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# World Happiness Foundation Response to “A Call for Peace: The End of Wars and Respect for International Law”

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## Introduction and Context

The **World Happiness Foundation** warmly commends the **High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, the Secretary General of Religions for Peace, and the President of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network** for its 2024 joint Statement “*A Call for Peace: The End of Wars and Respect for International Law*.” This global call – launched amid widespread conflict and “a growing culture of militarization” – underlines that humanity must **shift toward peace through dialogue, justice, and the rule of law**. It recognizes that today’s wars across all continents are “**solvable through dialogue**” and collective security, and that poverty and oppression fuel conflict. The World Happiness Foundation fully endorses these principles and views **peace as inseparable from human happiness and well-being**. In alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (notably **SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions**), we believe that a peaceful world is the foundation for societal happiness, sustainable development, and human flourishing.

**Building on SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace’s Ten Principles for Peace**, the World Happiness Foundation offers an expanded set of formal recommendations to address urgent gaps and strengthen the global commitment to peace. These recommendations emphasize: (1) the **urgent necessity of complete global disarmament** and demilitarization beyond just nuclear weapons; (2) a **universal renunciation of violence** as a means of conflict resolution, replaced by dialogue and restorative justice; (3) the **democratic renovation of the United Nations** to represent *all* of humanity and even the “more-than-human” world of nature; (4) the integration of **Peace and Happiness curricula**

globally to cultivate inner peace, compassion, and empathy; and (5) key **gaps in the SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace statement** that must be addressed to realize a truly peaceful world in 2025. These policy recommendations are presented in a structured, diplomatic format, consistent with international development discourse and the spirit of the United Nations Charter.

## 1. Complete Global Disarmament and Demilitarization

**Urgent action for comprehensive disarmament** is imperative. The SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace statement rightly calls for supporting the prohibition of nuclear weapons and channeling cuts in military spending toward sustainable development. The World Happiness Foundation strongly reinforces this by urging “**general and complete disarmament**” – the elimination of *all* forms of militarization and arms trafficking worldwide, far beyond nuclear arsenals. Today, humanity faces the paradox of being “**over-armed, and peace is underfunded,**” as former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon warned. Global military expenditure has reached **record highs**, diverting precious resources from human needs: for example, world military spending surged to **\$2.72 trillion in 2024**, the steepest rise since the Cold War. This escalating investment in arms comes at the direct expense of education, healthcare, and sustainable development. We must **get our priorities right** and, as Ban Ki-moon said, “stop spending billions on weapons instead of people”.

**Disarmament beyond nuclear weapons** means aggressively reducing and eventually abolishing conventional arms and the global arms trade. There are **over one billion small arms** and light weapons circulating worldwide – tools of violence that fuel civil wars, crime, and terrorism. Illicit flows of these weapons wreak havoc on communities and violate the UN’s goal to significantly reduce arms proliferation (as per SDG 16.4). We call for **strengthening and expanding the Arms Trade Treaty** to cover all categories of weapons and ensure no nation or non-state actor can funnel arms into conflict zones with impunity. All weapons of mass destruction – nuclear, chemical, and biological – must remain strictly outlawed, and recent gains like the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons should be universally adopted and implemented.

**Militarization as a whole must be rolled back.** This includes dramatically downsizing armed forces, closing foreign military bases that provoke tensions, and ending the political economies dependent on arms manufacturing. The World Happiness Foundation echoes Pope Paul VI’s vision (cited by SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace) of diverting military expenditures into a global fund for human needs. Each dollar not spent on a tank or missile can instead provide clean water, schools, and healthcare – true security for citizens. Indeed, **evidence from peaceful nations** shows that demilitarization yields dividends for development and happiness. For example, **Costa Rica**, which **abolished its army in 1949**, has demonstrated for decades that a nation can live securely **without a military**. The resources saved were **invested in education, health, and social development**, resulting in a more prosperous, egalitarian and stable society. This “**unarmed democracy**” stands as a model to the world, showing that voluntary disarmament is possible and conducive to human well-being.

## Recommended Actions – Global Disarmament:

- **Negotiate a Binding Global Disarmament Treaty:** The UN General Assembly should convene a special session on disarmament to chart a roadmap for **general and complete disarmament under strict international control**, an objective it first endorsed in 1959. This would set timelines to eliminate nuclear arsenals, dismantle chemical/biological weapon stockpiles, and **progressively reduce conventional arms** to minimal levels required only for legitimate defense and peacekeeping.
- **Eliminate the Arms Trade:** Establish an enforceable **universal ban on the export, import, and sale of weapons** for warfare. Strengthen the Arms Trade Treaty with robust verification and accountability, and extend its scope to include stricter controls on small arms and light weapons (which cause the vast majority of conflict casualties). Major arms-producing states must lead by example in **shutting down the global arms pipeline**, much like international treaties have curtailed landmines and cluster munitions.
- **Redirect Military Expenditures to Peace:** Commit all nations to **annual reductions in military budgets**, reallocating those funds to a global peace dividend. In line with SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace's principle, establish a **UN-administered Sustainable Development Peace Fund** where savings from arms reductions are pooled to fight poverty, climate change, and pandemics. Cutting even a fraction of the \$2.7 trillion spent on militaries would unleash enormous resources for the Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Promote Demilitarized Security Models:** Encourage regional demilitarization agreements (e.g. nuclear-weapon-free zones, limits on heavy weapon deployments) and support countries that choose to **downsize or abolish their standing armies**. International incentives (debt relief, development aid, recognition) should reward demilitarization efforts. Peaceful nations like Costa Rica provide a blueprint for resolving threats **through international law and diplomacy instead of force**. Their experience should be studied and shared as a best practice in building security without militaries.
- **Address New Forms of Weaponry:** Expand disarmament discussions to emerging threats such as **autonomous lethal weapons ("killer robots")**, cyber weapons, and space-based weapons. A complete disarmament framework must anticipate future arms races – for instance, by **banning autonomous weapons systems** that lack human control, in order to prevent a destabilizing new frontier of violence.

By embracing comprehensive disarmament, the international community would **remove the fuel of war**. Disarmament is not a utopian dream but a practical necessity: as SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace's call highlights, humanity stands "89 seconds to midnight" on the Doomsday Clock due to the continued existence of nuclear weapons. We must pull back from that brink by eliminating **all instruments of mass violence**. In doing so, we heed the wisdom

that “*the world is over-armed and peace is underfunded*” – and we begin to correct that imbalance in favor of life, development, and happiness.

## 2. Enshrining Non-Violence in Conflict Resolution

**Peace cannot be achieved by violent means.** The World Happiness Foundation joins the SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace in affirming that **there is never a valid excuse to resort to war or violence** – conflicts must be resolved through dialogue, diplomacy, and justice. To truly “end the scourge of war,” the international community should establish an unambiguous norm: **a universal and total ban on the use of violence for resolving conflicts**. In essence, war itself should be seen as an illegal and obsolete institution. This principle flows naturally from the UN Charter, which already prohibits “the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state”. It is time to strengthen this norm, closing loopholes and ensuring that **non-violence is the inviolable standard** in both domestic and international disputes.

**Promote dialogue and preventive diplomacy:** All conflicts – whether between nations or within them – should be approached with the mindset that “*wars do not end on the battlefield, but precious lives do. Wars end at the negotiating table.*”. We urge states to **commit never to abandon diplomatic efforts**, even in the midst of crisis. As the SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace statement notes, it is never too early or too late to negotiate. To operationalize this, the UN’s mediation and conflict prevention capacities must be expanded. A robust system of **international mediation teams and peace envoys** (potentially under a revamped UN Peace and Conflict Resolution Commission) should be on standby to step into any emerging dispute. **Dialogue platforms** should be institutionalized at regional and global levels, bringing adversaries together before disputes harden. The habit of dialogue can be cultivated through regular peace conferences, “track II” diplomacy involving civil society, and back-channel communications – all with UN support to facilitate compromise.

**Ban violence as a policy – domestically and internationally:** The World Happiness Foundation recommends that nations adopt, perhaps via a new UN General Assembly resolution or international treaty, a **pledge of non-violence** in resolving conflicts. This would mirror on a global scale what some constitutions have done nationally. (For example, Japan’s constitution renounces war as a sovereign right, and Costa Rica’s constitution forbids a standing army.) A global pledge would commit states to **forswear aggression, retaliatory war, and the use of armed force**, except in the narrowly defined case of UN-sanctioned collective security or legitimate self-defense against an armed attack as per the UN Charter. Even internal law enforcement and security operations should emphasize minimum force and protection of human rights. **Militarized responses to social or political problems only breed further hatred and suffering**; instead, non-violent tools must be the default. This norm can be supported by strengthening international law: for instance, reinforcing the **accountability for war-making** by recognizing unprovoked aggression as the *supreme international crime*. The International Criminal Court’s jurisdiction over the crime of aggression is a step in this direction; all leaders

who initiate wars of aggression or atrocity violence should know they face personal accountability before international justice.

**Restorative justice and reconciliation:** In many conflicts, deep grievances and trauma drive the cycle of violence. The World Happiness Foundation advocates for the **widespread use of restorative justice approaches** as alternatives to punitive or violent “solutions.” Rather than responding to violence with more violence, societies should respond with justice that heals. This means prioritizing **truth-telling, forgiveness, reparations, and the restoration of relationships**. The world has seen powerful examples of restorative justice in action: **South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)**, for instance, offered a model of addressing grave human rights abuses through public truth-telling and amnesty conditioned on confession. This process, though not without critics, helped prevent a spiral of retribution after apartheid and is credited with laying a foundation for a more peaceful, unified nation. Similar truth commissions and community reconciliation processes in countries like Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Colombia have allowed victims to be heard and offenders to make amends – fostering healing in lieu of vengeance. We recommend that any peace agreement or post-conflict strategy include **mechanisms like truth commissions, community dialogues, and reparative justice programs** to address harm done. These mechanisms should be locally designed (drawing on cultural practices where appropriate) and aim to reintegrate former combatants and victims into a shared society. By focusing on **accountability with amnesty** (in cases of genuine remorse) and reparations rather than punishment alone, restorative justice breaks the cycle whereby today’s victims become tomorrow’s perpetrators.

**Culture of non-violence and communication:** To banish violence as a means of problem-solving, we must also change mindsets and skills at the individual and community level. The World Happiness Foundation stresses the importance of **non-violent communication (NVC)** and conflict resolution skills as a core societal competency. Governments and civil society should invest in training programs for **dialogue facilitation, mediation, and NVC** – from grassroots community mediators who can defuse local tensions, to diplomats trained extensively in empathy and listening. UNESCO’s **Culture of Peace** framework already calls for education in tolerance, solidarity, and dialogue to replace cultures of war. We urge full implementation of the UN’s *Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace* (1999), which outlines how media, education, and citizen engagement can cultivate non-violent norms. **Non-violent communication techniques**, as developed by experts like Marshall Rosenberg, have proven effective in de-escalating interpersonal and intergroup conflicts by reframing how parties express grievances and recognize each other’s needs. Introducing such training in schools, workplaces, and government institutions worldwide would equip people with peaceful tools to handle disputes without anger or aggression.

#### **Recommended Actions – Non-Violent Conflict Resolution:**

- **Adopt an International Declaration of Non-Violence:** The UN General Assembly, with support from all member states, should pass a landmark resolution (or even initiate a treaty) declaring that **violence shall not be used to resolve any conflict, whether between or within states**. This declaration would reinforce existing international law,

commit states to peaceful dispute resolution, and serve as a moral beacon (much like the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact renouncing war, but updated and strengthened for the 21st century).

- **Strengthen Peaceful Dispute Mechanisms:** Expand the mandate and resources of the **International Court of Justice (ICJ)** and arbitral bodies so that states in conflict are encouraged to submit their disputes to legal adjudication or arbitration **instead of resorting to force**. Making ICJ jurisdiction compulsory for all UN members (with limited exceptions) could be a transformative step. Additionally, empower regional organizations (African Union, EU, ASEAN, etc.) to mediate local disputes, and link them with UN good offices.
- **Invest in Mediation and Early Warning:** Establish a permanent **UN Mediation Corps** – a professional cadre of mediators and conflict-resolution experts who can be rapidly deployed to emerging crises. Pair this with improved **early warning systems** (using data and local input to detect signs of escalating tensions) so that diplomatic action is taken *before* violence erupts. The earlier the engagement in dialogue, the better the chances violence can be averted.
- **Implement Restorative Justice in Peace Processes:** The UN, together with regional bodies, should make restorative justice a pillar of conflict resolution. This includes setting up **Truth and Reconciliation Commissions** or similar bodies after conflicts to address wounds (drawing on successful models in **South Africa, Rwanda, and Colombia**). It also means incorporating traditional and community-based justice practices that emphasize healing. Donors and international agencies should fund training in restorative practices for local peacebuilders.
- **Global Non-Violence Education Campaign:** Launch a worldwide “**Education for Non-Violence**” initiative (in synergy with the educational recommendations below). This would declare a **Decade of Non-Violence Education**, for example, during which schools, media, and religious institutions receive guidance and resources to promote messages of peace, reject glorification of violence, and teach practical conflict resolution skills. Support exchanges of best practices in violence prevention (such as community violence interruption programs that have reduced gang conflicts without police force).
- **Commemorate and Commit:** Leverage international observances like the **International Day of Non-Violence (Oct 2)** – Mahatma Gandhi’s birthday – to secure annual commitments from leaders to reduce violence. Governments could report on steps taken to reduce armed incidents, police violence, and hate crimes. Civil society and religious leaders can unite on these days to **publicly reject violence** in all its forms, reinforcing a global norm that disputes must be settled with words, not weapons.



By making the **use of force a global taboo**, humanity can move toward a future where war is as unthinkable as slavery or colonial conquest are today. This monumental shift requires not only top-down legal measures but also a bottom-up transformation of hearts and minds – a true **culture of peace and non-violence** permeating all levels of society. The World Happiness Foundation believes that such a non-violent world is both necessary and possible. Indeed, as the SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace statement affirmed, “**humanity can rise above atavistic violence**” and embrace dialogue and diplomacy as the only routes to lasting peace. We must seize that hopeful vision and make it reality.

### 3. Democratic Renovation of the United Nations for All Humanity and Nature

To achieve lasting peace, the **institutions of global governance must themselves embody the principles of fairness, inclusivity, and respect for all life**. The United Nations – founded “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war” – remains the world’s foremost arena for peace and international law. Yet today’s UN, while indispensable, faces a crisis of legitimacy and effectiveness. It was built on a state-centric, mid-20th-century paradigm that no longer fully represents the **diversity of the 21st-century world**. The World Happiness Foundation calls for a bold **democratic renovation of the United Nations**, transforming it into a truly representative institution of *all* humanity – and even giving voice to the “*more-than-human*” world of nature and ecosystems that our collective security also depends on.

**Making the UN genuinely democratic and representative:** We endorse and expand upon the SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace statement’s appeal to reform the UN Security Council for greater representativeness. The current structure, especially the veto power held by five permanent members, reflects post-1945 power politics more than present-day demographic or geopolitical realities. Africa – a continent of 1.3 billion people – has no permanent seat; Latin America and South Asia are similarly unrepresented in the permanent membership. This imbalance undermines the Council’s credibility. **Security Council reform** should prioritize adding permanent and non-permanent seats for under-represented regions (with Africa as a top priority). In addition, mechanisms to **limit or override the veto** in cases of mass atrocities or egregious breaches of peace should be adopted (for instance, a veto override by a super-majority of the General Assembly or Security Council members). These steps would align the Council more closely with today’s multipolar and populous world, ensuring no region’s voice for peace is muted.

Beyond the Security Council, we must democratize the UN system at large to reflect “**We the Peoples of the United Nations**” – the opening words of the UN Charter – not just the governments. The World Happiness Foundation supports the creation of a **United Nations Parliamentary Assembly (UNPA)** as a new organ that directly represents the world’s citizens. In the spirit of proposals by global civil society and scholars (and as suggested by SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace leadership), a UNPA could be established under Article 22 of the UN Charter as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly. Delegates to a UN Parliamentary

Assembly might be drawn from national parliaments or even directly elected in the future, giving ordinary people a stronger voice in global decision-making. **This would be a watershed innovation in global governance**, injecting democratic legitimacy and accountability. As Professor Jeffrey Sachs (President of SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace) and others have noted, integrating representation of **“We the Peoples”** at the UN through a parliamentary assembly would help the UN become more responsive to global public opinion and the common good.

**Empowering the UN General Assembly and inclusive multilateralism:** In parallel, the UN General Assembly – where every nation, large or small, has an equal vote – should be revitalized as a **“parliament of humanity.”** The SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace statement aptly calls for a “vibrant UN General Assembly” as key to a just multilateralism. We recommend expanding the GA’s role in global peace and security decisions when the Security Council is deadlocked. For example, the *Uniting for Peace* mechanism (GA resolution 377(V)), which allows the GA to act when the Council fails to, should be invoked more frequently and perhaps institutionalized for cases of genocide or acts of aggression. **Innovations in GA procedure** – such as **weighted voting, coalition-building, or thematic debates that include civil society voices** – can make it more effective. The World Happiness Foundation also supports **strengthening the International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court**, giving them greater backing from the GA to ensure that international law (including laws protecting peace) is upheld and that war crimes or illegal wars are prosecuted. A more robust UN system of **justice and accountability** buttresses a world where the rule of law triumphs over the rule of force.

**Including the “more-than-human” world – nature and future generations:** A truly forward-looking UN must expand its circle of concern beyond the present generation of nation-states. The security and well-being of future generations, and of the planet’s ecosystems and other species (“mother earth”), deserve representation at the table. The World Happiness Foundation thus proposes the establishment of new representative mechanisms for the **more-than-human world**. Specifically, we endorse ideas like creating a **UN Council for Future Generations and Nature**. This could be achieved by repurposing or expanding existing bodies – for instance, transforming the dormant Trusteeship Council into a “Guardianship Council” for the environment and posterity. Alternatively, the General Assembly could create subsidiary organs focused on these constituencies. In fact, leading thinkers have suggested exactly this: a recent proposal calls for a **“Council of Youth and Future Generations”** to give youth and unborn generations a voice, and a **“Council on the Anthropocene”** to elevate environmental governance at the UN. These councils would ensure that decisions consider long-term impacts on the earth’s climate, biodiversity, and the rights of those yet to be born. They would institutionalize the concept of **intergenerational justice and ecological stewardship** at the highest level. For example, a Council on the Anthropocene could oversee compliance with climate and biodiversity agreements and advocate for the intrinsic value of nature in security deliberations.

Moreover, respecting the “more-than-human” world also means **recognizing the rights of nature**. Several countries and communities have begun to legally recognize rivers, forests, and



wild species as holders of rights – acknowledging that human law should protect the ecosystems that sustain life. The UN could encourage this movement globally, perhaps through a **Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth**, complementing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Granting nature a voice might involve accrediting **indigenous peoples and environmental scientists** as representatives or “guardians” for ecosystems in relevant UN forums. Indigenous communities, in particular, have long stood as custodians of the land and can articulate the interests of nature. A democratized UN would formally incorporate such voices, aligning global policies with the realities of living sustainably on a finite planet.

**Other democratic innovations in global governance:** Beyond these measures, the World Happiness Foundation supports creating additional forums to reflect humanity’s full diversity in culture and governance levels. For instance, a **Council of Regional Organizations** (giving bodies like the African Union, EU, ASEAN, etc., a direct role in UN deliberations) and a **UN Council of Cities or Local Governments** (recognizing the role of cities and states/provinces in issues like climate and migration) could decentralize and broaden input. A **UN Council of Indigenous Peoples** could ensure indigenous nations and communities (totaling over 400 million people worldwide) have a permanent voice in global affairs. Likewise, a **Council of Civilizations, Cultures, and Religions** could facilitate dialogue across cultural divides and promote the values of peace and mutual respect. These ideas, once mere dreams, are increasingly part of serious discussion on UN reform. The Summit of the Future planned by the UN Secretary-General is an opportunity to advance such transformative changes, as it seeks to make the UN “fit for purpose” for current challenges. The World Happiness Foundation echoes the view that this Summit should be a “*watershed in global governance*” that moves beyond hegemonic structures towards an order under the UN Charter that truly represents global unity.

### **Recommended Actions – UN Democratic Renovation:**

- **Launch a UN Reform Process:** The UN Secretary-General and willing member states should convene an inclusive reform process (or use the upcoming Summit of the Future) to draft proposals for **amending the UN Charter** where necessary to implement democratic changes. This process must be bold and participatory, consulting global citizens, scholars, and civil society. Key agenda items: expanding the Security Council, curbing the veto, and creating new organs (like a UN Parliamentary Assembly and Councils for youth, cities, etc.).
- **Establish a UN Parliamentary Assembly (UNPA):** As a first step not requiring Charter amendment, the General Assembly can vote to create a **UN Parliamentary Assembly** by majority vote (using its Article 22 powers). This assembly should initially comprise parliamentarians from all nations (reflecting population size in its composition) and gradually move towards direct election. Its functions might be advisory at first, but over time it can gain consultative or legislative powers on global issues – becoming the democratic conscience of the UN.
- **Empower New “Councils” for Inclusive Representation:** Similarly, the General Assembly should use Article 22 to create the **Council of Indigenous Peoples, Council**

**of Youth & Future Generations, Council of Civilizations, and Council on the Anthropocene** as subsidiary bodies. Each of these would have a structure allowing non-state actors (e.g., indigenous representatives, youth delegates, religious and cultural leaders, scientists) to deliberate and then interface with the GA and Security Council. This multi-stakeholder inclusion will enrich decision-making with perspectives beyond the nation-state framework.

- **Reform Security Council Composition and Rules:** Member States should continue negotiations to reform Security Council membership by **adding permanent seats for underrepresented regions** (e.g., Africa, Latin America, South Asia) and/or instituting a rotation that guarantees regional representation. They should also agree on **limiting veto use** – for example, via a code of conduct where P5 nations pledge not to veto actions addressing mass atrocities. If voluntary measures fail, an amendment to the Charter could be pursued to require that a lone veto can be overridden by a super-majority vote of the Council or by the General Assembly in emergency special session.
- **Institutionalize Environment and Future Focus:** Establish an Office of the **High Commissioner for Future Generations** or a **Special Envoy for Climate and Security** within the UN system to ensure continuous advocacy for long-term and planetary interests. Support the proposal for a **Declaration on Future Generations** and an **International Treaty on Environmental Protection** that places global commons (oceans, atmosphere, polar regions) under UN trusteeship. These steps will integrate more-than-human considerations into the UN's legal and moral framework.

By renovating the UN in these ways, we create an international system where **peace is upheld by inclusive, representative, and morally grounded institutions**. A democratized UN would be better equipped to address global challenges that no one nation can solve alone – from wars to climate change – and to do so in a way that all peoples consider fair. Crucially, giving voice to the voiceless (whether smaller nations, ordinary citizens, or nature itself) will reduce grievances and perceptions of injustice that often underlie conflict. **In a reformed United Nations, humanity can come together as one to seek collective security for humans and for the planet.** This fulfills the vision of the UN Charter and makes the international order more resilient and legitimate for the peaceful century to come.

## 4. Global Peace and Happiness Education for a Culture of Peace

Lasting peace requires more than treaties and institutional reforms; it demands a fundamental shift in the hearts and minds of people. As UNESCO's Constitution wisely observes, *"since wars begin in the minds of women and men, it is in the minds of women and men that the defenses of peace must be constructed."* The World Happiness Foundation firmly believes that **peace and**

**happiness must be cultivated through education** – from early childhood through adulthood – in every society on Earth. By integrating **Peace and Happiness curricula** at all levels of formal and informal education, we can foster the inner conditions for peace: empathy, emotional literacy, mindfulness, and compassion. Such education nurtures individuals who are resilient, understanding, and skilled at non-violent communication – capable of building harmonious communities and nations. We therefore recommend a concerted global effort to bring teachings of peace, well-being, and humanity’s shared values into classrooms and public consciousness worldwide.

**Cultivating inner peace and emotional intelligence:** Traditional education often emphasizes academic knowledge while neglecting social-emotional development. To build a culture of peace, this must change. Children and adults alike should learn **self-awareness, empathy, active listening, and anger management** – the building blocks of inner peace. A rich body of evidence shows that **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)** programs in schools lead to reduced aggression and better interpersonal relations among students. For instance, curricula that include mindfulness meditation and breathing exercises help students manage stress and develop compassion. The **“Happiness Curriculum” in Delhi, India** is a pioneering example: since 2018, Delhi’s public schools have implemented a daily Happiness class focused on mindfulness, emotional skills, and ethics. This program (for grades K-8) devotes 40 minutes each day to practices like guided mindfulness, reflective stories, and cooperative games. The results have been powerful – impacting **over 800,000 students across more than 1,000 schools** and measurably improving their well-being. An independent study by the Brookings Institution found that, as students progressed through this curriculum, their **self-awareness, empathy (“awareness of others”), communication, and critical thinking skills all improved**, with mindfulness strong across all grades. Teachers reported that **students developed better relationships with teachers, increased participation in class, and improved focus and mindfulness** as a result of the Happiness classes. Teachers themselves became more oriented toward nurturing values and collaborating with each other. This example showcases how intentional curriculum can shape a more peaceful, positive school culture. The World Happiness Foundation recommends scaling such models globally. Many other initiatives – from mindfulness programs in UK and US schools to social-emotional curricula in Scandinavian countries – likewise demonstrate **reductions in bullying, violence, and anxiety** when compassion and emotional skills are taught.

**Teaching compassion, ethics, and global citizenship:** Education for peace must also include the **moral and ethical dimension** – teaching the values of non-violence, respect for human dignity, and appreciation of diversity. UNESCO’s concept of **Global Citizenship Education (GCED)** aligns well here: it encourages learners to see themselves as part of a global community, with a shared responsibility to humanity and the planet. Curricula should incorporate lessons on **human rights, intercultural dialogue, conflict resolution, and environmental stewardship**. By learning about different cultures and religions in an atmosphere of respect, young people can overcome prejudices that often sow seeds of conflict. Programs like the **United World Colleges (UWC)** or the **International Baccalaureate (IB) Peace Education** modules have students from different nations living and learning together, which builds lifelong peace ambassadors. Likewise, peace education can draw on **historical role models of**

**non-violence** (Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, etc.) to inspire students with examples of how courage and empathy can change the world without bloodshed. **Ethics of care and compassion** should be woven into subjects from literature (empathizing with characters) to science (ethical implications of technology) to history (focusing on peacemakers and the cost of war).

Importantly, peace education should not be confined to schools. We need **community and adult education** as well – parenting programs that teach non-violent discipline, media literacy programs that help citizens resist hate propaganda, and workplace trainings in emotional intelligence. The **World Happiness Foundation**, in partnership with organizations like the **UN University for Peace (UPEACE)** in Costa Rica (which has trained peace leaders for decades), can help develop content and certify trainers for such efforts. UPEACE's existence itself is a testament to the value of institutionalizing peace education at the highest levels (graduate degrees in peace studies, conflict resolution, etc.). We envision a world where it is normal for a child to learn meditation in kindergarten, conflict resolution in primary school, intercultural understanding in secondary school, and perhaps pursue peace and development studies in university – creating a pipeline of citizens and leaders ready to build peace.

**Integrating “happiness” and well-being into education policy:** A key contribution of the World Happiness Foundation is highlighting **happiness and well-being as both goals and means of education**. Happy individuals – those whose basic needs are met and who have psychosocial well-being – are far less likely to succumb to hatred or violence. There is growing recognition, including at the UN (e.g. the International Day of Happiness and World Happiness Reports), that **public policy should elevate happiness as a core metric of progress**. We urge governments to incorporate **happiness and mental health outcomes in their educational objectives**. This entails providing students with tools for resilience, self-care, and community care. Some countries and regions have begun to innovate in this direction: **Bhutan's Gross National Happiness (GNH)** approach permeates its education system, emphasizing values like harmony with nature and others. In the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, a “Mindfulness Curriculum” has been piloted to similar ends. By formally valuing happiness, schools create an environment where *kindness, gratitude, and cooperation* are as important as math and reading. This does not detract from academic outcomes – on the contrary, research shows that **students who learn social-emotional skills often perform better academically** because they have better concentration and support.

#### **Recommended Actions – Peace & Happiness Education:**

- **Adopt Peace Education National Strategies:** UNESCO and national education ministries should collaborate on developing **national curricula for peace education** that include social-emotional learning, conflict resolution, human rights, and global citizenship. Each country can tailor these curricula to its context, but the UN can facilitate the sharing of best practices (as it did with the **Culture of Peace** program). Governments should revise education standards to embed these topics across subjects and grade levels, rather than treating “peace” as an occasional theme.

- **Implement Happiness Curricula Globally:** Building on the success in Delhi and elsewhere, other jurisdictions should introduce a **“Happiness Class” or dedicated time for mindfulness and SEL** in the school day. This could be as simple as a 15-minute mindfulness session every morning and a weekly class on emotional skills. International organizations can help fund and train teachers for this purpose. The positive outcomes in student behavior and mindset (as evidenced by Delhi’s program improving focus, participation, and teacher-student relations) make a strong case for worldwide adoption.
- **Train Educators as Peace and Well-Being Ambassadors:** Teacher training colleges and continuous professional development programs must equip educators with the skills to teach peace and happiness. This means training teachers in facilitation (rather than rote instruction), in practicing mindfulness or yoga themselves, and in **trauma-informed teaching methods** for students who have experienced violence. A global certification in “Peace Education” could be developed, encouraging teachers to specialize in this field. Additionally, **exchange programs** can be set up so that teachers and students from different countries meet and learn from each other, breaking down stereotypes and building global bonds.
- **Community Peace Education & Media Campaigns:** Education should extend beyond schools. We call for **public awareness campaigns and informal education** that promote non-violent values. For example, broadcasting peace education content through radio, TV, and social media – such as children’s cartoons that model conflict resolution, or documentaries on successful peacebuilding – can reach those outside the formal system. Community centers and religious institutions can host **“peace and compassion” workshops** for families. Recognizing that media can either incite hatred or spread understanding, the UN and NGOs should work with broadcasters to encourage programming that fosters tolerance and mutual respect.
- **Global Peace Education Coalition:** The World Happiness Foundation proposes forming a **Global Coalition on Peace and Happiness Education** under UNESCO’s leadership, bringing together governments, NGOs (like the Global Campaign for Peace Education), academia, and youth organizations. This coalition would coordinate research on curriculum effectiveness, develop open-source peace education materials in multiple languages, and perhaps establish a global index to measure progress in educating for peace and well-being. Countries could be encouraged (through recognition or modest financial incentives) to include peace education commitments in their national plans (analogous to climate commitments).
- **Leverage International Observances in Schools:** Align school activities with days like the **International Day of Peace (Sept 21)** and **International Day of Happiness (Mar 20)**. Around these days, schools globally can hold special assemblies, peace art competitions, interfaith dialogues, or community service projects that emphasize unity and compassion. This synchrony creates a powerful global shared experience and



reinforces the connection between peace and collective joy.

Educating for peace and happiness is a **long-term investment in “positive peace”** – the attitudes and institutions that prevent conflict. While its fruits may appear gradually, they are profound and lasting. Imagine a generation of youth across all nations who have been taught from childhood to see every human being as deserving of dignity, who know how to calm their own anger and listen to an opponent’s perspective, who celebrate diversity, and who find purpose in helping others – such a generation will be the strongest bulwark against war and authoritarianism. As one student in a Happiness Class in Delhi observed after a mindfulness session: *“When I feel peaceful inside, I feel like making others happy too.”* This encapsulates the ripple effect we seek: **inner peace begets outer peace**. The World Happiness Foundation is convinced that integrating peace and happiness into education is not a luxury, but a necessity to **break the perpetual cycle of violence and misery**. Through knowledge, empathy, and shared values, we can construct in the minds of all people the solid defenses of peace, as foreseen by UNESCO’s founders.

## 5. Addressing Gaps in the SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace statement – Foundations for a Peaceful 2025

While the SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace’s *“Call for Peace”* provides a crucial framework, the World Happiness Foundation has identified several **gaps and additional areas** not fully addressed in the original statement. To build the foundations for a truly peaceful world by 2025, these elements must be incorporated into the global agenda. Below we outline the key gaps and how our recommendations fill them:

- **Beyond Nuclear Disarmament – Total Disarmament:** *Gap:* The SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace statement strongly supports prohibiting nuclear weapons but does not explicitly address the vast **conventional arms trade and militarization** that also fuel wars. *World Happiness Foundation’s Addition:* We call for **complete global disarmament**, covering all weaponry and armed forces. This expands SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace’s focus from nukes to include small arms, heavy weapons, and military spending. By urging elimination of **all forms of militarization and the arms trade**, we tackle the root of armed conflict – an area the original statement only partially touched (via military budget cuts). Our recommendation for a global disarmament treaty and the example of Costa Rica’s unarmed democracy provide concrete pathways to this end.
- **Explicit Ban on Violence in Conflict Resolution:** *Gap:* The SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace principles emphasize diplomacy and stopping “spirals of violence”, but stop short of declaring **violence itself illegitimate** as a tool of politics. There is no direct call to outlaw war or armed force across the board. *World Happiness Foundation’s Addition:* We advocate a **universal ban on the use of violence for conflict resolution**,

essentially making the **renunciation of war and armed aggression** an international norm. This strengthens the intent of the UN Charter and frames peace as the only acceptable option. By promoting restorative justice, dialogue, and non-violent communication, we fill the gap on *how* to handle disputes without coercion. Our recommendation aligns with and extends SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace's point that "wars are solvable through dialogue" – we add that **no other method is acceptable**.

- **Democratic Global Governance & Voice for Nature:** *Gap:* The SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace statement does call for Security Council reform and a stronger UN, but it does not mention deeper democratization measures or representation for stakeholders beyond nation-states. It does not address including **civil society, youth, or the environment** in global decision-making. *World Happiness Foundation's Addition:* We recommend a sweeping **democratic renovation of the UN**, including a UN Parliamentary Assembly (giving the world's people a direct voice) and new councils for youth, regions, indigenous peoples, and the **Anthropocene (nature)**. We explicitly incorporate the "**more-than-human**" world by proposing representation for ecosystems and future generations – a theme absent in the original call. These innovations ensure the UN becomes "truly representative of all humanity" and our planet, closing the representation gap. By advocating these structural changes, we address underlying power imbalances and exclusion that can breed conflict if left unaddressed.
- **Education and Culture of Peace:** *Gap:* Nowhere did the SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace's ten principles mention **education or cultural change** as part of peace-building. The focus was primarily on political and security measures. This leaves a gap in how to achieve the mindset shift needed for sustainable peace. *World Happiness Foundation's Addition:* We introduce the critical element of **Peace and Happiness education globally**, to "construct the defenses of peace in the minds of men and women". This proposal fills the cultural and educational gap by ensuring future generations are equipped to live in peace. By integrating mindfulness, compassion, and emotional intelligence into curricula, we address the intangible social foundations of peace that were missing from the SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace document. Such education amplifies all other efforts by cultivating a populace that demands and maintains peace.
- **Holistic Approach to Peace and Well-Being:** *Gap:* The SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace statement, while comprehensive in political scope, did not explicitly connect peace with **human happiness and well-being**. It talked of sustainable development and justice, but not the psychological and community wellness aspects. *World Happiness Foundation's Addition:* Our response explicitly ties peace to the happiness agenda. We highlight how **violence and war devastate human well-being** (causing trauma, unhappiness, societal breakdown) and conversely how **peace enables human flourishing**. By proposing happiness curricula and emphasizing compassion, we integrate the often-neglected human factor – the need for inner peace and contentment

– into the discourse on ending wars. We fill the gap by showing that peace is not merely the absence of war, but the presence of positive conditions for humans and nature to thrive.

- **Actionable Mechanisms and Examples:** *Gap:* While the SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace statement provided guiding principles, it offered fewer concrete mechanisms or examples of implementation. For instance, it urged support for nuclear prohibition and cuts in military spending, but did not specify best practices or successful case studies for other points. *World Happiness Foundation's Addition:* We have infused our recommendations with **practical proposals and precedents**: e.g., Costa Rica's abolition of the army as a model, South Africa's TRC as a model for reconciliation, Delhi's Happiness Curriculum as a model for education, and specific structures like a UNPA. By doing so, we address the “*how*” – providing a clearer blueprint to implement the vision. This equips policymakers and advocates with tangible ideas to carry forward.

By identifying and addressing these gaps, the World Happiness Foundation's expanded recommendations seek to **complement and strengthen the SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace's call**, ensuring that no critical facet of peace-building is overlooked. We underscore that **2025 has been proclaimed the International Year of Peace and Trust (UN General Assembly resolution 78/266)** – a symbolic and real opportunity to advance these comprehensive measures. To truly make 2025 a turning point toward peace, the world community must tackle peace from every angle: disarming our weapons, disarming our hearts, reforming our global institutions, and educating our children in the ways of peace. Only a **holistic approach** can create the robust foundations for a peaceful and happy world.

## Conclusion – A Call to Action for a Peaceful and Happy Future

The World Happiness Foundation's expanded recommendations amplify the SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace's “*A Call for Peace: The End of Wars and Respect for International Law*.” We have laid out a vision that is **ambitious yet achievable**, rooted in the fundamental truth that peace is not merely a ceasefire or the silencing of guns – it is a **positive, dynamic process** of disarming, healing, inclusion, and education. To summarize our key points:

- We urge the **elimination of all weapons** and militarization, freeing humanity from the tyranny of arms and redirecting resources to life-sustaining goals. The world must unite to declare that our security will no longer be built on weapons of war, but on **human solidarity and sustainable development**. The overwhelming military expenditures and arsenals of today have no place in the peaceful 21st century we endeavor to create.
- We advocate for a global norm that **forbids violence as a means of resolving conflicts**, making negotiation, justice, and reconciliation the universal standard. In doing

so, we rekindle the ideal that **peace is the only rational aim of humanity**. The cycle of retaliation and war can be broken – and must be broken – by choosing non-violence at every turn and providing the diplomatic and restorative pathways to make that choice viable.

- We call for a profound **democratization of international governance**, so that the **United Nations truly becomes the united will of the peoples of the world, and a guardian of our planet**. A reformed UN with equitable representation and new voices – of youth, cities, indigenous communities, and nature – will better prevent conflict and uphold justice. This renovation aligns with the UN’s founding purpose and adapts it to current realities.
- We emphasize the power of **education and cultural transformation** in securing peace for generations to come. By ingraining the values of peace, empathy, and global citizenship in every child, we sow the seeds of a world where disputes do not give rise to hatred and violence. The mind is the first battlefield; through peace education, we ensure that this battlefield is won by understanding before physical battle can ever occur.
- We address missing links in the existing peace agenda, ensuring that efforts toward 2025 and beyond are **comprehensive and inclusive**. Peace must be built at all levels: inner (personal), inter-personal, societal, and international. Our recommendations weave these levels together into a coherent tapestry of peace.

The language of these recommendations is purposefully **formal and diplomatic**, but the spirit behind them is one of profound humanism and urgency. We stand at a crossroads in history. On one path, the world continues down a course of arms races, entrenched conflicts, and environmental destruction – a path that jeopardizes not only happiness, but civilization itself. On the other path, we see a bright horizon: nations disarming and cooperating, conflicts healed through dialogue, a United Nations renewed to meet the needs of all, children everywhere growing up as peacemakers, and humanity living in harmony with nature.

The World Happiness Foundation’s call to action is for **leaders and citizens alike**. We urge **governments, UN agencies, and international organizations** to take up these recommendations: negotiate the disarmament treaties, reform the UN, invest in peace education, and support restorative justice. We also urge **civil society, educators, religious leaders, and the private sector** to champion these ideas at the community level: demand peace dividends, practice non-violence, bring mindfulness and compassion into daily life, and hold leaders accountable to the promise of peace. Each of us has a role – as the SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace statement noted, “seekers of peace are found across all societies”. Peace is too important to be left to governments alone; it must be a **people’s movement** across the globe.

In closing, the World Happiness Foundation envisions a 2025 where the foundations of peace are firmly laid: where wars are ending, not multiplying; where international law and human rights

guide the resolution of disputes; where the **“security of all” is recognized and secured**; and where a culture of peace takes root in every nation. We believe that **peace and happiness are mutually reinforcing** – a more peaceful world will enable greater happiness, and a happier world will be more inclined to preserve peace. Let us heed this call for peace with the seriousness and determination it deserves. The end of wars and the flourishing of law and love is not a naïve dream, but a practical imperative for our survival and prosperity.

The **year 2025** has been designated as the International Year of Peace and – let it be remembered as the year humanity chose the path of peace irrevocably. Let it mark the beginning of the end of war in human history. The World Happiness Foundation stands ready to work with all partners to turn these recommendations into reality. **Together, let us make peace, in all its dimensions, our legacy for future generations – a legacy of a world finally free from the shadow of war, where every individual can pursue life, liberty, and happiness in a global family united by compassion and hope.**

#### Sources:

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- Ban Ki-moon (UNSG) – *“The world is over-armed, and peace is underfunded.”*
- Small Arms Survey – Over **one billion** small arms in circulation fueling violence.
- UNESCO – Abolition of the army in Costa Rica (1949) as a model of disarmed peace and social development.
- SDSN, UNAOC, and Religions for Peace Statement – *“Wars do not end on the battlefield... never an excuse to break off diplomatic efforts.”; “Humanity can rise above atavistic violence... dialogue and diplomacy as the urgent route to lasting peace.”*
- UNESCO Constitution – *“Since wars begin in the minds of men and women, it is in the minds of men and women that the defences of peace must be constructed.”*
- Delhi “Happiness Curriculum” case – implemented in 1,000+ schools, improved students’ mindfulness, empathy, and teacher-student relationships.
- Jeffrey Sachs / SDSN – Proposal for a **UN Parliamentary Assembly** and new UN Councils for Youth/Future Generations and for the environment (Anthropocene).
- UN GA resolution 78/266 – Proclaiming 2025 as International Year of Peace and Trust.