

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

NEW YORK

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

9 January 2018

Excellency,

I am pleased to enclose herewith the summary of the High-level Forum on Culture of Peace, held on 7 September 2017.

The summary contains the main conclusions from the keynote speakers during the Opening Segment, the views shared by Member States, civil society representatives and experts during the Plenary and Panel Discussion.

I take this opportunity to again express my sincere gratitude to the institutions and entities which partnered with the OPGA to organize the High-level Forum on Culture of Peace and to all who supported and participated in the event.

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

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'František Ružička', enclosed within a large, loopy circular flourish.

Chef de Cabinet  
František Ružička

All Permanent Representatives and  
Permanent Observers to the United Nations  
New York

## High Level Forum on The Culture of Peace

### United Nations Headquarters, New York, 7 September 2017

#### Summary

Recognizing the need to further promote the Culture of Peace, particularly in the current global context, and responding to paragraph 13 of Resolution 71/252, the President of the General Assembly convened a one-day High Level Forum on The Culture of Peace, on 7 September 2017, at UN Headquarters, New York.

In keeping with this approach, the High Level Forum highlighted emerging trends that impact on the realization of the culture of peace through an exchange of ideas in the statements by Member States, Observers and relevant UN entities on further promoting the Culture of Peace. The Forum welcomed that under the guidance of President of the General Assembly and participation of Member States, civil society and other relevant stakeholders.

The one day forum featured opening statements by the President of the 71<sup>st</sup> Session of the General Assembly, the Ms. Ana Maria Menendez, Secretary-General's Senior Adviser on Policy and the keynote address by the 1976 Nobel Peace Laureate Dr. Betty Williams. It was followed by a Plenary Segment and finalized with an afternoon Panel Discussion on "Sowing the Seeds of the Culture of Peace: Early Childhood Development is the Beginning" featuring a panel of experts in childhood development, human rights, and promotion of a culture of peace.

The following are the main takeaways from the High-level Forum on Culture of Peace:

- In his opening statement, President of the General Assembly stressed that to meet today's global challenges and sustain peace will require the very best of humanity. He underscored that "Fostering a culture of peace requires all of us –individuals, nations and international organisations – to work together to promote understanding of our common humanity. We must promote intercultural respect, strengthen interreligious understanding, and inspire people's hopes for the future. Above all we must unite for peace."
- Remarks by Ms. Menendez stressed the complex and interlinked nature of conflict- urging all citizens, governments and leaders to overcome differences, foster dialogue, and to resolve to put peace first. She also conveyed the call from the Secretary General for a new UN's approach to peace – to uphold the United Nations Charter, prioritize prevention and address the root causes of harm in all its forms.

- The keynote address by Ms. Betty Williams' highlighted the focus of the theme. She presented a "Universal Declaration of the Rights of the World's Children" for the international community.
- During the Plenary General Debate and Panel Discussion, Member states and panelists highlighted that events children experience early in life, education child receives, and the community activities and socio-cultural mind-set in which a child is immersed all contribute to form values, attitudes, traditions, modes of behavior, and ways of life develop. It was suggested that work should start even before school—at the family level. Parents being the first teachers and educators.
- The discussion stressed that the first years of life lay the foundation for individuals and societies, due to the fast pace in which the brain develops. As it is at this time when the brain is greatly influenced by the surrounding environment, thereby helping instill the rudiments that each individual needs to become agents of peace and nonviolence and to bring cultural transformation towards a culture of peace.
- To close the meeting President of the General Assembly reaffirmed the importance of investing in inclusivity, of building social cohesion through intercultural and interfaith understanding and of teaching the values of equity and respect. He also emphasized the key role of education as well as the interconnectedness between building a culture of peace to achieve sustaining peace and development and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Videos of the whole event can be found online by following these links:

[http://webtv.un.org/search/high-level-forum-on-the-culture-of-peace-general-assembly-71st-session/5567708131001/?term=culture of peace&sort=date](http://webtv.un.org/search/high-level-forum-on-the-culture-of-peace-general-assembly-71st-session/5567708131001/?term=culture%20of%20peace&sort=date)

[http://webtv.un.org/search/panel-discussion-on-sowing-the-seeds-on-the-culture-of-peace-at-high-level-forum-on-the-culture-of-peace-general-assembly-71st-session/5566146546001/?term=culture of peace&sort=date](http://webtv.un.org/search/panel-discussion-on-sowing-the-seeds-on-the-culture-of-peace-at-high-level-forum-on-the-culture-of-peace-general-assembly-71st-session/5566146546001/?term=culture%20of%20peace&sort=date)

Supporting documents will be added to the High-level Forum on Culture of Peace website found here:

<http://www.un.org/pga/71/event-latest/high-level-forum-on-the-culture-of-peace/>

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