

**ADVOCACY FORUM FOR THE DECLARATION OF PEACE AND CESSATION OF WAR****2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Commemoration of the World Alliance of Religions for Peace Summit**

Seoul, South Korea, 17 September 2016

*Speech by the President of the International Progress Organization**Prof. Dr. Hans Köchler (Vienna, Austria)**Laureate of the Gusi Peace Prize 2014; Honorary Medal, International Peace Bureau (Geneva)***Check against delivery! © I.P.O., 2016. Do not quote without permission!**

As an NGO in consultative status with the United Nations, the International Progress Organization, since its foundation in 1972, has been working with international civil society to demand a basic reform of our global system along the lines of *democracy* and *non-violence*. It has been one of our central concerns to raise popular awareness for what the ban on the international use of force, enshrined in the UN Charter (Article 2[4]), implies in terms of a fundamental *restructuring* of the system of relations between states: namely, acceptance of each other as equal partners, credible steps towards disarmament, and in particular the abolishing of arms of mass destruction. One of the reasons why the principle of the illegality of war, written into international law since the Briand-Kellogg Pact of 1928, has not been implemented so far lies in the fact that international rules, to a large extent, are still based on power and privilege. This is evident, among others, in the special role enjoyed by certain member states in the UN Charter (due to the provisions of Article 27[3]), which means that the international use of force by those states cannot be effectively curtailed – a fact that has undermined the international rule of law and has been profoundly demoralizing for the international community ever since the foundation of the world organization after World War II.

In the face of these harsh realities of power politics, the 2014 *Declaration of Peace and Cessation of War* gains its importance through a *comprehensive* methodology that is focused on implementation, including inter-cultural and inter-religious peace at the global level – aspects that have largely been overlooked in the era when the United Nations Charter was drafted. An *integrated* approach is urgently needed to make the ban on the international use of force a reality. The peoples' desire for peace can only be credibly met if the existing provisions on the illegality of war are complemented by, and seen in the context of, the rules of international humanitarian and international criminal law. Enforcement of the ban requires an *end to impunity* for those who wage aggressive war, irrespective of official capacity! To make this possible, prosecution of the crime of aggression must not remain under the de facto

control of the Security Council. Ending impunity will require amendments not only to the UN Charter (as far as state responsibility is concerned), but also of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (as regards individual responsibility). Of equal importance will be *credible* steps, not merely lip service, towards the implementation of previous agreements and declarations on the abolishing of arms of mass destruction, and in particular nuclear arms, which is the ultimate goal of the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Arms (NPT). The principle of the non-use of force between states can only be meaningfully advocated if the arms that threaten the very survival of mankind are also abandoned.

All of this can only be achieved if the cult of violence, indeed the exploitation of violence in the entertainment industry of our modern industrial society, is ended and a *culture of peace*, as envisaged in Article 10 of the *Declaration of Peace and Cessation of War*, is taking roots among the global community, citizens, peoples and states alike. On behalf of the International Progress Organization, I wish the World Alliance of Religions for Peace and the growing worldwide movement it represents further success in the accomplishment of its noble goal.

\*\*\*