

Op-Ed: Building a Culture of Peace in Today's World



As we mark the 25th anniversary of the United Nations General Assembly's adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, we are reminded that peace is not simply the absence of conflict. Rather, it is a dynamic and participatory process that requires active engagement, mutual understanding, and a spirit of cooperation. This year, more than ever, we must ask ourselves: what does peace look like in today's world?

In 1999, the UN recognized that peace must be built on dialogue and cooperation, ensuring that conflicts are resolved through understanding rather than violence. The Coalition Against Global Genocide (CoAGG) wholeheartedly supports this vision. Despite the violent conflicts and rising intolerance around the world, we remain committed to advocating for peace at every level—locally, nationally, and globally.

However, peace is fragile. The alarming realities of war, genocidal acts, and human rights abuses in places like Ukraine, Myanmar, and Sudan remind us that without vigilance, the culture of peace can be easily undermined. The atrocities of the past and present show us that when hatred and division go unchecked, peace becomes an elusive dream.

Yet, there is hope. At CoAGG, we have seen firsthand the power of education, dialogue, and community action to prevent conflicts from escalating. Our work is in collaboration with educators, advocates, and policymakers to raise awareness about the early signs of genocidal behavior and to promote understanding across communities. This work reflects the essence of what the UN's Culture of Peace declaration calls for—a proactive, inclusive approach to building a sustainable peace.

In the face of today's challenges, how can we all contribute to a more peaceful world?

1. **Engage in Dialogue:** Building peace requires ongoing dialogue, even when it's difficult. It means listening to those who hold different views and finding common ground. As individuals, we must challenge ourselves to have those conversations and encourage others to do the same.
2. **Foster Mutual Understanding:** Education is crucial in dismantling the barriers of ignorance and prejudice. Whether through formal education or community outreach, we can all play a role in promoting awareness of different cultures and histories to foster empathy and understanding.
3. **Act Locally, Think Globally:** Supporting peace is not limited to international diplomacy. In our own communities, we can advocate for justice, stand against discrimination, and promote policies that uplift human rights and human dignity. Every step taken locally can make a significant impact globally.

On this International Day of Peace, we stand united in the belief that peace is possible, but it requires action. Let us honor the spirit of the UN's Declaration on a Culture of Peace by committing ourselves to the hard work of dialogue, education, cooperation, and understanding. Though the world may seem divided, the promise of peace can be more than a dream, one that we can build together.

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