fields of public administration, business, education and training, health, employment, environment, agriculture and science within the framework of national e-strategies. This would include actions within the following sectors:
15. **E-government**

a) Implement e-government strategies focusing on applications aimed at innovating and promoting transparency in public administrations and democratic processes, improving efficiency and strengthening relations with citizens.

b) Develop national e-government initiatives and services, at all levels, adapted to the needs of citizens and business, to achieve a more efficient allocation of resources and public goods.

c) Support international cooperation initiatives in the field of e-government, in order to enhance transparency, accountability and efficiency at all levels of government.

16. **E-business**

a) Governments, international organizations and the private sector, are encouraged to promote the benefits of international trade and the use of e-business, and promote the use of e-business models in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

b) Through the adoption of an enabling environment, and based on widely available Internet access, governments should seek to stimulate private sector investment, foster new applications, content development and public/private partnerships.

c) Government policies should favour assistance to, and growth of SMMEs, in the ICT industry, as well as their entry into e-business, to stimulate economic growth and job creation as an element of a strategy for poverty reduction through wealth creation.

17. **E-learning** (see section C4)

18. **E-health**

a) Promote collaborative efforts of governments, planners, health professionals, and other agencies along with the participation of international organizations for creating a reliable, timely, high quality and affordable health care and health information systems and for promoting continuous medical training, education, and research through the use of ICTs, while respecting and protecting citizens’ right to privacy.

b) Facilitate access to the world’s medical knowledge and locally-relevant content resources for strengthening public health research and prevention programmes and promoting women’s and men’s health, such as content on sexual and reproductive health and sexually transmitted infections, and for diseases that attract full attention of the world including HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

c) Alert, monitor and control the spread of communicable diseases, through the improvement of common information systems.
d) Promote the development of international standards for the exchange of health data, taking due account of privacy concerns.

e) Encourage the adoption of ICTs to improve and extend health care and health information systems to remote and underserved areas and vulnerable populations, recognising women's roles as health providers in their families and communities.

f) Strengthen and expand ICT-based initiatives for providing medical and humanitarian assistance in disasters and emergencies.

19. E-employment

a) Encourage the development of best practices for e-workers and e-employers built, at the national level, on principles of fairness and gender equality, respecting all relevant international norms.

b) Promote new ways of organizing work and business with the aim of raising productivity, growth and wellbeing through investment in ICTs and human resources.

c) Promote teleworking to allow citizens, particularly in the developing countries, LDCs, and small economies, to live in their societies and work anywhere, and to increase employment opportunities for women, and for those with disabilities. In promoting teleworking, special attention should be given to strategies promoting job creation and the retention of the skilled working force.

d) Promote early intervention programmes in science and technology that should target young girls to increase the number of women in ICT carriers.

20. E-environment

a) Governments, in cooperation with other stakeholders are encouraged to use and promote ICTs as an instrument for environmental protection and the sustainable use of natural resources.

b) Government, civil society and the private sector are encouraged to initiate actions and implement projects and programmes for sustainable production and consumption and the environmentally safe disposal and recycling of discarded hardware and components used in ICTs.

c) Establish monitoring systems, using ICTs, to forecast and monitor the impact of natural and man-made disasters, particularly in developing countries, LDCs and small economies.

21. E-agriculture

a) Ensure the systematic dissemination of information using ICTs on agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, forestry and food, in order to provide ready access to comprehensive, up-to-date and detailed knowledge and information, particularly in rural areas.

b) Public-private partnerships should seek to maximize the use of ICTs as an instrument to improve production (quantity and quality).
22. **E-science**

   a) Promote affordable and reliable high-speed Internet connection for all universities and research institutions to support their critical role in information and knowledge production, education and training, and to support the establishment of partnerships, cooperation and networking between these institutions.

   b) Promote electronic publishing, differential pricing and open access initiatives to make scientific information affordable and accessible in all countries on an equitable basis.

   c) Promote the use of peer-to-peer technology to share scientific knowledge and pre-prints and reprints written by scientific authors who have waived their right to payment.

   d) Promote the long-term systematic and efficient collection, dissemination and preservation of essential scientific digital data, for example, population and meteorological data in all countries.

   e) Promote principles and metadata standards to facilitate cooperation and effective use of collected scientific information and data as appropriate to conduct scientific research.

C8. **Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content**

23. Cultural and linguistic diversity, while stimulating respect for cultural identity, traditions and religions, is essential to the development of an Information Society based on the dialogue among cultures and regional and international cooperation. It is an important factor for sustainable development.

   a) Create policies that support the respect, preservation, promotion and enhancement of cultural and linguistic diversity and cultural heritage within the Information Society, as reflected in relevant agreed United Nations documents, including UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. This includes encouraging governments to design cultural policies to promote the production of cultural, educational and scientific content and the development of local cultural industries suited to the linguistic and cultural context of the users.

   b) Develop national policies and laws to ensure that libraries, archives, museums and other cultural institutions can play their full role of content—including traditional knowledge—providers in the Information Society, more particularly by providing continued access to recorded information.

   c) Support efforts to develop and use ICTs for the preservation of natural and cultural heritage, keeping it accessible as a living part of today's culture. This includes developing systems for ensuring continued access to archived digital information and multimedia content in digital repositories, and support archives, cultural collections and libraries as the memory of humankind.

   d) Develop and implement policies that preserve, affirm, respect and promote diversity of cultural expression and indigenous knowledge and traditions.
through the creation of varied information content and the use of different methods, including the digitization of the educational, scientific and cultural heritage.

e) Support local content development, translation and adaptation, digital archives, and diverse forms of digital and traditional media by local authorities. These activities can also strengthen local and indigenous communities.

f) Provide content that is relevant to the cultures and languages of individuals in the Information Society, through access to traditional and digital media services.

g) Through public/private partnerships, foster the creation of varied local and national content, including that available in the language of users, and give recognition and support to ICT-based work in all artistic fields.

h) Strengthen programmes focused on gender-sensitive curricula in formal and non-formal education for all and enhancing communication and media literacy for women with a view to building the capacity of girls and women to understand and to develop ICT content.

i) Nurture the local capacity for the creation and distribution of software in local languages, as well as content that is relevant to different segments of population, including non-literate, persons with disabilities, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups especially in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

j) Give support to media based in local communities and support projects combining the use of traditional media and new technologies for their role in facilitating the use of local languages, for documenting and preserving local heritage, including landscape and biological diversity, and as a means to reach rural and isolated and nomadic communities.

k) Enhance the capacity of indigenous peoples to develop content in their own languages.

l) Cooperate with indigenous peoples and traditional communities to enable them to more effectively use and benefit from the use of their traditional knowledge in the Information Society.

m) Exchange knowledge, experiences and best practices on policies and tools designed to promote cultural and linguistic diversity at regional and sub-regional levels. This can be achieved by establishing regional, and sub-regional working groups on specific issues of this Plan of Action to foster integration efforts.

n) Assess at the regional level the contribution of ICT to cultural exchange and interaction, and based on the outcome of this assessment, design relevant programmes.

o) Governments, through public/private partnerships, should promote technologies and R&D programmes in such areas as translation, iconographies, voice-assisted services and the development of necessary hardware and a variety of software models, including proprietary, open source software and free software, such as standard character sets, language codes, electronic dictionaries, terminology and thesauri, multilingual search
engines, machine translation tools, internationalized domain names, content referencing as well as general and application software.

C9. Media

24. The media—in their various forms and with a diversity of ownership—as an actor, have an essential role in the development of the Information Society and are recognized as an important contributor to freedom of expression and plurality of information.

a) Encourage the media—print and broadcast as well as new media—to continue to play an important role in the Information Society.

b) Encourage the development of domestic legislation that guarantees the independence and plurality of the media.

c) Take appropriate measures—consistent with freedom of expression—to combat illegal and harmful content in media content.

d) Encourage media professionals in developed countries to establish partnerships and networks with the media in developing ones, especially in the field of training.

e) Promote balanced and diverse portrayals of women and men by the media.

f) Reduce international imbalances affecting the media, particularly as regards infrastructure, technical resources and the development of human skills, taking full advantage of ICT tools in this regard.

g) Encourage traditional media to bridge the knowledge divide and to facilitate the flow of cultural content, particularly in rural areas.

C10. Ethical dimensions of the Information Society

25. The Information Society should be subject to universally held values and promote the common good and to prevent abusive uses of ICTs.

a) Take steps to promote respect for peace and to uphold the fundamental values of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, shared responsibility, and respect for nature.

b) All stakeholders should increase their awareness of the ethical dimension of their use of ICTs.

c) All actors in the Information Society should promote the common good, protect privacy and personal data and take appropriate actions and preventive measures, as determined by law, against abusive uses of ICTs such as illegal and other acts motivated by racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, hatred, violence, all forms of child abuse, including paedophilia and child pornography, and trafficking in, and exploitation of, human beings.

d) Invite relevant stakeholders, especially the academia, to continue research on ethical dimensions of ICTs.
C11. International and regional cooperation

26. International cooperation among all stakeholders is vital in implementation of this plan of action and needs to be strengthened with a view to promoting universal access and bridging the digital divide, *inter alia*, by provision of means of implementation.

   a) Governments of developing countries should raise the relative priority of ICT projects in requests for international cooperation and assistance on infrastructure development projects from developed countries and international financial organizations.

   b) Within the context of the UN’s Global Compact and building upon the United Nations Millennium Declaration, build on and accelerate public-private partnerships, focusing on the use of ICT in development.

   c) Invite international and regional organizations to mainstream ICTs in their work programmes and to assist all levels of developing countries, to be involved in the preparation and implementation of national action plans to support the fulfilment of the goals indicated in the declaration of principles and in this Plan of Action, taking into account the importance of regional initiatives.

   g) Countries should consider establishing national mechanisms to achieve universal access in both underserved rural and urban areas, in order to bridge the digital divide.

E) Follow-up and evaluation

28. A realistic international performance evaluation and benchmarking (both qualitative and quantitative), through comparable statistical indicators and research results, should be developed to follow up the implementation of the objectives, goals and targets in the Plan of Action, taking into account different national circumstances.

   a) In cooperation with each country concerned, develop and launch a composite ICT Development (Digital Opportunity) Index. It could be published annually, or every two years, in an ICT Development Report. The index could show the statistics while the report would present analytical work on policies and their implementation, depending on national circumstances, including gender analysis.

   b) Appropriate indicators and benchmarking, including community connectivity indicators, should clarify the magnitude of the digital divide, in both its domestic and international dimensions, and keep it under regular assessment, and tracking global progress in the use of ICTs to achieve internationally agreed development goals, including those of the Millennium Declaration.

   c) International and regional organizations should assess and report regularly on universal accessibility of nations to ICTs, with the aim of creating equitable opportunities for the growth of ICT sectors of developing countries.
d) Gender-specific indicators on ICT use and needs should be developed, and measurable performance indicators should be identified to assess the impact of funded ICT projects on the lives of women and girls.

e) Develop and launch a website on best practices and success stories, based on a compilation of contributions from all stakeholders, in a concise, accessible and compelling format, following the internationally-recognized web accessibility standards. The website could be periodically updated and turned into a permanent experience-sharing exercise.

f) All countries and regions should develop tools so as to provide statistical information on the Information Society, with basic indicators and analysis of its key dimensions. Priority should be given to setting up coherent and internationally comparable indicator systems, taking into account different levels of development.

F) Towards WSIS Phase 2 (Tunis)

29. Recalling General Assembly Resolution 56/183 and taking into account the outcome of the Geneva phase of the WSIS, a preparatory meeting will be held in the first half of 2004 to review those issues of the Information Society which should form the focus of the Tunis phase of the WSIS and to agree on the structure of the preparatory process for the second phase. In line with the decision of this Summit concerning its Tunis phase, the second phase of the WSIS should consider, *inter alia*

a) Elaboration of final appropriate documents based on the outcome of the Geneva phase of the WSIS with a view to consolidating the process of building a global Information Society, and reducing the Digital Divide and transforming it into digital opportunities.

b) Follow-up and implementation of the Geneva Plan of Action at national, regional and international levels, including the United Nations system, as part of an integrated and coordinated approach, calling upon the participation of all relevant stakeholders. This should take place, *inter alia*, through partnerships among stakeholders.