

IFOR's Role

2001-2010 Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for The Children of The World

How the Appeal started. An IFOR success story.

The first person to express the idea that non-violence should be taught to children at school was Thich Nhat Hanh. (The Ex-president of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR), former Doyen of Van Anh University Saigon, author of many books and buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh was proposed by Martin Luther King for the Nobel Peace Prize). Mme Marie-Pierre Bovy, president of IFOR (International Fellowship of Reconciliation, Movement international de la réconciliation, consultative status at the UN) and member of a community founded by Lanza del Vasto, suggested during a community meeting in 1996 that there should be a "Year of Non-Violence." Mr Pierre Marchand, founder of the humanitarian organisation "Partage avec les Enfants du Monde" 24 years ago, and IFOR delegate to the UNESCO in the Culture for Peace programme, decided to take up that challenge by launching a world-wide campaign. Pierre Marchand met with the Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Mairead Corrigan-Maguire, in Belfast and she agreed to lead the campaign. A generous donor, who has asked to remain anonymous, met the cost of these initiatives. Sri Loganathan, one of the leaders of the Gandhian movement and friend of Vinoba Bhavé, proposed that children should be taught about non-violence in kindergarten. The text of the appeal was written in a Children's Village in India by Pierre Marchand. From there, Pierre Marchand went on to Calcutta where Mother Teresa, recovering from her latest operation, signed the appeal in her hospital bed.

The third Nobel Peace Prize laureate to sign was Aung San Suu Kyi during a long discussion with Pierre Marchand in her Rangoon home - under the close surveillance.

Mairead Corrigan-Maguire and Pierre Marchand were then received in Washington by many dignataries, including the Dalai Lama, and by Mrs Sorensen - at the UN headquarters.

Mr Federico Mayor - Director General of UNESCO, Mrs Carol Belamy - Director General of UNICEF and Mrs Hildegard Goss-Mayr - Chairwoman of IFOR, have since signed letters in support of the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate's Appeal. In a word - the consensus was there from the start. Today all the Nobel Peace Prize Laureates have signed the Appeal, (with the exception of two who we were unable to contact.)

At the end of May 1997, a letter was sent to all Heads of States to inform them of the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate's Appeal and their Proposed Resolution (text included below).

The General Assembly of the United Nations should be able to examine this text during the next session in October 1997. If, as we hope, this resolution is adopted we will have made but the first step. Then the real work will begin: to transform the best intentions of the world's governments into concrete measures. As we stated earlier, education is the key factor. Education nourishes Culture. It is an interactive process which starts at the earliest instants of life. We already know that we can count on the support of several hundred organisations throughout the world to help us start programmes adapted to the culture and living conditions of children, young people and adults.

Among these organisations ready to help are the Serpaj in Latin America, The Peace People in Ireland, the Mouvement Social in Lebanon, Compartir in Lebanon, ASSEFA in India, The House of Grace in Israël, Milijuli in Nepal and most of all - IFOR.

Founded in 1915, IFOR was the first organisation for education in Non-Violence. IFOR has branches in over forty countries and brings together thousands of men and women committed to Non-Violence. IFOR's role will be to co-ordinate the necessary measures with governmental and non-governmental organisations, teachers, artists .. throughout the World.

UNESCO and UNICEF have agreed to integrate the spirit and the objectives of this Appeal into their programmes.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

In response to the "Appeal for the Children of the World", addressed by Nobel Peace Prize Laureates to each Head of the Member-States of the United Nations from Bethlehem in May 1997;

Recognising the reality of the different forms of violence which inflict today suffering on countless numbers of children, and conscious of the fact that this violence can be transformed to free ourselves, in order to live and to behave without being the cause of suffering, with a deep respect for Life, for the duties, the rights and the dignity of every human being and - specifically - of each child;

Aware of the rich spiritual heritage of humanity, manifest in our different religious traditions, handed down from generation to generation since the dawn of consciousness in the human species, and

Aware of the need to live our lives according to this heritage, to live mindfully and to transmit this heritage carefully to future generations, for it is the basis of a non-violent and meaningful art of living all together;

Recalling that the aim of the United Nations is to promote harmony and reconciliation between all members of the human family, and with our environment;

Recalling that the mission of UNESCO is to promote Peace through Education, Science and Culture, particularly through the "Culture of Peace" programme;

Considering the spirit of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, signed and ratified by almost all of the

United Nations member states;

Considering the Heads of State's Summit and Action Plan for Children, convened in 1990 by UNICEF;

Recalling the Report of Mrs Graça Machel, in 1996, about the horrifying and unacceptable impact of armed conflict on children;

Recalling the constructive work done, since 1919, by all the members of the "International Fellowship of Reconciliation", particularly with the Mahatma Gandhi and the Reverent Martin Luther King, to promote non-violence as a new way of living mindfully;

The Assembly General of the United Nations :

* Declares the decade 2000 - 2010 "The decade for a Culture of Non-Violence" ;

* Declares the year 2000 "The Year of Education for Non-Violence" ;

* Invites each member state to take the necessary steps so that Non-Violence be taught at every level in our societies during this decade, so that children become aware of the real, practical meaning and benefits of Non-Violence in their daily lives, in order to reduce the violence - and consequent suffering, perpetrated against them and humanity in general.

* Invites the president of the International Foundation "Appeal of the Nobel Peace Prize Laureates : Share with the Children of the World" to deliver a report to the United Nations Secretary General on January 1st 2000, containing propositions for achieving these aims of mindful art of living, with the active support of the member states, the different organs of the United Nations and relevant N.G.O.s. as the "International Fellowship of Reconciliation", the "Peace People" and "Servicio Paz y Justicia".

This resolution involves no specific U.N.O. budget for it's application. The International Foundation "Appeal of the Nobel Peace Prize Laureates: Share with the Children of the World" calls upon individuals and collectivities (Nations, U.N. agencies, organisations, state enterprise and private companies, etc.) to share their resources, freely and willingly in order to build, all together with women and men of good will, without any discrimination of any kind and nobody left behind - specifically with all our children - a new way of life for all : A Culture of Non-Violence.