

DELHI DECLARATION ON PEOPLES' RIGHT TO SAFETY

*A declaration adopted at the 5th World Conference on Injury Prevention and Control,
New Delhi, 8th March 2000*

Rationale

The Human Rights approach has been used effectively in many arenas, including the rights of the child, the rights of women and the rights of people in development. The Human Rights approach attempts to address issues of accountability at levels that range from that of the individual to those of the larger political and economic systems. The issues which such a document might address include non-discrimination, relationship to other human rights, accountability, the right to organise, the right to appropriate health care, the right to complain, sovereignty over living environments, the right to information and education, the right to participation, the right to environmental monitoring, the right to emergency preparedness, the right to relief and compensation, the right to enforcement of safety laws, the right to effective legal representation, the right to fair procedures, and the right to hold organisations and states accountable.

Definition

Safety can be defined as a state in which hazards and conditions leading to physical, psychological, and material harm are controlled in order to preserve the health and well-being of individuals and communities. Safety is a dynamic state resulting from the interaction of human beings with their physical, social, cultural, technological, political, economic and organisational environment. The objective is to establish a permanent state of vigilance and develop the mechanisms to control dangers on a continuous basis.

Safety relates to various dimensions of physical, social, and psychological well being. It includes the prevention and control of injuries, both physical and psychological, to individuals and communities as it should be contained in the notion of "human security" which is being discussed by the UN Security Council.

Essential conditions for both physical safety and the perception of safety include:

- freedom from violence in a climate of peace, justice and equity protecting human rights;
- the respect of values of individuals and communities as well as the physical, material, and psychological integrity of individuals; and
- strict enforcement of norms of transparency and accountability.

Safety can be achieved by acting on structures, environments, and attitudes and behaviours. This can be affected by:

- sharing information on risk and options for risk control between the public and political, professional, scientific, and community groups;
- concerted actions to maximise levels of safety achievable under the given conditions;

- adequate mechanisms for allocating resources for those in need and for resolution of conflicting interests; and
- legal bases for ensuring accountability of individuals, organisations and governments at all levels.

Declaration

The attendees of the 5th World Conference on Injury Prevention and Control declare their support for Safety as a Human Right because

- A. Injury is a huge burden as measured by disability-adjusted life years and as reflected in the burden of violence (as quantified in the WHO World Report on Violence).
- B. It is important to look holistically at safety because of the increase in complexity and interdependence of many related issues that interact with safety, including health, the environment, peace promotion and war, economic well being and development.
- C. The notion of Safety as a Human Right is an important policy tool for injury control and safety promotion. It is a way to bring together the Injury Control community and the Human Rights community for collective action that can be more effective than separate communities or individuals acting alone.
- D. The individuals or organisations represented at this 5th World Conference have much to contribute to developing a document elaborating the Right to Safety. This document will be presented for discussions and adoption in 2002 at the 6th World Conference and hopefully a document to support collective action through the United Nations and the WHO.

The next steps should include

- A. The declaration should be widely disseminated among institutions and non-governmental organisations which should be asked
 - to send their support for this declaration to South Asia Forum for Human Rights (SAFHR); and
 - whether they are interested in taking part in developing the charter on Peoples' Right to Safety.
- B. The draft of the Charter for Peoples' Right to Safety developed by SAFHR should be distributed to those who want to take part in this exercise.
- C. Revision of the charter should be co-ordinated by SAFHR in collaboration with the WHO Collaborating Centres.
- D. A revised version of the charter should be presented to the WHO Executive Board in January 2001 so that it may be presented before the World Health Assembly in May 2001.
- E. Develop a final document on Peoples' Right to Safety for presentation at the 6th World Conference on Injury Prevention and Control to be held in Montreal in 2002.