

# Responses to global ills must integrate peace and sustainable development, UN Member States told

24 January 2017 – United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres today highlighted the importance of recognizing the links between sustainable development and sustaining peace amid such intertwined global challenges as rising inequality, protracted conflicts and climate change.

“We need a global response that addresses the root causes of conflict, and integrates peace, sustainable development and human rights in a holistic way – from conception to execution,” Mr. Guterres told the UN General Assembly high-level dialogue, on ‘Building sustainable peace for all: synergies between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and sustaining peace.’

The universal nature of the 2030 Agenda – adopted by the Assembly in September 2015 as a plan to tackle poverty, inequality and other global challenges – and its pledge to leave no one behind ties it to sustaining peace, he explained.

“Our priority is prevention – prevention of conflict, of the worst effects of natural disasters, and of other manmade threats to the cohesion and wellbeing of societies,” Mr. Guterres stressed, noting that the best means of prevention, and of sustaining peace, is inclusive and sustainable development.

Investing in sustaining peace means investing in basic services, bringing humanitarian and development agencies together, building more effective and accountable institutions, protecting human rights, promoting social cohesion and diversity, ensuring the meaningful participation of women and girls in all areas of society and moving to sustainable energy, he said.



A wide view of the Trusteeship Council Chamber during the General Assembly high-level dialogue on building sustainable peace for all. UN Photo/Manuel Elias

The Secretary-General cited two overriding challenges.

“First, education; education is a prerequisite for both peace and economic development. Good quality education systems can help transform societies, especially those affected by conflict [...] Second, youth unemployment deprives millions of young people of the opportunity to fulfil their potential, and plays a part in violent conflict and the rise of global terrorism.”

To tackle these global challenges, the United Nations must also be ready to reform, in particular in three major areas, including its strategy and

approach to peace. Indeed, he said, while peacekeeping missions consume about 70 per cent of the Organization's regular budget, many of them are deployed where there is no peace to maintain.

"We must prioritize the prevention of violent conflicts and the perpetuation of peace," he continued, also underscoring the need to reform the UN development system, as well as its administration.

Together with these reforms, it is crucial to build a new generation of partnerships, with governments, civil society, regional organizations, international financial institutions, academia and the business community and to implement the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development, he said.

In his remarks, General Assembly President Peter Thomson said that the history of the United Nations has been punctuated by both notable successes and some truly regrettable failures.

**AUDIO:** UN Secretary-General António Guterres says investing in education, finding decent jobs for young people and promoting social cohesion are just some of things that can be done to make the world safer, more resilient and sustainable. *Credit: UN News*

In April of last year, the General Assembly and the Security Council decided to advance a new approach to peace by adopting the so-called 'sustaining peace' resolutions in their respective chambers, thereby signalling a new cross-sectoral, comprehensive, and integrated approach to the maintenance of international peace and security.

He explained that those texts emphasize the importance of sustainable development to sustaining peace, and give special place to conflict prevention, gender equality, addressing root causes of conflict and protecting human rights.

"Taken in tandem, the 2030 Agenda and the [resolutions] make it clear that Member States regard sustainable development and sustaining peace are two agendas that stand or fall together," Mr. Thomson said, noting that today's dialogue is a tangible step to mutually reinforce commitment to that end.