Universal Declaration of Responsibilities of Human Intercourse

a draft proposal

Context

This text has been slightly adapted from the draft Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities, proposed by the InterAction Council in 1997 (as amended in 1998) for consideration by the United Nations as a complement to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). No action has since been taken on the original proposal (available in many languages). In a reaction to it, the UN approved a Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (53/144, 9 December 1998).

A draft proposal for a very comprehensive Declaration of Human Duties and Responsibilities was adopted in 1998 in Valencia, under the auspices of UNESCO and the Valencia Third Millennium Foundation, by a high-level group (chaired by Richard J Goldstone) and then submitted for consideration to UNESCO in 1999 as the "Valencia Declaration" (but without any apparent follow-up). An earlier proposal, known as the Trieste Declaration of Human Duties (also known as the Carta of Human Duties), had been drafted from 1992 by the International Council of Human Duties. The Earth Charter (completed in 2000) has also been considered to be a Declaration of Human Duties and Responsibilities even if it does not bear that name -- notably by recognizing the need for "reproductive health and responsible reproduction".

Since the adoption of the 1948 Declaration, the peoples of the world have been witness to the totally irresponsible, self-interested pursuit of human rights by signatories of it or by those invoking its clauses. They have also been witness to massacres on a scale commensurate with those it was designed to prevent, which continue at this time -- and with merely token response by a United Nations arguably complicit in the process to some degree (as with Srebrenica and Rwanda).

In a Universal Declaration on Democracy (adopted in 1997), the Inter-Parliamentary Union specifies: Democracy is inseparable from the rights set forth in the international instruments recalled in the preamble. These rights must therefore be applied effectively and their proper exercise must be matched with individual and collective responsibilities.

Whilst there has long been a UN Commission on Human Rights, there is no such Commission on Human Responsibilities. The process of Dialogue among Civilizations, initiated by the United Nations in 2001, was immediately followed by the arrogation of the right by some permanent members of the UN Security Council to engage in a "war against terrorism" -- sustained by a religious and strategic mindset regarding a "clash of civilizations". In so doing they set aside some human rights enshrined in international law, notably with regard to the use of torture. Terrorism may be understood as one inappropriate form of human intercourse, just as its causes are another, and as may be the reaction to it. The UN Report of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (A More Secure World: our shared responsibility, 2004) might be seen as another effort to reframe the question of human responsibility.

Most issues resulting in human suffering and death, that are of concern to the United Nations, are a direct consequence of irresponsible human intercourse -- including global warming and the consequent climate change (see Begetting: challenges and responsibilities of overpopulation, 2007).

Preamble

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world and implies obligations or responsibilities,

whereas the exclusive insistence on rights can result in conflict, division, and endless dispute, and the neglect of human responsibilities can lead to lawlessness and chaos,

whereas the rule of law and the promotion of human rights depend on the readiness of men and women to act justly,

whereas global problems demand global solutions which can only be achieved through ideas, values, and norms respected by all cultures and societies,
whereas all people, to the best of their knowledge and ability, have a responsibility to foster a better social order, both at home and globally, a goal which cannot be achieved by laws, prescriptions, and conventions alone,

whereas human aspirations for progress and improvement can only be realized by agreed values and standards applying to all people and institutions at all times,

whereas the Universal Declaration of Human Rights addresses itself to the inalienable rights of humanity, and to the protection of all people against abuse of power by governments or institutions of governments, this proposed declaration is a moral appeal which addresses itself to issues of conscience and ethical behaviour. While governments are clearly responsible for just and equitable laws, there are many matters of conscience for which we must be our own judges.

Now, therefore,

The General Assembly

proclaims this Universal Declaration of Responsibilities of Human Intercourse as a common standard for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, should contribute to the advancement of communities and to the enlightenment of all their members. We, the peoples of the world thus renew and reinforce commitments already proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: namely, the full acceptance of the dignity of all people; their inalienable freedom and equality, and their solidarity with one another. Awareness and acceptance of these responsibilities should be taught and promoted throughout the world.

Fundamental Principles for Humanity

Article 1

Every person engaging in intercourse with others, regardless of gender, ethnic origin, social status, political opinion, language, age, nationality, or religion, has a responsibility to treat them in a humane way.

Article 2

No person engaging in intercourse with others should lend support to any form of inhumane behavior; all people have a responsibility to strive for the dignity and self-esteem of all others.

Article 3

In engaging in intercourse with others, no person, no group or organization, no state, no army or police stands above good and evil; all are subject to ethical standards. Everyone has a responsibility to promote good and to avoid evil in any form of intercourse with others.

Article 4

All people, endowed with reason and conscience, in engaging in intercourse with others, should accept a responsibility to each and all, to families and communities, to races, nations, and religions in a spirit of solidarity: What you do not wish to be done to yourself, do not do to others.

Non-Violence and Respect for Life

Article 5

Every person has a responsibility to respect life in engaging in intercourse with others. No one has the right to injure, to torture or to kill another human person during that process. This does not exclude the right of justified self-defense of individuals or communities.

Article 6

Disputes between states, groups or individuals, regarding the process and outcome of intercourse, should be resolved without violence. No government should tolerate or participate in acts of genocide or terrorism, nor should make use of intercourse as a means of abusing women, children, or any other civilians as instruments of war. Every citizen and public official has a responsibility to engage in intercourse in a peaceful, non-violent way.

Article 7

Every person engaging in intercourse is infinitely precious and must be protected unconditionally, as with any outcome of that process. The animals and the natural environment also demand protection from abusive human intercourse. All people have a responsibility to protect the air, water and soil of the earth for the sake of present inhabitants and future generations.

Justice and Solidarity

Article 8

Every person engaging in intercourse with others has a responsibility to behave with integrity, honesty and fairness. No person or group should rob or arbitrarily deprive any other person or group of their property during that process.

Article 9

All people engaging in intercourse with others, given the necessary tools, have a responsibility to take into account, in doing so, the need
to overcome poverty, malnutrition, ignorance, and inequality. Through their intercourse, they should promote sustainable development all over the world in order to assure dignity, freedom, security and justice for all people.

**Article 10**

All people engaging in intercourse with others, have a responsibility to develop their talents through diligent endeavor; they should have equal access to education and to meaningful work. Everyone should lend support to the needy, the disadvantaged, the disabled, and to the victims of discrimination and abusive intercourse.

**Article 11**

All property and wealth must be used responsibly by those engaging in intercourse with others in accordance with justice and for the advancement of the human race. In the process of intercourse, economic and political power must not be handled as an instrument of domination, but in the service of economic justice and of the social order.

**Truthfulness and Tolerance**

**Article 12**

Every person engaging in intercourse with others has a responsibility to speak and act truthfully. No one, however high or mighty, should speak lies. The right to privacy and to personal and professional confidentiality is to be respected by those engaging in intercourse with others. No one is obliged to tell all the truth to everyone all the time.

**Article 13**

With respect to the process of intercourse, no politicians, public servants, business leaders, scientists, writers or artists are exempt from general ethical standards, nor are physicians, lawyers and other professionals who have special duties to clients. It is for the professions and their members to establish appropriate ethical codes relating to the process of intercourse which reflect the priority of general standards, such as those of truthfulness and fairness.

**Article 14**

With respect to the process of intercourse, and as an aspect of it, the freedom of the media to inform the public and to criticize the institutions of society and governmental actions is essential for a just society. It is the responsibility of those involved to exercise their freedom with a sense of responsibility and discretion.

**Article 15**

While religious freedom must be guaranteed, the representatives of religions have a special responsibility to avoid expressions of prejudice and acts of discrimination toward those of different beliefs regarding the process of intercourse. They should not incite or legitimize hatred, fanaticism and religious wars, but should foster tolerance and mutual respect between all people engaging in intercourse.

**Mutual Respect and Partnership**

**Article 16**

All men and all women have a responsibility to show respect to one another and understanding in their partnership and the associated processes of intercourse. No one should subject another person to sexual exploitation or dependence. Rather, sexual partners should accept the responsibility of caring for the well-being of each other.

**Article 17**

In all its cultural and religious varieties, bonds associated with intercourse require love, loyalty and forgiveness and should aim at guaranteeing security and mutual support.

**Article 18**

Sensible family planning is the responsibility of every couple engaged in intercourse. The relationship between parents and children should reflect mutual love, respect, appreciation and concern. No parents or other adults should exploit, abuse or maltreat children.

**Conclusion**

**Article 19**

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any state, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the responsibilities, rights and freedom set forth in this Declaration and in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* of 1948.

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The only reference to obligations in the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* is Article 29: “Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.” Not everyone at the time thought that was enough. Mahatma Gandhi, on being consulted about that Declaration, wrote: "The Ganges of rights originates in the Himalaya of responsibilities." Many have continued to note the ineffectively addressed issues of Western bias in the original Declaration -- resulting in the formulation of alternative declarations, such as the *Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights* (1401/1981).
Article 30 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* could therefore be usefully interpreted as: *Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein — or to avoid any responsibility set forth in the Universal Declaration of Responsibilities of Human Intercourse.*

A clarification of the nature of intercourse, in support of this proposal, is provided separately: "*Human Intercourse*: "Intercourse with Nature" and "Intercourse with the Other" (2007).

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