



Many to Many

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“Many to Many” is a quarterly publication under the aegis of Peace Through Unity as 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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Editor's Note

Two of Gita Brooke's editorials have been included, given their content and the theme of the issue.

Trust

While leaders of nations, surrounded by discrete armies of secret service personnel, are delivering public statements with promises and assurances, the general state of affairs of peoples and planet are rapidly deteriorating. And in times of increasing upheaval and unrest trust is among the first of casualties; mistrust and uncertainty spreading like a particular vicious strand of virus through local and global neighbourhoods and relationships, feverish anxiety blurring overheated brains and clouding clarity of thought.

In times like these we have tended to find somebody to blame for the sad state of affairs, and whose duty it therefore is to 'fix' things. There was even a time when the sins of a community were ceremoniously put on a goat's back, the animal then carrying this burden into the wilderness, leaving the community residents to continue their daily routines.

While modern societies will scoff at such an ancient method, we still have the tendency to lay the blame

anywhere else but at our own doorstep.

However, today there is a growing understanding that we are in fact living and moving within the global 'wilderness', which contains all the unattended and unresolved issues that we have in common. Despite the almost crushing feeling of despair at the magnitude of human suffering and indignities to be faced, there is also a growing sense of the need to take 'ownership' of the general state of affairs; an increasing readiness to work together and to bring about the much needed changes and transformation of old unsustainable habits and attitudes. While war-faring countries and groups are killing people and destroying homes and environments as they squabble over lines drawn in the swirling sand, the heart of humanity is rapidly shedding the numbing sense of fatigue and despair and waking up to its true – invincible – power.

Inherited habits and inhibitions are falling away and allowing for new alliances and groups to emerge in deep recognition of our common humanity. It can truly be said that we live in watershed times where an aging civilisation, however reluctantly, is having to make way for the new dispensation that the Aquarian Age will bring. Whatever nationality, race, culture or belief we may belong to, whatever our individual circumstances may be, we are being provided with the challenge and the opportunity to choose and decide which way to go.

In his address to the Human Rights Council, 27 February, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, stressed that: *“disregard for human rights is a disease, and it is a disease that is spreading – north, south, east and west”*. But human rights form an intrinsic part of all we do and *are*, he said, and urged that we all speak up for human rights *‘in an impartial way without double standards’*.

The shockwaves of disturbing global news together with daily doses of perplexing statements from people in power will surely make us realise – as did the little boy in H.C. Andersen’s fairy-tale *‘The Emperor’s New Clothes’* – that today’s many ‘emperors’ are in fact naked, revealing all! The regular stream of tailor-made words, containing the ‘perfect’ texture and blend of reassurances of protection and warnings against ‘the enemy’, is losing their mesmerising hold on us and freeing our capacity to discern facts from fiction.

We realise that it is we who will be responsible for and have the power to heal the world community of the spreading ‘disease’ of general disregard for human rights; it is we who can and must learn to practice, impartially and without double standards, the principles they hold. It is we who can awaken and nurture into full expression the vision held within the human heart. It is also we who can help restore and enable the

wilderness to reveal its true being in all its wondrous glory.

Will we do so? Yes, we will.

Gita Brooke, Many to Many, March 2017

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.

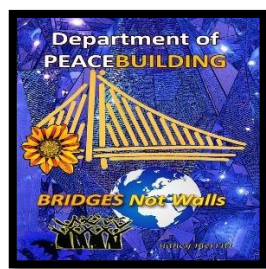
Throughout every neighbourhood within all nations people are uniting in and contributing to a shared vision of the future civilisation of our planet, the mind-set of the individual opening up and embracing all living beings within and upon it – ensuring the unfoldment of the full potential of each and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

Gita Brooke, Many to Many, October 2017

Hope And Peace

Peace IS Possible with POLITICAL WILL & This Gives Me Hope

*A Solution: Build The Culture of Peace by
Establishing Governmental Departments
of Peace*



Hope is the theme of this Many-to-Many issue so the relation of hope and peace is my topic, as it relates to my Department of Peace / Culture of Peace advocacy work. My google search says hope and peace are intertwined concepts, with hope often seen as a necessary ingredient for achieving peace. Hope is a powerful force, even in the absence of tangible reasons for optimism. It is a positive state of mind that expects good outcomes. Hope improves mental health and fosters a sense of purpose in life, facilitating emotional regulation. The feeling that what is wanted can be had or that events will turn out for the best. It is about being able to see LIGHT in the midst of pervading darkness. Peace, on the other hand, is often seen as an active state requiring understanding, compassion, and a commitment to building a better future.

I wrote the above opening hope and peace paragraph the day before yesterday. **Since then, the whole world order is reeling from the sudden stunning U.S. bombing in Iran!** Civil society cries out in despair for the umpteenth time **NO MORE WAR - ENOUGH - WILL WE EVER LEARN?** Today it is harder for me to write about hope than it was yesterday. Yet I realize what still gives me hope today is knowing from my peace work that the Culture of Peace can and will become a reality when government leaders have the wisdom and courage to evoke the political will necessary for the new “science of nonviolence” to become a basic organizing principle and priority in society.

Establishing governmental departments, ministries and other “Infrastructures for Peace” (I4P) is the way to make that happen. How do I know? *Because the **United Nations (UN) Development Program** in 2013 produced evidence-based research showing that governmental and civil society I4P have reduced violence in several countries!* Which is why the 2023 **UN New Agenda for Peace** recommends that member states develop I4P and take advantage of the UN expertise offered to support creating I4P globally.

The UN coined the term “**Infrastructures for Peace**” around 2003 to encompass the evolutionary concept of departments, ministries and other

structures aligned with the science of nonviolence that are intentionally designed to reduce and prevent violence. **Given the hopelessly violent state of the world right now (per the 2025 Global Peace Index), I4P offer a logical and hopeful solution at a time when few alternatives to de-escalate violence are working.**

The 2025 Global Peace Index finds *“that the world became less peaceful for the 13th time in the last 17 years, with the average level of country peacefulness deteriorating by 0.036 % over the prior year. This is the sixth consecutive year that global peacefulness has deteriorated... a continued decline in global peacefulness, with key indicators that precede major conflict now at their highest levels since the Second World War! Rising conflict deaths, accelerating geopolitical tensions, and assertive middle powers are driving The Great Fragmentation – a fundamental reshaping of the global order and the emergence of a new geopolitical era. Amid intensifying major power competition, rapidly evolving warfare technologies, and deepening economic fragility, the risk of further conflict continues to escalate. This geopolitical fragmentation, rising military expenditure, and a record number of conflicts are creating conditions for widespread instability. Proactive conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and development funding are in decline, undermining global capacity to respond to the drivers of conflict. Strengthening Positive Peace remains essential to fostering sustainable peace and prosperity.”* Thus, I say **I4P can be proactive national “conflict prevention**

strategies” that provide hope by strengthening positive sustainable peace and prosperity. (Explore the data, regional breakdowns, and long-term trends that define the state of peace in 2025. [Global-Peace-Index-2025-web.pdf](#).)

The **Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace** (www.gamip.org) has been advocating internationally for I4P the last 20 years. Several countries like Costa Rica have Ministries for Peace. The U.S. has had an evolving Department of Peacebuilding bill in Congress for the last 20 years that is just now getting attention. The **U.S. Peace Alliance “Department of Peacebuilding” Campaign** has been advocating for passage of this bill in Congress the last 20 years, too (www.peacealliance.org). Slowly consciousness is shifting from the eons old-paradigm one of “Peace Through Strength” to “Strength Through Peace.”

In conclusion, I know peace is possible and trust that enlightened politicians do exist. This gives me some hope for the future. My peace advocacy has been about raising awareness of how establishing Departments of Peace can build the Culture of Peace, per **UN Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace Resolution A/RES/53/243** whose “Eight Peace Action Domains” align with the comprehensiveness of Department of Peacebuilding bill (HR 1111). 2025 is the year of great transformation in one direction or the

other. When breakdown has settled and the world desperately searches for new visions for breakthrough to a better world, the long-seasoned U.S. Department of Peace bill can become the roadmap for Congress to effectuate the Culture of Peace.

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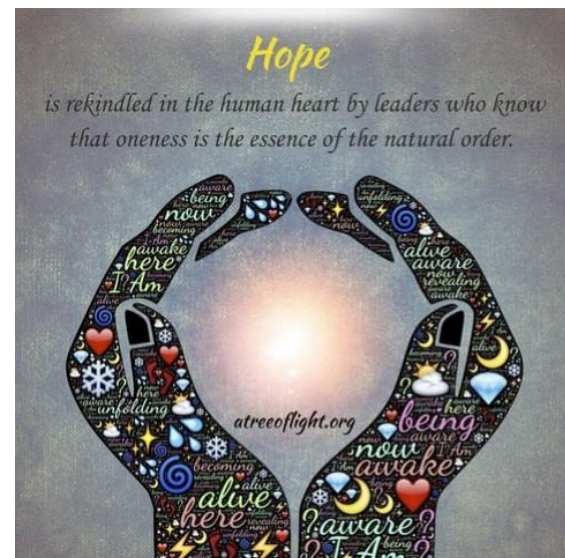
Global Alliance for Ministries and
Infrastructures for Peace
UN NGO Rep Peace Through Unity
Charitable Trust
Global Movement for the Culture of Peace
U.S. Peace Alliance Department of
Peacebuilding Campaign

Addendum: As the above article about **Hope and Peace and the UN** was being written, actor and UN Peace Messenger Michael Douglas got a standing ovation speaking about **"Hope, Peace and Nuclear Disarmament"** at the UN in Geneva at the World Conference of Speakers of Parliament. *"Today, as the Doomsday Clock ticks closer to midnight...as China Syndrome appears less fiction than prophecy...our mission sometimes feels like a desperate holdout against the inevitable,"* he continued. *"But that hope isn't naïve...it's necessary. Because without it...without hope in the face of overwhelming odds...we wouldn't see new treaties formed, or old arsenals destroyed. We wouldn't see young people dreaming, marching, campaigning for a safer world. We wouldn't see folks of every political stripe coming together to say that a nuclear war must never, ever be fought."* Jonathan Granoff, of the Global Security Institute and Alyn Ware, cofounder of UNFOLD ZERO also

spoke. Learn more @

<https://www.unfoldzero.org/michael-douglas-gets-standing-ovation-at-the-un-for-speech-on-hope-peace-and-nuclear-disarmament/> .

Anne Creter: U.S. Peace Alliance & Global
Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures for
Peace



Establishing Global Oneness Day as a UN Observance

In these pivotal times, the United Nations emerges as the primary catalyst for fostering global unity, founded on the principles of oneness. Embracing *Oneness* is key to assuming responsibility for the greater good and the fate of life on Earth... a first step toward transforming our world. Thus, this endeavor of aligning Global Oneness Day with the United Nations mission is fundamental.

It is proposed that Global Oneness Day would be commemorated on 25 October, the day after the UN celebrates the anniversary of the entry into force of the United Nations Charter on 24 October 1945. This special day would be observed each year beginning in 2025 honoring the landmark week of the founding of the United Nations almost 80 years ago and thereby recognizing the value of the interconnectedness that exists among all people, all life, and the planet. It would also pay tribute to United Nations mission at large to maintain international peace and security by fostering a culture of peace, protecting human rights, advancing sustainable development and achieving international cooperation through the promotion of collaboration, dialogue, reconciliation and mutual understanding.

Aligning Global Oneness Day with the United Nations mission would further

embed the principles of unity, interconnectedness and solidarity into global policies and actions, providing a broader worldwide platform to spread its message. This alignment is supported by key UN documents, including the UN Charter¹, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights², and the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace³.

Throughout the ages, countless religious and spiritual traditions, philosophies, organizations and individuals have advanced the idea of the interconnectedness of humanity and oneness with all life.

More recently, Humanity's Team launched a Oneness Declaration Signature Drive in 2008 to help transform global interactions and perspectives. By 2010, over 52,000 signatures from more than 150 countries were collected, demonstrating a global readiness to embrace our united humanity and oneness. On May 20, 2010, Humanity's Team's Global Council visited United Nations Headquarters in New York and presented these signatures and a proposal for Global Oneness Day to Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury. The ceremony which was co-sponsored with the NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns (NY), a committee of the

¹ <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/chapter-1>

² <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

³

<https://www.un.org/en/ga/62/plenary/peaceculture/bkg.shtml>

Conference of NGOs in consultative relationship with the United Nations took place in front of the Chagall Window next to the UN Meditation Room. Ambassador Chowdhury emphasized the importance of solidarity and suggested that Humanity's Team launch Global Oneness Day celebrations all over the world and return to the UN after establishing global support. For 16 years Global Oneness Day has been celebrated worldwide, and has gained significant momentum over the last decade, demonstrating a global readiness to embrace a shared responsibility for the common good. The 16th Annual Global Oneness Summit will take place October 24th – 26th of this year.

<https://www.humanitysteam.org/global-oneness-summit>

Everyone is invited to join. Now we are returning to the UN to seek its official recognition, believing that oneness and solidarity can propel the UN's agenda forward. We have recently formed a Global Oneness Day Working Group of the NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns (NY) www.csvgc-ny.org made up for UN NGOs that are committed to working together to get this resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly. UN NGOs and other UN badge holders are welcome to join this working group.

In conclusion, a UN commemorated Global Oneness Day would symbolize a commitment to our collective well-being. Establishing this day would create a profound legacy of oneness and mark a pivotal step toward global cooperation. It invites every individual

to join in the transformative journey toward a more compassionate and interconnected world. Embracing our oneness can usher in an era where humanity transcends conflict, ensures universal access to essentials, promotes balanced resource use, and ends poverty and social injustice. This legacy would honor the founding principles of the United Nations and inspire current and future generations to build a harmonious and flourishing global community for all.

*Drafted by Global Oneness Day
Leadership Team: Ambassador Anwarul
K. Chowdhury, Steve Farrell, Sharon
Hamilton-Getz, Olivia Hansen, Samuel
Jacobs-Abbey, Abbie Johnson, Nina
Meyerhof, Danilo Parmegiani, Diane
Williams*

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“Peace cannot be achieved through violence, it can only be attained through understanding.”

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

United Nations New Agenda for Peace

“Infrastructures for Peace” Recommendations

~ *Urgent UN Implementation Needed Now as a Prevention Strategy for Peace* ~

“The Ministry of Peace concept started to be developed in 2003 mainly in the global North, with the aim of creating a practical model to advance a culture of peace.” Paul van Tongeren, 2005 Secretary-General of Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict

As a long-time UN NGO representative with **Peace Through Unity Charitable Trust (PTU)** and UN liaison to the **Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace (GAMIP)**, plus the U.S. Peace Alliance Department of Peacebuilding Campaign (DoP) and the Global Movement for the Culture of Peace UN NGO Coalition, I am charged with finding out how the UN is implementing its **Infrastructures for Peace (I4P) recommendations from the 2023 “UN New Agenda for Peace” (NA4P)**. [*The UN defines I4P as “a network of interdependent systems, resources, values and skills held by government, civil society and community*

institutions that promote dialogue and consultation; prevent conflict and enable peaceful mediation when violence occurs in a society.”] Since this new I4P UN mandate of “supporting and developing I4P” has been GAMIP’s sole international mission for the past 20 years, we believe our vast I4P peacebuilding work could help the UN meet its I4P mandate now. GAMIP’s two decades long I4P experiences and challenges could be useful as the UN begins its current new I4P responsibility. Perhaps GAMIP could be of service, especially now as the UN observes its 80th anniversary this year, in what is sadly described as alarming UN internal dysfunction coupled with totally inadequate resources.

When I joined GAMIP 20 years ago through my U.S. DoP work, I met PTU & GAMIP coworker, Kate Smith (editor of this newsletter) at GAMIP’s second 2006 Summit in Canada. It was exciting to discover this New Zealand NGO I now represent (founded by Gita Brooke on the other side of the world) *because PTU coincidentally then was also advocating for our same unique evolutionary vision relating the concept of developing I4P to building the Culture of Peace. Both I4P and CoP are significant UN constructs or silos that if operating together within the peacebuilding system would empower deeper internal UN consistency and coherence.* GAMIP and PTU led a long-evolving initiative **crafting a draft General Assembly Resolution**

“urging all member states to establish departments, ministries and other I4P.” GAMIP’s means of promoting its I4P mission is to host international I4P Summits, done in the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, Costa Rica, South Africa, Switzerland (at UN Palais des Nations), Colombia and Nigeria. A highlight was Costa Rica’s 2007 Summit, when then **President Oscar Orias** in hosting the Summit **officially announced the creation of their Ministry of Justice and Peace** – which still stands today as a model for the world of a long-functioning national governmental I4P.

GAMIP defines itself as *“a worldwide community of civil society campaigns, organizations, committed citizens, and government officials supporting the development of ministries, departments and other infrastructures for peace. GAMIP believes in strengthening the UN mission to establish international peace and security. GAMIP works with countries having established ministries and other I4P to share best practices and support striving to develop a culture of peace”*. Thus, collaboration between GAMIP and the UN could enhance both of us in these transformational times of unprecedented violent poly-crisis with earth in the balance and resources so scarce.

The peacebuilding term “I4P” is referenced in the NA4P under Action 3 [page 19] which recommends various actions to **Shift the Prevention and Sustaining Peace Paradigm within**

Countries, including with the following two specific I4P actions:
#1. *Develop national prevention strategies to address the different drivers and enablers of violence and conflict in societies and **strengthen national infrastructures for peace.***
#2. *Member states seeking to establish or **strengthen national infrastructures for peace** should be able to access a tailor-made package of support and expertise.”*

Beginning my task, the only I4P tidbit I knew for sure was that in 2024 my one remaining inside UN I4P source had shared a promising I4P related workshop on **“Unpacking National Prevention Strategies”** hosted by the NY University Center on International Cooperation. Beyond that, she confirmed no specific UN I4P plan had materialized yet last year. The UN was undergoing major change and upheaval then, struggling with its many internal futuristic reforms.

On 8 July 2025, I happened to attend a UN workshop (virtually) hosted by the **UN International Peace Institute (IPI)** which surprisingly addressed my task. It was about the **Ten-Year Review of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations**. [Ten-Year Review of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations Report - International Peace Institute](#) . Not expecting to hear anything related to our I4P quest, I was shocked when that actually happened rather dramatically in what final speaker, Dirk Druet (Non-

Resident Fellow, IPI) said in his closing remarks. “Two very quick final points on the peacekeeping side of the operations spectrum. I think there needs to be an **induction of the notion of national “Infrastructures for Peace” more fully into the DNA of how peacekeeping operations work.** This is a concept that has been re-upped and redefined in the New Agenda for Peace.” Stunning words, as they describe the essence of GAMIP’s and PTU’s long-evolving peacebuilding advocacy work **raising consciousness and understanding about how the proven UN peacebuilding concept of I4P reduces and prevents violence, thus builds the Culture of Peace, per the comprehensive, multi-level 1999 UN Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (CoP) Resolution 53/243.** (<http://un-documents.net/a53r243.htm>)

I asked Dirk Druet the following question in the chat: “*As an NGO with the Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace, I was thrilled to hear your point about getting “National Infrastructures for Peace into the UN DNA” per the New Agenda for Peace.* **Question: What unit at the UN is now working on I4P?**” His response: “To our colleague online asking about the implementation of the NA4P and national infrastructures, **I think it is important to say this concept has been around a long time and has really been at the root of UNDP “Joint Program on Building National**

Capacities for Conflict Prevention” which deploys Peace and Development Advisors into non-mission settings. And is focused very much on national mechanisms and national capacities for conflict resolution and mediation. **Hum, but integrating that into the peace operations space is a little bit less clear. So, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) Joint Program is one unit that is very much working on it. Although it has suffered catastrophic funding cuts I think are among the most troublesome among many the last couple of years, which is a critical part of it. Also, the entire **Peace and Security Pillar** to the extent they are responsible for implementation of the NA4P, **I4P should very much be in the DNA of all parts of the system.”****

Catastrophic funding cuts to the I4P UN program when the world is on fire is not a hopeful sign. What is hopeful though is witnessing a high-level UN official publicly speak such pithy words revealing his deep conviction that **constructing I4P is effective action that can dynamically improve the UN’s woeful peacebuilding inadequacies.** His recognition that **I4P are not yet “inducted in the UN’s DNA” gets to the heart of the disconnect.** It is telling that there is no mention of the term I4P in the above 25-page Review, or on its abbreviations list, nor in the 2025 Peacebuilding Architecture Review. This lack of I4P acknowledgement in

UN documents as a bona fide peacebuilding entity has been puzzling. Because back in 2012 (*when a pilot UN I4P unit briefly flourished producing studies showing that I4P reduced violence*), **UN I4P authors had contributed significantly to the prestigious Journal of Peacebuilding & Development Special Issue on I4P, a watershed moment that established I4P academic credibility.**

One powerful way to “induct I4P more fully into the UN’s DNA”, aligned with GAMIP and PTU’s longstanding advocacy to formalize the relationship between I4P and CoP, is to purposefully **apply the peacebuilding actions identified in the landmark CoP Resolution to develop national prevention strategies stated in a country’s national “Culture of Peace Action Plan” based on the Eight Action Areas of the CoP Resolution.** Integrating these two separate UN silos (I4P and CoP) within the new Peacebuilding Operations structure would be productive and unifying, **using the CoP Resolution as roadmap** guiding countries to implement proven science of nonviolence actions to dispel our culture of violence.

Another way to “induct I4P into the UN’s DNA” is for the **General Assembly to pass an I4P resolution urging all member states to establish departments, ministries and other I4P.** Utilizing GAMIP’s prior wealth of experience here could facilitate that to happen more quickly. Also, it may benefit UN Political and Peacekeeping

Operations to know more about the 20 year-long U.S. Peace Alliance governmental advocacy campaign for passage of the bill in Congress (H.R. 1111) to establish a cabinet-level U.S. Department of Peacebuilding.

In closing let us not underestimate the need to *construct governmental I4P to build the Culture of Peace through use of the UN Declaration and Program of Action on a Culture of Peace framework to develop national Culture of Peace Action Plans.* This is how to apply the evolutionary principle of I4P to manifest the Culture of Peace. In these troubled times, we are told that now is the time to speak up about what really matters to you. GAMIP’s priority now is establishment of national governmental I4P because UN studies have shown I4P have reduced violence in countries. I4P thus need to be constructed worldwide and the UN must coordinate such peacebuilding actions now to make that happen in the fierce urgency of NOW.

We amplify Mr. Druet’s closing plea to **“induct I4P into the UN’s DNA.”** We rejoice knowing of a UN official who champions I4P as much as we do and are grateful he has steered us to the **DPPA Joint Program and Peace and Security Pillar** to pursue GAMIP collaboration. As the old world breaks down, a new peace consciousness is rising which needs a solid anchor. I4P can be that solid anchor if lifted out of

UN archives to take center stage as a powerful missing link. There will always be war until a better way of resolving conflict is ingrained in the system. Institutionalizing peace instead of warmaking is the better way. Imagine what the world will be like when country governments have implemented national violence prevention plans, whose primary organizing principle of nonviolence consciously directs actions at all levels consistent with the blueprint provided by the **UN Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace**. World peace just might become possible then.

"Civil society has done the most to advance the cause of peace in which the Global Movement for the Culture of Peace (GMCOP) has taken a lead in developing a coalition of civil society organizations and work with various actors promoting the culture of peace. I am proud to say the Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace (GAMIP) is one of the partner organizations. I believe the culture of peace should be the most appropriate vehicle to prepare ourselves, our world in effectively addressing the complex challenges of the 21st century." Former Bangladesh Ambassador Anwarul K.

Chowdhury – Former UN Under-Secretary-General, High Representative of the UN and Founder of the Global Movement for the Culture of Peace

Anne Creter annecrets@aol.com August 1, 2025

Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace

UN NGO Rep Peace Through Unity Charitable Trust

Global Movement for the Culture of Peace UN NGO Coalition

U.S. Peace Alliance Department of Peacebuilding Campaign



Declaration by former Foreign Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean

on the United Nations and the appointment of the future Secretary-General

As we draw near the **80th anniversary of the United Nations**, we — a collective of former Foreign Ministers from Latin America and the Caribbean — wish to underscore the urgent need for a stronger system grounded in the Charter's vision. The Charter anchored the UN's mandate in its Preamble and Chapter I, outlining a triptych of core objectives: maintaining **peace and security**, promoting **development**, and fostering **universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms**. It is clear that “there is no peace without development, there is no development without peace, and there is no lasting peace or sustainable development without respect for human rights and the rule of law.” Only by honoring these **interlinked principles — peace, development, and human rights — together**, can the UN fulfill its founding promise and rise to meet the complex challenges of our era.

At this critical juncture, the United Nations faces profound challenges — including the growing failure of **key global actors to uphold international law**. Most notably, it must reclaim and reinforce its role as an **influential global voice and convener of crises**, from geopolitical conflict to humanitarian disasters. Simultaneously, it is essential to **reexamine how its business is conducted** — so that the constellation of UN agencies operates efficiently in fulfilling the mandates set by Member States, backed by sufficient resources and clear prioritization.

It is soon that the United Nations must formally launch the process to appoint its next Secretary-General, who will take office on 1 January 2027. In light of the complex geopolitical, humanitarian, and development crises we face, the importance of this decision cannot be overstated.

First, on regional rotation: Latin America and the Caribbean have had only one United Nations Secretary-General in eight decades — a glaring gap in global representation. We urge all Member States to support our region taking responsibility in this upcoming cycle. Latin America and the Caribbean brings a **distinct perspective on global public goods**, reflecting long-standing regional commitments to peace and

cooperation – such as the Treaty of Tlatelolco – and active engagement in sustainability, climate finance, and inclusive development agendas.

Second, on gender: It is time for a **woman** to lead the United Nations. The next Secretary-General should be selected with gender parity and merit at the forefront. Our region includes many distinguished women who could redefine international leadership and bring new perspectives to global governance.

Now is the time to **reimagine the United Nations as the foremost platform for defending our Global Common Goods and crafting cooperative solutions to shared global challenges**. In this pivotal era, Latin America and the Caribbean stand ready to lead – not only with a unique regional vision rooted in multilateral peace and solidarity, but also in nurturing leadership that is inclusive, diverse, and representative in this transformative moment, we reaffirm our readiness to contribute leadership, energy, and innovative ideas both regionally and globally.

We urge all UN Member States to unite behind **regional rotation favoring Latin America and the Caribbean**, and to support a

woman candidate for Secretary-General in the 2027 cycle. This convergence of regional representation, gender parity, and proven leadership would mark historic progress – and position the UN to meet the complex demands of the 21st century with renewed legitimacy and impact.

Signatories:

Francisco Álvarez de Soto	Panama
Carolina Barco	Colombia
Jaime Bermúdez	Colombia
Rafael Bielsa	Argentina
Santiago Cafiero	Argentina
Norman Caldera Cardenal	Nicaragua
Jorge Castañeda	Mexico
Guillermo Fernández de Soto	Colombia
Luis Gallegos	Ecuador
Diego García-Sayan	Perú
Federico González	Paraguay
Manuel González Sanz	Costa Rica
Juan Carlos Holguín	Ecuador
María Ángela Holguín	Colombia
José Miguel Insulza	Chile
Eladio Loizaga	Paraguay
Susana Malcorra	Argentina
María Emma Mejía	Colombia
Carlos Raúl Morales	Guatemala
Alfredo Moreno	Chile
José Antonio Moreno Ruffinelli	Paraguay
Heraldo Muñoz	Chile
Rodolfo Nin Novoa	Uruguay

Peace Manifesto 2025.

In recent months, we have published signs of a fightback, some light in this time of darkness in Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan and now in the US against Trump and Musk.

This month we are making the fightback and we are shining a light ourselves. CPNN is proud to have been involved from the beginning in the Peace Manifesto 2025 that is being launched today, May 1.

Here is the press release that has been sent to media around the world.

SICK AND TIRED OF THE CULTURE OF WAR? SHARE THE PEACE MANIFESTO 2025

Saying they are “sick and tired of the culture of war,” Nobel Peace Laureates and other peace organizations and peace activists hope to repeat the success of the Manifesto 2000 that was signed by 75 million people during the UN International Year for the Culture of Peace. They announce that the Peace Manifesto 2025 will be launched on May 1.

Its text is simple; “I’m sick and tired of the culture of war, so I give my support to the culture of peace, and I will keep spreading the word on social media until we win. I live in [your City, Country].”

One of the organizers of the new manifesto, David Adams, was in charge of the mobilization of the Manifesto 2000. He says that the success in the year 2000 struck fear in the heart of the military-industrial complex to such an extent that the initiative was shut down. “This time,” he says, “we are not relying on any organization run by states, but we are simply asking the youth of the world to disseminate the Manifesto 2025 on social media. We believe that the current state of the world demands it.”

The Manifesto 2025 is supported by Nobel Peace laureates Mairead Maguire and the International Peace Bureau. Maguire, who is now on a hunger strike to support the people of Gaza (see article below), says “I am very delighted that you are relaunching the culture of peace and wholeheartedly give my support to your efforts.” And Jay Ngoma, the granddaughter of Bishop Desmond Tutu and representative of Desmond Tutu Peace Foundation, says “This manifesto couldn’t come at a more important time, and I wholeheartedly stand with the movement to amplify the voices of youth and civil society in building a just and peaceful world.”

“Our world and Mother Earth continue to be deeply fractured by crises, conflicts and the suffering of wars, injustices, human rights violations, discriminations, and ecological destruction. The Peace Manifesto 2025 urgently appeals to all

humanity to embrace personal and social action to build a peaceful, nonviolent, just, compassionate, inclusive and sustainable web of life”, says another of the organizers, Toh Swee-Hin, former professor at the United Nations University for Peace and laureate of the 2000 UNESCO Prize for Peace Education.

The many partners of the initiative include Mouvement de la Paix, World Without War, the Global Campaign for Peace Education, Pathways to Peace and the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding. Other partners include organizations in Philippines, Colombia and Palestine.

People are encouraged to compose their messages for social media on the website for the Peace Manifesto 2025: <https://activatingpeace.org> A map on the website shows participation coming from all corners of the world.

The Manifesto Team

David Adams, CPNN Coordinator, coordinator@cpnn-world.org, France
David Wick, Ashland Culture of Peace Commission and Pathways to Peace, USA

Myrian Castello, culture of peace and right to dream activist and educator, Brazil

Nawal Amjad, SDG Changemaker, Pakistan

Munira Beisenbayeva, Teacher, Kazakhstan

Alicia Cabezudo, Education Expert, Colombia

Virginia Cawagas, Peace Educator, Philippines/Canada

Toh Swee-Hin (S.H.Toh), Laureate, UNESCO Prize for Peace Education (2000), Canada/ Australia

From CPNN May 1, 2025 [English bulletin May 1, 2025 | CPNN](#)

“The commitment to building a safer world, free from the nuclear threat, must be pursued through respectful encounters and sincere dialogue, to build a lasting peace, founded on justice, brotherhood and the common good. No one should ever threaten the existence of another. It is the duty of all countries to support the cause of peace, initiating paths of reconciliation and promoting solutions that guarantee security and dignity for all.”

~ Pope Leo XIV (St. Peter’s Basilica June 14, 2025)

Editor's note

Ambassador Chowdhury has graciously given us permission to share three of his articles, on recent events at the United Nations.

It is noted that these will give some more clarity on issues facing all of us.

Thank you, Ambassador Chowdhury, PTU much appreciates your continued support and encouragement.

Germany's Annalena Baerbock elected President of the 80th General Assembly



UN Photo/Manuel Elías Annalena Baerbock, President-elect of the General Assembly at its eightieth session addresses delegations after her election

By Vibhu Mishra

2 June 2025 [UN Affairs](#)

Former German foreign minister Annalena Baerbock was elected President of the General Assembly's 80th session on Monday. Her appointment comes as the regional

group that includes Western Europe takes its turn at the helm of the world body.

She assumes the role at a challenging time, with ongoing conflicts, faltering development goals, mounting financial pressures, and the upcoming selection of the next Secretary-General.

Ms. Baerbock received 167 votes following the secret ballot. Write-in candidate Helga Schmid (also from Germany) received seven. Fourteen delegations abstained.

She becomes the first woman from the Western European group to hold the post and the [fifth woman overall](#) to lead the General Assembly. The presidency rotates among the world body's [five regional groups](#).

At 44 years, Ms. Baerbock is also one of the youngest leaders to secure the top job.

Crucial juncture

Ms. Baerbock's election comes at a critical juncture for the multilateral system, spearheaded by the United Nations.

With the [Security Council](#) deadlocked – especially on moves to help end the wars in Ukraine and Gaza – the Assembly has become a vital forum for diplomatic engagement and consensus-building, even without binding authority on peace and security issues.

As conflicts rage, the Assembly has passed a series of resolutions calling for ceasefires, humanitarian access and the protection of civilians.

Many now see the Assembly as an essential platform for accountability and maintaining international focus on intractable crises, especially through the “[Veto Initiative](#)” adopted in 2022 which ensures that issues blocked by permanent members on the Security Council are debated in the Assembly as a priority.

A power wielded by the five permanent members – China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States – a veto (or negative vote) can block Council action even when all other members support a motion.

Pledge to be an honest broker

In her [acceptance speech](#), President-elect Baerbock acknowledged the current global challenges and pledged to serve as “an honest broker and a unifier” for all 193 Member States, emphasising her theme of “[Better Together](#).”

She outlined three priorities for her presidency: making the Organization more efficient and effective; advancing the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development; and making the Assembly a “truly inclusive forum”.

She called for a UN “that **embraces everyone. I see the diversity of the General Assembly as our strength.**

This is the place where all nations come together and where every country has a seat and a voice.”

She also highlighted the importance of promoting gender equality, multilingualism, and engagement with civil society and youth.

[\[UN Video | Annalena Baerbock elected to lead 80th session of the UN General Assembly. WATCH ON UNTV\]](#)

UN80 initiative

Ms. Baerbock also touched on the UN80 initiative, which was [launched by Secretary-General António Guterres in March](#).

“The UN80 Initiative should not be a mere cost-cutting exercise,” she said, stressing the need for bold ambition and readiness to take difficult decisions.

“Our common goal is a strong, focused, nimble and fit-for-purpose organization. One that is capable of realising its core objectives – we need a United Nations that delivers on peace, development and justice.”

A career defined by multilateralism

In congratulating Ms. Baerbock, current President Philemon Yang [described](#) her as a leader defined by “**an unwavering commitment to multilateralism**”, praising her “Better Together” vision.

Mr. Yang, who steered the Assembly through a year marked by the [Summit](#)

[of the Future](#) and persistent global crises, expressed confidence in her ability to build trust and foster dialogue across divides.

Secretary-General António

Guterres said Mr. Yang's successor was [taking the gavel](#) amid a "difficult and uncertain moment for the multilateral system," noting she was only the fifth woman to lead the body.

The UN chief warned that "conflicts, climate catastrophe, poverty and inequality continue to challenge the human family," and **called on the Assembly to unite in forging common solutions.**



UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe Annalena Baerbock, President-elect of the eightieth session of the UN General Assembly, speaks to the media following her election.

The world parliament

The General Assembly remains the UN's most representative body, where each Member State has an equal voice – and an equal say in decisions.

While its resolutions are non-binding, the GA – as the acronym goes in New York – helps define global diplomatic norms, convenes dialogues on

worldwide challenges and holds the Security Council to account.

The 80th session, starting 9 September, is expected to be pivotal – not only for sheer number and intensity of crises ongoing – but for advancing long-term reforms, including the [UN80 initiative](#) and the selection of the next Secretary-General before his term ends in 2026.

The Secretary-General Briefing On The UN 80 Initiative

New York, 12 May 2025

[English only]

Mr. President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Next month marks the 80th anniversary of the United Nations Charter.

The Charter is our roadmap to a better world – our owner's manual setting out purposes and principles – and our practical guide to advancing the three pillars of our work: peace and security, development and human rights.

Anniversaries are a time to look back and celebrate – but they are even more a time to cast our eyes to the future.

It is only natural – especially in a period of turbulence and tumult – to look ahead and ask central questions:

How can we be the most effective Organization that we can be?

How can we be more nimble, coordinated and fit to face the challenges of today, the next decade, and indeed the next 80 years?

The UN80 Initiative is anchored in answering these questions – and equipping our organization in an era of extraordinary uncertainty.

Yes, these are times of peril.

But they are also times of profound opportunity and obligation. The mission of the United Nations is more urgent than ever.

And it is up to us to intensify our efforts to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals and be laser-focused on implementing the Pact for the Future with its many pathways to strengthen multilateralism.

Excellencies,

As indicated in my letter of 11 March, the UN80 Initiative is structured around three key workstreams:

First, we are striving to rapidly identify efficiencies and improvements under current arrangements.

Second, we are reviewing the implementation of all mandates given to us by Member States.

And third, we are undertaking consideration of the need for structural changes and programme realignment across the UN system.

Under the first workstream on efficiencies and improvements, Under-Secretary-General Catherine Pollard is leading a Working Group for the Secretariat that is developing a management strategy to design a new business model for the Organization.

The Working Group is focused on developing cost-reduction and efficiency-enhancement proposals in management and operations across the UN Secretariat.

It is reviewing administrative functions to identify redundancies, streamline processes, and design integrated solutions – with cost-benefit analyses and clear implementation roadmaps.

Priority areas include:

- Functional and structural consolidation;
- Workforce streamlining;
- Relocating services from high-cost duty stations;
- Centralizing IT and support services, and
- Expanding automation and digital platforms.

While the Working Group's immediate focus is on management and operational areas, the rest of the Secretariat will be expected to contribute towards the efficiency agenda.

For example, all Secretariat entities in New York and Geneva have been asked to review their functions to determine if any can be performed from existing, lower-cost locations, or may otherwise be reduced or abolished.

This especially pertains to those functions that do not directly support inter-governmental bodies in New York and Geneva.

With respect to the broader UN system, in April, the High-Level Committee on Management identified potential system-wide efficiency measures in areas such as human resources management, supply chain management and information and communications technologies.

Concrete proposals are now being developed, including identifying services that system organizations can provide quicker, at a lower price or through more competitive contracts.

This brings me to the second workstream: mandate implementation review.

As stated in my 11 March letter, this workstream is about how the UN system implements mandates entrusted by Member States.

We will not review the mandates themselves. Those are yours to decide on.

Our job is to examine and report on how we carry them out, and our goal is to simplify and optimize how we do so.

Nearly twenty years ago, in 2006, an analysis of mandates and the “mandate-generation cycle” was carried out by the Secretariat.

A number of problems were identified, including burdensome reporting requirements, overlap between and within organs, an unwieldy and duplicative architecture for implementation, and gaps between mandates and resources.

But let’s be frank.

Most of these problems are not only still with us – they have intensified.

We must do better.

Our review will be conducted holistically – looking at the entire universe of mandates, and at the entirety of their implementation.

This review, therefore, cannot be limited to the UN Secretariat, but it will start there.

We have already completed an identification of all mandates reflected in the programme budget - and will soon do so for the rest of the system.

The review has so far identified over 3,600 unique mandates for the Secretariat alone.

It is now deepening its examination, clustering these mandates using various analytical lenses.

After this analytical work, relevant entities and departments will be invited to identify opportunities for

improvements and consolidation of efforts.

This should result in the identification of duplications, redundancies, or opportunities for greater synergy on implementation.

Naturally, based on this work, Member States may wish to consider the opportunity to conduct themselves a review of the mandates.

There can be no doubt that the thousands of mandates in place today – and our machinery to implement them – stretch the capacities of Member States, especially those with smaller missions, and the UN system beyond reason.

It is as if we have allowed the formalism and quantity of reports and meetings to become ends in themselves.

The measure of success is not the volume of reports we generate or the number of meetings we convene. The measure of success – the value, purpose and aim of our work – is in the real-world difference we make in the lives of people.

This brings me to the third
workstream: structural changes.

Proposals on structural change and programme realignment are likely to emerge from the mandate implementation review.

But we have already got the ball rolling by soliciting the views of a number of UN senior leaders.

Their initial submissions – nearly 50 in all – show a high level of ambition and creativity.

Last week, we deepened some of our ideas and thinking about structural changes in a dedicated session of the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination.

I felt a strong sense of collective determination and responsibility from the leaders of UN entities – a shared resolve to strengthen the system and assume the challenge of change and renewal – and a united commitment to bring to you, our Member States, concrete and ambitious proposals for a renewed United Nations.

The UN system is highly diverse consisting of organizations with a wide variety of structures and mandates.

To advance our three workstreams, I have established seven UN80 clusters – under the coordination of the UN80 Task Force and in close cooperation with the Secretariat Working Group.

Each of the seven clusters bring together the organizations that contribute to a similar specific global objectives and similar areas of work.

They will advance efforts in the three UN80 workstreams – identifying efficiencies and improvements, mandate implementation review, and possible structural changes.

They will be managed at the Principals' level and will consist of the following:

- Peace and security, coordinated by DPPA, DPO, OCT, and ODA;
- Development in the Secretariat and in development we have two clusters because the work in the Secretariat is very different from the work in the Agencies, but the two clusters will be working very closely together. So development in the Secretariat is coordinated by DESA, UNCTAD, ECA, and UNEP;
- Development (UN System), coordinated by UNDP, UNOPS, UNICEF and DCO;
- Humanitarian, coordinated by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, WFP, UNICEF, UNHCR, and IOM;
- Human Rights, coordinated by OHCHR;
- Training and Research, coordinated by UNU and UNITAR; and finally
- Specialized Agencies, coordinated by ITU and ILO.

They will be the locomotive force for concrete proposals. And they will operate at the high level of ambition that our times demand – and that also echo in large measure the calls contained in the Pact for the Future.

Excellencies,

In all three workstreams, my objective is to move as quickly as possible.

Initiatives impacting on the [Proposed] Programme Budget for 2026 prepared under the coordination of the Secretariat Working Group will be included in the revised estimates for the 2026 budget to be presented in September.

As you know, the budget for 2026, the proposal was already given to ACABQ some time ago and it will be impossible to change it at the present moment. We will revise our proposals and present the revised version in September on time for the process to take place for the approval of the budget before the end of the year.

Additional changes that require more detailed analysis will be presented in the proposal for the Proposed Programme Budget for 2027.

We expect meaningful reductions in the overall budget level.

For example, let me describe what is under consideration in the peace and security cluster.

First – resetting DPPA and DPO, merging units, eliminating functional and structural duplications, getting rid of functions that are also exercised in other parts of the system. I believe we'll be able to eliminate 20% of the posts of the two departments.

Second – a similar exercise of streamlining the civilian part of Peacekeeping.

Third - The consolidation within OCT of all counterterrorism activities spread in the system.

Fourth – a review of the present structure of Regional Offices, Special Representatives and Envoys aiming at a consolidation of the system – with increased functionality and meaningful savings.

The level of reduction of posts that I have outlined for DPPA and DPO must be seen as a reference for the wider UN80 exercise, naturally taking into account the specificities of each area of work.

There might be immediate, one-off costs involved in relocating staff and providing potential termination packages.

But by moving posts from high-cost locations, we can reduce our commercial footprint in those cities and reduce our post and non-post costs.

We have already seen considerable savings in New York by terminating the lease of one building and moving staff into other existing premises – and we expect to close two more buildings when their leases expire in 2027 with considerable savings.

While the regular budget is our immediate focus, the efficiency efforts will include the entire Secretariat across all funding streams.

This will entail some difficult decisions as we assess structures and processes and seek meaningful efficiencies.

The impact on Member State contributions will be visible for years.

But we cannot achieve the efficiencies required unless we also focus on the programmatic areas of our work.

Dedicated outreach with the wider UN system is now underway, and will take profit of the work of the established clusters.

Additional proposals resulting from the other workstreams will be submitted to Member States for consideration as appropriate.

Many changes will require the approval by the General Assembly this year and next.

I will consult closely and regularly with Member States on progress, seeking guidance on the way forward, and presenting concrete proposals for discussion and decision-making when appropriate.

We know that some of these changes will be painful for our UN family.

Staff and their representatives are being consulted and heard. Our concern is to be humane and professional in dealing with any aspect of the required restructuring.

Excellencies,

The UN80 Initiative is a significant opportunity to strengthen the UN system and deliver for those who depend on us.

It is central for implementing the Pact for the Future.

It is crucial for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals.

The needs of the people we serve must remain our guiding star.

We must always stick to principles.

We must never compromise core values. We must forever uphold the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.

We will advance all this work so that our three pillars – peace and security, development and human rights – are mutually reinforced, and the geographical balance of our workforce and our gender and disability strategies will be preserved.

And we will be ever mindful of the interests of all Member States – developing countries, in particular.

Your active engagement and support for the UN80 Initiative is vital to ensure that efforts are inclusive, innovative, and representative of the needs of all Member States.

The success of the UN80 Initiative depends on all of us living up to our shared and complementary responsibilities.

Many decisions ultimately are in your hands as Member States.

Many of you have agreed that this must be the moment to be bold and ambitious.

That is what our Organization needs – and that is what our times demand.

Make no mistake – uncomfortable and difficult decisions lie ahead.

It may be easier – and even tempting – to ignore them or kick the can down the road.

But that road is a dead end.

We cannot afford to act in any other way than with the highest level of ambition and common purpose.

Let us seize this momentum with urgency and determination, and work together to build the strongest and most effective United Nations for today and tomorrow.

And I thank you.

More to come.

*Best wishes,
Anwarul K. Chowdhury
Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury
Former Under-Secretary-General
and High Representative of the UN*

International Day for Women in Diplomacy 24 June



Dear co-activists,

This was sent out early morning today to 300 plus current and former Permanent Representatives to the UN from me on the occasion of the International Day for Women in Diplomacy.

“Dear colleagues,

Happy International Day for Women in Diplomacy!

Felicitations to you all!

Today - 24 June - is the fourth observance of the IDWD following the decision by the UNGA in 2022.

I recall with appreciation that Ambassador Thilmeeza Hussain of the Maldives (subsequently a member of the IAPR ExBd) introduced the resolution on 20 June 2022 for the proclamation of the IDWD.

On this specially inspiring occasion, I recall proudly that in September 2012,

my humble self and the IMPACT Leadership 21 issued a joint “Call to Action” to world leaders gathering at the UN asking for urgent action in four areas:

1. Appointment of a woman as the next UN Secretary-General. Since its establishment in 1945, the world body has failed miserably to elect a woman to that post. It is truly a matter of huge embarrassment.

2. Nomination of women as future Presidents of the General Assembly. Out of its 193 Member States, only five women were elected as the Assembly President in the 80 years of the UN's existence.

We are proud that Ms. Annalena Baerbock of Germany has been already elected as the President of the upcoming very special anniversary session of the 80th General Assembly.

3. Election of more women as Heads of various UN Governing Bodies;

and

4. Appointment by Member States of more women as Ambassadors to the UN in New York and Geneva.

On the International Day of Women in Diplomacy, let us commit to achieving these objectives to make the observance of the IDWD truly meaningful and worthwhile.

As of June 1, 2025, there are only 31 women serving as Heads of State or Government in 27 countries. Women

hold only 22.9% of Cabinet positions heading Ministries.

Unfortunately, women still face significant underrepresentation in leadership positions globally.

Now women make up only 22% of UN Permanent Representatives to the UN. Since 1947, a mere 7% of all ambassadors to the UN have been women. According to the UN, 73 countries have never appointed a female Permanent Representative.

Female representation in diplomatic missions continues to lag behind men, especially in top-ranking roles.

On this occasion, it is my honor to bring to the attention of the International Association of Permanent representatives (IAPR) members that since 2011, following **eleven** of UN's distinguished women PRs have been bestowed with the civil society's prestigious annual Spirit of the United Nations Award (SUNA):

2011 - Ambassador Byrganym Aitimova of Kazakhstan (IAPR President)

2013 - Ambassador U Joy Ogwu of Nigeria

2014 - Ambassador Mary Elizabeth Flores of Honduras (IAPR President)

2015 - Ambassador Edita Hrdá of Czechia

2016 - Ambassador Aksoltan Ataeva of Turkmenistan, who is now the

longest serving PR since February 1995.

2017 - Ambassador Katalin Bogyay of Hungary (IAPR President)

2018 - Ambassador Keisha Aniya McGuire of Grenada

2019 - Ambassador Inga Rhonda King of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (IAPR ExBd member)

2020, 2021 & 2022 - No award presented in view of the Covid pandemic

2023 - Ambassador Laura E. Flores of Panama (IAPR ExBd member)

2024 - Ambassador Menissa Rambally of Saint Lucia (IAPR ExBd member)

2024 - Ambassador Thilmeeza Hussain of the Maldives (IAPR ExBd member)

*In peace and solidarity,
Anwarul K. Chowdhury,
Bangladesh "*

Weaving guardianship and opportunity into our future

As told in Māori legend, the great mountains of New Zealand once stood together in the heart of the North Island. But love stirred the land. A fierce battle erupted between Tongariro and Taranaki over the beautiful Pihanga. Tongariro emerged victorious, and Taranaki, wounded and heartbroken, journeyed westward. With each step, he carved a deep trench into the earth, a channel that became the Whanganui River. To this day, it is said that Taranaki gazes longingly toward Pihanga, his tears flowing eternally through the awa (river).

This legend is more than folklore; it reflects a worldview in which mountains and rivers are not mere features of the land, but ancestors, with spirit and dignity. In te ao Māori, the natural world is living, relational, and sacred. It possesses mauri (life force) and whakapapa (genealogy). It deserves not ownership, but care.

New Zealand began a visionary initiative to recognise these ancient perspectives in 2014 with the passing of the Urewera Act, a comprehensive agreement that addressed historical grievances related to the Treaty of Waitangi. The Tūhoe-Urewera Treaty settlement created a new legal entity,

Te Urewera, formerly Te Urewera National Park, co-governed by Tūhoe and the Crown. It granted Tūhoe greater autonomy over their ancestral lands and cultural heritage.

This was followed in 2017 by the Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act, which recognised the special relationship between the Whanganui River and the Whanganui iwi. It provided for the river's long-term protection and restoration by placing ancestral values at the centre of governance and gave the river legal personality in the eyes of the law. Earlier this year, Parliament passed the Taranaki Maunga Collective Redress Act 2024, officially granting Mount Taranaki, known in the Act as Te Kāhui Tupua, the status of a legal person. Under the agreement, the mountain is represented by a collective of guardians, with equal representation from local iwi and the Crown.

These three agreements emerged from Treaty of Waitangi settlement processes in which Māori communities, through persistence and dialogue, worked with government to establish new, culturally defined co-governance arrangements. They mark a further step in New Zealand's evolving relationship with the environment - one that acknowledges not only ecology, but also culture, story, and justice.

For many Māori, the recognition of Te Awa Tupua and Taranaki Maunga as legal persons is a step toward addressing historical grievances, yet the sense of loss and cultural displacement still lingers. As New Zealand society evolves, there is a growing call not only to acknowledge the past, but to actively shape a future grounded in shared responsibility. Legal personhood is a meaningful milestone, but its true value lies in how we bring it to life, through relationships, policies, and practices that reflect respect for the natural world and the diverse communities that live alongside it.

These shifts also reflect a wider global movement, with recognition of the rights of Pachamama (Mother Earth) in the constitutions of Bolivia and Ecuador, alongside growing local and international initiatives to recognise rivers, lakes, forests, oceans, plants, and animals as entities with legal standing. Such innovations are redefining how we govern and care for the environment.

They also raise timely questions: how can new technologies be part of this regenerative future? Could artificial intelligence, when aligned with environmental ethics, become a tool for ecological guardianship? With investment in ethical AI and data innovation, New Zealand could pioneer tools to support real-time ecosystem monitoring, predictive

land-use planning, and biodiversity protection. This approach can amplify, not replace, the wisdom and relationships already present on the land.

Several other sectors offer immense potential for synergy. Regionally rooted innovation such as clean design, agri-tech, and low-impact industry can foster resilience while respecting the identity of each landscape. Supporting farmers through sustainable practices and market access empowers them as stewards of the environment. These industries, when developed in harmony with ecological principles, demonstrate that prosperity and protection can grow together.

While Māori knowledge and leadership have been foundational to the recognition of natural personhood and the philosophy of kaitiakitanga, New Zealand is also a diverse and multicultural society. People from many backgrounds engage with nature in ways shaped by different cultures, professions, and personal experiences.

In this diversity lies strength, if we are willing to listen, respect, and learn from one another. Our collective future will be shaped not by any one tradition alone, but by our ability to collaborate across worldviews. Māori and non-Māori, tangata whenua and tangata Tiriti, each have roles to play

in the wellbeing of both people and the natural world.

This does not require erasing difference. It means holding space for multiple truths and co-creating futures where indigenous wisdom, scientific insight, technological innovation, and community aspirations inform one another.

Mount Taranaki still stands in solemn grace over the western horizon. Te Awa Tupua continues its journey from mountain to sea. Their stories have been told for generations, and now, their legal status offers us a new chapter to write.

But the story will not write itself. It is up to all of us, iwi leaders, innovators, farmers, educators, artists, entrepreneurs, and everyday citizens, to decide what this new relationship with the land and waters will look like. Will it be symbolic, or will it be lived? Will it divide us, or unite us?

If we choose relationship over ownership, reciprocity over extraction, and shared purpose over singular vision, then perhaps these living ancestors will not only be honoured, but they will also help guide us toward a future that is more resilient, more just, and more alive.

Eric Wong, Co-worker PTU
ericwong729@gmail.com

The author wishes to thank the late Peter Horsley for his valuable feedback and suggestions on this article and expresses heartfelt condolences on his recent passing.



Taranaki Maunga



The Whanganui Awa

THE GREAT INVOCATION

From the point of Light within the
Mind of God

Let light stream forth into human
minds.

Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the
Heart of God

Let love stream forth into human
hearts.

May the Coming One return to Earth.

From the centre where the Will of God
is known

Let purpose guide all little human
wills

The purpose which the Masters know
and serve.

From the centre which we call the
human race

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.