



## **A FUTURE FOR HUMANITY**

*Peace in a Nutshell*

### **THE SEED**

*Second and third submission for the "New Agenda for peace"*

April 18<sup>th</sup> and June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023

*"If you plan for a year, plant rice.  
If you plan for twenty years, plant a tree.  
If you plan for a century, develop Men.  
But if you look at a millennium or more, please bear for our planet".*

This is a succinct expression of what **comprehensive peace policies** entail: what the available peace tools are. It is meant for quick reading. These concepts and tools shall be sustained and completed by policy, research and effectivity. It is the path ahead, the talk we walk.

**If one intends to look at peace** and **to live in peace**, there is at first a deep need to leave aside for a while or for later fear, conflict or even risk management. These may and often need to be addressed; yet they only exist at the outskirts of peace. There is a need to look at peace *per se* before anything else. Said otherwise, once minds and hearts are set free from the “not so at peace” elements of life and nature, of perfectible human choices, behaviors and attitude, or from damaging or conflictive types of individual, cultural and civilizational traits: one may or we may establish ourselves, for an instant or for longer in some sort of basic harmony.

From there, the central and essential, most often prevailing nature of peace may be seen: peace (a fair amount of peace) is needed for all manifestations of life. Starting at conception and through all phases of life, if there is life peace is present (even if only minimal or for an instant), and peace may grow. Further, peace is paramount to all the greatest achievements of our humankind, and to our planetary and human survival. As an essential element of life, peace is needed to sustain it, to allow it to flourish, and to establish our persons into a lasting and desired, a happy humanity.

Using categories, peace can be approached through three lenses: **individual, social and political peace**. All these levels of human life are interlinked, all having and using specific tools as required to see peace progress.

First and overall, comes the **value** of peace.

Values are choices, based on the highest possible, but also on common and well understood instincts. Values are supported by practices in line with them.

Peace as a fundamental value needs to be approved, confirmed, promoted and exemplified by our human capacity to stand, individually and collectively, in and for peace. Stand for peace in its deep serene and fulfilling nature, in its purposes and in its methods.

Standing for peace does not come at all costs, because human rights stand for equality and universal wellbeing, no space or need for sacrifice may be left, allowed or required. And because justice can and shall be nonviolent and inclusive, restorative, everyone has a right and a space to improve, belonging in humanity, as a person and as a member of the human family, towards peace and fulfillment. Yet the stand for peace, belonging in it and the means needed or acquired to remain peaceful shall largely grow. A purpose we share and express.

Values, including peace achievement and growth come with **methods of peace**, ethics all the more and reviewed (best) practices. To nurture peace using the will and the skills available, as needed to overcome difficulties without losing the essential sight and nature of peace. Said simply: to maintain and build peace without resorting to unpeaceful means.

It is noteworthy to highlight that **fundamental values**, thus human rights must be accompanied by **fundamental methods**. As we detail them hereafter, the practices of peace, write large, are part of these fundamental methods.

The value of peace is expressed by the **culture of peace**<sup>1</sup>.

It is also enshrined in our human founding texts. To name them: the Universal declaration of Human Rights (article 28, broadly) and the UN Charter. But peace is also present in many of our legal and institutional infrastructures<sup>2</sup>, in our usual human endeavors and practices, in the Sustainable Development Goals and all in efforts made or carried further for the betterment of our human condition and of the way we practice our humanity, alone and in common.

Our **constitutions**, universal as local ones, bear well on the ideal of peace<sup>3</sup>.

All countries need to step up and turn fair peace intents into effective and comprehensive policies. States have a duty of peace, and thus to see peace progresses made and accounted for. The report mechanisms used for human rights can similarly be used for the progresses of peace.

Policies are developed and implemented by **institutions**<sup>4</sup>.

Yet institutions need to be gently balanced by a cooperative approach towards and by the people, which can be assured among other policies by the recognition of the **human right to peace**<sup>5</sup>.

Thus, having people and institutions stand equally, mutually serving each other and creating the common future. It is here important to note that the fundamental right to peace is one of the links needed between all human rights allowing them to all thrive in common<sup>6</sup>.

Peace is also an expression of well-grounded and inclusive consensuses<sup>7</sup>.

The value of peace needs to be made vernacular, universal, available *and useful* for each and every one: **Education**. This is expressed by Sustainable Development Goal 4.7: as an integral part of sustained development, peace and nonviolence need to be present in all education curricula.

Once the value of peace is acknowledged and enshrined through our texts and intents, designed into policies: this is the first field-based peace tool, education. Peaceful educating in itself (non-coercive education) and education for the practices of peace and peaceful methods. The opposite is just as true, bottom-up practices and educating for peace will help institutions to come to peace more thoroughly. Paradigm.

Another important peace tool is the **peace zone**<sup>8</sup>.

Because peace is or may be a trial-and-error process, it needs to grow in serenity. Here again, while you read (or listen) to this text, you may recognize, at least to a minimal extent, the sure presence of peace around you. Hopefully, and as joyfully as it is or as it may be, you may also recognize peace some degree of peace within yourself and just as far, acknowledge the peace you create (or not), with your own personal peace, for your surroundings.

Mostly they are two types of peace zones: peace or serenity zones, a calm zone to replenish and enjoy life, in the harmonious part of its nature. And conflict solving zones, which may be a bit more open or tolerant on behaviors and attitudes, if they are truly oriented at building a greater peace; building peace so often also implies deconstructing violence.

Inclusivity and participation are the next best steps: peace in and by **democracy**<sup>9</sup>. Coherent norms, to be approved and adhered to equally, by the people and the institutions, need to be openly discussed. This is the future we want.

*Building peace where it is needed. No hardship meant, yet we face the state of the world.*

From here on, we walk as peacefully, nonviolently, and cautiously as possible towards the outskirts of the peace zone. Two important things must be mentioned:

1) As long as no responsibility is taken for or from others, everyone is free to remain peaceful, and hopefully happy, the core of the peace zone. Or one is free to walk and act towards maintaining peace or creating more peace<sup>10</sup>. It is an individual choice (or if need be a consciousness objection choice).

2) There is no outer frontier to the peace zone; separating peace and violence, name it “security” is in our opinion is a disastrous language and dichotomic mistake. It may seem simplistic, yet once the peace zone concept is fully acquired, all that exists the peaceful core of the zone, and further the peacebuilding zone where peace simply needs to grow. You may call it “planet” and we are all concerned.

Addressing risks sometimes faced by peace and peaceful people, first comes **prevention**. To maintain peace as it is, or if need be to avoid difficult situations from worsening, generally speaking to avoid falling into any form of violence and most of all to overcome into nonrecurrences: New and more humane policies. Speak with heart rather than the fist<sup>11</sup>.

**Peaceful settlement of disputes** must become universal. As it is mandatory in international law, it needs to become readily available to all persons wishing to use it, within all societies, be it by mediation, conciliation, arbitration or other similar practices (UN Charter art. 33)<sup>12</sup>.

**Practices of creative justice** to maintain, protect and restore peace. Preferably without using force, never using violence needs to progress towards nonkilling, nonviolence and more humane and restorative policies and practices, such powers of peace encompassing constructive, learned and learning processes of nonrecurrences, and if need be social policy and structural changes allowing everyone to find an enriching places and spaces within humanity and their own well-being and progress. Said simply, win-win only! If there is a loss, justice is not yet completed. Leave no one behind may well also be to leave no one deprived.

**Use of force** shall always be avoided, or highly limited. Force is not violence. There is a universal need for independent control over any use of force, which shall encompass civil society and victims. The right to conscientious objection needs to be extended to all police, law enforcement and disciplinary forces, including mercenaries and private military companies. And in our moral opinion, in the presence of humanitarian and human rights violations it will always be valid. Use of non-maiming, non-aggressive and non-destructive force – thus incapacitating violence without aggravating the situation – can then stand as an example of integrity, but also of compassion. Further, it sustains a non-violent approach; imitating violence is good no one. Non-violent and humane police forces is not an empty dream. Stopping war and or widespread repression is more demanding, but still our best choice.

**Conscientious objection**<sup>13</sup> is essential for the participation of youth in peace processes.

**Financing peace** deserves to be mentioned. If we pay for war, war might be what we get. And we encourage the peacebuilding fund to open up a public account where private donors can contribute.

**Disarmament** of consciousness, of language and feelings, and of course disarming hands and weapons requires a refreshed intent. This we give into your hands, standing at your side.

**In conclusion** Peace is at reach. We have the tools needed to see it prevail, they are all interlinked. What is still needed is the political will and just as much popular support, awareness and practice of the forthcoming peace tools.

*“Happy people breed a happy world”.*

This document was prepared by the **Center for Global Nonkilling**, in cooperation with “**APRED**, participative institute for the progress of peace”. It is a living document: sharing and participation, questions, comments for improvements are peacefully welcome<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture\\_of\\_Peace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_Peace)

<sup>2</sup> It is not unworthy to mention that peace is also expressed by our feelings and by our informed behaviors and attitudes in favor of peace, as by our practices as these maintain and reinforce peace (or not).

<sup>3</sup> All national constitutions are available in English on [www.constituteproject.org](http://www.constituteproject.org), thanks to google who financed the start of the project. Most constitutions do mention peace somehow or somewhere. A comprehensive approach of peace therein, intents and implementation, sound and robust overview are missing, shall ne in the making, commitment by States. Some SDG Voluntary National Reports, based on SDG 16 have started in this direction; based on some of the UPR we participated in, Nepal or Lesotho can be examples. Yet if peacewashing is still washing, makes it brighter and stands as a fair start, effective and deeper involvement will always be worthy. Constitutional empowerment of peace, and fair participation of all or most towards it will be needed.

<sup>4</sup> Peace institutions shall or can take the form of peace ministries or departments.

[https://www.apg23.org/downloads/files/ONU/calling\\_for\\_ministries\\_of\\_peace.pdf](https://www.apg23.org/downloads/files/ONU/calling_for_ministries_of_peace.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> A/RES/71/189. *More references to be added*

<sup>6</sup> It is worth mentioning that one of the difficulties of the right to peace is that it needs to be exerted peacefully; shame-and-blame procedures or even condemnations do not stand very well in this perspective. Yet peace and peaceful procedures may be the ground enabling good will to express itself, a fair start; from there peace methods, build into (deep) infrastructures, legal and cultural ones, may bring us, humanity, beyond a state of conflictuality (the permanent risk of war?) and of common violence that we can simply state as of unhealthy, for individuals as for societies.

<sup>7</sup> Practice has shown us that well-grounded consensus, for which the full time has been given and all have been included, have always met, and thus reach and express, fundamental values, but also a fair balance of interests, thus adding care and sustainability.

<sup>8</sup> Peace zones can be formal, but most often they are just there without being named as such. In fact, zones totally free from any form violence (economic violence?) are rare, they are meditative one can say. The idea is more like setting the goal of one or more progresses towards peace, then evaluating them and reckoning them in their achievements and sustainability, and further to move on peacefully to the next step, the next peace goal.

<sup>9</sup> They are, a reaction to autocrats but also the fruit of new or enlarged consensus, new moves towards greater progresses of democracy.

<sup>10</sup> Quite often, we walk the other way around, going away, emancipating from violence towards or in search of the peace zone. This does not change the basic choice: addressing the not-so-at-peace issue(s) is (almost) never a requirement and one needs to have the appropriate tools to do so.

<sup>11</sup> Prevention at large is already beginning to be a working topic through the UN, so here we do not elaborate on it more, but to say that one of the best preventions will always be to share the other side of the coin, betterment rather than harkening and hardening.

<sup>12</sup> We hold it that there is a right of access to soft justice: people are free to use it or not, but if nonrecurrence is assured, why punish (or be forced to punish, or accomplice) when one may forgive?

<sup>13</sup> Conscientious objection is a recognized right, at least to military service, military service which is in times of conflict a major cause of killing. Conscientious objection is valid in times of peace as well, as objecting to the possibility of killing or preparing killing. Based on article 18 of CCPR, the relevant resolutions of the Human Rights Council and the decisions of the Human Rights Committee, we consider that conscientious objection can also be based on article 6 of CCPR on the right to life, as a refusal to kill. We consider that the right shall be extended to any mandatory killing. Similarly, the right to conscientious objection shall be recognized to persons refusing to pay for killings and military institutions and services ([www.cpti.ws](http://www.cpti.ws)).

<sup>14</sup> [www.nonkilling.org](http://www.nonkilling.org), [www.apred.ch](http://www.apred.ch)

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*Front Cover photo: Hans Erni, at the age of 100, entrance of the United Nations in Geneva, 2009. Photo C. Barbey*

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