

Conference Statement

of the 9th International Conference on on War Tax Resistance and Peace Tax Campaigns

In the context of the right not to be complicit in killing, more than 100 delegates to the 9th *International Conference on War Tax Resistance and Peace Tax Campaigns* from 16 European, African, Asian and American countries call for full legal recognition of the right of those who object in conscience to paying for the military element in taxation.

With the ever increasing threats of war and military conflict in mind, the conference has made the following statements:

- The threat with and the use of military force is not compatible with our conscience, even if used as last resort (*ultima ratio*).
- The international NGO *Conscience and Peace Tax International* (CPTI), located in Belgium, will be given increasing financial support for its work for human rights at the United Nations.
- There is an overwhelming disparity between enormously high military expenditure and the minimal support given to the development of civilian peace work. This disparity must be brought to the attention of the public.
- The human right of conscientious objection should be reflected in the process of creating a constitution for the European Union.
- The participants of the conference call upon the World Council of Churches, all individual churches and other faiths, as well as all people committed to peace to put conscientious objection to the military element in taxation on the agenda of the *Decade to Overcome Violence* and to actively support it.
- Members of the conference have met with Members of the European and German Parliaments and have stressed the right to follow individual conscience.

In international affairs, since non-violent conflict resolution appears to be increasingly replaced by military action the conference is deeply concerned about war preparations by the US Government against Iraq. It calls upon governments not to participate in the increasing escalation and to reject any request for the use of their military facilities.

The following delegates have been elected to the board of CPTI for the next four years: Marian Franz (USA), Bart Horemann (Netherlands), Eric Hummels (chairman, Netherlands), Hannelore Morgenstern (Germany), Pedro Otaduy (Spain), Dirk Panhuis (Belgium) and Cosimo Tomaselli (Italy).

The Belgian organisation „Vredesactie“ (Peace Action) offers to host the 10th *International Conference on War Tax Resistance and Peace Tax Campaigns* in Belgium in July 2004 and this is joyfully accepted by the conference.

