Millennium Declaration*  

(Extracts)

I. Values and principles

1. We, heads of State and Government, have gathered at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 6 to 8 September 2000, at the dawn of a new millennium, to reaffirm our faith in the Organization as indispensable foundations of a more peaceful, prosperous and just world.

2. We recognize that, in addition to our separate responsibilities to our individual societies, we have a collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level. As leaders we have a duty therefore to all the world’s people, especially the most vulnerable and, in particular, the children of the world, to whom the future belongs.

3. We reaffirm our commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which have proved timeless and universal. Indeed, their relevance and capacity to inspire have increased, as nations and peoples have become increasingly interconnected and interdependent.

4. We are determined to establish a just and lasting peace all over the world in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter. We recommit ourselves to support all efforts to uphold the sovereign equality of all States, respect for their territorial integrity and political independence, resolution of disputes by peaceful means and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, the right to self-determination of peoples which remain under colonial domination and foreign occupation, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for the equal rights of all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion and international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character. And we recognize that the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world’s people while globalization offers great opportunities, at present its benefits are very unevenly shared, while its costs are unevenly distributed. We recognize that developing countries and countries with economies in transition face special difficulties in responding to this central challenge.

5. We believe that the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world’s people while globalization offers great opportunities, at present its benefits are very unevenly shared, while its costs are unevenly distributed. We recognize that developing countries and countries with economies in transition face special difficulties in responding to this central challenge.

6. We consider certain fundamental values to be essential to international relations in the twenty-first century. These include:

- Freedom. Men and women have the right to live their lives and raise their children in dignity, free from hunger and from the fear of violence, oppression or injustice. Democratic and participatory governance based on the will of the people best assures these rights.
- Equality. No individual and no nation must be denied the opportunity to benefit from development. The equal rights and opportunities of women and men must be assured.
- Solidarity. Global challenges must be managed in a way that distributes the costs and burdens fairly in accordance with basic principles of equity and social justice. Those who suffer or who benefit least deserve help from those who benefit most.
- Tolerance. Human beings must respect one another, in all their diversity of belief, culture and language. Differences within and between societies should be neither feared nor repressed, but cherished as a precious asset of humanity. A culture of peace and dialogue among all civilizations should be actively promoted.
- Respect for nature. Prudence must be shown in the management of all living species and natural resources, in accordance with the precepts of sustainable development. Only in this way can the immeasurable riches provided to us by nature be preserved and passed on to our descendants. The current unsustainable patterns of production and consumption must be changed in the interest of our future welfare and that of our descendants.
- Shared responsibility. Responsibility for managing worldwide economic and social development, as well as threats to international peace and security, must be shared among the nations of the world and should be exercised multilaterally. As the most universal and most representative organization in the world, the United Nations must play the central role.

7. In order to translate these shared values into actions, we have identified key objectives to which we assign special significance.

II. Peace, security and disarmament

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States, by implementing the Barbados Programme of Action and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly rapidly and in full. We urge the international community to ensure that, in the development of a vulnerability index, the special needs of small island developing States are taken into account.

18. We recognize the special needs and problems of the landlocked developing countries, and urge both bilateral and multilateral donors to increase financial and technical assistance to this group of countries to meet their special development needs and to help them overcome the impediments of geography by improving their transit transport systems.

19. We resolve further:
   • To halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world’s people whose income is less than one dollar a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger and, by the same date, to halve the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water.
   • To ensure that, by the same date, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and that girls and boys will have equal access to all levels of education.
   • By the same date, to have reduced maternal mortality by three quarters, and under-five child mortality by two thirds, of their current rates.
   • To have, by then, halted, and begun to reverse, the spread of HIV/AIDS, the scourge of malaria and other major diseases that afflict humanity.
   • To provide special assistance to children orphaned by HIV/AIDS.
   • By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, as proposed in the “Cities Without Slums” initiative.

20. We also resolve:
   • To promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable.
   • To develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work.
   • To encourage the pharmaceutical industry to make essential drugs more widely available and affordable by all who need them in developing countries.
   • To develop and maintain partnerships with the private sector and with civil society organizations in pursuit of development and poverty eradication.
   • To ensure that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication technologies, in conformity with recommendations contained in the ECOSOC 2000 Ministerial Declaration, are available to all.

IV. Protecting our common environment

21. We must spare no effort to free all of humanity, and above all our children and grandchildren, from the threat of living on a planet irredeemably spoilt by human activities, and whose resources would no longer be sufficient for their needs.

22. We reaffirm our support for the principles of sustainable development, including those set out in Agenda 21, agreed upon at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

23. We resolve therefore to adopt in all our environmental actions a new ethic of conservation and stewardship and, as first steps, we resolve:
   • To make every effort to ensure the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol, preferably by the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 2002, and to embark on the required reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases.
   • To intensify our collective efforts for the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.
   • To press for the full implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa.
   • To stop the unsustainable exploitation of water resources by developing water management strategies at the regional, national and local levels, which promote both equitable access and adequate supplies.
   • To intensify cooperation to reduce the number and effects of natural and man-made disasters.
   • To ensure free access to information on the human genome sequence.

V. Human rights, democracy and good governance

VI. Protecting the vulnerable

VII. Meeting the special needs of Africa

27. We resolve therefore:
   • To give full support to the political and institutional structures of emerging democracies in Africa.
   • To encourage and sustain regional and subregional mechanisms for prevent-
The Right to Water*

The European Council on Environmental Law, 
Conscious of the grave problems posed by access to drinking water, an essential element for the survival of man;
Considering that access to water is part of a sustainable development policy and cannot be regulated by market forces alone;
Considering that water is an economic good, it is above all a social good;
Convinced that water resources constitute a common heritage and must be used in an equitable manner and managed in cooperation with the users in a spirit of solidarity;
Taking account of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) according to which “[The States recognize (…) the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health” (art. 12);
Considering that the right to water cannot be dissociated from the right to food and the right to housing which are recognized human rights and that the right to water is also closely linked to the right to health;
Taking account of the Protocol on Water and Health (1999) adopted in London in the framework of the Economic Commission of the United Nations for Europe, which refers to the principle of “equitable access to water” which should be provided for “all members of the population” (art. 5);
Mindful of the principles of the Malawi Declaration on the Sustainable Management of Water Resources, adopted by the ECEL, on 17 April 1999;
Observing that the greater part of the population of European countries already enjoys access to water at an affordable price;
Recognizing that access to water for all should be an important element in policies to combat poverty;
Proposes that Governments and competent international organizations explicitly recognize – in the national, community and international frameworks – the right of each person to water according to the following principles:
1. Each person has the right to water in sufficient quality and quantity for his life and health;
2. Public authorities must adopt the necessary measures to facilitate access to water for all and exert control over the actions of the diverse bodies, public or private, operating in water service management;
3. In each corporate body responsible for the water service the costs of the service must be apportioned in such a way that each person can enjoy the right to water;
4. In the exercise of their activities, economic actors and individuals must respect the right to water;
Recommend that public authorities ensure that drinking water is appropriately priced by the bodies responsible for the service thereon so that this good can continue to be affordable to each person.
Recommend that a significant part of development aid be used for the supply of drinking water and waste water treatment in poorly equipped countries.

Rapporteur: Henri Smets

* Resolution adopted on 28 April 2000. See also page 248.

Right to the Protection of Environment*

The European Council on Environmental Law
Having considered the draft of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (September 2000);
Noting that Article 36 of the draft dealing with “Environmental protection” does not impose any direct obligation on the member States of the Union which must;

* Adopted on 22 September 2000. See also page 258.


Art. 36: Environmental protection. A high level of environmental protection and the improvement of the quality of the environment shall be integrated into the policies of the Union and ensured in accordance with the principle of sustainable development.

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