

Statement of the National Institution for Human Rights on the occasion of International Day of Tolerance

16 November 2014

Today, November 16 marks the day that was adopted in 1995 by the United Nations General Assembly as the "International Day of Tolerance", on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which falls on the same day, the General Assembly invited all its members to celebrate each year.

At the 28th session of the UNESCO's General Conference a Declaration of Principles on Tolerance has been adopted stating that tolerance means respect, acceptance and appreciation of the vast diversity of our cultures, our forms of expression and humanity characteristics. This tolerance can be fostered by knowledge, openness, communication and freedom of thought, conscience and belief.

The Declaration adds that the tolerance at the state level necessitates ensuring justice, impartiality in legislation and in implementing laws, judicial and administrative procedures. It also requires allowing access to economic and social opportunities for everyone, without distinction of any kind as any exclusion or marginalization can lead to frustration, hostility and fanaticism.

The Director-General of UNESCO Mrs. Irina Bokova, in her message on the occasion of International Day of Tolerance confirmed that tolerance is a fundamental principle to live in society, which naturally arises from respect for human rights and preservation of dignity, and that tolerance is not limited to just



talking, it is a behavior acquired at schools and is embodied in the opening to the diversity of cultures and beliefs and respect for freedom of opinion and expression rooted in upholding human rights. She added that the commitment of UNESCO to direct its efforts to establish, disseminate and promote the principle of tolerance through educational and cultural programs.

The National Institution for Human Rights shares the call of the United Nations to mark the occasion and to uphold the principles of tolerance stated in the UNESCO Declaration and the importance of caring about tolerance culture by promoting understanding and respect in the community and addressing the situation of inequality. It also shares the need to raise awareness of the culture of religious and political tolerance, coexistence and community acceptance of religious, linguistic and ethnic diversity in our world today.

The National Institute puts hope on States and civil society organizations to celebrate this day through the integration of values and concepts of tolerance within its vision, programs and action plans as without tolerance there can be no peace and without peace there can be no development or democracy.

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