

DECLARATION ON THE **PHILOSOPHY OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

We are young people of diverse ethnic, religious, cultural, economic, political and social backgrounds from all regions of the world. We have experienced human dignity and solidarity, but also have knowledge of and have witnessed violations of human rights. We declare that all human beings have inherent, intrinsic dignity from conception until natural death, and that this dignity is prior to, and the foundation for, every human right.

Human beings have intrinsic dignity. This intrinsic dignity does not depend on any circumstance, stage of development, or potential, and no human community can grant or rescind it. Thus, human beings must always be treated as an end and never used solely as a means.

All human persons share this common dignity and as such are called to live in solidarity with each other. This solidarity enables us to recognize that human flourishing can only be realized through cooperation with others. This mutual cooperation is the common good. The development of human rights and duties springs from this understanding of the common good and is a moral tool that affirms human dignity, while also pointing out corruption and abuse of the human person.

Law springs directly from the expression of the common good, and is therefore at the service of the human person. International law, or practical principles of action for the international community, must be in accordance with universal principles which promote human dignity in order to be legitimate expressions of the common good. Human rights laws which do not recognize the dignity of the person by denying the common good for economic or political interest are therefore not legitimate laws or legal instruments.

Human rights are an authentic expression of solidarity, arising as legal instruments from the primacy of the dignity of the human person. Since the human person is prior to laws and governments, it is therefore the sole task of laws and government to respond to the reality of the dignity of the human person and protect it. Although the enforcement of human rights through law and government is necessary to protect the human person, we recognize that it is through the commitment of each person to live in solidarity with others that such human rights become a reality, and culture and society are transformed.

We call upon the international community to recognize that all human beings have intrinsic dignity, which is the foundation of human rights, prior to law and government, and is the only authentic source for the development of legal instruments. In order to promote the common good, all law must be at the service of the human person and recognize the person as its end and purpose. In accordance with this understanding of the person and human rights, we commit ourselves to fulfill our duties to respect human rights and uphold human dignity in solidarity with one another.