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**RELIGIONS FOR PEACE WORLD ASSEMBLY ENDORSES
DECLARATION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN**

(KYOTO, JAPAN, 28 August 2006) – Delegates of the *Religions for Peace* Eighth World Assembly today endorsed the Declaration on Violence against Children, which commits religious communities to confront violence against children and protect children in their communities.

The Declaration will be presented to the United Nations and member governments when they receive the Study on Violence Against Children report due to be released and presented to the United Nations General Assembly on 11 October 2006.

The endorsed Declaration states, "We find strong consensus across our religious traditions about the inherent dignity of every person, including children. This requires that we reject all forms of violence against children, and protect and promote the sanctity of life in every stage of a child's development...We believe that religious communities must be part of the solution to eradicating violence against children, and we commit ourselves to take leadership in our religious communities and the broader society."

The Declaration was developed during a global consultation convened by UNICEF and *Religions for Peace* in May 2006 in Toledo, Spain. Almost 50 representatives from 30 countries and many different religions submitted an agreed set of recommendations to the report, developed commitments for actions by religious communities, and drafted the declaration that was formally adopted today.

James Cairns, Director of the Advocacy and Action for Children program at *Religions for Peace*, said, "Religious communities are uniquely positioned to apply their areas of strength to confront and prevent violence against children. These areas include consciousness raising, the empowerment of children, and inter- and intra- faith actions. For example, religious communities, working with adults, can promote and strengthen non-violent approaches to child-rearing."

Through the partnership with UNICEF, *Religions for Peace* has been able to offer a spiritual, religious and human values perspective to the UN Study on Violence against Children. Ann M. Veneman, UNICEF Executive Director said, "UNICEF has a long history of working with religious communities across the globe. Their moral authority and their vast constituencies make them uniquely powerful allies for children. This Declaration is a rallying call for religious groups to unite around this common cause: the protection of children from violence of all kinds." The two organizations will continue to work closely together to assist religious communities in effectively addressing violence against children.

The *Religions for Peace* Eighth World Assembly convenes more than 800 senior religious leaders from every region of the world and all major faith traditions to address the power of religious communities to confront violence and advance shared security. Assembly delegates come from the *Religions for Peace* network of more than seventy national and regional affiliated inter-religious councils and groups.

For 60 years UNICEF has been the world's leader for children, working on the ground in 156 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments.