



## INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR OCTOBER 17

"Wherever men and women are condemned to live in extreme poverty, human rights are violated. To come together to ensure that these rights be respected is our solemn duty." Father Joseph Wresinski

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### GORÉE DECLARATION of the International Committee for October 17 at the end of its 10th biennial meeting in 2024

We, the members of the International Committee for October 17, meeting in Gorée

1. *Recognising* this place as a symbol of the transatlantic trafficking of slaves, a shameful chapter in human history marked by cruelty, humiliation and human suffering, and its lasting impact on racial inequality today as well as the trafficking in persons worldwide,
2. *Remembering and honouring* today the victims of the oppressive systems—the millions of women, men, and children, who were brutally captured, forcefully transported and robbed of their dignity and freedom — and also *remembering* the millions of lives lost and the human suffering caused by extreme poverty and paying homage to them today,
3. *Underlining* the link between the fight for the abolition of slavery and the fight to end poverty, recalled by Joseph Wresinski during his visit at the Maison des Esclaves in November 1987 and his words inscribed on a commemorative plaque "*millions and millions of men, women and children today are refusing misery and shame because men, yesterday treated as slaves by the powerful, affirmed in their hearts that they were men, and many died for three centuries so that no one would ever forget this down the centuries*",
4. *Affirming* that the fortunes amassed due to slavery should be restituted and the victims' families compensated and *further affirming* that victims of present day human trafficking and new forms of modern day slavery must be offered reparations with dignity,
5. *Recalling* that systemic oppression robbed millions of human beings of their freedom. In the present day, the disempowering political systems and profit driven economies make it impossible for the most deprived to liberate themselves from the

chains of misery; *further recalling* that discrimination and structural inequalities continue to widen the gulf between the privileged and the most marginalised and *deploring* the widespread existence of destitution alongside the extreme material wealth owned by a handful of people,

6. *Recalling also* that a participative research on the Hidden Dimension of Poverty<sup>1</sup> has demonstrated that poverty has multiple dimensions, some visible and others hidden, but are all interlinked, *welcoming* the 2024-2025 theme of October 17, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, highlighting one of the hidden dimensions – the social and institutional maltreatment experienced by people living in poverty –, and urging all governments to incorporate the participatory research findings and Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights<sup>2</sup> in reaching policy decisions,

7. *Emphasising* that a serious form of institutional maltreatment is the failure to provide a birth certificate or legal identity for every human being, and *affirming* the inalienable right of all children to have access to a name, an identity and to civil registration, which is an indispensable condition for access to all rights and *unequivocally affirming* that leaving no one behind starts with birth registration for every child,

8. *Recalling* the Global Goals adopted in 2015, by the world leaders which promised to leave no one behind and resolved to “free humanity from the tyranny of poverty, hunger and misery, to care for and preserve the planet” and that the recent United Nations Summit of the Future concluded that “poverty, hunger and inequality are on the rise. Human rights are under threat and we risk leaving millions of people behind,”

9. *Considering* that the climate emergency represents a new form of violence against people living in poverty and that the most deprived communities bear the heaviest burden from increased occurrences of extreme weather disasters and the destruction of homes, crops, and livelihoods,

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<sup>1</sup> Hidden Dimensions of Poverty Participatory Research, Oxford University and ATD Fourth World

<sup>2</sup> Human Rights Council Resolution 21/11 of 27 September 2012.

10. *Condemning* the brutal wars, plagued with war crimes and crimes against humanity and *rejecting* the spiralling violence and increases in military spending at the expense of public services, social programmes, and development assistance,

*Convinced*, as we unveil this **commemorative plaque** on Gorée island, despite the long nights of darkness, and look forward **to a new day with hope and determination, that we can build a better world for all** , we

11. *Call* on all the participants at the World Social Summit of 2025 and the fourth international conference on financing for development and to all future international gatherings of this type, to use them as opportunities for the realisation of our rights, demonstration of international solidarity and advancement of international cooperation on taxing wealthy individuals and using these new resources to ensure that no one is left behind,

12. *Demand* action and *call* on everyone concerned to achieve universal birth registration by 2030 and for all governments of the world to guarantee that every human being in their territories has the right to a legal identity,

13. *Call* for ever stronger and more open and inclusive commemorations of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, initiated on 17 October 1987 by Joseph Wresinski and more than 100,000 human rights defenders, a day that exemplifies solidarity at its strongest and humanity at its best,

14. *Envision* this commemorative plaque in Gorée can shine like a beacon of hope, that it can shine in every community, every neighbourhood, every workplace and every corner of our planet, and that each of us can be a beacon of light for others and from here, in Gorée, Africa, *call* on everyone, especially the younger generation from all over the world, to join us in reaching out to the most disadvantaged, to dream together and to work together, to put an end to discrimination, poverty and injustice.

Done in Gorée Island, on 18 October 2024