

Statement in Favor of Life, of Peace, of Equality

According to the FAO 35,000 children die from hunger each day. This is genocide of appalling proportions, which we witness with apathy daily. At the same time it is estimated that 2,800 million dollars are spent daily on weapons, while US and European Union agricultural subsidies amount to 800 million dollars a day. There are no funds for the treatment of AIDS... while to a large extent the global economy is ruled by the profits of the military war industry. It is essential that we share more fairly. There are no better breeding grounds for radicalization, hostility and aggression than humiliation and exclusion. Violence is never justifiable, but its origins must be closely examined.

Instead of strengthening multilateralism and endowing the United Nations with the means and authority to implement a global development plan to the benefit of all, the natural resources of progressively impoverished countries continue to be exploited, and their citizens are forced to emigrate in circumstances that frequently offend their dignity. Genuine democracy cannot be built and consolidated with captive votes and blind obedience and fear. The world's great challenges and inequalities on all fronts cannot be addressed through wars of greed, demonstrations of force, military strikes and invasions based on economic and energy interests, generating a spiral of violence, of action and reaction, and of interventions and reprisals.

Government leaders have abdicated their political responsibilities, replacing universal values with the laws of the market place. The result has been a concentration of wealth in very few hands, and an ever-widening social and economic gap between the rich and the poor.

NO TO POVERTY! In a great roar heard worldwide we must demand that our government leaders give priority to fulfilling the Millennium Objectives. We must forsake complacency for personal involvement.

Let us once again proclaim that we do not justify attacks and violence, no matter what their origin. We condemn all terrorism: terrorism of groups hidden in the shadows, and terrorism of the state. Torture and cruel and degrading punishment is being used in constant violation of international and humanitarian law.

The International Community must put an end to this savagery and massacre. As set forth in the United Nations Charter, all peoples must be able to decide their destiny. We must urgently join the voices of all peoples of the earth to say **NO TO WAR AND VIOLENCE.**

We have remained silent too long, but this silence must stop. The peoples will raise their voices. War is a tragedy for all. It is urgent that we disarm this armed reason. Today more than ever we need the capacity for dialogue and alliance, a commitment to resolving conflicts peacefully, supporting attitudes of convergence and respect for others, through the application of human rights in our daily lives.

It is necessary to change our present course through collective actions, fomenting solidarity among all peoples. It is urgent that intellectuals, artists, educators, scientists... abandon their passive attitudes and take action. Only then will their works and their words become credible, enabling them to contribute their efforts to those of others who seek to stop the madness of war, confrontation and violence.

The time of the peoples has come. And above all, the time of those young people, men and women who believe that another world is possible. Public institutions and the media must help the citizens of the world to finally cease to be mere spectators and to take up their tasks as protagonists in designing the future. Government leaders, parliamentarians, members of municipal councils... all have a special responsibility in bringing about this historic change.

The time has likewise come for even the most diverse cultures and religions, united in their inherent solidarity and love for their fellow men, to take up their place at the forefront in the effort to rescue human dignity.

All peoples must join social, cultural, political and spiritual resistance movements, refusing to cooperate with violence and injustice, and uniting with others to denounce those responsible for the domination and pain that afflict humanity.

We must stand up for peace and march toward new horizons of life, not death. After all, this is our hope.

In view of the above and with our sights set on the future generations, we call on all of those who are equally concerned to demonstrate their support for peace through all available means, whether live or virtual.

NO TO WAR AND VIOLENCE!

YES TO PEACE AND JUSTICE!

For 24 hours, throughout the world on we will demonstrate with our voices or in the media the next days 10th and 11th of December, 2006, in commemoration of the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights.

If we make progress, in these advances we will soon achieve a “globalized conscience”, the source of real independence for the world’s peoples.

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Former President of Portugal

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