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**PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF ALL HUMAN RIGHTS, CIVIL,  
POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS, INCLUDING  
THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT**

**Joint written statement\* submitted by International Alliance of Women (IAW), Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches (CCIA/WCC), Women's Federation for World Peace International (WFWPI), Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University (BKWSU), International Association of Soldiers for Peace, Zonta International, International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres (IFS), International Council Of Women (ICW-CIF), World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS), World Young Women's Christian Association (World YWCA), World Federation of United Nations Associations, International Federation of Business and Professional Women (IFBPW), nongovernmental organizations in general consultative status, Conscience and Peace Tax International (CPTI), Dominicans for Justice and Peace (Order of Preachers), Federación de Asociaciones de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos, Interfaith International, Pax Romana (International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs and International Movement of Catholic Students), Temple of Understanding (TOU), Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Women's World Summit Foundation (WWSF), World Organization Against Torture, International Federation of University Women (IFUW), Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS), Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Worldwide Organization for Women (WOW), Anglican Consultative Council (ACC), Union of Arab Jurists, Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA), Rencontre Africaine pour la Defense des Droits de l'Homme (RADDHO), Foundation for the Refugee Education Trust (RET), International Bridges to Justice**

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**Inc. (IBJ), Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (IAC), International Association for the Defence of Religious Liberty, American Association of Jurists (AAJ), Lassalle-Institut, UNESCO Centre of Catalonia, Anti-Racism Information Service (ARIS), Peter Hesse Stiftung Foundation, Colombian Commission of Jurists (CCJ), Pan Pacific and South East Asia Women's Association (PPSEAWA), Ius Primi Viri International Association (IPV), Permanent Assembly for Human Rights (APDH), International Movement for Fraternal Union Among Races and Peoples (UFER), Women's International Zionist Organization (WIZO), International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), International Federation of Women in Legal Careers (FIFCJ), Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW), International Association for Women's Mental Health (IAWMH), European Union of Women (EUW), European Women's Lobby, International Women's Year Liaison Group (IWYLG), African Services Committee, Inc., International Federation of Family Associations of Missing Persons from Armed Conflict (IFFAMPAC), Institute of International Social Development, African Action on AIDS, International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS), Lama Gangchen World Peace Foundation (LGWPF), Pax Christi International-International Catholic Peace Movement, MADRE (International Women Human Rights Organization), the Syriac Universal Alliance (SUA), Tandem Project, Al-Hakim Foundation, Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (VOW), International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV), Solar Cookers International (SCI), Women's Welfare Centre (WWC), Medical Women's International Association (MWIA), World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH), The Salvation Army, United States Federation for Middle East Peace, Susila Dharma International Association Inc. (SDIA), Network Women in Development Europe, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, International Council of Jewish Women (ICJW), Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice (IPJ), Grail, Nord-Sud XXI, Andean Commission of Jurists (ACJ), Korean Institute for Women and Politics (KIWP), nongovernmental organizations in special consultative status, Institute for Planetary Synthesis (IPS), International Peace Bureau (IPB), International Women's Tribune Centre (IWTC), International Society for Human Rights (ISHR), UNESCO Centre Basque Country (UNESCO ETXEA), 3HO Foundation Inc. (Healthy, Happy, Holy Organization, Inc.), Dzeno Association, Country Women Association of Nigeria (COWAN), and SERVAS International, non-governmental organizations on the Roster**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[24 May 2008]

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\* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

## Right to Education on Peace and Human Rights<sup>1</sup>

### I

*The Spanish Society for International Human Rights Law (SSIHRL)*, with the support of the Catalanian Agency for Cooperation to Development, adopted on 30 October 2006 the “Luarca Declaration on the Human Right to Peace” as the culmination of a process of extensive consultations with Spanish civil society.

Following the adoption of the Luarca Declaration on the Human Right to Peace, the SSIHRL has continued in all regions of the world the process of consultations with civil society through the organization of conferences and expert meetings on the human right to peace<sup>2</sup>. In 2010 the SSIHRL will call for a World NGO Conference to analyse and incorporate the inputs received from international civil society and to adopt the final text of the *Universal Declaration on the Human Right to Peace*. The new text will truly represent the aspirations of international civil society.

On 15 March 2007 the Luarca Declaration on the Human Right to Peace was presented to the Fourth Session of the Human Rights Council in an oral statement delivered by UNESCO Etxea on behalf of SSIHRL. Several Parallel Meetings have taken place at the *Palais de Nations* in Geneva during subsequent sessions of the Human Rights Council<sup>3</sup>

### II

The right to education constitutes an essential component of contemporary human rights law. Although the right to education is generally considered to be a cultural right, it is also related to civil, political, economic and social rights. Education is a precondition and the key to the enjoyment of all human rights. Taking into account that the right to education

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<sup>1</sup> NGOs without status consultative in ECOSOC that endorse the statement: KULU Women and Development, Women in Black Network, Centre for Gender Studies (Benue State University, Nigeria), Instituto de Estudios Políticos para América Latina y Africa (IEPALA)

<sup>2</sup> Conferences and expert meetings have already taken place in Bilbao and Geneva (November 2006); Mexico (December 2006), Bogotá, Barcelona and Addis Ababa (March 2007); Caracas and Santo Domingo (April 2007), Morelia (Mexico, 12 May 2007), Bogotá (12 May 2007), Oviedo and Santa Fe (New Mexico, USA, 16-17 May 2007); Washington (14 June 2007), Nairobi (15 June 2007), Geneva (28 June 2007), Feldkirch (Austria, 31 August 2007), Geneva (11, 12 and 21 September 2007), Luarca (28 September 2007), Madrid (23 October 2007), Monterrey (1st November 2007), Mexico DF, Geneva, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Zaragoza and Navía, Asturias (December 2007), the UN Commission on the Status of Women, New York (February 2008), Geneva (March 2008), Parliament of Catalonia, Barcelona, Geneva, Dakar, Madrid, Valencia (April 2008), Rome and Gwangju, Republic of Korea (May 2008). For more information about these meetings, please see <http://www.aedidh.org>

<sup>3</sup> 15 March 2007, both the SSIHRL and the International Society of Human Rights (Frankfurt) convened an open *Information Meeting on the Luarca Declaration*; on 16 March 2007, the SSIHRL organised a *Technical Meeting* with NGO and human rights experts with a view to building a common strategy for a world-wide campaign on the human right to peace; 11 June 2007, both UNESCO Etxea and SSIHRL organised an additional Parallel Meeting on the relationship between peace and solidarity rights; 12 September 2007, the SSIHRL in collaboration with the UNESCO Liaison Office in Geneva organised a Roundtable on the legal content of the human right to peace; 21 September 2007, the SSIHRL organised the commemoration of the United Nations International Day of Peace in the Council Chamber of the Palais de Nations; 7 March 2008, the SSIHRL, the International Society of Human Rights (Frankfurt) and UNESCO Etxea organised a Roundtable on the relationship between extreme poverty and the human right to peace

cannot be viewed in isolation, it can be concluded that the fulfilment of the right to education would allow the enjoyment of, *inter alia*, the right to freedom of opinion and expression and the right to participation<sup>4</sup> of all human beings in a more just society.

The right to education involves three key actors: the Government as provider and/or funder of public schooling, the child as the principal bearer of the right to education and of the duty to comply with compulsory-education requirements, and the parents who are “the first educators”. Governments are responsible to secure conditions for full realization of the rights of the child, including the enforcement of parental responsibilities towards their children, and recognizing the importance of extra-curricular non-formal education as a positive method of learning. Although learning begins at birth, the most intensive period of learning is produced during the first six to seven years of life. Nevertheless, the learning and education process continues in the adolescent period.

As stressed in several international human rights instruments, education should be directed not only to the full development of the human personality and the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, but also to the promotion of mutual understanding and respect, gender equality, friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups and the maintenance of peace<sup>5</sup>.

The right to education requires enforceable individual entitlements *to* education, safeguards for human rights *in* education and instrumentalization of education to the enjoyment of all human rights *through* education. As stated by UNESCO, “the inclusion of human rights in education is a key element of a quality education”<sup>6</sup>. Thus, richly endowed education systems may be faulted for their failure to halt intergenerational transmission of racism or xenophobia<sup>7</sup>. It follows that a successful human rights education system should be able to eliminate any and all types of inequality, exclusion or discrimination based on prejudices, bias and discriminations transmitted from generation to generation.

Inequality is a cross-cutting variable that affects all social strata. Women constitute a main group affected by this inequality as shown by the increasing number of women victims of violence. Other groups seriously affected are children, indigenous people, disabled persons, the elderly, minorities, displaced or people infected or suffering from AIDS. Patriarchy and all other practices based on the idea of inferiority and/or superiority among human beings are not structures of autonomous oppression but an undifferentiated set of oppressive factors deriving from race, gender, ethnic origin, economic and social background. As stated by the current Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, gender inequality and other forms of social, religious, ethnic and racial discrimination impede

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<sup>4</sup> Report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Mr. Vernor Muñoz Villalobos, E/CN.4/2005/50, 17 December 2004, par. 66

<sup>5</sup> Article 26.2 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, article 29.1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and article 13.2 of the Protocol of San Salvador on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

<sup>6</sup> UNESCO Executive Board, Elements for an overall UNESCO strategy on human rights, (165 EX/10) para. 31

<sup>7</sup> Report submitted by the by the late Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Ms Katarina Tomasevski, E/CN.4/2004/45, 15 January 2004, par. 53; Y. Danieli (Ed.) International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma. New York: Kluwer Academic/ Plenum Publishing Corporation. 1998

social mobility and impact negatively on the full realization of all human rights, including development, peace and security<sup>8</sup>.

Educational statistics demonstrate how discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, or language, combines to trap new generations of people in a vicious downward cycle of denied rights, where the lack of access to education leads to exclusion from the labour market, which then results in perpetuating and increasing impoverishment<sup>9</sup>. As stressed by the United Nations, the exclusion of the poorest from education perpetuates social inequalities in many parts of the world<sup>10</sup>. Denial of the right to education leads to denial of other human rights and the perpetuation of poverty. It could be concluded that the recognition and enforcement of this fundamental human right is vital to creating stable and prosperous societies.

As highlighted by the UNESCO *Declaration and Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy*<sup>11</sup>, education should develop non-violent conflict resolution through the promotion of peace, tolerance, solidarity, compassion, sharing and caring. Consequently, human rights education should aim to build a universal culture of human rights through the encouragement and promotion of attitudes directed to peace building and maintenance<sup>12</sup>. Education, both formal as non-formal, is therefore a key element to achieving “sustainable development, peace and stability within and among countries”, by fostering social cohesion and empowering people to become active participants in social transformation<sup>13</sup>.

The culture of war and violence has a much longer tradition and has been more commercially attractive than the culture of peace and education for peace. In many countries, the documentation of wars and war heroes in school textbooks contributes significantly to the glorification of the culture of war and violence at the expense of the culture of peace. Moreover, our children are exposed to the limitless commercialization of computerized war games and violent movies. Everyday millions of children are initiated in the practices of warfare as part of traditional initiation rituals or institutionalized educational programmes<sup>14</sup> and many of them are killed as a consequence of armed conflict. Moreover, the media pay more attention to disasters and violent crimes, which further contributes to reproducing violent behaviours. A human rights education should help in providing means to unlearn war.

Formal and non-formal education should promote empathy, respect, diversity, solidarity, understanding, peace and friendly relations among nations and all racial, ethnic

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<sup>8</sup> Report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Mr. Vernor Muñoz Villalobos, E/CN.4/2006/45, 8 February 2006, par. 18

<sup>9</sup> Report submitted by the by the late Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Ms Katarina Tomasevski, E/CN.4/2001/52, 11 January 2001, par. 45

<sup>10</sup> United Nations, *1985 Report on the World Social Situation*, New York, 1985, Sales No. E.85.IV.2, p. 34

<sup>11</sup> Declaration on the 44th session of the International Conference on Education (Geneva, October 1994) endorsed by the General Conference of UNESCO at its twenty-eight session, Paris, November 1995, par. 9

<sup>12</sup> OHCHR, *The Plan of Action for the First Phase (2005-2007) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education*, Geneva, 2005

<sup>13</sup> Dakar Framework for Action, Education for all: meeting our collective commitments. Text adopted by the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000, goal 6

<sup>14</sup> Report submitted by the late Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Ms Katarina Tomasevski, supra n. 8, par. 46

or religious groups, and encourage the development of United Nations activities in pursuance these objectives<sup>15</sup>. Education should further provide children with the necessary tools and generic skills: a) cognitive (to know); b) procedure-instrumental (to learn acting); c) attitudinal (to be). These latter skills should be related to a concept of peace understood from a creative, empathic and non-violent perspective<sup>16</sup>. For this reason, schools should be identified and protected as sanctuaries and zones of peace<sup>17</sup> so that the lives of children and young people who are victims to violence and war may be rebuilt. Non-formal education must also be recognized and supported as an effective method of installing values of peace and tolerance among youth and protecting them from vulnerability. The growing global attention to the study of the causation of warfare and of peace-building requires that education and, specifically, education on peace and human rights, is prioritised on the international agenda.

According to the former Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, an important obstacle to universalizing the right to education is to consider education as superfluous for human survival and unnecessary for subsistence. On the contrary, Professor Tomasevski stated that the absence of education not only prevents the victims of armed conflicts and disasters from becoming self-sustaining but forces them to remain recipients of assistance.<sup>18</sup> The “survival package” of humanitarian relief should include not only the provision of water, sanitation, medical and psychosocial services, shelter, clothing and food, but fulfil the right to education as a primary need.

As stated in Article 2 of the *Luarca Declaration on the Human Right to Peace*, adopted on 30 October 2006,

“Every person has the right to receive peace and human rights education, the basis of every educational system, which will help to generate social processes based on trust, solidarity and mutual respect, promote peaceful settlement of conflicts and lead to a new way of approaching human relationships”.

We therefore urge the Human Rights Council to promote education based on social justice and equity, non-discrimination and gender equality, respect of all human rights, empathy, tolerance, diversity, solidarity, peace and friendly relations among all nations, races, ethnicities or religions.

We also urge Member States to implement the necessary mechanisms to recognize the negative impact of education based on intolerance, discrimination and inequality among races, sexes, ethnicities and social backgrounds in the enjoyment of the human right to peace.

We further urge Member States to realise the educational goals of the Declaration and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, the

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<sup>15</sup> Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action, World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, 14 - 25 June 1993, U.N. Doc. A/CONF.157/24 (Part I) at 20 (1993), par. 33

<sup>16</sup> The International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World (2001 to 2010), par.

<sup>17</sup> Dakar Framework for Action, *supra* n. 13, goal 58

<sup>18</sup> Report submitted by the by the late Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Ms Katarina Tomasevski, *supra* n. 9, par. 49

Millennium Development Goals, the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010) and the Plan of Action for the First Phase (2005-2007) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education.

We also urge member states to support formal and non-formal education in line with the goal of building women's capacity to participate in all levels of decision making on peace and security issues as provided in UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

Finally, we welcome the General Assembly to the High Commissioner for Human Rights to carry out constructive dialogue and consultations with Member States, the Specialized Agencies, Intergovernmental and Non-Governmental Organizations, on how the international community may better promote an international environment leading to the full realization of the right of people to peace<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> UNGA Res/60/163, of 2 March 2006, *Promotion of peace as a vital requirement for the full enjoyment of all human rights by all*, paragraph 8