

# François Houtart. UNESCO Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence

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The *BRussels Tribunal* president François Houtart (Belgium) and Abdul Sattar Edhi (Pakistan) to share 2009 UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence

The Director-General of UNESCO, Koïchiro Matsuura, has decided, following the unanimous recommendation of the International Jury, to award the 2009 UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence to the following two laureates, dividing the \$100,000 amount of the Prize equally between them:

**François Houtart** (Belgium) for his life-long commitment to world peace, intercultural dialogue, human rights and the promotion of tolerance, and in recognition of his outstanding efforts to advance the cause of social justice in the world

**Abdul Sattar Edhi** (Pakistan) for his life-long efforts to ameliorate the conditions of the most disadvantaged groups in Pakistan and South Asia, and to promote the ideals of human dignity, human rights, mutual respect and tolerance.

Dedicated to advancing the spirit of tolerance in the arts, education, culture, science and communication, the Prize is awarded every two years to individuals or institutions for outstanding contributions to the promotion of tolerance and non-violence.

Mr Houtart is an ardent promoter of North-South cooperation and the founder of the Tri-Continental Centre (CETRI), a non-governmental organization renowned for its work on development issues and in the International Council of the World Social Forum. Known throughout his life as a defender of human rights, he has contributed significantly to the advancement of the inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogue. As a noted sociologist of religions and theology, he has authored numerous publications and given lectures in over 100 universities around the world. An honorary member of the Academy of Sciences of Vietnam and Cuba and a member of the Commission on Struggle against Racism of the Ecumenical Council of the Churches, he has served as President of the Committee for Human Rights in Burundi (1986-1992); founder and director of the international review "Social Compass" (1960-1990); and President of the International League for People's Rights (2003-2008).

The Prize-giving ceremony will be held on International Day for Tolerance, celebrated every year on 16 November.

**Prof. Em. François Houtart** (Participant in the Bertrand Russell War Crimes Tribunal on US Crimes in Vietnam in 1967, Director of the Tricontinental Center (Cetri), spiritual father and member of the International Committee of the World Social Forum of Porto Alegre, Executive Secretary of the Alternative World Forum, President of the International League for Rights and Liberation of People, President of the *BRussells* Tribunal and senior advisor to the President of the United Nations General Assembly Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann – Belgium)

We'd like to congratulate François Houtart for his commitment to peace, his commitment to justice and his relentless efforts to defend the oppressed people in the South.

The *BRussells* Tribunal Executive Committee.

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