

**7th General Assembly of International Association of Peace Messenger Cities,
Arnhem, Netherlands, September 8 - 10, 1994**

"For A Just and Safe World"

THE ARNHEM APPEAL

We, the 23 peace cities from throughout the world, together with representatives of non-governmental organizations, assembled in Arnhem in the Netherlands on 8th and 9th September 1994, subscribe to this ARNHEM APPEAL. In so doing, we assume the obligation to integrate into our policies the 8 recommendations set out below and furthermore to act in the spirit of this ARNHEM APPEAL. With this APPEAL we also call upon local authorities and non-governmental organizations throughout the world to unite behind the conclusions of our discussions on the role and mission of local authorities, in the broad context of just and sustainable development of the world. As a result of our experiences, we are convinced that it is precisely at the grass-roots level of municipalities and local communities that contributions can be made to promote and maintain a dignified and humane society in a healthy and sustainable environment. We consider it our task to pursue this goal in our own communities. We undertake to encourage our citizens to do the same and to support citizens, who are already actively pursuing this goal. We undertake to test our policies and actions constantly against the principles of justice, solidarity and sustainability.

The world does not end at the boundary of our city or village. In our local communities we experience the consequences of tensions, inequality, backwardness and poverty in large parts of the world. Constantly increasing mobility and variation in means of communication bring us into close contact with other cultures, religions and ways of life. Worlds which, not so long ago, seemed far away have settled in our own city or village, in our own lives. Many view this development as an enrichment of their existence; others see it as a threat. Local authorities have increasingly been obligated to take into account international aspects of local policy. We, assembled in Arnhem, have agreed to pay full attention to these aspects in the exercise of our powers.

Taking this into consideration we have agreed to integrate the following 8 points into our policies. We call upon all local authorities and representatives of NGOs throughout the world to follow our example. Acting alone, we shall achieve little, but many local authorities acting in concert form a powerful force for peace, justice and the preservation of the planet.

1

In the interests of the quality and effectiveness of international local authority co-operation it is necessary that we collaborate with citizens and civic organizations. Local authorities should generate support for their policies among the population by helping to establish forms of co-operation and providing them with facilities. It is essential to strengthen the grass-roots level to reinforce the legitimacy of local authority action in the field of international solidarity. We are convinced that increasing awareness among the population also enhances the quality of the local community

2

The offer, on a project basis, of local authority expertise to local authorities in the developing world and Central and Eastern Europe, the South and East is an important form of co-operation. The needs of the partners to whom this support is directed must be of prime importance. In addition to sharing expertise, methods, and technical development however, attention should also be paid to the negative aspects of economic growth in the industrialised world. Existing sources of subsidy should be fully exploited. Obstacles to the participation of interested employees of the local authority's own organization in the transfer of knowledge should be removed as far as possible.

3

The efforts to achieve sustainable development will affect municipal policy in many local fields. Under Local Agenda 21 (action agenda Rio de Janeiro 1992) and in co-operation with active groups in their city, local authorities must develop instruments to test constantly their policies in practice against the norms and values of sustainability.

4

International co-operation and multicultural aspects of the community are closely interrelated. International local authority co-operation projects gain considerable added value when immigrants (migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees) are actively



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involved in them. It involves them in the local community and promotes community spirit. It also shows that the local authority knows how to value respect for the individual and the rich elements of the world's multicultural society.

All authorities, and in particular the local authority, must understand this to be their responsibility, irrespective of the political conditions in which their country finds itself. The local authority must encourage and motivate its inhabitants, politicians and officials to exchange and discover each other's backgrounds and cultures. Also contact between organizations that are dedicated to the multicultural society and international co-operation is also important.

5

Local authorities are being increasingly asked to contribute to emergency aid campaigns. Initiatives from the population also deserve to be supported, because the involvement of the population in responding to emergencies promotes awareness of the fundamental causes of underdevelopment and the need to prevent conflicts. Local authorities should not however concern themselves with the organization of specific emergency aid projects. This area is expertly covered by national and international aid organizations. Humanitarian projects, based on civic associations and co-operation projects, form an exception to this, as they contribute to building up the community. Local authorities should also exploit their opportunities to contribute to conflict prevention (pre-conflict situations) and to reconciliation and reconstruction following conflicts (post-conflict situations).

This also requires new forms of international local authority co-operation, in dialogue with expert peace and humanitarian organizations.

6

Local authorities in joint ventures should also be aware of the economic needs of their partner. If local authorities can contribute to the economic development of their partner, they must find ways to co-operate in this. Priority should be accorded to the principle of sustainability and a preference accorded to small-scale and environmentally friendly initiatives. Forms of co-operation must also be of a structural nature.

7

A policy supported by little or no resources (finance, facilities, personal dedication) is an empty gesture and signifies, in fact, a failure to acknowledge the enormous gap between North and South and the enormous development needs of Eastern Europe. On the other hand, solidarity is not expressed solely in terms of money or goods. Local authorities should reserve a set sum per inhabitant per annum - to be set by the local council - for international co-operation. They should further lay down that the sums raised from campaigns originating from and organized by the population should be matched by an equal amount up to a previously established maximum.

8

Local authorities should strengthen their policies in the field of international co-operation by affiliating to national and international local authority organizations active in the specific field of international solidarity. In this way, their policies will gain effectiveness and their voice will become more influential at the international political level.

National governments must respect the local autonomy and provide sufficient room for international local authority co-operation.