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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<sup>1</sup> 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, New Humanity, International Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centres (IFS), International Council Of Women (ICW-CIF), World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS), International Movement ATD Fourth World, non-governmental 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 Society for Human Rights (ISHR), 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, African Women's Development and Communication Network – FEMNET, Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM ASIA), Rencontre Africaine pour la Defense des Droits de l'Homme (RADDHO), Foundation for the Refugee**

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<sup>1</sup> This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

**Education Trust (RET), International Bridges to Justice (IBJ), Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (IAC), International Association for the Defence of Religious Liberty, General Arab Women Federation (GAWF), 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), African Services Committee, Inc., 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, Inc., the Syriac Universal Alliance (SUA), Tandem Project, Al-Hakim Foundation, Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (VOW), Guild of Service (GOS), 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), Prison Fellowship International (PFI), UNANIMA International, Inc., World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH), The Salvation Army, Droit a l'Energie SOS Futur, United States Federation for Middle East Peace, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status, Institute for Planetary Synthesis (IPS), International Peace Bureau (IPB), UNESCO Centre Basque Country (UNESCO ETXEA), 3HO Foundation (Healthy, Happy, Holy Organization), Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA), Dzeno Association, Country Women Association of Nigeria (COWAN), 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.

[22 February 2008]

### **The eradication of extreme poverty as a condition to the full and effective enjoyment of the human right to peace**

*The Spanish Society for the Advancement of 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, including the organization of six expert seminars in different regions<sup>2</sup>.

Following the adoption of the Luarca Declaration, the SSIHRL has continued the process of consultations with international civil society through the organization in of conferences and expert seminars on the human right to peace in all regions of the world<sup>3</sup>. In 2009 the SSIHRL will call for a World NGO Conference to take stock of 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 thus better represent the aspirations of civil society as a whole.

On 15 March 2007 the Luarca Declaration was first submitted to the fourth session of the Human Rights Council in an oral statement by UNESCO Etxea on behalf of the SSIHRL. Since then several Parallel Meetings have organized at the *Palais de Nations* in Geneva during the sessions of the Human Rights Council. Firstly, on 15 March 2007, both the SSIHRL and the International Society of Human Rights (Frankfurt) convened an open *Information Meeting on the Luarca Declaration*. Secondly, 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. Thirdly, on 11 June 2007 both UNESCO Etxea and SSIHRL organised an additional Parallel Event focused on the relationship between peace and solidarity rights<sup>4</sup>. Fourthly, on 12 September 2007 a Roundtable on the legal content of the human right to peace was organised by SSIHRL with collaboration of UNESCO Liaison Office in Geneva. Fifthly, on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2007 the SSIHRL organised the Commemoration of the United Nations International Day of Peace at the Council Chamber of the Palais de Nations. An Expert Consultation has been organized at the 52<sup>nd</sup> session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York.

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<sup>2</sup> The regional expert seminars took place in Oviedo (27-28 July 2006), Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (17-18 August 2006), Bilbao (15-16 September 2006), Madrid (21-22 September 2006), Barcelona (28-29 September 2006) and Seville (13-14 October 2006)

<sup>3</sup> Conferences and expert seminars 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), Madrid and Barcelona (January 2008), the UN Commission on the Status of Women, New York (February 2008). For more information about these event, please see <http://www.aedidh.org>

<sup>4</sup> Panellists were representatives of the World Organization Against Torture, the International Society of Human Rights, UNESCO Etxea and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

## II

Extreme poverty is a universal and multidimensional phenomenon, which currently affects millions of people in both rich and poor countries<sup>5</sup>. According to the World Health Organization statistics, about 1 billion people globally live in extreme poverty on an income of just \$1 a day and 270 million people, most of them women and children, died as a result of poverty since 1990<sup>6</sup>. Thus, peace is not only economic and social justice, as important as it may be, it relies first on respect of the human dignity and self esteem of the poor<sup>7</sup>.

As Mr. Leandro Despouy stated in 1996<sup>8</sup> the lack of basic security, or the absence of one or more factors enabling families to assume basic responsibilities and to enjoy fundamental rights, leads to chronic poverty when it simultaneously affects several aspects of people's lives, when it is prolonged and when it severely compromises people's chances of regaining their rights and of reassuming their responsibilities in the foreseeable future. The lack of basic security destroys family ties and prevents people from taking responsibility for family planning and proper care of their children, thus increasing child mortality. Widespread extreme poverty thus inhibits the realization of human rights<sup>9</sup> in general and political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights in particular<sup>10</sup>. Today there exists a worldwide consensus that extreme poverty is the most global and permanent violation of human rights.

People affected by chronic extreme poverty are at risk of becoming socially excluded from full participation in the society in which they live. Usually the poor, the unemployed, people belonging to ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups remain "outsiders" and low in the social hierarchy<sup>11</sup>. Moreover, the poor may express their despair and trauma through physical violence or conflict<sup>12</sup>. Thus, as stated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, full realization of political, economic and social rights of all people is the solid way to maintain the social balance which is vital for a society to develop in peace. Conversely, war and the use of force may increase poverty since they hinder all aspects of development.

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<sup>5</sup> Report submitted by Ms. M. Lizin, independent expert on human rights and extreme poverty, E/CN.4/2000/52, of 25 February 2000, paragraphs 10-11

<sup>6</sup> Report of the WHO, Regional Office for the Western Pacific, *Health Poverty and MDG*, 2005

<sup>7</sup> 56th meeting of the Commission on human rights, E/CN.4/2003/L.11/Add.3, 22 April 2003, Paragraph 1.a

<sup>8</sup> Final report submitted by the independent expert on human rights and poverty to the Sub-Commission, E/CN.4/Sub. 2/1996/13, 28 June 1996, Annex III

<sup>9</sup> Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, World Conference on Human Rights, A/CONF. 157/23, 12 July 1993, paragraph 14

<sup>10</sup> GA resolution 53/146 of 8 March 1999, Human rights and extreme poverty, conclusion 3

<sup>11</sup> Report submitted by Mr. Arjun Sengupta, independent expert on human rights and extreme poverty, E/CN.4/2005/49, of 11 February 2005, paragraph 14

<sup>12</sup> Report submitted by Ms. M. Lizin, independent expert on human rights and extreme poverty, E/CN.4/2001/54, of 16 February 2001, paragraph 93

To establish lasting peace, the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical, mental and spiritual health should be central to creating and sustaining the capabilities that the poor need to escape from the scourge of poverty. As stressed by Mr. Paul Hunt, Special Rapporteur on United Nations the right to the highest attainable standard of health, ill health destroys livelihoods, reduces worker productivity, lowers educational achievement, limits opportunities and reduces human development<sup>13</sup>. A fundamental right which must be respected not only in times of peace but also in times of war, is the right to a minimum standard of living, including regular, permanent and unrestricted access, either directly or by means of financial purchases, to quantitatively and qualitatively adequate and sufficient food supplies<sup>14</sup>. Thus, taking into account that the eradication of poverty is an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind<sup>15</sup>, the international community must urgently ensure that “persons living in extreme poverty are entitled to the full enjoyment of all human rights, including the right to participate in the adoption of decisions which concern them, and to contribute to the well-being of their families, their communities and humankind”<sup>16</sup>.

International human rights law is concerned particularly with vulnerable marginalised and minority groups who live in extreme poverty. The exponential increase in prostitution and trafficking of women and children is a perceptible reflection of the spread of poverty<sup>17</sup>. People's security also deals with international and states' legislation prohibiting and punishing violence in particular in relation to women and the girlchild, and taking action against trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and children. The extremely poor, especially women, children elderly and disabled persons, should be the main targets of anti-poverty strategies. To be successful in these strategies, children's right to food needs to be respected in order to combat hunger and guarantee peace<sup>18</sup>. And as many empirical studies demonstrate women's full enjoyment and participation in all human rights is a precondition to the full realization of the right to peace and has a major impact on the enjoyment of these rights for society as a whole.

The International Peace Conference held in The Hague in 1899 concluded that peace finds its roots in the “consciousness of the world”. Nevertheless, as Martin Luther King said, real peace can never be reached realised if the word “hunger”, like other words of oppression such as slavery, racism and discrimination, is not definitely removed from the dictionary.

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<sup>13</sup> Report submitted by Mr. Paul Hunt, independent expert on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, E/CN.4/2003/58, of 13 February 2003, paragraph 45 and 46

<sup>14</sup> Report submitted by Mr. Jean Ziegler, Special Rapporteur on the right to food, E/CN.4/2002/58, of 10 January 2002, paragraph 72

<sup>15</sup> Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, A/CONF.166/9, chapter I, 1995

<sup>16</sup> *Draft guiding principles “Extreme poverty and human rights: the rights of the poor”*, Report of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights on its fifty-eight session, A/HRC/Sub.1/58/36, 11 September 2006, p. 31

<sup>17</sup> Report submitted by Ms. M. Lizin, supra note 6, paragraph 58

<sup>18</sup> Report submitted by Mr. Jean Ziegler, Special Rapporteur on the right to food, A/HRC/4/30, of 19 January 2007, paragraph 4

Those who live in extreme poverty, in special poor rural women, understand better than we realize what is at stake in wars and who ultimately benefits from them. They therefore are in a position to demand a redistribution of the world's priorities and resources<sup>19</sup> and to urge all Member States to ensure their availability to live on an income of \$3 a day. It follows that such a redistribution can be never reached when extraction of resources from the poor is not accompanied by fair and adequate compensations.

As stated in paragraph 13 (Preamble) of the 2006 Luarca Declaration on the Human Right to Peace,

“...the promotion of a culture of peace, the world-wide redistribution of resources and the achievement of social justice must contribute to the establishment of a new international economic order which will facilitate the fulfilment of the proposals of this Declaration, by eliminating the inequality, exclusion and poverty which generate structural violence incompatible with peace on the national and international levels”.

We therefore urge the United Nations to establish a new partnership based on social justice and equity, non-discrimination and gender equality, respect of all human rights and the rule of law by all, including corporations and business. We also urge Member States to implement the necessary mechanisms to recognize the negative impact of extreme poverty in the enjoyment of the human right to peace and to realise the poverty goals of the Declaration and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, the Millennium Development Goals<sup>20</sup> and the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development.

We welcome the General Assembly call to the High Commissioner for Human Rights to carry out a 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>21</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> Report submitted by Ms. M. Lizin, independent expert on human rights and extreme poverty, E/CN.4/2004/43, of 29 February 2004, paragraph 93

<sup>20</sup> Paragraph 11 of the AG Resolution 60/131 “Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons: Realizing the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities”

<sup>21</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