

History of Culture of Peace originally carried on website of GMCOP

The Culture of Peace initiative was launched in 1989 by UNESCO at an international peace conference in Yamoussoukro, Cote d'Ivoire. Its final declaration called for the construction of "a new vision of peace culture based on the universal values of respect for life, liberty, justice, solidarity, tolerance, human rights and equality between women and men."

The Member States of UNESCO then adopted in 1992 a proposal for a Culture of Peace Programme to bring peace to states newly emerging from conflict. With the full support of the UNESCO Director-General, national programmes were then established, beginning with El Salvador and Mozambique, and over the next few years extended to a number of other countries. But the national culture of peace programmes did not receive the financing that had been expected from the UNESCO Member States, and by the end of the decade they had mostly disappeared.

Meanwhile, at the UN General Assembly in New York, the Member States from the South began as early as 1995 to request a global culture of peace programme for the UN system. In 1997 the General Assembly recalled in its resolution A/52/13 that "the creation of the United Nations system itself, based upon universally shared values and goals, has been a major act towards transformation from a culture of war and violence to a culture of peace and non-violence." The following year, the General Assembly proclaimed an International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010) in its resolution A/53/25 on November 10, 1998. At that time, they had already declared the Year 2000 as the International Year for a Culture of Peace, and they had received from UNESCO a draft document for a Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

The culture of peace concept, as presented in UNESCO's draft document A/53/370, was specifically presented as an alternative to the culture of war. For each of eight fundamental aspects of the culture of war, eight alternative programme areas were proposed for the culture of peace. The UNESCO draft called for "a global movement" involving "partnerships for a culture of peace . . . between the United Nations and the Member States with various inter-governmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations, including educators, artists, journalists, parliaments, mayors and local authorities, armed forces, religious communities, and organizations of youth and women."

In 1999 the UN General Assembly, after long deliberations, adopted a Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (Resolution A/53/243) which included the eight programme areas proposed by UNESCO and which called for a "global movement for a culture of peace" that would include initiatives of the civil society as well as governments and the UN, and that would be "promoted through sharing of information among actors on their initiatives in this regard".

For the International Year in 2000, UNESCO organized a campaign to involve the civil society and individuals around the world. Over 75 million people signed the Manifesto 2000, committing themselves to cultivate a culture of peace in daily life.

During the International Decade (2001–2010), the leadership was taken by over a thousand civil society organizations as described in World Civil Society Reports at the mid-point and end of the Decade.

More detailed information is available at <http://culture-of-peace.info/history/introduction.html> and <http://decade-culture-of-peace.org>