

4th Annual International Conference on An Interfaith Perspective on Globalisation for the Common Good, Kericho, Kenya, April 21-24, 2005

Declaration

Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life. While poverty persists, there is no true freedom. — Nelson Mandela

Africa and Globalisation for the Common Good: The Quest for Justice and Peace

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As our International Conference on Globalisation for the Common Good and the Quest for Justice and Peace in Africa – in which many speakers representing, governments, religions, business, academia, civil society, charity, voluntary sector, media and young people participated – comes to an end, we shall carry with us happy memories of the warmth of the welcome we received and of our brief but enriching experience of the variety and vitality of African life. We admire and salute Africa's achievements in ending colonialism, dismantling apartheid, and initiating development, democratisation and social reform. We are also conscious of the enormous contribution Africa has to make to the rest of the world, but we are aware that many people here live in poverty and are unable to achieve their full potential. For this situation to be changed 'Globalisation for the Common Good' is essential.

We affirm our conviction that people everywhere prosper where justice and equity are honoured. We salute our African sisters and brothers and their heroic struggle for justice and peace. We applaud Africa's determination to solve her own problems. We urge the world to work in partnership with the African people to support that process and to remove the impediments that have been imposed on Africa from the outside. We enthusiastically affirm that the good of the African peoples is an indispensable condition for achieving the universal common good, but we acknowledge that the life conditions under which many Africans live remain intolerable, an affront to the dignity of all humankind. We urge the amelioration of these conditions through a change of governmental, intergovernmental, corporate and social policy in favour of the poor, the marginalised, the dispossessed and the excluded. We offer our individual and joint commitments to work toward this goal. We urge that the international community, governments and institutions express their solidarity with the people of Africa by promoting a society of hope, compassion, justice and peace in Africa. We call for the formation and empowerment of the youth of Africa as leaders of this transformation.

To this end, we recommend the practical vision and mission of Globalisation for the Common Good for Africa. Globalisation for the Common Good means the promotion of ethical, moral and spiritual values – which are shared by all religions – in the areas of economics, commerce, trade and international relations. It emphasizes personal and societal virtues. It calls for understanding and collaborative action – on the part of civil society, private enterprise, the public sector, governments, and national and international institutions – to address major global issues. Globalisation for the common good is predicated on a global economy of sharing and community, grounded

in an economic value system whose aim is generosity and the promotion of a just distribution of the world's goods, which are divine gifts.

The Essential Dimensions of Globalisation for the Common Good:

The acknowledgement of God, Ultimate Reality, or the One. Our lives are grounded in an Ultimate Reality, the source of the sacredness of all life and of the spiritual power, hope, and trust that we discover in prayer or meditation, in word or silence, and in our striving for just relationships with all existence.

The investment of Spiritual Capital. The most powerful way for faith and spiritual communities to influence beliefs, norms and institutions is through prophetic voice and public action. Highly visible faith and interfaith affirmation of the great spiritual truths of peace, justice, and the sacredness of the Earth and all life can make a tremendous contribution to Globalisation for the Common Good. Action and service by spiritual and faith communities and groups can provide a vital source of inspiration and energy for the healing of the world.

The practice of selfless Love. The most important point of convergence shared by the world's great spiritual traditions is to be found in the practice and power of selfless love for all humanity. It is the wellspring of the best hope for a better future.

The cultivation of interfaith Dialogue and Engagement. It is absolutely vital that religious and spiritual communities come together with one another in honest and open dialogue. It is also essential that these communities enter into dialogue with secular groups, organizations and governments working for a better world. Religious and spiritual communities – in mutual respect and partnership – must engage the critical issues that face the planetary community as the 21st century unfolds.

The nurturing of cultures of Peace. True cultural evolution is perhaps best measured in the growing rejection of violent approaches to conflict resolution in favour of the cultivation of the infrastructures of forgiveness, reconciliation and peace. Our greatest contribution to the future lies in ensuring that our children grow to maturity in cultures of peace.

The struggle for Justice. Justice is the heart of all creation. It is the profound feeling of oneness with all other beings in the universe. Today, it finds its most vital expression in social and economic fairness, concern for others and the vigorous defence of human rights.

The realization of Gender Partnership. Challenging the assumptions and infrastructures of patriarchy is essential to cultural evolution. Women and men, living and working together in harmony and equity, can build stronger, more creative religious communities and societies.

The path of Sustainability. In this rapidly changing world, our reverence for the Earth will determine the fate of the entire community of planetary life. This deep, visionary

and unconditional caring for what is yet to come, is the love of life embedded in ecological sustainability.

The commitment to Service. Service is our link to spirit. Personal action for a better world is the discernable manifestation of the divine in the human. The essence of service is the grace of giving. We give because giving is how life begins and how it continues. This process will enhance personal responsibility for the common good.

We affirm that economics is, above all, concerned with human well-being and happiness in society and with care for the Earth. This cannot be separated from moral and spiritual considerations. The idea of a “value-free” economics is spurious. It demonstrates a complete misunderstanding of what it means to be a human being.

We affirm our conviction that genuine interfaith dialogue and cooperation is a significant way of bringing the world together. It is indispensable to the creation of the harmonious global culture needed to build peace, justice, sustainability and prosperity for all. The call for Globalisation for the Common Good is an appeal to our essential humanity. It engages the most pressing concerns of peoples the world over.

Globalisation for the Common Good, by addressing the crises that face us all, empowers us with humanity, spirituality and love. It engages people of different races, cultures and languages, from a wide variety of backgrounds, all committed to bringing about a world in which there is more solidarity and greater harmony. This spiritual ground for hope at this time of wanton destruction of our world, can help us to recall the ultimate purpose of life and of our journey in this world.