

# The Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Initiative for the Advancement of Human Civilization

**1.** We offer our tribute to the memory of Rajiv Gandhi, India's young and charismatic leader, whose tragic death in May 1991 prematurely removed from the world scene a statesman of great vision and energy, deeply committed to the ideals of human brotherhood, peace and international cooperation for the progress and well-being of all humanity. Rajiv Gandhi regarded humankind as one indivisible family and worked ceaselessly towards the universal acceptance of this high ideal. Durable peace, he believed, can come only from the advance of human civilization to a new, more just and equitable world order. In his short political career, lasting no more than a decade, as a worker in and then leader of the Indian National Congress, as India's Prime Minister and, finally, as a responsible leader of the opposition, Rajiv Gandhi left an indelible impression on the world stage as a statesman devoted to the goal of lifting humanity to a higher state of civilization in which the quest for dominance is abandoned so as to render the world free of violence, oppression and war.

**2.** The long and tortuous history of humanity is replete with conflict and war, along with great achievements of the human spirit in the fields of culture,

science and technology. In the global village that has now emerged, the threat of nuclear annihilation needs to be permanently eliminated, so that the creative energies of humanity can be directed towards building a harmonious and just global society on planet Earth.

**3.** We meet against the backdrop of a new international paradigm. The end of the Cold War has paradoxically brought with it new crises and conflicts across the globe. The problems of proliferation of nuclear and conventional weapons have assumed new dimensions. Divisions rooted in ethnicity, religion and economic disparities threaten to rend societies asunder. Welcome demands for greater democracy and human rights worldwide create their own challenges. The economic hiatus between North and South continues to widen. Ecological disaster hangs like a sword of Damocles over planet Earth. These are the threats to human civilization that brought us together from all corners of the world to contemplate.

**4.** Peace must begin in the human mind. For the human family to have the assurance of survival, with honor and dignity for all, a new ethic of international relations is needed. Non-violence must become the governing principle for relations between citizens and nations. A secure future for humankind must be predicated on

acknowledgement of the concept of a common humanity in all its diversity, and the application of universal and non-discriminatory norms in human interaction and in dealing with human problems, wherever they might occur.

**5.** The starting point of such a transformation must lie in agreement, by 1995, on a balanced program of nuclear arms reduction so that they are eliminated as early as possible and, in any case, not later than the year 2010. Simultaneous with the process of the total elimination of all nuclear weapons, the threshold powers and other non-nuclear weapon powers should undertake to not themselves cross the threshold. Such a process would not only help achieve the twin objectives of the elimination and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in a fair, reasonable and balanced manner. It would also facilitate the world's return to the true spirit of the United Nations Charter. Indeed, the arrangements for comprehensive global security envisaged in the Charter would be indispensable to ensuring that once a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world order is established, there is no slipping back into national nuclear-weapon arsenals.

**6.** In today's world of unprecedented technological advances in weaponry of mass destruction, the quest for dominance carries the threat of

strategic miscalculation, human error or even a technical lapse ending all life on our planet Earth, destroying all that human civilization has so far achieved. Clearly, nuclear weapons pose the greatest threat to human civilization and to humankind's survival. Their elimination is, therefore, the first prerequisite for the advancement of human civilization. It is this approach that inspires the Action Plan for a Nuclear-Weapons-Free and Non-Violent World Order submitted by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to the United Nations' Third Special Session on Disarmament in New York on June 9, 1988.

**7.** We commend the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan, updated to take into account momentous developments since it was presented, to the consideration of the international community as the best possible path to sustained peace and sustainable development. We urge the immediate commencement of negotiations on universal treaties and conventions for:

- A total ban on all nuclear tests.
- Banning the threat or use of nuclear weapons, with corresponding confidence-building measures, including the deactivation of all missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads, and a complete inventory and control of nuclear-weapon-grade materials, nuclear warheads and bombs, and their delivery vehicles.
- The cessation of any further production of nuclear weapons and weapon-grade fissionable materials, including the closure or conversion of nuclear weapon production facilities and test sites.
- The cessation of the transfer to other states of nuclear weapons, delivery systems, and weapon-grade fissionable materials.
- Placing under the control of an international authority all existing stocks of weapons-usable nuclear material.
- A moratorium on the testing and deployment of all space weapons

systems, leading to an international agreement to ban the testing, development, deployment and storage of all space weapons.

- Restriction of the development of ballistic missiles and re-entry vehicles to those intended for peaceful purposes.
  - Control and management of new military technologies by bringing all new technology projects and technology missions with military potential under the purview of the United Nations system, leading to an agreement to ban technological missions aimed at the development of new weapons systems.
  - Establishment of an integrated multilateral verification system, with effective sanctions, for monitoring the implementation of conventions and treaties under the aegis of the United Nations.
  - An immediate declaration reaffirming the illegitimacy of any threat or use of nuclear weapons.
  - The immediate commencement of a negotiating process aimed at the elimination of all nuclear weapons by international treaty as early as possible and, in any case, not later than the year 2010, based on a comprehensive verification system that precludes the production of any nuclear weapons.
  - In exchange, an undertaking by non-nuclear weapon powers not to acquire or take steps towards acquiring nuclear weapons.
  - Reduction of all conventional forces to minimum defensive levels as early as possible and, in any case, not later than the year 2010.
  - Establishment of a comprehensive global security system, backed by a permanent military force under strict UN control, to sustain a world without nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.
- 8.** While nuclear disarmament is the core of the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan, the end of the Cold War and the emerging transformation and

transition have made urgent attention to conventional disarmament an imperative. This calls for universal agreement particularly among armament-trading nations on the control and limitation of the flow of armaments to warring nations, support of internal armed conflict, terrorist groups, and international criminal groups involved in narco-trafficking. In addition to these global initiatives we favor renewed attempts to negotiate reduced tensions, and thereby decelerate the arms race, in various volatile regions of the world.

**9.** We congratulate presidents Clinton and Yeltsin for their agreement, reached at their Vancouver summit, to enter negotiations for a multilateral nuclear test ban and appeal to them, in the name of humanity, to maintain their moratorium on nuclear testing as an important aid in achieving a comprehensive ban to shut off all nuclear testing by all countries in all environments for all time. Reducing testing even to low threshold levels will not suffice in preventing the development of smaller, even more sophisticated nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons development must be terminated completely forever. Bearing in mind the forthcoming review of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), we state emphatically that any prohibition on testing must be a comprehensive nuclear test ban, as this is essential for the non-proliferation and elimination of nuclear weapons. A comprehensive test ban would reduce the discriminatory nature of the NPT and such discrimination will only be fully overcome when the existing nuclear-weapon states renounce reliance on nuclear weaponry and move expeditiously to accomplish its elimination.

**10.** Rajiv Gandhi had repeatedly drawn the world's attention to three other major impediments to humanity's well-being and progress—dehumanizing poverty in large parts

of the world, environmental degradation, and the relative absence of democratic values within nations and in relations between nations. These problems are among the root causes of much instability and global insecurity. The world community as a whole must address them in a cooperative family spirit.

**11.** The United Nations Organization provides an excellent forum for the preparation and implementation of a carefully planned program of collective international action to eradicate poverty in the large number of developing countries. A duly accelerated process of nuclear and general disarmament should release adequate funds for such collective action. A substantive attack on poverty and creating conditions for reducing growing global disparities should be urgently undertaken and implemented. Absolute poverty should be eliminated by 2000. A new era of international economic cooperation should be promoted, having regard to the growing globalization of the world economy and its impact in the fields of trade, finance and technology, and the need for increased flows of financial resources, so as to effectively support sustainable development as envisaged by the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. We are particularly concerned that efforts be made to protect the weakest and most vulnerable states from the impact of global market forces, especially in relation to such matters as external debt, restraints on trade, and the accountability of transnational corporations and banks.

**12.** With regard to safeguarding the earth's integrated environment, we urge all national governments to lend their support to Rajiv Gandhi's proposal, made at the 1989 Summit of the Nonaligned Countries, for the establishment of a Planet Protection Fund to be used for the transfer, free of charge, of conservation-compatible technologies to all Fund members. International cooperation is

indispensable for sustainable and equitable development.

**13.** We urge the promotion of humanitarian values and democratic practices all over the world, and the elaboration and strengthening of a universal normative framework, so that human beings everywhere might live and work in full enjoyment of their fundamental freedoms and human rights. That will broaden the dialogue between peoples of different races and regions of the world and bring them closer together in cooperation for humankind's advance. The promotion of and respect for human rights is essential for the promotion of international peace and security. Human rights should be a central concern of the United Nations. We strongly condemn ethnic cleansing, systematic rape, and other genocidal acts, as well as racially- and religion-inspired oppression of minorities, and all other forms of collective punishment, as incompatible with the non-violent world order we aspire to establish.

**14.** For the rule of law, justice and the spirit of friendship to prevail in international relations, the democratization of the international system, based on due respect for the sovereignty of states, is necessary. As a first step in this direction, we urge a substantial enlargement of the Security Council to reflect the fundamental changes that have taken place since the Organization's inception. A suitably enlarged Security Council should play its proper role in hastening the elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and in monitoring progress of the process.

**15.** There is also a clear need for an enlargement of the UN General Assembly's role in global security matters—especially in conflict-prevention and conflict-resolution, including the socio-economic causes of conflicts within nations. A strengthened collective security

system requires major advances in international law, including acceptance by all states of the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, and the establishment of a permanent international criminal court.

**16.** We wish to thank the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation for convening this Conference to launch the Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Initiative for the Advancement of Human Civilization. The spirit underlying the Foundation's Initiative and its objective of helping humanity advance to a higher state of civilization, marked by the absence of violence and war, are in line with India's great and ancient cultural tradition.

**17.** We request the Foundation to constitute a group under its aegis to further develop the proposals outlined in this declaration. The group will also help the Foundation in promoting and propagating this Initiative globally through appropriate networking arrangements with like-minded Non-Governmental Organizations. We assure the Foundation of our active cooperation in these tasks.

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