

Statement Of The 5th Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates

Two decades ago, the world was swept with a wave of hope. Inspired by the popular movements for peace, freedom, democracy and solidarity, the nations of the world worked together to end the cold war. Yet the opportunities opened up by that historic change are slipping away. We are gravely concerned with the resurgent nuclear and conventional arms race, disrespect for international law and the failure of the world's governments to address adequately the challenges of poverty and environmental degradation. A cult of violence is spreading globally; the opportunity to build a culture of peace, advocated by the United Nations, Pope John Paul II, the Dalai Lama and other spiritual leaders, is receding. Alongside the challenges inherited from the past there are new ones, which, if not properly addressed, could cause a clash of civilizations, religions and cultures. We reject the idea of the inevitability of such a conflict. We are convinced that combating terrorism in all its forms is a task that should be pursued with determination. Only by reaffirming our shared ethical values -- respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms -- and by observing democratic principles, within and amongst countries, can terrorism be defeated. We must address the root causes of terrorism -- poverty, ignorance and injustice -- rather than responding to violence with violence. Unacceptable violence is occurring daily against women and children. Children remain our most important neglected treasure. Their protection, security and health should be the highest priority. Children everywhere deserve to be educated in and for peace. There is no excuse for neglecting their safety and welfare and, particularly, for their suffering in war. The war in Iraq has created a hotbed of dangerous instability and a breeding ground for terrorism. Credible reports of the disappearance of nuclear materials cannot be ignored. While we mourn the deaths of tens of thousands of people, none of the goals proclaimed by the coalition have been achieved.

The challenges of security, poverty and environmental crisis can only be met successfully through multilateral efforts based on the rule of law. All nations must strictly fulfil their treaty obligations and reaffirm the indispensable role of the United Nations and the primary responsibility of the UN Security Council for maintaining peace. We support a speedy, peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue, including a verifiable end to North Korea's nuclear weapons program, security guarantees and lifting of sanctions on North Korea. Both the six-party talks and bilateral efforts by the United States and North Korea should contribute to such an outcome. We welcome recent progress in the talks between Iran and Great Britain, France and Germany on the Iranian nuclear program issue and hope that the United States will join in the process to find a solution within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency. We call for the reduction of military expenditures and for conclusion of a treaty that would control arms trade and prohibit sales of arms where they could be used to violate international human rights standards and humanitarian law. As Nobel Laureates, we believe that the world community needs urgently to address the challenges of poverty and sustainable development. Responding to these challenges requires the political will that has been so sadly lacking. The undertakings pledged by states at the UN Millennium Summit, the promises of increased development assistance, fair trade, market access and debt relief for developing countries, have not been implemented. Poverty continues to be the world's most widespread and dangerous

scourge. Millions of people become victims of hunger and disease, and entire nations suffer from feelings of frustration and despair. This creates fertile ground for extremism and terrorism. The stability and future of the entire human community are thus jeopardized. Scientists are warning us that failure to solve the problems of water, energy and climate change will lead to a breakdown of order, more military conflicts and ultimately the destruction of the living systems upon which civilization depends. Therefore, we reaffirm our support for the Kyoto Protocol and the Earth Charter and endorse the rights-based approach to water, as reflected in the initiative of Green Cross International calling upon governments to negotiate a framework treaty on water.

As Nobel Peace Prize Laureates we believe that to benefit from humankind's new, unprecedented opportunities and to counter the dangers confronting us there is a need for better global governance. Therefore, we support strengthening and reforming the United Nations and its institutions.

As immediate specific tasks, we commit to work for:

- Genuine efforts to resolve the Middle East crisis. This is both a key to the problem of terrorism and a chance to avoid a dangerous clash of civilizations. A solution is possible if the right of all nations in the region to secure, viable statehood is respected and if the Middle East is integrated in all global processes while respecting the unique culture of the peoples of that region.

- Preserving and strengthening the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. We reject double standards and emphasize the legal responsibility of nuclear weapons states to work to eliminate nuclear weapons. We call for continuation of the moratorium on nuclear testing pending entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and for accelerating the process of verifiable and irreversible nuclear arms reduction. We are gravely alarmed by the creation of new, usable nuclear weapons and call for rejection of doctrines that view nuclear weapons as legitimate means of war-fighting and threat pre-emption.

- Effectively realizing the initiative of the UN Secretary General to convene a high-level conference in 2005 to give an impetus to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. We pledge to work to create an atmosphere of public accountability to help accomplish these vitally important tasks.

We believe that to solve the problems that challenge the world today politicians need to interact with an empowered civil society and strong mass movements. This is the way toward a globalization with a human face and a new international order that rejects brute force, respects ethnic, cultural and political diversity and affirms justice, compassion and human solidarity. We, the Nobel Peace Laureates and Laureate organizations, pledge to work for the realization of these goals and are calling on governments and people everywhere to join us

Mikhail Gorbachev

Chairman of the Board, Green Cross International