

Declaration on Demilitarisation and Youth

“The world is over-armed and peace is under-funded”.¹ According to SIPRI², global military expenditure totalled almost 1.7 trillion USD in 2015, of which NATO accounts for more than half³. Over the next year several trillion USD will be spend on the so called modernisation of nuclear weapons. The military are taking up more and more resources in the name of peace, security, and freedom. Yet, these cannot be achieved through military means. Indeed military activity actively harms efforts for peace. These resources should be used to provide humans with a decent living, and provide youth with education or a liveable future.

In many ways the world we live in is unjust and inhumane, particularly towards young people. Our social model is established on unlimited economic growth, the depletion of natural resources, the predominance of capital, structures of domination, patriarchy, competition, violence, confrontation, conflict and war. Capitalism and militarism reinforce themselves, destroying the foundations of life. This has a significant and lasting impact on young people, on our lives and our futures. We must transform our activities and social structures to create a sustainable and peaceful world.

Youth are a military target in schools, universities, religious spheres and other social environments. Compulsory military service still exists in numerous countries worldwide and spreads violent and patriarchal values. Militarisation leads to radicalisation and unequal power relations within society.

We want to abolish the military complex, which perpetuates a global culture of violence and inequalities in all fields. Young people should develop and socialise with values based on human rights, gender equality, social justice and solidarity between people.

We, the participants of the IPB Youth Gathering, actively strive for peace and a just future. We believe that justice and peace are possible only with the abolition of militarism and the capitalist system we live in. We need to overcome both and develop new systems based on peace, human rights, gender equality, cooperation, and sustainable development. Thus, we demand complete demilitarisation and transformative steps towards a more humane society.

We call for the promotion of a culture of peace, through formal and non-formal peace education. Education which promotes intercultural knowledge, shared

¹ Ban Ki-Moon at NPT 2010 Conference at Riverside Church.

² Stockholm International Peace Research Institute :
<https://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2015>.

³ NATO military spending came to 900 billion in 2015. www.nato.int.

narratives and gender equality. We advocate for organisations, structures and activities that implement such training for young people.

We advocate for the active inclusion and participation of young people in the process of shaping a sustainable future.

We will increase our international cooperation, solidarity, actions and discussion on topics of war and peace and the transformation of our society.

Today we create a Youth Network under the umbrella of the International Peace Bureau, calling for a world conference on youth, demilitarisation, and transformation in 2018. “Those who love peace must learn to organise as effectively as those who love war”⁴; a world conference is the next big step towards achieving our aims of a transformed society.

We will facilitate an open and participatory process. We call on all actors, individuals, groups and organisations to join us and participate in the IPB youth network.

Young people account for more than half the world’s population and we truly believe in peace, non-violence and equality. We will find practical approaches to building wholesome, functioning and sustainable societies that promote peace, co-existence and equality worldwide.

There is a future without wars, bullets and guns.

A future with solidarity, justice, equality and humanity.

Berlin, 2 October 2016

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Note: The declaration reflects discussions of several open conference calls and of the weekend of the IPB World Congress Disarm! For a Climate of Peace – Creating an Action Agenda”. It is not comprehensive but rather a starting point for future discussions within and beyond the declaration.

⁴ Dr. Martin Luther King, Speech at Rally against the Vietnam War, Chicago, 25.03.1967. i.e. <http://www.jofreeman.com/photos/KingAtChicago.html>.