



DECLARATION OF PEACE

“Peace Without Borders”

BERLIN, 1 DECEMBER 2012

All human beings have the right to live in a state of peace, free from violence, persecution, inequality, and suffering. As leaders and friends of the Rotary movement, united in service, we publicly declare our commitment to creating a more peaceful world.

We recognize that national boundaries and political ideologies often divide people, enabling dissent and conflict to thrive. While we take pride in our homelands, as ambassadors of goodwill, we also look beyond our own national interests. And while some of us may have fundamentally different opinions and beliefs, we are committed as global citizens to work together and focus on the good that we can collectively accomplish. In this spirit, we embrace the concept of peace without borders.

We believe that tolerance is necessary in order for peace to exist. Every day, we strive to acknowledge our differences and respect each other's rights to freely express political, religious, cultural, and social perspectives and practices that differ from our own. We support the principles of democracy and democratic governance, which guarantee the equal representation and protection of people of different backgrounds and beliefs. As citizens of many nations, we hold our respective leaders accountable for the advancement and preservation of individual rights, recognizing that peace can take root in a society only when all of its people are afforded justice and equality under the law.

We express our desire for a peaceful world through the action of service. By serving and helping others, we gain empathy and understanding, build lasting bonds of friendship, and empower others to become peacemakers. Consider some of the ways that we have enhanced peace together through Rotary:

- ❖ To help mend international relationships that were damaged during two world wars, Rotary established intercountry committees, which facilitate humanitarian and peace efforts between countries. Today, nearly 250 intercountry committees are working to advance international understanding, goodwill, and peace.
- ❖ Through The Rotary Foundation's Peace Fellowships, more than 700 Rotary Peace Fellows have earned master's degrees or professional certificates that enable them to pursue careers in peace-building and conflict resolution.
- ❖ Because of the efforts of Rotary and its partners, polio, a disease that was endemic in 125 countries just 25 years ago, is now on the brink of eradication, with an estimated 5 million children to date saved from lifelong paralysis. As the largest global public health initiative in history, polio eradication has shown that amazing achievements are possible when individuals, governments, and private partners join together in cooperation and service.

We urge everyone who shares our vision of peace to take action:

- ❖ Encourage your national leaders to emphasize peaceful conflict resolution practices and avoid resorting to war.
- ❖ Reject the notion of enemies. Actively befriend people from countries that have traditionally had adversarial relationships with your own country.
- ❖ Reach out to marginalized groups in your community, such as ethnic or religious minorities, and develop new friendships and partnerships.
- ❖ Work to empower those who live in places that lack political stability and the rule of law, as these areas are the most susceptible to conflict.
- ❖ Connect with others to make a difference. There are Rotary clubs in more than 200 countries and geographical areas, working in more than 34,000 communities worldwide. Join us in advancing *Peace Through Service*.

Peace is not a final destination to be reached, but an active and continuous process. All of us are capable of becoming peacemakers in our own lives, and through our words and actions, we will demonstrate that peace is possible.



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