

The United Nations proclaimed 1986 the International Year of Peace. Governments and civil society were thereby invited to express hopes and fears for the future of the planet.

In September 2021, the UN Secretary-General issued an ambitious call to improve international cooperation through effective multilateralism. “Our Common Agenda is the Secretary-General's vision for the future of global cooperation. It calls for inclusive, networked, and effective multilateralism to better respond and deliver for the people and planet and to get the world back on track by turbocharging action on the Sustainable Development Goals. It outlines possible solutions to address the gaps and risks that have emerged since 2015, calling for a Summit of the Future to be held in 2024.” UN Our Common Agenda

The UN Secretary-General announced the formation of a High-Level Advisory Board (HLAB) tasked with developing an independent report in support of this objective. HLAB is led by a former Head of State and a former Head of Government and composed of other leaders from civil society, the private sector, academia, and other relevant arenas. In April 2023 they published the report “A Breakthrough for People and Planet “.

Yet despite these efforts in global governance we observe a world still beset by the horrors of war and its consequent destruction and forced migration. The effects of this are particularly problematic for widows and female headed households. They continue to be vulnerable with their children most at risk.

Widows Rights International calls for robust efforts from all to ensure the establishment of meaningful peace. We hold that peace is inevitable: - it is absolutely essential for the continued existence of the human race upon the earth. We ask - how long do we have to wait? We share the conviction with so many noble hearted people around the world that we are members of one human family and we have to learn to live together on this planet.

We call on governments to come together to forge the framework for a permanent peace.

We share the world view that human beings are essentially good and civilisation is evolving toward maturity. Selfishness and aggression is a distortion of the human spirit not an inevitable expression of it. Whilst some hold that injustice, prejudice and warfare are characteristics of humanity, we hold that these qualities are merely signs of humanity's adolescence.

The world can never be at peace with barriers such as racism, unequal status of women and men, unrestrained nationalism, lack of universal education, conflict among religions, inordinate disparity between rich and poor, lack of an international languageever strengthened through prejudice. World order can only be achieved when we all give up the

notion of “other” and profoundly recognise the oneness of humanity. We are all part of one people - how can we continue to oppress our sisters and brothers anywhere in the world?

Is it not time for us to raise the standard of peace and call for a cessation of war in Gaza and everywhere across the globe where the powerful continue to fight for the very earth that ultimately will only serve as the hollow for those who speak no more?

Is it not time for us to stay the hand of revenge and instead look each other in the eye to see our fellow human beings, all wishing for the same thing - peace and prosperity for all?

The current situation only serves to illustrate the despicable level of barbarity to which human beings can sink, when they forget who they truly are. Let all those whose hearts cry for peace and whose tears rain down when they see the torment and grief of all who are suffering - call now for powerful leadership to end conflict wherever it continues.

What has to happen for the world’s leaders to call for a stop? How many more children are to be butchered? How many more widows and orphans created? How much more trauma can we all cope with?

In the words of Ervin Laszlo, Member of the Club of Rome and Editor in chief of World Encyclopedia of Peace, in 1986, "Peace in the contemporary world is no longer an option but a necessity. All leaders and peoples of the world must come to realize this fact".

A great philosopher of the Twentieth Century said that the governments of the world “.....must make the Cause of Peace the object of general consultation, and seek by every means in their power to establish a Union of the nations of the world. They must conclude a binding treaty and establish a covenant, the provisions of which shall be sound, inviolable and definite.....”

Widows Rights International calls on all who care for justice, to beseech those in decision making positions to make real this wide-spread aspiration for peace - and end the huge rise in the numbers of widows created by conflict and its manifold consequences.