

SIGNIS World Congress 2022

Statement

Theme: Peace in the Digital World

Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

(Isaiah 43.19)

We the delegates of SIGNIS, the World Catholic Association for Communication, coming from 34 countries, gathered at Sogang University, Seoul, Republic of Korea from 14-18, August 2022 have discussed and deliberated on the theme 'Peace in the Digital World.'

Now as we leave this Congress with new insights, awareness, and resolves, we find a great deal to reflect on.

We live in a world where the 'digital divide' increases the gap between the rich and the poor leading to inequality in accessing the fruits of the digital revolution.

We realize that as people become hyper-connected , they are also challenged with socioeconomic, cultural, political, religious, spiritual, and ecological disconnections, leading to isolation, confusion and hopelessness. Online games, pornography addiction, overexposure to violence, and contents of divisive nature in media lead to destructive behaviours.

We recognize the devastating effects of fake news on contemporary society such as communal clashes among people. Vulnerable groups in the society are often the major victims of fake news.

We realize that equitable digital access and infrastructure strategy can develop a 'resilient environment' and support 'integral human development'.

We need to move from individual engagement to community building. As Pope Francis says, 'God's style is closeness, compassion and tenderness'.

We need to weave the web with truth and beauty of faith and hope. Technology has to be imbued with ethics and thoughtfulness.

We believe that it is possible to build a new society by creating awareness that inspires us to work together in peace with people of different cultures, beliefs, religions, and ideologies.

We affirm genuine interest in marginalized people and commit ourselves to communicate true and meaningful information to promote their struggles.

We urge media practitioners and citizens to take action to protect the human rights of civilians caught up in war and conflict zones. Media professionals especially are enjoined not just to report events but to engage actively in

supporting the victims of war and working towards conflict resolutions. By so doing we can pass unto the next generation the legacy of peace.

We need to cultivate the journalistic values of advocating for justice, holding authorities to account, and establishing common ground through well-researched context and nuanced explanation, so as to provide a guiding light for our readers, viewers and listeners.

We are heartened by the stories of young people from across the world on peace building. Listening to these stories of young people engaged in media activities, we realize their vital role in building communities and promoting peace through modern technologies using creative methodologies.

We extend an open invitation to the young people of the world to join hands with us in peace building processes.

We feel we leave this Congress spiritually and professionally enriched. We believe that through the renewing power of the Holy Spirit we can achieve peace in the digital world.

SIGNIS World Congress, Seoul,

18 August 2022.