

WORLD SUMMIT OF NOBEL PEACE LAUREATES ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Roma – Campidoglio November 11th and 12th 2000

CONCLUDING DOCUMENT

The second edition of the World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates took place on November 11th and 12th in Rome. The promoters of the Summit were Mikhail Gorbachev and Francesco Rutelli, Mayor of Rome. The following Nobel Peace Laureates were present: Mikhail Gorbachev, Lech Walesa, Joseph Rotblat, Betty Williams and Adolfo Pérez Esquivel. The following representatives for organisations that have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize were also in attendance:

- Francois Trémeaud for the International Labour Organisation;
- Luigi Bencetti for the International Committee of the Red Cross;
- Susan George for the International Peace Bureau;
- Stefania Dente for the Médecins Sans Frontières;
- Ana Liria-Franch for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;
- Donald Gann for the American Friends Service Committee;
- Daniele Scaglione for Amnesty International;
- Mary-Wynn Ashford, Abraham Behar and Sergei Gratchev (Co-Presidents) for the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War;
- Giovanni Micali for UNICEF;
- Nicoletta Dentico for the International Campaign to Ban Landmines; and
- Christian Dominicé for the Institut de Droit International.

The Nobel Peace Laureates, in a reserved and plenary session, discussed the current international situation, the problem of international debt in underdeveloped countries and the role and responsibilities of the mass media in resolving world problems.

1) The participating Nobel Peace Laureates arrived at the conclusion that the opportunities available to create a new world order once the Cold War had ended were not properly taken advantage of and were, in part, wasted. Ancient conflicts still continue in many countries of the world and new conflicts have arisen. In the Middle East, the peace seeking process has encountered tremendous obstacles. The creation of a European security system has failed and there is a growing danger of new dividing lines. The expectations of positive development in the Third World and the hopes of reducing the distance between developed and underdeveloped countries have not manifested. On the whole, the number of poor people in the world has increased and continues to do so. Freedom and human rights are being violated everywhere. Globalisation has intensified existing contradictions and produced others because the profits it reaps essentially end up in the hands of the more developed countries. The existing international organisations that have been called upon to regulate political and economic relationships do not guarantee a balance of interests or collaboration on an equal basis between members of the world community.

These and other negative tendencies on an international level have led the Nobel Peace Laureates to stress the immediate need for intervention. In their opinion, a premise for action exists. There is a growing awareness in the world of the necessity to join forces in order to find new solutions.

It is evident that the traditional positions and views, and overall the logic of military force, are in decline. The world needs a new political approach.

2) The two fundamental problems for the international community are the problem of peace and the problem of development. They are closely tied, since there cannot be development without peace, nor can there be peace without development.

The problem of peace is overall the problem of ending the conflicts that de-stabilise not only the regions these conflicts directly involve, but also the entire world.

The Nobel Peace Laureates have firmly pronounced themselves in favour of the renewal of a peaceful approach to finding a solution to the Middle East crisis, carried out on the basis of a

balance of interests between Israel and the Palestinian People. They do not believe there is any possibility of finding a solution to that conflict through military force. A new war in the Middle East would only lead to slaughter, devastation and the destruction of the necessary means of subsistence for many people in that area, long before a winner could emerge.

There are, therefore, no alternatives to the peace talks, however difficult and complex they may be, no alternatives to a renunciation of every unilateral condition, however painful that may be, and no alternatives to the search for acceptable compromises on both sides.

It is necessary to mobilise all political resources, as well as the efforts of those who have a say in the matter, including the United Nations, in order to resolve this conflict.

3) The prospect for global peace can only coincide with a further reduction of arms and weapons. The Nobel Peace Laureates accepted with satisfaction the measures adopted by the United States and Russia to reduce their nuclear arsenals. They appeal to these two countries that these efforts may continue and stress the importance of avoiding all attempts at hindering the evolution of disarmament. In particular, they ask these two countries to guarantee the observance of agreements that have already been signed with regards to anti-missile defence. At the same time, however, the Nobel Peace Laureates reveal, with regret, that other countries in possession of nuclear arms are still unwilling to adhere to the need for disarmament.

The non-proliferation of nuclear arms continues to be of utmost importance. The Nobel Peace Laureates support the initiative of the Secretary General of the United Nations aimed at preventing the illegal traffic of conventional arms and backing regional measures for disarmament. They also stress the importance of halting the production and sale of anti-personnel (apers.) mines.

4) The Nobel Peace Laureates pronounced themselves decidedly in favour of the cancellation of debts accumulated by underdeveloped countries. They applauded Italy for having annulled these debts independently, without regard to the fact that other developed countries had done so or not. The annulment of debts accumulated by underdeveloped countries could constitute an important step in creating conditions that lead to development and fighting poverty. It is, however, not enough. Developed countries must also provide underdeveloped countries with practical aid to strengthen their educational and health programs, as well as know-how that allows for the building of basic infrastructures.

It is of utmost importance to assure that the resources made available by the cancellation of international debt, as well as any practical aid allocated to underdeveloped countries, be used exclusively for the development of those countries and the battle against poverty.

On the other hand, it is also important to guarantee an open market in developed countries for products originating in underdeveloped countries. This would allow a source of revenue far greater than that which underdeveloped countries receive in the form of aid. It could also constitute a new boost to development and the battle against poverty.

The cancellation of debts accumulated by underdeveloped countries shouldn't be a simple act of charity, but rather an act of human justice. In this way, it would be an important contribution to the cause of world development.

5) The Nobel Peace Laureates are of the opinion that the modern system of mass media is suffering from an unprecedented crisis that prevents a correct and objective view of what is currently happening in the world.

This situation is due, in part, to the fact that the principle flow of information comes from thirty of the richest countries in the world and therefore reflects the interests, values and lifestyles of those countries.

The responsibility of the mass media is enormous because if it doesn't do its job as it should, the world will be left vulnerable with regards to the complicated problems the international community must face. Among these problems is the growing distance between poor and rich countries, and poor and rich classes, even in the most developed countries. This is not only a moral problem. It is a political and practical problem, as well.

The crisis of the mass media must be analysed in depth. However, this analysis is strongly in contrast with powerful economic interests and the subordination of politics in favour of these interests, which, in the end, determine what the mass media offers.

In order to counteract these negative tendencies, the Nobel Peace Laureates believe it is essential to mobilise the intellectual community to combat the "illusion" of freedom of speech and information. In fact, the absence of free competition in the field of mass media only substantiates the affirmation of an oligarchic monopoly. This threatens the right of individuals and people to have truly free and objective information, especially with respect to their own history and culture.

According to the Nobel Peace Laureates, it is indispensable to bring these reflections to the attention of the public opinion, so as to provide incentive for further analysis by experts of various cultural factions. Furthermore, it is necessary to create observation and analysis centres that are able to intervene quickly and denounce any violation of the right to information or unfairness, with the possibility of making consequent proposals to remedy the situation.

The public opinion has been called upon to make the transformation from passive observer to active participant, keeper of the truth and responsibility of mass media.

6) The modern world is experiencing more and more a tendency towards globalisation, which must, however, be supervised and geared towards human need.

The evolution of democracy in the world implies a renovation of the existing structures, or the creation of new ones oriented towards global politics, so as to take into consideration the interests of everyone and act accordingly. This means, first of all, giving greater importance to the role of the United Nations, the only world organisation specialised in maintaining global peace and international security. A specific reform of the United Nations is essential to guarantee 1) the effectiveness of the steps it takes in the interest of the entire world community and 2) total respect, on the part of the countries of the world, with regards to their own commitments and obligations towards the United Nations. The Nobel Peace Laureates support the efforts carried out by the General Secretary of the United Nations Kofi Annan to this end.

It is also necessary to create local and international, non-government security organisations that collaborate actively with the United Nations.

The need to reform international, economic organisations has been apparent for quite a while, starting with the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the WTO. These institutions must be transformed from private clubs, where membership is limited exclusively to developed countries, into organisations at the service of stability of world economy, development and improvements in the standard of living and the quality of life.

Furthermore, if we consider that the future of humanity will be ever more determined and conditioned by the level of education, science and culture, it is important, then, that we give greater significance to organisations that operate in these fields, beginning with UNESCO.

7) The Nobel Peace Laureates have confirmed their availability, each in his/her own field and on a unitary basis, to contribute in the future to the establishment of a new world order.

The participants of the Summit have committed themselves to carrying on in their common cause by working together, staying in touch and keeping in mind the objectives set forth therein.

The "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World: 2001-2010" was inaugurated during this second edition of the World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates. This ten-year plan was accepted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on the basis of an appeal signed by all the Nobel Peace Laureates.

The participants of the second edition of the World Summit expressed their gratitude to the promoters, Mikhail Gorbachev and Francesco Rutelli, Mayor of Rome. They also acknowledged the importance of contributions made by the Gorbachev Foundation in Moscow; the Italian Branch of the Gorbachev Foundation with headquarters in Piacenza, Italy; the City of Rome and all the organisations without which this event would not have been possible.

The contents of this document were discussed and reviewed by all of the participants at the Summit.