



# Many to Many

Issued by  
Peace Through Unity  
  
Accredited NGO in association  
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Anthony & Gita Brooke,  
co-founders

*“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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Kate Smith PTU Co-worker 48 Parsons Street, Whanganui, 4501, NZ

Website: [www.peacethroughunity.info](http://www.peacethroughunity.info)

Email [optuwhanganui@gmail.com](mailto:optuwhanganui@gmail.com)

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## RE-AWAKENING

We are certainly living in tumultuous times. There is no 'normal' in so many areas of life. While this is to be expected in a transition period from Piscean to Aquarian ages, it is not easy to predict what will come next. And we still don't seem to have listened to the wake-up call of Covid-19 from earlier in the year. In so many countries around the world, in an attempt to get back to 'normal' many thousands of lives have been lost with no clear improvement in the economy -leading to further suffering of different kinds, both physical and mental, which will continue into the future. So many people are asking themselves, their employers and their government what should they do?? However, only they can control how they react. By taking a heart centred, humanitarian approach to what is happening around them, a solution can be found. There are benefits from working from home; taking leave gives a chance to relax and spend time with the family; even losing your job altogether gives an opportunity to consider alternative work. Applying life-long learning will allow a different approach to 'education' - with greater emphasis on practical qualifications to match the skills needed by society. In a time of transition, assistance will be required to bridge the currently widening income gap but this is an investment in the future rather than a cost or drain on resources. An example of awakened thinking?

Examples of current discrimination in many areas of living will be harder to eliminate, but not impossible with a concerted and co-operative approach. A reawakening to the importance of all life on our planet will be a first step. Recognising contributions made by all living organisms, human, animal and ecological, will remind us of the need to practise stewardship of our limited resources. A good guide - the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

UN Secretary-General, António Guterres said in April, "*We face a colossal test which demands decisive, coordinated and innovative action from all, for all.*" This is still true today! <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/articles/2020-04-02/recovery-the-coronavirus-crisis-must-lead-better-world>

He said in July, "*We must work for the best and prepare for the worst.*" and suggested we construct a new, collaborated network based on the Charter of the United Nations. This would use the Sustainable Development Goals as a guide, building on their success to date, while accepting that we will now face further and different challenges to their implementation worldwide. <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/articles/2020-07-03/global-wake-call>

Later in July, when giving an address to commemorate Nelson Mandela, he likened the current situation to that of an x-ray showing up fractures in society's skeleton.

These are not being addressed by those founding UN member states who have failed to change their outlook to fit the huge changes in civil society. Little has been done to eliminate the widespread corruption in both governments and business enterprises – profit and non-profit alike – which has exacerbated the growing gap in incomes and treatment of issues of gender and ethnicity. These issues are being made even more obvious with Covid-19. *“We are sometimes told a rising tide of economic growth lifts all boats. But in reality, rising inequality sinks all boats.”* noted S-G Guterres.

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2020-07-18/remarks-nelson-mandela-lecture-tackling-the-inequality-pandemic-new-social-contract-for-new-era>

If a more graphic example of the coming together of tragic circumstances is necessary, look no further than the recent massive explosion in Lebanon. In itself, this would have been bad enough, but it came on the heels of after-effects of a civil war as well as the global pandemic. Corruption, poor leadership, self-interest being put ahead of communal interests and a ‘little’ virus have created unbelievable suffering for the Lebanese people. They are resilient and will recover, but life will be different for them.

However, there is also an opportunity to create a more equal and sustainable world, especially in the area of education, which Nelson Mandela saw as, *“...the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world.”* But education itself will need to change and prepare people, especially young people, to recognise and deal with not only knowledge but also its interpretation. The skill of being able to distinguish ‘facts’ from propaganda, lobbying and aggressive advertising has never been greater. This ‘spin’ on information is often a reaction to uncertainty and fear which is being spread by ever present and more sophisticated social media. Conspiracy theories are spreading faster than the virus. Some parts of society are becoming inured to ‘fake news’ but ‘fake science’ is also rising. By encouraging calm and co-operation, selflessness rather than selfishness and heart-based thinking we can contribute to a more peaceful approach to life.

A change of mind set is becoming more urgent: re-awakening consciousness from the heart. Human beings are basically the same physically but make unique contributions to all of life. The re-awakening will take place when, accepting the basic similarities, our unique perspectives and energy can be directed to a greater sense of gratitude for and peaceful relationships with all living organisms. Then the contributions of all, of young and old, of whatever colour, whatever challenges faced, whatever family or community background, from wherever in the world, will be recognised as invaluable. In the spirit of the culture of peace we will truly respect and practise our human rights being mindful of the rights of all others.

Lead the re-awakening by example. Be confident that individual actions taken to promote peace and harmony with humanity, will make a difference. Let us rebuild our world by the way we live our lives – through hope and from the heart.

## INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE 2020

### Shaping Peace Together

My heart is certain that Gita is smiling down upon us as the beauty of the group work continues to unfold in these challenging and simultaneously joyful times. Shaping Peace Together is the 2020 International Day of Peace theme and a beautiful global group work is continuing to demonstrate as the journey continues. It is the story of humanity realising unitive consciousness as we learn to live in right relationship with self, others and all life. That is the very definition of peace.

Certainly since 2012 there has been a significant increase in awareness and participation regarding the International Day of Peace. This year a remarkable merging of networks is taking place. Unity.Earth, Unify, SINE Network, United Religions Initiative, May Peace Prevail on Earth International and others offered World Unity Week [www.worldunityweek.org](http://www.worldunityweek.org) in late June and at the close stated the intention to merge with the 100 day countdown to the International Day of Peace [www.internationaldayofpeace.org](http://www.internationaldayofpeace.org). A World Water Law [www.codes.earth/waterlaw](http://www.codes.earth/waterlaw) emerged during that week through Codes for a Healthy Earth [www.Codes.Earth](http://www.Codes.Earth), along with a spirit of cooperation that continues to make the heart sing. We are now, as a world group engaged in a series of momentous group events that have become a journey of unity throughout 2020.

UpConvergence kicks off August 28, 2020, when a Caravan of Unity will cross the USA as another Caravan crosses Europe. On September 10<sup>th</sup> the Civil Society portion of the UN High Level Forum for the Culture of Peace will be offered on the UpConvergence platform and will be live streamed on the Global Movement for the Culture of Peace Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/gmcp/>. Eleven Days of Global Unity <https://11daysofglobalunity.org> runs from September 11<sup>th</sup> through to the International Day of Peace September 21<sup>st</sup> and September 19-21 is PeaceWeekend2020 <https://peaceweekend.com/>, as the world group focuses on Shaping Peace Together. There will be numerous events including a Peace Cranes Project workshop on the 21<sup>st</sup> that will be broadcast worldwide as we learn together how to make Origamis - literally shaping peace together. Global Silent Minute [www.globalsilentminute.org](http://www.globalsilentminute.org) will participate in numerous events including a 12 noon New York time silent minute on the International Day of Peace.

On September 20<sup>th</sup> Ambassador Anwaral K. Chowdhury, former US Congressman Dennis Kucinich, and others will speak at an event hosted by The Peace Alliance USA and Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace <http://gamip.org>. As Gita was well aware, these groups are focused on calling forth the political will to institutionalize peace. The movement continues to gain momentum around the world and the proposed UN Resolution for Infrastructures for Peace is on track to gain serious support in 2020.

As the International Day of Peace [www.internationaldayofpeace.org](http://www.internationaldayofpeace.org) continues to take on a central role in the world group, with a minute of silence at 12 noon around the world and a call for a global cease-fire, may peace become a way of life for all of us. Thus, we make violence history. Thus, we realise our human and planetary destiny and enter a new era of right relations and social justice. May Peace Prevail on Earth.

Dot Maver [dot@nationalpeaceacademy.us](mailto:dot@nationalpeaceacademy.us)



~ A Global Alliance for Ministries & Infrastructures for Peace (GAMIP)  
UN Peace Day 2020 Reflection ~

## SHAPING PEACE TOGETHER by Establishing “Infrastructures for Peace” Worldwide

This year’s UN Peace Day theme of **Shaping Peace Together** relates to and hence highlights the significance of establishing ministries and infrastructures for peace worldwide. *As that is what ministries, departments and other infrastructures for peace (i4P) are designed to do -- shape peace together!* I4P provide the necessary peacebuilding architectural framework to “shape” the Culture of Peace into form.

The UN Development Program (UNDP) defines i4P as a “dynamic network of interdependent structures, mechanisms, resources, values and skills which, through dialogue and consultation, contribute to conflict prevention and peacebuilding in a society”. **At its heart i4P focus on building and having in place the necessary institutions and capacities to do peacebuilding effectively at all levels.** I4P are structures that help avert conflict because they are aligned with the science of nonviolence; nonviolence being their organizing principle. UNDP research conducted through its extensive “i4P” work in various countries substantiates this claim.

The transformative concept of creating governmental i4P worldwide is a rapidly growing trend. Five countries currently have functioning national peace ministries: Costa Rica, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Ethiopia and Afghanistan. A few (like Nepal and the Philippines) have had i4P in place at various times. Canada has a newly created Ministry of Women, Peace and Security. Kenya, Ghana, Kyrgyzstan have effective peace councils and commissions. Some countries like the U.S. have pending bills in their governments to establish i4P. [U.S. Dept. of Peacebuilding Campaign](#)

**The Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace (GAMIP)** was founded in 2005 to facilitate this movement. With members from countries all over the world, GAMIP's objective is the establishment of concrete peace structures, large and small, in governments, at all levels (particularly national) and in civil society organizations that can help construct the Culture of Peace.

In the last 15 years GAMIP has had six international summits in different regions (London, Canada, Japan, Costa Rica, South Africa and Switzerland). A possible 2021 summit in Latin America is being considered (pending Covid-19 status). An African regional chapter of GAMIP exists. Plus, Latin America and North America ones are forming. A task of the GAMIP UN Committee since 2006 has been working for passage of a UN General Assembly resolution urging all member states to establish i4P. This initiative was recently reactivated with new associations and is now strategized to happen in 2021.

GAMIP has strongly **“re-awakened”** in these challenging pandemic times of global crisis and opportunity. *GAMIP chooses this opportunity to beckon peacebuilders everywhere to join us in raising awareness of the urgent need NOW to establish i4P supporting Culture of Peace formation.* As humanity desperately searches for new ways of solving the many ills of society that have come into sharp focus from Covid-19 (ills that are obstacles to manifesting the Culture of Peace) **let Peace Day 2020 be the time of breakthrough to wise, evidence-based innovations such as creating the i4P blueprints or prototypes that will ‘shape peace together’ into actualization.**

**To become involved with GAMIP, visit GAMIP.ORG**

An informative book on this subject is: How Not to Go to War: Establishing Departments for Peace and Peace Centers Worldwide by Vijay Mehta.  
<http://unitingforpeace.com/leaflets%20and%20flyers/2018/book-promotion-flyer-2018.pdf>

Also see World Beyond War reference to i4P in its just released 5<sup>th</sup> Edition Publication: A Global Security System: An Alternative to War (p-130-133).  
<https://worldbeyondwar.org/alternative/>

By Anne Creter ([annecrets@aol.com](mailto:annecrets@aol.com))  
Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace  
Global Movement for the Culture of Peace  
UN NGO Representative - Peace Through Unity  
Peace Alliance US Department of Peacebuilding Committee

*\*This reflection is in memory of -- Gita Brooke – head of my UN NGO who worked so tirelessly with GAMIP since its founding.*

## THE CONNECTION THAT MATTERS

In January this year, I went back to New Zealand for a two week family vacation over the lunar new year's holiday. My kids were looking forward to this winter school break travel, to get away from their study for a while. For my wife and I, we were hoping to unwind and relax before returning to our busy lives in Hong Kong. It never came to our mind that the world as we all knew it would turn upside down in the months or perhaps years to come.

On the first day we arrived, the news broke out about the wide spreading of Covid-19 in Wuhan, and the increasing number of confirmed cases in Hong Kong. Over the next days, our friends and families bombarded us with updated news on the situation, and we were being tasked to gather as many surgical facemasks as we could from New Zealand to bring back with us. With the rapid surge of demand for masks in Hong Kong, it was almost impossible for anyone to purchase any masks. We were surprised to find out it was not so easy to get them in New Zealand either, people reacted quickly to seek stocks from overseas and selling facemasks and hand sanitizer suddenly became the new trend of export business.

The virus situation was getting worse by the day, as reported on the news, and just two days before we were scheduled to return to Hong Kong, I received a call in the middle of the night (due to the time difference between New Zealand and Hong Kong) from the human resources department at my work, informing me that an urgent pandemic measure just been decided and we needed to arrange all of our colleagues to work from home the next morning, until further notice. All of our facilities had to be closed to the public with immediate effect; we were put on our highest alert, and felt like we were preparing for a war.

Hong Kong has experienced the deadly impact of SARS in 2003, with around 300 people who died from contracting this disease, quite a few of whom were medical workers. It was a dark time for the city, and much hardship for the medical workers, many of them were too afraid to return home after their work, they were worried and paranoid about the risk they exposed to contracting SARS, which could then infect their families as a result. The city was badly damaged economically, and the mood was gloomy but still, things started picking up again after 3 months, and the impact of SARS was mostly in the southern part of China. Comparing this to the current Covid-19 pandemic, the whole world has been fighting hard for over half a year, and the light at the end of the tunnel still looks far too dim.

The prolonging situation of the Covid-19 pandemic is changing the world and our lives completely, it is simply putting a pause in time, and giving us a chance to reflect on the values that are truly important to us. Quoting from a recent tweet by the UN chief António Guterres: *"Covid-19 has exposed the lie that free markets can deliver healthcare for all, the fiction that unpaid care work isn't work, the delusion that we live in a post-racist world. We are all floating on the same sea, but some are in superyachts & others clinging to*

*drifting debris.*" This pandemic indeed magnifies all the social and political issues that we have been ignoring in the past and is now bringing us to attention.

For some, the social distancing and work from home arrangements provide an opportunity to spend more time with the family and being comfortable to relax and take it easy at home while containing the spread of the virus. At the same time, there are some that work in the low-skilled labor market for their daily bread and butter, they are requested to be constantly on the frontline and risk their lives; also there are businesses that could not weather this wave of economic downturn, and many of their employees have been furloughed or lost their jobs completely, they too are also confined at home but in a different reality.

This pandemic is also widening the gap of education inequalities for the rich and poor students. According to a report from The Economist, way back to 2018, students in Britain who come from disadvantaged backgrounds were twice as likely to leave school without basic qualifications in English and maths as their wealthier peers. During months of coronavirus-induced school closures this year, most learning has moved online and this shift has been easier for some than others. For the better, well-off kids, they are far more likely to have access to computer or laptops and reliable broadband internet access. To reach the learning materials provided, many poorer children have to compete with other family members for access to a sole laptop, or use their smartphones. Some have to forgo lessons entirely. *"The digital divide became very real during the pandemic"*, as told by Tiziana Bonapace, the Director of UN ESCAP's Information and Communications Technology Division.

A lot of the things that were unimaginable to us at the beginning of 2020, are fast becoming the new reality, as we are waking up to the "new normal". Things that we have taken for granted in the past such as visiting friends and the family in the weekend, is now requiring so much energy and effort, even creativity to attain. With the social distancing measure in force, people are also more aware of the importance of protecting themselves and others. The help of digital technology could bring us all together virtually, people could continue to arrange their happy hour, family gatherings and birthday parties, all being conducted online. But deep down, people all yearn for the closeness of physical contact, and now, we can only go as far as giving our loved ones a hug through the "cuddle curtain".

On the surface, Covid-19 is wreaking havoc worldwide and bringing suffering and disturbances to us all. At the same it is a re-awakening call for humanity, to make us reflect on how we should write the next chapter of history. We are reminded that there are things that we cannot control, and at the end of the day, we are all connected fundamentally. In this digital age that we are living in, there are pros and cons, but we could leverage all the new technology to minimize the shortcomings. Social media and free online applications, provide platforms for grassroot level charities and NGOs to mobilize resources and support to help those who are in need in the neighborhood. More so, we could bring the voices and the reality of social issues to our respective governments, at all levels.

We must learn to be in control of our lives in this digital age, or as some scholars described it the “fourth industrial revolution”. Over the past months, the pandemic has put us all onto this learning curve to manage our lives online, we have the opportunity to take the lead instead, and leap forward to connect with each other more effectively, and build supportive networks of communities with the help of digital technology. It is still unknown when our world will move out from the shadow of Covid-19, the only thing that is certain is that we have to walk on this path of recovery together.

Eric H.Y.Wong [ericwong729@gmail.com](mailto:ericwong729@gmail.com)

## WHEN WOMEN RISE

For centuries, women’s ability to serve in leadership positions and to play an active role in politics have been questioned constantly. Women were seen to embody values such as gentle, empathetic and passive. These virtues were considered soft and subversive of *realpolitik*. Because of the traits associated with femininity, it was implicitly understood that women were not capable subjects that merited any real political consideration let alone to be considered capable enough to hold a leadership position.

These gendered assumptions have persisted over the past hundreds of years and still thrive in many parts of the world. In the 2016 US presidential elections, Hillary Clinton faced an onslaught of sexist and misogynist attacks. Somewhat ironically in hindsight, many questioned her temperament as a woman and cited it as a potential hindrance to the ability to serve in one of the world’s most powerful positions. Nearly four years later, similar types of attacks are being aimed at Biden’s pick for vice president Kamala Harris, a highly accomplished Senator and woman of color. Sexism and gender stereotypes embedded in our societies and structures have deeply contributed to the result--very few women serving in leadership positions, particularly in government. This precipitates the question of where are the women? In the 2020 Nelson Mandela Annual lecture delivered by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, he noted the persistent problem that “*women are still excluded from senior positions in governments and on corporate boards*”. According to UN women, 6.6% (10/152) of heads of government are women while 5.2% (10/193) women serve as heads of government as of June 2019.

<https://www.unwomen.org//media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2019/women-in-politics-2019-map-en.pdf?la=en&vs=3303>

A rare highlight that has recently emerged from the COVID-19 crisis is recognition of the competency of female leadership. Countries such as Germany, Taiwan, New Zealand, Iceland, Finland, Norway and Denmark were found to have responded the most effectively and have some of the lowest numbers of cases and deaths. Another thing that they have in common? Female leaders. Countries led by women have been particularly effective at combating the virus. It is reported that “*countries with women*

*in leadership have suffered six times fewer confirmed deaths from Covid-19 than countries with governments led by men."*

<https://hbr.org/2020/06/will-the-pandemic-reshape-notions-of-female-leadership>

One such leader internationally recognized for the prompt action she took to enact one of the strictest lockdowns early on which allowed her country to drastically lower infection rates and open the country up internally, is Jacinda Ardern who serves as the Prime Minister of New Zealand. Other leaders similarly praised for their effective leadership during the crisis are Germany's vice chancellor Angela Merkel, Finland's Prime minister Sanna Marin and Tsai Ing-wen, the president of Taiwan. This recent trend has been widely noticed and have precipitated comments indicating women make better leaders such as one recently made by former IMF chief Christine Lagarde, who was quoted saying, *"I would say for myself I've learned that women tend to do a better job"*.

<https://twnews.co.uk/gb-news/apos-women-tend-to-do-a-better-job-apos-christine-lagarde-praises-female-leaders-for-role-in-pandemic>

She followed up by acknowledging that *"this is my woman's bias and I indulge in ceding to this bias"*. While the successes of female leaders should certainly be celebrated, it is imperative that any statements that women make more capable leaders than men should be resisted. Due to the small sample size of female leaders available, analyses are neither statistically significant nor are they able to show causation. In addition, such conclusions would be unproductive and only reproduce gender stereotypes rather than equality of the sexes, the ideal that feminism is trying to achieve.

What can and should be drawn from these examples of extraordinary leadership is the proven capability and competency of women as leaders and the importance of women in positions of leadership. When people of diverse backgrounds have a seat at the table, they are able to draw on their different lived experiences and contribute diverse perspectives and solutions. This is particularly vital in politics as when a government better reflects the diversity of their constituents, it strengthens their ability to govern effectively and understand and meet the needs of their people. As UN Secretary General António Guterres stated in a recent speech, *"Gender inequality harms everyone because it prevents us from benefiting from the intelligence and experience of all of humanity"*.

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2020-07-18/remarks-nelson-mandela-lecture-tackling-the-inequality-pandemic-new-social-contract-for-new-era>

When more women serve in leadership positions, it also increases the diversity of approaches to leadership and reinventing what effective leadership is and what it looks like. Though each leader mentioned is credited with acting quickly and decisively, each person brings a unique strength to leadership from the humanist-centered approaches of Ardern and Marin to Ing-wen's quiet resilience and Merkel's frank and data-driven pragmatism. Their approaches emphasize humility, integrity, intelligence, compassion, honesty and expertise and lie in stark contrast to the strong man politics that currently dominate the global political atmosphere. Perhaps the

antithesis to Trump and his divisive bluster, Jacinda Ardern is known for her honesty, empathy and rationalism as well as her clear communication style. Shortly after a nation-wide lockdown had been enacted, she addressed the nation live from her home in casual attire after having just put her toddler to sleep. In the short video, she clearly explains the restrictions and the reasons behind the lockdown before imploring everyone to help each other out. Finland's prime minister Sanna Marin is also reinventing her role, holding the first ever press conference that took questions from Finnish children and addressed them directly.

The world as we know it to be is at its breaking point. In this current atmosphere, we face numerous, almost insurmountable challenges. Inequalities--whether racial, gender, socioeconomic--define our time and long held socio-political tensions are exacerbated by a deadly pandemic unbound by borders.

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/07/1068611>

But, the upheaval of COVID-19 offers us an opportunity to rethink. While it was long thought that women did not belong in politics, *"the crisis has brought to light an undeniable truth: that the leadership of women is essential for us to effectively recreate the world...that is more human-centred, that is more equal"*.

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/07/1068321>

To even have a chance at eradicating inequality, we must have governments that are more reflective of the diversity of its constituents, including greater female representation. Increased representation also changes what we consider competent leadership to be. Leaders like Ardern, Merkel, Marin and Ing-Wen challenge us to re-envision what a competent leader looks like. Their success is all of our successes because when women rise, we all rise too.

Ananda Young [anadayoung154@gmail.com](mailto:anadayoung154@gmail.com)

## 2020 MARKS THE UNITED NATIONS 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY



Seventy-five years ago the United Nations was founded in the wake of the Second World War. On June 27, 1945 the U.N. Charter was signed in San Francisco by representatives from 50 nations, a symbol of one of the greatest peace efforts of the

20th century. The UN is marking its 75th anniversary at a time of great disruption for the world, compounded by an unprecedented global health crisis with severe economic and social impacts. Will we emerge stronger and better equipped to work together? Or will distrust and isolation grow further?

2020 was supposed to be a year of deep global dialogue, when we were to come together to discuss our priorities as a human family, and how we can build a better future for all. A 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary gala was planned for the entire year until the Covid-19 pandemic struck. For the first time in its history, the General Assembly will not convene this September at New York headquarters. The UN is closed so most business is virtual. I am disappointed recalling the extravaganza at its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary when I was a new NGO representative in 2005.

Following are UN 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary initiatives we can still do to shape our future together:

**Declaration on the Commemoration of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United Nations:**

<https://www.un.org/pga/74/wp-content/uploads/sites/99/2020/05/UN75-Letter-from-the-co-facilitators-1.pdf>

**75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of UN Charter: YouTube**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qvhc9d0TN9c>

**Toolkit for UN75 Dialogues -- Join the Conversation:**

<https://www.un.org/en/un75/join-conversation>

**Join UN75** <https://www.un.org/en/un75>

**UN75 Online Survey:** <https://un75.online/>

Anne Creter – Peace Through Unity UN NGO Representative

**SAVE THE DATE!**

UNITED NATIONS HIGH LEVEL FORUM ON THE CULTURE OF PEACE  
& CIVIL SOCIETY PANEL DISCUSSION

**Theme:**

***“The Culture of Peace: Change our world for the better in the age of COVID-19”***

**Thursday 10 September 2020**

**10:00am-1:00pm EDT:** [webtv.un.org](http://webtv.un.org)

**& 3:00pm-6:00pm EDT:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87549306145>

*“A key role in the promotion of a culture of peace belongs to parents, teachers, politicians, journalists, religious bodies and groups, intellectuals, those engaged in scientific, philosophical and creative and artistic activities, health and humanitarian workers, social workers, managers at various levels as well as to non-governmental organizations.” ~ UN Declaration and Programme of Action on Culture of Peace <https://undocs.org/A/RES/53/243>*

This year’s Ninth Annual **UNITED NATIONS HIGH LEVEL FORUM ON THE CULTURE OF PEACE (HLFCoP)** will be held on Thursday, 10 September 2020 as a virtual online event in view of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and will be a half-day session, instead of a daylong program as in previous years. In light of this, a coalition of civil society organizations, the Global Movement for the Culture of Peace (GMCoP), has taken the initiative to host a panel discussion as an extension of this year’s High Level Forum in the effort to build and deepen the collaborative interaction between the General Assembly and its Member States and civil society. The theme for both the morning and afternoon sessions will be the same: *“The Culture of Peace: Change our world for the better in the age of COVID-19”*.

The morning **High-Level Forum** from 10:00am to 1:00pm EDT will be convened by the President of the General Assembly, *H.E. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande*. Statements will be made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, *H.E. António Guterres*, as well as by the Member States and other stakeholders. Particular emphasis of the meeting will be given to implementation of the Programme of Action from the landmark UN Declaration on a Culture of Peace [A/RES/53/243] adopted by consensus on 13 September 1999 by the UN General Assembly. This morning session will be live webcast on: [webtv.un.org](http://webtv.un.org).

The afternoon **Civil Society Panel Discussion** from 3:00pm-6:00pm EDT, organized by the Global Movement for the Culture of Peace, features *H.E. Anwarul K. Chowdhury*, Former Under-Secretary-General and High Representative of the UN, Founder of the Global Movement for the Culture of Peace. The session will be moderated by *Kehkashan Basu*, Founder-President of Green Hope Foundation, UN Human Rights Champion, First Recipient Voices of Youth Gorbachev-Shultz Legacy Award & Winner of 2016 International Children’s Peace Prize. The webinar will be live on Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87549306145>. It will also be live streamed on the Global Movement for the Culture of Peace Facebook page.

Confirmed speakers (to date) for the afternoon session include:

*Dr. Saul Arbess* – Director, Canadian Peace Initiative (CPI) Board and Co-founder, Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace (GAMIP) Board;  
*Xiye Bastida* – An American climate activist and member of the indigenous Mexican Otomi-Toltec nation, A major organizer of Fridays for Future NYC;  
*Aida Brda* – Social Worker and Community Peace Activist in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Founder, Center for International Cooperation and Nonformal Education, CISNO;

**Vivian Gunsett Cecco** – Teacher at Centro Cultural Paraguayo Americano;  
**Tezekiah Gabriel** – Executive Director of Pathways to Peace, Peace Builders Youth Trainer;  
**H.E. Ambassador Mussie Hailu** – Director of Global Partnership & Representative at the UN and African Union and Regional Director for Africa United Religions Initiative;  
**Audrey Kitagawa** – Chair of World Parliament of Religions, President of the Light of Awareness International Spiritual Family, Former Advisor to the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict at the United Nations.  
**Dikla Lev (Lavertovsky)** – Organizational Consultant and Community Peace Activist in Israel, Storytelling for social change senior trainer and coach.  
**Bill McCarthy** – Founder and President of Unity Foundation;  
**Sarah Oliver** – Global Youth Coordinator for United Religions Initiative Global Citizens Program, Cape Town, SA;  
**Kasha Slavner** – Founder of Global Sunrise Project, Award-winning documentary filmmaker from Canada;  
**Monica Sharma** – International Practitioner on Leadership Development for sustainable and equitable change;  
**Anita Thomas** – Chair, NGO Committee on Financing for Development (CoNGO);  
**Isaac Thomas** – Global Council Trustee of the United Religions Initiative, Youth Ambassador for South India/Sri Lanka Region, Co-coordinator of One Billion Youth for Peace project;  
**Estela Tustanofsky** – Pax Cultura Argentina, Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace Board;  
**Vanessa Valencia** – Peace activist, educator and author from Hawaii;  
**Ananda Young** – Peace activist and youth representative for the NGO, Peace Through Unity. (Also, author of many fine articles in *Many to Many*.)

A highlight of the afternoon session will feature the **Global Silent Minute**. At 4:55pm EDT, **Dot Maver**, Co-founder of Global Silent Minute, National Peace Academy USA, River Phoenix Center for Peacebuilding and Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace, will share the history of the Silent Minute launched in WWII in London. Then, at 5:00pm, participants will have the opportunity to pause in a unique minute of stillness while uniting with thousands around the world in this focused Global Silent Minute for peace as many do every day at 5:00pm.

Everyone is welcome to join these webinars and share in what promises to be an important discussion on how “We the Peoples” might “*Change our world for the better in the age of COVID-19*”. The hope, responsibility and opportunity for changing the world are up to every one of us as the quotes at the beginning and end of this article state. Expressing the energy of goodwill leads to right human relations – the simplicity of which children know well – *peace is the effect*. Goodwill is the true

'power of the people', which – when it spreads like wildfire from heart to heart – creates positive change.

To many, 'COVID-19' brought the pause that has led us to rethink – to reawaken – to NOW and the time when, together, we can begin to create a better, a more peaceful way of living – without poverty, without arms, without wars – for ourselves, our families, our communities, our nations, our planet; so that 2020 becomes the turning point, the marked beginning of a new age, which manifests as a living demonstration of love-in-action, the culture of peace – a culture of Heart!

*"The seed of peace exists in all of us. It must be nurtured, cared for and promoted by us all to flourish. Peace cannot be imposed from the outside: it must be realized from within." ~ Anwarul K. Chowdhury*

Iris Spellings [optu.ny@gmail.com](mailto:optu.ny@gmail.com)

PEACE THROUGH UNITY, UN NGO Representative to the Department of Global Communications  
GLOBAL MOVEMENT FOR THE CULTURE OF PEACE

## 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.**