



INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR THE CULTURE OF PEACE

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

14 September 1999

Paris - Eiffel Tower

In a few weeks' time we will be taking our leave of this century, filled with wonder at the scientific and technological progress made but at the same time with dismay at the violence, war and oppression that have taken such a heavy toll in human lives and suffering of every kind. Each and every one of us must do our utmost as we enter the new millennium to bequeath to future generations certain values and certain responses, on which a start has already been made, to deal with social inequalities, poverty, hunger, exclusion, discrimination, destruction of the environment, proliferation of drugs and weapons and, above all, the use of force to settle conflicts.

Abolishing violence, war and their causes requires much more than the action of States. It means that everyone must be involved in putting into practice in daily life the ideals so clearly set forth in UNESCO's Constitution and in achieving a radical change in attitudes within the family and the community and within countries and regions. It calls for a cultural transformation.

Will we be capable of making such a change in so short a time ? Will we be capable of countering authoritarianism and intolerance with democracy and solidarity ? Our answer is yes! Together we must find new hope in our troubled history and make sure that non-violent rebellion, creative disobedience and insubordination by those who will never accept the unacceptable will enable us to effect the transition from the logic of force to the force of reason. I therefore **APPEAL SOLEMNLY**

- To the international community and political, military, religious, economic, social and cultural leaders - especially parliamentarians, mayors and the media - to re-establish the principles upon which the United Nations was founded in order to " save succeeding generations from the scourge of war... reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights... and promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom" .

- To educators in particular, to the media, to parents who are raising children and to older persons, who are living memories of past violence, to mobilize and help forge in the young people of today the fervent desire to seek new ways of living together based on conciliation, generosity and tolerance, unlimited respect for human rights, rejection of all forms of oppression and violence, equitable distribution of wealth, the free flow of information and the sharing of knowledge. In other words, a culture of peace.
- I suggest that there should be a square or historic monument - like the Eiffel Tower - designated in every country and city as a " messenger of peace" symbolizing the political will and the will of the people to serve the cause of peace and non-violence. And by the same taken I call for measures to be taken and events to be held that will help foster these ideals.
- I appeal to each and every one of us - women, men and children - to endorse the Manifesto 2000 drafted by a group of Nobel Peace Prize laureates, in order to create a global movement for a culture of peace and non-violence. Let us gather 100 million signatures to present to the United Nations General Assembly in the year 2000, so that world society may have a strong voice in this great transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace.

May the new century and the new millennium be a new departure, the setting of a new scene for human endeavour, locally and worldwide ! Let us take up the challenge and together let us shape a new future by joining in the movement for the Year 2000, International Year for the Culture of Peace and Non-Violence.

Federico Mayor

