



Deputy Secretary-General
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USE OF EDUCATION FOR PEACE BY INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE ON PEACE EDUCATION REFLECTS

EVOLVING DEFINITION OF COLLECTIVE SECURITY, DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL SAYS

Following are Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro's opening remarks at the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration and symposium of the International Institute on Peace Education in New York today:

It is a pleasure for me to join you this morning.

I am delighted to welcome all of you to this conference, marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the International Institute on Peace Education.

Let me thank the staff of the International Institute and the Peace Education Centre at Teachers College, Columbia University, for organizing this gathering. Thanks also go to the Department of Public Information for co-sponsoring the event.

I extend my special greetings and thanks to Betty Reardon, who founded the International Institute on Peace Education 25 years ago.

Your mission to use education for peace in its broadest sense reflects the evolution that has taken place over the past few decades in the way we define collective security.

When the United Nations was first created, our founders were preoccupied with the security of States. When they spoke about creating a new system of collective security, they meant it in the traditional military sense. It was largely limited to the notion that States would join together and react collectively against acts of aggression that might be directed at any Member State.

Today, peace and security are no longer viewed only in terms of military conflict, but just as much in terms of poverty, hunger, environmental degradation and human rights violations. These ills are often at the heart of national and international tensions. Economic and social development is thus integral to building enduring peace.

By the same token, we now know that there can be no lasting development without security. And no society can long remain secure, or prosperous, without respect for human rights and the rule of law. That is why the United Nations' work today centres around the three interlinked pillars of security, development and human rights.

As our understanding of this has grown and deepened, so has education for peace evolved. What was once a mission to eliminate the risk of global extinction through nuclear war is today a broader quest to build a culture of peace.

This has involved strengthening global partnerships of the United Nations family, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, and citizens' networks, all working together to advance education for peace around the world. These partnerships are based on the understanding that our work to end war must reach well beyond the mere absence of conflict. It requires the spread of values, attitudes and behaviours that reject violence and embrace tolerance, justice and respect for human rights.

The General Assembly broke new ground when it declared 1999 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace. The United Nations broke new ground again with the Alliance of Civilizations -- our initiative to strengthen bridges between societies, foster sustained and constructive intercultural dialogue, and build common values and shared aspirations.

The same pioneering partnership spirit underpinned the Peace and Disarmament Education Project, completed in 2005, which set out to "disarm the minds" of young people and conduct small arms collection initiatives in schools in four countries. You will hear more about this project during the conference. What is remarkable is the way it brought together the organizing capacity of the United Nations, the educational expertise of a non-governmental organization, and funding from the United Nations Foundation and Governments to build broad support for disarmament.

You will no doubt also hear about the joint efforts of the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs and the Department of Public Information to create a new online portal for disarmament and non-proliferation education, to be launched later this year on the UN Cyberschoolbus website. This new educational portal will provide background information on disarmament and non-proliferation education, as well as lesson plans on small arms, nuclear arms, child soldiers, and landmines for use in classrooms around the world.

As you can hear, education for peace is an important part of the United Nations' work -- from conflict prevention to disarmament, and from the promotion of human rights to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In all these tasks, the United Nations relies immensely on partners such as you.

As you mark your twenty-fifth anniversary, I congratulate you on reaching this important milestone, and I thank you for your commitment.

I hope this three-day conference will lead to yet more partnerships as you exchange ideas and learn from each other's experiences. I wish you all the best in your deliberations.

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