



The long road to peace

Rotary's contribution

DECLARATION

District governors of Hauts de France and Belgium-Luxembourg thank the 1,200 participants of the conference "The Long Road to Peace" in Lille on October 15, 2022.

The strength of women

Faced with violent extremism and the rape of women as a weapon of war in South Kivu in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

Dr. Denis Mukwege and his teams "repair" mutilated women and accompany them on the road to reintegration in the Panzi hospital, founded in 1999.

70,000 survivors of sexual violence have been treated there. Five to seven women are seen there every day.

Dr. Denis Mukwege was honored in 2018 with the Nobel Peace Prize.

He writes in "The Power of Women": "*If the keys to power are handed over to a woman, she is more likely to lead the reforms needed to make the world a safer and more just place.*"

The United Nations has also observed that the participation of women in a peace process is 30% more likely to succeed.

For its part, Rotary International and its President 2022/2023 Jennifer Jones as well as President Shekhar Metha 2021/2022 have made the education and empowerment of women and girls a priority of their mandate.

Proceeds from the conference - from partners and registrations - will be used to make new investments in Panzi Hospital.

Human rights

Security, human rights, and development are the three pillars of the United Nations Charter.

The 4 Tunisian civil society associations that formed the national dialogue in 2011 in the wake of the Arab Spring managed to establish a democratic electoral process.

They received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015, including Ms. Ouided Bouchamaoui, President of the Federation of Industries. Her speech today was about peace through development and education.

Europe, its peoples, its institutions have lived 77 years without war. Mrs. Maria Arena, President of the Human Rights Commission at the European Parliament, reminded us how vital it is for everyone to enjoy freedom of thought, assembly and belief. To be assured of legal protection in case of oppression and to never have to suffer fear and want.

Laws change over time. The students of the European School of Political Science at the Catholic University of Lille want to bring forward the idea of integrating gender into all European Union policies.

The European Union wants a special court to judge the perpetrators of the crimes.

At this time, let us salute the memory of René Cassin, Rotarian and founding member of the Lille club - the first president of the European Court of Human Rights - Nobel Peace Prize 1969.

Rotary's contribution

Historically, Rotary International participated in the drafting of the United Nations Charter and the creation of UNESCO to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

In this spirit of peace culture and understanding of others, German and French Rotarians launched the first Intercountry Committee in Strasbourg in 1950 to renew friendly relations and build peace in Europe.

In the face of the invasion of Ukraine, The Rotary Foundation, districts, clubs, Intercountry Committees, and Rotarian Action Groups provided considerable support and assistance to the refugees and the population.

The Intercountry Committee, through its chair, announced two initiatives for dialogue between Rotarians in countries in conflict: Ukraine/Russia and the Mediterranean region.

Since 1985, Rotary has organized "Rotary Day" at the United Nations in New York.

The network of Rotary representatives to international organizations (UN and others) perpetuates and strengthens Rotary's presence. Strengthening these networks will strengthen peace.

Since the 1960s, Rotary clubs have focused on youth through international school exchanges - Interact and Rotaract - to promote intercultural dialogue.

Today, Rotary and Rotaract have a combined membership of 1,400,000.

During the last two decades, the concept of positive peace to strengthen the internal cohesion of societies has dominated.

In 2002, the "Peace Centers" installed in prestigious universities gave master's students professional access to international institutions and NGOs.

Some students have been able to create their own conflict prevention center.

The Institute of Economics and Peace - a Rotary International partner - offers individual online training for Rotarians.

Since 2005, Rotary and The Rotary Foundation have focused their resources on seven key causes: peace, education, water and sanitation, disease, maternal and child health, community development, and the environment, plus polio eradication, the personal battle begun in 1985.

The construction of peace is seen today through a common long-term project between States/civil society on the realization of the United Nations objectives for sustainable development.

This is a project in which the impetus provided by youth organizations such as Rotaract will be decisive.

A model that anticipates the advent of just and fraternal societies.

Peace through service

Social peace

The Hauts de France region is not spared by territorial and social fractures, and many women and men who are far from inclusion doubt and give up.

Social structures like Vitamine T and its president André Dupon seek to reconcile them with themselves and with society.

An example of diversity, equity and inclusion

Extending our reach

Let's imagine, with 2022/2023 President Jennifer Jones, Rotary as a moral conscience in the field of peace.

Lille, 15 October 2022

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