



CCIVS Statement on the Occasion of the 70th Anniversary

“Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed”, the preamble of the UNESCO constitution, is also part of the founding vision of the Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS). This statement is still as relevant today as it was 70 years ago. Capitalism continues to contribute to the unfair distribution of wealth and power, workers exploitation, and is bringing the planet to the edge of climate disaster. We are experiencing a return to the rise in populism, nationalism, xenophobia, racism, hate and fear, manipulation by governments and media, the loss of identity often through forced assimilation and the loss of community. For many people our sense of connection to the natural world has been dulled, we continue to contaminate the earth, we all too often see ourselves as separate and not as one part of the eco system - responsible for the future, and of the generations to come.

In 2018 we have seen the election of governments which support environmental destruction, which do not recognise the rights of indigenous peoples’ and peasants and who are actively supporting their continued displacement and genocide; governments who refuse to support refugees fleeing from wars created by the same governments who deny their right to asylum, people forced to return to their countries where certain death awaits them; the rejection of migrant’s rights, the closing of borders, the building of walls, hate crimes; the killing of journalists who have tried to expose corruption and the killing of environmental defenders. Political prisoners continue to be held without trial, or without sufficient evidence. The continued cycle of violence in the Middle East targets civilian populations decimated by war, hunger, occupation and forced to live in ‘unliveable’ conditions. Politicians are using the same hate speech as fascist governments of the past. History is repeating itself, and it is down to us to break this cycle.

2018 also saw the UN report on Climate Change, an urgent call to action to limit climate change catastrophe, we also learnt from other major reports that we have wiped out 60 % of wildlife since 1970 and that plastic is now inside all humans and animals. The change in weather cycles are leading to extreme environmental devastation, the result of anthropogenic (man-made) climate change is leading us on a clear path of destruction if we continue to live as we do today.

In face of these threats and in spite of them, we, the International Voluntary Service (IVS) movement commit to work together and defend our planet and its inhabitants, to deconstruct preconceptions and existing power structures, to enhance social transformation and to continue to re-form the broken bonds of community. CCIVS strives for social justice and rejects all forms of oppression and abuse. We will continue to work for a peaceful world where all are treated equally and with respect. We stand firmly behind our statement on Freedom of Movement and support the right to self-determination. We will continue our work for climate justice including the rights to food & housing and to a sustainable and dignified life, for migrant & refugee rights and universal civil rights, for gender rights, and the rights to sexual and personal bodily autonomy. Volunteering supports resilience, acts for solidarity not charity, and ensures the participation of all from a grassroots to a global level whilst contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals.

CCIVS in its 70th year and as an organisation with a political commitment, reaffirms its mission to work towards the objectives listed in its constitution; to promote and develop the voluntary service movement at national, regional and international levels with emphasis on the following priorities: peace through international understanding, friendship and co-operation among the people of the world, particularly youth; sustainable development and protection of the environment; recognition of all cultures in their diversity, emphasising the importance of the world’s cultural heritage; human rights, and individual and national liberation; opposition to all forms of social, cultural, political and economic exploitation. We are working to build an alternative future.

Kundapur, India, November 2018



CCIVS
70 YEARS
Coordinating Committee for
International Voluntary Service
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