

Remarks on
«Integral Link between The Human Right to Peace
and The Culture of Peace »

by

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Greetings to all of you from New York!

As I begin my remarks, allow me to convey my respects for our distinguished moderator Lois Herman whose continuing engagement in and advocacy for the human right to peace is deeply appreciated. I also thank her for kindly reading out my presentation at this Experts Meeting organized on the margins of the 41st Session of the UN Human Rights Council

As we are on the threshold of the third decade of the 21st century, we should appreciate more the need for the flourishing of the culture of peace to generate the mindset that is a prerequisite for the transition from force to reason, from conflict and violence to dialogue and peace.

With that objective, 20 years ago, a landmark decision was taken by the United Nations to adopt the Declaration and Programme of Action on Culture of Peace on 13 September 1999 (UN General Assembly resolution 53/243). I had the honor of chairing the

nine-month long negotiations for reaching consensus on this norm-setting document embraced by all Member States. During those negotiations, a proposal was presented for recognizing the human right to peace in view of the fact that acceptance of that right is considered crucial and integral to the spread of the culture of peace. Sadly as a result of stonewalling by some powerful countries, that proposal was abandoned only for the sake of achieving consensus amongst all Member States on the culture of peace document. But that did not mean that peace-loving people of the world gave up the quest for the human right to peace.

Struggle for attaining the universal acceptance of the human right to peace by the international community and its long overdue recognition by the UN General Assembly by consensus continues. Human Right to Peace should bring the nations and peoples of the world together, not divide through voting “no” or abstaining or absenting. This will allow the UN to proclaim that “the Right to Peace is universal, indivisible, interrelated and interdependent”.

I have asserted time and again that “The cause of peace needs to be understood not only in the passive sense of the absence of war, but also in the constructive sense of creating conditions for equality and social justice.” Quoting Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., I further underscore that “We must concentrate not merely on the negative expulsion of war but the positive affirmation of peace”. I believe, therefore, that it is only the culture of peace created in each one of us that would create the solid foundation for recognizing the human right to peace.

Nearly two decades have gone by and what we have got is a voted resolution and minimalist declaration by the UN General Assembly in 2016 on the right to peace.

That declaration therefore failed to have the universal acceptance and credibility that is absolutely essential for an issue of such global importance for humanity. Some efforts have been noticed through last year's UNGA resolution in improving its text.

I am very proud to say that civil society organizations have been the most forward-looking in advocating for recognition of the human right to peace, particularly with the adoption of a milestone charter in October 2006 - The Luarca Declaration on the Human Right to Peace. Here I would like to pay tribute to the leadership that the Spanish Society for International Human Rights Law (SSIHRL) under the guidance of its President Carlos Villan has been providing in advancing this global endeavour. I extend my solidarity with his continuing determination.

Let us send a strong, loud and clear message from the civil society from this forum that the culture of peace and the human right to peace are integrally linked and are essential for the good of humanity, for the sustainability of our planet and for making our world a better place to live.
