A Call for Sustainable Peace: UN's Role in Building a Peaceful World

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The United Nations, established in 1945 in the aftermath of World War II, was created with a singular and paramount mission to maintain international peace and security. More than seven decades later, the world continues to face unprecedented challenges to stability, ranging from armed conflicts and terrorism to climate change or pandemic threats that know no borders. In an era marked by growing geopolitical tensions, humanitarian crises, and the emergence of complex, asymmetrical conflicts. The relevance of the United Nations in fostering sustainable peace has become increasingly critical. Sustainable peace represents more than the mere absence of conflict it encompasses the establishment of conditions that promote justice, economic development, and social cohesion while addressing the root causes of violence.

Sustainable peace extends beyond the cessation of armed hostilities to encompass a comprehensive framework that addresses structural inequalities, promotes inclusive governance, and ensures equitable access to resources and opportunities. According to the United Nations' own definition articulated in various peace-building strategies, sustainable peace involves the prevention and resolution of conflicts through addressing their underlying causes including poverty, inequality, resource scarcity, and poor governance. The importance of this holistic approach became evident following the Cold War, when numerous ceasefire agreements and peace treaties failed to establish lasting stability because they did not adequately address the socioeconomic or political grievances that had fueled conflict in the first place. The UN has increasingly recognized that sustainable peace requires investments in education, healthcare, economic opportunity, and democratic institutions not merely the deployment of military forces to separate warring parties.

The interconnected nature of contemporary challenges underscores the necessity for sustainable peace frameworks. Climate change, for instance, exacerbates resource scarcity and can trigger mass migration, thereby creating conditions conducive to conflict. Similarly, economic inequality and lack of opportunity, particularly among youth populations, create vulnerability to radicalization and recruitment into armed groups. A sustainable peace approach recognizes these connections and seeks to create resilient societies capable of withstanding and managing tensions without resorting to violence. This represents a paradigm shift from traditional peacekeeping operations, which often focused narrowly on military intervention, toward comprehensive peace-building initiatives that address the multifaceted dimensions of conflict and instability.

The United Nations maintains a substantial peacekeeping apparatus comprising military and civilian personnel deployed across multiple regions to monitor ceasefires, separate combatants, and create conditions for political dialogue. As of recent years, the UN has maintained approximately 13 peacekeeping operations across Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, involving nearly 100,000 military personnel and civilian staff United Nations Department of Peace Operations, 2023. These operations represent a tangible manifestation of the UN's commitment to conflict resolution and stability maintenance. The peacekeeping model, established through the UN Charter and operationalized through successive General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, has evolved to encompass not only military monitoring but also civilian protection, rule of law promotion, and transitional justice mechanisms.

Peacekeeping operations have demonstrated both remarkable successes and significant limitations. In regions such as Mozambique, East Timor, and more recently in portions of the Balkans, UN-led initiatives contributed substantially to the transition from conflict to relative stability and democratic governance. These successes typically occurred when peacekeeping operations were accompanied by robust international support, clear mandates, sufficient resources, and genuine commitment from local stakeholders to peace processes. Conversely, operations in Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Syria have revealed the constraints inherent in the UN's structure and the challenges posed by modern conflicts characterized by non-state actors, sectarian dimensions, and the involvement of powerful external states with conflicting interests. The peacekeeping model, while necessary, has proven insufficient as a standalone mechanism for achieving sustainable peace, necessitating integration with broader peace-building and development initiatives.

The UN's peace-building architecture, formalized through the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission in 2005, represents a critical evolution in the organization's approach to sustainable peace. The Peacebuilding Commission serves as an intergovernmental advisory body that brings together relevant stakeholders, including the Security Council, General Assembly, World Bank, and affected countries, to support peace consolidation efforts. This mechanism acknowledges the necessity of integrating security initiatives with development programs, governance reforms, and transitional justice mechanisms. Peace-building initiatives increasingly incorporate components addressing disarmament, demobilization, and integration of former combatants establishment of transitional justice mechanisms including truth commissions or war crimes tribunals strengthening of democratic institutions and rule of law, promotion of reconciliation and social cohesion.

The integration of sustainable development with peace-building represents a crucial insight, encapsulated in the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Research has demonstrated that investments in education, healthcare, economic opportunity, and inclusive governance generate long-term reductions in conflict risk by addressing the grievances and conditions that fuel violence United Nations Development Programme, 2022. Countries that have successfully transitioned from conflict to stability have typically done so through comprehensive approaches combining security measures with sustained development investments and political reforms. The UN's role in facilitating such transitions involves both direct implementation through its agencies and programs and coordination of international support. However, the fragmentation of UN entities and competition for limited resources have sometimes undermined the coherence and effectiveness of these integrated approaches.

An increasingly recognized principle within the UN system is that preventing conflicts from emerging is substantially more cost-effective and humane than responding to conflicts after they erupt. The UN's Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, along with regional offices and specialized agencies, maintains capacity for monitoring situations of concern and attempting diplomatic intervention before violence escalates. Early warning mechanisms employing analysis of structural tensions, political rhetoric, arms transfers, and other indicators can identify environments at risk for conflict, enabling preventive diplomacy and targeted interventions. Despite the logic underlying these approaches, prevention receives substantially fewer resources and political attention than response to active conflicts, representing a significant gap between rhetoric and practice.

Sharjah Book Sellers Conference Draws 912 Professionals from 99 Countries



APP- ISLAMABAD: The fifth edition of the Sharjah Book Sellers Conference, organized by the Sharjah Book Authority, was inaugurated by Chairperson of the Sharjah Book Authority Sheikha Bodour bint Sultan Al Qasimi at Expo Centre Sharjah.

The two-day conference brought together 912 booksellers, publishers, distributors and representatives of e-commerce platforms from 99 countries to discuss bookselling, distribution, digital promotion, artificial intelligence and innovative ways of reaching readers. Pakistan's book and publishing industry was also represented at the conference.

The Pakistani delegation included National Book Foundation (NBF) Director Headquarters Murad Ali Mohmand, Director Book Corner Pakistan Amar Shahid, Urdu World Books Chief Executive Officer Sarmad Khan, Ferozsons' Daniyal Muhammad and Liberty Books Pakistan Director Sameer, said a message received here on Friday.

Pakistani representatives established professional contacts with international booksellers, publishers and distributors and discussed opportunities for cooperation in publishing, sales, distribution, translation, digital platforms and access to international book markets.

The participation of Pakistani delegates provided an opportunity to highlight Pakistan's literary, book and publishing activities within the broader global publishing industry. In particular, the representation of the National Book Foundation helped connect Pakistan's public-sector initiatives for the promotion and publication of books, access to readers and international literary and publishing relations with the global book industry.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by Sharjah Book Authority Chief Executive Ahmed bin Rakkad Al Ameri, board members, and representatives of cultural organizations, publishing houses and libraries from the United Arab Emirates and various other countries.



Commuters ride past shipping containers stacked in front of Serena Hotel as authorities beef up security ahead of PTI's expected long march

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