

**THE SEOUL MILLENNIUM DECLARATION OF NGOS:
ACHIEVING OUR VISION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY**

◆ We, more than 1,000 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have gathered in Seoul, Korea on the eve of the new millennium to:

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- ◆ Build upon the work begun at the United Nations world conferences of the 1990s;
- ◆ Forge a common vision for the 21st Century;
- ◆ Channel our collective energy and experience to make this vision a reality.

Challenge of the New Millennium

We begin the new Millennium facing grave and interconnected challenges. As frontline actors in the struggle for peace, justice and the eradication of poverty, NGOs encounter daily the human impact of rising violence and armed conflicts, widespread violations of human rights, and unacceptably large numbers of people who are denied the means of a minimal human existence. At the same time new and emerging diseases such as HIV/AIDS threaten to devastate entire societies.

Despite its promise of progress, globalization is undermining local traditions and cultures, escalating disparities between rich and poor are marginalizing large numbers of people in urban and rural areas. States are becoming weaker while an unaccountable, transnational private sector grows stronger. A single-minded focus on economic growth through unfettered free markets, combined with the adjustment and stabilization policies of the international financial institutions are crippling many national economies, exacerbating poverty, eroding human values and destroying the natural environment.

Yet, there are many reasons for hope. The last decades have witnessed the phenomenal growth of people's movements, civil society organizations and NGOs committed to addressing these ills. Increasingly there is more shared awareness of what is at stake and what we need to do together. In this context, the Seoul Conference considered a number of interrelated themes, declared a shared vision for the 21st Century and agreed on concrete actions to make this vision a reality.

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Our Vision

Our vision for the future is firmly rooted in our collective and collaborative experiences and our growing understanding of what is possible.

1. Our vision is of a world that is human-centered and genuinely democratic and where human beings are full participants and determine their own destinies.;
2. ◆ It is a world where the driving forces of all societies are justice, equity, dignity, sharing and respect for diversity and the human rights of all people;
3. It is a world where peace and human security replace armaments, conflicts and wars as reflected in the principles of the United Nations Charter;
4. It is a world in which women and men, young and old, live in true equality at all levels sharing leadership, decision-making and family responsibilities;
5. It is a world in which the strength of nation states is judged not by their military might or Gross National Product, but by their willingness to guarantee freedom, human security and a decent standard of living, education, housing and health services for all and their willingness to cooperate with other nations for the good of a common global society;
6. It is a world in which globalization and economic growth are harnessed to social development, a sustainable environment and the well being of people everywhere;
7. It is a world in which science and technology are at the service of ethical and moral values;
8. It is a world in which all women and men pay full attention to the respect, care and education of children, planting the seeds of non-violence and human rights through the examples they set as well as the lessons they teach;
9. It is a world in which the voices of indigenous peoples, older persons, youth, people with disabilities, rural dwellers and other excluded and invisible populations are heard and heeded in their own communities and at the highest levels of policy and decision making.
10. It is a world in which human needs are met today in a manner that respects biodiversity, the ◆ global environment and preserves intergenerational equity and justice.

We believe that full implementation of the Programmes of Action adopted by the United Nations world conferences would mark an enormous step forward in achieving our shared vision for the world in the 21st Century. We insist that, despite the difficulties and complexities of the tasks at hand, it is in the power of governments and international organizations, in partnership with NGOs and civil society, to do much better and make rapid progress. And the need to make rapid progress is urgent.

To Governments:

We call upon all governments to:

- ◆ Fully implement the commitments made at the 1990s ◆ UN world conferences and existing international agreements and conventions;
- ◆ Fully respect the role of NGOs as legitimate partners of effective governance and as representatives of the public interest;
- ◆ Create and/or strengthen an enabling environment for the growth and development of the NGO sector, including appropriate and supportive legal frameworks;
- ◆ Strengthen the UN as the only democratic intergovernmental forum for addressing the challenges of the new century.

To the United Nations:

We call upon the United Nations in the ongoing process of reform to:

- ◆ Build upon the progress made in recent years in deepening partnerships with NGOs and provide every opportunity for NGO participation in its work;
- ◆ Play a more creative and effective role in securing the conditions for world peace and development for all peoples.

.To NGOs Everywhere:

We call upon NGOs in their advocacy, monitoring and operational work to:

- ◆ Extend and deepen partnerships among NGOs in a spirit of solidarity, and share their resources, experience and energy in pursuit of common goals;

