

DECLARATION OF PUEBLA
MEETING OF PUBLISHERS AND EDITORS OF
LATIN AMERICAN
NEWSPAPERS FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE

Puebla, Mexico, 17 May 1997

The participants in the meeting of publishers and editors of Latin American newspapers for a culture of peace, convened in Puebla, Mexico, at the invitation of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), declare the following:

That freedom of expression is a prerequisite for consolidating a culture of peace on the continent;

That history shows that the growth and spread of violence is usually preceded and accompanied by hostility to and attempts to silence the free press;

That a culture of peace implies dialogue with and knowledge of others through the full and free flow of ideas, which is principally achieved through an independent press;

That domestic harmony within societies and peaceful understanding between nations require openness of information and opinion in order to overcome differences and reach agreements;

That UNESCO has recognised that freely functioning media can make a key contribution to a culture of peace by disseminating everyone's views and opinions, without violence and in a climate of understanding and respect for others;

That the publishers and editors at this meeting believe in peaceful and creative understanding and tolerance and in the educational potential of the press as a means of transmitting values based on respect for the life and dignity of human beings and of encouraging co-operation for the consolidation of a culture of peace.

In consequence, they:

Confirm their commitment to non-violence;

Express the desire to establish modes of consultation to prevent the escalation of violence in any form;

Reiterate their commitment to a society which lives in peace and turns away from the culture of violence to pursue a culture of peace;

Welcome and endorse the decision of the newspaper publishers of Ecuador and Peru, present at the meeting, to continue the meetings aimed at establishing and maintaining openness of information and relations between the two countries on the road to peace;

Call upon the media to condemn any initiative likely to promote the culture of war and express their concern at the recent lifting of the embargo against the sale of high-technology weapons in the region, which could lead to an arms race the cost of which would inevitably reduce the amount of funds available for the task which has brought them together, namely, to promote a culture of peace.

Express their concern at the concentration of the media internationally, which threatens the freedom of expression and imposes restrictions on the diversity of information and opinion, which are the foundations of a culture of peace;

Proclaim that the freedom of the press includes the right of citizens to information:

Condemn any restrictions by governments on the freedom of expression and, in particular, any economic pressure against the media and its journalists;

Suggest that UNESCO support co-operation among the media in order to promote the exchange of information on the culture of peace;

Suggest that the United Nations declare 1999 as the 'international year of the culture of peace';

Express their appreciation to the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr Federico Mayor, for his culture of peace initiative and for inviting them to the meeting;

Thank the Government of the State of Puebla and, in particular, Governor Manuel Bartlett Díaz, for sponsoring the meeting and for the generous hospitality of this friendly city of Puebla, which is part of the cultural heritage of humanity.