I am grateful and deeply honoured to receive the 1994 Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize. Peace is never the achievement of any single person. It requires the commitment of many people to a frustrating, arduous, and often lengthy process. I have been fortunate to find many fellow workers to share both my successes and my disappointments in peacemaking. My colleagues and I at The Carter Center could achieve little without the cooperation of numerous people in many different governments (including my own United States), in non-governmental organizations, and in international organizations. The honour of the prize must be shared.

It is especially meaningful to be recognized by UNESCO, which was conceived fifty years ago as an organization dedicated to promoting peace and security in the world through education, science, culture, and communication. I admire the contributions of UNESCO to the foundations of peace. It has advanced knowledge and mutual understanding among peoples.

I am pleased to share this award with His Majesty King Juan Carlos. His leadership in moving his country from an authoritarian government to a democracy set an example for our times. The benefits of this peaceful transition should be evident to all.

Today in some thirty nations, wars with over a thousand battlefield deaths are taking place because leaders failed to achieve peaceful change. For example, in Liberia more than half the population has been uprooted by the civil war that has continued since 1989. Especially vicious conflicts have devastated Burundi and Rwanda, and brought about a refugee crisis that is the worst in the world.
I believe that war is the greatest violation of basic human rights that one people can inflict upon another. I am convinced that everyone has more to gain from resolving their conflicts peacefully than by trying to resolve them through war.

One of the leaders in Africa who worked actively for peaceful change was Félix Houphouët-Boigny, the late president of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire. I am pleased to receive an award named for him. I had the great privilege of working with him in efforts to resolve conflict and to advance health care. It is because of my commitment to one of these efforts, the eradication of the Guinea Worm disease, that I am unable to be in Yamoussoukro to accept this award in person. I am represented by my son James Earl Carter III, who has also participated in The Carter Center's efforts for peace.

I am delighted to accept the award. I view it as a challenge to continue the efforts of the Carter Center to contribute to conflict resolution and to the support of free government and human rights in the world.