



OMEP WORLD ASSEMBLY DECLARATION

Stop wars and violence. Urgent call to peace, disarmament, and dialogue

Athens, July 13th, 2022

We, members of the World Executive Committee of the World Organization for Early Childhood Education (OMEP), Presidents and delegates of the National Committees of 34 countries, present at the 74th World Assembly, call to states, international and multilateral organizations to use all available means to permanently stop violence and wars that devastate many countries in the world.

In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Post-2015 Development Agenda: **Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. This Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet, and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. One of the **areas of action of critical importance for humanity and the planet is Peace**, and the Heads of State and Government and High Representatives, declared that they were determined **to foster peaceful, just, and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development**. All humanity has the ethical commitment to achieve Goal 16 in order to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. At the same time, States and governments must comply with the United Nations Charter **to protect children's rights to the highest degree and as the highest priority, through dialogue and negotiation**.

OMEP stands in solidarity with the children and families who live in conflict, through all the Committees who have known how to work in peace, jointly and ecumenically, over cultural, ideological, political, or economic differences for 74 years. We are convinced that safeguarding young children by prioritizing their protection, health, care, education, development, and guaranteeing the fulfillment of their rights is not only necessary to alleviate suffering, but will also drive peace and security, resilience, justice, and social cohesion for all human beings.

The instability and resulting wounds and trauma that are being inflicted on young children and their families, are tragic, and without the committed and sustained action of the global community, will be long lasting from generation to generation. The world must assure safety and protection of families fleeing destruction. Therefore, we call on every country to ensure the best interests of children, through providing gender-sensitive services, protecting children from any kind of violence or abuse, and ensuring the provision of psychosocial support and life opportunities for early childhood and their caregivers. We know that holistic early childhood education and care public policies and centers are crucial to mitigate the current and long-term impact of the adversities facing so many of the children and families living in conflict.

Funding focused on Early Childhood Care and Education, has lately been insufficient, especially in crisis-affected countries. We call on governments and donors to direct more funds to support them. This includes expanded and prioritized investments in good health, adequate nutrition, opportunities for learning, safety and security, and responsive care, as much as development assistance, emergency responses, and humanitarian action.

If we are to build real peace in our world, we must protect and support young children and work together towards the protection of human rights, equity, and social justice for and among them. Let us commit our efforts and all resources to bring them happiness and well-being, so that they can become active citizens in a more peaceful and sustainable world!