



Interdependence,
Mutual Prosperity and
Universal Values for World Peace

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Global Vision for Peace: A Participatory and Integrated Approach

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Since the beginning of the nineties, the number and intensity of armed conflicts had declined. This was in large measure achieved through peaceful settlement of conflicts accompanied by peace support at the local, national, regional, and international levels. The United Nations had played a critical role in supporting this positive trend through its Peace Operations and through the work of its wider political human rights and development pillars.

Despite this overall spread of peace, the last decade witnessed a rise in violent conflicts.¹ They are also becoming more complex and protracted, involving more non-state groups, regional, and international actors. They are more intractable and less conducive to a political resolution.² More importantly, they are becoming threats to global peace and security. Insecurity (Political and Criminal Violence, Civil Unrest) has become a primary development challenge of our time.³

This is requiring more concerted efforts and effective synergy by the international community to prevent and minimize the dangers associated with conflict and violence and their devastating consequences on our society, eroding all chances of peace, justice, and development.

The World Bank and United Nations report Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict projects that more than half of the people living in poverty will be found in countries effected by high levels of violence by 2030.⁴

Today, millions of families find themselves trapped in situations of war and violent conflict that disrupt the fabric of their societies and compromise the very foundation of their institutions. As revealed by a new Save the Children report, more children than ever before, at least 420 million children are living in conflict zones. Twenty-nine million children or 1 in 5 were born into conflict in 2018.⁵

The impact of violent conflict on families and communities is tremendous and should not be tolerated. In addition to indiscriminate killings and maiming, appalling abuses are perpetrated against them, their children are trafficked and enrolled as child soldiers, and combatants.

Women and girls also face the atrocities of sexual violence and exploitation which include rape, sexual slavery, forced marriage, and trafficking.⁶ Sexual exploitation is still used as a tactic of war and terrorism, destroying families and communities attacking their dignity and humanity.⁷

When their homes and communities are no more safe havens, and when their streets become battlefields and their schools used for military purposes, families flee for their lives in search of safety in the neighboring countries or thousands of miles away from their homeland.

This is a time of unprecedented displacement of more than 70 million people, primarily women and children.⁸ An estimated 50 million children have migrated across borders or have been forcibly displaced,

and 28 million children have been uprooted by horrific violence.⁹ The danger they encounter during their harrowing journey includes exploitation and violence, abduction and detention, xenophobia and discrimination.¹⁰

The plight of families and children whose lives have been shattered by violent conflict continues to haunt us... Images of families and children fleeing their homes, communities, and villages continue to haunt us... Their perilous journeys continue to haunt us... But what should haunt us more is the full extent of people's pain and loss... as well as their resilience and moral courage, which is not captured and is under-reported or recorded. Rarely are the families asked how the conflicts has affected them and violence affected them, or what would make their lives better, and how could we change the tide of violence... towards a path to peace... reconciliation and dialogue.

It is in this context of devastation and complexity that the United Nations continues its journey to further advance the ideals of,

“We the People of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women, and nations large and small...” further they say, *“and to unite our strengths and to maintain international peace and security.”*¹¹

Nevertheless, the United Nations continues its journey, to further advance its ideals and fulfill its goals, in a new era of building a world of peace. In an era where people are at the centre of peace and development efforts...In an era of dialogue and reconciliation...In an era of protection of civilians...in an era of sustaining peace... Most importantly, in an era of inclusion and partnership with all members of society, including women, youth, and children in the service of peace. Who also express themselves saying that they want to be heard, not only as victims of violence, conflicts, and displacement but as agents of change and drivers of peace.

In laying the foundation of an environment conducive to peace and sustaining peace, the Un General Assembly adopted in 1997 the groundbreaking resolution 52/15 proclaiming the year 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace¹². In its resolution 53/25 adopted on the 10th of November 1998, it proclaimed the period 2001-2010 as the international decade for a Culture of Peace and non-violence for the children of the world.¹³ On the 13th of December 1999, the General Assembly adopted a Declaration and programme of action on the Culture of Peace.¹⁴ Subsequent resolution adopted every year have reaffirmed the commitment of the United Nations to build and promote the Culture of Peace. On the occasion of the observance of the 20th anniversary of the Culture of Peace and the United Nations high-level forum held on the 13th of September 2019, the General Assembly

adopted on the 12th of December the annual resolution A/74/21, titled “Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace” that further reconfirmed the commitment of the United Nations to the follow up of the Declaration and programme of action on a Culture of Peace.¹⁵

The vision of the Culture of Peace was furthered captured by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the “Sustaining Peace Resolution.” In the historic and memorable meeting of the General Assembly on the 25th of September 2015, all member states adopted the transformative 2030 Agenda. The Agenda, which is universal, integrated and indivisible in nature recognized for the first time the direct link between peace, justice, and development. Its seventeen goals range from ending poverty in all its forms everywhere to ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education to reducing inequalities within and among countries, to achieving gender equality, to taking action to combat climate change, and also to promoting peaceful and inclusive societies as articulated in goal 16.¹⁶ The Agenda calls for:

“Peaceful, just and inclusive societies that provide equal access to justice and that are based on respect for human rights (including the right to development) on effective rule of law and good governance at all levels, and on transparent, effective and accountable institutions.”¹⁷

In signing on the 2030 transformative Agenda, the world leaders expressed their determination to foster peaceful, just and inclusive

societies that are free from fear and violence, and for “not leaving anyone behind.”¹⁸

The ground-breaking Sustaining Peace Resolutions: further confirmed the indivisible agendas of sustaining Peace and Sustainable development. They also emphasized the importance of a comprehensive approach to sustaining peace, particularly through the prevention of conflict and addressing its root causes. They also promote sustained and sustainable economic growth, poverty eradication, social development, national reconciliation, and unity, including through inclusive dialogue and mediation. Most importantly the resolution confirms the vital role of women, youth, families, and communities in preventing conflict in peacemaking, peacebuilding and sustaining peace.¹⁹

The importance of the participation of all stakeholders in the service of peace was affirmed in the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, it calls on for the engagement of communities and families, including women, girls, and young people to prevent violent extremism.²⁰

Twenty years ago, on the 31st of October, the Security Council adopted the resolution 1325. The Landmark resolution affirmed the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peacebuilding and peacekeeping. It urged all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations Peace and Security efforts.²¹

The resolution on “Youth Peace and Security” (2250) reinforces the power of young women and men in shaping peace and security in the world. It urges the international community and government to support the youth efforts and integrate them in decision making at all levels, carrying out intergenerational dialogue. It further highlights the important role of education, skill development, and employment facilities in the struggle against poverty, social and political marginalization and exclusion that are driving factors for war and extremism.²²

To crystalize this new vision and action for preventing conflict, building and sustaining peace, the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres introduced a set of mutually reinforcing reforms to ensure that the UN is more fit for purpose including the realm of Peace and Security and that all its agencies should work effectively together to achieve the development and Peace Agenda.²³

In his January 2018 report on “Peace-building and Sustaining Peace,” he said:

“The scale and nature of the challenges of sustaining Peace calls for closer strategic and operational partnerships among the United Nations, national government and other key stakeholders, including international, regional, and sub regional organizations, international financial institutions, civil society organizations, women’s groups, youth organizations, and the private sector.”²⁴

Hence, it has become important to shape innovative, transformative, and participatory approaches to address both Policies and global action to prevent conflicts reduce violence, build and sustain peace.

In the last two years, the UN, its agencies, the World Group and other research and policy organizations including Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, presented to the world an integrated approach towards peace that calls on all institutions to work together in the path of preventing violent conflict. This call does not only emphasize that peacebuilding strategy should include the policy, regional, national and local level, but also to ensure local participation and ownership of peacebuilding design and practice.²⁵

A growing body of evidence shows that participation of communities, women, youth and children in all aspects of peacemaking, peace building and sustaining peace has a tangible impact on human security, and on peace and security in general. They play an important role in sustaining peace by anchoring peace dividends in their communities. For example, women are vocal advocates for preventing conflict before it breaks. We know that in numerous countries women are at the forefront of campaigns to diffuse tension between different groups. Women frequently bridge political, economic and social divides, as they are able to build a broad coalition for peace, they also take part in national and local reconciliation.

There is also, now, an emerging network of young women for peace and leadership that supports and empowers young women and girls in conflict affected countries to fulfill the role in peacebuilding and counter violent extremism.²⁶

The new and well-established body of scientific evidence from multiple disciplines (neuroscience, psychology, economics) that continues to substantiate the link between the early years of life and early life environment with long term well-being, violence prevention and behaviors linked with more peaceful communities.^{27, 28, 29} The formative years of life and intra and inter family and community relationships are powerful agents of change that can promote resilience social cohesion and peace.³⁰

As such investing in the positive development of Young Children is a path to creating a culture of Peace and sustain Peace at home in the community and society.

Unfortunately, until now, the Peacebuilding discourse and practice has failed to be inclusive and acknowledge the participation of every member of society in building and sustaining peace, for this reason, all the efforts to implement approaches to prevent violence, maximize justice, equality, and harmony yielded mixed results.

But now, it is the time to elevate the role of people to the Global Peace Agenda... It is time to demonstrate by scientific evidence and

practice the transformative power of participatory and integrated approaches to building peaceful, just, and inclusive societies.

In this regard, we need the commitment of the International Community to translate promises, resolutions, and plans of action into reality for a more just, peaceful, and secure world.

We need responsive, compassionate, and accountable World and National leaders, as His Majesty King Abdullah of Jordan in addressing the European Parliament in Strasbourg, and in stressing the importance of leadership said, that leaders have a responsibility to safeguard their people's long-term interests and welfare.³¹

We need to place the interest of People in the heart of our development and peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts. This means we have to reach everyone. We must empower women and girls, men and boys, and help them rebuild their lives, fulfill their human rights, and restore their dignity.

We need international and national actors to rethink strategies and programmes, and to make them people-centered, where local communities can play an important role in decision making. We must build on what people know and give them space to be the driving force for change. By doing so, the joint international, national, and local effort can promote self-reliance, local ownership and peace dividend.³²

We need all responsible actors to build programmes, that are long term and inclusive. They should also go beyond physical security and

geared towards human security, peace, and justice. They should include access to social services, such as health care, education, and economic empowerment. Most importantly, they should include reconciliation and mediation mechanisms, creating vital spaces for people to voice their grievances and manage conflict through non-violent means.

The task ahead to build and sustain peace is formidable, but there is room for optimism as each one of us is responsible. “It is our shared responsibility,” as the former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon used to say. There is no better time than now to unite our strengths to change the tide of violence and build a peaceful world for all of us and the generations to come.

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