

21 September 2008

- **United Nations International Day of Peace**
- **International Day of Prayer for Peace**

Brussels, 17 July 2008

Dear Friends,

In 2001, the United Nations General Assembly fixed the date for the observance of the **International Day of Peace (IDP)** as 21 September, a day of non-violence and ceasefire. Communities, groups and individuals around the world are encouraged to build on this campaign, by promoting peace and justice to the public through their own local initiatives. Pax Christi International has a Special Consultative Status with the United Nations since 1979.

Each year Pax Christi International Member Organisations joins thousands of other organisations worldwide to mark the UN International Day of Peace, 21 September, also as an **International Day of Prayer for Peace**. This initiative, launched by the World Council of Churches as part of its Decade to Overcome Violence (2001-2010), calls on churches and communities all over the world to arrange services or vigils on 21 September and to also include prayers for peace in their services on the preceding or following Sunday. This year, 21 September is a Sunday. Additional details are available at <http://www.overcomingviolence.org> and <http://www.worldpeace.org/peaceday.html>.

We urge you to raise public awareness of 21 September as the **International Day (of Prayer) of Peace**, and to remember the positive contributions to society made by peace advocates worldwide.

We appreciate this excellent initiative, which focuses on empowering people of different faiths, socio-political ideologies and cultural backgrounds through recognition and reflection of the sources of injustices in their own countries, and the possibility of overcoming it through “collective action”. The day is also a reminder that peace work is not limited simply to the promotion of non-violence and ceasefire in conflict situations, but is also a part of our daily struggles against injustices.

Some of our member organizations have already informed us of their plans to observe this special date, in many cases in an interfaith and intercultural context. This initiative is also strongly recommended at the latest Northern Consultation in Antwerp, 5 – 7 June 2008.

Related materials are also available online. For more information and to communicate your thoughts and activities in observance of IDP 2006, please refer to the following websites:

United Nations website

<http://www.un.org/events/peaceday/2007/index.shtml>

InternationalDayofPeace.org

www.internationaldayofpeace.org

International Day of Peace Vigil

<http://www.idpvigil.com/>

World Council of Churches – Decade to Overcome Violence

www.overcomingviolence.org

Would it be possible to inform the International Secretariat of any activities you are planning, and to report to us afterwards on their outcomes?

With Kind Regards,

Claudette Werleigh
Secretary General

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