

Joint Message of Hope and Peace:

„Peace among the People – Interreligious Action for Peace and Inclusive Communities“ International Conference in Wuppertal, Germany, July 13 -16, 2017

We, more than 80 participants of the conference, leaders of different religions - Christians, Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims - as well as delegates of religious communities from 13 countries¹ came together at the Protestant Conference Centre in Wuppertal to discuss “Peace among the People – Interreligious action for Peace and Inclusive Communities”.

As people of different faiths, together we have experienced:

The Spirit of God (Buddhist: Dhamma) unites us, and enables our common witness.

With gratitude, we confess: Gods Spirit of Love (Buddhist: Dhamma) to all people and the entire creation surpasses all that may separate us from each other.

The Spirit of God (Buddhist: Dhamma) has the power to renew and to transform our own lives and our religious communities. It calls us and empowers us, together to overcome violence and to live out potentials for peace in our respective religions, nurturing a society without exclusion.

We have shared positive examples of interreligious encounter and cooperation. They underline our hope and confidence: Suffering, injustice and violence are neither people´s fate nor God´s (Buddhist: Dhamma) will. This affirms our determination not to give up, even when confronted with the suffering of so many people all over the world, due to

- increasing extremism, racism, violence and war
- increase of poverty and exploitation
- corruption and misuse of political and economic power
- abuse of religion for political purposes, legitimizing violence and exclusion

Amongst us it has been shared that in certain countries and contexts

- blasphemy laws are still applied and victimize many people
- there is the need for a just system of power sharing between all the communities
- we are facing movements, ready to spread xenophobia and to attack refugee homes and mosques, churches, synagogues and other places of worship
- our common concern is that Government, Religious Leaders and citizens together reject any form of violence in the name of religion
- there is the need to address various religious agitations, generated by inequitable distribution of resources and perceived political marginalization

¹¹ Democratic Republic of Congo, Germany, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda.

Trusting in the reconciling, transforming and encouraging power of God (Buddhist: Dhamma), we return to our respective faith communities, countries and contexts, committing ourselves to the following:

- We treat the religious convictions of others with respect and speak about each other in a positive and peace-building way. We resist those who discriminate, condemn or persecute people because of their faith, conviction, gender and orientation.
- We encourage crossing of borders between people of different religions and cultures by encounter and dialogue and bridge building.
- We commit ourselves to promote education and knowledge about the different faiths and the competence in order to empower the members of different faith communities, especially young people, together to work for peace.
- We commit ourselves to continue our dialogue and practical cooperation for peace and justice within and beyond our respective contexts.
- Based on our spiritual resources, we will contribute to the transformation of our societies towards inclusive communities, embracing diversity, gender justice and caring for the integrity of creation.
- We spare no effort to contribute to overcome poverty and exploitation. We promote fair trade and sustainable development. We struggle against the causes of forced migration.
- We remind all religious leaders and politicians of their duty to create peace and justice.
- We remind the media of their responsibility not to fuel prejudices and hatred.

The Spirit of God (Buddhist: Dhamma) calls our Religions to walk hand in hand and to work together as beacon of Hope and Peace.

Grateful for the common call we have heard and for the communion we have experienced, we will build up structures of networking to continue our common interreligious journey for Peace and Inclusive Communities.

Wuppertal, July 16th, 2017