



To International and National Institutions

To International and National Organizations

To Religious Leaders

To Personalities of Culture, Arts and Sports

To People of Good Will

APPEAL

#SignUpForPeace

We represent “Youth for a United World” and we belong to the Focolare Movement, born in 1943 from the experience of Chiara Lubich. We are young people from all over the world, of different religions, cultures, beliefs and traditions; we identify with the principle of universal fraternity and we commit ourselves to live according to the Golden Rule which invites us to do to others what we would like done to us. We operate at an international level in collaboration with the NGO “New Humanity”.

We are aware of the many conflicts throughout the world that cause people to migrate, fleeing from violence, extreme poverty, hunger and social injustice. These deep wounds directly involve us and have led us to seek our own practical solutions through "Fragments of Fraternity" (concrete actions for peace) gathered in the “United World Project”.

To accomplish universal fraternity, personal good will is not enough: in fact, we are convinced that political action is needed to address the root causes of inequality and conflict.

In the year 2000 the Heads of State and government of all the member States of the UN signed the “Millennium Declaration” in New York. In it they affirmed that “The globalized civilization of the third millennium possesses the wealth, knowledge and means to achieve the dream of a humanity freed from poverty and the lack of basic needs.” These goals were meant to be reached by 2015 but they have only been partially achieved.

There are many issues still open. Therefore we appeal to:

- 1. To reduce public expenditure on arms and make more resources available for development.** Currently the amount spent on weapons at a global level is equal to 1,740 billion dollars. One consequence of this is that by the end of 2014, 59.5 million people were displaced, having been forced to leave their homes (UNHCR). Of the 218 thousand refugees crossing the Mediterranean,

more than three thousand lost their lives. We believe that instead of arms, investment is needed to promote greater cooperation between countries in order to build peace.

2. **To combat extreme poverty by new efforts to reduce inequality (MDG 1).** The financial crisis has further emphasized the gap between rich and poor. More than 35% of the world's population suffers from malnutrition while 20 cents a day would be enough to save a child from hunger (World Food Programme). In this sense Pope Francis' words are meaningful: *"How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points? ... We also have to say 'thou shalt not' to an economy based on exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills"* (Evangelii Gaudium 53).
3. **To revise current methods of governance: greater democratic control of economic and monetary policies** is needed and more control over financial institutions whose behavior was one of the main causes of the economic crisis. We need to rediscover a political vision centered on the common good, to enable money and finance to become instruments and not goals of human behavior.
4. **To adopt new models of law enforcement, in order to tackle organized crime** in drug dealing, human trafficking and the illegal exploitation of the environment. We appeal especially for renewed commitment in effectively opposing corruption in institutions.
5. **To continue efforts to provide universal primary education (MDG 2)** in order to allow the full development of human persons and their capacity for self-determination. According to recent data from UNESCO (2014), one child in ten still has no access to a school and 759 million adults are not able to read and write.

We invite you to sign this appeal, to live and to put into practice together "Be the change you wish to see in the world" (Gandhi).

Rome, 25 September 2015

The Youth for a United World