

**High Level Meeting on the right to peace  
Organised by Costa Rica in coordination with CSOs and the support of the Non-governmental Liaison  
Unit of UNOG**

**IN THE CONTEXT OF THE  
COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE:  
"SUSTAINABLE PEACE FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE"**



**High level Meeting on**

**The Right to Peace**

**Geneva, 21st September 2012**

**Palais des Nations**

**13:10 - 14:10 h.**

**Room XVI**

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#### 1. Introduction

The International Day of Peace, also known as the World Peace Day, occurs annually on 21 September. It is dedicated to peace, and, specifically, to the absence of war, and the Secretary-General calls for a temporary ceasefire in a combat zone. It is observed by many nations, political groups, military groups and peoples.

This year marked the 31<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the adoption of resolution 36/67 (1981) and 11 years since the adoption of resolution 55/282 (2001) on the International Day of Peace by the General Assembly. Costa Rica not only recognizes the International Day of Peace, but was also the sponsor of the original resolution establishing the Day in 1981 and 2001 before the General Assembly.

#### 2. Background

Pursuant to HR Council resolution 17/16 of 17 June 2011 and Advisory Committee (AC) recommendation 8/4 of 24 February 2012, the AC submitted to the HR Council at its 20<sup>th</sup> session (June 2012) its (third) draft declaration on the right to peace<sup>2</sup>

Also in preparation of the 20<sup>th</sup> session of the HR Council, on 6 June 2012 several civil society organisations (CSOs)<sup>3</sup> jointly co-organised, with the sponsorship of the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the African Group (AG), the II Dialogue Forum on the *Regional contributions to the Codification of the Right to Peace* at the Palais des Nations. Both representatives of States and CSOs requested the HR Council to establish an open-ended working group to continue the codification process of the right to peace, taking duly into account both the AC draft declaration and the CSOs main contribution, i.e. the *Santiago Declaration on the Human Right to Peace* (2010).

On 5 July 2012 the HR Council adopted resolution 20/15 on “The promotion of the right to peace”. Welcoming the important work being carried out by civil society organizations for the promotion of the right to peace and their contribution to the development of this issue, it established an **open-ended working group** with the mandate of progressively negotiating a draft United Nations declaration on the right to peace on the basis of the draft submitted by the Advisory Committee, and without prejudging relevant past, present and future views and proposals.

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<sup>2</sup> A/HRC/20/31 of 16 April 2012, Annex.

<sup>3</sup> Spanish Society for International Human Rights Law (SSIHRL) and the International Observatory of the Human Right to Peace (IOHRP), The Foundation for Dialogue among Civilizations (FDC), the World Council of Churches (WCC), Nord-Sud XXI, Rencontre Africaine pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (RADDHO), the Japanese Committee on the Human Right to Peace and the International Association of Peace Messenger Cities

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The resolution further decided that the working group shall hold its first session for four working days in 2013, before the twenty-second session of the HR Council (March 2013), and requested the President of the HR Council to invite the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee's drafting group to participate in the first session of the working group.

Finally, it invited Member States, civil society and all relevant stakeholders to contribute actively and constructively and requested the working group to submit a report on the progress made to the HR Council for consideration at its twenty-third session (June 2013).

### **3. Commemoration**

In the context of the 2012 commemoration of the International Day of Peace, a meeting took place at the Palais des Nations (Geneva) on 21st September focused on the current UN codification process of the right to peace. It was organized by the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the United Nations in Geneva in coordination with the Spanish Society for International Human Rights Law (SSIHRL), the International Observatory of the Human Right to Peace (IOHRP), the Foundation for Dialogue among Civilizations (FDC), the World Council of Churches (WCC), Nord-Sud XXI, Rencontre Africaine de Défense pour les Droits de l'Homme (RADDHO), the Japanese Committee on the Human Right to Peace (JCHRP), the International Association of Peace Messenger Cities (IAPMC), International Peace Bureau (IPB) and Initiatives of Change, and the support of the Non-Governmental Liaison Unit of the United Nations Office at Geneva.

The main objectives of the commemoration were:

- To analyse the topic of the UN 2012 commemoration entitled "Sustainable Peace for a sustainable future".
- To study the linkage between sustainable peace and the promotion of all human rights for all, in particular the right to peace.
- To share the *Santiago Declaration on the Human Right to Peace* with civil society, international organisations and academics attending the 21st session of the Human Rights Council.
- To assess the Human Rights Council resolution 20/15 on "The promotion of the right to peace" of 5 July 2012, which established the open-ended working group to continue the codification process of the right to peace.
- To study the role of peace movements in the development and promotion of a sustainable peace based on the respect of all human rights worldwide.

The meeting's working languages were English, French and Spanish. Each speaker had 5 minutes for making her/his oral statement. It was held on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2012 from 13:10 to 14:15 at the Palais des Nations (Room XVI).

**In the context of the Commemoration of the International Day of Peace. Geneva, 21st September 2012**

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In accordance with the program of work, the official message of the Secretary-General for the Day was broadcasted, followed by the statement delivered by H.E. **Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev**, UNOG Director-General, who spoke about the role of the United Nations in the promotion of human rights and peace.

**Mr. Ricardo Espinosa**, Chief, Non-governmental Liaison Unit, United Nations Office at Geneva, was the Moderator of the High Level Meeting on the right to peace.

The guest speakers specially invited to address the meeting were:

- **H.E. Mr. Manuel Dengo**, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations in Geneva.

"The abolishment of armies and the right to disarmament as pre-conditions to achieve a sustainable peace"

- **H.E. Mr. Slimane Chikh**, Permanent Observer of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to the United Nations in Geneva

"The right to peace and the Alliance of Civilizations"

- **Ms Kerstin Holst**, Head of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Liaison Office in Geneva

"Culture of peace as a means to promote peace, dialogue and human rights"

- **Mr. Luca Lupoli**, Human Rights Officer at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

"The right to peace and the OHCHR"

- **Prof. Carlos Villán Durán**, President of the Spanish Society for International Human Rights Law and representative of the International Observatory of the Human Right to Peace.

"The implementation of the right to peace"

- **Mr. Rainer Gude**, Representative of Initiatives of Change to the United Nations in Geneva.

"The right to peace as a means to strengthen dialogue and cooperation"

The meeting was attended by some 100 participants, among them representatives of Member States and International Organisations, as follows: Czech Republic, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Italy, Spain, the Order of Malta, the Non-governmental Liaison Unit of the United

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Nations Office at Geneva, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the International Institute of Humanitarian Law, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

In addition, the following CSOs attended the meeting: the Planetary Association for Clean Energy, the Foundation for Dialogue among Civilizations, the Institute for Planetary Synthesis, the International Association of Peace Messenger Cities, the Spanish Society for International Human Rights Law, the International Observatory of the Human Right to Peace, the Kennedy Centre for International Studies, the Rencontre Africaine de Défense des Droits de l'Homme, the Worldwide Organisation for Women, the Associazione Comunita Papa Giovanni XXIII, Femmes Africa Solidarité, the International Organization for the right to education and freedom of education, the Association Points-Coeur, Humanity for Human Rights, the International Buddhist Foundation, the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Himalaya Research and Cultural Foundation, ISEO/CMDC, the International Association of Women, Rotary International, the Gaia Foundation, the Amman Center for Human Rights, the International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the NGO Arab Human Rights Committee, Graines de Paix, the World Federation of United Nations Associations, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Soka Gakkai International, the BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency, the Lutheran World Federation and the Mouvement ATD Quart Monde.

#### 4. Presentations

The Moderator, Mr. **Ricardo Espinosa** opened the commemoration by inviting three members of the Music Club of the United Nations to play Georg Friedrich Händel's piece known as "Andante". The performers were Ms. **Janet Weiler**, double bass, Mr. **Olivier Murray**, flute and Mr. **Michael Wiener**, piano

Following this, a video recorded in New York with the message of the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. **Ban Ki-moon**, on the occasion of World Peace Day was screened.

The Secretary-General stated that on the International Day of Peace, the United Nations calls for a complete cessation of hostilities around the world. He also asked people everywhere to observe a minute of silence, at noon local time, to honour the victims – those who have lost their lives, and those who have survived but must now cope with trauma and pain. The theme of this year's observance was "Sustainable Peace for a Sustainable Future". Armed conflicts attack the very pillars of sustainable development. Natural resources must be used for the benefit of society, not to finance wars. Children should be in school, not recruited into armies. National budgets should focus on building human capacity, not deadly weapons. On the International Day of Peace, he called on combatants around the world to find peaceful solutions to their conflicts. He ended his speech by asking us all to work together for a safe, just and prosperous future for all.

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H. E. Mr. **Kassym-Jomart Tokayev**, Director-General of United Nations Office at Geneva, started his presentation by inviting all participants to observe a minute of silence in memory of victims of violence. Afterwards he said that it was his pleasure to welcome all participants to the Palais des Nations and to this commemoration of the International Day of Peace. It was the fifth year that UNOG celebrated this important day. He expressed his appreciation to Ambassador Dengo, and the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica, as well as to the regional groups of Member States, the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, UNESCO and civil society partners - the Spanish Society for International Human Rights Law- for making this event possible.

Today, people around the world are uniting to commemorate this day - the International Day of Peace. One of the founding principles of the United Nations is the maintenance of international peace and security. In fact, this is so primary to our mission that it is stated in the first sentence of Article 1 of the UN Charter.

Although it is an admittedly lofty goal, the work of the United Nations towards peace takes very concrete forms. It can be seen in our peace-building, rule of law and democracy programmes, the support and promotion of human rights, and our work in sustainable development and disarmament. It is accomplished through our 15 peacekeeping operations across the world, our 13 peace-building and political missions, by the UN Peace-building Commission and Support Office, by UN agencies, funds and programmes, by partnerships with Member States, non-governmental and regional organizations. Here in Geneva, he said, we have seen the Human Rights Council step up to action in Syria and Libya. UNOG also supports discrete efforts in mediation and preventive diplomacy.

As the Secretary-General mentioned in his video message, the theme of this year's observance is "Sustainable Peace for a Sustainable Future". It cannot be denied that conflict is a great impediment to sustainable development. It ravages economies, livelihoods and leaves social and environment scars. In order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and build a 2015 sustainable development framework, peace, stability and security are essential.

Mr. Tokayev added that he was pleased that as we mark the International Day of Peace this afternoon, we will have the opportunity to hear from distinguished colleagues from a variety of backgrounds. It will surely prove to be an interesting and fruitful discussion. He hoped that it will also serve as a reflection on the work that is being done around the world to build and maintain peace. And that, through these actions, this "lofty goal" will become a reality for all.

After, **H.E. Mr. Manuel Dengo**, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations in Geneva, said that 191 years ago, on 15 December 1821, Costa Rica became independent. The whole villages of Costa Rica enacted a constitution called the Concorde Agreement, based on principles of freedom and equality, and, for the first time, established a republican and democratic government.

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He quoted the President of the Republic, Laura Chinchilla who referred to the independence in the following terms:

"I think that few times in history has a modest and rudimentary society reacted to the challenge of sovereignty, vision, and fervent hope of their people, to build a country, the most distinctive feature of which is coexistence in peace and harmony.

Since 1821, the independence of Costa Rica is understood as a prohibition of aggression to other towns or of abuse of authority over citizens, and entails a duty to promote coexistence, both with neighbouring countries and within Costa Rica's society.

The promotion of coexistence cannot be limited to preventing war and defending political freedoms. Having true independence means for us to work responsibly for a more just, prosperous and safe Costa Rica. Today, just as 191 years ago, authentic commitments and new agreements are needed to overcome the current challenges".

The Permanent Representative of Costa Rica said that a half century ago Costa Rica had a civil war. When the war ended in 1948, Costa Rica took the voluntary decision to abolish the army and to declare peace to the world. Doing this, Costa Rica promised its people not to invest in arms, but in schools, hospitals and areas of preservation of our environment: "Our country promised to dismantle the institutions of violence and to invest in progress and development. Security cannot be achieved with weapons and armies. It is only reached with human development. For this reason, in our society we have eliminated military spending and decided to invest in social affairs instead".

He asked how the world would be if the 1.73 billion dollars invested globally in military spending in 2011 had been invested in education, health, access to clean water and eradication of extreme poverty: "Today, in the context of the International Day of Peace we call to invest less in weapons in to invest more in the road to peace and the right to peace. He concluded his intervention by ensuring Costa Rica's commitment to the Working Group on the Right to Peace.

The next speaker, **H. E. Mr. Slimane Chikh**, Permanent Observer of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to the United Nations in Geneva, stated that this event marks the celebration of the International Day of Peace. He said that his participation in this meeting again demonstrates the OIC commitment in defense of the right to peace. He added that he had the opportunity twice to speak in several forums organized by the Spanish Society for International Human Rights Law, which continues its tireless efforts for the codification of the right to peace. This is a long-term initiative that deserves our tribute. At the same time, he addressed the same tribute to the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the United Nations Office in Geneva for co-organising this meeting. He underlined that this country does not have an army and bets on peace.

He made a brief summary of his previous remarks regarding "the contribution of the Islamic world to the right to peace", starting from the meaning of the word "Islam" the root of which (Salam) means "peace", and emphasized the prominence given to peace in the Quranic message.

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This is the message that has nurtured the ambition of the OIC and guided its action on the field as a political and non-religious organization. As a reminder, he referred to several texts related to the current topic and contained in the OIC Charter adopted in February 1974 and revised in December 2008, the Ten-Year Programme of Action of December 2005 and various declarations adopted at ministerial meetings and OIC Summits.

All of these reference texts point to an Islam of "moderation, measurement and tolerance". They condemn or refrain from justifying terrorism. Such condemnation of terrorism is also associated with the condemnation of acts of Islamophobia.

These declarations are committed to promoting a culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations. In addition, they intend to materialize on the ground, through a multifaceted humanitarian action, a commitment to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and preventive action about conflicts.

He said that the case of Syria was one of the main concerns of the recent OIC Extraordinary Summit held in Mecca in August 2012. The resolution adopted on that occasion condemned the Syrian authorities and considered the regime guilty for the excessive use of violence against civilians and decided to "suspend the membership of the Syrian Arab Republic in the OIC and all its organs". It called for "beginning without delay the implementation of a strategy for the transitional phase and the creation of a peaceful mechanism to build a new Syrian state based on a pluralist, democratic and civil society which guarantees equality on the basis of law, citizenship and fundamental freedoms". It also expressed its desire to carry out a humanitarian action in Syria.

The case of North Mali had also been a subject of special attention in the same summit. The OIC Summit condemned "the atrocities perpetrated by terrorist groups against unarmed civilians and the destruction of UNESCO-declared World Cultural Heritage sites, including Tumbuktu".

He recalled the Preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO, which states "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed". Physical violence is often caused by emotional abuse in the form of extremism that feeds both terrorism and Islamophobia, whose manifestations tend to increase and spread. The latest one is the provocative film entitled "Muslims' innocence" which represents a case of incitement to religious hatred and that the pretext of freedom of expression can not exempt.

In fact, violence, whether physical or legal, ultimately, causes a rupture of dialogue. OIC emphasizes the virtues of dialogue to disarm intolerance, prejudice and discrimination in all its forms. The creation of the Alliance of Civilizations in the UN under the leadership of Spain and Turkey, is an important forum for dialogue, open to States and organizations of civil society, and contributes to the promotion of the "culture of peace".

This initiative was originally intended as a response to the thesis of the "clash of civilizations", calling for the mutual recognition of cultures and civilizations. It has



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expanded its areas of interest, during successive forums, to the fields of history, culture and especially the youth and education, in order to train a new generation free from prejudices and to accept otherness as a factor of rapprochement.

The dialogue begins with educational work on oneself, which allows to develop the ability to listen to each other in a spirit of empathy. It is in this spirit that the culture of peace promotes the adherence to common human values. Dialogue is even more needed to make peace after conflict, in order to achieve reconciliation between the parties and to overcome resentment.

The adoption by consensus of HRC resolution 16/18 on *combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence, and violence against persons based on religion or belief* was really important. It included eight points proposed by the OIC Secretary General, and, in particular, point eight recognizes that "... the open, constructive and respectful debate of ideas, as well as interfaith and intercultural dialogue at the local, national and international levels, can play a positive role in combating religious hatred, incitement and violence". It should be noted that Article 2 empowers states to punish any act addressed to fuel intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization. Nevertheless, it has not prevented the rise of incitement to religious hatred without incurring in any penalty, by assuming that the obligation to respect freedom of expression is considered superior to respect freedom of religion. Can we admit, in this case, the existence of a contradiction and even less of a hierarchy between two rights, namely, freedom of expression and freedom of religion?

The OIC Permanent Representative pointed in this regard to the article published in the newspaper *Le Temps* dated on 31 August 2012 entitled "The world is over-armed and peace is under-funded", signed by Mr. Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General of the UN. According to him, "the amount of resources devoted to defense and the opening of new funding for the modernization of nuclear weapons have created a world in which peace is under-funded." He deplored the fact that his proposal to create a convention or any other instrument to achieve nuclear disarmament has not succeeded. Ambassador Chikh proposed that a tax on arms sales should be established the proceeds of which should be used to finance the development.

He ended his speech by indicating that despite the predictable and unpredictable difficulties encountered, they should not discourage efforts towards the codification of the right to peace.

In turn, **Ms Kerstin Holst**, Head of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Liaison Office in Geneva, thanked the organizers for inviting UNESCO to take part in the event. She said that it was a privilege for her, on behalf of the Director- General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova, to join in the marking the International Day of Peace.

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The meeting was taking place at a special moment for the United Nations. The *International Day of Peace* brings together everything the United Nations is about, everything the United Nations does.

*“Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.”*

These words feature prominently at the beginning of UNESCO’s Constitution, and they have lost none of their power in a world buffeted by change, where violence remains an everyday reality, where culture is under attack and where discrimination and intolerance remain rife. Peace cannot be decreed through treaties – this is the message of the UNESCO Constitution and all our experience. Peace must be nurtured through the dignity and rights of every man and woman, through their capacity to fulfil their aspirations. It is a way of being, a way of interacting with others, a way of living on this planet. To succeed, it must be founded on intellectual and moral solidarity and taken forward through an open process of dialogue.

From this angle, we see clearly where peace is failing today. It is failing in societies torn apart by violence, in Syria, as we speak. It is failing in the injustice of poverty and discrimination suffered by millions of men and especially women. It is failing in the lack of access to education and health. It is failing in the attacks on culture we see in Mali, and against the historic cities of Syria.

The roots of violence today lie less on frontlines between States and more within our societies. They lie in the rise of intolerance, in the divides opening in our cities. They lie in the crippling impact of a global economic, energy and food crisis that is hitting the poorest hardest and shaking governments everywhere. The world is changing, societies are more connected than ever before, new centres of power are rising -- but billions of men and women remain caught in deep poverty, and young people are carrying the heaviest burden.

UNESCO’s position is clear. Peace cannot be disconnected from the development of societies. The *United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development*, Rio+20 agreed that lasting peace and sustainable development are two sides of the same coin. Development is not sustainable if societies are not at peace with themselves and their neighbours. Peace cannot be lasting if billions of people remain deprived of economic, social and environmental justice.

UNESCO brings this vision to everything it does – to promote quality education for all, to advance gender equality, to safeguard cultural heritage and underpin cultural diversity on the basis of human rights, to foster bridges of dialogue for stronger respect and tolerance.

These were the objectives of our leadership in the *International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World* (2001-2010) and the

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*2010 International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures.* Building a culture of peace and non-violence remains the core question for the century ahead.

How, Ms. Holst asked, can we harness the power of cultural diversity on the basis of human rights? How can we integrate culture and education more firmly into the global sustainability agenda and into all efforts for peace-building? How can we develop new forms of international solidarity that are meaningful for individual men and women?

There are no easy answers, and this is why she was so thankful to the panellists for coming the meeting to share their experience, their vision and their ideas. Today we need this more than ever. The setting on our compass is clear -- the dignity and rights of every woman and man are the measure of all our efforts – but the waters are stormy, and we must chart a new path, together.

The next speaker, **Mr. Luca Lupoli**, Human Rights Officer at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, addressed the relationship between the promotion and the protection of human rights and peace. He encouraged all participants to work for achieving a dream. Finally, he paid tribute to the work performed by civil society organisations in the development of the right to peace.

Next, Prof. **Carlos Villan Duran**, President of the SSIHRL and representative of the IPHRP, noted that the SSIHRL conducts since 2005, with the support of 1790 civil society organizations and public institutions worldwide, a reflection on the content and scope of the human right to peace as an emerging right, seeking its international recognition.

On 10th December 2010 the Santiago Declaration on the Human Right to Peace was adopted. It is the more complete contribution of the civil society to the global debate on the content of this right. On the same date were also approved the Statutes of the International Observatory of the Human Right to Peace. The Observatory, headquartered in San Sebastian (Spain), works close with SSIHRL and a network of local CSO partners, in order to promote the *Santiago Declaration* in the United Nations. It will also conduct fact-finding missions, publish reports on situations of grave and massive violations of the human right to peace, and develop objective indicators to measure the States and other international actors' compliance with the right to peace.

The *Santiago Declaration* is a normative instrument, drafted in accordance with the legal technique of international human rights instruments. Its Preamble echoes the holistic vision of peace that imbibes the entire Declaration. Thus peace is not limited to the strict absence of armed conflict. It also has a positive dimension oriented at achieving a threefold objective:

- Meeting the basic needs of all human beings;

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- Eliminating all forms of violence (armed, structural, and cultural: family-based, gender-based, mobbing, bullying); and,
- Achieving the effective protection of all human rights for all.

Thus, the Declaration emphasizes the need to establish a new international economic order, led by the global redistribution of resources and the realization of social justice so as to eliminate inequalities, exclusion and poverty, as long as they generate structural violence which is incompatible with peace.

He added that Article 7 of the *Santiago Declaration* proclaims the right of individuals and peoples to general and transparent disarmament, under a complete and effective international control. Echoing the close relationship among peace and security, development and human rights, the Declaration calls for "resources freed by disarmament [to be] allocated to the economic, social and cultural development of peoples and to the fair redistribution of natural wealth, responding especially to the needs of the poorest countries and of the groups in situation of vulnerability, aiming to put an end to inequalities, social exclusion and extreme poverty" (Art. 7.2).

On 17 June 2010 the Human Rights Council (resolution 14/3) recognized the contribution of civil society to the codification of the right to peace and requested the Advisory Committee to prepare a draft declaration on the right of peoples to peace.

Two years later, the Human Rights Council (resolution 20/15 of 5 July 2012) took note of the Declaration on the right to peace prepared by the Advisory Committee (A/HRC/20/31, 16 April 2012, annex) and established a new intergovernmental Working Group to continue the codification process of the right to peace on the basis of the AC draft Declaration and the input provided by civil society.

Prof. Villán Durán welcomed these developments, because the draft Declaration elaborated by the Advisory Committee included 85% of the standards proposed by the *Santiago Declaration*. However, the Advisory Committee proposed the establishment in the Human Rights Council of a special procedure on the right to peace. Instead, civil society prefers that the General Assembly sets up a Working Group on the Human Right to Peace, which will be responsible for the promotion and protection of that right. Its functions, described in Article 15 of the *Santiago Declaration*, reproduce the best practices of the special procedures of the Human Rights Council.

The speaker concluded that it was urgent to complete the codification of the human right to peace because it is subject to systematic violations. They come from direct armed violence, since more than 40 armed conflicts around the world persist today, many of them forgotten. According to SIPRI, global military expenditure in 2011 reached 1,740 billion dollars. These dilapidated resources should be devoted to combating structural violence that generates extreme poverty and famine which, far from decreasing, are affecting more than 1000 million people, the majority of whom are women and children in developing countries.

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The human right to peace is also violated by manifestations of cultural violence, such as gender-based violence, mobbing, bullying and family-based violence. Cultural violence is very frequent in our societies, in which the culture of violence prevails over the culture of peace.

Therefore, he invited all international actors to participate actively in the new Working Group, so that the General Assembly could adopt no later than 2015 an Universal Declaration of the Human Right to Peace, which should be firmly rooted in the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, both instruments having been universally accepted. If peace is an ethical requirement that should prevail over international relations, the human right to peace is the legal requirement to which the civil society worldwide is identified with, because it is a requirement of civilization that is above all regional, historical or cultural particularities.

Moreover, like all other human rights, the human right to peace is a justiciable right. This is demonstrated by the jurisprudence of international, constitutional and national courts from countries as diverse as Colombia, Costa Rica, Japan and the Republic of Korea.

Finally, the President of SSIHRL publicly thanked everyone who had made possible this solemn commemoration of the IDP for their excellent work: interpreters, musical trio (UN volunteers) and organizers: Mr. Ricardo Espinosa (UN) and Mr. David Fernandez Puyana (SSIHRL and IOHRP). He thanked the Government of Costa Rica for its sponsorship, and to all participants for their attention.

The next speaker, **Mr. Rainer Gude**, representative of Initiatives of Change to the United Nations in Geneva, speaking on behalf of his President Dr. Omnia Marzouk and his former President, Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun, a great advocate of the right to peace, wished all participants a very happy peace day!.

Ambassador Sahnoun had asked him to thank the other co-sponsors and had also hailed the efforts of Costa Rica and other countries who have promoted the right to peace. He considered it of the utmost importance since “it can help people realize that confrontation and wars are often initiated to serve interests without looking at the consequences for people.” In a word, the right to peace and the standards it proposes, places people at the focus since they are the main beneficiaries of peace.

However, peace is only possible when people prefer dialogue and cooperation to war. We have found that, in promoting the right to peace, the strengthening of these two capacities is a natural outcome.

He added that Initiatives of Change supports the right to peace because it believes that by creating standards particularly in the area of peace education, development, the environment, and victims and vulnerable groups, we can more easily conceive how peace can be built and maintained. In fact, approaching peace in this manner, by not merely seeing it as an immense and unachievable goal, but by proceeding in small steps, even down to the individual level, has been very much part of Initiative of Change's long experience.

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We know that war will not disappear simply by making a law against it, but by promoting standards in different yet inter-connected fields that are the foundation of peace we can make progress both for the right to peace as a concept and to peace itself.

Initiatives of Change aims at building bridges across the world's divides. Its approach is a holistic one that links both global and personal change. As the founder of Initiatives of Change, Frank Buchman realized, not only structures, but people, have to change for any change to be lasting and for peace to be achieved. He once said, "Peace is not just an idea, it is people becoming different." Long before the concept of the Right to Peace was even formulated, members of what was then called Moral Re-armament, their previous name, were able to galvanize support to buy and renovate the Caux-palace Hotel above Montreux in 1946, with the dream of helping Europe heal after WWII. There was no concept yet of a right to peace, but there was a strong conviction in the wrong of war. Between 1946 and 1950 3,000 Germans and 2,000 French visited Caux, among them parliamentarians, industrialists, trade unionists and journalists. Robert Schuman and Konrad Adenauer were also present and paid tribute to Caux's support in the reconciliation process. These conferences did not try to promote peace as such, but promoted forgiveness and reconciliation through dialogue and started with a look at personal lives and motivations. They could be considered a large-scale training in dialogue or even a crash-course in the right to peace. The increased capacity of dialogue and habits of cooperation built there among all levels of society were of tremendous use in solidifying peace and the subsequent reconstruction of Europe.

Since then, many other exciting things have happened in Caux, not to mention the fact that three Costa Rican Presidents have visited it. Caux has been the incubator for change and source of inspiration for many meetings involved in the process leading to Tunisian Independence, Aboriginal rights in Australia, minority rights in South Tyrol, healing religious tension in Lebanon, and many peace initiatives for Burundi as well as countless personal experiences of reconciliation. It is a place where dialogue can be learnt and cooperation is practiced, and has of course given birth to many of grass root projects in over 30 different countries. Their holistic approach, which touches on each of the standards that the right to peace is promoting, has produced what could be called a normalization of dialogue and cooperation. While promoting the right to peace these important ingredients to peace would be naturally promulgated and strengthened.

What the world needs now, Mr. Gude concluded, are not simply more peace treaties, but a strengthening of the foundations of peace and our capacity to work for them. This is precisely what the right to peace proposes and what Initiatives of Change strive for.

Next, a classical musical piece known as "Shepherd's Lament" by Carl Maria von Weber. It was performed by Mr. **Amaryllis Roper**, cello, Mr. **Olivier Murray**, flute and Mr. **Michael Wiener**, piano.

The commemoration was then closed by the Moderator after having acknowledged to the organizers, the interpreters, the musical performers, the speakers and the participants.

**Annex I:**

**The Right to Peace: A Nonkilling View, by Francisco Gomes de Matos**

When the Right to Peace is stated  
How does Humankind usually feel?  
Do human beings show they are elated  
or do they expect something real?

The Right to Peace two major dimensions cover:  
One that is spiritualizing: Meditation  
in which paths to tranquility we may discover;  
another that is conciliatory: Mediation

The Right to Peace entails a very demanding obligation:  
That to Dignity and Justice all Humankind should be committed  
Of the Principle of Non-violence, helping the propagation  
and educating so that forms of life-killing are not permitted

How can the Right to Peace be universally achieved?  
This also calls for socioeconomic-political transformation  
In which the benefits of equality by all are received  
and people violating peace will have non-killing preparation

Urgently needed: Humankind to disarm  
all kinds of weaponry immediately forswear  
so that human beings can walk arm in arm  
and from now on only the Peace uniform wear

The Right to Peace on Earth let's firmly globalize  
So that by conflicts and wars less and less people will be harmed  
As appliers of the Right to Peace let's harmonize  
And one day, in a non-killing future, all nations will be disarmed

**High Level Meeting on the right to peace**  
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**Annex II: Photos of the panellists**



UN Secretary-General



UNOG Director-General



Chief, Non-governmental Liaison Unit, UNOG



Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the UN in Geneva



Permanent Observer of the OIC to the UN in Geneva



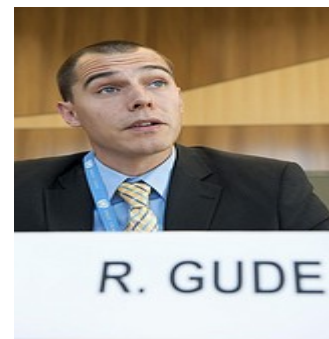
Head of the UNESCO Liaison Office to the UN in Geneva



Representative of the OHCHR



President of the SSIHRL and representative of the IOHRP



Representative of Initiatives of Change to the UN in Geneva



### Annex III: Photos of other participants



Mr. Mario Vega, Counsellor and Ambassador  
Christian Guillemet, Deputy Permanent  
Representative to the UN in Geneva



Mr. David Fernandez Puyana, representative of the  
SSIHRL/IOHRP in Geneva and coordinator of  
commemoration of the International Day of Peace



Mr. Michael Wiener, piano, Ms. Janet Weiler,  
double bass and Mr. Olivier Murray, flute



Participants at the commemoration



Minute of silence in memory of victims of violence