



SCOUTS[®]
Creating a Better World

World Organization of the Scout Movement
Organisation Mondiale du Mouvement Scout
Всемирная Организация Скаутского Движения
Organización Mundial del Movimiento Scout
المنظمة العالمية للحركة الكشفية

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To: International Commissioners

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Statement from the World Scout Committee on Human Rights issues

Dear friends and colleagues,

At its last meeting, the World Scout Committee adopted the attached Statement on Human Rights issues, which I am pleased to share with you for information, reference and use as appropriate.

Yours sincerely,

Luc Panissod
Secretary General WOSM



STATEMENT FROM THE WORLD SCOUT COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

March 2010

1. From time to time, issues arise within the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM) which cause concern, either within the Scout Movement itself or further afield. Some of these concerns relate, in one way or another, to issues affecting human rights.

2. In responding to such concerns, the World Scout Committee is conscious of the wide diversity of opinion on questions pertaining to "human rights". The World Scout Committee is also very conscious that human rights issues are intrinsically "political" and is mindful that the Scout Movement is "non-political" (WOSM Constitution, Article I,1). The World Scout Committee, while fulfilling its constitutional obligations with respect to the requirements for membership of WOSM (WOSM Constitution, Article V), also has no wish to interfere in matters which may be considered "internal" to a particular National Scout Organization or which fall within the political jurisdiction of any national government or other authority.

3. The World Scout Committee bases its position on matters of human rights in full recognition of the definition, purpose and principles of the Scout Movement.

a. Scouting is defined as *"a voluntary non-political educational movement for young people open to all without distinction of gender, origin, race or creed, in accordance with the purpose, principles and method conceived by the Founder..."* (WOSM Constitution, Article I, Definition). Consequently, discrimination of any kind has no place within the Scout Movement.

b. The purpose of the Scout Movement is to *"contribute to the development of young people in achieving their full... potentials as individuals, as responsible citizens and as members of their local, national and international communities"* (WOSM Constitution, Article I, Purpose). Scouting, therefore, approaches issues of human rights from the perspective of the education of young people.

c. Article II (Principles) of the WOSM Constitution states that *"the Scout Movement is based on... participation in the development of society with recognition and respect for the dignity of humanity..."*, a basic Scouting principle that is fully consistent with all universal principles of human rights.

4. The World Scout Committee affirms its unequivocal adherence to the principles of human rights as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations in 1948 (*World Scout Conference Resolutions 19/77 and 8/88*). This includes, *inter alia*, articles related to discrimination¹.

5. The World Scout Committee also affirms its total commitment to the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted in 1989 (*World Scout Conference Resolution 16/90*). In this respect, the World Scout Committee is particularly mindful of the dignity of the human person, not only children and young people².

6. The World Scout Committee calls on all National Scout Organizations to adhere to the principles contained in these internationally accepted agreements, and to ensure that their actions are fully consistent with them. Furthermore, the World Scout Committee calls on all leaders of National Scout Organizations, at all levels, to ensure that their personal actions do not jeopardise in any way the reputation and good name of Scouting locally, nationally or internationally. If any Scout leader finds himself or herself in a position where their personal convictions on any matter affecting human rights are inconsistent with Scouting's purpose, principles or method, as defined in the WOSM Constitution, and in particular the requirements of the Scout Promise and Law, or Scouting's commitment to universal human rights, the World Scout Committee calls on them to withdraw from their position in the Scout Movement so as to preserve the good name and reputation of the Movement.

7. The World Scout Committee is mindful of its responsibility to preserve the unity of the Scout Movement. It will, therefore, take action whenever necessary to maintain the reputation and unity of the Movement including, if necessary, recommending the suspension or expulsion from membership of WOSM of any National Scout Organization whose actions place the reputation of the Scout Movement in jeopardy. Where the actions of any Scout leader threaten the good name of his or her National Scout Organization, and hence the reputation of the Scout Movement, the World Scout Committee calls on the National Scout Organization concerned to distance itself publicly and unequivocally from such actions.

1 See, for example, Article 7: All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

2 See, for example, the first two parts of the Preamble to the UN Convention on the Right of the Child:

- Considering that, in accordance with the principles proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, 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,
- Bearing in mind that the peoples of the United Nations have, in the Charter, reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person, and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,