

Many to Many

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“Many to Many” under the aegis of Peace Through Unity is a communicating link between “we, the peoples” of all nations, races, creeds and ideologies offering in the spirit of the preamble of the United Nations Charter an instrument for the furthering of better relationships based on deepening mutual understanding and the aspiration to promote unity and cooperation beyond all differences.

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I HOPE

Hope is an interesting concept, generally described as 'a feeling of expectation'; a frame of mind that tends to take the shape and form that we, individually, give it.

Through history the notion of hope has been associated with some of the most inspiring accounts of the victorious human spirit, dealing with and overcoming seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Whether as individuals, as groups or as nations, people have, again and again, been rising up from the ashes to rebuild their world in accordance with individual and collective vision and renewed sense of direction.

But hope can also appear like a thin, or not so thin, veneer covering indecision or even downright insincerity; an 'if only', handwringing, attitude that can provide a shield against any kind of personal effort or involvement, even open the door to indulgences and habits that will effectively smother any 'feeling of expectation' of better things to come.

So, when we air our discontent with many of today's leaders and the gaping crevasse between the rich and the poor, should we perhaps reflect on how this state of affairs came about on our watch? Maybe we are provided with the challenge, the wake-up call, to bring about the transformative changes that are so sorely needed for restoring welfare and wellbeing to all planetary life?

Today, the interconnectedness of all life and livingness is becoming a generally accepted and undeniable fact. We know, at least theoretically, that we live within a global environment in constant communication with all parts of itself. We are becoming acutely aware of the inability of nature to sustain our individual as well as corporate appetites and wasteful – thoughtless - habits. Not only are facts, figures and prognoses continuously updated and made public; humanity is also providing itself with solutions and remedies which could, or would, heal and restore – even improve – the general state of affairs, if we resolve to do so.

We know - and *feel* - that we as well as all other planetary lives are confronted with a crisis of global proportions; wherever we look depletion and starvation, denial and mindless actions of sheer brutality and revolt is tearing apart the very fabric of the world as we have known it. So, this is a time when we shall need to unite in the 'feeling of expectation' and together find ways of how to realise and bring into being *that* for which the whole world hopes.

The natural habitat of hope and vision is the heart; here every heartbeat is nurturing that new life which is stirring and about to be born. Every mother, every worker in the fields, knows full well the hard labour that such a task will involve and are preparing the soil and atmosphere in which this seed can grow into the fullness of its being.

Throughout every neighbourhood within all nations people are uniting in and contributing to a shared vision of the future civilisation of our planet, the mind-set of the individual opening up and embracing all living beings within and upon it – ensuring the unfoldment of the full potential of each and all. The frozen wintry crust slowly melting and life within all seeds

stirring. The Spring of the new Millennium bringing with it the climate for which all life has been waiting and preparing with deep anticipation.

II A Continent of Hope

In a statement earlier this year the UN Secretary General António Guterres shared his feeling that ‘far too often the world views Africa through the prism of problems’, suggesting that it could equally be seen as ‘a continent of hope, promise and vast potential’.

Having attended the 28th African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, António Guterres declared his firm commitment to help establish a ‘higher platform of cooperation’ between the United Nations and the leaders and people of Africa. We need, he said, to move from managing crises to preventing them; we need to ‘break the cycle of responding too late and too little’. Pointing out that three out of five Africans are under the age of 35, he urged that more investment in education and training could, and would, help young people to aim toward shaping their future and contributing to their community.

“The best means of prevention and the surest path to durable peace is inclusive and sustainable development,” the UN Secretary General said, pointing to the ongoing preparations for the UN Climate Change Conference in Bonn as creating an important milestone toward the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Agenda 2063 – The Africa We Want:

Agenda 2063 is the complementary and ambitious document, adopted by Africa, which will provide a vitally important contribution to the Bonn Conference. The final edition of Agenda 2063, published in 2015 under the heading ‘The Voices of the African People’, opens with the words: “We, the people of Africa and her Diaspora, united in diversity, young and old, men and women, girls and boys from all walks of life, deeply conscious of history, express our deep appreciation to all generations of Pan-Africanists.” It acknowledges that Agenda 2063’s vision will not happen ‘spontaneously’ and will require ‘conscious and deliberate efforts to nurture a transformative leadership that will drive the agenda and defend Africa’s interests’.

Under the heading: ‘our aspirations for the Africa we want’, Agenda 2063 offers seven specific goals:

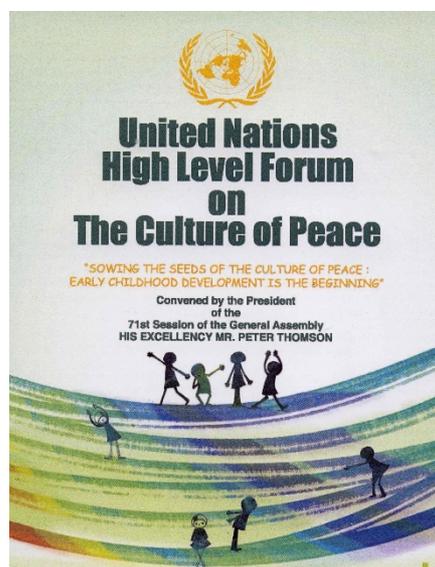
1. A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development
2. An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa’s Renaissance
3. An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law
4. A peaceful and secure Africa
5. An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics

6. An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and Youth, and caring for children
7. Africa as a strong, united and influential global player and partner

The aspiration of the Agenda is that by 2063 Africa will be: *'people-centred and caring; puts children first; has empowered women to play their rightful role in all spheres of life; has full gender equality in all spheres of life; and has engaged and empowered Youth'*.

<http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/agenda2063.pdf> -
<https://www.uneca.org/publications/social-development> <http://newsroom.unfccc.int/cop-23-bonn/>

III World Goodwill Attends UN High Level Forum on the Culture of Peace, 7 September 2017



Every year since 2012 the President of the UN General Assembly has convened a High-Level Forum on the Culture of Peace. With the support of member nations (102 governments sponsored the resolution calling for this year's event) the Forum aims to highlight emerging trends impacting on the realization of the culture of peace, defined as *a set of values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behaviour and ways of life* based on universal principles of freedom, justice and peace. In 1999 the General Assembly passed a Declaration and Programme of Action on the Culture of Peace, and these annual Forums are a way of ensuring that this long-term agenda does not get lost amid all the activity at the United Nations.

World Goodwill was delighted to attend this year's Forum. Opening the session General Assembly President, Peter Thomson of Fiji, reminded us that the culture of peace requires work from individuals as well as nations and international organisations "to promote understanding of our common humanity ... and inspire people's hopes for the future." A representative of the UN Secretary-General and Nobel Peace laureate Betty Williams, then addressed the gathering.

Betty Williams spoke with great heart about her work on behalf of children. Forty years ago, she witnessed the shooting and tragic death of three children on the streets of Belfast. *I made a promise to*

those children that I would fight for the rest of my life that they did not die in vain. The mothers of the world, she said, *are the sustenance of this world.* Following her work in Northern Ireland to ensure that children could grow up with *peace and justice and love*, she began to be invited to visit places around the world where mothers and children were facing violence and suffering. *I couldn't believe what I was seeing!*

Having witnessed, *up close and personal*, the plight of children, Betty Williams told Forum participants that *I get very passionate about my work. It's time to give the children a voice.* The only thing that can save the planet is the children. But children are suffering in the many wars and violent conflicts around the world. *So, I'm here today to beg. I have no problem begging for a child. I beg you at the UN, anybody who can see the insanity of what is happening, to lobby for percentages of military budgets to be used for the well-being of children. If we are going to have a better planet, we had better be good to the children.*

The morning session concluded with a series of statements in support of the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace by Member States.

The afternoon session was largely taken up with a panel discussion on the theme *Sowing the Seeds of the Culture of Peace: Early Childhood Development is the Beginning.* Chaired by the founder of The Global Movement for the Culture of Peace, and former UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative, Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury, panelists included former UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayor; the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative on Violence Against Children, Dr. Marta Santos Pais; UN Ambassadors from Honduras and Hungary; and Dr Nancy Hardt, Professor Emerita of University of Florida, College of Medicine.

Special Representative Santos Pais highlighted that investment in early childhood is crucial both to ensure children's development and to build peaceful and inclusive societies around the world. *Early childhood is where everything starts, and it is also where investment can achieve the highest returns.* Dr Hardt brought the discussion about the enormous benefits to be derived from investment in early childhood development to the local level with an account of practical steps taken in her community in Florida, USA, to develop neighborhood based services combining law enforcement and health care. Within four years the community saw *a reduction in unintended pregnancies, reduction in premature births, and a stunning reduction in cases of child abuse and neglect to address suffering and inequities.* These developments are being further enhanced with a new *diverse partnership between law, medicine, psychology and restorative justice.... "Peace for Gainesville", closely aligned with the River Phoenix Center for Peacebuilding.*

Building the Culture of Peace is clearly a long-term goal for the United Nations. It is a work in process, embracing every aspect of the transformation of human relations so that they may be more fully aligned with principles of sharing and the practice of mutual understanding and cooperation within nations and between nations. This High-Level Forum helped to remind participants and member nations of the need for constant focus on the long-term goal and the short-term goals detailed in the Programme of Action agreed to in 1999.

<http://www.un.org/pga/71/event-latest/high-level-forum-on-the-culture-of-peace/> Watch webcasts of the event <http://webtv.un.org/watch/high-level-forum-on-the-culture-of-peace-general-assembly-71st-session/5567708131001/?term=http://webtv.un.org/watch/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>

For a fuller report

and links to transcripts of talks: <http://www.xunicef.org/2017/09/transcription-excerpts-former-cf-staff-peace-sowing-seeds-early-child-dev-webcast-7-sep-2017/>

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IV International Day of Peace 2017 – Whanganui celebrations

Peace Through Unity (PTU) in conjunction with the United Nations Association of New Zealand (UNA NZ) Whanganui Branch and the Quaker Settlement, celebrated the International Day of Peace on 21 September 2017. The UN theme chosen for this year was: “Together for Peace: Respect, Safety and Dignity for All”.

It was felt that this theme fitted in well to our overall promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which has been the basis for our recent events, including this one.

At noon a group gathered at the Peace Sculpture, Handspan, to offer prayers and invocations for peace in the world. We were joined by a group led by Deirdra McMenamin, from the Quaker Settlement, who had organised paper-cutting of images, representing unity and connection between people. There was a representation of the globe and a series of paper dolls. Prayers were led off by Jonathan Hartfield and many others joined in with prayer, poem and song. At the conclusion of our prayer session at Handspan several people walked down to the river so that it could be included in our prayers and pledges for worldwide peace.

In the evening members of different community groups met at the Quaker Settlement to hear from a panel representing various sectors of our community in a discussion based on the theme for the day, ‘Together for Peace: Respect, Safety and Dignity for All’, including the SDGs. They were asked to speak from their area of experience, and to suggest some actions we might take as a community to make our city more peaceful and collaborative. Those in the audience were also given an opportunity to make a contribution.

The room was decorated, as in previous Peace Days, with flags – one for each UN member state, made by Meg Hartfield, together with local schoolchildren. A moment of silence was observed in memory of Meg, a very dear long-time co-worker.

The evening was officially opened by Rev Amail Habib, one of the local hospital chaplains, who set the scene for our deliberations. A welcome to the Quaker Settlement was given by Michael Payne. This was followed by another regular part of our celebration, the plea for peace to prevail throughout the world, by reading out all UN member state names, including the two permanent observer states.

Kate Smith, on behalf of PTU and UNA NZ, acted as Master of Ceremonies for the evening and began by introducing the panellists. Local government was represented by His Worship Mayor, Hamish McDouall, refugees by Orphee Mickalad, Executive Assistance to local MP Chester Borrows, and Restorative Practices Trust by Chairperson, Jenny Saywood.

Community Education was also invited but the manager, Sian MacGibbon, was unable to attend. Panellists were asked to speak to the theme as well as highlighting their relationship

to the SDGs, and to suggest ways in which our community might contribute to their successful implementation.

Mayor McDouall began by noting the struggles being faced by many of countries just named and that they were restive; or unwilling to submit to control, in most cases this would take the form of conflict, often armed conflict. He noted that although one person can do something, it will take collective action and a sense of togetherness to change the restive situations around the world. His presentation was based on the 17 SDGs which he felt were far more than 'goals'; that they were essential and should already form the basis of our everyday living. Changes to the Local Government Act has restricted what a local council was able to provide, and this is not always appreciated by local citizens. However, he made the point that local government could not be expected to act alone – that a collaboration would be needed between central government and other organisations. He highlighted the importance of education, including community education, and gave as an example the 'Water Only' promotion in schools where children have access to water rather than sugary drinks. If this was expanded, the health of our children would be improved in many ways. Water and sanitation was one area where the Council could act. The waste water treatment replacement plant which should be operational by the end of this year is an example. In the area of energy, a suggestion by a councillor, that as council vehicles come up for replacement, an electric vehicle should be considered. However it should be noted that such a change would involve more than just a new vehicle, such as a real community resolve to improve our environment. Work under way to becoming a Restorative City and a Peace City was seen as positive action. The cost of climate change was becoming obvious in the damage to infrastructure as a result of various recent adverse weather events. It was also hoped that Whanganui would be able to accept more refugees in the near future. Mayor McDouall asked that we all hold the council accountable for contributing to the SDGs by making submissions to Annual and Ten Year Plans as well as attending the public council sessions.

The theme of individual and community cooperation was continued with the second speaker, Orphee Mickalad, who arrived in New Zealand in 2006 from the Republic of Congo. His family was resettled to Palmerston North where he went to school and later to University. He was most appreciative of the help and support given to him by staff at the school where he faced many challenges with peers as well as with mastering English. He gave a very graphic picture of life as a refugee. Refugees do not want to leave their homes – they are forced by circumstances to flee and leave everything behind – not only possessions but often family members as well. Most refugees took the same path as Orphee – to make the most of living in a peaceful country where they could benefit from the education system. This gave them a stepping stone to integration into New Zealand society and also the opportunity to contribute to it. He recognised that when individual contributions are being considered, then the concepts of human rights, human security and human development were important. Orphee made reference to many well-known people to emphasise the challenges we all face and how we might overcome them. President John F Kennedy said that, "...our problems are man-made, therefore they may be solved by men." He noted that sustainable peace was necessary to attain sustainable development of both individuals and the environment. However the hardest days for peace are still in the future as we try to overcome hatred in society. "Peace

is still a distant concept in many parts of the world,” he observed. When they arrive in New Zealand, refugees spend 6-8 weeks learning about the culture of the country, which is often completely different from their home. However, this was appreciated in helping them start on their journey of assimilation. Orphee is grateful to NZ as it is here that he learned, “... respect for human rights, respect for diversity of thoughts and respect for my neighbour. ... (I) also learned to tolerate other things such as religion.” Orphee felt that the refugee challenge was second only to climate change in importance in current situations around the world. “It begins with us – to make a difference,” he said. He charged us all to make a difference in someone’s life, and to show respect for different communities and people, by avoiding discrimination of skin colour, language and accents. Working for a common goal of a good and prosperous future for our children followed the UN principles, and the SDGs in the areas of peace, health and prosperity. “Diversity is a strength.”

Jenny Saywood is active in many community organisations at a governance level and is the Chairperson of the Whanganui Restorative Practices Trust. She carried on the theme of the individual contribution to a community living at peace with itself and its members. Restorative Practices’ emphasis is on a peace-making approach to conflict to achieve harmony, contentment, security and wellbeing. A community has a strong collective power built on a progression from being respected, to becoming engaged and leading to a feeling of empowerment. Jenny referred to Jane Gleeson-White’s book, “Six Capitals”, which includes the concept of Social capital. This is developed by building trust, respecting others, retaining dignity and mana; it is proactive and encourages constructive dialogue. With a collective involvement, the effects will be felt in many ways, including lower crime rates, better health, higher education levels and better economic development for all. Restorative Practices provide training and support for all sectors of the community from schools to neighbourhood groups. Encouraging better communication, for example using Circle Groups, ensures all members of a community can play a part in solving any problems. These groups can also welcome newcomers into an area to make them feel at home, or to reach out to those who are lonely and isolated. Jenny reiterated the importance of careful listening – listen to understand and consider what was said before responding. Active listening shows respect for the opinions of others as well as increasing one’s own knowledge. This could lead to changing the language we use so that peace is promoted.

All presentations were well received and the audience had obviously listened closely to what was said. Their contributions included: a couple’s favourable opinion of Whanganui as a friendly and welcoming city, which was echoed by another view that we often underestimate what we have; Whanganui has much positive energy; comments on issues which had attracted protests were raised and while it might be better to replace a ‘protest’ by a ‘community discussion’, people’s voices need to be heard and that this public pressure can change unacceptable decisions.

All contributions were constructive and positive and echoed the main thread of the evening – the importance of the individual and the positive effects of cooperating as a community to make progress on the success of all 17 integrated and inter-related SDGs.

We had a very exciting extra addition to the evening from Ralph Wallace, Triangle Centre, Paekakariki. He had just returned from a trip to Myanmar, where he had been helping toward the completion of the construction of The Lotus Garden School in the Shan mountains, northeast of Mandalay. He presented some beautiful visual accounts which allowed us to get some idea of where he was working and what he was doing. Thanks, Ralph.

Fellowship, over some light refreshments and animated discussions, was a fitting ending to an interesting and informative evening. Thanks are due to all those who assisted in the many aspects of arranging our Peace Day celebration, including a Swiss Rotary Exchange student, Ludivine Berclaz, who designed our programme.

Report by Kate Smith, Co-worker PTU, President Whanganui Branch UNA NZ
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V World Food Day

The 2017 official ceremony of World Food Day, commemorating the founding date (in 1945) of the Organisation was held at the headquarters of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in Rome. This year's theme was: *'addressing migration through investing in food security and rural development'*.

In his key note address, Pope Francis stressed that food security for all requires tackling climate change and ending conflicts. It is clear, he added that wars and climatic change are causes of hunger, so *'let's not present it as if hunger is an incurable disease'*. Referring to the negotiation of a Global Pact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration – he stressed that managing human mobility, *"requires coordinated, systematic intergovernmental action in line with existing international norms, and full of love and intelligence."*

For the first time in over a decade hunger is rising and 815 million people are now affected. The reason for this rise is seen as a consequence of the 'proliferation of violent conflicts and climate-related shocks' – which are the major drivers of 'distress migration'.

FAO Director-General Jose Graziano da Silva, spoke of the resolve of FAO to address the root causes of migration, such as poverty, food insecurity, inequality, unemployment and lack of social protection, and said: *'we firmly believe that increasing investment in food security, sustainable rural development, and in efforts to adapt agriculture to climate change, will help create the conditions whereby people, especially the youth, will no longer be forced to abandon their lands in order to seek a better life elsewhere'*.

The Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), David Beasley, revealed that over \$6 billion – 80% of the WFP's expenditure - were consumed by conflicts, and urged *'people in power, the people with guns, to stop the fighting now'*. David Beasley also shared about his meetings with people fleeing conflict and violence: *'I saw their wounds with my own eyes' he said, 'and I heard their stories with my own ears'*. They were frightened, hungry and malnourished after enduring a nightmare that most people cannot even imagine, and: *"If we are truly going to end hunger, we must stop this kind of inhumanity"*.

Mr William Lacy Swing, Director General of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) further stressed the far-reaching effects of climate change on the agricultural productivity and food security. It is, he said, *‘among the main reasons for the record numbers of people compelled to migrate from rural areas to towns and cities around the world’*. Today more people live in cities than in rural areas, he said. Some move simply to seek improvement of their lives, others *‘are forced to flee due to conflict or sudden or slow onset disasters, such as drought, flooding or rising sea levels’*, exacerbated by climate change and environmental stress.

FAO and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) have been appointed to co-chair the 2018 United Nations Global Migration Group (GMG). This meeting will aim to bring together heads of international organisations to promote wider application of all relevant international and regional instruments and norms relating to migration, with a view to: *“strengthening international cooperation on and governance of migration towards the adoption of a global compact on migration”*.

In the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants world leaders expressed their political will and commitment to: *‘protect the human rights of all refugees and migrants, regardless of status’* and to promote their *‘full, equal and meaningful participation in finding solutions’*. The Declaration also points to their resolve to *‘develop guidelines on the treatment of migrants in vulnerable situations’*, in particular with regard to the increasing number of unaccompanied children.

It further expresses the need for a more equitable sharing of the burden and responsibility for hosting and supporting the world’s refugees by adopting ‘a global compact on refugees in 2018’. The agreement to move toward such a comprehensive framework is seen as a momentous one, and will mean that migration, like other areas of international relations, will be guided by a set of common principles and approaches. For the full text of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 19 September 2016, go to http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/1

<https://www.iom.int/international-dialogue-migration> -

<https://www.iom.int/news/migration-making-move-rural-urban-choice> -

<http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/883148/icode/> -

VI High-Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament

On the 2nd of November the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution which set the ‘dates and mandate’ for a High-Level conference on nuclear disarmament, and calls on leaders to come together with the aim of reducing ‘nuclear dangers and pave the way for nuclear disarmament’. This conference is to take place at the United Nations on 14-16 May 2018.

The resolution calls for progress to be made on ‘a global agreement which would include the nuclear-armed States and provide a phased and verified process for prohibiting and eliminating nuclear weapons.’

Jonathan Granoff, President of the Global Security Institute, remarked that, although 120 non-nuclear weapons states have negotiated a treaty to ban the weapons, the nine states with the weapons ‘continue to hold the world at risk of nuclear annihilation’.

Christine Muttonen, MP, Austria, and President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), said that ‘parliamentarians across the political spectrum have been calling on governments to step back from the nuclear brink’. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly includes the parliament of France, Russia, UK, USA and 52 other members, all of whom have adopted the 2016 and 2017 declarations calling on member governments to ‘reduce nuclear threats, adopt no-first-use policies and support UN negotiations.’ We are ready, she declared, to support governments in this vitally important initiative.

UNFOLD ZERO, in cooperation with the Basel Peace Office, Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non Proliferation (PNND) and Abolition 2000, are building civil society, parliamentary and government support for the 2018 UN High Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament, and to influence the agenda and ensure success. (www.unfoldzero.org)

<http://www.unfoldzero.org/wp-content/uploads/L45Rev13.pdf> -
<http://www.unfoldzero.org/2018-un-high-level-conference-on-nuclear-disarmament/>

VII Breaking the Silence

‘Breaking The Silence’ is the name of an Israeli non-governmental organisation, founded in 2004 by a group of soldiers, men as well as women, who serve or have served in the occupied Territories of Hebron. Their aim is to help inform the Israeli general public, so a fuller understanding of ‘everyday life’ in the Occupied Territories can be obtained. ‘Breaking The Silence’ seeks to stimulate public debate about *‘the price paid for a reality in which young soldiers face a civilian population on a daily basis, and are engaged in the control of that population’s everyday life’*.

The organisation believes that some of the most powerful voices for peace can belong to soldiers: *‘men and women who know what conflict means’*, and who know also *‘the impact it has on those who fight and the crucial line between legitimate self-defence and unwarranted aggression’*.

To date, more than 1,100 testimonies from soldiers - all meticulously researched and facts cross-checked - have been collected. These testimonies represent all strata of Israeli society and cover most if not all units that operate in the occupied Palestinian territories.

‘Breaking the Silence’ is committed to defend the values of peace, human rights, truth and reconciliation and also aims to bring an end to the occupation. <https://www.walk-together.org/sparks-of-hope/2017/09/27/breaking-silence/>

VIII #WalkTogether

On Mandela Day in Cape Town, the town in which Nelson Mandela gave his inspiring Freedom Speech (1990), a thousand people walked with The Elders and #WalkTogether campaign partners in a spirit of hope and unity. Before this symbolic walk to freedom began, the Elder, Graça Machel, told the people gathered, that we are here today ‘as members of The Elders – the group of independent former leaders founded by Nelson Mandela ten years ago to work for peace, justice and human rights.’ We, like people throughout the entire world, are guided by his mandate to “*support courage where there is fear, foster agreement where there is conflict, and inspire hope where there is despair*”.

Today ‘700 million children – the equivalent of the entire population of Europe – have had their childhood prematurely ended’, she said. All these children are lacking access to decent health, education, to grow up with family and friends, because of war, poverty, abuse and disease that ‘*stunt their life chances before they have even begun to grow up*’. It is small wonder, said Graça Machel, that, ‘*so many young people become alienated from their societies and fall prey to the siren voices of gangs, violence and extremism*’.

But there are ‘sparks of hope’ throughout communities around the world – courageous moral leaders who should be supported and celebrated; leaders who are speaking truth to power, defending rights and freedoms in the face of growing authoritarianism and division. *)

Nelson Mandela understood this so intimately and acutely, she said. He knew that freedom requires a constant struggle, and that campaigners could never rest on their laurels, even after securing great victories... ‘What made him such a towering example of the best of humanity lay in combining this unshakeable desire for freedom with the deepest sense of magnanimity, empathy and compassion towards his opponents and oppressors.’

Nelson Mandela stressed that “*Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world,*”

Freedom also offers all citizens the responsibility for engaging in the public sphere and democratic process, and not to ‘*withdraw into apathy or virtual echo-chambers of the like-minded*’, she urged. This struggle for freedom is ‘**both timely and timeless**’, she stressed, and as we are preparing to mark the centenary of Nelson Mandela’s birth in July 2018 let us all walk alongside each other and be guided by his mandate to:

‘support courage where there is fear, foster agreement where there is conflict, and inspire hope where there is despair’.

In preparation for the 10th anniversary of their Founder, the Elders have launched the ‘#Walk Together’ Campaign to help ‘*bridge the deepening global fault lines of division, hate and xenophobia that is leading to inward-facing populism*’. They will be working to engage people within all walks of life in ideas which will ‘inspire solidarity, compassion and tolerance.

See <https://www.walk-together.org/> for further information and how to participate in #Walk Together initiative.

IX “Sparks of Hope”

The Sparks of Hope’s mission is to assist in the healing process of children who have survived abuse and help them thrive once again by providing special services which will assist in restoring their sense of hope. Through creating opportunities that will develop trust and healing children are given assistance to move forward with a renewed sense of confidence.

One of the initial steps toward restoring a sense of hope in abused children is to grant them a personal wish, such as a new pair of shoes, a musical instrument or lessons, or perhaps a birthday party. They may never have experienced these simple things that many of us are taking for granted, explains “Sparks of Hope”.

To encourage continued healing and success, we offer mentoring and healing camps to teach them to move in their healing journey ‘from victim to survivor, survivor to thriver’, and from being a thriver they may choose themselves to become a mentor.

A Sparks of Hope Mentor is an adult of same gender with whom the young person has established a good connection at one of their healing camps. Two Mentors will together meet regularly, twice a month, with the youth (called the ‘mentee’) and through different types of activities, chosen by the ‘mentee’, hope, healing and trust will be allowed to develop at its own pace.

Among several other initiatives to heal abused and traumatised children are two ‘healing K9s) - two dogs, Sparky and Zoey, who will help children have the courage to face their abusers in court and help them heal the hurts of the past – loving them ‘every step of the way’.

The Sparks of Hope website (<http://www.sparksofhope.org/>) includes a quote by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi:

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others”

X The Seventh Session of the UN Convention Against Corruption

In his message to the Conference of States Parties to the UN Convention Against Corruption UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres acknowledged that corruption can strike anywhere and often hits the poor, the weak and most vulnerable of all. It can, he said, deny people ‘access to health services, schools and economic opportunities’, as well as any hope of a better future.

It can also enable small elites in powerful positions to prosper while others are paying the price. This situation can seriously damage the relationship between a state and its people, and

obliterate people's faith in good governance. *'Corruption can never be justified in the name of financing campaigns or paying back favours'*, he said.

Underscoring the importance of the work of the UN Convention Against Corruption', the UN Secretary-General stressed that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can only be achieved, *if*: 'every nation has strong, transparent and inclusive institutions, based on the rule of law and supported by the public'. Acknowledging the achievements of the Convention, he also welcomed the *'decisive action against high-level corruption'*, taken by legal institutions taking in many countries.

But Antonio Guterres called for the full engagement and support of the business and financial communities, and stressed that 'global leaders of all kinds – government, corporate, religious, cultural – must lead by example and prove themselves trustworthy' so as to restore people's faith in their governments and institutions.

However: **most of all**, stressed the UN Secretary-General, **"we need young people to engage and to change minds and practices so that the corruption of today play no role in the future"**.

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2017-11-06/secretary-generals-message-conference-states-parties-un-convention>

XI The Great Invocation

From the point of Light within the Mind of God
Let Light stream forth into the minds of men
Let Light descend on Earth

From the point of Love within the Heart of God
Let love stream forth into the hearts of men -
May Christ return to Earth

From the centre where the Will of God is known
Let purpose guide the little wills of men
The purpose which the Masters know and serve.

From the centre which we call the race of men
Let the plan of Love and Light work out
And may it seal the door where evil dwells

Let Light and Love and Power restore the plan on Earth