

# A CONTRACT WITH THE WORLD

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As members of the **MINNESOTA ALLIANCE OF PEACEMAKERS** and, more importantly, as **CITIZENS OF THE WORLD**, we hereby commit ourselves to and commend to others a course of action to promote a **more just and peaceful world**.

Our commitment stems from diverse sources:

**First**, from the **Preamble to the United Nations Charter**, whose aims are to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, --- reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom ---;”

**Second**, from the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** and from subsequent international human rights covenants relating to civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, which, having been ratified by the requisite number of the world's nations, have become a part of customary international law;

**Third** from the **Declaration of Independence**, the **Constitution** and numerous other historical documents that illuminate American history and have served to a remarkable extent as models for the global documents referred to above.

**Fourth**, from the ethical teachings of the world's many **religions** and from various **humanistic philosophies** which stress the golden rule of doing unto others as we would have others do unto us and point to the primacy of social and economic justice in human affairs as an essential prerequisite for enduring peace;

**Fifth**, from the scientific fact that all human beings comprise a **single human family** sharing a common home, the planet earth; and from the recognition that the welfare of each member of that family is interdependent with the welfare of all its other members as well as with the health of the planetary ecosystem;

Sixth, from the firm convictions that individuals and groups can make a significant difference in improving the governance of society, especially when they act cooperatively, and that the enjoyment of our inalienable human rights conveys a **moral responsibility** to balance those rights with actions for the betterment of society, locally, nationally, and globally.

**Therefore, we commit ourselves to advancing the following ten goals:**

**1. Human Rights.** The extension of fundamental human rights to all those who, through no fault of their own, do not presently enjoy such rights; the vigilant safeguarding of such rights wherever they are in jeopardy; and the progressive expansion of opportunity for personal growth.

**2. The Rule of Law.** Promotion of the worldwide rule of law and of the proposition that the force of law must supplant the law of force. Specifically, this calls for universal and unqualified acceptance of the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice in matters of international law; establishment of an International Criminal Court to try individuals guilty of war crimes, genocide, terrorism, and other flagrant offenses against humanity; and the capability to implement decisions of those courts, with respect to states and individuals respectively.

**3. Peace Initiatives.** Extension of the capability of the United Nations system to undertake preventive diplomacy to avert armed conflict and remove its underlying sources, as well as specific peacemaking, peacekeeping, and, should the need arise, peace enforcing missions. The United Nations system must be endowed with sufficient resources to lend credibility to all such efforts and ensure their success.

**4. Demilitarization.** Disarmament in all nations to levels that are appropriate for national defense, but not for external aggression, with concurrent strengthening of the capability of the United Nations and of regional organizations to deal collectively with threats to the peace; a complete ban on the testing of nuclear weapons; total abolition of all weapons -- nuclear, chemical, or biological -- of mass and / or indiscriminate destruction.



**5. Democratization of Global Institutions.** Restructuring the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly, as well as specialized agencies within the United Nations system so as to make their membership and voting practices more democratically representative and realistic. This implies the development of systems of weighted voting that are appropriate for the functions for which each such agency is responsible.

**6. Solution of Problems at Appropriate Levels.** Devising methods for addressing specific problems at the most appropriate level, from global at one extreme to local at the other. Global problems, especially those relating to the global ecosystem and serious crimes against humanity, such as genocide; require global solutions or responses; others are best addressed at regional, national, or more localized levels.

**7. Sustainable Development.** Moving rapidly toward the long established goal of having every developed nation provide the equivalent of at least 0.7% of its GNP as "official development assistance" for the world's less developed nations. Such aid should be made available mainly through multilateral agencies, directed largely towards the enhancement of human resources and the empowerment of disadvantaged segments of society (especially women), and allocated with due regard to the sustainability of the changes to be promoted.

**8. Fiscal Responsibility.** Ensuring that all legal debts to the United Nations and its specialized agencies are paid faithfully, promptly, and in full, thereby enhancing the ability of all of those agencies to carry out effectively the responsibilities with which they have been entrusted. To starve the United Nations system of the resources it requires and then to condemn it for failure to achieve desired goals constitutes an immoral "unfunded mandate."

**9. Civil Society.** Enhancing cooperation among various elements of civil society. This implies greater consultation among non-governmental organizations, citizens' groups, religious bodies, academia, trade unions, corporations, the media, and others, both among themselves and with national governmental and United Nations agencies, and the formulation of bold new intersectoral initiatives for promoting a more just and peaceful world and an ecologically healthy planet.

**10. Education and Constructive Criticism.** Educating ourselves and then developing and disseminating such educational materials as are appropriate for the promotion of all of the foregoing goals through the media and in schools, and in other public and private institutions; thinking critically about the United Nations, as well as our own governmental and other agencies that affect the quality of our lives; and promoting the reforms needed to make those agencies function, more democratically, openly, honestly, economically, and efficiently.

We see no inconsistency or conflict between the goals enunciated above and our obligations as citizens of the United States. Rather, we perceive an essential harmony between the two in that our global aspirations are but logical extensions of values, principles, and purposes which inform our actions as citizens from the local community to the national level of governance. We undertake our global commitments with full awareness of the magnitude and complexity of the obstacles that stand in the way of their attainment. Although the threats to the well being of our planet are of such a magnitude as to impart urgency to all of the commitments we have indicated, we neither seek nor anticipate quick fixes and have no specific program for "the first hundred days" following the adoption of this Contract. Rather, we recognize that the struggle for peace and justice must be a never-ending quest. Our weapons in that struggle are good will, a spirit of cooperation, informed intelligence, imagination, vigilance, fortitude, dedication, and, above all, **an ethically driven creative vision**. We urge all individuals and agencies who seek a more just and peaceful world to further the goals expressed in this **Contract with the World**.

Adopted on September 25, 1995

**The Minnesota Alliance of Peacemakers**