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DRAFT DECLARATION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS  
OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

Statement submitted by Pax Romana International Catholic Movement  
for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs, a non-governmental  
organization in consultative status, category B

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Pax Romana, whose members include thousands of Catholic intellectuals and students in all parts of the world, holds that a suitable draft declaration on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance would further the recognition of basic human rights and would be a real contribution to world peace. For this purpose it submits to the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities the following observations and suggestions:

- (1) The history of mankind illustrates vividly the dangers of religious intolerance. Failure to accept the rights of conscience and religious freedom and the persecution of both individuals and religious bodies continues to be a source of suffering and of bitter discord both within nations and among nations. Since one of the main objectives of the United Nations is to promote world peace and prosperity it is fitting that it should take a decisive stand against this source of turmoil and unrest.
- (2) The Universal Declaration of Human Rights not only proclaims directly in article 18 the right to freedom of religion, but it also upholds many

related rights such as the right to freedom of assembly, of speech, and of parental education of children. It is the purpose of the proposed Declaration to protect these rights, which have already been accepted in principle by the nations and peoples of the international community, against erosion by any form of public or private intolerance. Therefore this proposed declaration should clearly state that nothing in its provisions may be liable to any interpretation which would restrict or impede the exercise of these fundamental rights.

(3) Any realistic declaration in this area must recognize the fact that religious belief has a profound effect upon the totality of life and conduct of the believer. It goes far beyond the area of worship and ritual and includes, among other things, a moral code; a desire to serve one's fellow man; and a need to view social, economic and political questions in terms of the moral and religious convictions of the believer. Hence, these aspects, as well as worship and ritual, must also be safeguarded against the effects of intolerance and discrimination in civic and professional life.

(4) For the great majority of believers, religious observance and practice involve corporate actions, such as group worship; schools for the teaching of religion; institutions for the service of mankind, such as hospitals, orphanages, and charitable bodies; freedom to hold and dispose of property; a religious press; and the right to instruct and maintain persons who wish to devote their lives to the service of religion. Therefore it is not enough to protect only the right of the individual to freedom of conscience. Man is also social by nature and his religious freedom manifests itself in social forms as well as in personal worship. Accordingly not only individuals must be protected by this instrument but also religious bodies in their corporate social activities.

(5) While organized religion has taken many forms throughout history, it is a fact that hundreds of millions belong to religious bodies that are supranational in character. Hence, effective freedom of religion demands that believers have full rights to every form of communication necessary to maintain the integrity of their supranational religious body. These include, among other rights, freedom to visit and receive visits from

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their coreligionists in their own and other lands, pilgrimage to holy places, attendance at international religious meetings and councils, and reciprocal contact with religious authorities in other lands.

(6) The family character of religious freedom must be recognized. This calls for protection of the right of parents to instruct and to ensure the instruction of their minor children in religious faith and practice.

(7) Religious freedom does not exempt citizens from just laws, compatible with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, applied without discrimination to all citizens. Nor does it sanction practices which violate the basic human rights of any individual. But laws, taxes, and administrative practices that impede the full and legitimate expression of religious belief should be rescinded as violative of the rights of mankind.

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