

WUCWO



UMOFC

World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations
Union Mondiale des Organisations Féminines Catholiques
Unión Mundial de las Organizaciones Femeninas Católicas
Weltunion der Katholischen Frauenverbände

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September 17, 2008

Religious Org.



Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon
United Nations
New York, NY 10017

Your Excellency,

Founded in 1910, the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (WUCWO) unites more than 5 million Catholic women from 100 organizations in more than 60 countries representing all continents and some island states. It has held consultative status with United Nations ECOSOC since 1947; UNESCO, 1948; UNICEF, 1952; FAO, 1953; HRC, CSW and is a member of CONGO.

In the two years since our WUCWO Study Days and General Assembly which focused on the theme, *Women Peacemakers: United in Faith and Action*, our members continue to work on the WUCWO Priority of *Building a Culture of Peace*. Enclosed for your information is a copy of the Declaration and commitments made by this body.

As the United Nations General Assembly established September 21 as the *International Day of Peace*, WUCWO fully supports this and encourages "all nations and people" to commemorate the day as an opportunity to promote peaceful resolutions of conflicts and to honor a cessation of hostilities. Peace is written into the founding Charter of the United Nations and it lies at the heart of the Gospel message which we as Catholic Christians are responsible for proclaiming to all nations.

Pope John Paul II, on the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations in 1995, indicated the need to be a "family of nations. ... The family is by nature a community based on mutual trust, mutual support and sincere respect. In an authentic family the strong do not dominate; instead, the weaker members, because of their very weakness, are all the more welcomed and served."

The Message of Pope Benedict XVI for World Day of Peace 2008 focused on the theme, *The Human Family, a Community of Peace*, and describes humanity as "one great family": "We do not live alongside one another purely by chance; all of us are progressing along a common path as men and women, and thus as brothers and sisters. Consequently, it is essential that we should all be committed to living our lives in an attitude of responsibility before God, acknowledging him as the deepest source of our own existence and that of others. By going back to this supreme

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principle we are able to perceive the unconditional worth of each human being, and thus to lay the premises for building a humanity at peace."

This year marks the 60th Anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* which acknowledges the equal dignity of all men and women, and places respect for the fundamental rights of individuals and peoples at the center of human coexistence. Every man and woman needs a sense of belonging to the one human family and to share in striving for the establishment of true and lasting peace.

WUCWO Members will observe International Day of Peace with prayer, and by undertaking additional acts of kindness or reconciliation towards another member of our human family, encouraging government officials to undertake strategies which promote human rights and dignity beginning with the fundamental right to life, and advocating for effective demilitarization, progressive and mutually agreed dismantling of existing nuclear weapons.

May these and other efforts to build a culture of peace be met with global success through the blessing of the Creator of our one human family. Your Excellency's endeavors and mission of peace-building are commended and remembered in prayer.

Sincerely yours,

Karen M. Hurley
President General

Enclosure

WORLD UNION OF CATHOLIC WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS (WUCWO)

GENERAL ASSEMBLY – “Women Peacemakers: United in Faith and Action.”

Arlington, Va, USA, May 31 – June 7, 2006.

FINAL DECLARATION

‘Peace is the fruit of justice’ ...peace is likewise the fruit of love, which goes beyond what justice can provide.’ (*Gaudium et Spes*, N. 78)

We, the women of the World Union of Catholic Women Organisations, gathered together from all continents and some island nations, **understanding** that *‘peace is never attained once and for all, but must be built up ceaselessly’* (Ibid) resolve to go from this Assembly accepting the challenge of commitment to:

- acknowledge in each person his/her dignity as a child of God, always seeking dialogue with respect, charity and truth, focusing on the positive qualities of each person;
- seek unconditional reconciliation with people from whom we are estranged, especially family members;
- undertake positive stances and actions, with believers and non-believers, for justice, truth and freedom, locally and globally;
- use all means available to us, **including** the media, to take positive action to influence our local, national and international leaders in Christian values, leading to just laws and the preservation of the environment;
- show respect for and tolerance of other faiths, trying always to discover our common values through ecumenical and religious dialogue;
- denounce policies, strategies and **behaviour** that are counter-productive to the fostering of justice and peace in every aspect of **society**, especially the violation of all human rights; in particular, violence and the abuse of the rights of the vulnerable, especially of women and children.

Motivated by Christ’s teaching as explained in the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, that: *“Peace is a value and a universal duty founded on a rational and moral order of society that has its roots in God himself, the first source of being, the essential truth and supreme good”*, **the Catholic women of WUCWO recognise that one of the major challenges of these times is the establishment of a “culture of peace” at every level of human endeavour.**

We, therefore, also resolve *“as lay faithful, to work together with all those who truly seek peace, in specific organisations, to promote an extensive work of education to defeat the ruling culture of egoism, hate, revenge and hostility, and thereby develop solidarity at every level. Such solidarity, in fact, is the way to peace and at the same time to development.”*

[Christifideles Laici]

They shall beat their swords into plough-shares and their spears into pruning hooks.” [Isaiah 2:4.]

Approved: Study Days Closing Session, June 3, 2006.

Registered participants: 600 from 44 countries.

Adopted at the Statutory Assembly of the World Union of Catholic Women’s Organisations, June 7, 2006.