



THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

13 September 2016

Excellency,

I have the honour to transmit herewith a summary of the key messages and proposals from the High-Level Forum on the Culture of Peace which I convened on 1 September 2016 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mogens Lykketoft'.

Mogens Lykketoft

To all Permanent Representatives  
and Permanent Observers to the United Nations  
New York

# **High-level Forum on the Culture of Peace**

**New York, 1st September 2016**

## **President's Summary**

### **Introduction**

The President of the General Assembly convened a High-level Forum on the Culture of Peace on 1st September 2016. The purpose of the Forum was to provide an opportunity for Member States and other stakeholders to have an exchange of views on ways to build and promote the Culture of Peace and non-violence that benefits humanity, especially future generation. It also recognized the anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

Over the course of the Forum, speakers highlighted the importance of building and promoting a global culture of peace and sustaining peace to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They stressed the need to promote globally a culture of tolerance and reconciliation. In this regard, participants underlined the significant role of the society, women and youth as well as the media.

The Forum consisted of a high-level opening plenary session with high-level representatives, and two interactive panel sessions where participants discussed several key issues focusing on the themes: "Enhancing synergy between Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and eight action areas of the UN Programme of Action on Culture of Peace" and the "Role of Youth in advancing the Culture of Peace in the context of the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution on Youth, Peace and Security".

The one-day meeting brought together UN Member States, UN entities, civil society, youth, the private sector and the media.

### **Key messages**

Throughout the day, participants highlighted the importance of continuing the implementation of the General Assembly's landmark resolution 53/243 on the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace adopted on 13 September 1999. Participants further expressed their aim to implement the eight Programme of Action Areas towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft opened the High Level Forum on the Culture of Peace with a sobering thought emphasizing how the media creates boundaries between the citizens of the world. He stated that although technology is bringing us together at an ever-increasing speed, prejudice is still a prevalent obstacle. Nobel Laureate, Ms. Ouided Bouchamaoui echoed these remarks by urging everyone to stop mixing up Islam and violent extremism. In a statement expressed by the Chef de Cabinet, Mr. Edmond Mulet on behalf of the UN Secretary General, there was strong emphasis on the need for us to work together in this rapidly globalizing world and that the potential of the world's young women and men is immeasurable in its impact.

Participants cited that violent extremism is an issue that needs to be addressed by the United Nations and all its members. It was communicated that strong ideologies and a lack of peace dialogue stand in the way of further development of the Culture of Peace and it is clearly time for a change in our consciousness both individually and in governance. Recent peace deal between a Member State with the guerrilla group (FARC) is an example of what can be achieved through active peace dialogue among the groups.

Providing the youth with an opportunity to participate and providing better access to education for global citizenship to all demographics of society, were commonly referred to during the Forum as means to resolve these cyclical issues.

One of the key subjects brought forth at the Forum was the repeated and unified agreement that it is vital for the youth to be included and welcomed into the development of their own countries on a leadership level, in peace relations and conflict resolution in order for the world to shift to a level of peace that can make a difference.

Many delegations also stressed the important role that youth plays in building a culture of peace and further stressed the need to include them in peace building efforts in the context of the implementation of the UN security Council Resolution on Youth, Peace and Security.

Many delegations underlined the importance of education in building a culture of peace, in particular building a global citizenship curriculum into early education is a prime factor in creating one humanity, and the culture of peace. The digital and online classroom is key to compassionate awareness and diversity building, for the leaders of our future.

Some participants advocated that peace begins with education, highlighting that education is vital as terrorists groups continue to unfold. They further noted that education is key to integrating societies regardless of faith and geographical location without the necessity

for one to lose his or her national identity. Access to quality education was a desire echoed by a number of Member States although, for the most part, the brief time allocation didn't allow for elaboration on how this could be achieved.

Speakers underscored that early education for global citizenship is a large step towards social inclusion and a flourishing of the Culture of Peace. The redirection of funding away from war support, small arms and nuclear disarmament, upholding and implementing RES 53/243 Declaration on a Program of Action for the Culture of Peace.

A synergistic plan of action including the eight Programme of Action Areas for Culture of Peace, is a mandatory factor for achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, especially goal 1, 4, 16, and 17 specifically. In partnership with all actors engaged, the roots of peace grow forth from the individual into an evolutionary shift for our world as basic human needs are fulfilled, and poverty is eliminated, as the primary SDG goal.

To enhance the synergy between Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) and the eight action areas of the UN Programme of Action on Culture of Peace, all Member States must be encouraged and supported to carry through with their statements to actively implement these actions, in local community on a country level.

**Conclusion:**

The one day meeting provided an opportunity to share personal experiences and draw lessons learned from Member States and other stakeholders in promoting and strengthening the culture of peace. They addressed the urgent need for promoting the peace through dialogue and non-violence. In general, participants underscored that peace requires equitable societies, inclusive education and tangible actions on the ground. They reaffirmed their commitment for building the culture of peace and working more diligently for its realization.