

The Carthage Charter

For Tolerance in the Mediterranean

Participants in the international conference on "The Pedagogy of Tolerance in the Mediterranean", held on 21st and 22nd April 1995 at the Tunisian academy Beit Al Hikma in Carthage, a city whose three thousand years of civilization have influenced three continents, Africa, Europe and America,

- Drawing inspiration from the United Nations Charter, which calls for the exercise of tolerance, from the document by which UNESCO was founded, and from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

- Drawing inspiration also from UNESCO resolutions concerning education for democracy, human rights, peace, and the promotion of tolerance;

- Recalling the recommendations adopted by the meetings UNESCO has held on this theme;

- Noting with satisfaction the opening speech made by His Excellency Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia, for its humanistic and ethical bearing, and the speech made on the same occasion by Mr Federico Mayor, Director General of UNESCO,

Adopt the present Charter :

At a time in humanity's history When progress in science and technology is bringing people closer together, obliging societies to be increasingly receptive to one another and thereby requiring that we subject the image we have of ourselves and of others to critical examination, We are more than ever called upon to view tolerance as a universal principle, an ethical and political ideal.

We should bear in mind that tolerance is not an attitude that arises spontaneously but a virtue, patiently acquired. It is therefore a responsibility which is incumbent upon the educational system. Education for tolerance should be considered an urgent necessity, which is why we should work to promote a pedagogy of tolerance that will, in a systematic and rational manner, address the very sources-cultural, social, economic and political of intolerance, the principal root of all violence and a major form of exclusion.

In the aim of strengthening this education for tolerance, the Carthage Conference sets down the following principles:

1) The attempt to eradicate all forms of intolerance requires that liberty, the inviolacy of the conscience, be recognized as one of the very foundations

of human existence, which in turn dictates the establishment of democracy, political pluralism and mutual recognition and respect.

2) The right to liberty in all its forms requires the existence of a state of laws, whose function it is to create a climate that favours the coexistence of individuals of differing convictions, and not only of those who share the same certitudes.

3) The existence of intolerable situations created by economic and social inequalities, by inequitable international relations and by imposed economic policies means that profound change will be necessary to create an environment which enables human beings to practice tolerance.

4) Humanity's long experience reveals clearly that there can be no peace among men without peace among beliefs, be they political or religions. It is therefore incumbent upon the three monotheistic religions in the Mediterranean basin to promote the values of liberty, tolerance and human rights, in their internal and mutual relations and in their relations with other societies.

5) Humanity is one, and its basic values are identical; any right to difference has real meaning only within the framework of an aspiration to universality. Diversity of cultures and the multiplicity of expressions of that which is human, are factors of mutual emulation and enrichment; they should not become obstacles to the development of a culture based on the values of progress, peace and brotherhood. No right is alienable, and there must be no discrimination with regard to the right of active citizenship, or that of the practice of democracy, or that of exercising freedom of thought and expression.

6) Given the ethical nature of these principles, the participants in the Carthage conference call upon intellectuals, politicians and authorities in the communications networks to do their utmost to promote education for tolerance and strengthen the values of liberty and human rights, by disseminating a culture of human brotherhood.

7) Noting the new initiatives that have been taken by the various parties to favour dialogue among the countries on either shore of the Mediterranean, the participants call upon all those of good will to work still harder to strengthen peace, tolerance and cooperation among the peoples of the Mediterranean.

The participants in the Carthage Conference, aware of the laudable efforts made to organize this event, wish:

- To pay tribute to, Tunisia for the firm and valuable contribution that country has made to the celebration of the International Year of Tolerance, and to thank the Tunisian authorities for their warm welcome and excellent organization.

- To congratulate UNESCO for the support it provided in the organization of this conference.

- They urge that this "Carthage Charter for Tolerance" be approved at the next UNESCO general conference, and hereby state their firm support of the plan to institute an international day of tolerance; they propose to UNESCO that, starting in 1995 , this day be an occasion for events designed to promote tolerance and non-violence.