

REFLECTIONS ABOUT DIALOGUE AS A GUARANTEE OF PEACE

IOAN VOICU*

Abstract:

Acest articol se concentrează asupra actualității conceptului de dialog ca factor esențial pentru menținerea păcii, în lumina unei rezoluții propuse de 68 de state în cadrul Adunării Generale a ONU și adoptate prin consens la 6 decembrie 2022. Textul articolului analizează în detaliu conținutul bogat al rezoluției, acordând o atenție deosebită elementelor specifice referitoare la modul de implementare a acesteia de către statele membre ale organizației mondiale. Totodată, se subliniază relevanța Declarației ONU din 2016 privind dreptul la pace și rolul crucial al tinerei generații în aplicarea prevederilor acesteia într-o lume caracterizată prin vulnerabilități, perplexități și discontinuități globale. Sunt evidențiate puținele evenimente care au marcat în 2023 Anul Internațional al Dialogului ca Garanție a Păcii, menționându-se, totodată, că această inițiativă diplomatică nu s-a bucurat de interesul cuvenit în baza ansamblului conceptelor generoase care au inspirat-o.

Articolul sugerează câteva idei pentru viitor, a căror materializare intră în competența UNESCO. Această instituție specializată a ONU are un rol semnificativ în promovarea educației pentru pace, atât în conformitate cu mandatul înscris în Constituția sa, cât și în lumina recomandărilor adoptate la cea de-a 42-a sesiune a Conferinței Generale din noiembrie 2023.

Cuvinte cheie: dialog, garanție, pace, ONU, UNESCO, rezoluție, recomandare, relații prietenești, drepturile omului

Résumé :

Cet article est axé sur l'actualité du concept de dialogue comme facteur essentiel du maintien de la paix, à la lumière d'une résolution proposée par 68 États à l'Assemblée générale de l'ONU et adoptée par consensus le 6 décembre 2022. Le texte de l'article analyse en détail le riche contenu de la résolution, en accordant une attention particulière aux éléments spécifiques liés à sa mise en œuvre par les États membres de l'organisation mondiale. Dans le même temps, la pertinence de la Déclaration des Nations Unies de 2016 sur le droit à la paix et le rôle crucial de la jeune génération dans l'application de ses dispositions dans un monde caractérisé par des vulnérabilités, des perplexités et des discontinuités mondiales sont également rappelés. Les quelques événements qui ont marqué 2023 Année internationale du dialogue comme

* PhD, Visiting Professor, Assumption University, Bangkok, (2000-2019), e-mail: ioanvoicu@yahoo.com

garantie de paix sont rappelés, tout en notant que cette initiative diplomatique n'a pas suscité l'intérêt dû, malgré l'ensemble des concepts généreux qui l'ont inspirée.

L'article suggère quelques idées pour l'avenir, dont la matérialisation relève de la compétence de l'UNESCO. Cette institution spécialisée de l'ONU joue un rôle important dans la promotion de l'éducation à la paix, à la fois conformément au mandat inscrit dans sa Constitution et à la lumière des recommandations adoptées lors de la 42e session de la Conférence générale en novembre 2023.

Mots-clés : dialogue, garantie, paix, ONU, UNESCO, résolution, recommandation, relations amicales, droits de l'homme

Preliminary observations

One of the fundamental ideas related to promoting universal peace was formulated by Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), leader of the Indian independence movement and pioneer of the philosophy and strategy of non-violence. He said: "Your beliefs become your thoughts. Your thoughts become your words. Your words become your actions. Your actions become your habits. Your habits become your values. Your values become your destiny." In his opinion, Peace on Earth becomes a reality only when each individual actively chooses to embrace it. "The world will live in peace, only when the individuals composing it make up their minds to do so".¹

Mahatma Gandhi's conviction aligns harmoniously with the principles laid out in the Preamble to the UNESCO Constitution: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed." In the complex landscape of today's global challenges—fuelled by ideological extremism, religious fundamentalism, misguided nationalism, economic injustice, and inequality—it becomes imperative for citizens of the global family to dedicate themselves to the pursuit of peace. The multifaceted issues, including violation of human rights, militarism of power politics, racial and ethnic discrimination, egoism, and unbridled human instincts necessitate a collective commitment to building the defences of peace within the minds of individuals across the world.

¹ For the quotations used in this paragraph see the article Mahatma Gandhi's views on peace education by Prarthita Biswas. See also Bose, Anima. (1981) "A Gandhian Perspective on Peace", *Journal of Peace Research*, XVIII (2): 159-164. An older but useful book is *All Men Are Brothers (Life and Thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi as told in his own words)* Compiled & Edited by: Krishna Kripalani Introduction by: Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Ahmedabad, India, 1958, 207 pages. This book was republished by UNESCO in 1968.

It is in this context that the year 2023 was declared by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), in a resolution adopted by consensus on 6 December 2022, as International Year of Dialogue as a Guarantee of Peace.²

This diplomatic initiative had as principal sponsor Turkmenistan. On 12 December 1995 the UNGA recognized the status of permanent neutrality declared by Turkmenistan.

The resolution on the International Year of Dialogue as a Guarantee of Peace (IYDGP) had 68 co-sponsors as follows: Afghanistan, Angola, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, China, Djibouti, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Maldives, Mali, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Türkiye, the United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Viet Nam and Yemen.³

Before going to an analysis of the content of the resolution it is useful to reflect on possible interpretations of the expression “Dialogue as a Guarantee of Peace” present in the title of the resolution.

Used in the daily language, the expression “Dialogue as a Guarantee of Peace” suggests that engaging in open and constructive communication between parties, whether they are individuals, groups, nations, or any other entities, is a crucial means of ensuring and maintaining peace. This concept highlights the idea that when people or groups with differing interests, beliefs, or objectives are willing to engage in dialogue and negotiation rather than resorting to conflict, violence, or other hostile actions, this modality of action can help prevent or resolve disputes and conflicts, ultimately leading to some degree of peaceful coexistence.

² The symbol of the resolution is United Nations A/RES/77/32 General Assembly Distr.: General 8 December 2022 22-27794 (E) 131222 *2227794* Seventy-seventh session Agenda item 14 Culture of peace. It was adopted by the General Assembly on 6 December 2022 [without reference to a Main Committee (A/77/L.10)] 77/32. All further quotations from this section are taken from the indicated resolution.

³ The full list of 68 delegations that co-sponsored the draft resolution is available in the process verbal of the UNGA meeting of 6 December 2022 under the symbol A/77/PV.45 06/12/2022. Attention should be paid to the large geographical representation of the sponsors.

There are several elements to be taken into account while dealing with *Dialogue*. Usually, it refers to a process of communication in which parties involved in a dispute or potential conflict engage in conversations, consultations, negotiations, and discussions. Dialogue demands willingness to listen, understand, and express one's own perspectives and concerns. The word *Guarantee* in this context, has to be interpreted that dialogue is recognized as a reliable and effective method for achieving and maintaining peace. It is not to be considered a guarantee in an absolute sense, but rather a strategy that significantly increases the likelihood of peaceful outcomes. Finally, in the same context *Peace* encompasses a state of non-violence, absence of conflict, and harmonious relations. It can be visible on various scales, from personal relationships to international diplomacy. The idea that dialogue is a guarantee of peace leads to the necessity of conflict resolution, diplomacy, and peace-making efforts. Indeed, by fostering communication, addressing grievances, finding common ground, and seeking mutually acceptable solutions, parties involved in a dispute can prevent tensions from escalating into violence and, in the best cases, establish a foundation for lasting peace. In general terms, the three words designate concepts which underscore the importance of diplomacy, consultations, negotiations, and open channels of communication as alternatives to destructive and confrontational approaches in conflict resolution. These terms also suggest that investing in effective dialogue mechanisms and promoting a culture of dialogue can contribute to the maintenance of peaceful relations.⁴

From the procedural point of view, it is necessary to highlight that on 6 December 2022, the delegation of Turkmenistan introduced in the UNGA the draft resolution entitled “International Year of Dialogue as a Guarantee of Peace, 2023” (IYDGP) with a few explanatory comments summarized below.

It was recalled in this introduction that the Charter of the United Nations calls upon all its 193 Members to maintain international peace, develop friendly relations, carry out international cooperation and resolve their disputes by peaceful means through negotiation and dialogue. The UN Secretary-General submitted an ambitious *New Agenda for Peace*, which includes reducing

⁴ Explanations about the significance of expressions quoted in this paragraph are inspired from Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/>. Accessed 12 Nov. 2023. See also in this regard the article signed by Saber Hossain Chowdhury & Hassan Damluji entitled Time for global climate solidarity in which it is asserted that “There is no solidarity without trust and no multilateralism without solidarity”. For the full text of the article see Bangkok Post dated 3 November 2023.

global strategic risks, investing in conflict prevention and peacemaking, and supporting regional preventive measures.⁵

In the opinion of Turkmenistan “The philosophy of *dialogue is a guarantee of peace* is aimed at pooling the efforts of the international community in strengthening the tradition of the peaceful and trusting coexistence of nations, restoring the values, views and traditions relating to preserving and promoting peace, and establishing an extensive culture of peace in international relations”.

With reference to the main content of the resolution, Turkmenistan underlined the fact that inclusive dialogue in its various manifestations plays an important role in strengthening relations and cooperation among Member States. In this regard, the text emphasizes the special role of women and youth, as well as the contribution of children and older persons to the promotion of a culture of peace and in particular the importance of women’s active participation in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in the promotion of a culture of peace, including in post-conflict situations.

It was also reminded that broad and sustainable dialogue will contribute to mobilizing the efforts of the international community to strengthen peace and trust among peoples, based on mutual understanding and cooperation, with a view to building solidarity and harmony. In that regard, the objective is to call upon the international community to promote the ideals of peace and trust and to demonstrate its commitment to dialogue in every possible way.

The operative part of the draft resolution declares 2023 the International Year of Dialogue as a Guarantee of Peace and calls on the community of nations to resolve conflicts through inclusive dialogue and negotiation in order to ensure the strengthening of peace as a value that promotes sustainable development, security and human rights.

The UNGA was also informed that on 11 December 2022, Turkmenistan hosted an international conference entitled “Dialogue is a Guarantee of Peace”. “We strongly believe that the convening of that forum in neutral Turkmenistan in today’s geopolitical conditions is a timely and necessary step towards sustainable peace to put multilateral dialogue on a peaceful, diplomatic course”, said the representative of Turkmenistan.

At the same time, it was announced that Turkmenistan’s initiative “is part of a long process”, and the Global Campaign for Dialogue as a Guarantee of Peace will make a significant contribution to the development of equal, mutually respectful and trusting ties between nations. The fact that this initiative is not limited to a strict calendar period will be further illustrated in these pages.

⁵ The full text of the UN report entitled Our Common Agenda by Antonio Guterres is available at <https://www.un.org/en/common-agenda>.

The substance of a significant resolution

Looking back at the end of 2023 to the content of the resolution entitled International Year of Dialogue as a Guarantee of Peace, 2023, we have to recognize from the very beginning its undeniable topicality, and, at the same time, to regret the lack of political will to really put it into effect.

The long paragraphs of the UNGA resolution reflect many noble aspirations contradicted by the realities of 2023, having in front of the list the current war in Ukraine and in the Middle East.

Indeed, under these circumstances it is useful to reaffirm the Charter of the United Nations and its purposes and principles, and especially the commitment to settle disputes through peaceful means and the determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. It is appropriate to recognize the importance of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, which serve as the universal mandate for the international community, particularly the United Nations system, for the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence that benefits humanity, in particular future generations. It is also true that inclusive dialogue in its various manifestations plays an important role in strengthening the relationship and cooperation between Member States.

In a rational interpretation nobody can deny the role of inclusive dialogue in promoting a culture of peace in support of proactive peace efforts as a basis for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The efforts made by the United Nations Member States to address global challenges and advance in a spirit of trust and solidarity to find common solutions and move forward in areas of mutual interest towards a relationship based on dialogue and cooperation are efforts well known by the international community. However, the expression “to address global challenges and advance in a spirit of trust and solidarity” demand some additional clarifications. *Addressing Global Challenges* should be understood as referring to the need to tackle and overcome issues that affect the entire world, such as climate change, poverty, disease, or conflicts. It emphasizes the importance of recognizing and confronting these problems on a global scale rather than as isolated or as just national issues. The term “*advance*” implies making progress, improvements, or achieving goals. In this context, it suggests working towards solutions and positive outcomes regarding global challenges. *In a Spirit of Trust* demands having confidence and faith in the intentions and actions of others, especially in the context of international cooperation. It highlights the importance of mutual trust among nations, organizations, or individuals involved in addressing these challenges. Trust is crucial for effective collaboration. Finally,

Solidarity refers to a sense of unity, support, and shared responsibility among different parties. It means that people and nations should come together, support one another, and work in cooperation rather than isolation. Solidarity is essential in the face of global challenges because it fosters a sense of shared commitment to addressing them.⁶

In summary, the expressions used in the resolution emphasize the need for global cooperation and collaboration to confront and overcome the significant challenges that affect the world. It calls for trust among nations and a sense of unity and mutual support, as working together with trust and solidarity is often seen as the most effective way to make progress in addressing complex global issues.

In a long preambular paragraph of the resolution the UNGA offers a comprehensive presentation of factors leading to a culture of peace. It is understandable for the UNGA to recognize that “the efforts made by the UN system in general and the international community at large for the prevention of conflicts, the peaceful settlement of disputes, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, mediation, disarmament, sustainable development, the promotion of human dignity and human rights, social inclusion, democracy, the rule of law, good governance and gender equality at the national and international levels contribute greatly to a culture of peace.” In addition, in a text belonging to multilateral diplomacy, the UNGA also recognized the role of international, regional and subregional organizations, in accordance with their mandates, in the promotion and preservation of peace.

In 2023, in the light of well-known tragic events, it is highly topical to recognize further “the importance of respect and understanding for religious and cultural diversity throughout the world, of choosing dialogue and negotiations over confrontation and of working together and not against each other.”

What should be the quality and the dimensions of the proposed dialogue? The resolution, by the voice of the UNGA, recognizes that “the open, constructive and respectful debate of ideas, as well as interreligious, interfaith and intercultural dialogue, at the local, national, regional and international levels, can play a positive role in combating religious hatred, incitement and violence.”

A significant provision of the resolution is dedicated to emphasizing “the role of women and youth, as well as the contribution of children and older persons in advancing a culture of peace, and in particular the importance of the active participation of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in activities promoting a culture of peace, including in post-conflict

⁶ See note 4 supra.

situations.” The resolution is action-oriented as it recognizes the importance of developing more peaceful societies through advancing equality, tolerance, human development and promoting human rights, and, in this regard, it calls for investment in education, including through effective policies and practices, towards promoting respect, reconciliation and a culture of peace and non-violence.” An original paragraph of the resolution deals with a specific aspect of current international relations. It emphasizes that “the policy of neutrality declared and pursued by States Members of the United Nations plays an important role in the development of peaceful, trust-based, friendly and mutually beneficial relations among the countries of the world and contributes to the strengthening of international peace and security at the regional and global levels”. In this sense, it is appropriate to remind that the UNGA recognized the status of permanent neutrality declared by Turkmenistan.

Global social aspects are not forgotten in the resolution under review. The UNGA recognized the importance of “combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy and unemployment”, and emphasized that “friendship to all and malice towards none, in the spirit of constructive cooperation, dialogue and mutual understanding, will help to achieve these objectives.” In 2023, when the absence of constructive dialogue between parties involved in disputes and conflicts is a regrettable reality, it is appropriate to reiterate by the voice of the UNGA the conviction that “dialogue contributes to combining the efforts of the international community in consolidating the traditions of peaceful and trust-based coexistence among the peoples of the world, restoring the values, attitudes and traditions of maintaining and promoting peace and the comprehensive establishment of a culture of peace and trust in international relations”. Sensitive to this undeniable reality, the UNGA recognizes “the urgent need to promote and strengthen preventive diplomacy, *inter alia*, through multilateralism and political dialogue, and the important role of the United Nations in this regard”. This idea is further developed by stressing the importance of preventive diplomacy in supporting the UN efforts to promote the peaceful settlement of conflicts, in order to preserve peace.

The UNGA welcomed the efforts of the international community to enhance understanding through constructive dialogue among civilizations, in particular through various initiatives at the local, national, regional and international levels. At the same time, the UNGA expressed its appreciation for the ongoing efforts of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in fostering international dialogue, greater understanding and respect among civilizations, cultures, religions and beliefs and promoting a culture of peace

through a number of practical projects in the areas of youth, education, media and migrations, in collaboration with Governments, international organizations, foundations and civil society groups, as well as media and the private sector. In this connection, two important events have been evoked: the Eighth United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Forum, held at United Nations Headquarters on 19 and 20 November 2018 under the theme “#Commit2Dialogue: partnerships for prevention and sustaining peace”, as well as the Ninth United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Global Forum, held in Fez, Morocco, on 22 and 23 November 2022 under the theme “Towards an alliance of peace: living together as one humanity”, aimed at discussing ways of promoting dialogue, tolerance, cultural and religious diversity and pluralism. The UNGA also welcomed the work of the Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions as an international interreligious dialogue platform for the benefit of peace, noting the importance of the Declaration of this Congress, held in Astana (Capital of Kazakhstan) on 14 and 15 September 2022.

In the final segment of the preambular part of the resolution, the UNGA formulated a short definition of the dialogue, calling it “a valuable tool in conflict resolution and prevention” which can help to “ease tensions, resolve disputes, overcome dividing lines and contribute to a culture of peace and non-violence, people-to-people contacts and reconciliation”. The role of the UN Secretary-General could not be forgotten and the UNGA reminds that he “is working to advance dialogue through cooperation with Governments, international organizations, regional bodies, civil society and the private sector.” The operative part of the resolution is a short one, contains a number of repetitive elements and starts by declaring 2023 the International Year of Dialogue as a Guarantee of Peace. In the second operative paragraph the UNGA “Underlines that the International Year of Dialogue as a Guarantee of Peace constitutes a means of mobilizing the efforts of the international community to promote peace and trust among nations based on, *inter alia*, political dialogue, negotiations, mutual understanding and cooperation, in order to build sustainable peace, solidarity and harmony.” The third paragraph contains a strong appeal which is far from being implemented in 2023, but its topicality for future action is beyond any doubt. We reproduce the full text of this paragraph by which the UNGA “Calls upon the international community to resolve conflicts through inclusive dialogue and negotiation in order to ensure the strengthening of peace and trust in relations between Member States as a value that promotes sustainable development, peace and security and human rights.”

The next fourth paragraph is about mediation. In it, the UNGA “Acknowledges the importance of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution and in seeking long-term political solutions for sustaining peace, and recognizes that mediation needs to be further and more effectively used, without prejudice to other means mentioned in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations.”

From an operational perspective, an essential provision is reflected in paragraph five of the resolution. By it, the UNGA “Invites all Member States, organizations of the United Nations system, international and regional organizations and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, individuals and other relevant stakeholders, to facilitate the observance of the International Year of Dialogue as a Guarantee of Peace in an appropriate manner and to disseminate the advantages of peace and trust, including through educational and public awareness-raising activities”.

The existing documentation shows that the International Year of Dialogue as a Guarantee of Peace could not be fully marked in accordance with its real significance in a world characterized by global vulnerabilities, perplexities, discontinuities, wars, conflicts and disputes. It is true that the UN Secretary-General has brought the resolution to the attention of all Member States, organizations of the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations, as well as civil society, including non-governmental organizations and individuals, but we cannot advance relevant proofs of its real implementation. To that it is necessary to add some obvious financial difficulties. We cannot underestimate the decision that the costs of all activities that may arise from the implementation of the resolution should be met by voluntary contributions.

Celebrating the IYDGP

At the UN headquarters in New York the official launch of International Year of Dialogue as a Guarantee of Peace took place on 27 January 2023. On that occasion, the UNGA President Csaba Korosi thanked the Government of Turkmenistan for its consistent efforts to promote the culture of peace in the world. This new International Year “is built on our shared conviction that real peace cannot be maintained or restored without constructive exchanges of views held in good faith. History has taught us that such open and sincere interactions can indeed foster understanding between nations. And they can bring change in the perceptions, priorities and ambitions”.

In his statement Csaba Korosi quoted the English scientist Jane Goodall who said, “Change happens by listening and then starting a dialogue with

the people who are doing something you don't believe is right". Commenting on this quotation, Csaba Korosi declared: "we should all change our thinking from a logic of power and rivalry, a logic of possible short-term gains to a logic of long-term dividends from peace and cooperation".

With reference to 2023 events, he said: "Turning to dialogue instead of threats has never been as urgent as today. Unfortunately, we are now facing the highest number of violent conflicts since 1945. To transform this state of our world, we must prevent as many conflicts as possible. In developing a culture of peace, inclusivity is imperative, and the participation of women, the young, and civil society is crucial. Using dialogue to bridge gaps in international trust and cooperation would be the greatest achievement in diplomacy".

He also expressed a wish for "seeing Member States increasingly turn to dialogue so as to promote and advance sustainable peace, solidarity, and harmony". And in the same context he quoted the wise words of Benjamin Franklin: "Be at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbours, and let every new year find you a better person".⁷

On 12 December 2022, at a conference sponsored by the Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan dialogue was defined as an active process allowing for the development and recognition of individuals' voices. Deriving from the Greek word *dialogos* in which *dia* means "through" or "across" and *logos* means "meaning", dialogue refers to both a quality of relationship arising, however briefly, between two or more people, and a way of thinking about human affairs highlighting their dialogic qualities.

At the conference mentioned above a number of speeches were made in which distinguished diplomats thanked the Government of Turkmenistan for its consistent work to promote a culture of peace throughout the world, emphasizing that this International Year has a steady and wonderful cornerstone: Dialogue for Peace.

Peace dialogue was defined as a dialogue practice of mutual accommodation applied in different dialogue procedures to achieve social transformation. Dialogue promotes peace and it is a communication tool that allows people and states to understand each other's viewpoints without damaging both viewpoints. In addition, dialogue is the path to peace and has the ability to

⁷ For the full text of the statement made by the President of the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly, H.E. Csaba Kőrösi, see [https://www.un.org/pga/77/Jane Goodall is a United Nations Messenger of Peace since 2002. She is an ethologist and conservationist practicing holistic action driven by hope for people, animals, and the environment. For details see https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2023/06/jane-goodall/](https://www.un.org/pga/77/Jane%20Goodall%20is%20a%20United%20Nations%20Messenger%20of%20Peace%20since%202002.%20She%20is%20an%20ethologist%20and%20conservationist%20practicing%20holistic%20action%20driven%20by%20hope%20for%20people,%20animals,%20and%20the%20environment.%20For%20details%20see%20https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2023/06/jane-goodall/)

resolve conflicts through dialogue, not by force. Undoubtedly, dialogue as a tool for peace building and conflict management, as well as the development of dialogue and facilitation skills, contributes to a better understanding of the key principles of dialogue and conflict management.

Proposing to the UN to declare 2023 the international year of “Dialogue as a guarantee of peace”, Turkmenistan considered the topic of trust as one of the most important for improving interstate relations. The resolution analysed above was considered as being aimed at supporting international efforts to de-escalate conflicts and create favourable conditions for their transfer to the negotiating channel.⁸

Present at the conference, the European Union Special Representative for Central Asia, Ambassador Terhi Hakala delivered a statement in which he underlined *inter alia* that “Today European Union invests a lot of political determination/will and financial resources in a global dialogue, defending European values and building stronger regional and global resilience. We support peaceful solutions and dialogue all over the world, and hold to our values and the principles of the UN Charter especially now – trying to stop the devastating war in Ukraine. In today’s world, the rules-based multilateralism is challenged and questioned. Dialogue becomes even more pertinent. We have to use dialogue to guarantee peace and to solve most challenging issues. We also need multilateralism to be effective and networked to address the urgent global challenges”.

The same speaker introduced some significant nuances in the interpretation of the concept of dialogue. In his opinion, “Dialogue has a multi-layered nature. It is much more than a guarantee of peace. It is *about security and sustainable development, and building more resilient and inclusive societies where women and youth play a significant role in reaching sustainable development*”.

In his conclusions he said that “Dialogue is about joint goals and joint efforts. To guarantee peaceful future, to support our common multilateral order and the UN, we need improved dialogue and we cannot let the dialogue fail”⁹

Role of youth

Another document of direct relevance for the topic of this article is the address by the participants of the International Youth Forum “Dialogue – Guarantee

⁸ For statements and other events at this conference see <https://www.mfa.gov.tm/en/news/3528>

⁹ For the full statement delivered by H.E. Ambassador Terhi Hakala see https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/international-conference-%E2%80%9Cdialogue-%E2%80%93-guarantee-peace%E2%80%9D-speech-eu-special-representative-central-asia_en

of Peace”, which was held in Arkadag, Turkmenistan, on 2 October 2023. This document was published as an UNGA and the Security Council document.¹⁰

We will summarize the main ideas contained in the address by the participants of the International Youth Forum on Dialogue as a Guarantee of Peace which was held in a hybrid format on 2 October 2023 in Arkadag, Turkmenistan. This event was organized by the Government of Turkmenistan with the active participation of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia and the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Turkmenistan. Its objective was to explore and discuss critical topics related to the key role of youth in conflict prevention and resolution, the use of technology in peacebuilding, the relationship between climate change and peace, and inspiring youth-led initiatives relating to peace and social cohesion.

This event was organized in pursuance of the resolution 77/32 of 6 December 2022, which proclaimed 2023 as the IYDGP, which was analysed in these pages. Its aim was to mobilize the international community in promoting peace and trust in relations between States, based on, *inter alia*, political dialogue, negotiations, mutual understanding and cooperation, with the aim of achieving sustainable peace, solidarity and harmony.

In the preambular part of this document the participants recalled the United Nations Security Council resolution 2419 (2018) of 6 June 2018, on youth, peace and security, in which the Council reaffirmed the important role that youth can play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. Another recall referred to UNGA resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in which for the first time the Assembly recognized children and youth as agents of change, and recognized that the Sustainable Development Goals are integrated, indivisible and global in nature, and therefore that all of them apply to youth. Special reference is made to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, adopted by the UNGA on 13 September 1999, which serves as the universal mandate for the international community, particularly the United Nations system, for the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence that benefits humanity, in particular future generations.

¹⁰ This is an official UN document circulated by Turkmenistan under the symbol A/78/508 S/2023/738 4/4 23-19571 and available at <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/documents/2023-10-26>.

This document reminds by its content the celebration in 1985 of the International Youth Year under the motto Participation, Development, Peace, on the basis of an initiative of Romania. For details see Dan Mihai Barliba, *Un an pentru Generatia Viitorului*, București, Editura Politica, 1986, 194 pages.

The document recognizes the need to continuously engage young people in all efforts made by the United Nations system in general and the international community at large for peacekeeping, peacebuilding, mediation, the prevention of conflicts, sustainable development, the promotion of human dignity and human rights, democracy, the rule of law and gender equality at the national and international levels, that contribute greatly to a culture of peace. While being relatively repetitive if compared with the UNGA resolution already presented in detail, the specific emphasis on the role of younger generation makes this document quite topical while dealing with peace. Indeed, it is necessary to recognize the inherent potential of young people as agents of positive change, and considering the relevance of global issues, to reaffirm the commitment to fostering a culture of dialogue, mutual understanding and cooperation as fundamental guarantees of peace.

While the preambular part of the documents on youth role in promoting peace is just an introduction to this complex field, four specific fields are treated in detail. The first theme is entitled *Dialogue as a guarantee of peace. Exploring the role of youth in preventing and resolving conflict and promoting sustainable peace*, and it emphasized the crucial role of youth in conflict prevention and resolution. “Youth are not just beneficiaries of peace, but active participants and leaders in peacebuilding processes”. In order to enable youth to accomplish this role, the participants call on Governments, civil society organizations and international institutions to actively involve young people in decision-making processes related to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. For that purpose, the participants “undertake to foster a culture of dialogue and mutual understanding, promote tolerance and respect for diversity, and address the root causes of conflict through education, information campaigns and public engagement”.

The second theme is entitled *Digital diplomacy and peacebuilding. Use of technology and social media in positive peacekeeping efforts*. Under this theme the participants recognize the potential of technology and social media in advancing peacebuilding efforts, and the importance of responsible and ethical digital diplomacy. Inspired by this potential, the participants call for the development of digital and media literacy programmes that will enable youth to use technology and social media as tools to promote peace and counter hate speech, disinformation, and violent extremism. A similar call is extended to governments and technology companies to work together to create safe online spaces that foster dialogue, understanding and collaboration among diverse groups of youth.

The third theme is entitled *Climate change. Exploring the relationship between environmental sustainability and peacebuilding*, and it acknowledges “the link between climate change and peace, understanding that environmental degradation can exacerbate conflict and threaten peace”. It also calls for urgent action to address the impacts of climate change and advance sustainable practices that promote peace, including support for vulnerable communities affected by climate-related displacement. Acting in this spirit, the participants undertake to raise awareness of the importance of environmental sustainability and advocate for policies that mitigate climate change and promote peace.

The last theme is entitled *Youth initiatives for peace. Demonstration of successful youth projects and initiatives promoting peace and social cohesion*. In this respect, the participants underscore the inspiring youth initiatives presented at the Forum, demonstrating the potential of young people to bring about positive change in their communities. They undertake to support and replicate these initiatives, contributing to the creation of a global network of youth peace projects that promote social cohesion and conflict prevention and resolution. At the same time, participants call on governments, foundations and international organizations to provide financial and technical support to youth peace initiatives.

The document contains a short conclusion according to which the participants pledge to take concrete actions based on the discussions and views expressed during this Forum, believing in the transformative power of youth engagement, dialogue and cooperation in ensuring a peaceful and sustainable future for all. They also undertake to use the knowledge gained during the Forum to promote sustainable peace in their communities, countries and throughout the world. Finally, the participants welcomed the proposal of the Government of Turkmenistan to regularly convene International Forums on Dialogue as a Guarantee of Peace in order to provide youth with the necessary institutional platform for promoting peace and trust through intercultural and interreligious dialogue, mutual understanding and cooperation.

It is appropriate to inform that this Forum was organized by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan and the Central Council of the Youth Organization of Turkmenistan. It was supported by all states of the Central Asian region, and it was considered an essential step towards strengthening a culture of peace and trust in international relations.

In his final speech during the Foundation Meeting of the Dialogue of Youth of the Countries of Central Asia, SRSG Kaha Imnadze noted: “...young representatives of Central Asia – participants of the Youth Forum received positive experience that will help to unite the efforts of young people in the

region in promoting common interests in the international arena and, first of all, within the United Nations.”¹¹

The Forum described in this article did not end only with the adoption of the document fully presented above. The Dialogue – Guarantee of Peace International Youth Forum concluded with the official signing of the Central Asian Youth Dialogue Memorandum by representatives of Central Asian government agencies working with youth. The purpose of negotiating, drafting and signing this Memorandum was to deepen understanding of the importance of dialogue in preventing and resolving conflicts, to strengthen intercultural ties and to increase tolerance for different points of view, and select youth projects and initiatives in the field of peacebuilding developed during the Forum and the creation of a network of young leaders advocating dialogue as the most crucial element for the culture of peace.¹²

Declaration on the Right to Peace

The present article cannot be separated from a relevant and most topical document– the Declaration on the Right to Peace contained in the UNGA resolution A/RES/71/189 adopted on 19 December 2016 on the report of the Third Committee (A/71/484/Add.2)] 71/189). The preamble of the resolution containing Declaration on the Right to Peace starts by stressing that peace is a vital requirement for the promotion and protection of all human rights for all.

The Declaration itself has the merit of reminding the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, contained in General Assembly resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970, an instrument of permanent significance while dealing with the supreme value of peace. Romania was a member of the special committee which drafted the Declaration.

In 2023 it is appropriate to recall, in accordance with the Declaration on the Right to Peace¹³, that acts, methods and practices of terrorism constitute a grave violation of the purposes and principles of the United Nations and may pose a threat to international peace and security, jeopardize friendly relations among States, threaten the territorial integrity and security of States, hinder international cooperation and aim at the destruction of human rights,

¹¹ The statement and other useful documents from the conference are available at: <https://unrcca.unmissions.org/srsg-kaha-imnadze-took-part-dialogue-%E2%80%93-guarantee-peace-international-youth-forum>

¹² The summary of the Memorandum’s text is available at <https://mfa.gov.tm/en/news/4092>

¹³ The full text of the Declaration on the Right to Peace is available at <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N16/454/62/PDF/N1645462.pdf?OpenElement>

fundamental freedoms and the democratic bases of society, and to reaffirm that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable regardless of their motivations, whenever and by whomsoever committed.

It is also useful to urge all States that have not yet done so to consider, as a matter of priority, becoming parties to international instruments related to terrorism. Of permanent interest is the reminder that peace and security, development and human rights are the pillars of the United Nations system and the foundations for collective security and well-being, and that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. The Declaration also reminds that peace is not only the absence of conflict, but it also requires a positive, dynamic participatory process where dialogue is encouraged, and conflicts are solved in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation and in the same context it is underlined that peace is promoted through the full enjoyment of all inalienable rights derived from the inherent dignity of all human beings. Quite topical, in 2023, the need for strengthened international efforts to foster a global dialogue for the promotion of a culture of tolerance and peace at all levels, based on respect for human rights and diversity of religions and beliefs, is highlighted in the Declaration.

The final provision of the Declaration's Preamble is a solemn invitation addressed to all stakeholders to guide themselves in their activities by recognizing the high importance of practicing tolerance, dialogue, cooperation and solidarity among all human beings, peoples and nations of the world as a means to promote peace; to that end, present generations should ensure that both they and future generations learn to live together in peace with the highest aspiration of sparing future generations the scourge of war.

The operative part of the Declaration contains only 5 articles, but all are of permanent relevance in our times. Article 1 is addressed to individuals and proclaims that "Everyone has the right to enjoy peace such that all human rights are promoted and protected, and development is fully realized". Article 2 requests the states to "respect, implement and promote equality and non-discrimination, justice and the rule of law, and guarantee freedom from fear and want as a means to build peace within and between societies." The same article provides that "States, the United Nations and specialized agencies should take appropriate sustainable measures to implement the present Declaration, in particular the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. International, regional, national and local organizations and civil society are encouraged to support and assist in the implementation of the present Declaration". The document makes a special emphasis on peace education. Article 4 is crystal-clear in this regard. "International and national

institutions of education for peace shall be promoted in order to strengthen among all human beings the spirit of tolerance, dialogue, cooperation and solidarity. To this end, the University for Peace should contribute to the great universal task of educating for peace by engaging in teaching, research, post-graduate training and dissemination of knowledge”. The final Article 5 has the role of indicating the way the Declaration has to be interpreted. It specifies that “The provisions included in the present Declaration are to be understood in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and relevant international and regional instruments ratified by States”.

Looking forward

The role of UNESCO as mentioned in the Declaration on the Right to Peace quoted above was further re-emphasized during its 42nd General Conference held in Paris during the period 7-22 November 2023. Ambassador Simona Mirela Miculescu, the President of this session, declared: “As we elevated culture to the status of a global public good, we must ensure that its intrinsic value is propelled further to advance sustainable development, foster peace, bridge divides and reduce inequalities”.¹⁴

Very interesting ideas have been developed at the same session by Indian historian Dipesh Chakrabarty in his Intellectual keynote in which he asserted that “The current conflicts are a reminder, if ever one was needed, of how difficult remains the task of tending to the problems of the commons that increasingly mark our collective existence as humanity. Attending to these problems urgently requires the work of peacebuilding that in turn demands that we address the burning issues of justice and inequality that divide our passions”.¹⁵

His statement argued how taking a planetary view of our contemporary history may allow us “to shift our political imagination in ways that enable us to address peace, justice, and the planet together in our institutions and actions”.

¹⁴ The full text of the statement delivered by H.E. Simona Mirela Miculescu is available at <https://www.unesco.org/en/general-conference/42>

¹⁵ A summary of the Intellectual keynote delivered by Dipesh Chakrabarty at UNESCO General Conference is available at <https://www.unesco.org/en/general-conference/42/high-level-segment>

See also Dipesh Chakrabarty, *The Climate of History in a Planetary Age*, University of Chicago Press, 2021, 292 pages.

This assertion suggests that adopting a global view of contemporary history can have profound and strong implications for our political imagination and subsequently influence the modalities of addressing key global issues, such as peace, justice, and environmental concerns. A planetary view implies recognizing the interconnectedness of various global challenges. By understanding how political, social, and environmental factors are interlinked on a global scale, we may be better equipped for a responsible dialogue enabling us to formulate comprehensive solutions related to multiple issues simultaneously. It should be noted that shifting our political imagination towards a planetary perspective can facilitate a more holistic approach to problem-solving. Instead of compartmentalizing issues and problems, there is also a possibility to consider them in a broader context, thus allowing for more effective and sustainable solutions. In addition, it is reasonable to admit that using a global view prompts us to acknowledge that challenges like climate change, human rights violations, and geopolitical conflicts are collective responsibilities that require collaborative efforts. This recognition may foster a sense of shared responsibility among nations and individuals, encouraging more coordinated and cooperative actions.

At the multilateral level, more attention has to be paid to the idea that our institutions may need to be reevaluated and possibly restructured to accommodate a planetary perspective. This could require the development of international mechanisms that transcend traditional national boundaries and promote collaboration on a global scale. Viewing contemporary history from a planetary standpoint may highlight the urgency of adopting sustainable practices. This could have a positive impact on political decisions and policies helping to prioritize environmental conservation and social justice as integral components of a global agenda. A planetary perspective as interpreted by UNESCO may lead to a reexamination of current cultural and ethical values, stimulating a more inclusive and globally-minded ethos. This could contribute to the development of more humanistic ethical frameworks able to guide decision-making factors in a way that prioritizes the well-being of the entire planet and its inhabitants.

In conclusion, accepting a planetary view of contemporary history offers a paradigm shift in political thinking, encouraging a more interconnected, holistic, and globally conscious approach to addressing the global challenges of our time. By considering peace, justice, and the well-being of the planet together, humanity may be better positioned to create a more peaceful, sustainable, and equitable future.

UNESCO's perspective on the value of dialogue for global peace revolves around the idea that open and respectful communication is a fundamental building block for understanding, cooperation, and the prevention of conflicts. It aligns with the broader goals of the United Nations in fostering a more peaceful and equitable world. The most recent UNESCO's official publications and statements are testimony of the collective efforts of the community of nations to give tangibility to the vital right to peace.¹⁶

Bibliography:

- Prarthita Biswas, *Mahatma Gandhi's views on peace education*.
- Bose, Anima. (1981). *A Gandhian Perspective on Peace*, Journal of Peace Research, XVIII(2): 159-164.
- Saber Hossain Chowdhury & Hassan Damluji, *Time for global climate solidarity*, Bangkok Post dated 3 November 2023,
- Dan Mihai Barliba, *Un an pentru Generatia Viitorului*, București, Editura Politica, 1986, 194 pages.
- Dipesh Chakrabarty, *The Climate of History in a Planetary Age*, University of Chicago Press, 2021, 292 pages.
- Krishna Kripalani, *All Men Are Brothers* (Life and Thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi as told in his own words), Introduction by: Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Ahmedabad, India, 1958, 207 pages, republished by UNESCO in 1968.
- Declaration on the Right to Peace, available at <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N16/454/62/PDF/N1645462.pdf?OpenElement>
- <https://unrcca.unmissions.org/srsg-kaha-imnadze-took-part-dialogue-%E2%80%93-guarantee-peace-international-youth-forum>

¹⁶ One of the most important documents adopted in November 2023 by the 42nd session of the General Conference of UNESCO is Revision of the 1974 Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. This is a comprehensive document of 26 pages containing a significant definition according to which: “Peace”, “international understanding”, and “cooperation” are to be considered as an indivisible whole based on the principle of friendly relations between peoples, on cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders and on an understanding that States have different social and political systems, while respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.” The full text of the document is available at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000386924/PDF/386924eng.pdf.multi>.

- Revision of the 1974 Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted in November 2023 by the 42nd session of the General Conference of UNESCO. available at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000386924/PDF/386924eng.pdf.multi>
- Statement delivered by H.E. Ambassador Terhi Hakala, see https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/international-conference-%E2%80%9Cdialogue-%E2%80%93-guarantee-peace%E2%80%9D-speech-eu-special-representative-central-asia_en.
- Statement delivered by H.E. Simona Mirela Miculescu, is available at <https://www.unesco.org/en/general-conference/42>
- Statement made by the President of the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly, H.E. Csaba Kőrösi, see <https://www.un.org/pga/77/>
- The summary of the Memorandum's text is available at <https://mfa.gov.tm/en/news/4092>
- UN document circulated by Turkmenistan under the symbol A/78/508 S/2023/738 4/4 23-19571 and available at <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/documents/2023-10-26>.
- UN report entitled *Our Common Agenda* by Antonio Guterres is available at <https://www.un.org/en/common-agenda>.
- United Nations A/RES/77/32 General Assembly Distr.: General 8 December 2022 22-27794 (E) 131222 *2227794* Seventy-seventh session Agenda item 14 Culture of peace, adopted by the General Assembly on 6 December 2022