

## THE ISTANBUL DECLARATION

### An Interfaith Perspective on Globalisation for the Common Good: The Sixth Annual International Conference

#### “A Non-Violent Path to Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding” Istanbul 2007 • Fatih University

“All roads lead to Istanbul.” Meeting place of two continents and capital of two empires [the Byzantine and the Ottoman], Istanbul has been a crossroads of cultures for nearly 1800 years. The city offers a powerful metaphor for understanding and reconciliation between East and West. We gather here on the beautiful campus of Fatih University, grateful for their warm hospitality and support. We come together from many countries, six faiths, and countless areas of expertise to continue our exploration of pathways to Globalisation for the Common Good. In Turkey we experience the vital bio-diversity of the Earth and the rich cultural diversity of humankind. Our time here has been richly inspiring and profoundly motivating. It has yielded a very fruitful dialogue.

In this sixth international conference we affirm our shared commitment to non-violent conflict resolution and the building of cultures of peace around the world. The urgency of the challenge is particularly apparent in a region of the world that is so tragically afflicted by violence. The time has come for concrete new democratic and non-violent strategies that reflect global, regional, and local cultural and spiritual realities.

We recognize the deep-seated human desire for harmony in diversity, the source of our strength. We strongly acknowledge the interdependence of peace with justice and ecological sustainability. We recognize the urgent need for dialogue not only among the religions but also between religion and the sciences and between the religious and secular spheres. The strong engagement of these dimensions of human endeavor is vital if we are to address the critical issues that arise in the wake of globalisation.

We believe that education is the key that unlocks the door to globalisation for the common good. We call in particular for approaches to education that nurture interreligious and intercultural understanding, awareness of interdependence, moral values, and global citizenship. These essential elements shape personal decisions of social consequence, concern for the well being of others, and respect for other human beings and for the whole of the planetary community.

The movement from the myth of *redemptive violence* to the new story of *restorative justice* has informed our inquiry and inspired our deliberations. We urge the recognition of the spiritual dimension of the global dilemma in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century and of the spiritual component that must be present in the solutions we attempt.

We believe that enduring change emerges through the cooperative activity of men and women. Visionary activists must therefore work towards the evolutionary social transformation of fundamental values, especially those bearing on the empowerment of women.

**We strongly acknowledge the vital importance of the following critical challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.** Each is a source of violence. But as we address each urgent issue, we open up a wellspring of peace. The path to that end leads through respectful encounter with the other, open dialogue, and cooperative common action to address the problems that face us all in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

- Global poverty, hunger, disease, and unmet human life needs

- International militarization and obscene levels of military spending
- Unsustainable economic, political, cultural, and ecological structures of power
- Social and economic injustice and the systematic violation of universal human rights
- Worldwide gender inequity in the social, economic, political, legal, and religious spheres
- Coercive violence against women and children, including the horror of children forced into combat
- Rampant ecological degradation and disregard for the sacredness of all life
- Intercultural and interreligious ignorance, mistrust, fear, and hatred

We must strengthen the influence of the majority of humans that wish to live in peace. We strongly endorse efforts to combine our collective intelligence to build globalization from the bottom-up: creating a global consensus of commitment to the common good. In this way, we declare our global sovereignty and claim our global citizenship for the first time.

We urge the development of consensus for a common global action plan, beginning with a multi-stakeholder consultation process, and culminating in a common vision for ending poverty, reversing climate change, financing sustainable development and creating structural reforms in global trade, finance, and energy policy.

**As committed participants in the Globalisation for the Common Good Initiative [GCGI] we commit our individual and group support to the following:**

- To create a network of organizations whose aims resonate with those of GCGI. This Internet-based network will facilitate the sharing of ideas, information, and courses of constructive action.
- To develop and maintain – on the GCGI web site and in the *Journal of Globalization for the Common Good* – a dynamic list of “what’s working”: initiatives, projects, and civil society organizations that are making a significant contribution to the common good.
- To explore ways to encourage young persons from around the world to become actively engaged with Globalisation for the Common Good. This will include participation in future conferences, international exchange programs, interreligious and intercultural study and dialogue, and other initiatives.

Globalization for the Common Good has come a long way over the past six years. Six successful conferences and an increasingly influential journal and web site mark our progress. We have cultivated a diverse group of scholars, leaders of civil society, religious and spiritual leaders, and global activists for intense explorations of a value-centered vision of globalisation and the common good. We invite all others who share our vision to join us on the path to a better global future.

Globalisation for the Common Good, at Fatih University, Istanbul

8 July 2007

[www.globalisationforthecommongood.info](http://www.globalisationforthecommongood.info)