



GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE

MOBILIZING CIVIL SOCIETY FOR BUILDING PEACE

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2014 GENEVA



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FACULTÉ DES SCIENCES
DE LA SOCIÉTÉ
Medi@LAB-Genève, Institut
des sciences de la communication,
des médias et du journalisme.



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Background

A High Level Dialogue of the General Assembly on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace was convened on 4 October 2007. It was preceded by a Resolution A/RES/61/269, which the United Nations General Assembly adopted on 25 May 2007. The main point of the High Level Dialogue was to emphasize the importance of the "bottom-up" mobilization of people's consciousness and awareness of the essentiality of the intercultural dialogue and tolerance for the promotion of peace in the world. This aim was accomplished by the UN's engagement with various civil society organizations that somehow could contribute to an increase of people's understanding about the importance of interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

One of the key findings in the High Level Dialogue was the fact that globalization makes people more conscious of the existence of the "other." The "other" is often defined in religious or cultural terms. People increasingly feel the need for positioning themselves and their identities in the globalized world by comparing themselves to those who are different from them (the "other"). However, this may constitute a great danger if stereotypes and false depictions of the other groups prevail in the whole process of self-identification. In such cases, the disrespect and the low level of tolerance reduces the trust among different religious or cultural groups, thus creating conditions for emergence of potential conflicts. Therefore, globalization makes the need for cooperation and mutual understanding among different cultural groups even more necessary today than at any time before.

Besides the 2007 High Level Dialogue of the General Assembly, there were several other significant efforts by the UN to generate conditions for peaceful coexistence in the 21st century. For instance, the 2005 Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations (Resolution A/RES/60/4) focused on intercultural communication, cultural pluralism, the role of the civil society, and the contribution of the UN system in achieving all this. The Resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2011 on Implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (A/RES/65/11) strove to find some methods for achieving the goals of peace and non-violence. Therefore, its emphasis was on spreading a culture of peace, and the main role in that would be education. For that purpose, this resolution envisioned close cooperation with UNESCO and UNICEF.

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In 2011, the UN General Assembly also adopted a Resolution on Combating Defamation of Religions (A/RES/65/224). Defamation of religions was defined as one significant obstacle on the way to peaceful coexistence. The resolution focused on the reasons and on the potential solutions for the problem of religious intolerance, discrimination, group hatred, destruction of religious symbols, as well as on the role of mass media and education, as well as freedom of expression.

The UN General Assembly High Level Forum on the Culture of Peace, convened on 6 September 2013, is the latest effort on the part of the international community to create a dialogue among different political, religious, and civil society actors with the aim of underlining the concept of peace as an important element in the global culture of the 21st century. Husayin Hurmali, chief administrative officer of Journalists and Writers Foundation was one of the panelists in this Forum, whose experience and remarks will feature as resource in preparing and organizing this conference. All the prior resolutions and conferences constitute important basis on which more work needs to be done.

Resolution A/RES/61/269 and the High Level Dialogue, which followed it, admit that dialogues between high-level officials is not enough. The grass-root mobilization of people's support for peaceful coexistence is an essential factor in the struggle to prevent intolerance and promote peace. Another key finding of the High Level Dialogue was that the roles of education and media might be crucial in the process of encouraging interreligious and intercultural understanding. Education was considered an important catalyst for better mutual understanding and cohesion between members of different religious or cultural groups. Media was praised for its role in influencing people's perceptions of the "other." The balance between freedom of expression and the responsibility of the media was emphasized as an indispensable factor in media's role in promoting tolerance and peace.

After this High Level Dialogue, the UN's interest in the practical methods (such as education and media), through which the states may encourage mutual understanding among different groups, calls for more discussion on how these practical means may supplant the high level discussions among politicians and religious leaders in promoting intercultural tolerance and peace.

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Conference Program

October 24, 2014 – Friday

08.00-09:00 On-Site Registration and Access to Palais des Nations

09:30-10:30 Opening Ceremony & Key-note Addresses

Andres Smith Serrano

External and Inter-Agency/ Political Affairs Officer
Office of the Director-General, United Nations Office at Geneva

Mustafa Yeşil

President, Journalists and Writers Foundation, Turkey

Ela Gandhi

Peace Activist, Granddaughter of Mohandas Gandhi, South Africa

Dr. Heinrich Kreft

Director for Public Diplomacy and Dialogue among Civilizations,
Foreign Ministry of Germany

10:30-12:00

Freedom of Religion & Building and Sustaining Peace

Gunnar Johan Stålsett

Member of Norwegian Nobel Committee, Norway (Moderator)

Prof. Tariq Ramadan

Oxford University, Faculty of Oriental Studies, UK

Dr. Samya C. Marasinghe

Peace Activist, Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, Sri Lanka

Rabbi Ehud Bandel

Vice President of the International Council of Christians and Jews, Israel

Prof. Thomas Michel

Georgetown University, Faculty of Theology, US

12:00-14:00 Lunch Break

14:00-15:30 **Peace and Journalism**

Joost Legendijk

Columnist at Today's Zaman (Moderator), Netherland

Myung-bok Bae

Editorial Writer & Diplomatic Correspondent, JoongAng Ilbo, South Korea

Dr. Petra Aczél

Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary

Dr. Cengiz Aktar

Lecturer at Süleyman Şah University, Istanbul, Turkey

15:30-16:00 Coffee Break

16:30-17:30 **Education & Sustaining Peace**

Prof. Abdeljalil Akkari

Prof of International Education, University of Geneva (Moderator)

Prof. Toh Swee-Hin

Distinguished Profesor, University for Peace, Costa Rica

Prof. Radhi Al-Mabuk

Professor of Education at the University of Northern Iowa, US

Daniel Hyslop

Research Manager, Institut for Economics and Peace, Australia

18:00-20:00 Reception and Cocktail

Venue: Restaurant des Délégues, Building A, 8th floor

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Opening Ceremony and Keynote Speakers



Andres Smith Serrano

External and Inter-Agency/ Political Affairs Officer
Office of the Director-General, United Nations Office at Geneva

Since 2012 Mr. Andres Smith Serrano is holding the post of an External and Inter-Agency/ Political Affairs Officer in the Office of the Director-General, United Nations Office at Geneva. He completed his PhD in politics in the London School of Economics in 1986. During his long diplomatic career he has been holding various positions in different agencies of the United Nations and has completed different diplomatic tasks on behalf of the UN in Islamabad, Kabul, Tehran, Baghdad, Monrovia, Abidjan, etc. This is his fourth time being selected to the position of Political/External Affairs in the Office of the Director General in Geneva.



Mustafa Yeşil

President, Journalists and Writers Foundation, Turkey

Mustafa Yeşil has been the president of the Journalists and Writers Foundation since 2008. Prior the current appointment, he undertook numerous positions in the United Kingdom and Germany. Mr. Yeşil was among the founding members of the London Center for Social Studies, a think tank that aims to connect research, policy and practice. During his career in the UK, he encouraged and successfully mobilized Turkish society to establish various non-profit education institutions such as Wisdom Primary and Secondary School, Coral Girls' College, Koza Women Society, Axis Education Trust, Fellowship Dialogue Society, and Dialogue Society for Scotland.

Mr. Yeşil's career initially started as the general coordinator of Zaman, the highest circulated newspaper, in various cities of Turkey. In 2003, he was appointed as an overseas representative of Zaman in the UK and has also served as the chairman of the World Media Group Company in Frankfurt, Germany for two years. Mr. Yeşil holds a Master of Arts degree in Social Studies from Dokuz Eylul University. He was born in Canakkale, Turkey. He is married and has three children.

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Ela Gandhi

Peace Activist, Granddaughter of Mohandas Gandhi, South Africa

Ela Gandhi was born as the youngest daughter of Manilal and Sushila Gandhi and granddaughter to the iconic activist Mahatma Gandhi. The Gandhi children were raised in the spirit of Gandhi's philosophy of a "life of labour...is a life worth living"-a philosophy that Ela carried with her in all her activities.

She is a peace activist and was a Member of Parliament in South Africa from 1994-2004, where she aligned with the African National Congress (ANC) party representing the Phoenix area of Inanda in the KwaZulu Natal province. Her parliamentary committee assignments included the Welfare, and Public Enterprises committees as well as the ad-hoc committee on Surrogate Motherhood. She was an alternate member of the Justice Committee and served on Theme Committee 5 on Judiciary and Legal Systems.



Dr. Heinrich Kreft

Director for Public Diplomacy and Dialogue among Civilizations in Foreign Ministry of Germany

Dr. Heinrich Kreft is an ambassador and director for public diplomacy and dialogue among civilizations in the German Foreign Ministry. Prior to his tenure as ambassador, he served as senior foreign policy advisor to the CDU/CSU Parliamentary Group in the German Bundestag and was a member of the German Council of Foreign Relations. Kreft was stationed for diplomatic terms in both Tokyo and Washington, D.C. and served for many years as part of the Foreign Policy Planning Staff. He has held visiting fellowships at the Henry L. Stimson Center, the Heritage Foundation and the Woodrow Wilson Center. He has published numerous pieces on major political power and economic relations, international security and European, American and Asian political and economic affairs.

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First Session:

Freedom of Religion & Building and Sustaining Peace



Gunnar Johan Stålsett

Member of Norwegian Nobel Committee, Norway (Moderator)

Gunnar Johan Stålsett graduated in Theology in 1961. He taught at the Missionary School in the City of Stavanger in 1964-1969. From 1969 until 1977 he was Secretary General of Mellomkirkelig Råd, the Church of Norway's council on Ecumenical and International Relations. Stålsett was State Secretary in the ministry of Church Affairs and Education 1972-1973. In 1977 he was elected chairman of the Center Party and held that position until 1979. He was Secretary General of the Lutheran World Federation in 1985-1994. Subsequently, he was Rector of the Seminar of Practical Theology at the University of Oslo until he became Bishop of Oslo in 1998. Gunnar Stålsett is a member of the Norwegian Nobel Committee.



Prof. Tariq Ramadan

Oxford University, Faculty of Oriental Studies, UK

Prof. Tariq Ramadan is a Swiss academic and writer. He is also a Professor of Contemporary Islamic Studies in the Faculty of Oriental Studies at Oxford University (Oriental Institute, St Antony's College) as well as at the Oxford Faculty of Theology. Furthermore, he is Visiting Professor at the Faculty of Islamic Studies (Qatar), and Director of the Research Centre of Islamic Legislation and Ethics (CILE) (Doha, Qatar). He advocates the study and re-interpretation of Islamic texts, and emphasizes the heterogeneous nature of Western Muslims.



Dr. Samya C. Marasinghe

Peace Activist, Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, Sri Lanka

As a Commonwealth Scholar, she obtained a Master of Letters degree (M.Litt.) and a Doctor of Philosophy degree (D.Phil) in International Law from the University of Oxford, specializing in International Human Rights and Child Rights Law. In a career spanning nearly 30 years, she served as a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Law of the University of Colombo for 17 years, as Deputy Chairperson and a member of the National Child Protection Authority and a trainer and a resource person in the field of human rights, child rights and women's rights at diverse conferences and institutions, both local and international.

Dr. Marasinghe has been a volunteer of Sarvodaya for more than three decades and co- founded the Sarvodaya Legal Services Movement in 1985. She was the co-recipient of the 'Women and Engaged Buddhism Award' (2008) of the Buddhist Council of Midwest, USA, and the recipient of 'An Outstanding Woman in Buddhism Award' (2009) from Thailand, for exceptional development of wisdom and compassion in the protection of child rights.

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Rabbi Ehud Bandel

Vice President of the International Council of Christians and Jews, Israel

Rabbi Ehud Bandel is a graduate of the Hebrew University in Jewish History and Jewish Philosophy and holds a Master degree in Judaic studies from The Jewish Theological Seminary in America. In 1988 he graduated the first class of the Schechter Rabbinical Seminary in Jerusalem and was the first native Israeli to be ordained as a Masorti (Conservative) Rabbi in Israel. For five years, he was the director of "Noam" - the Masorti Youth Movement and between 1997 and 2005 he served as the President and CEO of the Masorti (Conservative) Movement in Israel. In 2006 he moved with his family to Melbourne Australia and served five years as the rabbi of Kehilat Nitzan, Melbourne's first Conservative (Masorti) congregation. Rabbi Bandel is very active in interfaith and human rights issues. He was the Founding Director of Rabbis for Human Rights, and currently he serves as the 1st Vice President of the International Council of Christians and Jews and the chair of the ICCJ's International Abrahamic Forum. In 2011 he received in the US the Gandhi Peace Award for promoting peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

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Prof. Thomas Michel

Georgetown University, Faculty of Theology, US

Prof. Thomas Michel is a visiting professor in Theology at Georgetown's School of Foreign Service in Qatar. He is also the former Secretary of the Jesuit Secretariat for Interreligious Dialogue in Rome and Ecumenical Secretary for the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (1994-2008). Fr. Michel is a board member of (among others) Georgetown's Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, the Khalidi Library in Jerusalem, and the Journal of Islam and Muslim-Christian Relations. He possesses a doctorate in Arabic and Islamic studies from the University of Chicago.

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Second Session: **Peace and Journalism**



Joost Lagendijk

Columnist at Today's Zaman, Netherland (Moderator)

Joost Lagendijk is a Dutch columnist at the Turkish dailies Zaman and Today's Zaman. He is a former GreenLeft Member of the European Parliament (MEP) and served as the joint chairman of the Turkey-EU Parliamentarians delegation. Since 2008, he is a senior adviser at the European Policy Center and also a professor at Sabancı University.



Myung-bok Bae

Editorial Writer & Diplomatic Correspondent, JoongAng Ilbo, South Korea

Mr. Myung-bok Bae is currently an Editorial Writer and Diplomatic Correspondent for the JoongAng Ilbo. He joined the JoongAng Ilbo in 1984 and began his career as a reporter of economy, politics, foreign news, etc. In 1989 he was dispatched to Paris as a foreign correspondent and passed four years and half in Europe. Returning to Seoul, he covered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade as a staff writer. In 1997 he was reposted as a correspondent in Paris to spend another three years in Europe. After his second mission in Paris, he became a Chief of Foreign News Desk and Foreign News Editor as well as Travelling Correspondent in US. Since 2006 he has been taking the current task. Currently he is writing columns for the JoongAng Ilbo. In 1982 he received a Bachelor's degree of French language and literature from the Seoul National University and studied at the SAIS of Johns Hopkins University in Washington DC in 2004. In recognition of his outstanding work as a correspondent in Europe he was presented the 1st Korea-Europe Journalist Award by the Korean Society of Contemporary European Studies(KSCES) in 2011.



Dr. Petra Aczél

Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary

Petra Aczél is associate professor at Corvinus University of Budapest, she is head of the Institute of Behavioural Science and Communication Theory. She studied at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, earned her PhD degree in classical and modern rhetorics in 2003, and gave her habilitation lecture for university professorship in 2011. Her research interests are focused on the theory and practice of rhetoric, public communication and new media, she authors and co-authors four books and numerous essays. Recent publications include her contributions to the debate on “new rhetoric” and new media rhetoric. She is a regular participant at international conferences, and holds memberships in Hungarian and international communication associations and boards.

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Dr. Cengiz Aktar

Lecturer at Süleyman Şah University, Istanbul, Turkey

After having spent over 20 years in various UN field operations in Africa, Asia and Europe, Aktar retired from the UN and back in Turkey where he taught courses on various EU policies at Galatasaray and Bahçeşehir Universities. Currently he lectures at Süleyman Şah University and is a senior scholar associated with Istanbul Policy Centre. He writes weekly columns for daily Taraf and Today's Zaman.

Aktar works on policies of memory regarding ethnic and religious minorities as well as various EU policies. He has published nine books and numerous articles in Turkey and abroad. The latest book he edited "Ecumenical Patriarchate" was published in Turkish in March 2011. His latest work "Handbook for decentralisation" will hit the shelves in December 2014.

Third Session: **Education & Sustaining Peace**



Prof. Abdeljalil Akkari

Professor of International Education, University of Geneva (Moderator)

Abdeljalil Akkari is professor, and director of a research group on international education, at the University of Geneva. At the same time, he is a regular consultant for UNESCO and other international organizations.

Previously, he was the dean for research at the Higher Pedagogical Institute HEP-BEJUNE in Bienne, Switzerland. His major publications include studies on educational planning, multicultural education, teacher training and educational inequalities. His main research interests focuses on teacher education and reforms of educational systems in a comparative and international perspective.

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Prof. Toh Swee-Hin

Distinguished Professor of University for Peace, Costa Rica

Toh Swee-Hin is Distinguished Professor and long-term Consultant, Office of the Vice-Rector, University for Peace. He graduated with a Ph.D. in International/Intercultural Education & Sociology of Education, and a Master of Education in Educational Administration from the University of Alberta, Canada after undergraduate studies in Chemistry & Education, La Trobe University, Australia. Prior to his UPEACE appointment, Prof. Toh was the founding Director of the Multi-Faith Centre, Griffith University, Australia, a centre that promotes inter-faith dialogue towards a culture of peace. He was also Director of the Centre for International Education and Development at the University of Alberta before moving to Australia. Born in Malaysia, he has taught in universities in Canada, Australia and the Philippines. He has contributed to several international networks and organizations including UNESCO, the Peace Education Commission of the International Peace Research Association, International Institute on Peace Education, World Council for Curriculum & Instruction, Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding, Parliament of the World's Religions and Religions for Peace. In 2000, he was awarded the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education.



Prof. Radhi Al-Mabuk

Professor of education at the University of Northern Iowa, US

Prof. Radhi Al-Mabuk is a professor of Education at the University of Northern Iowa, a position he has held since 1990. Al-Mabuk received his Ph.D in Educational Psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and his M.S. from Winona State University, Winona, Minnesota. His areas of expertise include child and adolescent development, human motivation, moral development, and instructional psychology. His research interests focus on moral development of forgiveness, particularly the psychotherapeutic applications of forgiveness in contexts of deep and interpersonal hurt, psychology of revenge, conflict resolution, peer mentoring and student and teacher motivation.



Daniel Hyslop

Research Manager, Institut for Economics and Peace, Australia

Daniel Hyslop heads the Institute for Economics and Peace's (IEP) research efforts. IEP's raison d'être is to promote a better understanding of the relationship between peace, business and prosperity. In short, it quantitatively tries to prove the economic value of peacefulness. To publicize its efforts, IEP annually publishes the 'Global Peace Index' (GPI), which uses 23 indicators to rank order the relative peacefulness of the world's nations. Mr. Hyslop worked as a research associate to an Australian government relations and political consultancy, advising and researching on a broad range of political and public policy issues. Prior, he lived in Beijing where he worked and studied at Peking University under scholarship from the University of Sydney. He holds a Bachelor of Economics and Masters of Economics (Social Sciences) (First Class Honours) from Sydney University.

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Organizers



Journalists and Writers Foundation (JWF)

JWF has been established by a group of distinguished writers, scholars and journalists in 1994 to contribute to peaceful coexistence and dialogue by bringing together intellectuals from all political spectrums with different cultural, religious, ethnic and ideological backgrounds that belong to the many diverse disciplines in science, religion, philosophy, politics, and art. The JWF holds General Consultative Status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council, being the first and only institution to achieve this status in Turkey.



The Institute of Dialogue and Intercultural Cooperation (Dialog-Institut)

Dialog-Institut is a politically neutral non-profit organization, founded in 2004. Dialog-Institut promotes intercultural dialogue and constructive relationships within cultural diversity. It seeks to reduce prejudices and fears of one another, and work to build a common future between different cultures. It allows a dialogue between individuals but also between communities. The Institute strives to promote the diversity of cultural resources to build mutual understanding and implementing common constructive work. It opposes all forms of exclusion and constantly strives to promote understanding between people. Its work is based on common values. The Swiss example shows that it is possible to build a society that can live together despite cultural differences. This experience should also help us to solve our current problems and to improve the future of our country.

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Medi@LAB-Geneva, Institute of Communication Sciences, Media and Journalism at the University of Geneva

In 2012, the Master in Communication and Media of the University of Geneva has gained a new shape. It became the Research Laboratory of the Institute of Communication Sciences, Media and Journalism at the University of Geneva, shortly Medi@LAB-Geneva. It integrates pure academic training with a new concept of research. These changes make Medi@LAB-Geneva a multi platform facet in perfect harmony with the new media landscape version of the XXI century. Enjoying the stimulating environment of the University of Geneva and Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, Medi@LAB laboratory develops with the help of a multidisciplinary team (sociology, communication, economics, management, etc.), and research and expertise around four axes: Uses of social media and digital media, communication, economics and media management, and finally, journalism and new practices on the Internet.

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