

DECLARATION GALILEE PEACE CONFERENCE MAY 1-2, 2009

Declaration issued by the Galilee Peace Conference, organized by the "House of Hope" in Shefar Am and "The Center of Meeting and Dialogue" in Nes Ammim, unanimously adopted on May 2, 2009

1. We, the participants of the conference, are convinced that the goal of peace, coexistence and justice can only be reached in mutual recognition of the rights of both the Jewish and Palestinian people, and the minorities in the region. We refuse to become depressed and frustrated in the midst of the fear and suffering caused by the ongoing Israeli – Palestinian conflict.
2. We have discovered the face of the other, and we recognize that every human being is created in the image of God. No one is superior or inferior. We will not give up the vision that all human beings are equal and that our children will live in peace and share the land.
3. We commit ourselves to accept each other as partners, with all our differences. Being different should not be a threat but a mutual enrichment.
4. We acknowledge that the continuation of violence and hatred is caused and being perpetuated by mutual fear. Jews and Palestinians have fostered their own particular narratives and regard the narrative of the other as a threat to their very existence. We commit ourselves to listening and to stop demonizing each other.
5. We believe that peace can only be reached by compromise and mutual understanding, and by healing of the wounds of both peoples.
6. We appreciate the diversity of the people in the country, resembling the beautiful colors of the rainbow. We continue to believe in the vision of living in co-existence with full equality for all ethnic groups. We reject second class citizenship for any group.
7. We resist extremist and fundamentalist religion convictions that block peace efforts and cause violence and death. Religion can be divisive but also a tool for peace and justice. We support the common efforts of religiously motivated Jews, Christians, Moslems, Druze and others, together all people of goodwill, who want to pave the way to a better future.
8. We choose, at this conference in the Galilee, to commit ourselves to dialogue, reconciliation and mutual acceptance. We realize that there is no other way but to live together in peace in the same land.
9. We call for deepening the education for peace in every educational means, programs and opportunities. We reach out to all other groups in Israel and overseas to join hands in this objective.
10. We (means here: Jewish and Arab Israeli's) welcome guests in our country, like those in Nes Ammim, who want to live here for a certain period of time. We encourage them to be active and to commit themselves to building bridges of understanding and dialogue between Palestinians and Jews.
11. We invite all people of good will, such as the people of Nes Ammim and others, to join us in the vision and in the effort to bring about peace and harmony of human relations among all the inhabitants of this land. E-mail address: dialogue@nesammim.com