

To International and National Institutions.

To International and National Organisations

## **APPEAL**

### **#SIGNUPFORPEACE**

We represent “Youth for a United World” and are part of the Focolare Movement, which began in 1943 arising out of the experience of Chiara Lubich. We are young people from all over the world who belong to different religions, cultures, beliefs and traditions. We identify with the principle of universal fraternity and are committed to living according to the “Golden Rule” which invites us to do to others what we would like done to us. At international level we work in collaboration with the NGO New Humanity.

We are aware of the current global scene in which many conflicts cause migrations of peoples fleeing from violence, extreme poverty, hunger and social injustices, which they are victims of in their own countries. We are deeply affected by all this suffering and are personally committed to finding practical solutions. Our projects and actions for peace are called “seeds of fraternity” and are part of the overall United World Project ([www.unitedworldproject.org](http://www.unitedworldproject.org)).

Universal fraternity cannot be achieved only through individual good will. We believe direct action by politicians is needed to address the causes of conflicts and the factors that generate inequality.

In the year 2000 the Heads of State and governments of all the member States of the UN signed the “Millennium Declaration” in New York. They affirmed that “The globalized civilization of the third millennium possesses the wealth, knowledge and means to achieve the dream of a humanity freed from extreme poverty and the lack of basic needs.” These goals were meant to be reached by 2015 but have only partially been achieved.

There are many issues still open. Therefore we appeal to governments and political institutions:

1. To reduce public expenditure on arms in order to guarantee a fairer distribution of resources. Currently the amount spent on weapons globally is equal to 1,740 billion dollars (UNODA). We believe that a turnaround on current investments is necessary, so as to give greater support to cooperation between countries and build peace.
2. To work at the root causes of inequality and combat extreme poverty. The financial crisis has further emphasized the gap between rich and poor. More than 35% of the world’s population is still malnourished while 20 cents a day would be enough to save a child from hunger (World Food Programme). Pope Francis’ words are meaningful: “How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of

exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points? ... Today we also have to say “thou shalt not” to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills” (Evangeli Gaudium 53).

3. To review current models of governance. Greater democratic control is needed in the choice of economic and monetary policies. More control is required over financial institutions whose behaviour was one of the main causes of the economic crisis. We need to rediscover a political vision centred on the common good. Money and finance should return to their role as tools and not ends of human behaviour.
4. To act more effectively to combat criminal phenomena like drug dealing, human trafficking and the illegal exploitation of the environment. We appeal especially for renewed commitment to effectively opposing widespread corruption in institutions.
5. To guarantee a level of universal primary education that allows the full development of the person and their capacity for self-determination. According to recent data from UNESCO (2014), one child in ten still has no access to a school and 759 million adults are not able to read and write.

Rome 24<sup>th</sup> September 2015

### **Youth for a United World**

We invite religious leaders, key figures in culture, the arts and sport, and all persons of good will to support this appeal, thus putting into practice what Gandhi said: “Be the change you want to see in the world”.