

Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization

YEARBOOK 1996

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The text of the UNPO Yearbook is a testament to the struggles of UNPO Members' efforts to ameliorate their difficult situations. The fact that the UNPO Yearbook gets published, though, is a testament to the struggles of the Secretariat staff. To prepare the Yearbook, staff gather information from more than 50 disparate regions of the world, use a wide variety of languages, receive materials by post, fax, telephone, electronic mail, package and courier, translate and modify diverse syntactical and grammatical configurations and styles, and generally coordinate the Members' efforts to put understandable words and phrases to their complex and not infrequently painful predicaments.

The entire Secretariat is involved in a thousand different ways in making the Yearbook a reality: helping to contact Members, soothing frayed nerves, typing and re-typing, consultations and pacifications, answering telephone calls and e-mails, keeping track of costs and finances, and a million other details too small to mention but too large to neglect.

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On a personal note, I am grateful for the individual members whom I have met. It is they who imposed a human face onto the often impersonal stories that we read and hear every day in the Secretariat. It is to them and to their children that I dedicate the work which we all accomplished in order to produce this Yearbook.

Christopher A. Mullen
Editor

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PREFACE

José Ramos-Horta

*1996 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate
Special Representative, National Council of Maubere Resistance
East Timor*

The search for peace and justice has been a human pursuit throughout history. This is no less so in our time, and the denial of the right of self-determination is an important source of disturbances to world peace. Even if international legal mechanisms are in place to protect the right of self-determination, the lack of political will and misguided concepts of state 'realism' leave the weak unprotected and with a need to fend for themselves. These oppressed peoples, denied their right by the powerful, are compelled to struggle in a variety of ways to assert themselves and regain their legitimate entitlements.

In 1996, these self-determination struggles once again commanded prominent international attention, and many of the nations involved were UNPO members: among others, the people of Tibet, Bougainville, and Ogoniland. For many the road ahead remains a long one. However, during 1996, there has been progress on issues affecting UNPO Members, most notably Chechenia, Sanjak and East Timor. These and other Members, though, are still in need of support.

UNPO has endeavored for 5 years now to provide this support. The assistance UNPO provides is a valuable one, without which many nations, peoples and minorities would be left with no voice at all. As the organization grows and develops, it will be able to continue providing this assistance for the peoples of the world who lack the freedoms many take for granted.

I was very grateful to be presented, as a representative of the people of East Timor, with the first UNPO Award in February, given for outstanding dedication to the rights of threatened peoples throughout the world. This contributed to attracting further public attention, as well as greater awareness among the other UNPO Members, to the difficult situation in East Timor, the suffering of its people under a brutal military occupation by Indonesia, and to our continuing efforts to have our right of self-determination respected. The UNPO Award was followed at the end of the year by the Nobel Peace Prize, awarded to the people of East Timor through Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes-Belo and myself. This was a great and humbling honor, which helps to generate the widest international awareness of the situation in our homeland.

But, East Timor does not suffer alone. In our world there are many other violations of the basic rights of nations and peoples taking place. I call on all fellow

UNPO Members to develop an even greater solidarity in the future, so that we can jointly protect ourselves and contribute to the active defence of our collective rights.

This UNPO Yearbook is a record of the work being carried out by committed members sharing common goals. It can be seen as the rich history of cultures as varied as the Batwa and the Lakota, the Kurds and the Bougainvilleans, or the East Timorese. We all share common aspirations for ourselves, our children, and our children's children. I sincerely hope our work will help to see these aspirations and goals realized in the near future.

Through the UNPO we can actively contribute to create the world of justice and peace we desire. Our common efforts unite us, and the victory of one provides encouragement to the others. I share the honor of the UNPO Award and the Nobel Peace Prize with all those who take part in the peaceful struggle for self-determination. In such recognition, I am inspired by knowing that the principles of non-violence, religious tolerance and the belief in the right of self-determination shared by all UNPO members, and enshrined in the organization's covenant, can be effective. I am proud of the valuable work UNPO accomplishes and proud of my association with that work. This is work born of dreams of justice, peace and brotherhood in our world; of dreams that will never die.

Yearbook 1996

Now in its second year of annual publication, the *UNPO Yearbook* contains important information about the current state of affairs of the 50 Members of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO). UNPO was created in 1991, by the members themselves, in order to provide a platform for those nations, minorities and peoples who are not represented in established international forums such as the United Nations. The mission of UNPO is to assist these people to advance their interests effectively through non-violent means, including diplomacy, through the use of the United Nations and other international procedures for the protection of human rights, through development of public opinion and through the exploration of legal options to defend their rights. The number of UNPO Members has grown rapidly since its founding and today the 50 Members represent over 100 million people.

The *UNPO Yearbook* provides a comprehensive overview of the 1996 activities of UNPO, a review of the history and current positions of UNPO Members, a selection of key UNPO documents and annual information, as well as 1996 Conference and Mission Reports. An essential reference work for anyone involved in current international affairs, the UNPO Yearbook is the only publication which gives access to the material of the UNPO and its Members. The UNPO Yearbook for 1996 represents a considerable body of information providing a record of the changes and developments relating to UNPO and to the activities of its Members during the past year.

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