



DECLARATION ON THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN THE  
PROMOTION OF A CULTURE OF PEACE

THE CONTRUBUTION BY RELIGIONS TO THE  
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 obliged 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.

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## **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, charity, solidarity, and love; inspiring one and all to choose the path of freedom and responsibility. Religions must be a source of helpful energy.
20. We will remain mindful that our religions must not identify themselves with political, economic, or social powers, so as to remain free to work for justice and peace. We will not forget that confessional political regimes may do serious harm to religious values as well as to society. We should distinguish fanaticism from religious zeal.
21. We will favor peace by countering the tendencies of individuals and communities to assume or even to teach that they are inherently superior to others. We recognize and praise the non-violent peacemakers. We disown killing in the name of religion.
22. We will promote dialogue and harmony between and within religions, recognizing and respecting the search for truth and wisdom that is outside our religion, We will establish dialogue with all, striving for a sincere fellowship on our earthly pilgrimage.

## APPEAL

23. Grounded in our faith, we will build a culture of peace based on non-violence, tolerance, dialogue, mutual understanding, and justice. We call upon the institutions of our civil society, the United Nations System, governments, governmental and non-governmental organizations, corporations, and the mass media, to strengthen their commitments to peace and to listen to the cries of the victims and the dispossessed. We call upon the different religious and cultural traditions to join hands together in this effort, and to cooperate with us in spreading the message of peace.

### ***Signed by the chairpersons of the session***

JOAQUIM XICOY, President of the Parliament of Catalonia

FEDERICO MAYOR, Director-General of UNESCO

### ***And the following participants***

MASAO ABE, Kyoto School of Zenbudism, SALEHA ABEDIN, Institute for Muslim Minority Affairs, ANTOINE ABI-CHANEM, Centre de Recherche sur les Droits de l'Homme et de la Famille, Byblos, Liban, JOAN ALBAIGÉS, Centre UNESCO de Catalunya, AHMED SIDQI AL-DAJANI, Arab Organisation for Human and Peace, EHUD BANDEL, Rabbis for Human Rights, JO BECKER, Fellowship of Reconciliation, JOAN BOTAM, Centre Ecumènic de Catalunya, ELISE BOULDING, International Peace Research Assembly, HANS BÜHLER, Pädagogische Hochschule Weingarten, JOAN CARRERA, Bishop of Barcelona, MARIANI DIMARANAN, Task Force Detainees of the Philippines, ALI ELSAMMAN, Association pour le Dialogue International Islamo-Chretien, JOAN ESTRUCH, Centre de Recerca de Sociologia ANGELO FERNANDES, Archbishop Emeritus of New Delhi, VICENÇ FISAS, Centre UNESCO de Catalunya, SIMONE FUOSS, Pädagogische Hochschule Weingarten, GANYONGA 111, Fon of Bali, GÜNTHER GEBHARDT, World Conference on Religion and Peace, MAHA GHOSANANDA, Dhammayietra Centre for Peace and non Violence, LAMAR GIBBLE, World Council of Churches, DANIEL GOMEZ IBAÑEZ, Peace Council, LINDA GROFF, California State University, SOM RAJ GUPTA, Kirori Mal College, University of Delhi, TENZIN GYATSO, H.H. the Dalai Lama, DAG HEDIN, Life and Peace Institute, SOHAIL INAYATULLAH, World Futures Studies Federation, JOSEPH JOBLIN, Pontificia Universita Gregoriana, ALEXANDER KOJA, Moscow Patriarchate. Interreligious Relations, MIRTA LOURENÇO, UNESCO, Culture of Peace Programme, FÈLIX MARTI, Centre UNESCO de Catalunya, GERALD MISCHÉ, Global Education Associates, PATRICIA MISCHÉ, Global Education Associates, MAXIMILIAN MIZZI, Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue, MAURICIO MOLINA, Pax Romana, MARY MWINGIRA, Pax Romana, RAIMON PANIKKAR, Fundació Vivarium, LOUIS-EDMOND PETTITI, Cour Européenne des Droits de l'Homme, JOSEPH RAJKUMAR, Pax Romana, HELGA RIEDL, Plum Village, KARL RIEDL, Plum Village, SAMDHONG RINPOCHE, Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, BAIDYANATH SARASWATI, Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, JACOBUS SCHONEVELD, International Council of Christians and Jews, PATARAPORN SIRIKANCHANA, The World Fellowship of Buddhist, KISHORE SINGH, UNESCO, Human Rights Unit, PAUL SMOKER, International Peace Research Association, MARIE-LAURE SOREL, Association pour le Dialogue International Islamo-Chretien, JANUSZ SYMONIDES, UNESCO Human Rights, Democracy and Peace Division, JOHN B. TAYLOR, World Conference on Religion and Peace, WAYNE TEASDALE, Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, SUSANNA VILLARAN, instituto Barlóme de las Casas, ANTE VUCKOVIC, Theology College in Makarska, ANDRZEJ WIELOWIEYSKI, Member of the Polish Parliament, MAHMOUD ZAKZOUK, Faculty of Theology of Al-Azhar University