

## Concept note:

### Presidential Conference at UNESCO – 28 March 2020

*United Nations and Rotary:  
A long relationship to build a peaceful society*

#### Preamble

Next year, RI President Mark Maloney will host 5 presidential conferences in New York, Paris, Rome, Santiago de Chile, and Honolulu to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the creation of the United Nations: An opportunity to highlight the convergence of thought and action of the United Nations and Rotary and to underline the contribution of each to peace and development.

#### United Nations

In 1945, the United Nations replaced the Society of Nations in order *“to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.”*

The UN are built upon three inseparable pillars:

Peace and Security – Human Rights – Development

Rotary and Rotarians played a role at every major step of their creation:

- First, with public peace advocacy between the two wars;
- Second, with the role played during the London conferences (1942-45) attended by the Ministers of Education of the free world, which led to the creation of UNESCO;
- Finally, with the drafting of the Charter of the United Nations in 1945 in San Francisco – It should be noted that the US Secretary of State asked the RI President to appoint 10 Rotarians to be part of the US delegation as he did for several other major organizations such as the Red Cross.

Many Rotarians, as representatives of their countries, participated in the First General Assembly of the United Nations as well as in the ones that followed.

Five presidents of this assembly were Rotarians.

- René Cassin, future Nobel Peace Prize winner and first President of the European Court of Human Rights, also a Rotarian in Lille and then in Paris, was probably the most active Frenchman in this institutional and humanist renewal, as he was in 1948 in Paris with the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

This shared vision will be reflected in the annual Rotary Day at the United Nations, which was interrupted during the Cold War but resumed in 1985 following Rotary's commitment to eradicate polio.

### **Agencies – Funds – Programs – Entities of the United Nations**

- *Counter-Terrorism Office* - [New York](#)
- *Peacekeeping Office (15 ongoing actions)* - [New York](#)
- *Office of Political Affairs (with the Secretary General for Conflict Prevention)* - [New York](#)
- *UN Food and Agriculture Organization* - [FAO](#) - [Rome](#)
- *International Labor Organization* - [ILO](#) - [Geneva](#)
- *International Organization for Migration* - [New York](#)
- *International Telecommunication Union* - [Geneva](#)
- *Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights* - [Geneva](#)
- *Peacebuilding Support Office* - [New York](#)
- *United Nations HIV Program UN AIDS* - [Geneva](#)
- *United Nations Human Settlements Program UN Habitat* - [Nairobi](#)
- *Economic and Social Council* - [New York](#)
- *Department of Public Information* - [New York](#)
- *United Nations Development Program UNDP* - [New York](#)
- *Unesco* - [Paris](#)
- *United Nations Environment Program UNEP* - [Nairobi](#)
- *High Commission for Refugees* - [Geneva](#)
- *United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research* - [New York](#)
- *United Nations Institute for Training and Research* - [New York](#)
- *Office for Disarmament Affairs* - [New York](#)
- *United Nations Office for Disaster Reduction* - [New York](#)
- *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime* - [Vienna](#)
- *United Nations Population Fund* - [New York](#)
- *United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment* - [New York](#)
- *World Tourism Organization* - [New York](#)
- *United Nations Alliance of Civilizations* - [New York](#)
- *United Nations Children's Fund* - [UNICEF](#) - [New York](#)
- *United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace* - [New York](#)
- *Research Institute for Social Development* - [New York](#)
- *World Food Program* - [Rome](#)
- *World Health Organization WHO* - [Geneva](#)
- *World Meteorological Organization* - [Geneva](#)

- *United Nations Commission on International Trade Law* – [Vienna](#)
- *International Atomic Energy Agency* - [Vienna](#)
- *Office for Outer Space Affairs* - [Vienna](#)

Among these agencies, we must single out the ones exclusively dedicated to peace and security.

They represent 20% of UN activities around the Security Council.

The other 80% focus on development and human rights.



## UNESCO

Preamble: *“Since wars begin in the minds of men and women, it is in the minds of men and women that the defenses of peace must be constructed.”*

Creation in 1945 – Agency of the United Nations.

Its purpose is “to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations.”

Areas of expertise:

Education – Culture – Natural Sciences – Social Sciences and Humanities – Communication and Information

A focus on gender equality and the African continent.

Themes:

- Education for all throughout life;
- International cooperation among scientific policies;
- Intercultural dialogue and ethical principles;
- Sharing our world heritage;
- Promoting the diversity of cultural expressions;
- Freedom of thought and knowledge dissemination.

UNESCO spearheads the United Nations for goal #4: Education.

## **Approaches to build peaceful societies**

They revolve around two main ideas:

- A permanent peace diplomacy associated with peace sustainability activities.

Rotary as an international independent service organization and UNESCO as an intergovernmental institution have approaches adapted to each region by creating models that reflect the diversity of their programs.

### **Recommended actions:**

- Fighting violent extremism through youth participation and mobilization, freedom of expression and celebration of cultural diversity, because violence is the greatest threat to development.
- Youth unemployment is one of the worst threats to peace according to the UN Secretary-General.
- Women's involvement is a guarantee of effectiveness in peace processes and gender equality.
- Strengthening peace-building and conflict resolution programs because it is at the local level that the successes are most certain.
- The culture of peace: The foundation of the intellectual and moral solidarity of humanity - Increasing programs linked to intercultural and interreligious dialogue to promote respect and understanding.
- Sustainable development program by 2030.

Collective work to solve persistent problems.

Seek and implement synergies between local, international and civil society institutions.

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## Rotary International

In 1921 at its international convention in Edinburgh, Rotary added a fourth point to its Object: To promote the advancement of peace.

The declaration of the Rotary Club of Chicago to the State of Illinois included "*to serve the genuine interests its members*" and "*a loyal behavior.*"

- Between the two wars, Rotary would be the advocate of peace between nations and district governors would create the Inter-Country Committee program to foster mutual understanding between countries in conflict. The France-Germany Inter-Country Committee founded in 1950 was followed by the creation of dozens of others, mainly in Europe, that would meet during an annual conference attended by the RI President or his representative.

Following the fall of the Berlin Wall, Inter-Country Committees contributed to the rebirth of Rotary in Central and Eastern Europe.

- As we can see, Rotary followed a track parallel to that of the United Nations. In fact, the newspaper La Voix du Nord described "*Rotary as the UN of service*" in their coverage of the Rotary Institute in Lille in 2005.
- Whether we are talking about its many youth programs (Rotaract, Interact, RYLA, Youth Exchange, scholarships including the ones at UNESCO's IHE Institute for Water Education in Delft, the Netherlands).
- Or its fight to eradicate polio officially launched in 1985 at the UN General Assembly during which the United Nations celebrated their 40th anniversary while Rotary celebrated its 80th anniversary. RI President Carlos Canseco announced Rotary's commitment to immunize 80% of the world population.
- Or our areas of focus - our causes - that shared commonalities with the UN's Millennium Goals. These areas of focus provide a direction to the work of its 36,000 clubs.
- Or, finally, the strongest stance Rotary took towards its commitment to peace: The Rotary Peace Centers.
- Without forgetting Rotary's network of representatives to the UN and other international organizations.

Rotary Day at the UN - Peace conferences at UNESCO.

In the past few years, under the leadership of researchers, including Peter Wallenstein from the Rotary Peace Center at the University of Uppsala, Sweden a new concept has emerged, "*positive peace,*" an ambitious goal to live together in harmony.

## Institute for Economics and Peace

The Institute for Economics and Peace train Rotarians as part of a partnership with RI.

### **Positive peace requires:**

- The Rule of Law, a civil society, and a stable policy.
- An environment conducive to economic growth and the development of the private sector.
- An equal distribution of resources.
- Human rights protection, ours and theirs.
- Good relations with neighboring countries, with procedures in place to solve conflicts, such as mediation.
- Freedom of the press.
- An educated population, a contribution to the economy, to policies and financial assets.
- A trust in laws and institutions through understanding.

### Definition of positive peace

Behaviors, structures, and initiatives that are the foundation for and support to social peace.

It manifests itself as a state of tranquility – human connections and shared values – and as a transformation from a violent condition to a culture of peace.

Positive peace is measured in an annual report covering 160 countries.

### Reminders:

The resolution approved at the UNESCO conference on 4 April 2015 in the presence of RI President Gary Huang cited “*social cohesiveness as a prerequisite for peace.*”

The initiative jointly launched by the Catholic University of Lille and the Rotary Club of Lille Nord Nouveau Siècle through a peace master class.

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## Transforming the world: The UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030

17 main goals and 169 secondary goals.

Ensuring the dignity of all, protecting the planet, and promoting peaceful societies.

Where the United Nations and Rotary converge today.

A philosophy close to ours.

Those are also qualitative goals based on values – Rule of Law, absence of corruption – that resonate with our own values – integrity, loyalty, equality.

Rotary's areas of focus are reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals:

- **Health:** Stopping the AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria epidemics. Reducing the maternal and child mortality rates.
- **Water and sanitation:** Ensuring access to water and sanitation for all.
- **Education:** Defeating illiteracy and providing access to higher education – ensuring education for girls.
- **Peace:** Promoting the advent of peaceful societies, education of civic duties, conflict resolution.
- **Development of local economies to fight poverty – Microcredit**

Rotary also recommends even though this is not an area of focus (not yet):

- **Living in a sound environment,** sharing resources, using the oceans in a sustainable way and fighting the consequence of climate change.

Other Sustainable Development Goals might not be our priority but remain important to us:

- **A sustained economic growth,** entrepreneurship and a global strategy for youth employment – sharing resources and knowledge – eliminating child labor.
- **Energy and Internet for all.**
- **Programs for inclusive cities** – Transportation – Waste management.

**Regarding the means, we also share some goals, including **partnerships**.**

- Come to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with UNESCO on the Sustainable Development Goals

This would be the third one following:

- The 1996 MOU with RI President Luis Vicente Giay and UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayor
- The 2003 MOU with RI President Jonathan Majiyagbe and UNESCO's Director-General Koichiro Matsuura - with the national commissions.

The most effective tool would certainly be a global initiative for each goal on the PolioPlus model that would include institutions and governments, and NGOs with an international structure such as Rotary International.

Serge Gouteyron