



ROTARY INSTITUTE  
**ROME 2023**  
15-17 SEPTEMBER

Zones 13, 14, 15, 16, 20B-C

On the occasion of the Rotary Institute Rome 2023  
the Intercountry Committees organize the

# PEACE FORUM IN THE MED

INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION  
FOR PEACE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN



## FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup> 2023 - 09:00

ROMA CONVENTION CENTER "LA NUVOLO" - VIALE ASIA, 40 - ROME, ITALY

08:30 - Registration of participants

09:00 - **OPENING AND INSTITUTIONAL GREETINGS** -  
*Speaker: Riccardo Lorenzi, ICC*

**Maria Carla Ciccioriccio**, District 2080 Governor

**Mohamed Ghammam**, Rotary ICC Executive Council  
Chairman 2022-24

**Alessandro Pastorini**, National Coordinator ICC Italy,  
Malta and San Marino

Message from **His Holiness Pope Francis**

09:30 - **DIALOGUE OF THREE RELIGIONS: THE  
CHALLENGES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN** - *Round table  
moderated by Stefano Girotti Zirotti, Rai Vaticano*

**Vincenzo Paglia**, President of the Pontifical Academy for  
Life

**Prof. Nader Akkad**, Imam in the Great Mosque of Rome

**Noemi Di Segni**, President of Jewish Communities in  
Italy

10:30 - **ROTARY'S COMMITMENT TO BUILDING PEACE**  
- **Meredith Burlew**, Director of Grants - Evanston

10:45 - Coffee break

11:00 - **DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION AS A  
PEACE-BUILDING MECHANISM** -

**Sybille Rupprecht**, Rotary International Representative  
to the United Nations in Geneva

11:15 - **WATER, IMMIGRATION AND PEACE. THE  
WORLD FOOD PROGRAM COMMITMENT** -

**Vincenzo Sanasi d'Arpe**, President of WFP Italia  
(World Food Programme)

11:30 - **HOW TO MEDIATE IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY**

- **Scott Martin**, Fellow of Mediators Beyond Borders  
International

11:45 - **WOMEN IN ROTARY PEACE AGENTS - A  
CHALLENGE OF MEDITERRANEAN CULTURE** -

**Nicki Scott**, Past Rotary International Vice-President

12:00 - **FOSTERING PEACE PROCESSES THROUGH  
WOMEN'S MOTIVATION AND INVOLVEMENT** -  
**Sara Formisano** - Rotary Foundation Peace Fellow

12:15 - **CONCLUSIONS**



Register on the Institute website:  
[rotaryinstituterome2023.com](http://rotaryinstituterome2023.com)





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## Report on the ICC Forum for Peace in the Mediterranean

**Date:** September 15, 2023

**Place:** "LA NUVOLA" Congress Center Rome, Italy

**Subject:** "Intercultural dialogue and cooperation for peace in the Mediterranean"



*"La Nuvola" Congress Center, Rome.*

**Organized by:** National Coordination of ICC Italy, Malta and San Marino - PDG Alessandro Pastorini (President of the Organizing Committee - National Coordinator of Intercountry Committees Italy, Malta and San Marino), PP Carlo Felice Corsetti (Co-organiser, President of ICC Italy/BeLux), PP Alessandro De Lucchi (National Coordination Secretary), Riccardo Lorenzi (Speaker).



*From left: Lorenzi, Ghanmam, De Lucchi, Corsetti*

### INTRODUCTORY NOTES

The ICC Meeting "PEACE FORUM IN THE MEDITERRANEAN" took place on the occasion of the Rotary Institute Rome 2023, in the prestigious venue of the Rome Convention Center "La Nuvola" - Italy. La Nuvola is an international conference structure, with great scenographic impact, designed by the famous architect Massimiliano Fuksas.



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This conference, strongly desired by PDG Mohamed Ghammam President of the Executive Council of the Intercountry Committees, was organized by the National Coordination of the Intercountry Committees of Italy, Malta and San Marino.

It saw the participation of over one hundred Rotarians coming not only from the Mediterranean basin but also from various areas of the world.

PDG Alberto Cecchini, Rotary International Director for Zone 14, brought his greetings as Convener of the "Rome Rotary Institute 2023".

Gordon R. McNally, President of Rotary International, honored us with his presence and his message ([click HERE for the video](#)).



*The intervention of RIP Gordon McNally*

#### OPENING AND INSTITUTIONAL GREETINGS



**Mohamed Ghammam**  
Executive Council ICC  
Chairman 22-24

[VIDEO HERE](#)



**Maria Carla Ciccioriccio**  
Governor D2080 RI

[VIDEO HERE](#)



**Nathalie Huyghebaert**  
Executive Council ICC  
Chair Elect 24-26

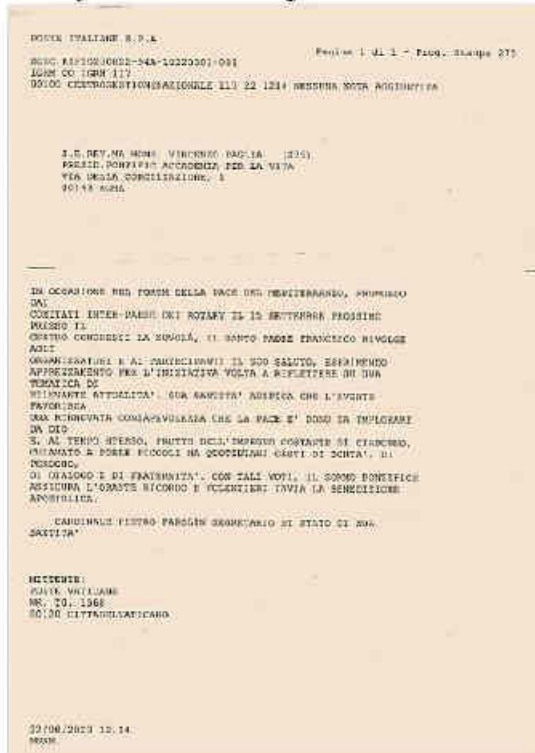
[VIDEO HERE](#)



*Participants during the "Honors to the Flags"*

**MESSAGE FROM HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS**

*Read by Mons. Vincenzo Paglia*



On the occasion of the Mediterranean Peace Forum, promoted by the Rotary Intercountry Committees on 15 September at the La Nuvola Congress Center, the Holy Father Francis addresses his greetings to the Organizers and Participants, expressing appreciation for the initiative aimed at reflecting on a topic of significant current interest.

His Holiness hopes that the event will foster a renewed awareness that Peace is a gift to be implored from God and, at the same time, the fruit of the constant commitment of each person, called to make small but daily gestures of goodness, forgiveness, dialogue and of brotherhood. With these vows, the Supreme Pontiff ensures prayerful remembrance and willingly sends the apostolic blessing.

*Cardinal Pietro Parolin  
Secretary of State of His Holiness*

[VIDEO HERE](#)



### **INTERVENTION by Andrea Benzo**

*Special Envoy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation for the protection of religious freedom and for interreligious dialogue*



I am very happy, also as a Rotarian, member of the Rotary Club of Genoa, to bring greetings on this significant occasion. We live, in fact, in an era in which the importance of the religious dimension in foreign policy and of the collaboration between secular and religious actors in diplomatic activity is increasingly evident. In particular, interreligious dialogue is now recognized as an essential tool for promoting mutual understanding, social inclusion, integral development and peace. This is even more true in the wider Mediterranean region, a strategic area for Italy's foreign policy and in which religious traditions shape a significant part of public and individual life. The Italian model

of relations between the State and religious confessions is based on mutual collaboration oriented towards the common good. Internationally, we recognize and encourage the role of religious leaders, particularly in advocating for peace. It should be remembered, in fact, that the action to combat terrorism and violent extremism cannot be limited to the sphere of security alone but must also include the cultural, educational and religious sectors. Italy's commitment to religious freedom also passes through the protection of places of worship, today exposed to serious threats in various parts of the world, as demonstrated by the recent anti-Christian violence in Pakistan or the numerous attacks in Nigeria. Many projects financed by our Development Cooperation focus on the economic emancipation and social inclusion of people belonging to ethnic and religious minorities who are victims of persecution and serious discrimination. As the theme of today's event reminds us, it is essential that States, international organizations, religious institutions and civil society actors collaborate in good faith to heal the fractures that divide cultures and religions and promote common paths of reconciliation and dialogue.

### **THE DIALOGUE OF THE THREE RELIGIONS: THE CHALLENGE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN**

*Round table moderated by Stefano Girotti Zirotti, Rai Vatican*

*Vincenzo Paglia, President of the Pontifical Academy for Life*

*Nader Akkad, Imam in the Great Mosque of Rome*

*Noemi Di Segni, President of the Jewish Communities in Italy*

Below is a brief summary of the interventions of the three speakers.

#### **Vincenzo Paglia**

"Peace is a very high term for us believers, it is the very name of God. To say a just peace means a peace that has deep roots in associated life, it is not only the opposite of war but it means living together in harmony, starting from the family where you learn to understand and support yourself. Then we move from the family to the social context. We have a home, the planet; a family, that of peoples; a table, that of all peoples. We must live in the perspective of a common future. Interreligious dialogue is very important, we must continue along the lines of Fratelli Tutti. Poverty is the great destabilizing problem and selfishness creates the conditions for conflict."



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#### Noemi Di Segni

"The prerequisite for the desire for dialogue is the recognition that one wants to live in peace. If there is a starting point that is derogatory and prevaricating towards the other, it is clear that no dialogue can start. The prerequisite is recognition and respect for others. In the case of the Abrahamic religions it is fundamental to put together that series of values that characterize the good and make it available to the community. We must push from below to support the voice of those who want peace, so that those who decide can collect these messages. Seeking peace in the Mediterranean means guaranteeing enormous potential for the whole world, it goes far beyond geographical borders. We must start with children to build the future, indoctrination into hatred is not good for anyone, whether on one side or the other."

#### Nader Akkad

"Today a key word is peace, in Arabic "Salam". The way to reach passes through an internal journey. To open certain doors that connect the mind to the heart. Once this individual and interior pacification has been achieved, then the human being can become a source of peace, he can become a builder of peace in the various areas of social life. In the ways ahead there are many obstacles and people who put a spanner in the works, many do it for their own ego, this is a great evil of humanity. How can we act?"

There are those who are committed to conflict; those who are committed to peace are motivated by the encounter with others and try to build bridges of peace. Evil is the opposite of love, peace is like the sun that radiates all humanity, unlike selfishness."



*Panel discussion. From left: Girotti Zirotti, Puglia, Akkad, Di Segni*



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## **ROTARY'S COMMITMENT TO BUILDING PEACE**

*Meredith Burlew, Director of Grants - Evanston*



### **Rotary builds Peace**

Rotary believes that if concerned citizens work together to create peace locally, we can create lasting change globally.

### **AREA OF INTERVENTION: PEACE BUILDING AND CONFLICT PREVENTION**

#### *GLOBAL GRANTS*

Club and District projects that support the education and practice of peacebuilding and conflict prevention around the world are eligible for global grants from the Foundation

Rotary. Global grants support large international efforts with sustainable, measurable results in Rotary's areas of focus.

#### *ROTARY PEACE FELLOWSHIPS*

Each year, Rotary selects some of the world's brightest and most dedicated professionals to study at seven Rotary Peace Centers around the world. Our more than 1,400 program alumni work in more than 115 countries and serve as leaders in governments and non-governmental organizations, in education and research, in law enforcement and the military, as well as in international organizations dedicated to peace.

#### *ROTARY PEACE FELLOWSHIP*

Patrick Bwire (Duke-UNC, 2016-18) is a regional liaison officer for 16 countries with the Center for Conflict Resolution (CECORE) in Uganda. He coordinates projects that prevent young people from being radicalized again after conflicts and that transform them into champions of peace.

#### *ROTARY PEACE FELLOW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION*

The Association of Former Rotary Peace Fellows connects former Rotary Peace Fellows to network and facilitate collaboration between them and Rotary clubs to promote peace around the world. The association's speaker database connects Rotarians with alumni who are willing to speak at club meetings, webinars, or town hall meetings. The group's YouTube channel offers recordings of alumni presentations.

### **PARTNERS IN PEACE**

#### *INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMY AND PEACE*

Rotary partners with the Institute for Economics and Peace, a leader in the study of peace and conflict, to address the causes of conflict and create conditions that foster peace. The partnership focuses on Positive Peace education and training. While negative peace is usually defined as the absence of violence, Positive Peace examines the underlying conditions that lead to more peaceful societies, including good governance, access to needed services, a healthy business environment and respect for human rights.

#### *MEDIATORS BEYOND BORDERS*

Charlie Masilae Hunt, a Rotarian, returned Peace Corps volunteer and president of Partnering for Peace, a group that facilitates collaboration between Rotary and the Peace Corps.



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#### *SHELTER BOX*

Noor and her family live in a refugee camp in Syria. They were cattle ranchers, but they fled their homes and lost everything when the Islamic State group took control. "ShelterBox came and gave us a tent and told us that from now on it will be ours. My children were very excited, they jumped for joy, they drew a circle in the sand around the tent and said: this is our home now," says Noor. Learn more about Rotary's partnership with ShelterBox.

#### **PEACE PROGRAMS**

##### *INTERCOUNTRY COMMITTEES*

The Poland-Ukraine Intercountry Committee organized a summer camp for children affected by the conflict in Ukraine in 2014. In addition to activities and educational trips, participants received counseling to help them deal with their feelings. ICC members raised funds to pay for the travel and accommodation costs of the children and their caregivers. Find out how an ICC can help your club.

##### *EXCHANGE OF FRIENDSHIP*

The idea for the Indus Peace Park on the India-Pakistan border came after a Rotary Friendship Exchange group from Canada visited Pakistan in 2015 and participants learned that, for security reasons, they could not attend the changing of the guard ceremony on the border with India.

Group leader Kees van der Pol, a Rotarian from British Columbia and director of the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park on the U.S.-Canada border, suggested creating a new park. Once finished, the goal is for the park to become a place where Indians and Pakistanis can celebrate and share their cultures through dialogue, literature, religion, dance, music, history and art. Learn more about the Rotary Friendship Exchange.

#### **PEACE EVENTS**

##### *THE ROTARY PEACE SYMPOSIUM*

The Rotary Peace Symposium offers Rotary Peace Fellows and Rotarians the opportunity to showcase and celebrate their peacebuilding efforts by meeting and finding ways to collaborate with like-minded people. Typically held every three years, the most recent symposium was held at the 2019 Rotary International Convention in Hamburg, Germany. These events have inspired many Rotarians to develop peacebuilding projects in their clubs and districts or to make significant contributions to existing peacebuilding initiatives.

##### *ROTARIAN ACTION GROUPS*

##### *ROTARY PEACE ACTION GROUP*

##### *ROTARY ACTION GROUP FOR REFUGEES, FORCED DISPLACEMENTS AND MIGRATION*

##### *ROTARY ACTION GROUP AGAINST SLAVERY*

##### *ROTARY ACTION GROUP FOR FAMILY SAFETY*

##### *RAGFP*

Disaster response to build empathy and resilience in Türkiye and beyond. Participants developed coping skills that help them process their feelings and regain hope for the future.

##### *SUPPORT PEACE*



## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION AS A PEACEBUILDING MECHANISM

*Sybill Rupprecht, Representative of Rotary International to the United Nations in Geneva*



Rasha Ahmed, from the Collaborative for Peace in Sudan (CIPS), believes that women's participation in peacebuilding is important. Why?

In Sudan and in Africa in general, war disrupts the lives of women in many ways, in terms of shelter, food, and security like being subjected to gender-based violence as a weapon of war.

As in most war-torn countries the number of female-headed households has become so huge in Sudan (some estimates place it at around 50%) that they are visible everywhere, from courts of laws to the streets where they sell food and tea to provide for a family whose male providers disappeared due to conflict.

Rasha said that she saw how women suffer from the issues of long lasting conflicts: poverty, lack of development, conflict, irresponsible political elite (overwhelmingly male, of course) and bad governance. She saw them walk several miles to fetch water and firewood. She heard their sad stories of how many abortion incidents affected friends and relatives due to the primitive healthcare facilities.

Poverty, insecurity, deterioration of environment, death and injury, bad governance, disruption to the provision of basic services, disruption of the social fabric and other consequences of conflict, all work against women.

Women are the real beneficiaries of peace and its sustainability and are therefore the most likely to fend for it. And Rasha adds: I believe women's presence in peacebuilding is important because they hold the keys to the whole community and are thus the best entry point for any intervention.

Rasha is just one of many courageous women peacebuilders. They risk their life and freedom to advocate for communities without conflicts.

The nature of violent conflict has radically changed over the past century. Wars are now fought on our front door steps, rather than on the front lines. As the consequences of war have shifted from combatants to civilians, the complex and variable roles that women have played in shaping and ending conflict have come into a more critical focus.

Women and girls are acutely suffering from the consequences of armed conflict, which is resulting in much higher rates of gender-based violence. Women and girls are rendered vulnerable to poverty and precarity, due to the loss of jobs and a lack of proper educational opportunities and basic shelter. And harming women and children is nowadays used as a weapon of war.

Today, not only conflict but also climate change exacerbates gender based economic inequalities from access to water to safe, clean and sustainable environment. Ecological catastrophies throw even more refugees on the road many of them women and children.

In today's climate of uncertainty, when so many challenges are facing us on a constant basis, we cannot afford to hesitate to achieve gender equity, equality, and inclusion.

As we sometimes say in stressful times: all hands on deck - and that means including women and girls (in other words half of the population).

As Rotarians -

**How could we be silent**, when the rights of countless women go disrespected and unprotected.



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**How could we be complacent**, when indicators from the World Health Organisation tell us that 1 in 3 women, around the world, are at grave risk of physical or sexual violence.

**How could we be unworried**, when the European Commission reports that women and girls are at particular risk of trafficking and modern-day slavery.

**How can we look the other way** when still in many countries around the Mediterranean we have inequality in inheritance, restricted or no access at all to abortion services, criminalisation of same-sex relations...

It is women and girls, escaping from persecution in their home countries, who are at the most elevated risk of physical, sexual, and psychological violence.

But it is not all about war, it is about justice, laws, opportunities.

"The global economy will continue to suffer greatly, if women continue to be excluded," said the former President of Malta, Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, at the ILO's World of Work Summit 6 years ago. And yet, no progress has been made.

In the recent Morocco earthquake, many lost all they had, their loved ones, their houses, their livelihood.

As in war, the most vulnerable are women and children. Women who cannot inherit from their fathers due to archaic laws, and who are left with no way of making a living, rebuilding their house, nourishing their children if the father / husband has perished in this natural disaster.

Women who are dependent on the generosity of the men in the family, who have not been sent to school, and find themselves in enormous difficulties.

The increasing numbers of women, being pushed into precarity, results in the continued, and intergenerational, suffering of entire families and communities.

You see, environmental catastrophes, conflicts, climate change affects women and children in their every-day life.

Working to alleviate poverty is working towards sustainable peace.

Women are powerful transformative agents of change who can make meaningful contribution and yet are often excluded of vital decision making and peace negotiations. Their position should make them respected key actors in negotiations and stability

**What about Rotary's contribution to peace?**

It is time that we take a close and self-critical look at how we function.

Whatever project in whatever focus area ... without peace no possibility to implement it. And without these projects no peace.

This interdependence is not reflected within Rotary. We still work in silos, sometimes jealously guarded. Global Grants are few for peace projects, yet every project is contributing to peace, thus has a peace component in it.

Peace is less familiar to Rotarians than water or maternal health or Polio vaccinations. And yet, without peace, we would not be able to work on these focus areas.

It is high time for us, the Rotarians of this world, to ensure that every one of us is familiar with how peace affects us.

It is high time for us, the Rotarians of this world, to be ambassadors for Peace, and to publicly speak about it.

It is high time for us, the Rotarians of this world, to work cross sector and entirely for the well-being of fellow humans and the planet and not for personal egos.



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It is high time for us, the Rotarians of this world, to be united, in pursuit of peace, prosperity, and wellbeing.

So, let us work together to create a legacy of peace and improved conditions for human beings, thereby safeguarding equity and dignity for each and every member of our human family.

As John Lennon said:

*Imagine all the people*

*Livin' life in peace*

*You may say I'm a dreamer*

*But I'm not the only one*

*I hope someday you'll join us*

*And the world will be as one*

Rotarians are people of Actions - Lets imagine Peace together - and join hands.

#### **WATER, IMMIGRATION AND PEACE. THE COMMITMENT OF THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM**

*Vincenzo Sanasi d'Arpe, President of WFP Italy (World Food Programme)*



I thank, first of all, General Carlo Felice Corsetti for the invitation, addressed to the Italian Committee for the WFP, to this formidable event on the occasion of the Rotary Institute 2023, as well as the organizers of the event, the Intercountry Committees; event made even more exceptional, not only for the theme "Forum of Peace in the Mediterranean", and for the place that hosts us, the "La Nuvola" Congress Center. The theme, Peace in the Mediterranean, is well suited to a humanitarian agency like the WFP, which, as you will remember, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2020. My speech, entitled "Water, immigration and peace. The commitment of the World Food Programme" is above all a story of how the WFP and WFP Italy work, at a global level,

to fight poverty and assist the most needy populations with humanitarian aid and the supply of food. Global water stress is one of the great challenges of recent years, and is closely linked to global food security. There are 828 million people who, in an increasingly fragile planet, suffer from chronic hunger, while 345 million suffer from serious food insecurity. Most of them live in arid environments where water availability is limited, or in areas where water is sufficient to cover the population's needs, but quality and access are often compromised. Poor agricultural production due to insufficient water supplies can exacerbate conflicts and trigger social tensions in communities already under water stress. Today, around two billion people live in territories at risk of desertification, and it is estimated that around 50 million people could migrate due to the effects of water scarcity for agricultural and domestic use by 2030.

Climate change is accelerating the problem of water stress and food insecurity, increasing the frequency and severity of water-related extreme events such as floods and droughts. In the last decade alone, 1.7 billion people have been affected by extreme weather events and climate-related disasters, with the worst impacts occurring in sub-Saharan Africa and some regions of the Middle East.



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What alternatives do we have left, at relatively limited costs? Mainly two, and they are mitigation and adaptation activities. Mitigation measures are those actions undertaken to reduce and curb greenhouse gas emissions, while adaptation measures are based on reducing vulnerability to the effects of climate change.

In addition to being at the forefront in responding to all those emergencies due to environmental disasters such as droughts and floods, WFP promotes, in collaboration with local governments and partners, an integrated package of activities to strengthen the resilience of communities already exposed to a series of socio-economic and climatic vulnerabilities.

Since 2014, WFP has supported the creation and rehabilitation of 110,000 water harvesting structures, 28,000 km of canals and irrigation systems, and 1.6 million hectares of land have been redeveloped.

Water and food security are inextricably linked. The availability and quantity of water, both for agricultural use and for domestic consumption, influence food production and the nutritional status of people, and therefore health. Ensuring that all people have access to safe water sources and nutritious food requires an integrated approach involving governments, international organizations, businesses and civil society. Water and food, two fundamental elements for our existence, to which we should pay more attention.

Other key points of WFP's commitment are:

1. **Fighting famines:** To prevent a famine from developing, we provide emergency food assistance, using cutting-edge technologies that alert to the risk of famine to determine the most appropriate response, and by mobilizing our supply chain tools, such as airlifts or parachuting food in the absence of other options. We also work to prevent situations from deteriorating to the point of famine by strengthening education systems, nutrition, the resilience of livelihoods and social protection, such as with school feeding programs;
2. **Emergency relief:** Early warning systems, emergency prepared personnel always ready to spring into action and the management of a global supply chain allow WFP to be one of the first responders on the ground in case of disasters. Every year, WFP assists millions of displaced people, people left homeless or deprived of basic resources due to conflict, the consequences of climate change, pandemics or other catastrophic events;
3. **Food assistance:** WFP food assistance goes far beyond immediate relief from hunger. In order to achieve the second Sustainable Development Goal - zero hunger - we provide tailor-made, multi-year programs aimed at improving countries' nutritional indicators. Where markets and the financial sector are functioning, we provide cash transfers that enable the people we serve to purchase nutritious food of their choice;
4. **Supply Chains:** Every day, WFP has 5,600 trucks, 100 planes and 30 ships on the move to prevent people from falling into famine. These vehicles transport and deliver vital food and other assistance to the most vulnerable. In its 60 years of activity, WFP has worked and continues to work with governments and non-governmental organizations, suppliers and local communities. We connect with entrepreneurs and small farmers, and invest in local economies, markets and the private sector;
5. **Humanitarian services and support:** WFP puts its vast expertise and capabilities in supply chain management, engineering and emergency telecommunications - often in the most complex contexts - to work for other humanitarian entities. Additionally, WFP leads the multi-agency



Emergency Logistics and Telecommunications (ETC) Clusters and is co-leader of the Food Security Cluster;

6. **Disaster Risk Reduction:** disasters are among the main causes of hunger and malnutrition in the world. Due to the climate crisis, extreme weather events, as already mentioned, are becoming more and more frequent. WFP country programs integrate actions aimed at addressing the risks of climate disasters and mitigating the repercussions on food security. These include land and water conservation, the development of drainage and flood protection structures, the construction of small reservoirs and water reserves at community level, and the terracing of slopes subject to erosion and landslides.

I could add much more regarding our commitment, but I conclude by saying that only with the support of the nations affected by these problems, through the planning of resilience interventions in their countries, with the aim of creating balance, food security and peace, do we help the most vulnerable populations. needy, thus limiting the migratory phenomena, which, as is known, bring with them the suffering of those who have to travel long and dangerously, overcoming repelling borders and facing the risk of being abused, trying to survive and gradually enter into part of the societies of the receiving countries despite the obstacles caused by unreliable legal procedures, poorly functioning reception systems, lack of cohesion policies and the spread in many areas of a culture of separation between social groups and hostility towards differences. Let us not forget, in fact, that among people fleeing wars, humanitarian crises, natural disasters, poverty and authoritarian regimes, a considerable portion is made up of children, girls and adolescents. They are minors who are deprived of their right to a future, who leave their countries of origin with their families. In Italy, up to mid-June 2023, 6,000 minors without parents and adult caregivers arrived in Italy after crossing the Mediterranean, one of the most dangerous migratory routes in the world. We therefore support the WFP and WFP Italy so that they continue to work, with their interventions, to improve the lives of millions of disadvantaged people in the world.

## HOW TO MEDIATE IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

*Martin Scott, Fellow of Mediators Beyond Borders International*



I started with my peacebuilding journey, which began while I was studying architecture in Italy in 2001 when 9/11 occurred. The event highlighted the need to see the humanity in each other, even in times of unthinkable tragedies (like now).

I spoke about the work of Mediators Beyond Borders International (MBBI) and our service partnership with RI.

I continued to talk about the layers of how we see conflict in mediation - using the image of a hippopotamus instead of an iceberg to highlight the cultural relevance - most conflicts are fought at the visible moment of "positions" or the underlying layer of "competing interests" - what we say we want and because - which is highly contextual and ripe for cultural misunderstanding. But by letting go of what we think is right or wrong and asking ourselves deeper questions, we find that we may have shared "Values" and ultimately "Needs" that are



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universal. Values that we have defined as a cultural mechanism for satisfy our universal needs. By working at these levels, we can unite across our differences.

Finally, I brought us back to some sobering statistics:

- more people die from suicide than from war, terrorism and natural disasters combined;
- more people now die of obesity than of starvation.

Over the past 10 years, the number of social and environmental NGOs has grown to 10 million, but the number of climate and conflict refugees has grown even faster.

And he concluded: the world doesn't need more resources or NGOs, we need connection networks, like RI, MBBI and ICC that seek to connect the world's people and resources locally and globally.

### **WOMEN IN ROTARY PEACE AGENTS - A CHALLENGE OF MEDITERRANEAN CULTURE**

*Nicki Scott, Past Vice President of Rotary International*



Greetings to everyone participating today in this important peace forum in the Med. May I start by thanking Mohammed Ghammam for inviting me to speak with you all today. I'm sorry that I can't be there with you all in Rome, but our own institute, or what we now call an action summit, is taking place here in England at the same time. And as much as we would love to be in two cases at once, that's just not possible. However, I know that you will all be having as much fun as I am right at this moment.

As you all saw in the program, I was asked by Mohammed to speak on the topic of women in Rotary as peace agents, a challenge of Mediterranean culture. But I'd prefer to leave the particular focus on

women's involvement in the peace process to our expert Rotary foundation peace fellow, Sarah, who's speaking right after me. Instead, I would prefer to speak more generally about the very important role rotarians and rotaractors of all genders, ages and backgrounds contribute to this topic of peace and how that in turn, helps create peace in ourselves. I believe all of us have an inherent capacity to be peace agents and make conscious choices that promote peace in our relationships, in our communities, and in the world at large. As with all aspects of Rotary, it is important that we walk our own talk, no matter how challenging that may be at times.

One of the things that drew me to joining Rotary and makes me most proud of referring to myself as a Rotarian today is that we are a non religious and non political organization. It is not that we are in denial of the differences we all experience in our lives, quite the contrary, in fact. We celebrate the uniqueness and depth of understanding that listening to each of our individual perspectives can bring to the table. It is our shared purpose as people of action to seek to find solutions that make the world a better place. The word action in of itself implies doing something, and so it's important that being nonpolitical is not confused with shying away from advocacy and activism, even when considered potentially dangerous.

At times in Rotary, we often talk of our Rotary moments, those special experiences attributable to us, to Rotary that stay with us forever. And over ten years ago, I had the opportunity to be part of an NID trip to India. And it was 2012 at the time, the year that Rotary India was celebrating being one year polio free. And they were holding a conference hosted by the government as well, inviting all of those



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from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nigeria, the only other three remaining endemic countries, to learn from what they had learned at that conference. Somebody we know now as past president Ravi was speaking.

He was a director nominee at the time, I believe, but he was talking about how he realized that it was very important for Sri Lanka, his home country, to be able to get rid of polio in order to give India, this enormous country, the hope that it could do the same. When I talk about putting himself in danger, he said that he wanted to write to the head of the Tamil Tigers. The Tamil Tigers were a much feared terrorist organization that basically held the fort of the mountains and very hard to penetrate and go up and vaccinate the children. So everyone said he must be crazy if he was going to write to the head of the Tamil Tigers. But he decided that he wanted to do that nonetheless.

And in this conference space of over a thousand attendees, Ravi held up a letter. And it was a letter written by the head of the Tamil Tigers back to him, and it said, our war is not against the children. You tell us when you want to vaccinate and we will down our weapons. Still gives me goosebumps to say that story, even today. And it was that day that I realized that it is the fact that we're non political, non religious that enables us as rotarians to achieve things and possibilities that are way beyond the normal possibilities.

And for that I'm very grateful. Our core values of service, leadership, diversity, integrity and fellowship unite us across all geographical, cultural and religious and political differences. We're all about caring for humanity and all that that entails. Peace is at the very heart of everything we do. As we often say, it's so much more than the absence of war.

It is rooted in all fundamental human needs being met. And every single one of our seven areas of focus comes back ultimately to creating more peace in the world. I was fortunate to serve on the Strategic Planning Committee when our new Vision Statement was being researched, and I'm proud to share that over a million touch points across people from many countries of differing cultures were made during that process. Rotarians, rotators, alumni of our amazing programs, and even some who had not yet even heard of Rotary. It was not merely a small group of people sitting in one room who came up with it.

Together we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change across the globe, in our communities and in ourselves. I recall being very passionate about the last two words in that final part of the Vision Statement in ourselves. I truly believe that peace must start from within. If we have inner conflict and harbor angry or restless thoughts, it's hard to emanate peace for those around us. I'm very grateful to President Gordon for his focus this year on destigmatizing the topic of mental health.

Many of you will know that he has shared a very personal story on why this topic is important to him. My own mother was a manic depressive, which was the old term for what's now known as bipolar. She died at the very early age of just 45. So this topic is very close to my heart. It's very hard to take care of others when we ourselves are depleted.

I personally find my peace in walking in nature. I'm very lucky to live in the beautiful English countryside, and I take advantage of that as much as I can. I encourage all of you to find whatever it is that nurtures you and ensure you're making time for that in your busy life while working on being committed to service above self. It is great to see the variety of everything that is being included in the agenda for this forum.



Today's conference is proof enough that there are so many ways for us to contribute towards being peacemakers in our own small way. And Rotary, of course, enables us to amplify our impact and expand our reach. With this conference being held in Rome, it's important to acknowledge that the Mediterranean does, of course, have a long history of conflicts and tensions, but so do many other parts of Europe and indeed other continents. It's sometimes good to focus on the positive and what history has taught us over time. There have been many contributions towards peace from this part of the world.

As Director of Great Britain and Ireland, as well as Spain and Portugal, I had the pleasure of being hosted by Spanish Rotarians on a trip to Toledo last year. I was interested to learn about the period called when people of the Muslim, Jewish and Christian faiths all lived alongside each other in harmony. No doubt there's a level of complexity behind that rather simple statement, but Toledo was an incredibly beautiful city to visit, and much of that is attributable to the traces of such religious diversity left in the architecture still standing today. Touching back a little on the subject as presented, Queen Isabella of Spain is attributed, sadly, to putting an abrupt end to that era of "convivencia". And yet at the same time, she's credited for playing a very pivotal role in the exploration of the New World.

Her support of Christopher Columbus led to the age of exploration, which had a profound impact on the Mediterranean region by expanding trade and, of course, cultural exchange, which comes very closely aligned with that. It is the pursuit of cultural exchange and understanding that fuels my passion for Rotary. Many of you already know that I'm a huge supporter of the concept of intercountry committees, where so much good can be done to foster friendships based on our strong values platform that enhance intercultural understanding. I have been blown away by just how many ICCs have formed over recent years, and I thank all of you here today who are involved in this very important work.

With President Gordon coming from Scotland himself. I was interested to note that the first international convention outside of the United States was held in Edinburgh in 1921. And it was at that convention that delegates incorporated a new purpose into the Ri Constitution to advance peace and goodwill through fellowship among Rotarians united in the idea of Rotary service. Having joined Rotary in the Chicago area in 2000, I was fortunate to be able to visit the home of our founder, Paul Harris, which was in the Chicago suburbs. And I loved discovering that Paul Harris had his own peace garden where he would plant trees collected from his visits all around the world.

Of course, we wouldn't get away with doing that today. We wouldn't get away with getting a tree or any plant or anything alive through customs. But I still think it's fun to share that story because it shows that we are truly rooted in nurturing peace right from the beginnings and of our origins. In 1927, rotary youth exchange was started by the Rotary club of Copenhagen, Denmark. It was soon adopted by Rotary International, who hoped it would create a more interconnected and understanding world.

It's a fantastic program for creating a hunger for cultural understanding from a very young age, and it's great to see it coming back now after being after the interruption of the COVID Pandemic, the 69th Europe Eastern Mediterranean Africa Youth Exchange Conference was actually held in Lake Como, Italy in 2022. It is when we seek first to understand, visit each other's homes, and live like others, with different experience to our own, that true potential for peace can be ignited. Whilst my own children were growing up, we were fortunate to host four international exchange students from other





countries in our own home. And that definitely broadened their horizons and had a lasting impact on both of them. As hard as a COVID Pandemic was, I think it actually has helped us adapt and move Rotary forward more in the last three years than we would otherwise have achieved in ten.

I think this opens up even more endless opportunities to contribute towards peacemaking globally, even from the comfort of our very own homes. One case in point is the Mediterranean Peace Initiative Conference, held virtually on November 20, 2020. It was cohosted by yourself, the ICCs and the Rotaract Mediterranean MDIO, and had over 1000 participants in attendance. How fantastic is that? I found out about it because I was fortunate to meet the Rotaract MDIO President at the time, Astrid, virtually earlier on in that year.

And as a result of getting to know asked I asked her if I could interview her for a breakout session I was being asked to host for an event called the Summit of Champions being held virtually in the US. It's incredible, all of that interconnectivity, and I always say that Rotary makes the world a little smaller, and I think that helps make my point. Last year. Like many before me, I was fortunate to serve as the Vice President of Rotary International. I had the privilege of visiting several different countries and cultures, and I will never tire of that.

One of those visits was to Interota, which was held in Tunisia, at which I was fortunate to meet many of the members of the ICC executive, many of whom may well be with you today. It was great to have such diversity of age and ethnicity all in the same place at once. I think we often undervalue the uniqueness of our Intergenerational mix in helping create understanding through Rotary. So now I come full circle. I have learned so much from so many through my service to Rotary and all that we do to help make our world a better place.

I'm sure that's true for all of you, too. And I thank you for all the time you're taking to be part of this peace forum in the Med today. I always love to end with a quote, and as Albert Einstein said, peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved through understanding. So let's make sure we all stay curious. Thank you.

[VIDEO HERE](#)

## **FOSTER PEACE PROCESSES THROUGH THE MOTIVATION AND INVOLVEMENT OF WOMEN**

*Sara Formisano, Rotary Foundation Peace Fellow*



### **INTRODUCTION - WOMEN ON EQUALITY FOR LASTING PEACE**

Equal power between all genders is crucial to contributing to lasting peace. Since 2000, United Nations Resolution 1325 has required women to participate on an equal footing with men in peacebuilding.

Despite all this, States still fail to implement the national agendas for peace and women's security necessary to achieve gender equality in peacebuilding. However, there are some positive experiences, which deserve to be recognized, focused on building trust in women's ability to make peace rather than strengthening it through military means.



Intercountry  
Committees



#### GOALS

The idea of the initiative is that trained women can empower and motivate their local communities to join peace initiatives and social actions by transcending individual political, ethical and cultural differences, in favor of peaceful dialogues.

It's an opportunity to amplify and spread the success of women. From themselves to communities and beyond, women build empathy and create mutual understanding and solidarity among people in conflict.

#### RESULTS

This initiative aims to bring concrete results such that the women supported by WELP, in particular the six selected leaders, are included in peace processes and occupy decision-making positions in their field of experience in their own countries.

Furthermore, these women leaders in their countries will support local organizations, training new young leaders for positions within governments, non-state entities, political parties, etc. transferring their know-how into diplomacy and mediation.

#### WELP COLLABORATORS AND STAKEHOLDERS

The media and in particular the radio are the main external collaborators of the Women in Equality for Lasting Peace initiatives.

In Africa, to promote the joint work of Sudanese and Ukrainian women's organizations we intend to establish a partnership with Radio Tamazui, Radio Miraya and Radio Vision. In Europe we foresee a collaboration with Copy Mad, Radio 3 and Radio Vaticano.

#### CONCLUSIONS

*The ancient Romans said:*

*"If you want Peace, prepare for War"*

*but today we all say together:*

*"If you really want Peace, prepare Peace"*



*Conclusion of the Forum. Group photo with some of the participants.*





ICC EC news

Dear Friends  
Dear ICC Family

Chers Amis  
Ma Chère Famille

#### ENGLISH VERSION

The Executive Council of the Inter-Country Committees (ICC) has just organized the Africa Peace Forum in Cairo from 17 to 19 November 2023 with the participation of eminent partners of Rotary for Peace, MBBI, IEP, Makerere Peace Centre, a Rotary Peace Fellow, the Egyptian Red Crescent and other outstanding speakers. Allow me to thank them very much.

This Forum brought together ICC participants from 35 nationalities and was honoured by the presence and participation of Director Patrick Chisanga and PRIVP Nicki Scott.

The Forum is being organized after the Rome Forum for Peace in the Mediterranean last September, which was honoured by the participation of Rotary International President Gordon McInally.

Allow me to thank and extend my warmest congratulations on behalf of the Executive Council Committee, to the entire organizing team and in particular to the exceptional Abdulhamid, President of the Organizing Commission, to the excellent Annemarie and to the remarkable Christophe. Their teamwork over the months has enabled the organization of a successful and high-quality Forum despite the difficult situation prevailing in the region and which did not allow certain participants to join us.

I am pleased to provide you with a summary report of the activities of this Forum, illustrated with a few photos and with appropriate links.

I am also transmitting a statement voted on by the participants outlining proposals and suggestions to Rotary International and the Rotary Foundation regarding the humanitarian situation in the Gaza area.

I wish you a good reception.

Hope and Peace

Mohamed

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