

# Peace: Utopia or possible "reality"?

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So many emotions!

Write an editorial for the District 1650 Governor Jean-Paul Escolar February Monthly Letter, the Rotary month for peace and world understanding, while I was representing the Foundation and the International Polio Plus Committee-IPPC at the WHO regional meeting for polio (to review the Phase II and to plan Phase III in the Middle East and that to counter soaring poliovirus imported from Pakistan to Syria since October 2013) is to choose one of the emotionally strong moments of the Rotary International program to answer the question of whether peace is utopia or a possible reality?

I asked myself what were the reasons that let a French DG Jean-Paul chooses a Lebanese Rotarian, Arabic and oriental to sign an editorial about peace? Is it because it is in this part of the world that the mast's peace hurts? Is that really the only place where peace hardly strong for its credentials? It is clear that from a distance, the planet earth looks like a patchwork bright-red color formed by craters of many "human" volcanoes spewing hatred, violence, barbarism and death!

How with so much negativity and madness, Rotary International and its Foundation can they still claim to achieve a goal of peace and world understanding?

Have Rotary Clubs a reason to hope that the fourth goal of their association which tends to "the advancement of international understanding, goodwill, and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional persons united in the ideal of service" be a reality?

If tolerance, respect for others, justice, law, truth, equality, freedom, brotherhood ... are steps that lead us to peace, how to bring our practical contribution by becoming citizens of the world as we believe that Humanity is one?

How is woven internationally renowned Rotary allowing it thus to be rewarded, since 1993, the "general consultative status" within the ECOSOC, the Economic and Social Council, one of the main organs of the United Nations, by its member countries?

How the image of an "association of wealthy persons distributing bank checks to make own good conscience" becomes an association of clubs formed of men and women volunteers and humanitarian off-road who realized to convert bank checks in sustainable development projects, thereby capturing the recognition and partnership of the international community, regional and local?

The answer lies in the implementation of philosophy, mission and goals of our association within concrete and practical projects and the salutary announces strategic "areas of focus" aligning with the objectives of Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations.

If Rotary is "Humanity in Motion" which tracks are offered to us by the RI programs and those of its Foundation for "doing good"?

Finally I will submit a non-exhaustive list of tracks that [with the creative ingenuity demonstrated by French RI District 1650] could be adapted to countries' regulations, national and local customs:

- Increase awareness and support for programs of The Rotary Foundation. "Peace begins with me."
- Collaborate with local universities and schools to peace education, such as the excellent and ingenious initiative of the "Winter University" [videoconferencing on Skype] brilliantly organized 6 December 2014 by the District committee of "Action" of RI D. 1650 .
- Create with local governance a culture of peace in the community.
- Motivate and involve the new generation to MUN Rotaract [Model UN], Rotary peace programs and activities.
- Building peace on assets already done with others in the community.
- Share Peace: Be partner with Rotaract and Interact Clubs, Lions Clubs, the Red Cross or Red Crescent, the Scout movement and other NGOs.
- Spread values of peace with the media as well as through social media like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr...
- Joining the United Nations Global Compact which the RI has acceded. This partnership between Rotary and the Global Compact is to encourage networks of the pact and our 34,000 clubs to cooperate with the UN to defend our common values and to serve our communities.

- Take advantage of the experience and relationships of "32 ambassadors" who are Rotary representatives to the United Nations and International Organizations, by inviting them as speakers at Clubs, the District Conferences, peace forums and Rotary days.
- Participate in Rotary-day to the United Nations [annually at New York, November] and casual Rotary-days in the world such as at FAO [Rome, 23 February 2015], the Arab League [Cairo, March 5, 2015], with the UNESCO [Paris, April 4, 2015].
- Engage yourself and your club and District in Inter Country Committee -ICC and its international sounding activities including twinning, youth exchange, R.Y.L.A, global grants, vocational programs and projects of common interest. <http://www.rotary-cip-france.org> .
- Attend Rotary webinars such as the one organized in French language on Tuesday, March 3, 2015 [4: 00pm Paris time] on the "Rotary Centers" and peace scholarships. I invite you to sign up on the RI website [www.rotary.org/webinars](http://www.rotary.org/webinars) .
- Propose suitable candidates for 100 annual Rotary scholarships for Peace and Conflict Resolution in Master degree program and/or development program Certificate. Candidates should apply directly online at [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org) and then to secure the District endorsement.
- Polio Plus, Rotary's flagship, needs our moral support, our personal commitment during NIDs, our personal, clubs and Districts' financial support, our influence with local authorities, NGOs, media ... Nobody is immune against the polio virus and we are all affected by the outbreak in some countries, and its persistence in others.

Peace is therefore an activity, a commitment of everyday that begins in our individual consciousness and becoming a collective one.

As for Rotarians, peace is, the opposite of selfishness and indifference, the fruit of our commitment into needed projects focused, practical, productive and sustainable.

The late Dom Helder, Brazilian bishop, known for his fight against poverty in his country and the world, said: *"Never be afraid of utopia ... When we dream alone, it's still a dream, when you dream with others, it is already reality. "*

Peace be upon you. Assalam alaykum.