

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF SOCIAL DEFENCE**

**RESOLUTION ON A MORATORIUM ON THE DEATH
PENALTY**

1. In 2007, the international movement for the abolition of the death penalty made significant progress when a proposal for a resolution regarding a moratorium on the death penalty was submitted to the United Nations.
The death penalty is still applied in many countries around the world including the USA and China, the biggest in terms of size and political influence, which are permanent members of the United Nations of the Security Council.
2. However, the historic trend towards the progressive reduction of the death penalty in the world is now clear and irreversible: the number of abolitionist countries, *de jure* or *de facto*, has increased to 130. Even in those countries who have most often resorted to capital punishment, we can observe a tendency to limit the number of executions. Finally, in the countries of the European Union, the death penalty is only a remote memory and is often explicitly banned by their Constitutions.
3. The debate on the death penalty has traditionally focused on ethical and utilitarian arguments. However, it is today undeniable that such a penalty is equivalent to a negation of our modern perception of human rights which is based on the respect of human life and human dignity.
Public opinion is also becoming more sensitive to the issue; the spectacular presentation of cases involving the death penalty by the media and the subsequent offense to human dignity has created a deep sense of repulsion around the world.

4. We should also not forget that the Statute of the International Criminal Court formally sanctions the refusal of the international community to punish even the most serious war crimes and crimes against humanity with death. 50 years after the Nuremberg trials this constitutes a major step towards the humanization of international criminal law.
5. On September 28th, at the initiative of Italy and Portugal, a meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the 95 countries that have signed the request for a moratory, will be held at the UN headquarters.
In this context and at the end of its 15th International Congress (Toledo, 20-22 September 2007), the General Assembly of the Société internationale de défense sociale, a movement for the promotion of a humane criminal policy which also draws inspiration from the teachings of of Cesare Beccaria, wishes to express its firm and unanimous support of the proposal for a moratorium on the death penalty, as a first step towards the complete abolition of capital punishment worldwide.

San Pedro Martir, Toledo, 22 September 2007.