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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Associazione Comunita Papa Giovanni XXIII, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[22 August 2022]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only. The views expressed in the present document do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials.

Democratic and equitable international order: challenges to international peace and security

Associazione Comunita' Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23) appreciates the theme "Rethinking global peace and security" that the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order has chosen for his report to the 51st regular session of the Human Rights Council, following the call for input on the "challenges to international peace and security" (1) in which APG23 has participated with a contribution whose summary is provided in this statement.

Our views and considerations hereby proposed derive from the ground-based engagement for the promotion of peace through nonviolent means and the commitment to promoting integral development, respect for human rights and a culture of peace and nonviolence. In particular, through its Civilian Peace Corps "Operazione Colomba", APG23 has a nonviolent presence in conflict zones to protect civilians exposed to violence on both fronts of the conflict, to foster nonviolent direct actions and promote dialogue and reconciliation. Moreover, APG23 actively participated in the process for the recognition of the human right to peace that culminated in the adoption of the Declaration on Right to Peace by General Assembly on 19 December 2016.

Global peace and security are severely and deeply challenged by different, complex and interrelated processes, instances, interests, actions and events. We see these challenges to maintaining and strengthening international peace and security at the global level firstly as challenges to peace in itself. In its broadest sense, peace is not just absence of armed conflict nor a matter of inter-state relations. Peace is not only a state of affairs in external relations, it also defines domestic relations. The absence of armed conflicts does not secure peace as there are many non-military sources of instability, i.e. economic, social, environmental, cultural, humanitarian causes. Therefore, it is vital to have an integrated approach to peace which includes human rights and political, economic, social, cultural, humanitarian, environmental and developmental perspectives.

In this comprehensive vision, peace is strongly linked with the realization of sustainable social and economic development, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, promotion of justice, peace culture and education, non-discrimination, tolerance and dialogue, good governance and institution building, rule of law and accountability, among others, and all those elements that counter every kind of violence.

This understanding of peace overlaps with justice, especially social justice. We share the belief of Saint Paul VI that justice is a step toward peace and so "if you want peace, work for justice" (2). Sustainable peace must be founded on justice. Consequently, in translating the connection between peace and justice into practice, we need to remove the root causes of injustice in order to achieve peace. As long as there is injustice, no lasting and sustainable peace is possible.

The 1986 Declaration on the Right to Development underscores that comprehensive development goes hand in hand with peace. It states plainly that "international peace and security are essential elements for the realization of the right to development" and that "States should promote the establishment, maintenance and strengthening of international peace and security and, to that end, should do their utmost to achieve general and complete disarmament under effective international control, as well as to ensure that the resources released by effective disarmament measures are used for comprehensive development, in particular that of the developing countries".

In the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development States committed themselves to promote peaceful, just and inclusive societies (SDG16) recognizing that "there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development". The targets associated with SDG16 elucidates once more that peace goes beyond the mere absence of war and encompasses a wide range of elements. Peace is not only about violence and

disarmament but it is also about rule of law; equal access to justice; reducing corruption; effective, accountable and transparent institutions; responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at different levels; legal identity; access to information and protection of fundamental freedoms; countering illicit financial and arms flows; combating terrorism and crime; non-discrimination.

Unfortunately, until now peace has been mainly understood as linked to security. Instead, by linking peace to social justice and broadening its meaning, a new concept of security emerges and matches with this understanding of peace: "human security", which responds to structural violence and realizes freedom from fear and want. Within this framework, "security is a condition or feeling of safety, of being protected" and thus goes well beyond the idea of military security to the extent that "national security and international security cannot be achieved without respect for individual security in the form of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" (3).

Indeed, peace is strongly interrelated with the respect for human rights, as clearly stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. As underlined by Kofi Annan, "respect for human rights is the best guarantee of peace and the establishment of a durable peace is a condition of the respect for human rights" (4).

The broad concept of peace as here exposed is in line with the Declaration on the Right to Peace, which recognizes in the Preamble that "peace is not only the absence of conflict but also requires a positive, dynamic participatory process where dialogue is encouraged and conflicts are solved in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation, and socioeconomic development is ensured".

Following these considerations, most factors challenging global peace and security are among the key elements undermining sustainable development and social justice, both at national and international level. From a human rights perspective, they correspond with the obstacles to the realization of the right to development and to the effective and wide implementation of the right to peace.

If we do not address these issues with the adequate political will to overcome the structural injustices, inequities and inequalities in the international political, economic and financial systems, by removing the obstacles to the realization of all human rights and by advancing on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we will never be in the position to maintain and strengthen a peaceful order at global level.

The crucial challenges to international peace and human security could be far better faced through more effective and accountable institutions at global at national level.

Among the structural institutional reforms that are needed in this perspective there is the reform of the United Nations, that should reflect a truly democratic approach in all its processes and organs, in particular by reviewing the Security Council and the anachronistic veto power. The principle of accountability and fair representation mechanisms should also be fully applied to the international economic, trade and financial institutions, together with the duty to international cooperation.

At a national level, as already remarked in 2006 by Kofi Annan, "the aim should be the creation of a sustainable national infrastructure for peace that allows societies and their governments to resolve conflicts internally and with their own skills, institutions and resources" (5). This is what the Infrastructures for Peace (I4P) do. The I4P approach recognizes the need of long-term structural measures to prevent and manage conflicts, facilitate peace agreements, reconcile tensions, deal with political, social and economic transformation.

We believe that such I4P are a necessary institutional framework in order to effectively face the challenges above described. In particular, APG23 proposes the 'Ministry of Peace' as an

implementation tool for the right to peace that can be established in every country all around the world. This would provide an effective move towards the realization of the Declaration on the Right to Peace and to maintaining and strengthening international peace and security in their broadest meaning.

This proposal is analyzed and described in two documents elaborated by APG23: "Calling for Ministries of Peace all around the World - A move forward in the implementation of the right to peace"(6) and "Calling for Ministries of Peace all around the World - Conflict Prevention and Alternative Dispute Resolution through the experience of the APG23 Nonviolent Peace Corps (Operazione Colomba)" (7) .

The proposal of the Ministry of Peace as an instrument of good governance is meant to offer an innovative response to the need of peace, security and welfare, able to build up nonviolent solutions to conflicts and to hinder structural violence within societies; promote human rights, justice and new forms of security; prevent wars and conflicts and address their root causes through the realization of a positive and sustainable peace.

(1) <https://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/2022/call-input-democratic-and-equitable-international-order-challenges>

(2) Message of Saint Paul VI for the celebration of the Day of Peace, 1 January 1972

(3) https://www.peacepalacelibrary.nl/ebooks/files/UNIDIR_pdf-art2018.pdf

(4) UN Secretary-General Message to the UNESCO International Consultation of Governmental Experts on the Human Right to Peace, Paris, 5-9 March 1998

(5) Progress Report on the prevention of armed conflict, Report of the Secretary-General, United Nations, 2006 (A/60/891), p.16

(6) <https://www.ministerodellapace.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/CallingforMinistriesofPeace.pdf>

(7) <https://www.ministerodellapace.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/ConflictPreventionandADR.pdf>