

DG/2001/40
Original: English

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

Address by
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(UNESCO)

on the occasion of the award ceremony
of the UNESCO Prize for Human Rights Education

Nuremberg, 21 April 2001

Madam President of the Jury,
Lord Mayor of Nuremberg,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Representatives of the Federal Government and
the Government of Bavaria,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be with you today in Nuremberg on the occasion of the Award Ceremony of the UNESCO Prize for Human Rights Education.

First of all, I should like to thank the Lord Mayor of Nuremberg and his staff for having organized this ceremony and for their warm hospitality.

The UNESCO Prize for Human Rights Education was instituted by the Executive Board of UNESCO in 1978 to mark the 30th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states in its Article 26 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*”. The principal aim of this Prize is, as stipulated in UNESCO’s Constitution, “*to further universal respect [...] for human rights and fundamental freedoms*” by means of education. The Prize is awarded every two years to institutions, organizations and individuals who have made a particularly significant contribution to the development of human rights education, on the basis of the principles set forth in international standard-setting instruments on human rights.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Many cities of a substantial age have a mixed or chequered history, with elements of pride and shame, of light and shadow. The City of Nuremberg is no exception. In the Middle Ages, Nuremberg was dubbed the ‘gembox’ of the German empire. It was also the cradle of outstanding artists like Albrecht Dürer and Veit Stoss and leading scientists of their age. All this, however, was overshadowed by the events that occurred during the 20th century. Thus, in regard to Nuremberg, we are dealing with a very special historical case. Since the 1930s, the very word ‘Nuremberg’ has become a shorthand term of immediate symbolic significance and, indeed, notoriety.

I do not believe that this legacy of historical associations and special symbolism will quickly or easily fade away. What is important is how the City of Nuremberg and its citizens, young and old, deal with this situation. What is important is that the understandable desire to move on and to create a new symbolism or image of Nuremberg is not based upon forgetting, denying or condoning terrible events that did happen. What is important is that Nuremberg incorporates into its understanding of itself and into its projection of itself into the wider world what are the key lessons it has learned. These lessons, of course, concern not only how an entire city, a whole community, engages with its own past but also how it deals with real problems today.

Nuremberg now identifies itself as “a City of Peace and Human Rights”. This is not only a fine motto and a most worthy image but also a high standard by which to measure oneself and be measured by others. However, one should recognise that Nuremberg’s new and positive symbolism will not replace its 20th century image. Instead, the two symbolic versions of what the City of Nuremberg represents will live side-by-side for the foreseeable future. This is the challenge that you face. Your commendable handling of this complex and difficult challenge is the reason we are here today.

Thus, it is indeed remarkable that the City of Nuremberg, associated for decades with racism, the violation of human rights, intolerance, and war crimes and their aftermath, today takes pride in calling itself “a City of Peace and Human Rights”. This transformation, if not catharsis, which reveals the strong will and ethical commitment of the City and its citizens, contains lessons from which other communities may learn. Nuremberg has earned the right to talk about human rights and to educate others about human rights and peace.

The International Jury for the UNESCO Prize for Human Rights Education, which met at UNESCO Headquarters from 27 to 28 November 2000, unanimously recommended that the Prize be awarded to the City of Nuremberg, in recognition of its outstanding initiatives to promote human rights.

The creation in 1993, at the request of the City, of a splendid monument entitled the “Way of Human Rights” by the Israeli artist Dani Karavan, is a symbolic response by the City to the darkest chapter of its history and clearly reveals the particular attention it pays today to the

values of human dignity, human rights and tolerance. It is a remarkable coincidence, indeed, that a work by Dani Karavan also adorns part of UNESCO's small sculpture garden in memory of the late Yitzhak Rabin.

Bearing in mind that knowledge of human rights is an important instrument to ensure their promotion and protection, the City and many of its civil society organisations dealing with human rights issues strive to raise awareness among the general public, in particular through education, information and documentation. Many activities are designed specifically for schoolchildren and young people in order to inculcate in them attitudes and behavioural patterns that are based on the principles of mutual respect, non-discrimination and tolerance, as well as to encourage their commitment to the cause of human rights. This is exemplified by the German Human Rights Film Award and the activities of the Nuernberg Human Rights Centre. Both initiatives, which emanated from and are carried by civil society organisations, are most commendable indeed. At the same time, the City gives special emphasis to research and reflection. In the framework of the conferences it organizes, concrete ways and means are sought to combat and prevent prejudice, hatred and discrimination, which are perennial sources of conflict and violence.

Concerned by on-going violations of human rights throughout the world, the City of Nuremberg encourages the implementation of human rights for all everywhere by honouring, through the "Nuremberg International Human Rights Award", special achievements in the struggle for human rights and tolerance.

The activities carried out by the City of Nuremberg to develop human rights education correspond closely to the objectives of UNESCO in this field. These activities are a significant and exemplary contribution to the implementation of the objectives of the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), and thus, to the building of a culture of human rights. Human rights education is an important element of UNESCO's priorities during its forthcoming medium-term strategy 2002-2007. Nuremberg's activities also contribute to the construction of a culture of peace, for which UNESCO has been designated the international lead agency by the UN General Assembly. As stated in the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace adopted on 13 September 1999 by the General Assembly, "*a culture of peace is a set of values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behaviour and ways of life based on [...] full respect for and promotion of all human rights and fundamental*

freedoms". For UNESCO in general and for myself personally, these goals and orientations go to the heart of what the United Nations stands for. It is most gratifying to find partners and communities such as the City of Nuremberg who share the same vision and purpose and who are committed to take concrete and imaginative actions in that regard.

The activities of the City of Nuremberg send a true message of hope to those who are still denied their human rights and are an inspiration to all those engaged in the struggle to ensure that everyone's human rights are respected. Therefore, I am most happy to pay tribute to the City's strong commitment to promoting and protecting human rights and wish it continued success in its outstanding work in this field.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

According to the regulations of the Prize, Honourable Mentions of the Prize may also be awarded in recognition of outstanding contributions to the development of human rights education. On the unanimous recommendation of the International Jury for the UNESCO Prize for Human Rights Education, I have the pleasure in presenting three Honourable Mentions, respectively to Ms Flor Alba Romero, human rights activist from Colombia; to UNESCO's Associated Schools Project from Pakistan; and to the non-governmental organization Hurights Osaka from Japan.

Ms Flor Alba Romero is a professor and a citizen, tireless and fearless in the promotion and protection of human rights in Colombia, especially those of persons belonging to vulnerable groups – children, young people, the homeless, women in detention with children, and refugees.

Ms Romero,

Your activities are carried out in a very difficult context and are aimed at helping the most underprivileged groups. Your work is a vital contribution to the struggle for human rights for all and an excellent

example of human solidarity. You deserve all our respect and encouragement.

The UNESCO Associated Schools Project of Pakistan has made exemplary efforts, through education, to instil in children and young people the values of tolerance, non-violence, responsibility and mutual understanding. These values are the foundations on which to build and consolidate a culture of human rights.

As you may know, the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network was launched in 1953 to put education at the forefront of the defence and promotion of peace and human rights. Thanks to this Project in Pakistan, education for human rights has been introduced as an extra-curricular subject in more than 250 schools in the country. We commend you for this major achievement.

The third Honourable Mention of the Prize is given to the non-governmental organization Hurights Osaka, which was established in December 1994 to serve as a centre for the promotion of human rights education in the Asia-Pacific region. Today, it acts as a leader in the field of research, publications and training related to human rights.

Hurights Osaka is particularly devoted to promoting human rights education in schools in order to prepare well-informed, democratically minded and responsible citizens to live in an environment free of violence, discrimination and intolerance. To this end, it co-operates closely with various actors within civil society, including research and training institutions, other non-governmental organizations, and national institutions. I hereby pay tribute to its vision and its achievements in making human rights education an integral part of education.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of UNESCO and in my own name, I should like to repeat my warmest congratulations to the City of Nuremberg and to the Honourable Mentions.

It is with great pleasure that I now present the UNESCO Prize for Human Rights Education 2000, representing an amount of US\$10,000, and a diploma, to the City of Nuremberg, represented by its Lord Mayor, Honorable Ludwig Scholz.

I am pleased to present Ms Flor Alba Romero with a diploma attesting that she has been awarded an Honourable Mention of the Prize.

I am pleased to present the UNESCO's Associated Schools Project of Pakistan, represented by its National Coordinator, Dr Munir A. Abro, with a diploma attesting that it has been awarded an Honourable Mention of the Prize.

Finally, I am pleased to present the non-governmental organization Hurights Osaka, represented by its Director, Professor Yoshio Kawashima, with a diploma attesting that it has been awarded an Honourable Mention of the Prize.

I am convinced that human rights education plays a major role in promoting tolerance and ensuring a better future for all without discrimination. Let us work tirelessly to make a human rights culture a daily reality around the world.