



THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF UNESCO MARKING THE BEGINNING OF THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE AND NON-VIOLENCE FOR THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD

The United Nations and UNESCO were founded to achieve a world at peace. This means more than an absence of war. It means justice and equity for all as the basis for living together in harmony and free from violence. For us all, now, but even more so for our children and succeeding generations. The next ten years will provide a unique opportunity to translate solemn declarations and good intentions into reality. Let us then together renew a shared pledge to at last attain this goal – a world at peace with itself – in a new century and a new millennium.

The General Assembly has designated 2001-2010 as the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World. This title signifies a substantive ambition and call for action. It establishes a time-frame for deepening our individual and collective commitments, giving ourselves the means to live up to them morally, and carry them out practically.

By focusing on our children, we implicitly pledge ourselves to education for all, a concept that combines formal and non-formal education and seeks to promote quality basic education that is grounded upon the universal values – and practice – of a culture of peace and non-violence. Such a task must engage every one of our fellow citizens in all dimensions of life : in schools, workplaces, the home ; at the national and at the community levels ; in the public, private and voluntary sectors. Above all, children themselves must be empowered to become actors, not mere spectators, in shaping their own visions and futures.

Indeed, the world's nations have committed themselves to the Declaration and Programme of Action for a Culture of Peace. In 2000, International Year for a Culture of Peace, more than one percent of the world's people actually signed the *Manifesto 2000*, a common pledge to observe, and put into practice in daily lives, the universal principles of a culture of peace and non-violence. These same values were adopted by the Millennium Summit, the largest ever gathering of Heads of State.

This emerging movement is global in the finest sense: a marshalling of all existing forces for social improvement arising from the world's civil societies and a mobilization of their energies, ideas and commitments. Such a planetary movement must enjoy full support from both the United Nations family and all Member States. It will be one avenue for harnessing the forces of globalization for the common good and a better world.

Peace can be at hand; it is in our hands.

Kōi chiro Matsuura



INTERNATIONAL DECADE
FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE

2001



2010

AND NON-VIOLENCE
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