

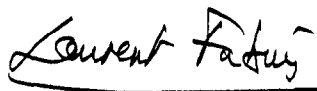
**A**t the invitation of the French National Assembly and of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), a World Parliament of children met for the first time from 21 to 27 October 1999 in Paris. It brought together 350 youths from some 175 countries.

On the eve of the year 2000-proclaimed 'International Year for the Culture of Peace' by the United Nations-these youths wished to define their expectations regarding the defence of peace, solidarity, education and culture, economic and human development, and environmental protection, by adopting on 24 October 1999 a **Youth Manifesto for the Twenty-First Century**.

This manifesto bears witness to the attachment of youths to the principles set forth by the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789) and by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948.

It was presented to UNESCO's General Conference on 26 October 1999.

It will be transmitted to all the Heads of State or Government as well as to the Speakers of Parliaments and, in autumn 2000, will be formally communicated to the United Nations.



**Laurent Fabius**  
President of the  
French National Assembly



**Federico Mayor**  
Director-General  
of UNESCO

**We, the young citizens of 175 countries assembled  
in the World Parliament of Children in Paris,  
from 21 to 27 October 1999,  
have adopted the following Manifesto :**

## **I** **Peace and Non-violence**

**e, the young people of the twenty-first century,**  
want that century to be one of peace among nations.

**The world's different civilizations,** cultures and religions have a common purpose in the good of humanity and the cause of peace; this is a fundamental philosophy which is to be embodied by all nations. While there should be analysis of past events, from which we may learn for the future, we must focus on attempting to correct the inequities of the present.

**It is imperative** that the world strive to attain peace, by diplomacy, dialogue, community campaigns and any other viable means. Peace is not only a dream but a goal. Provided the international community is sincere in its desire to create and maintain peace, peace is a reality which can be attained. This is the world's only hope for survival.

**War is a major disease** caused by world leaders, blind and unmindful of the fact that with their

actions they are destroying our future and burying deep under ruins our right to live and thrive. Underlying causes include unequal distribution of wealth; prejudice based on race, creed, sex or nationality; and undemocratic authoritarian systems of governance.

**In view of this situation,** we propose the following:

- despite the barriers that may seem at times to divide us, we are entitled to exercise our right to equal respect and equal opportunity.
- a culture of peace and a philosophy of non-violence should be disseminated in mutual respect for all types of diversity through formal, informal and non-formal education. For example, teacher exchanges should be supported in addition to student exchanges as well as more public messages through the media and through community announcements to promote peace and teach conflict resolution.
- excessive military spending should be redirected towards programmes promoting peace and non-violence.
- there should be formation of international sporting events in which each team would be composed of young people from different countries.

**Our names, surnames, nationalities,** languages, religions and colours may be different but in essence all of us are the same, all of us are human.

## **I** Education

**The twenty first century** is right on our doorstep. Our key is education.

**We recognize the necessity** of affordable education, accessible to every person, regardless of race, gender, economic status, religious beliefs or cultural backgrounds.

**We are convinced** that education is not only the responsibility of teachers and students but also of the whole community, i.e. parents, public and/or moral authorities, the business world, Non-Governmental Organizations and the media, and that the international community should help whenever necessary.

**We are conscious** that education should enable us:

- to acquire a creative and open-minded personality as well as moral values,
- to develop not only intellectual but also practical and social skills,
- to create international understanding and respect between individuals,
- to strengthen national and international bonds,

- to understand and learn from the world in which we live,
- to help maintain and develop equality and democracy.

**We are concerned** by the fact that many people in the world are still denied access to school and do not have adequate conditions for quality learning.

**We call** upon the national and international communities:

- to increase funding for education including fee reduction and scholarships,
- to improve teachers' professional standards,
- to reduce teacher-pupil ratios,
- to diversify and to adapt the teaching-learning process to all types of abilities.

**We propose** that the relevant authorities:

- increase cooperation between all partners,
- set up adequate guidance and counselling,
- increase flexibility in the syllabus and update curricula periodically,
- give more responsibility to students for managing their schools.

**We pledge ourselves:**

- to involve ourselves more in school and social activities,
- to run projects and raise funds for our schools and communities,
- to help one another and contribute to the education of others,
- to respect the lives and dignity of other people without discrimination or prejudice.

## III Environment

**or the first time in the history of humanity,** progress can have irreversible negative effects on the planet which humans are unable to forecast (climate changes, nuclear accidents, genetic engineering, the extinction of fauna and flora).

**Nevertheless, individuals,** used to a certain way of life, continue to behave short-sightedly, both as producers and as consumers: industrial pollution, the destruction of natural landscapes, wastage, etc.

**The world's population is increasing** and natural resources are no longer sufficient, which increases the risks of conflict among peoples.

**At the dawn of the third millennium,** we, the young people of the world, taking account of these observations, propose:

- to call on other young people continually, through dialogue and action, at home, at school and in the street, to respect the environment and to keep themselves informed of the dangers of tampering with nature;

- through these incitements, to persuade:

. associations to play their part in alerting public opinion and in putting forward solutions,

. the media to contribute to making people aware of and informed about the problems,

. towns and cities to organize effective refuse collection so that rubbish can be recycled, to promote



non-polluting forms of public transport and to establish more green spaces.

. parliaments to adopt and strengthen laws to protect the environment.

. governments to provide sufficient funding for the application of these laws, the implementation of environmentally friendly techniques and the introduction of ecology in school curricula.

. heads of states to take concrete steps to put into practice the recommendations of the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit.

. UNESCO to pursue its role of coordination and information to the countries of the world, especially the developing countries.

. the United Nations to create an international fund dedicated to anti-pollution research, the development of renewable resources, and the support of national or regional initiatives which will preserve the Earth for future generations.

## Economic development, Human development **IV**

**We want the basic needs of human beings** to be better satisfied, namely health, education, adequate food, a good standard of living, and an end to discrimination. Fulfilment of basic needs is necessary for survival and to prevent conflict. The basic needs that we seek to satisfy can be attained in a number of ways: freedom of speech, openmindedness and acceptance of different opinions and religions. All

governments should impose severe punishment on those who abuse these basic rights.

**Governments should establish priorities** based on consideration of current situations and work out ways in which they could have been prevented from the start. One of the priorities should be to organize an international anti-drugs campaign in order to help guarantee a healthier future for the world's population. Other priorities should include family planning, gender equality, education, etc., which help in the construction of a peaceful future. This could be brought about by spreading awareness of and fostering a peaceful attitude. Much emphasis should be placed on avoiding conflicts before they happen. We, the young people from all continents, also want to produce a world with no more child soldiers, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

**To reduce problems** caused by high interest rates and manipulation of developing countries by creditors, we suggest that an international organisation be formed to help monitor loans and donations, lower interest rates and cancel the debts of countries which are unable to pay them back easily. To avoid an imbalance of power among countries, our suggestion is that there should be global economic equality leading to a global balance of economic power. We must also promote technological balance by sharing our knowledge. In order to avoid conflicts, we think that global interaction should be given priority among governments and peoples.

## Solidarity

# V

**e consider solidarity** as caring for others and respecting them. It is also helping others as if they were family. This means doing to others as you would wish them to do to you, without expecting anything in return. Solidarity is working together towards a common goal, either in an individual commitment or in a group activity.

**Therefore, we young people should help,** respect and care for others in need, regardless of any social, racial, cultural or religious differences.

**Possible actions to promote solidarity include:**

- improving communication at school between young people and adults,
- learning about others and their culture in order to understand and respect them,
- assisting people with special needs such as the elderly, the disabled, the physically and mentally handicapped and those with addiction problems,
- organizing campaigns to support children in need: orphans, homeless children, juvenile delinquents,

- taking part in local and national decision-making bodies such as legislative institutions.
- developing youth involvement in worldwide organizations such as the World Parliament of Children.
- Action starts with young people.

## **VI Culture, Communication and Intercultural dialogue**

**At the end of the 20th century**, it is important that we maintain our culture, learn from other cultures, promote intercultural dialogue and facilitate communication for peace and the enhancement of development worldwide.

**Culture provides us** with identity and a sense of being.

**Our societies are changing rapidly** and it is vital to preserve our cultural heritage.

**Therefore, we, the young people of the world:**

- call upon governments to provide equipment, subsidies and places to support cultural, artistic and sports activities for young people, which will also help us to keep our roots.
- ask for help to be provided for the poorest coun-

tries so that their natural and cultural heritage can be protected.

- ask for cultural objects of disputed origin or ownership to be made available for all people of all nations to see.

**Communication enables us** to get to know each other better, to share our ideas, opinions and experiences, to build unity among the young people of the world and solve problems peacefully.

**The media** and modern information and communication technologies allow young people to express themselves more. Therefore they should be made accessible to all young people in all countries of the world.

**A campaign to provide equipment** for the Internet, e-mail, etc. should be organized by the United Nations system with the help of multinational companies, rich countries and local authorities.

**Moreover we propose** to create an attractive, culture-related youth website.

**We propose** a special discount on Internet subscriptions for young people and schools.

**We would like to produce our own newspaper,** at national and international levels and we'd also like our parents and their generation to read it.

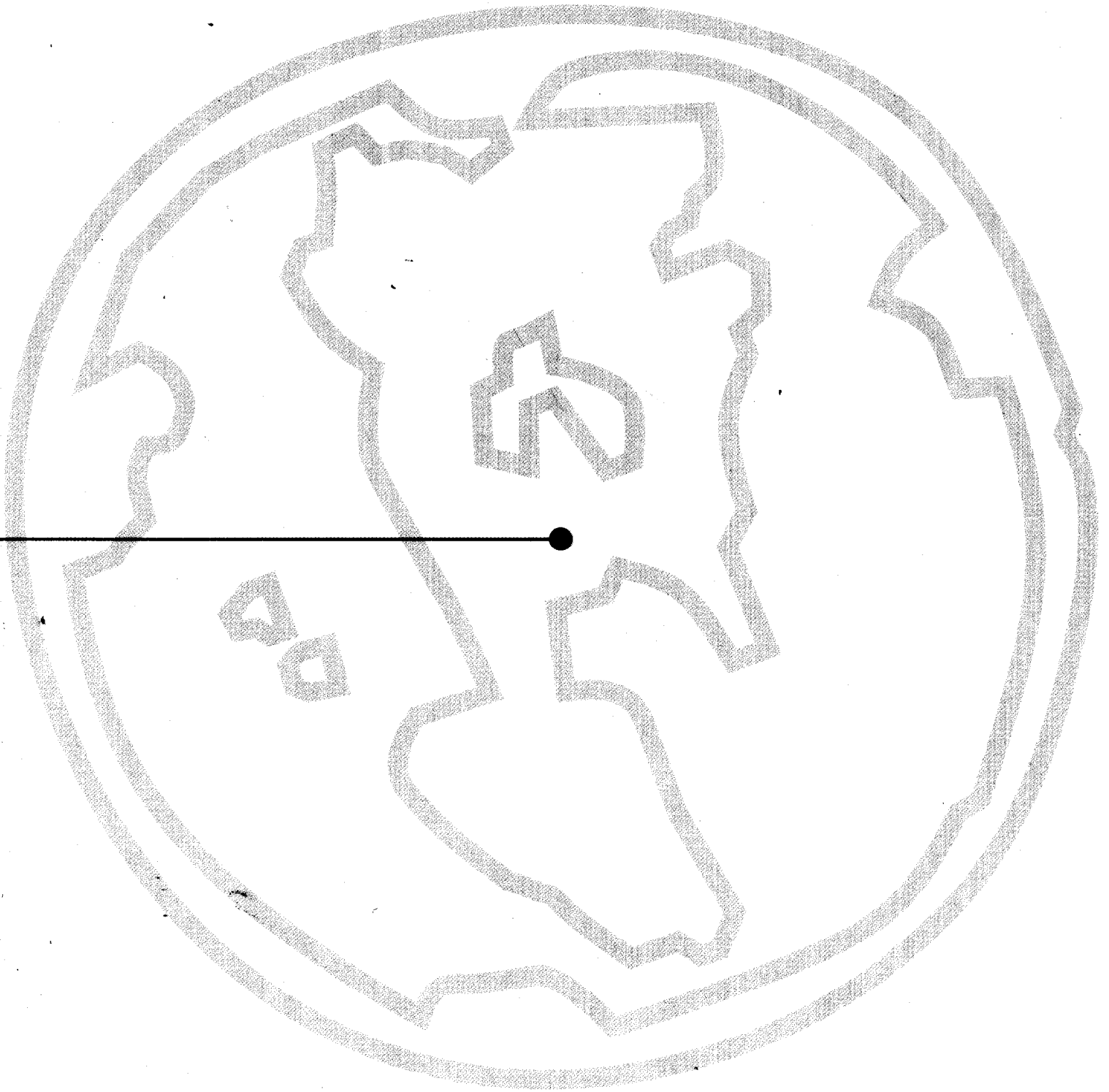
**Communication** being based on the knowledge of languages, we want our governments to pass legislation to enable us to learn languages as early as possible, in and out of school.

**History and current world events** show us that wars, ethnic cleansing and all kinds of discrimination and repression can be avoided if intercultural dialogue is developed, as this promotes better understanding of other cultures and mutual respect, and helps eliminate prejudices and stereotypes.

**We, the young people of the world,** pledge ourselves to value other people's opinions and creeds.

**We expect** municipalities to organize international days to enable people of different cultures in various communities to educate other young people about the way they live.

**We strongly desire** UNESCO's help to create a permanent World Parliament of Children so that young people can interact more and safeguard the culture of all nations, ethnic minorities, and indigenous peoples.





WORLD  
PARLIAMENT  
*of Children*

