



Peace is that precious object which, when it exists in the tranquility of one's own mind and heart, can be found in one's relationships with others. By extension, this tranquility can result in harmony and order among nations.

But where tranquility is shattered by military conflicts; where millions of human beings have no access—or inadequate access—to basic necessities such as food, water, clothing and shelter; where segments of society suffer the ravages of disease or natural disaster; how can there be peace for all?

The pursuit of true peace must include recognition of the common dignity of all people in our world's society. Peace is generated by understanding, tolerance, friendship, and assistance based on the belief that people, despite differences in racial, ethnic, or cultural heritage, share a common humanity.

Since its founding in 1917, The International Association of Lions Clubs has recognized the fundamental reality of our age—that individual, community or national interest cannot be attained in isolation from world interest. The First Object of Lionism, "To Create and Foster a Spirit of Understanding Among the Peoples of the World," is very similar to the United Nations' *raison d'être*. It is significant that Lion members took a leading role in activities during the UN Charter Conference in San Francisco, California in 1945.

Today, however, Lionism is concerned that the political rhetoric heard so often in chambers such as those of the Security Council and governmental bodies around the world can escalate into action that violates peace for all mankind. The International Association of Lions Clubs, therefore, calls upon government officials and all policy making bodies to place public interest above self-interest. We insist that such representatives try harder, recognizing the necessity of urging greater diligence in avoiding actions that provoke violence and thus destroy peace.

Considered alone, a single act of a single individual or a single country may seem of minor significance; but when added to the projects of hundreds of communities and millions of people working together, the sum total reflects the magnitude of the endeavor as an instrument for international good will and peace.

There can be no progress, no real freedom, and no real peace if we must constantly be on our guard to the threat of war in a world filled with fear, mistrust, envy and historical animosity. Lionism offers a network of 39,000 Lions Clubs in 162 countries as proof that individuals of different beliefs and cultures can work together for the common good. The cooperative international relations projects of these Clubs illustrate that peace is no idle dream, but a living and vital reality.

Therefore, we call upon governmental and legislative leaders to be conscious of their great potential as effective instruments for the promotion of international peace; to be sensitive to world human needs; to be aware of our human interdependence in the world community; and to reaffirm their commitment to work together to achieve the goal for which we all strive—universal peace.

Presented at the United Nations, New York, New York, March 14, 1988