
Documentation

The Rhodes Declaration

This declaration on “Dialogue of Civilizations For a Humane Order,” was issued at the World Public Forum “Dialogue of Civilizations” in Rhodes, Greece, on Sept. 3-6, 2003.

The World Public Forum (WPF) has been constituted to bring

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together a broad cross section of public, religious, academic, and political figures for the establishment of a “Dialogue of Civilizations.”

This was the outcome of a series of discussions held this year in Moscow and St. Petersburg (Russian Federation), in New Delhi (India), in Tehran (Iran), in Prague (Czech Republic), Athens (Greece), and Vilnius (Lithuania).

The aim of this dialogue is to discuss and elaborate such forms of the world community’s existence that could reinforce fundamental civilizational values and the inalienable human rights that would be capable of meeting the global threats and challenges.

The participants of the Forum reflected that the present world order, the established system of international relations, and its acting institutions do not provide complete implementation of the pressing human needs in security, in justice, and in qualitative improvement of life. This has led to expansion of enormous areas of human deprivation, to promotion of senseless desire for consumption and acquisition, to persistent attempts through the use of information technologies to bring not only economies, but also cultures, spirituality, moral and ethical norms to a single common denominator.

The participants of the Forum have paid special attention to the irreversible damage to the Institutions of International Peace and Security, due to unjustified use of violence against sovereignty, security, and culture of other nations, which results from the lopsided structure of the world.

To transform this state of affairs into a just, compassionate and humane order would require patience, sacrifice, and sustained action, to approach these problems of vast magnitude.

The satisfaction of the minimum basic needs for all—food, habitat, health, education, work environment, air and water—should be the first priority for all people of all countries, all the time. Yet the material, cultural, and spiritual consequences of the currently imposed paradigm of reckless consumption and its global spread become less and less acceptable because they serve the accumulation of affluence of a few countries and a small group of people while leading the vast part of the mankind to impoverishment and deprivation.

Ways should be found to break the unholy link, which generates internal and external compulsions to consumption, acquisition, and aggregation as the driving force of the New Global World Order. Society should glorify spiritual values and achievements. A cultural and spiritual counteroffensive is [a] need of the time.

Different indigenous cultures evolve into different civilizations. Therefore, the process of induced reduction of diverse cultures, as a part of globalization, into a single civilization model, is detrimental to the process of human evolution. A dialogue of faiths and cultures can freely and

creatively evolve only in the absence of a threat of cultural diversity being absorbed and assimilated into a single global standard.

The present globalization fixed on [the] material sphere and conducted in the interests of a small group of the rich developed countries without any ethical, moral, and value limitations, conducted without consideration for the interests of poor and developing countries, can be detrimental for the future of humanity. The New Global World Order forged by the unipolar power structure is a challenge to the true concept of human dignity and equality, and an affront to the freedom and sovereignty of nations.

So much damage has already been done to the human system, and it is being backed by so much military power, that this state of affairs cannot be transformed instantly. We have first to mediate, seek peaceful, non-violent and orderly solutions, which will fire the imaginations of vast society of people worldwide, to direct a trend towards a humane future for all. But the time scales for change will vary from one nation to another with the possible advantages for those with lesser damage from the present paradigm.

To seek long-term perspective requires a prophetic vision. But understanding of short and medium term objectives of world development would require a search for new cognition models needed to find an adequate response by different civilizations to challenges of the time.

The essence of this response is in defending the human freedom to develop within the frame of their own culture and territory, their own resources and needs. An innovative civilizational project, which embraces all aspects of material, cultural, and spiritual growth, is required.

The search for that humane future must evolve to alteration of the material world, where we live, where our modern civilizations exist. Otherwise humanity will forever continue in a state of rapid drift towards an Armageddon.

The present Forum is just a beginning of a large process that brings people and nations belonging to different civilizations closer to each other.

The participants of the Forum have unanimously decided to continue the serious discussion about the destiny of humanity that started on the island of Rhodes. This discussion should become a substantial factor of the international situation. Practical implementation of the stated goals can be achieved through a series of joint projects especially in cultural, educational, and ecological spheres.

The participants and delegates of the Forum have decided to establish a permanently acting International Coordination Committee (ICC) of the World Public Forum “Dialogue of Civilizations.”

The Rhodes Forum calls public organizations, legislative and executive bodies of governments, academic institutions and research centers, scholars, and thinkers to widely discuss our proposals.