

**Declaration on the
Contribution of UNESCO Chairs
to the Promotion of Human Rights, Democracy, Peace and Tolerance
Stadtschlaining, Austria, 24-27 April 2002**

We, the representatives of UNESCO Chairs on Human Rights, Democracy, Peace and Tolerance, gathered in Stadtschlaining, Austria, for our third meeting,

Acknowledging the inherent link between peace, democracy, development and human rights, reaffirmed by the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action [\(1\)](#) adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993,

Recalling the provisions of the United Nations Millennium Declaration [\(2\)](#) affirming that freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility are fundamental values essential to international relations,

Convinced of the absolute value and equal importance of all human rights – civil, cultural, economic, political and social – which are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated,

Acknowledging the necessity to promote universal acceptance of all human rights with special emphasis on economic, social and cultural rights, which are too often neglected,

Stressing the imperative need to ensure application and enforcement of international human rights standards through the universal ratification and the reinforcement of international and national monitoring and adjudicating mechanisms for their implementation at national settings,

Supporting the efforts aimed at putting an end to impunity of violations of human rights and expressing our conviction in this regard that the forthcoming entry into force on 1 July 2002 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (adopted on 17 July 1998) is a decisive step to guarantee the punishment of such violations (of human rights) wherever they occur,

Welcoming the elaboration of new international instruments strengthening protection and promoting implementation of human rights, especially of an optional protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and an optional protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and further elucidating and developing human rights law,

Noting with appreciation the adoption of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity [\(3\)](#) by the General Conference of UNESCO, which affirms that cultural diversity, being the common heritage of humanity, is one of the roots to development and that its preservation requires the full implementation of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Recognizing that cultural diversity and the pursuit of cultural development by all peoples and nations are a source of mutual enrichment for the cultural life of humankind and that cultural diversity is a precious asset of humanity that should be preserved through the promotion of intercultural dialogue, mutual respect and understanding,

Persuaded that the principle of non-discrimination is the very basis to ensure respect for the dignity and human rights of all,

Recalling the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action [\(4\)](#) adopted by the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (Durban, South Africa, 31 August – 8 September 2001) which proclaims slave trade, in

particular the transatlantic slave trade, a crime against humanity, and appeals for international solidarity and strengthened cooperation to confront the persistence and endurance of racism and racial discrimination as well as the emergence of new forms and manifestations of discrimination,

Convinced of the necessity to continue and intensify efforts to prevent and eliminate discrimination against women as well as against persons belonging to vulnerable groups, such as minorities, indigenous people, migrant workers, refugees, HIV/AIDS affected persons, elderly people and disabled persons and to ensure equality in opportunities and treatment for all,

Recalling the provisions of the World Declaration on Education For All (5) and the Dakar Framework for Action (6) adopted at the World Education Forum organized by UNESCO in Dakar, Senegal, from 26 to 28 April 2000, proposing concrete strategies for the implementation of the right to education for all without distinction on grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth, (7)

Emphasizing the crucial importance of the realization of the right to education for the implementation of all human rights,

Bearing in mind that education for human rights is an indispensable component of educational policies, that it is a comprehensive, lifelong process and a powerful means for building a culture of human rights, peace and democracy, social justice, tolerance and non-discrimination and for reaffirming the human dignity of all members of humankind,

Recalling in this regard the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004) (8) and the outcome of the mid-term global evaluation of the Decade (9) conducted in 2001 by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in cooperation with UNESCO,

Taking also into account the results of the Regional Conferences on Human Rights Education (Europe, 1997; Africa, 1998; Asia and the Pacific, 1999; Arab States, 1999; Latin America and the Caribbean, 2001) organized by UNESCO in cooperation with OHCHR within the framework of the Decade in order to give an impetus to the promotion of human rights education at national and regional levels,

Recalling the United Nations Declaration (10) and Programme of Action (11) on a Culture of Peace and the proclamation of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010), (12)

Bearing in mind the Programme of activities for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (1995-2004) (13),

Reiterating that extreme poverty is a flagrant violation of human rights and a denial of human dignity, resulting in social exclusion and marginalization,

Stressing the importance of adopting a human rights-based approach to poverty and the urgent need to undertake concerted action to alleviate poverty and eradicate extreme poverty, as an important precondition for peace and stability,

Expressing our grave concern at the persistence of serious threats to human rights, human security and democratic order such as terrorism, organized crime and corruption,

Noting with preoccupation the growing inequalities in many parts of the world associated with globalization, a process with economic, social, political, environmental, cultural and legal dimensions, and its negative impact on the full enjoyment of all human rights, (14)

Inspired by the deliberations and the message of the second World Social Forum (Porto Alegre, Brazil, 31 January – 5 February 2002) (15) calling for international solidarity and cooperation to redress the consequences of globalization,

Noting with appreciation the elaboration of a new UNESCO Human Right Strategy aimed at mainstreaming human rights throughout all activities and programmes of the Organization and placing particular emphasis on human rights research and promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural rights,

Underlining the important role of UNESCO Chairs in the elaboration and implementation of activities and projects aimed at the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, promotion of a culture of peace and consolidation of democracy,

Welcoming the convening of the World Forum of UNESCO Chairs (Paris, UNESCO Headquarters, from 13 to 15 November 2002),

1. Solemnly declare our resolution to contribute to the promotion and protection of all human rights – civil, cultural, economic, political and social – in accordance with the principle of their indivisibility, interrelation and interdependence, to the consolidation of democracy and to the strengthening of international peace and security by means of research, education, training and awareness-raising;

2. Undertake to encourage universal ratification, acceptance and implementation of international human rights standards through the sensitization of decision-makers and general public and reinforcement of relevant mechanisms;

3. Express our commitment to contribute by means of research and dissemination of information to the clarification of the content of human rights, especially of economic, social and cultural rights, their further codification and justiciability;

4. Reaffirm our determination to take an active part in the follow-up to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (2001) and contribute to the implementation of its recommendations;

5. Commit ourselves to work for the achievement of full respect of the rights of women and children, as well as of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, indigenous people, migrant workers, refugees and HIV/AIDS affected persons, elderly people, disabled persons and other vulnerable groups;

6. Undertake to widely disseminate the text of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) and its Action Plan and to work for the promotion of intercultural dialogue, mutual respect and understanding with a view to implementing the principles set forth therein and enhancing the synergy of actions in favour of cultural diversity;

7. Confirm our determination to promote education for human rights, which is an important vehicle for the full development of the human personality, the implementation of human rights, the prevention and elimination of all forms of discrimination, the entrenchment of a culture of peace and the consolidation of democracy;

8. Express our resolution to contribute to awareness-raising on human rights, *in particular* through the dissemination in national and local languages, of the texts of international human rights instruments, the norms of international humanitarian law and the results of research, the training of trainers and professional groups with special responsibilities in the field of human rights, such as law enforcement officials, the judiciary, police and military personnel, immigration officers and social security workers as well as media professionals;

9. Condemn violence in its various manifestations and undertake to contribute to building a culture of peace by promoting values, attitudes and behaviours that reflect and inspire social interaction and sharing based on the principles of freedom, justice and democracy, tolerance and solidarity;

10. Reiterate our appeal for the adoption of policies and measures aimed at making globalization fully inclusive, equitable and with a human face and underline, therefore, the need to continue to analyze its far-reaching consequences for the full enjoyment of all human rights;

11. Reaffirm our commitment to contribute to the creation of an environment, at both national and global level, conducive to human rights-oriented development and to the elimination of poverty;

12. Confirm our readiness to increase vigilance concerning the violations of human rights and to mobilize public opinion in support of efforts aimed at the punishment of perpetrators of such violations through printed, audiovisual and electronic media;

13. Proclaim our resolution to further develop the network of UNESCO Chairs in Human Rights, Democracy, Peace and Tolerance by intensifying cooperation among the Chairs, at national, sub-regional, regional and international levels, by increasing interaction with the academic community, non-governmental organizations, human rights research and training institutions, governments and intergovernmental organizations;

14. Express our determination to make a valuable contribution to the work of the World Forum of UNESCO Chairs by sharing our experiences and knowledge, and to take this opportunity to strengthen our interaction and collaboration with other networks of Chairs with a view to mainstreaming human rights and the values of peace and democracy;

15. Commit ourselves to strengthen our cooperation and interaction with UNESCO and increase our contribution to the implementation of its Medium-Term Strategy and its relevant activities in accordance also with the terms of the new Agreement of Cooperation;

16. Invite UNESCO to play a major role in human rights research, the struggle against racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the attainment of the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004) in close cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and other interested partners;

17. Adopt this Declaration and undertake to disseminate it by all appropriate means at local, national, sub-regional, regional and international levels, particularly (among the networks of UNESCO Chairs) at the World Forum of Chairs.

Notes

1. Document A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

2. UN General Assembly Resolution 55/2 of 8 September 2000.

3. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Records of the General Conference, Thirty-first Session, Paris, 15 October – 3 November 2001*, vol.1, *Resolutions*, resolution 25, annexes I and II. See also the Declaration of the Principles of International Cultural Cooperation proclaimed on 4 November 1966 by the General Conference of UNESCO, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Records of the General Conference, Fourteenth Session, Paris, 1966, Resolutions*.

4. Document A/CONF. 189/2.

5. The World Declaration on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs was adopted by the World Conference on Education for all (Jomtien, Thailand, 5-9 March 1990).
6. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Final Report of the world Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26 – 28 April 2000 (Paris, 2000).
7. See the *Convention against Discrimination in Education* adopted on 14 December 1960 by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
8. Document A/51/506/Add.1, appendix.
9. Document A/55/360.
10. UN General Assembly Resolution 53/243 A of 13 September 1999.
11. UN General Assembly Resolution 53/243 B of 13 September 1999.
12. UN General Assembly Resolution 53/25 of 10 November 1998.
13. UN General Assembly Resolution 50/157, Annex, of 21 December 1995.
14. See, *inter alia*, UN General Assembly Resolution 56/165 of 19 December 2001 and 55/102 of 4 December 2000.
15. For further information consult the following website:
<http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/>.