



The Global Call to Action

TEN YEARS → ONE BILLION ACTS OF PEACE



On September 16, 2006, at the 10th anniversary of the PeaceJam Foundation, the largest gathering of Nobel Peace Laureates in the history of the United States announced their Global Call to Action to the youth of the world. For one year prior, 10 Nobel Peace Laureates – the Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu, Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Oscar Arias, Máiread Corrigan Maguire, Jody Williams, Shirin Ebadi, José Ramos Horta, Adolfo Pérez Esquivel and Betty Williams – had discussed the issues they felt needed immediate action to create true world peace. This is what they said:

Today we ask the young leaders of PeaceJam, and the youth of the entire world, to join us in a Global Call to Action. For the next ten years, we invite them to work side by side with us as we address ten fundamental issues. These ten core problems are at the root of much of the suffering in our world, and we believe that young people can mobilize to make a difference in these ten key areas. Over the coming decade, we will continue to lead this effort. It is our hope that by launching this global campaign, we can inspire people of all ages, worldwide, to work for change. We hope to inspire over a billion acts of service and peace.

The Issue Areas of the Global Call to Action

(in no specific order):

Breaking the Cycle of Violence

One of the first things that we must do is to dismantle our own armed consciousness because we are children of a culture of violence, and our minds have been armed. Peace is the grand revolution that humanity has been waiting for. What is required is a profound understanding of the new realities created by our increasingly interconnected and interdependent world.

Controlling the Proliferation of Weapons

It is incomprehensible that the world still wastes nearly a trillion dollars each year on the weapons of war. We must change our values and our priorities as we enter the 21st century. We must end the ever-increasing spiral of expenditures on arms, both nuclear and conventional, which only serves to increase the likelihood of violent conflict.

Eliminating Extreme Poverty

Our world cannot be secure when so many billions of people are forced to exist on less than \$1 per day, without access to even the most basic levels of shelter, sustenance, or education. Extreme poverty can be eliminated in our lifetimes, and this must remain a fundamental goal.

Ending Racism and Hate

Racism and the growing divide between rich and poor are endemic, and it is a problem that affects all of us. There are two societies in most countries – one which is a reflection of the media image of prosperity, and one that is hidden and full of suffering. This is creating a

tremendous time bomb, ready to go off at any moment, and making it easier for demagogues to fuel hate and to rule by fear.

Equal Access to Water and Other Natural Resources

The lack of access to clean water and arable land is an increasing problem for many people around the world – and the struggle over these limited resources provides fuel for war and conflict, especially in those parts of the world where the population is exploding. We must work to ensure access to at least the most basic of natural resources, such as safe drinking water, for all.

Halting the Spread of Global Disease

One of the effects of globalization is the spread of disease, and the potential for devastating new diseases to ravage humanity. National boundaries no longer mean what they once did. The rapid movement of people and goods means that many “third world” diseases are now threatening the developed world, and have now become the problem of everyone. We must address these diseases together, as one human family.

Investing in Human Security

In order to create increased security in this new world in which we live, we must focus on the issue of human security. When we ensure that basic human needs are met, we are creating a more secure world. When we work for social justice, or to stop global warming, or to provide decent education, or to end racism, we are creating a more secure world. The time has come to shift our energy and our resources from military security to a long-term investment in true human security.

Restoring the Earth's Environment

The earth is our mother, and it is wounded. It is out of balance and needs to be healed. Global warming is a reality, and only by a concentrated effort involving individual citizens, civil society, and our government leaders can we address the many causes for the precarious situation we have created for ourselves here on earth.

Rights for Women and Children, and Their Role as Leaders

It is essential to bring an end to the exploitation of children, and to defend the basic human rights of women around the world. This includes the right to a decent education. The role of women and youth as leaders in local communities, in developing creative solutions to problems, must be fostered and encouraged.

Social Justice and Human Rights for All

The lack of basic human rights and civil liberties, and the persistence of social injustice over long periods of time with no hope or plan for progress or change, always creates a backlash. To try to impose a military solution without addressing the fundamental issues at the core of a society will only feed the growth of paramilitary groups, violence, and lack of security in that society.