



**OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS**



**Tolerance and pluralism as indivisible elements in the
promotion and protection of human rights**

Commission on Human Rights Resolution: 2004/54

The Commission on Human Rights,

Recalling the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations, which enjoins the peoples of the United Nations to practise tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours,

Recalling also the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Recalling further that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial or religious groups,

Recalling the relevant paragraphs of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted in June 1993 by the World Conference on Human Rights (A/CONF.157/23),

Reaffirming the principles of equality and non-discrimination in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction of any kind such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status,

Noting that tolerance involves a positive acceptance of and respect for diversity and that pluralism encompasses the willingness to accord equal respect to the rights of all individuals, without distinction based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status,

Reaffirming that cultural, religious and ethnic differences within and between societies should be celebrated rather than merely tolerated, and that cultural diversity should be embraced and cherished as a treasure that enriches all societies, and humanity at large,

Recognizing that the equal participation of all individuals and peoples in the formation of just, equitable, democratic and inclusive societies can contribute to a world free from racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance,

Noting that tolerance and mutual respect are fundamental values common to all civilizations and upheld by all religions,

Concerned that forces of aggressive nationalism, religious intolerance and ethnic extremism continue to pose fresh challenges,

Recognizing that intolerance often leads to discrimination which, in a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multicultural world, can lead to violence and conflict, thus endangering peace and stability both within States and internationally,

Convinced that tolerance and pluralism need to be actively promoted by the international community in order to strengthen democracy, facilitate the full enjoyment of all human rights and provide a sound foundation for civil society, social harmony and peace,

Recognizing that efforts to promote tolerance require cooperation by States, civil society, the media and individuals,

Recognizing also that promoting a culture of tolerance through human rights education is an objective that must be advanced in all States, and that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and mechanisms of the United Nations human rights system have an important role to play in this regard,

Taking note of the addendum to the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (E/CN.4/2004/12/Add.2), submitted pursuant to Commission resolution 2002/55 of 25 April 2002,

1. *Affirms* that all peoples and individuals have contributed to the progress of civilizations and cultures that form the common heritage of humanity, that they collectively constitute one human family rich in diversity, and that preservation and promotion of tolerance, pluralism and respect for diversity can produce more inclusive societies;

2. *Condemns unequivocally* all violent acts and activities that infringe upon human rights, fundamental freedoms and democracy and thereby undermine the values of tolerance and pluralism;

3. *Reiterates* the obligation of all States and the international community:

(a) To promote and enhance tolerance, coexistence and harmonious relations between ethnic, religious, linguistic and other groups and ensure that the values of pluralism, respect for diversity and non-discrimination are promoted effectively;

(b) To protect effectively the human rights of all persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities without any discrimination and in full equality before the law;

(c) To oppose all forms of discrimination, in accordance with their international obligations, based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status in order to promote tolerance and pluralism at the national and international levels and take all appropriate means towards their prevention and elimination;

(d) To take steps to prevent all manifestations of hatred, intolerance and acts of violence, in particular through education and dialogue;

(e) To foster a culture conducive to promoting and protecting human rights, fundamental freedoms and tolerance, inter alia through education leading to genuine pluralism, a positive acceptance of diversity of opinion and belief, and respect for the dignity of the human person;

4. *Recognizes* that the media can promote tolerance and respect for diversity and that information and communication technologies can enhance intercultural communication and mutual understanding, especially through the promotion of cultural and linguistic

pluralism, the generation of cross-cultural links, and the sharing of knowledge and information in various forms by networking communities and individuals;

5. *Welcomes* the role of civil society, particularly non-governmental organizations working at the grass-roots level, in disseminating the importance of tolerance and pluralism through their awareness-raising activities;

6. *Calls upon* the High Commissioner to continue to take steps:

(a) To include, in the work programmes of the Office, within overall existing resources, the promotion of tolerance, where appropriate through workshops and seminars, using mass media and non-governmental organizations, and, through its programme of advisory services and technical cooperation, to assist countries in their national programmes;

(b) To undertake, in that regard, specific educational initiatives and public-awareness activities for the promotion of tolerance and pluralism within the programmes and activities being implemented by the United Nations;

(c) To advise or assist countries, upon request, through the programme of advisory services and technical cooperation, to put in place effective safeguards, including appropriate legislation, against intolerance and discrimination;

7. *Calls upon* the relevant mechanisms of the Commission:

(a) To continue to attach the highest priority to the effective promotion, at the national and international levels, of the values of democracy, pluralism and tolerance;

(b) To study further situations and conditions that promote intolerance;

(c) To continue efforts aimed at identifying commonly accepted principles and best practices to promote tolerance and pluralism;

8. *Calls upon* the High Commissioner to include details of activities undertaken by the Office to implement the present resolution in the High Commissioner's report to the Commission at its sixty-second session;

9. *Decides* to consider this question at its sixty-second session under the appropriate agenda item.

*56th meeting
20 April 2004*

[Adopted without a vote. See chap. XIV.- E/2004/23 – E/CN.4/2004/127]