

The Human Rights Centre of the University of Essex, in conjunction with The Tandem Project, and sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts, has completed a world survey of freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief. This study has looked at how far international human rights standards on freedom of religion or belief are interpreted and implemented in representative countries from all regions of the world. This conference, a contribution to the 1995 United Nations Year for Tolerance, will both report on the work of the World Report, and seek to draw conclusions and recommendations for inclusion in the study, to be published in 1996.

Purpose

At this conference, we intend to consult organizations at all levels, from local initiatives to inter-governmental programmes. The challenge faced by these individuals, groups, governments and international organizations is to eliminate the sources of intolerance based on religion or belief, and to create social and political conditions in which diversity can flourish.

Drawing on the 60 country studies which will be completed for the World Report, this meeting will look both backwards to the work that has been done, and forwards to the work that remains to be done as the millennium approaches. It will consider problems of intolerance based on religion or belief alongside other problems that challenge democratic life. And it will seek to provide a forum not only for well-publicized initiatives, but also for the quiet voices of those whose everyday work shows by examples and by teaching that recognition of the 'other' may be a cause for celebration, rather than conflict.

International human rights standards seek to protect the human being's unique capacity to believe. The World Report has looked at key indicators of how far these standards are met, and in doing so has revealed the current status of religion or belief around the world, and shown the potential for future conflict. The challenge now is to build respect and to secure space for the fundamental human right to freedom of conscience, religion or belief, and to convince individuals and governments that respect for diversity of belief does not and should not end with this Year for Tolerance.

Day One-Monday

OPENING PROGRAMME

4:00 Registration

5:00

Opening Address Marking 50th Anniversary of the United Nations
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
United Kingdom

5:30

Tolerance, Peace and the United Nations Charter
The Honorable Jose Ayala Lasso
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

6:30

Reception

Day Two-Tuesday

**FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF
CURRENT STATUS AND FUTURE
CHALLENGES**

Plenary Addresses

9:00

**Introductory Issues:
Freedom of
Religion and Belief-A World Report**
Professor Kevin Boyle, Director
University of Essex Human Rights Centre

9:30

Implementing the 1981 United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief
The Honorable Abdelfatteh Amor
United Nations Special Rapporteur

10:00 Refreshments

10:30

**Country and Regional Reports--
Monitoring the Freedom**

Concurrent discussion groups with World Report examples from:

**Africa; Americas;
Asia/Pacific; Europe;
Middle East**

12:30 Lunch

2:00

**Global Issues--
Indicators of Intolerance**

Plenary addresses

**Indivisability of Tolerance
Human Rights and Peace**
David Little, Senior Fellow
United States Institute of Peace
USA

**Revealing Tolerance: Peace in
Judaism, Christianity and Islam**
Karen Armstrong, Author
United Kingdom

2:45 Questions from the audience

3:00 Refreshments

3:30

**Global Issues--
Indicators of Intolerance**

Concurrent discussion groups

Women; New Religious Movements; Minorities and Religion; Education, Children and the State; Conflict; Secularism; Religion and Human Rights

5:00 Close day two

Day Three-Wednesday

**THE UN YEAR FOR TOLERANCE
PRESENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS
AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

9:00

Introduction

Michael Cassidy, Head
Policy and Resources Committee
Corporation of London

Beyond the 1995 Year for Tolerance
United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization

9:45 Questions from the audience

10:00

**Working for Tolerance--
The Global Challenge**

Plenary Panel Reports on Programs from
Intergovernment Organizations (IGOs)

**UNESCO; Council of Europe; Organization of
American States; Organization of African States;
Asian Organization ; Middle Eastern
Organization**

10:30 Questions from the audience

11:00 Refreshments

11:30

**Working for Tolerance--
The Global Challenge**

Plenary Panel Reports from Nongovernmental
Organizations (NGOs) and the Media

**Inter-Faith Network; Ministry of Religion;
Amnesty National Section; BBC World Service
NY Committee on Freedom of Religion or Belief
Humanist & Ethical Union**

12:30 Lunch

2:00

**Local Initiatives--
Indicators of Tolerance**

Concurrent speakers on local projects
to eliminate intolerance
(projects to be named)

**Africa; Americas;
Asia/Pacific; Europe;
Middle East**

3:00 Refreshments

3:30

**Religion or Belief--
Beyond the Year for Tolerance**

Plenary addresses

**Strengthening Legal Standards: The
Need for a Convention?**
(speaker to be named)

**The Educational Challenge: A Universal
Curriculum on Religion or Belief**
(speaker to be named)

4:15 Questions from the audience

4:45

**A Call to Action
Conference Report and Recommendations**
Bertie Ramcharan
Commissioner,
International Commission of Jurists

5:30 Conference adjourns

Speakers identified in this program are confirmed.
Concurrent speakers and discussion group leaders
are in the process of being named. All speakers will
be identified by July.

The Human Rights Centre,
University of Essex
Wivenhoe Park, England
and
The Tandem Project
Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

**FREEDOM OF RELIGION
AND BELIEF
and
THE YEAR FOR TOLERANCE**

a conference

**Marking the 50th Anniversary
of the United Nations**

The Barbican Centre
London, England
18-20 September, 1995

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