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In closing, ARTICLE 19 notes that in the undertaking given by the Sri Lankan government at the 49th UNCHR session, the following statement was included: "The government will continue to pursue its policy of openness and cooperation with regard to further measures for the promotion and protection of human rights. Collaboration with the United Nations, national institutions and interested governments will continue to be an integral part of this policy."

ARTICLE 19 calls on the government of Sri Lanka to practice this same policy of openness and cooperation in its dealings with non-governmental organizations both within Sri Lanka and externally based. ARTICLE 19 also calls on the government of Sri Lanka vigorously to pursue a policy of openness with the people of Sri Lanka themselves by ensuring the effective and full enjoyment of the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

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## Documents - Human Rights

# VIENNA DECLARATION AND PROGRAMME OF ACTION ADOPTED ON JUNE 23, 1993

## World Conference (WC) on Human Rights

Considering that the promotion and protection of human rights is a matter of priority for the international community, and that the WC affords a unique opportunity to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the international human rights system and the machinery for the protection of human rights, in order to enhance and thus promote a fuller observance of those rights, in a just and balanced manner.

Recognizing and affirming that all human rights derive from the dignity and worth inherent in the human person, and that the human person is the central subject of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and consequently should be the principal beneficiary and should participate actively in the realization of these rights and freedoms.

Reaffirming their commitment to the purposes and principles contained in the Charter of the UN and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Reaffirming the commitment contained in Article 56 of the UN Charter to take joint and separate action, placing proper emphasis on developing effective international cooperation for the realization of the purposes set out in Article 55, including universal respect for, and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.

Emphasizing the responsibilities of all States, in conformity with the UN Charter, to develop and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.

Recalling the Preamble to the UN Charter, in particular the determination to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, and in the equal rights of men and women and nations large and small.

Recalling also the determination expressed in the Preamble of the UN Charter to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to establish conditions under which justice and respect for obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, to practice tolerance and good neighbourliness, and to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples.

Emphasizing that the Universal Declaration, which constitutes a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, is the source of inspiration and has been the basis for the UN in making advances in standard setting as contained in the existing international human rights instruments, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Considering the major changes taking place on the international scene and the aspiration of all the people for an international order based on the principles enshrined in the UN Charter, including

promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all and respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, peace, democracy, justice, equality, rule of law, pluralism, development, better standards of living and solidarity.

Deeply concerned by various forms of discrimination and violence, to which women continue to be exposed all over the world.

Recognizing that the activities of the UN in the field of human rights should be rationalized and enhanced in order to strengthen the UN machinery in this field and to further the objectives of universal respect for observance of international human rights standards.

Having taken into account the Declarations adopted by the three regional meetings at Tunis, San Jose and Bangkok and the contributions made by Governments, and bearing in mind the suggestions made by inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as the studies prepared by independent experts during the preparatory process leading to the WC.

Welcoming the International Year of the World's Indigenous People 1993 as a reaffirmation of the commitment of the international community to ensure their enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and to respect the value and diversity of their cultures and identities.

Recognizing also that the international community should devise ways and means to remove the current obstacles and meet challenges to the full realization of all human rights and to prevent the continuation of human rights violations resulting thereof throughout the world.

Invoking the spirit of our age and the realities of our time which call upon the peoples of the world and all States Members of the UN to rededicate themselves to the global task of promoting and protecting all human rights and fundamental freedoms so as to secure full universal enjoyment of these rights.

Determined to take new steps forward in the commitment of the international community with a view to achieving substantial progress in human rights endeavours by an increased and sustained effort of international cooperation and solidarity.

Solemnly adopts the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

## Follow-up to the World Conference

The WC recommends that the General Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights and other organs and agencies of the UN system related to human rights consider ways and means for the full implementation, without delay, of the recommendations contained in the present Declaration, including the possibility of proclaiming a UN decade for human rights. The WC further recommends that the Commission on Human Rights annually review the progress towards this end.

The WC requests the Secretary-General to invite, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration all States, and UN organs and agencies related to human rights, to report to him on the progress made in the implementation of the present Declaration and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its 53rd session, through the Commission on Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council Likewise, regional and, as appropriate, national human right institutions, as well as NGOs, may present their views to the Secretary-General on the progress made on the present Declaration. Special attention should be paid to assessing the progress towards the goal of universal ratification of international human rights treaties and protocols adopted within the framework of the United Nations system.

Courtesy: *Tribune des Droit Humains*, November 1993.

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