New Agenda for Peace Based on Nonviolence

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Active nonviolence is a way of showing that unity is truly more powerful and more fruitful than conflict. Everything in the world is inter-connected. (World Day of Peace Message 2017, Pope Francis)

Stressed societies and political systems around the world are generating significant insecurity and creating the potential for deepening structural and systemic violence (poverty, racism, hunger, extreme inequality, xenophobia, political repression …), as well as virulent outbreaks of direct violence (domestic violence, killing, militarized policing, gang and drug-related violence, gender violence, gun violence, extremist violence …). …

Global cooperation in a spectrum of nonviolent actions is urgently needed to establish just and effective institutions with the authority and capacity to govern an increasingly complex and inter-connected world.

Just and Effective Global Governance

At the international level, this will require strengthening and deepening an overlapping web of intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, treaty regimes, ecumenical and interfaith bodies and civil society groups. Such institutions are able to cultivate interdependence and co-operation, norms against war, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and sustained diplomacy. Their influence helps build more effective global governance and they have proven successful in mediating existing armed conflicts and helping to administer post-conflict agreements that create an enduring peace.

Nationally and locally, just governance includes responsive, accountable and fair public officials and political institutions that uphold the rule of law, provide space for a vibrant, multi-cultural civil society and protect basic human rights, especially for women, widows, girls and those with special needs. Sustainable and equitable economic development, along with preventing corruption and ending the influence of powerful special interests who benefit from violence and war, can also contribute to just peace and inclusive security.

Given the reality of violence in the world, including extreme violence, the global community should make an immediate and long-term commitment to developing multilateral governance structures empowered to *sustain* peace — to support the application on a consistent basis of lessons learned about what makes for enduring peace. This includes preventative measures that address the root causes of conflict, support for those who challenge injustices nonviolently and active approaches for de-escalating destructive conflict, cultivating reconciliation, transforming patterns of perception and behavior and cultivating conversion.

Nonviolence to Prevent or Interrupt Violence

Many nonviolent practices for preventing and interrupting violence have been well tested. For example,

- alternative policing, such as the mostly unarmed policing units now deployed in several countries (England, Norway, Ireland, New Zealand, Iceland and most of the Pacific Island nations) which can build trust, empower the community and reduce crime - in part because of their increased willingness to de-escalate situations and actively risk their lives to save others;
- unarmed civilian protection (UCP) initiatives that have protected people and saved lives in war zones and large-scale conflicts; in addition to important initiatives of local communities, these include organizations such as Nonviolent Peaceforce, Christian Peacemaker Teams, Peace Brigades International, Operation Dove and Meta Peace Team;
- sanctuary provided by faith communities and others;
- unarmed civilian protection programs in local communities that use a public health approach, recognizing that violence or killing mimics a contagious disease that clusters and is transmitted through observation, experience and trauma. "Credible messengers" who enjoy trust in the community are deployed to interrupt the transmission, in order to prevent violence and its contagion, as well as to change local norms that legitimate violence.

- traditional ways to maintain order – elders, women, clan members, age sets, spiritual leaders – that have now largely been eroded except in very traditional areas (e.g. South Sudan, Swaziland, and among some pastoralist and semi-nomadic peoples). Modern adaptations of these informal or semi-formal approaches include *Nyumba kumi* ("10 households") in Tanzania and Kenya.

Just Peace Ethical Framework

The urgent need to interrupt or prevent violent conflict and war and to nurture healing and solidarity is clear. A vast, historic collaboration between friends and enemies at every level - from the United Nations to local communities - who abandon animosity and join together to address shared challenges should be guided by a Just Peace ethical framework, which includes a set of practical norms that enable society to reduce violence and build and sustain peace.

It offers a way to consider how a whole array of nonviolent policies and programs – from unarmed intervention in violent conflict to sustainable development - function together as parts of a greater whole, addressing root causes of violence, developing crucial nonviolent skills and engaging the participation of all actors – especially women, young people, indigenous communities and vulnerable groups, who are most impacted by institutional violence and the use of violent force. Policies and programs built on the Just Peace ethic complement one another and form the building blocks of a culture of peace.

The three categories of Just Peace norms listed below can help policymakers to identify policies and programs that promote nonviolent approaches to interrupting or preventing violence. These Just Peace norms describe a wide constellation of policies that, together, lead to peace that is just and sustainable. A given policy may respond most directly to one or more of the norms, but no policy should undermine or obstruct any of them. It is important to note that to attain a just peace will require a long-term commitment from policy makers and major investments on the part of any society.

Programs, projects and strategies consistent with Just Peace norms would:

1. **Develop virtues and skills for constructively engaging conflict by**
   - **forming virtuous habits** consistent with nonviolence, such as courage, empathy, solidarity, and humility
   - **education and training in key skills,** such as nonviolent communication, intersectional analysis, and conflict analysis based on community needs.
   - **participatory decision-making processes,** inclusive of as many stakeholders as possible, especially women, youth, and marginalized groups.
   - **building nonviolent communities and institutions, nonviolent cultures**.

2. **Break cycles of destructive conflict and violence by**
   - **ensuring that means are consistent with ends**
   - **re-humanization of adversaries** through language, images, and narratives.
   - **conflict transformation** (drawing adversaries toward partnership and addressing root causes), including dialogue, trauma-healing, meeting the human needs of all actors and trust-building initiatives.
   - **acknowledging responsibility for harm**, including through restorative justice.
   - **nonviolent direct action**, such as unarmed civilian protection, nonviolent civilian-based defense and nonviolent civil society movements for social and ecological justice..
   - **integral disarmament,** suggesting not only the reduction of physical arms, but the "disarmament of hearts," which in practical terms depends upon trust-building.

3. **Build sustainable peace by**
   - **promoting reconciliation,** including interreligious dialogue and truth and reconciliation processes.
   - **building a robust civil society and just governance**, just and inclusive redistribution of political power and civic space.
   - **fostering ecological justice and sustainability**, contributing to the well-being of people, all living beings, and the environment, i.e. integral ecology.
   - **supporting human dignity and human rights for all,** including those of adversaries.
   - **upholding economic, gender, and racial justice,** with an emphasis on the most vulnerable.

A few examples of the Just Peace framework applied are included in *A Policymaker's Tool for Effective Nonviolent Strategies for Sustainable Peace*:

⇒ For the first category of norms**,** policymakers could examine educational and training priorities, childcare and family support policies, opportunities to promote healthy values via the media, identification of public nonviolent heroes or heroines, public awards and commendations and public holidays to see if they encourage the development of such virtues and skills.

⇒ By funding unarmed civilian protection, policy makers could make resources available for activities that are particularly consistent with the category of breaking cycles of violence and the norms of nonviolent direct action, reflexivity, and re-humanization. - as well as the category of building sustainable peace and the norms of robust civil society, human dignity and rights, and relationality.

⇒ Through policies and programs that promote restorative justice mechanisms and trauma-healing, policy makers could help to break cycles of violence and promote the norms of conflict transformation, acknowledging responsibility for harm, and re-humanization.

⇒ For all the categories of Just Peace norms and especially the third one, policymakers could consider a wide range of policies that contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and make available the much needed funding for their global implementation.