

LET'S BUILD PEACE!

For long-lasting improvements in issues like health, food, the economy, the environment, digital transparency, peace is vital. We use the UN's Culture of Peace Initiative to divide peace into manageable elements: Education for Peace; Sustainable Development; the Equality of Women; Human Rights; Disarmament and Security; Democratic Participation; Tolerance and Solidarity; and the Free Flow of Information. The UN General Assembly proclaimed 2001-2010 to be the UN Decade for the Culture of Peace.

1. EDUCATION FOR PEACE

Need for capacity development

Education shapes and transforms society, playing a key role in peacebuilding. Capacity development issues for conflict prevention should aim to improve individual skills and organisational procedures, mitigating the risk of conflict. It must also assist educational planners on conflict prevention measures, ensuring they have skills and knowledge necessary for the development of curricula that reflect principles of peacebuilding, tolerance and human rights.

Strengthening the role of youth

Education policy-makers and planners can benefit from emerging thinking on how young people learn to adapt their education and training systems as part of the technological age, and thereby help them become leaders and role models in society both within and outside school. Youth can be mobilised to contribute to conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities with different groups of students, acting as mentors and mediators to younger children and peers, participating in intra-community projects, especially in sensitive areas, and humanitarian and emergency aid, taking on electoral responsibilities, and managing cultural of peace centres.

2. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Security Council: an obstacle

The UN Security Council's delay in supporting the Secretary-General's call for a Global Ceasefire shocked all, especially as UNICEF reported 250 million children were caught in the armed conflict.

The UN's 70-years old Uniting for Peace resolution, first used in 1950 when the Security Council failed to act, allows the General Assembly to take over in such cases and 'use all means to maintain international peace and security'. Further use of the Uniting for Peace option could make it clear to the five permanent member states that they should reform - or get out of the way.

Smart Sustainable Cities

By 2050, 70% of us will live in cities; the Smart Sustainable Cities project offers an effective solution to the world's growing urban population. By integrating technology with sustainable management strategies to use resources more efficiently, we help the environment in a holistic way, from improving waste management to optimising traffic flow and sanitation systems. This resonates with the UN's SDGs, and with civic leadership, secures an important condition for the Culture of Peace Initiative.

3. EQUALITY OF WOMEN

Women on the front foot

Whereas the UN's challenge had traditionally been the protection of women, it agreed in 2000 to bring women to the forefront in overcoming the challenges to peace, especially in peacekeeping. In 1993, women made up 1% of UN peacekeepers, now 6%, and 10% in UN police but for 2028, it plans to raise this to 15%, with 20% in police units. To expedite this, the UN will bring in better recruitment, retention and training and provide better accommodation, sanitation, health care and protective equipment.

Women on the front line

These initiatives help women in the communities where UN peacekeepers are deployed. The claim, once thought as extravagant, that 'There is no sustainable peace without the full and equal participation of women' is now accepted. In Sudan, it was brave women who were the driving force in the protest movement. In African SADC states, 50% of election candidates must be women. Women leaders in African states are true game changers. We must support them.

4. HUMAN RIGHTS

Support the UN Peacebuilding Commission

Early operationalising of pre-emptive conflict prevention can work towards an ideal environment of 'Positive Peace' in which elevated economic and societal outcomes, paired with a diminished number of grievances, lower levels of violence and the will to resort to it. Positive peace is a society free from the structural problems that would lead its citizens to resort to violent actions.

Expand Accountability Mechanisms to Defend International Human Rights Through building on initiatives such as the [Responsibility to Protect](#), UN member states must commit to upholding human rights standards, initiate unanimous international responses when violations begin to occur, and cultivate a normative shift towards a culture that rejects human rights violations and resort to conflict as viable options.

5. DISARMAMENT AND SECURITY

Support the [#ICANSAVE My City](#) campaign

By happy chance, UN Day witnessed the ratification of the [2017 UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#) and was welcomed by many. The most effective support for this is through the [#ICANSAVE MY CITY](#) campaign started by ICAN which was awarded the [2017 Nobel Peace Prize](#). Using social media, all should campaign for their own city to join the programme Lethal Autonomous Weapons (killer robots) Young people should support initiatives like [Pugwash](#), currently organising an ethical science festival for young people and extending their mission beyond nuclear weapons to tomorrow's horror weapon, [the killer robot](#). University UN societies across the country could lead workshops for younger people in the surrounding areas.

6. DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

Youth involvement

More than ever before, the UN seeks to link with today's youth. Research shows that the young and those in developing countries are more optimistic about the future than their elders. And yet, [new surveys](#) report young people in the USA, UK and Australia questioning the value of democracy. In response, we must ensure youth is represented even in the highest fora, starting with a [UN Youth Council](#), despite local and national cultural obstructionism.

Listening to minorities

The [Black Lives Matter](#) initiative challenges everyone to review their perceptions of others.

Communities link up worldwide

The [Open Government Partnership](#) linking governments and civil society in 78 countries encourages rich and poor to showcase successful case studies and identify 'bright lights': those communities which are exemplars of reform. More voices, more progress.



7. TOLERANCE AND SOLIDARITY

Tolerance

Tolerance is an important peacemaker. This involves not the indifference we sometime show another, but rather curiosity in the other, a desire to understand the other side of the argument. Be the first to try to understand the other person!

Solidarity

When the UN was founded, all had lived through a pandemic, a global depression, genocide and world war. They knew all about solidarity. How do we rate? Some countries took months to show such solidarity in joining the [COVAX](#) programme even though 'vacci-nationalism' is not only unfair, but self-defeating. In preparing for the next pandemic, let's show the same solidarity as shown in 1945!

8. FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION

Sharing best practice

Firstly, many feel that there has been too much attention focused on how the media conducts its reports on conflict management rather than examining how well it reports on those processes which are important, such as community peacebuilding and state-building institutions. To generate more effective [media development in post-conflict environments](#), especially where internet access is poor, [media-military dialogues](#) can help to build trust and understanding between these two sectors and beyond, to the communities they serve.

Media regulatory reform

This should play a role in political settlements in fragile states. The regulatory framework should accommodate proportionate political coverage of parties and mechanisms to include minority political and cultural interests. There must be clarity in setting guidelines for licences to accommodate all media actors, including the small and independent.