

The Culture of Peace for the Security of Future Generations

peace culture

International and Local Democracy : Way of Peace

*Desirée Campagna
Pietro de Perini
Marco Mascia*



Higher Education
Volume Three
3

The Culture of Peace for the Security of Future Generations

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“Everyone talks about peace but no one educates for peace. In this world, they educate for competition, and competition is the beginning of any war. When we educate to cooperate and be in solidarity with one another, that day we will be educating for peace.”

María Montessori

“...It is time for all to commit to be a force for good, a force for peace: to support the project “Culture of Peace for the Security of Future Generations”, contributing to a more secure future for mankind and for the coming generations...”

Michael Frendo, “*Committing to Culture of Peace*”



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The Culture of Peace for the Security of Future Generations

Higher Education \ Volume three

International and Local Democracy: Way of Peace

Edited by

Luigi Moccia

Written by

Desirée Campagna

Pietro de Perini

Marco Mascia

Supervised by

Touhami Abdouli



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Abdulaziz Saud Albabtain Cultural Foundation**

The Foundation Offices

Kuwait

P.O. Box 599, Al Safat, 13006

Tel: (+ 965) 22415172

Fax: (+965) 22455039

Egypt

P.O. Box 509, Al-Dokki 12311, Al-Giza

Tel: (+ 202) 33027335

Fax: (+202) 33030788

Italy

Via Tuscolana 650, 00173 Rome

Tel: (+ 3906) 57335212

Fax: (+ 3906) 57335366

www.albabtaincf.org

info@albabtaincf.org

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Acknowledgments

On September 7, 2017, I submitted a proposal to the General Assembly of the United Nations. If the proposal succeeds in being implemented, it will be a milestone for future generations. Its realization certainly depends on our united efforts, especially on our sincere will and determination to serve humanity. The proposal is a project entitled “Culture of Peace for the Security of Future Generations” and requires that all actors of the international community commit themselves to introducing special lessons on Culture of Peace to their educational programs and materials, starting from kindergarten and on to primary education, high school and university. This project has been welcomed by the General Assembly of the United Nations to which I wish to extend my warm thanks. The approval of the project represented an incentive for me to move on to the next steps in the concretization of my idea. On November 22, 2017, the Foundation opened in Rome Abdulaziz Saud Albabtain’s chair for Culture of Peace and took care of all its activities. We have entrusted the task of supervising it and teaching Culture of Peace to the European Centre for Democracy and Human Rights, which includes 100 universities from around the world. I have also decided to set up an international committee to oversee and guide in facilitating the task of those who will be teaching Culture of Peace to future generations. It was then that I presided over the first meeting of this Committee in Rome, on 23 November 2017, the day after the opening of the Peace Chair at the Centre of Altiero Spinelli at the University of Rome. We, then, held a second meeting in Rome on 28 January 2018 (two consecutive days), during which we outlined the content of the manuals. We also met in Lisbon, Portugal, on 4 and 5 April 2018, during the International Symposium held by the Gulbenkian Foundation on higher education during ‘emergency times,’ and also on the occasion of receiving the Portuguese government’s seal from President Marcelo

Rebelo. As a first step, we all agreed to prepare a “model manual”, to guide experts in their composition of manuals for all education levels. The experts took into consideration all the suggestions given by members of the committee, thus combining the best of propositions in drafting the proposal.

On September 5, 2018, I presented this Manual to the General Assembly of the United Nations at the high level Forum on Culture of Peace. It was accepted by the participants with a special request to add lessons on different tools to protect the cultural heritage.

Since that, as a second step the overseeing committee engaged the expert teams specialized in manuals composition. The selection of members of the teams was done on the basis of three criteria:

- **Experience in teaching and in subject matter;**
- **Mastery of at least two languages (English and French) besides the mother tongue, in each country;**
- **Geographical diversity: experts from at least two or three continents or more.**

The overseeing committee recommended the adoption of the best examples from diverse schools as well as the implementation of an English educational system in its British, American as well as Anglophone forms. It also urged the consideration of other effective educational approaches in other systems such as the Finnish, German and Italian ones.

The manuals are currently being drafted by three teams of specialists relying on the model manual which was presented to the UN General Assembly on September 5, 2018. These teams are:

- **Team of kindergarten, primary and basic education experts.**
- **Team of secondary education experts.**
- **Team of higher education experts.**

We urged the teams to finalize the manuals by the end of April 2019, so that we could present them to our guests at the first edition of the World Forum for Culture of Peace to be organized by the Foundation at the International Court of Justice in The Hague on June 13, 2019.. A number of world leaders as well as political, social and cultural actors will be present at this Forum. In order to ensure the comprehensive completion of our work within the deadlines, the overseeing committee entrusted Professor Touhami Abdouli, the General Di-

rector of the Foundation, with the coordination, follow-up, and supervision of the manuals. So my deep thanks to all the talented expert teams who composed the manuals and did respect the deadline:

- **Luigi Moccia**, University of Roma Tre, Italy.
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- **Imene Gramy**, French School of Kuwait.

I would like also to extend my deep thanks to the overseeing committee, which I was honoured to chair, for its continued support in our global humanitarian project:

- **Michael Frendo**, former Maltese Parliamentary Secretary and Minister of Foreign Affairs, currently a Vice-Chairman of the Venice Democracy Commission.
- **Charles Nothomb**, President of the North-South Dialogue Foundation, former Belgian Foreign Minister.
- **Patrizia Martello**, President of the World Academy for Poetry.
- **Laura Troisi**, Secretary General of the World Academy for Poetry.
- **Terje Rød-Larsen**, President of the International Peace Institute in New York, and the former U.N. envoy.

- **Adam Lupel**, Vice President of the International Peace Institute in New York.
- **Nejib Friji**, Director of the International Peace Institute for the Middle East and North Africa.
- **Luigi Moccia**, President of the Centre of Altiero Spinelli, Rome.
- **Michele Capasso**, President of the Mediterranean Foundation.
- **George Ulrich**, Secretary General of the European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratization.
- **Touhami Abdouli**, Director General of Abdulaziz Saud Albabtain Cultural Foundation, former Secretary of State of Tunisia for European, Arab and African Affairs (2011-2016).

In conclusion, these manuals could be enriched by your valuable remarks as they are designed for Culture of Peace which is always in process....

Culture of Peace does not need proof and evidence because it is evidence of itself.

Abdulaziz Saud Albabtain

Kuwait, May 1, 2019

Foreword

Committing to Culture of Peace

These “Manuals” (from kindergarten to elementary schools, high schools and universities) to be presented to the international community within the different activities of the “World Forum for Culture of Peace” that will be organized by the Albabtain Cultural Foundation on June 13, 2019, at the International Court of Justice (Palace of Peace) in the Hague, Netherlands, represent another truly worthy achievement of a man who, successful in his business ventures, dedicated himself to literature, to poetry, and to the furtherance of the idea of humankind living together in harmony, respect and understanding, which lie at the heart of Culture of Peace.

Abdulaziz Albabtain is a peaceful voice from the Arab World, passionately furthering an ambitious project to create an international community - within our reach - where we all together jointly assert our “common commitment” for the “security of future generations” by providing them with an educational formation in Culture of Peace.

Certainly, it is in our much maligned Europe, that we have managed to keep a peace for over seventy (70) years by undertaking a unique political, economic and legal construction on the bloodied soil of the very continent that was the cause of two World Wars in one century.

In the context of a shared European perspective, when we speak of Culture of Peace, the vision of the European founding fathers and its actual implementation are central to the theme. The choice was to seek political integration through economic integration and the first step was the sharing of what at the time were the raw materials of war with the European Coal and Steel Community. That dedication to peace is at the heart of the European project in the proven belief that the more the peoples and States of Europe manage to suc-

cessfully share political and economic sovereignty the less vulnerable they are to fall victim to the isolationism which is the breeding ground of war and conflict.

The achievement of the European Union stems also from the same post-World War II spirit of a collaborative and internationally linked world where the nation-state joins up in international organizations such as the United Nations and its Agencies. The Charter of the UN, in its very preamble makes it clear that “the peoples of the United Nations” have joined together “to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security”.

For long, in the immediate post-war and in my generation, we took for granted that these noble aspirations had been embraced by the whole world and that the commitment to the direction of international cooperation and sharing of decision-making was unswerving.

Worryingly, we are witnessing events and political choices which do not allow us to take this trend for granted any more. The euphoria of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the reunification of most of Europe soon subsided with the indiscriminate attacks on civilians by non-state terrorist groups that engendered widespread fear in the name of extremism, religious or otherwise.

The sharing of sovereignty in the European Union is under assault from the forces of populism and nationalism: the model of collaborative internationalism which is at the heart of peace in our times has given rise to new walls of nationalism instigated by many factors, not least the issue of massive economic migration, isolationism and nationalistic rhetoric of grandeur.

Perhaps never more than now, therefore, has there been a need to further Culture of Peace in our world - and the project of “Culture of Peace for the Security of the Future Generations” not only comes at an appropriate time but also takes on greater significance in the attempt to ensure that Culture of Peace, as the basis of security for future generations wins the hearts and minds of the new generations.

That great champion of peace and non-violence, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, better known as the Mahatma, put it very aptly, when he said:

“If we are to teach real peace in this world, and we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with the children”.

And the Mahatma was someone who knew about the consequences and suffering of choosing the road of non-violence to achieve his political goal of independence for his great nation. His dedication to non-violence as a matter of principle and belief was not a matter of policy. His commitment to discredit the dictum that the end justified the means was based on his conviction that the means were actually an integral part of the end.

“Non-violence is not a garment to be put on and off at will. Its seat is in the heart, and it must be an inseparable part of our being”, he taught. And “The attainment of freedom, whether for a person, a nation or a world, must be in exact proportion to the attainment of nonviolence for each”.

In showing effectively that there is an alternative to violence as a means to achieve political aims, Gandhi is a prime example of a champion of Culture of Peace in our world.

The same philosophy permeates the principles guiding the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization, UNESCO. Indeed, as stated in the Memorandum to a Letter by a number of States that requested for the first time a discussion on Culture of Peace in the United Nations General Assembly, the concept of Culture of peace and its propagation, “dates back to the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), adopted more than 50 years ago, wherein that organization is called upon to construct the defenses of peace in the minds of men because ‘a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of Governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and ... the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind’.”

Doing exactly this: the founding of Culture of Peace upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind, therefore, is a task to which we are all called: to ensure the security of future generations.

However in doing so, we must steer clear of the facile mixing up of appeasement for peace, lest we suffer the fate of Chamberlain’s waving of his agreement with Hitler in 1938 as proof of “peace for our time”. There is no

peace in the mollification of tyrants and in the resignation to evil, as was the evil of Nazism.

To achieve peace for our time, for which the believers of all three Abrahamic religions pray, we must ensure a peace of substance. While no one wants to fill in the cemeteries with the victims of war and conflict, neither do we aspire to a peace of the cemeteries.

There was no peace without justice, and it is right and just to continue to pursue that justice even today. Equally, there is no peace for the oppressed if there is no freedom for them. As Hanna Nassar, the former mayor of Bethlehem, that birthplace of the Prince of Peace, once told me when I visited him as Malta's Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2005: "We are not witnessing peace, we are witnessing piece by piece".

Dialogue and Understanding are the tools of Peace. Diplomatic effort at resolving conflict and international tensions must be unceasing, resolute and continuous in the face of what may seem to be a situation of hopelessness. In the spirit of the words of Mother Theresa, "Give but give until it hurts". We must pursue peace with that extra determination, until it hurts.

Peace must have a dividend. In this context, the international community must ensure that peace always has a dividend. And that dividend is upheld and is shown as a carrot for other situations of conflict which require resolution. When we place the violent actors on the same plane as the non-violent actors, when we do not show reward and progress for those who give up violent struggle for peaceful and diplomatic means for change, we are discrediting the value of peace. Peace must have a dividend.

There is no peace without reconciliation. After political change, in the turmoil of events, we need leaders who place a high value on reconciliation as a means of peace and security for future generations. Perhaps no better example can be found other than the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission which held public hearings on human rights violations for victims and perpetrators alike. Of course no one can deny that there is a fine line between dispensing justice and granting amnesty in the search for reconciliation and no one reality is the same as the other – but there may be times when, under given

conditions, seeking reconciliation becomes paramount for the nation to move forward in peace.

Still in furtherance of peace, reconciliation requires historical memory and the recognition of past mistakes. Speaking recently at the International Peace Institute, my friend and former colleague, Erkki Tuomioja, rightly stated that even where there are peace agreements, the unaddressed history you think you left behind can return “to haunt you and at worst can lead to renewal of conflict.” For, “if you do not know your history, you cannot see into the future.” In this regard, he mentioned the Armenian genocide the definition of which is still contested between Turkey, Armenians and others, and the slowness of Germany to recognize atrocities in what is now Namibia, and the British and the French in India and Algeria.

Real security lies in a global culture of peace and not in the balance of armaments and the race to the bottom. No military strength can protect all citizens in all circumstances and everywhere within one’s territory. Protection lies not only in collaboration with others in security matters and exchange of information but also in the victory of Culture of peace which in itself is a pre-emptive strike against war and conflict.

Peace and security lie in international good neighbourly collaboration in a world which needs to address its own global challenges of climate change, global warming and extreme weather and the ever growing wealth divide where just eight human beings own the same wealth as 3.6 billion people making up the poorest half of humanity.

Peace also requires a social security net provided by each Nation State globally. In many circumstances, extreme and hopeless poverty, morally unacceptable, is also the breeding place and recruiting ground of extremism and violent conflict.

Of course, it is tautological that, even in wartime, with the collapse of peace, no peace is achievable without renewed political process and engagement to stabilize and to heal.

Is the Abdulaziz Saud Albabtain project a project for dreamers? Perhaps it is, but dreaming a better future has been the basis for all true progress for man-

kind. And at the end of the day peace is no dream for those who have achieved it: it is a fundamental and precious reality to all of us in our time and the basis for all other facets of life. As good citizens, we must also secure it for future generations.

The drive for the development and furtherance of Culture of Peace therefore must continue, in our schools, in our universities, within the nation-state and on a multilateral and international level. We must continue to fight the good fight: that greatness is not expressed in nationalism, in military strength, in the nostalgia of former empire or in isolationism, that force does not overwhelm justice and that war cannot become more appealing than peace.

The imploration of Abdulaziz Saud Albabtain, on the 7th of September 2017, then in the 5th of September 2018, in addressing the General Assembly of the United Nations to launch a project entitled “Culture of Peace for the Security of Future Generations” where the entire international community, governmental and non-governmental would fashion peace based education and cultural manuals on peace in education globally “from kindergarten to elementary schools, high schools and universities” finds resonance in a General Assembly Resolution entitled “Promotion of religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation adopted on 3 November 2005”:

“Encourages Governments to promote, including through education, as well as the development of progressive Manuals and text books, understanding, tolerance and friendship among human beings in all their diversity of religion, belief, culture and language, which will address the cultural, social, economic, political and religious sources of intolerance, and to apply a gender perspective while doing so, in order to promote understanding, tolerance, peace and friendly relations among nations and all racial and religious groups, recognizing that education at all levels is one of the principal means to build Culture of peace”.

Peace requires also inter-religious dialogue, which I know is so close to the heart of Abdulaziz Saud Albabtain and for which he has contributed so much throughout his life work. Peace requires therefore a renewed interest in the values which are the foundation stones of the major world religions. In its programme “Towards Culture of Peace”, the United Nations rightly includes

promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and co-operation for peace in interconnected processes.

True enough, religions can be divisive and themselves a source of conflict. John Lennon and his famous song “Imagine” would not argue with that. But religions can and should also be a source of common and shared values. Peace is at the heart of Islam, (from Salem - making peace) and of Christianity (love your enemies) as in Judaism where shalom also means wellbeing and therefore showing peace as not just the opposite of war but as the ideal state of affairs.

It is time for all to commit to be a force for good, a force for peace: to support and commit to the work of Abdulaziz Saud Albabtain and of his Cultural Foundation project “ Culture of Peace for the Security of Future Generations”, contributing to a more secure future for mankind and for the coming generations.

Michael Frendo⁽¹⁾

(1) Speaker Emeritus of the Parliament of Malta and a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malta, Dr Michael Frendo LL.M. (Exon.), LL.D. (Melit.), K.O.M. is currently Vice-President of the Council of European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission).

This text is based on a keynote address by Dr Michael Frendo at the launching of the Al Babtain Chair for Peace at the Aula Magna of Roma Tre Universita' degli Studi on the twenty-second of November 2017.

INTRODUCTION

“Establishing lasting peace is the work of education....”

“Everyone talks about peace but no one educates for peace. In this world, they educate for competition, and competition is the beginning of any war. When we educate to cooperate and be in solidarity with one another, that day we will be educating for peace.”

María Montessori

Peace means education...If a child learns well in his early years, he will not forget, and the rules of living in peace... will serve as a guiding beacon.

Abdulaziz Saud Albabtain.

The Rationale

The project “Culture of Peace for the Security of Future Generations” proposed by the “Albabtain Cultural Foundation” intends to offer a meaningful contribution to the field of Strategic Studies, at all educational levels. The Manuals are designed to promote Culture of peace as a viable and essential component not only within educational institutions, but with an extended influence to local and international government policy-making agencies as well as religious communities.

The “Culture of Peace project” is envisioned to be introduced in the classroom at an early age and proceed on to all subsequent levels. It is a long term process which should provide both children and young adults with an awareness and respect for human values and rights. In addition to developing the skills of active listening, dialogue and mediation, its proposed courses with diverse levels of competency, include topics such as: guidelines for peace in today’s world peace and conflict theories; international/regional organizations; international treaties and conventions; intercultural dialogue: the role of religious institutions and communities in the current geopolitical context; and new threats to peace in the global context: resources, international terrorism, organized crime; as well as numerous others.

Why Culture of Peace?

Increasingly, international actors and analysts are advocating a holistic understanding of peace, to move from a definition of peace as the absence of conflict towards one of positive peace. Looking at peace from this perspective requires a shift in focus from identifying and combating the causes of wars to understanding the factors that “foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies, free from fear and violence.”⁽¹⁾ In fact, people would do anything to live a peaceful life. Peace, however, is not a certainty since wars are omnipresent in almost every society, ranging from civil wars to genocide. Moreover, due to the precariousness of the socioeconomic condition of a large portion of society, the inalienable rights of peace and security are often overlooked or thought of as luxuries. Those rights, however, have been proclaimed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as principled values which serve as an ethical code for people to follow all over the world, despite ethnic, religious, cultural, or racial diversity. When countries and people are victimized by the ravages of armed conflicts, it is arduous to guarantee respect for Culture of Peace. This is when education must step in and perform a major role. Indeed, to transcend the destructive repercussions of wars, Culture of Peace has to be established. UNESCO’s Constitutional Statement confirms this when it states: “since wars begin in the minds of men it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed”. In other words, it is of utmost importance to educate and enlighten people in order to guarantee them the knowledge and respect of their rights in the short and long terms.

It is insufficient to call for peace, long for it, or send an outcry against wars. Rather, it is imperative that we come to terms with the fact that education is the only valid weapon which will enable the citizens of the world to finally attain the long sought after peace. The study of Culture of Peace together with Human Rights should not be solely regarded as an academic topic of education, but rather as an essential tool for attaining behavioural change in favour of a more peaceful society which respects human rights.

In order to achieve the objective of establishing peace and respect for Culture of Peace in education, the aim should be to enrich and deepen the stu-

(1) NYU Center on International Cooperation. “Pathways to Peaceful and Just Societies”, available at: http://cic.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/peaceful_just_inclusive_societies_unga_270916.pdf.

dents' concept of peace in content as well as in its enactment. Teachers should be both informative and active. In other words, they not only need to provide their students with information but also present activities that implement the acquired information into daily life behaviour. Instilling peace in the minds and hearts of the learners will necessarily go hand in hand with Culture of Peace education; an education that advocates the universally acclaimed values of freedom, justice, and equality. If these values were to prevail, people would be able to coexist peacefully, in a conflict-free society.

Culture of Peace encompasses a wide range of subjects and sub-topics, but despite how far-reaching and fast-growing its realm may be, its objective derives from a simple maxim: doing unto others as you would have them do unto you, which is basically synonymous with human responsibility within a framework of shared humanity.

In order for Culture of Peace to be respected and diffused around the globe, universal peace values should comprise an integral part of education from the very first contact with a school setting, namely in kindergarten. Moreover, Culture of Peace education requires a combination of high-quality teaching and learning, intended to provide a well-balanced and fulfilling scholastic environment, which inevitably results in a better balanced and more contented society. Culture of Peace education should offer students the guidance and assistance needed to become responsible, law-abiding, and humane citizens in the real world and such can be achieved by setting up a comprehensive Human-Rights' education enriched with a goal-oriented, thematic, and tangible Manual, adaptable to all the subjects.

These Manuals seek to provide educators of all levels, from kindergarten through higher education, with the guidelines and teaching materials required to inspire and reinforce an awareness of Culture of Peace in learners. Though the manuals are intended to serve as guidebooks for teachers who seek to cultivate Culture of Peace in the classroom, the manual should not be considered binding, but rather adaptable and emendable whenever necessary, in accordance with the feedback of the scholastic community: teachers, experts, parents, students, etc. That being said, it is hoped that these manuals will not cease to evolve and will serve as means to an end rather than an end in itself.

‘Actions speak louder than words’

One cannot give what one does not have. Similarly, one cannot teach something one does not know and preach about something one does not personally abide by. In other words, students do not need to be solely instructed and informed about Culture of Peace at school. For Culture of Peace education to be effective, students need to learn not only how to hold Culture of Peace values in high regards, but also how to hold the destructive deep-entrenched ills in contempt. To do so, teachers must seek to show respect for Culture of Peace in their methods of teaching. For example, a teacher cannot lecture to students about the importance of justice as a value, and then use unfair treatment. That would be contradictory to say the least, and would discredit the teacher in the eyes of the students, who would not be convinced to take the value of justice seriously. Notwithstanding the fact that some academic subjects are not directly associated with Culture of Peace, instructors of any given subject can foster Culture of Peace values in their students through the set of behaviours they try to promote within the classroom such as mutual respect, acceptance, trustworthiness, dependability, solidarity, equality, and equity. These values carry the same weight in the Humanities and the Social Sciences as they do in the Sciences and Mathematics.

It is advisable that teachers include Culture of Peace in the content of their subjects as well as incorporate classroom activities centred on real life issues such as freedom, equality, and justice. In this vein, Ian Lister proposes the following guidelines for a Human Rights school, which could be very useful for the school of Culture of Peace since the Human Rights are basic elements in the education of Culture of Peace. The standards he suggests are tentative ones; nevertheless they are a good set of starting points for any school community that would live by principles of Culture of Peace. In the following quotation of Ian Lister we are replacing the term of Human Rights School by Culture of Peace School as the last necessarily contains the Human rights:

“- Its general structures and practices reflect a concern for the Procedural values which underpin (Culture of Peace), toleration, fairness and respect for truth and for reasoning;

- *It will respect the rights and fundamental freedoms of all its members, including the students, acknowledging that the members have these rights and fundamental freedoms by virtue of their common humanity;*
- *All are entitled to these (principles of Culture of Peace) and freedoms because of their common humanity, and there will be no discrimination against anyone on grounds of race, religion, social class or gender. In particular, the (Culture of Peace School), will regard and respect children and women as part of common humanity. It will guard against 'unconscious' or 'unintentional' racism and sexism;*
- *No one in the school should be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;*
- *Any punishment must be preceded by due process and a fair hearing;*
- *Everyone will have the right of freedom of opinion and expression, and of peaceful assembly and association. Students will be able to form, and belong to, issue-related groups which respect the ideals and procedures of (principles of Culture of Peace);*
- *The education practiced by the (Culture of Peace School), will be directed to the full development of the human personality, and will show a concern for brain and hand, and for intellect and emotions;*
- *Through its structures and its manual, the (Culture of Peace School) will promote understanding, tolerance and friendship between people of different national, ethnic or religious groups and a concern for the maintenance of peace. It will help its students to acquire the attitudes and skills necessary to facilitate peaceful social change;*
- *It will recognize that everyone has duties and obligations, as well as rights and freedoms, and that these will include duties to the community and obligations to respect the rights and freedoms of others;*
- *It will be aware of the relationship of rights and freedoms and duties and obligations, and that the relationship between the rights and freedoms of one (or of one group) and the rights and freedoms of another (or of another group) may be contentious issues. The (Culture of Peace) school will not be without - or seek to be without - conflicts and issues, for they are an essential element in political and social change.⁽¹⁾*

(1) Ian Lister, Teaching and learning about human rights, School Education Division, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 1984

Making one's teaching gravitate around the principles of Culture of Peace can be very rewarding even beyond the scholastic environment and benefit the whole community. The manuals do not intend to overburden teachers with extra-manuals tasks, but rather it is designed to serve as a referential didactic tool when including Culture of Peace values in the teaching of already-existing subjects as well as in promoting positive classroom behaviour. However, the manuals for Culture of Peace are not intended to be considered inflexible dogma; indeed, they are subject to ratifications and other suggestions when necessary. Basic Culture of Peace values will be examined and taken into consideration when choosing the different activities and tasks in order to promote an open-minded and considerate conduct at school. The different activities suggested as part of the manuals will not only be suited to beginners but also to students of more advanced levels, due to the universality of its message.

How to foster Culture of Peace in the classroom?

Teachers/ professors are encouraged to disregard conventional didactic methods when setting up the pillars for Culture of Peace teaching. The student needs to feel part of a close-knit unit in a secure atmosphere. In other words, the inalienable rights of the students need to be secured and guaranteed in order that Culture of Peace teaching is efficient and not incongruous with reality. Hence, the learning process cannot be passive, but it must engage the student proactively while placing him/her at the centre of the educational process.

Additionally, Culture of Peace education put into action should not be solely limited to epistemological and conceptual facets. It needs to be interdisciplinary as the focus will be allocated equally to three different fields: the first one dealing with information and knowledge; the second one with practice and projects; and the last one focused on dialoguing and deliberations. This approach to Culture of Peace education should synchronize the epistemological component with the practical one. For Culture of Peace to be assured and carried out in real life, its focus needs to be directed towards changing hackneyed mind-sets and replace them with positive, constructive attitudes. This should start at an early age so as to be more effective and easier to carry out.

Self-Worth

Self-worth on the one hand, coupled with acceptance on the other is one of the most imperative values that need to be addressed seriously and worked on at school. Hence, the learning environment needs to focus more on rewarding rather than punishing. This is a preliminary step towards creating a conducive environment for Culture of Peace. Self-worth can be attained by encouraging different points of view and uninhibited discussions in the classroom as well as acknowledging the fact that every student is entitled to an opinion, no matter how divergent it is from others' opinions. This would also contribute to developing other important values such as mutual respect and self-confidence. Teachers can also stress self-respect by involving the students in the course's outline and conception, which would not only boost their self-confidence but also imbue them with a sense of responsibility and give them a sense of purpose.

Class Arrangement

Deciding the students' seating arrangements is not solely for aesthetic purposes. Indeed, its effects far outweigh the eye-pleasing factor. The way students are seated in the learning environment; the way they are treated; and the way they are instructed are of the essence in determining the kind of persons they grow to be in the future. The classroom environment is actually a microcosm of the greater community. The more responsibility, trust, freedom of speech, democratic values, and mutual respect are nurtured in the classroom, the more it will be reflected on a wider community scale. Moreover, a class managed horizontally, i.e. in which the teacher does not order or direct students, but involves them in a two-way learning relationship, has proven fruitful. This does not mean a total hands-off approach to teaching, but rather that the teacher plays the role of mediator and facilitator of both the teaching process and the socialization process in class.

Problem-Solving

Dealing with conflicts in class, whether they arise amongst students themselves or between the students and the teacher should be handled in a way that fosters Culture of Peace values. As a matter of fact, it is essential to choose a

particular course of action to nip crises in the bud especially because in class, conflicts tend to transpire very often. Dealing with conflicts steadfastly actually enables students to acquire the much needed skill of peaceful problem-solving, which can then be put it into practice naturally in and outside of class. Instead of focusing on the problem itself, the teacher should underscore a constructive slant that leads automatically and spontaneously to finding a perfect solution. Methodically speaking, a teacher should first recognize the problem, opt for a specific strategy, and finally perform the reached resolution. If done accurately, this process is likely to teach students conflict resolution on their own, without even asking for a teacher to intervene.

Fighting the ‘Isms’

Whether it is racism or sexism or any other “ism”, deprecating or bigoted conflicts that stem from religion, race, or gender grounds must be dealt with seriously so that this kind of behaviour will not spread into the community. It is important to note that this type of hateful demeanour has been noticed at an early age. Hence, it should be remedied early on with the help of a culture of peace centred teaching. One way of combating discrimination is celebrating every chance of diversity in the classroom, be it ethnic, religious, racial, or national. Simultaneously, the Manuals should shed light on the common, universally acclaimed values that bring us together, and steer away from the traits that drive us apart. The same approach should be taken into consideration when dealing with students with special needs.

That being said, teaching Culture of Peace should go beyond manuals choices and extend its reach to the whole teaching method and the general learning atmosphere.

General Introduction

Higher Education Manuals

Manuals aim

Since wars begin in the mind of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed (Preamble of UNESCO Constitution, 1945).

These words are at the origins of the mission and of the activities of the United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO). The *raison d'être* of this Organization is a simple yet powerful idea: the conviction that, since “political and economic agreements of governments” are not enough for securing the support and the long-lasting commitment of the people of the world, peace must be founded on “the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind” (*ibidem*). After the Second World War and the scourges caused by the disputes among states, the UNESCO Constitution launched a revolutionary and still inspiring message to the world. It underlines that no change at global level and no permanent eradication of fear, violence and discrimination could be pursued without a permanent transformation of the individual’s way of thinking and behaving in the broader social context.

Thanks to UNESCO, peace – far from being considered just as “absence of war” – became a framework of action to be introduced in people’s lives in a holistic manner. Peace became synonymous of “culture of peace”, namely “a collective and individual ethos animating spontaneous as well as reflexive behaviours conducive to tolerance, openness and dialogue” (UNESCO, 2013). The concept of “culture of peace” was officially adopted also within the broader UNESCO system. According to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on September 1999 (A/RES/53/243), culture of peace is a set of “values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behaviour and ways of life” based on a wide array of individual and social dimensions, strongly coherent with the human rights para-

digm and the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). The “culture of peace” encompasses:

- **respect for life, ending of violence and promotion and practice of non-violence through education, dialogue and cooperation;**
- **full respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of states and non-intervention in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law;**
- **full respect for and promotion of all human rights and fundamental freedoms;**
- **commitment to peaceful settlement of conflicts;**
- **efforts to meet the developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations;**
- **respect for and promotion of the right to development;**
- **respect for and promotion of equal rights and opportunities for women and men;**
- **respect for and promotion of the right of everyone to freedom of expression, opinion and information;**
- **adherence to the principles of freedom, justice, democracy, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation, pluralism, cultural diversity, dialogue and understanding at all levels of society and among nations; and fostered by an enabling national and international environment conducive to peace (Resolution A/RES/53/243, Article 1).**

Because of its aspiration to change values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and ways of life, the realization of a culture of peace implies a fundamental educational challenge, that of “enabling people at all levels to develop skills of dialogue and negotiation, consensus-building and peaceful resolution of differences” (ibidem). This is why – as recognized by the UN General Assembly – “education at all levels is one of the principal means to build a culture of peace [...] and human rights education is of particular importance” (ibidem, Article 4).

The “Culture of Peace Higher Education Manuals”, a four volumes series, promoted by the “Al-Babtain Cultural Foundation” should be seen as part of this educational path, started with the constitution of UNESCO in 1945, continued with the various initiatives promoted at international, regional and local

level over the years, and still alive in the work of people and institutions that are convinced that in a world buffeted by change and affected by violence, discrimination and intolerance, a stronger mobilisation is needed to build peace in the minds especially of young generations. Indeed, the aim of these four manuals, addressed to students of Bachelor's and Master's degrees is not only to contribute to the recognition of education and human rights education as core components of the "culture of peace", but also to stress the crucial role that culture of peace plays in a global reflection in which universal values are reinforced by cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. Taking into account all the above, this vocational aim stands high in tune with the UNESCO approach, at creating "intellectual unity" between the different parts of the world, building bridges of dialogue and cooperation with other cultures in order to "positively contribute to universal civilization" (ALESCO Constitution, 1970, Article 1).

The educational approach to the promotion of the "culture of peace" should also be seen as an integral part of an action-oriented project linked with the objectives set by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on September 2015. Being an updated and more comprehensive version of the previous eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their related 169 targets represent a "new universal agenda" aimed at eradicating poverty and strengthening universal peace as a way for sustainable development, "leaving no one behind". Various principles have been put at the foundation of SDGs. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals are, first of all, about "people", since their objective is not only to end poverty and hunger in all their forms but also to ensure that all human beings can live in dignity and freedom. The SDGs are also about "planet" and "prosperity" because they aim at protecting and safeguarding the environment, at promoting the sustainable use of its resources and at guaranteeing to everybody the experience of a fulfilling life from an economic, social and environmental point of view. However, these Goals cannot be imagined as being separated from the realisation of "peace" since "there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development" (United Nations General Assembly, A/RES/70/1, p. 35). Only thanks to this, it would be possible to foster a "spirit of a strengthened global solidarity" that should guide the constitution of a global "partnership" for the realization of sustainable development.

Culture of peace and sustainable development are two sides of the same coin and, in the framework of these “Culture of Peace Manuals”, they are treated in a synergic and mutually reinforcing manner. Both cultural of peace and sustainable development are holistic concepts: they consider material conditions – disarmament, poverty eradication, food security and nutrition – as inseparable from the establishment of peaceful and inclusive societies characterized by education opportunities, gender equality and the sustainable use of resources. Both culture of peace and sustainable development are human rights-based: they reaffirm the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of other human rights instruments, stressing the responsibility of all actors to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability or other status. Finally, both culture of peace and sustainable development include an educational challenge: they regard people – and especially children and young women and men – as “critical agents of change”, as protagonists of the establishment of a “practiced peace” (UNESCO, 2013, p. 10), that connects universal principles with the real world and the daily life. The “Culture of Peace Manuals” fully endorse this empowering dimension: by promoting them, the “Al-Babtain Cultural Foundation” gives to students and people in general the necessary tools for translating peace and development into values, behaviours and actions that are relevant for their local context and rooted in a global understanding.

Manuals scope and methodology

The four “Culture of Peace Higher Education Manuals” – 1) Peace and Human Rights; 2) Peace, Human Security and Human Development; 3) International and Local Democracy, Way of Peace; 4) Education for a Culture of Peace and Human Rights – are imagined as up-to-date educational materials aimed at giving to Bachelor’s and Master’s Degree students a synthetic but comprehensive picture of the theoretical and practical linkages between the idea of the “culture of peace” and a wide array of other issues linked with the promotion and protection of human rights, international democracy and sustainable development. The methodological approach adopted within the four manuals can be defined as human-right based, multilevel, culturally relevant and action-oriented.

The Manuals are human-right based in the sense that they consider the international human rights principles and norms as the foundation of the “culture of peace”. For this reason, the discussion of the different aspects that characterise “peace” are done in constant reference to the most important human rights Conventions and Declarations, to the work of the various international, regional, national and local organizations responsible for their implementation and to the practices and policies of human rights protection and promotion in various contexts. In the framework of this work, human rights are considered as the *trait d’union* of all international, regional, national and local initiatives for the realization of the “culture of peace”. Being the rights that are inherent to all human beings whatever their nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status, human rights offer a fundamental conceptual lens for orienting the promotion of peace, democracy and sustainable development to the full realization of human dignity. By adopting a human right-based approach, these Manuals will be tools for students not only to increase their knowledge but also to develop their capabilities and to flourish as individuals freely, translating the “culture of peace” principles in responsible choices also in the daily life.

The methodological approach pursued is multilevel in the sense that these Manuals consider the protection and the promotion of human rights – as well as the connected realization of the “culture of peace” – as a mission that should be synergically pursued by different levels of governance, including international and regional organizations (such as United Nations, European Union, African Union and so on), states, but also local authorities, NGOs and civil society at large. According to the classic way of describing the human rights architecture, international human rights treaties establish obligations only on states. However, many globalized phenomena and global dynamics are less under the control of State’s sovereignty and an increasing number of non-state actors have a considerable impact on the effective enjoyment of human rights. Hence, while recognizing the crucial role of national authorities in designing and implementing human rights interventions, the Manuals shed light also on the fundamental contribution that, in specific historical moments and also nowadays, local authorities, civil society organizations and individuals have given to the advancement of the “culture of peace”, promoting grassroot initiatives that

have inspired the international standard-setting and the work of international organizations. This multilevel approach contributes at presenting the “culture of peace” as a shared mission that connects global and local actors, international principles and daily practices.

These four “Culture of Peace Manuals” are also intended to be culturally and professionally relevant. Their objective is, indeed, to discuss the protection and promotion of human rights, international democracy, peace and sustainable development with a particular focus on cultural specificities. By doing so, the Manuals try to be as much appropriate as possible: they discuss concepts and principles in a way that is pertinent and suitable to a given cultural modality or context, respectful of the culture and cultural rights of individuals and communities. This work also stresses the linkage between human rights, the culture of peace and cultural diversity. Considering cultural diversity as being embedded in the “uniqueness and pluralities” of humankind (UNESCO, 2001), the Manuals underline that the promotion of peace and human rights goes hand in hand with the valorisation of these diversities, in a way that promotes dialogue and mutual exchanges.

Finally, the methodological approach adopted is action-oriented in the sense that it aims at complementing theoretical and conceptual elements with practical ones, linked with programmes, policies and initiatives promoted at various levels in different parts of the world. This action-oriented approach is clear also looking at the structure of the four Manuals. In the books, each paragraph is complemented by one or more “insight boxes” containing additional materials such as international policy instruments, quotes from important historical figures, parts of research papers or best practices on the promotion of human rights and the “culture of peace”. This is meant to be useful to foster students’ curiosity and critical skills, stimulating them to look for further information and explanations also beyond the ones offered by these Manuals. The “insight boxes” are deemed to be essential to the educational challenge to which this work aims to respond, that of giving students not only knowledge about norms and principles but also instruments for making them able to translate the “culture of peace” into concrete and transformative practices.

1. THE IDEA OF A NEW DEMOCRATIC INTERNATIONAL ORDER

1.1 The meaning of international democracy

There are four main different approaches in studying global civil society as an actor for the democratization of the international political system, as developed by four different authors. All four refer to the same model of structural change in the international political system. David Held uses a “cosmopolitan democracy” approach; Richard Falk, a “human governance” approach; Robert Cox, a “neo-Gramscian” approach; and Antonio Papisca an “international democracy” one.

According to the “cosmopolitan democracy” line of reasoning, civil society is one of the actors in the global governance system which interact directly with the system’s institutions, giving voice, as well, to local volunteer groups and associations (Held 1995). In Held’s schema, civil society acts in a sphere of “cosmopolitan democratic law” delineating the form and scope of individual and collective action within State and civil society organisations; the sphere of a “cosmopolitical democratic community” defined as a new institutional complex of global scope, which receives its form from a fundamental democratic right, and assumes the government characteristics as far as it is able to make respected that right (Held 1993).

Held states that following on processes of change which developed in the 20th century – in the world economy; with the growth of economic, political, juridical, military and cultural interdependence; with the development of transnational relations and structures, the proliferation of arms and military technology, the explosion of pressing transnational problems oblivious to national borders – democracy must be reshaped and strengthened, both within national frontiers and beyond them (Held 1993). In denouncing the intensifying clash between national sovereignty and international law, Held recognises the need to democratise the intergovernmental organisation. In particular, he holds that the United Nations, being a universal institution, must be put in a position to exercise all the powers conferred on it by the San Francisco Charter, beginning with those aimed at protecting human rights and maintaining international peace and security. In this manner it would activate the collective security system foreseen by Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

Held believes the United Nations should act as a politically independent decision-making centre, and be democratised through the creation of a second Assembly, elected by universal democratic suffrage, and by revising the system of representation within the Security Council in order to allow adequate regional responsibility (Held 1993).

Another exponent of cosmopolitical democracy, Andrew Linklater, speaks of the need to create “post-Westphalian communities”, whose members would include not only states, but also NGOs, social movements and national minorities (Linklater 1998a). Citizens of the “Post-Westphalian State” would be subject to the jurisdiction of various political authorities; they would have multiple identities, and would not need to be united by social ties. In this state, citizenship would include the right to contribute to the decision-making processes of international institutions and to the international protection of human rights (Linklater 1998b).

There is no lack of criticism toward these scholars. According to R.B.J. Walker, the “cosmopolitan democracy” approach is too abstract, and shows little political commitment in considering the emerging global civil society; its analysis focuses on the role that local and national civil society plays in the global governance system (Walker 1994).

In sharing such criticism, P. Wapner focuses his analysis on the topic of “global civil society” and the role it may play in democratising the international relations system, starting from a grass-roots level. In particular, he examines transnational social movements advocating human rights and environmental protection. He makes an analogy with transnational interest groups, whose political importance, he notes, is directly proportional to the degree of influence exercised over State politics and inter-state conduct. Wapner speaks of a “world civic politics” differing from State power in that it has no legal status either to impose sanctions or to legitimately use force. He points out that the concept “world civic politics” clarifies how forms of governance in civil society differ from the instruments used by State norms; in any case, however, they are never fully autonomous or completely untied from State activity (Wapner 1995).

R. Falk has made solid, highly valid scientific contribution to the theme of “human governance”, shedding light on the role of global civil society and transnational movements (Falk 1995). He maintains that in order to change

the “de-humanising system of government” in the world, we need to spread a strong sense among people that they belong to global civil society; we need to reinforce international solidarity and the struggle against violence and exploitation; we need to promote respect for human rights and environmental protection throughout the world.

According to Falk, the building of a “human governance system” can come about not so much by promoting global government institutions, as by developing the practise of “transnational democracy”, seen as cross-border, grass-roots democracy. The goal of transnational social movements is, indeed, to spread a “global ethic” rather than construct a “world government”. However, if a world government must be created – which the author considers probable, given the growing demand for centralised institutions of governance for the world economy – then civil society organisations must also have a voice in decision-making, in the new supranational context. Falk speaks of grass-roots globalisation as an alternative to globalisation from above, imposed by the neo-liberal elite in politics and the economy, which concerns itself with defending not “human needs”, but the “needs of capital” (Falk 1995, p. 101). Like Held, Falk emphasises the need to create a global democratic norms structure, a “right to humanity”. Unlike Held, however, who believes that “cosmopolitical law” should originate from the top, Falk advocates a “right to humanity” built “from the ground up”; it should be rooted in global civil society, for this is the only way, says Falk, to free people’s minds from validating the identity of State sovereignty (Falk 1995, p. 101).

The “neo-Gramscian” approach, one of whose significant proponents is Robert Cox, sees civil society as an actor in “global power relations”; this actor has a double identity: on one hand, it is involved in “reproducing the world capitalistic hegemony”; on the other, it is involved counter-hegemonically, in organising a counter-power at the same level¹²⁰.

Cox notes that as agencies of the global economy, states join with the big economic interest groups in instrumentalising civil society in order to maintain social and political stability: for instance, by distributing funds to NGOs which, in Cox’s opinion, are spent for activities in line with neo-liberism (Cox 1999, p. 11).

The other identity of civil society is thus described by Cox:

Civil society is the operative field in which those who are disadvantaged by the globalisation of the world economy can organise their protests and seek alternatives. This may occur through local communitarian groups that reflect cultural diversity and develop social behaviour on a world scope [...]. Even more ambitious is the vision of a “global civil society” in which such social movements constitute, in synergy with one another, the basis for an alternative world order (Cox, 1999, p. 10).

In other words, Cox recognises that the presence of global civil society in the international political arena sheds doubt on both the ideology of neo-liberist power and the state-centric logic which still marks the identity of the international system. At the same time, he considers this transnational movement still to be weak, both organisationally (its capacities for coordination are scarce) and politically (its capacity for influencing decision-making processes is scarce). Cox notes that while global civil society may contain some of the elements of a world-scale alliance of counter-hegemonic forces, it has certainly not attained the status of such an alliance (Cox 1999, 13).

The issue of civil society transnationalism has found ample development within a sound body of theory concerning international democracy. This field of scientific analysis is proving extremely fertile, sustained as it is by empirical evidence of transformation at a structural level. Antonio Papisca, as if portending relevant scientific analyses of change in the international system following 1989, wrote in 1986:

Anyone who wishes to elude the determinisms of realist theory must employ conceptual courage and scientific curiosity, putting aside his or her “honourability” within the establishment of official culture and that of decision-makers. He must explicitly assume that: traditional international law, functioning to uphold this structure, is on the whole an essentially unjust order; it is “law without justice”, inhuman; the individual is its “object”; [...] the realist theory of international relations as one concerning the belligerous behaviour of sovereign States is, as such, so clearly scientific that it needs no further “realistic” reiteration. Once these assumptions have been brought into the open, the international relations scholar is challenged to theorise change for the international system (Papisca 1986, 24-25).

Starting from these premises, Papisca points to the historical need to widen the horizon of scientific analysis from the government-centred sphere to the

intergovernmental one, and from the transnational sphere to that of non-governmentalism: i.e., to that segment of the international system within which the “potential for change” is evolving, and pathways toward the humanisation of international political relations are emerging¹³⁰. The main goal is to draw up, within the flow of political theory, a “theory of international democracy” having a clear prescriptive accent, with the aim to monitor states’ behaviour from both inside and outside, through a process which the author metaphorically defines as “castration of their belligerous attributes” (Papisca 1986, 29). According to Papisca, the true actors in any “in-field experimentation” of the positive peace strategy are not sovereign states, inherently incapable of understanding such discourse, but the “new” subjects of international relations: transnational social movements and NGOs aspiring to human promotion. Papisca attributes such subjects with a threefold function: to diffuse at a popular level and in global public opinion, the culture and practise of positive peace and a strategic demand for change in the international system’s belligerous structure; to carry out pressing political action directly addressing intergovernmental organisations; and to promote a sort of “pan-human constituency” for a “New International Democratic Order, NIDO” (Papisca 1986, 9).

1.2 The strategy of “interstitial wedging” and the “Constituent for a new democratic international order”

Papisca’s analysis reflects a process-centric approach. It does not envision a complete institutional project for a new international order, nor the creation of a world government. Rather, it hypothesises a strategy of intervention towards such institutions of the international system, beginning with value choices; targeting international actors who share such choices, and who can play significant roles within the strategy, at the same level where sovereign states interact with each other (Papisca 1986, 30). In Papisca’s view, the democratisation process is a condition necessary not only in qualifying international institutions, but also in leading them to perform. The author’s level of analysis here, then, is that of the international political structure, with its particular juridical system, its particular governance structures, its particular styles of action. His basic premise is that the international political system, which is “not a completely ‘blocked’ system” – one closed to any action for change – can be penetrated by NGOs by

way of “interstices” open to the “wedge” wielded by values and actors different from those allowing the state-centric structure to reproduce; therefore, we may hypothesise a new international order even in the absence of world wars fought with traditional arms (Papisca 1986, p. 30).

Papisca asserts that the “systemic dysfunctionality” of “alternative actors”, i.e., those of NGOs, directly affects the “division of labour in international politics” (currently, the political “labour” is officially assigned exclusively among states). The dysfunction also affects the traditional systemic “regime” (based on principles of sovereignty, reciprocity, and non-interference in internal affairs). By these two effects, this dysfunctionality raises the question of redefining the international “political community” on the basis of three (no longer only two!) sectors of interest within the frame of international politics: national interests, intergovernmental international interests, and transnational, panhuman interests (Papisca 1986, p. 55).

International democracy, says Papisca, implies the definition, promotion and protection of pan-human interests; it implies shedding light on the governed and on their fundamental needs; it implies monitoring those who are assigned roles of political governance within the international system. “International democracy” is therefore defined as “international power of an international people, that is, participation, control, self-governance ensured by popular social structures operating on the international plane as well, in a distinct, autonomous space with respect to that of States” (Papisca 1986, p. 55). Papisca classifies such transnational structures acting to promote humankind, as structures of “international society” (they belong to the category of the *sociale internazionale*) (Papisca 1986, p. 79ss). These are the principle actors in the “nonviolent international revolution”, to be waged using two strategies: that of interstitial “wedging” aimed at democratising multilateral international institutions, and that constituting a “New International Democratic Order”, autonomously promoted and managed outside the limits of intergovernmental organisations, by subjects working in the name of pan-human values and interests (Papisca 1986, p. 87).

Papisca classifies these interstices according to three types: “status legitimating” interstices (e.g. international human rights law and consultative status for NGOs); interstices which are “embryonic forms of international democracy”

(e.g. human rights treaty bodies and other organs made up of individuals); and interstices which are “embryonic forms of international democracy” (e.g. the European Parliament, OSCE, Council of Europe, OTAN parliamentary assemblies, the, United Nations World Conferences). The NIDO Constituency is assigned the task of defining general orientation, guidelines and goals for the “nonviolent revolution”, as well as guaranteeing organic organisation, continuity and efficacy for interstitial actions. Besides being a “think tank of transnationalism”, NIDO must be a “‘forum’ exercising pressure also because it thinks and plans”; and an instrument of popular legitimation for international politics. One important function assigned to this civil society constituency is to unify “popular transnational consensus”, with the aim to contest belligerous institutions and to legitimate structures and actions encouraging change (Papisca 1986, p. 140). Papisca hypothesises three main goals for NIDO: to declare principles and norms; to foster the creation of new international organisms; to effect anomic actions efficaciously “demonstrating” the active, vital existence of the Constituency.

Today, nearly thirty years after creation of the “international democracy” model, we note growing attention towards this new analytical perspective: not only among scholars of international relations, but also, and above all, in the world of global civil society. The strategy of “interstitial wedging” grows richer and richer in its empirical manifestations: from consultative status with IGOs to participation in UN World Conferences; from Arria-Formula meetings with the United Nations Security Council to NGOs’ attendance at Assemblies of States Parties to the International Criminal Court. As regards the NIDO Constituency, it still has no single centralised structure organised at a universal level. However, hundreds of well-organised networks, federations and umbrella organisations are active, the latter united around given sectors or themes (environment, human rights, development cooperation, social justice, etc.). The radius for such groups’ action may be regional, continental or universal. The twofold strategy propounded by Papisca, that of “interstitial wedging” together with the NIDO Constituency, is highly active, then, in the international relations system, and is gaining important results in various areas, as we shall see in the chapters which follow.

The “sustainable statehood” approach (Papisca 1994, 2011) sheds further light on the normative pathways indicated in the “international democracy” model, especially as regards State (re)form and (re)definition of the “frontiers”

of the democracy experience in an era of planetary interdependence and internationalisation of human rights. The basic premise could thus be summarised: the governance crisis not only concerns the State's "capacity" but affects the very "border-bound form" of the State. The State is obsolete "in its form and in its traditional attributes"; it no longer makes sense "to conceive of and practise politics, therefore hypothesising institutional reforms, merely within the State: this State" (Papisca 1994, pp. 274-275). Papisca observes that rapidly evolving empirical evidence today demonstrates that the power to make laws and to coerce is no longer a State monopoly, but is shared, within democratic states, with local and regional governance bodies; and above State level, with several multilateral international organisations. The reference here, of course, is to the European Union, which can emanate legislative acts, such as "regulations" directly binding on the citizens of Member States; and to the United Nations Security Council which, pursuant to Chapter VII of the Charter, can impose sanctions against a State, create international tribunals (recall those for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda), and send Blue Beret troops into conflict zones.

A further, radical element detracting from State sovereignty, notes Papisca, derives from international human rights law: "The operative implications of recognising the international juridical personality of the human being subvert the old state-centric world order and compel us to make a new division of political labour, from local micro-areas to the planetary macro-area, starting with human rights: that is, from the essential needs of human persons and communities" (Papisca 1994, p. 279). We see a clear reference here to the principle of subsidiarity, revisited in light of human rights, as the regulating principle for the division of political labour among various governance levels.

Papisca's point here is that State reform – indeed, redefinition of the State – must be approached in a historical frame of global interdependence and growth in international organisation, both governmental and non-governmental. The "path to sustainable statehood" passes through the creation of new, democratic governance structures, "along a continuum or governance scale whose poles are local government and supranational government: on this scale the old State is reconverted into a new form of governance structure, whose functions are prevalently those of coordination and mediation between the two poles" (Papisca 1994, p. 279). Papisca considers "sustainable statehood" to be a "new

political culture” having the difficult task of responding in a “human-centric” perspective, and therefore, a democratic one, to the challenges of planetary interdependence and globalisation (Papisca 1994, p. 281).

In this context, democracy itself – whose crisis stems, in particular, from the insufficient “politico-territorial space into which the democratic experience has been squeezed”, the national State – must be organised at various governance levels, from the city to the United Nations. The sphere of civil society organisations whose goals are inspired by solidarity is considered a “reservoir and infrastructure of democracy in all its forms: political, economic, representative, direct, internal and international” (Papisca 1994, p. 294). Passage from the “border State” to the “sustainable statehood”, asserts Papisca, is a process which must develop both within states and within the international relations system. It must be based on extensive popular political participation; its steering value “compass” must be the principles and norms of international human rights law (Papisca 1994, p. 307).

1.3 Strengthening and democratizing the United Nations

It should be stressed that the question of how to strengthen the role of the United Nations in an ever more globalised cannot be addressed as a separate chapter from the wider agenda of world economic and political order, indeed it lies at the centre of the whole debate. This is not a new issue. It is a problem first seen when the United States and a considerable number of ‘western’ governments fiercely opposed the strategy of a New international economic order, NIEO, launched by the General Assembly in 1974, with a Declaration and attached Programme of Action (see the interventions of H. Kissinger in the sessions of the United Nations General Assembly in the years 1974 and 1975). During those debates a fracture occurred among western countries. France became the promoter, within the European Community, of the Conference on international economic cooperation, known as the North-South Conference (Paris, 1975-1977), however in the end proceedings broke down under the pressure exercised by the US and the divisions, more or less clearly revealed on that occasion, within the European community system. In “western” circles still, it should not be forgotten that even before this the subject of the world order, in its monetary and financial aspects, had been at the centre of a fierce dispute

between the United States and the European Community, following the latter's decision, as a result of the Werner Report in 1970, to create its own Economic and Monetary Union, or EMU. This initiative by Europe was certainly taken out of any sense of solidarity with the South of the world, but indicated a serious attempt to make itself autonomous from the US: in fact, it foundered and was subsequently watered down, as we all know, into the "monetary serpent".

The role of the United Nations was also heavily obstructed in the years subsequent to 1974, when following the famous McBride Report, UNESCO took the initiative of launching the strategy of a New world order in information and communication, NOMIC (1980). The United States, followed by the United Kingdom, went so far as to leave UNESCO. The NOMIC met the same fate as the NIEO.

Nowadays the role of the United Nations is posed dramatically in relation to the spread of war, the increase of terrorism and the increasing damage done in the name of neo liberalism and free market at all costs. The UN reform to strengthen and democratise is dramatically urging all of us.

The response cannot be low profile, as it was in the last three or four decades concentrating on aspects of a bureaucratic-organisational nature. These bureaucratic concerns undoubtedly required attention but were secondary to the strategic priorities such as those of the NIEO and of the NOMIC. At this point the procedure of publishing innumerable reports on the subject of the "organisational complexification" and "elephantids" of the UN was set in motion.

Attention was focused once again on the UN reform debate during the 1990s, especially in mid-decade coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the UN. But all it did was to generate more reports, more papers, endless empty proposals, like a cemetery filling up rapidly with tomb-stones.

The end of the forty years of cold war provided the structural premises to relaunch the model of world order as outlined by the United Nations Charter, further specified in the Universal Declaration of human rights, and developed in the other international legal instruments on this subject including, for instance, the UN Declaration of 1986 on the Right to development and the UN

Declaration of 1999 on the Right and responsibility of individuals and organs of society to promote and protect human rights (the so-called Charter of Human Rights Defenders).

In line with the changing world situation, the famous Report “An Agenda for peace” of 1992, prepared by Boutros-Boutros Ghali at the explicit request of the Security Council, emphasised that states no longer had any alibi for not proceeding speedily to implement the principles and provisions of the United Nations Charter on the subject of collective security.

Whereas, on the contrary, the decade of the 1990s and early 2000s is marked by the heavy, barbaric attempts of the remaining super-power, to hinder the direction indicated by the Secretary General. Then we have seen: the surplace to revive the authoritative role of the UN; a re-legitimation of war as a physiologic instrument in international relations; a disinterment of principles of the old law of armed and border State sovereignties; a containment of the role played by non-governmental organisations and by the “World Conferences”; institutional as well as economic de-regulation; and a strategy of the type “let the UN do what it is possible for it to do” (and not what it should do, in accordance with its Charter). No doubt this approach relieves the states of any responsibility legal or juridical to ensure that the UN is capable of functioning.

In the decade of the 1990s and early 2000s wars and massive violations of human rights have occurred. The UN is permitted to do only what is not in conflict with the interests concealed behind a vision of new world order which is antinomic with respect to that of the San Francisco Charter. The initiatives of the Secretary General aimed at affirming the authority of the UN are clearly opposed by the US as the reigning superpower and (implicitly) by its “allies”. In this connection the stands taken by the US Representatives in mid-1990s in the working groups on the UN reform are highly revealing.

“Humanitarian intervention” and “human rights” are formulae used and abused to justify military interventions in flagrant violation of principles and norms of the UN Charter and of the entire International Law. In the “Agenda for peace” it is explicitly stated that, up to 1992 (and thus, after the first Gulf War), Art. 42 of the UN Charter which legitimates recourse to force, had not found any application, thus confuting that the war operations in the Gulf had been carried out under the authority of the United Nations.

The war in Kosovo was waged in violation, not only of the Statute of NATO, but also of the provisions contained in Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, opening up the way to the uncoupling, indeed to the uprooting, of the NATO constitution from the UN Charter. The United Nations is more and more relegated, even forced to the notarial function of legitimation *ex post* of illegal “*fait accompli*”.

The logic of the preventive war in Iraq, first seen quite patently in 1991 takes its place within this trend, completely following this rationale, and with similar disastrous consequences. There are however three innovations. One is that President Bush Jr. no longer has any hesitation in speaking of “pre-emptive war”, thus institutionalising in words and works the imperial strategy of occupation and control of spaces considered vital for global American national interests. A second novelty, hopefully positive, is that the Security Council has refused to legitimise the Iraq invasion, then to continue in the notarial role of the *fait accompli* and, under the gaze of the whole world, it has imposed a juridical and political defeat on the US. An outcome which had not been envisaged by the neo-conservative strategists of unilateralism. Third novelty is the planetary mobilisation of people movements for peace backed by strong public opinion against the war.

Terrorism, warring “interventions”, “pre-emptive wars” have challenged directly and explicitly the heart of international law enshrined in the United Nations Charter. Violations of such law though flagrant, point to the fact that it is wounded and suffering, but not that it has been killed. This can be argued in terms of juridical logic, and empirical evidence. From the time the UN Charter introduced the paradigm of human rights at the core of international law, this has been provided with a set of fundamental principles which remain intact even if violated. The other argument is that never before had those principles been so defended: from John Paul II to non-governmental organisations, from solidarity movements to trade unions, and from the universities to schools of every order and level, finally the UN Charter and human rights are continual reference points. Never before, even if only in rhetoric has the “centrality” of the United Nations, been demanded in international relations and security, before and after 11 September 2001.

Recalling the “past history of reform” and aware of today’s economic and political reality, we think that global civil society should urgently exercise its

right-duty to summon those who have the power to decide: drop your mask, lay your cards on the table; when you speak of the United Nations, show first your model of world order!

There are two visions of world orders with which we are faced today: one is openly declared by the superpower, the other should be affirmed in particular by the European Union. The essential features of the two models can be briefly presented, “in contrasting terms”: the hierarchic (or imperial) world order and the democratic (and peaceful) world order. Their essential terms are below:

Insight Box 1 – Hierarchic vs Democratic World Order	
Hierarchic (or imperial) World Order	Democratic (and peaceful) World Order
Sovereignty of the states	Sovereignty of persons and people (human rights)
National security	Collective security
Power of veto (Security Council) and weighted vote (IMF, WB)	International democracy
“Alliances”, “Multinational coalitions”	International organisations
War	Prohibition of the use of force (except for policing purposes)
Settlement of conflicts: war and/or negotiation	Settlement of conflicts: prohibition of the use of force, negotiation, supra-national jurisdiction, military and civil policing operations
Single world market	Human development, self-reliance
Economic competitiveness	Social orientation of the economy
Maintenance of the present “terms of trade” North-South	New, more equitable international division of labour
Control of the mass media	Freedom of information
Cultural homologation, nationalisms	Safeguarding of diversity, multiculturalism, interculturalism, transculturalism
Protagonism of states and diplomacy, Summit practice	Many different and differentiated subjects: states, NGOs, international organisations, local and regional government authorities
Approach to the world order: <u>negative</u> peace “divide and rule”	Approach to the world order: <u>positive</u> peace “dialogue, cooperate, share”

1.3.1 The institutional (rule based) road to peace: democratising global governance

Regarding the global world scene, we see many real possibilities for mass mobilisation, which has never yet been possible to imagine, to give way since now to the reform of the United Nations and other multilateral institutions. The initiative should build, on one hand, on the embarrassingly ever clearer incapacity of the governments of the most powerful states to move beyond the terrorism-war-poverty-pollution-discrimination-exclusion spiral. On the other hand, it should count on a more comprehensive and coherent co-ordination of global civil society resources and structures (NGOs, movements, local authorities, universities), and create synergies.

The approach that we call the rule-based road to peace, giving priority to the democratisation of international politics, necessarily focuses on those aspects of building a just and peaceful world order that refer to principles, structure and functioning of the international organisations, and to the role of actors other than states.

The main assumption is that the democratisation of international institutions, procedures and policies is an independent variable with respect to peace-making processes and policies for human development, human security, global gender equality, and environmental sustainability, as well as to institutions and procedures for promoting and protecting internationally recognised human rights.

It is impossible to speak of international democracy and democratisation without making reference to the “institutional spheres” in which they can actually be pursued, whether the democracy in question is representative or participatory or direct. The major challenge lies in ensuring that the institutional spheres are suitable for carrying out the practice of democracy, first of all within themselves.

The strengthening of the UN and of the entire system of specialised agencies and of any other multilateral organisation presupposes, in order to improve both quality and efficiency, a more direct legitimation of the organs taking decisions at supranational level, and more popular participation in their decision making.

Present-day international language sees the recurrence of new expressions for international politics such as the “international rule of law” and “subsidiarity”. It is necessary to take advantage of these lexical novelties to extract operative consequences. We cannot speak of those principles if the institutional framework we are referring to, ignores or does not care the direct legitimation and representativeness of the decision-making organs, political participation in the decision-making, adequate ways to guarantee fundamental rights and subsidiarity, the role of the principal actors of the subsidiarity dynamics (both territorial and functional).

The injection of democratic practice in the multilateral institutions is the only way to break the intergovernmental monopoly, with its current tendency to be more and more summit-oriented and self-referential (finally plutocratic).

On the concept of international (or transnational or cosmopolitan) democracy, ambiguities both of language and conceptual thinking still exist. We need to be clear once and for all that democratisation of the international political system means the realisation of forms of genuine legitimation of the international institutions, and of popular participation in their decision-making. Accordingly, the actors in this twofold process cannot be the states. When it comes to guaranteeing government delegations in international gatherings the same voting right or a wider geographic representativeness in the composition of organs, the appropriate reference is to the principle of equality between states. Whereas the actors in international democracy must be the same actors as in the internal democratic processes: namely the peoples, in whom sovereignty originally resides.

In terms of principle, international legal recognition of human rights triggers the concern for international democratisation. As a matter of fact, the existence of multiple transnational networks, whether organised or not, of global civil society, on the one hand, and of a complex world and regional system of intergovernmental organisations, on the other, already provides a concrete answer to the question of the who (subjects) and where (institutional forums) of a correctly functioning international democracy. In other words. democratising the international institutions is, today, not utopia, but a real possibility.

Mobilisation with a view to building appropriate and functioning institutional forums, needs to involve five groups of “actors for change” within a “Global alliance for strengthening and democratising the United Nations”:

- **NGOs and various civil society organisations,**
- **Women global movement,**
- **Local and regional governmental authorities,**
- **Members of national parliaments and of the parliamentary assemblies of regional organisations,**
- **Universities, in particular the Human Rights Centres, and cultural institutions.**

It is hypothesised that mobilisation could occur at three levels:

- **Intergovernmental level, in the form of a participatory democracy of global civil society: strategy of “penetration into the interstices”, that is action within the international institutions, taking advantage of any opportunities offered (starting from the NGOs consultative status);**
- **transnational level, in the form of direct democracy exercised by the actors of global civil society: constituency building strategy through the convergence of movements, NGOs, networks;**
- **national level: within individual states, local action strategy.**

1.3.2 The “conventional way” to reform

One fundamental problem is the type of structure needed to draw up a document on the UN reform having more political “authority” than the reports produced by panels, working groups, “eminent” personalities, and so on.

From the standpoint of democratisation, the document should be prepared by an ad hoc body of a “plural” nature, that has a broader and more diversified representation than the intergovernmental bodies. Its composition has to break with the stagnating and inconclusive self-referentialism of the debate on reform at the United Nations headquarters.

The proposal would be to establish, upon resolution-decision endorsed by the General Assembly – where veto power does not exist – a “Global Convention for strengthening and democratising the United Nations”, whose composition could hopefully comprise the following representative segments:

- UN member states, by regional groupings,
- relevant institutions of the UN system,
- regional organisations and their parliamentary assemblies
- national parliaments (by regional areas),
- local government authorities (through the NGO “United Cities and Local Governments”),
- NGOs having consultative status and global civil society networks,
- Women global movement,
- Permanent Observers to the UN.

The final document of the Convention would be submitted to the General Assembly as the mandatory institution, for any suitable follow up.

Once the Global Convention has been set up, it would take into consideration any interesting proposals already drawn up in the milieu of global civil society and expert institutions and personalities.

There is no need to point out that the operation of political-institutional engineering would be carried out as indispensable for the effective achievement of substantive objectives such as indicatively:

- the prevention and peaceful settlement of conflicts, and thus the functioning of an effective system of collective security according to the strategy of “human security”;
- nuclear disarmament, the banning of arms of mass destruction, the supranational control of the production and trafficking in “small arms”;
- orientation of the international economy in accordance with principles of social justice, economic and social rights (“human development” indicators);
- the eradication of poverty and pandemics, the fight against pollution of the planet;
- the promotion of gender equality and of women’s equal participation in international affairs;
- strengthening the supranational machinery for human rights;
- developing the supranational machinery of international criminal justice;
- the effective coordination of the specialised agencies and the international economic and financial organisations;
- the creation of a system of “UN own resources”.

UN democratisation should be conceived as a process that urgently:

- will provide more representativeness to the Security Council, hopefully reorganising its membership on regional basis;
- will establish a UN Parliamentary Assembly, as a second UN General Assembly, and a permanent Global Civil Society Forum;
- will enhance the role of both non-governmental organisations and local government institutions;
- will reinforce the ECOSOC functions in pursuing social justice goals including the empowerment of the UN human rights machinery;
- will establish a permanent UN police force (both civil and military);
- will enlarge the mandate of the International Criminal Court and further empower it by human and material resources.

Insight Box 2 - Campaign for a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly (UNPA Campaign)

The Campaign for a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly is a global network of parliamentarians, non-governmental organizations, scholars, and dedicated citizens that advocates democratic representation of the world's citizens at the United Nations. A United Nations Parliamentary Assembly for the first time would give elected citizen representatives, not only states, a direct and influential role in global policy.

The campaign's mandate is based on the international appeal for the establishment of a parliamentary assembly at the UN that was published in 2007 and on subsequent declarations. Five international meetings on a UNPA have taken place so far.

The campaign's international action and strategy is coordinated by a secretariat that is hosted by Democracy Without Borders . The secretariat works closely with the campaign's steering committee , the co-chairs of the campaign's advisory group, and partner organizations such as the World Federalist Movement based in New York and The Hague.

The overall goal of the campaign is to mobilize government support for the establishment of a UNPA. While the campaign approaches governments, it simultaneously seeks to establish parliamentary support.

The campaign advocates a UNPA within civil society at all levels, gains support from non-governmental organizations, and works towards achieving popular awareness of a UNPA as a response to the democratic deficit in global governance.

Insight Box 3 - Appeal for the establishment of a Parliamentary

Assembly at the United Nations

Humanity faces the task of ensuring the survival and well-being of future generations as well as the preservation of the natural foundations of life on Earth. We are convinced that in order to cope with major challenges such as social disparity, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the threat of terrorism or the endangerment of global ecosystems, all human beings must engage in collaborative efforts.

To ensure international cooperation, secure the acceptance and to enhance the legitimacy of the United Nations and strengthen its capacity to act, people must be more effectively and directly included into the activities of the United Nations and its international organizations. They must be allowed to participate better in the UN's activities. We therefore recommend a gradual implementation of democratic participation and representation on the global level.

We conceive the establishment of a consultative Parliamentary Assembly at the United Nations as an indispensable step. Without making a change of the UN Charter necessary in the first step, a crucial link between the UN, the organizations of the UN system, the governments, national parliaments and civil society can be achieved through such an assembly.

Such an assembly would not simply be a new institution; as the voice of citizens, the assembly would be the manifestation and vehicle of a changed consciousness and understanding of international politics. The assembly could become a political catalyst for further development of the international system and of international law. It could also substantially contribute to the United Nations' capacity to realize its high objectives and to shape globalization positively.

A Parliamentary Assembly at the United Nations could initially be composed of national parliamentarians. Step by step, it should be provided with genuine rights of information, participation and control vis-à-vis the UN and the organizations of the UN system. In a later stage, the assembly could be directly elected.

We appeal to the United Nations and the governments of its member states to establish a Parliamentary Assembly at the United Nations. We call for all organizations, decision-makers and citizens engaged with the international common interest to support this appeal.

2. NGOs fundamental contribution to the human rights system

2.1. The Consultative status to the ECOSOC

Art. 71 of the United Nations Charter provides that “the Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organisations which are concerned with matters within its competence”.

The United Nations (UN), more than any other system of intergovernmental cooperation, has progressively promoted and developed dialogue with non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Such dialogue grew particularly intense in the 1990s, when the United Nations significantly involved NGOs in global governance processes. Today such organisations interact, albeit in different modes and forms, with all UN organs, including the General Assembly and the Security Council, and with all its specialised agencies.

The UN, then, must be credited with recognising in its statute the principle of participative democracy, therefore widening the operative scope, internationally, for civil society organisations (CSOs).

Relations between the UN and NGOs are disciplined by Resolution No. 31 of 25 July 1996, adopted by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in the wake of the widespread, qualified participation of NGOs at UN World Conferences held during the first half of the 1990s: on environment and development in 1992 (Rio de Janeiro), human rights in 1993 (Vienna), population and development in 1994 (Cairo), social development in 1995 (Copenhagen), women in 1995 (Beijing), human settlements – Habitat II in 1996 (Istanbul).

The concession of consultative status does not imply recognition of an NGO as an international juridical person; instead, it recognises the NGO’s usefulness for the functioning of IGOs. Consultative status confers officialdom on the role of NGOs independently of any formal, strictly juridical implication⁹. In other words, consultative status attests to the fact that given NGOs are considered qualified to perform international roles which are highly significant in the operational arena of specific IGOs. In short, consultative status is a recognition of the international function of actors; its political importance is manifest.

The attribution of consultative status – a unilateral act by the IGO – leads to the registration of the approved NGOs on the IGO roster. The registered NGO thereby has access to the documentation and meetings of given organs and programmes; it can intervene orally and in writing and receive funding.

The Resolution establishes three different types of status for NGOs at the UN: general consultative status, special consultative status and roster status. The number of NGOs with consultative status has grown enormously as years have passed (see chart 1).

Chart 1 – NGOs with consultative status at the ECOSOC over the years

Year	General	Special	Roster	Total
1948	13	26	1	40
1968	17	18	85	180
1992	38	297	409	744
1996	76	468	497	1041
2000	122	1048	880	2050
2004	131	1376	911	2418
2008	137	2072	976	3187
2010	142	2405	987	3534
2015	143	3544	978	4665
2016	136	3880	974	4990
2018	138	4053	972	5163

This exponential growth in the number of NGOs accredited with ECOSOC is due to various factors. The first is a direct consequence of the World Conferences organised by the UN in the 1990s: many NGOs which had established ad hoc relations with the UN decided to formalise their position by requesting consultative status. The second reason stems from the fact that Resolution 1996/31 opened the doors to accreditation of national NGOs as well, accepting the principle that “greater involvement of non-governmental organisations from countries with economies in transition should be encouraged”. The third reason is that – again, in the 1990s – the UN decided that NGOs already included by various UN organs and agencies on lists of automatically associated organisations could accede to the regime of consultative status.

Consultative status is the most important formal instrument legally authorising NGOs to exercise political capacities and roles directly “recognised” at the systemic level of international politics, and to interact, within the same institutional context, with a plurality of actors: IGOs, states and other NGOs. The main function which consultative status allows them to exercise is to articulate and convey the basic political demand.

Resolution 1996/31 brings an important contribution to democratic reform at the UN, since it establishes general rules in an area which, until very recently, was left to the total discretion of governments; it consolidates the principle of international democracy; and it fixes an important premise for the full exercise of popular political participation in the UN system.

NGOs with consultative status at the UN have created a Conference of NGOs having a consultative relationship with the UN (CoNGO), with the aim to facilitate NGOs’ participation in the UN system and thereby, their impact on policies and actions at all UN levels. In particular, CoNGO aims to improve NGOs accessibility and presence at all levels of the United Nations; enhance the effective engagement of NGOs with the United Nations; strengthen the dialogue between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations; engage NGOs to work together on issues of common interest; education / capacity development; work in partnership with UN civil society focal points; advocate on the principles and goals that NGOs and United Nations share.

2.2 The International Conferences and parallel conferences

The UN World Conferences during the 1990s marked a turning point in relations between the UN and NGOs. These conferences were heavily influenced by the presence of NGOs, which succeeded in carrying out effective advocacy and lobbying activities, helped to set up global agendas, mobilised world public opinion, and strengthened participation by civil society in the world’s South.

The World Conferences and their preparatory meetings were all flanked by parallel NGO conferences organised by the NGO Forum, which set up its own agendas. An analysis of World Conferences, as a global public space of highly compressed social relationship, is crucial to understand the content and dynamics of global governance (Clark at al. 1998; Friedman 2005; Tabbush 2005; Sadoun 2007).

According to Drainville, “as evocative as they may be as artifacts of global governance, global conferences give but a limited idea of the complex processes they present. They are maquettes freezing what is dynamic and presenting as a tidy, finished product what is still in the making” (Drainville 2004, p. 113).

UN conferences result from a complex series of events. The conference summit, the culminating encounter usually lasting for two weeks, is preceded by multiple encounters such as PrepComs (Preparatory Committee), regional meetings, seminars with experts. The preparatory processes, which last from two to three years, are guided by PrepComs, whose participants include representatives from governments of UN Member States, from specialised agencies, and from NGOs.

Only registered NGOs can participate in a UN World Conference and its preparatory meetings. Several governments now customarily include NGO representatives in their official delegation. NGO representatives may participate in the plenary session with observer rights and, in some cases, with speaking rights. They may also participate in working groups discussing themes central to the conference: for example, the plan of action and the final declaration; in such groups they enjoy observer rights, but rarely have the right to intervene.

However, NGO representatives enjoying the right to enter the conference room may speak directly to government delegates and to UN officials. Based on accreditation status, NGOs may distribute written statements as “UN documents”. Normally, NGOs may not attend informal meetings convened in order to reach a compromise over the most critical issues, by states participating in the conference.

While emphasising the intergovernmental nature of the conference and of its preparatory sessions, ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31 declares that participation by NGOs is welcome on principle, but that “this does not imply that such organisations are authorised to participate in negotiations”. By this caveat, states have guaranteed for themselves unhindered freedom of action in all negotiating phases of the conference. However, the resulting “democratic deficit” is overcome at least in part by a two-fold, synergic lobbying activity, carried out by

NGOs addressing national delegations and the conference steering committee. Such lobbying activity is destined to increase, for today, as we have pointed out, even national NGOs may gain free access to consultative status. In addition, members of parliament and NGOs lobby in order to persuade governments to include, in national accredited delegations participating in the international conference, not only government representatives, but also representatives from parliament and from CSOs.

A parallel NGO Forum is organised several days before the start of the official conference by a civil society network in collaboration with a UN official responsible for relations with NGOs. This allows NGOs to set out a common platform and to attend the UN summit.

The Conferences produce multiple results, relating to new juridical norms, new bodies, the planning of new policies and new modes of action. For example, the fruits of the Mexico City Conference on the Status of Women (1975) include the adoption of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the establishment of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW); and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). The Stockholm Conference (1972) deserves credit for creating the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); the Rio de Janeiro Conference, for adopting the Conventions on Climate Change and Desertification and the Treaty on Biodiversity, and for creating the Commission on Sustainable Development. The Vienna Conference on Human Rights (1993) created the office of a United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The UN Conferences constitute a forward-moving practise of international democracy, an exercise in active citizenship within the world political system. They form an open laboratory for global governance learning. Indeed, they help to promote new knowledge, to spread information at a “glocal” level; to foster a fundamentally project-oriented political culture among NGOs, legitimating their participation at an international level. The Conferences also strengthen international human rights law and the systems set up to protect it. The World

Conferences generate new “political coalitions” formed by government representatives, international officials, academic personnel, experts, local administrators, and representatives from NGOs and other social movements.

R. Falk points out that the transnational presence at World Conferences has helped reduce inequity among government delegations, in particular the knowledge gap; and that these United Nations arenas have added a multi-faceted dimension to democratic policy regarding some of the most controversial political issues in act among the peoples and governments of the world (Falk 1998).

2.3 The Glocal space of civil society mobilization

A myriad of civil society organisations act along a continuum of roles that start in local communities and go up to the sanctuaries of international politics. The big world conferences, convened by the United Nations, mobilise large civil society from all continents and regions, and provide the human rights culture the opportunity to express itself in the form of “value politics” and of transnational participatory democracy. In fact, the human rights paradigm constitutes a code of shared symbols that are used by significant actors of global civil society to communicate among themselves and with national and international institutions. It should be stressed that the topic of international legality based on human rights and multilateralism has become familiar to the trans-national world of civil society not only for denouncing, with competence and full legitimacy, dictatorships, hegemonisms, economics without justice, Realpolitik behaviours, but also for conceiving and proposing suitable policies, institutions, positive measures, and good practices to achieve goals of global (good) governance.

The passionate and creative reality of civil society organisations and movements acting across and beyond state borders demonstrate that civic and political roles, that is active citizenship, are no longer limited to the intra-state space, and that a suitable “geometry” for democracy, as advanced before, is really extending and building up in the world space. The traditional inter-state system was like an exclusive club of “rulers for rulers” the nourishment of which was assured by what cybernetics call “withinputs” (that is, demands and supports

by rulers for rulers, summitry practice), not by physiological “inputs” coming from the “ruled people”, that is from those human beings that we call “citizens”. Now the very “citizens”, especially through transnational organisations and movements, have visibility and legitimate room in the world constitutional space. Democratising international institutions and politics in the true sense of democracy – that means not “one country, one vote” (a procedural translation of the old principle of states sovereign equality), but more direct legitimacy of the relevant multilateral bodies and more effective political participation in their functioning – has become the new frontier for any significant human-centric and peaceful development of governance. Advocating an international-transnational democracy is already putting new citizenship into practice.

This large mobilisation is further legitimated, in a very specific and innovative way, by the United Nations Declaration “on the right and responsibility of individuals, groups and organs of society to promote and protect universally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms”, endorsed by the General Assembly Resolution on 9 December 1998, which will be further elaborated in Chapter 4. Needless to point out that the tasks relating to the defence of democracy and the construction of world order have a high political profile. Reference to civic and “public” roles of individuals and associations is clearly to be carried out from the city up to the world sanctuaries. The only legitimacy condition that is specified by the Declaration is that such roles should be realised “peacefully”, that is in perfect consistency with the logic of human promotion.

The space suitable for human rights is the glocal space which starts from the city - as territory, but not border - and extends up to the great sanctuaries of the international institutions. In our era of interdependence and globalization, this is the best space allowing us to build and operate good multilevel governance according to the principle of subsidiarity: that is, by starting out from the daily level of vital needs, as linked to personal and social responsibilities.

The Law of human dignity is also the Law of neighbouring: it cares for the vital needs of persons, beginning with the weakest and most vulnerable.

With simplicity and elegance, Eleanor Roosevelt shed light on the affectionate dimension of our topic:

“Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home - so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person: the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seek equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world”.

3. Localizing Human Rights

3.1 Cities as global and human rights actors

The complexity of the current global phenomena is affecting the capacities of the states and national governments of facing and managing effectively social dynamics. According to Papisca (2010), the “current governance crisis is a structural one, because it affects not only government capacities, but also, and in depth, the very form of statehood as it has been shaped and realised in the last centuries: the state as a national-sovereign-armed-border legal entity” (95). The states in its traditional configurations are no longer able to control phenomena that are complex and interdependent. Indeed, since social, economic and political realities, inside and outside the national borders are sensible and vulnerable to each other, a lot of key decisions are taken outside and beyond the states. In this scenario, local authorities play a crucial role since they allow for the emergence of specific and localized needs and the strengthening of democratic processes. They are the venue of vital administrative and social services, incorporating economics, educational and landscape infrastructures as well as artistic and cultural heritage. As underlined by Papisca (2010), “in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (UNGA Res. 53/144 of 9 December 1998), widely known as the Magna Charta of human rights defenders, local governments as organs of society share with states the responsibility to protect all those who live in their territories. Committed to defend life and pursue well-being for all, local governments are entitled to claim active participation in the construction of a peaceful world order following Article 28 of the Universal Declaration: Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can fully be realised”.

Coherently with these reflections, the Human Rights Advisory Committee (2015) prepared a research-based report on the role of local government in the promotion and protection of human rights, including human rights main-

streaming in local administration and public services, with a view to compiling best practices and main challenges.

Recalling that “the real effect of human rights is experienced locally” (Human Rights Council, 2015, 8), the Advisory Committee argues for an increased recognition of their role within the international system and the human rights machinery (see Insight Box 4).

Insight Box 4 - The local relevance of human rights

Local authorities are close to citizens’ everyday needs and they deal with human right issues on an everyday basis. Therefore, there exists a clear and strong connection between human rights and local government. When performing their functions, local authorities take decisions relating in particular to education, housing, health, the environment, and law and order, which are directly connected with the implementation of human rights and which may enforce or weaken the possibilities of its inhabitants to enjoy their human rights. Furthermore, local government is always facing the risk of discriminatory practices against perceived outsiders, such as immigrants or ethnic minorities, to the local community. In the area of housing, for example, “scapegoating, stigmatization and discrimination against homeless people” are often more pronounced at the local level. Integrating a human rights dimension in all local government initiatives is vital for addressing these violations. Actually, it is difficult to imagine a situation of human rights being realized where there are no local authorities to provide the necessary services. Local officials are thus responsible for a wide range of human rights issues in their day-to-day work. However, this work is rarely perceived as human rights implementation, neither by the authorities, nor by the public. Consequently, human rights remain distant as a frame of reference or analysis in most policies and practices at the local level, while they may actually be human rights in practice. In this regard, it should be borne in mind that the real effect of human rights is experienced locally.

Source: Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, 2015.

The Committee recognizes that, as matter of international law, the State as only single entity, regardless of its unitary or federal nature and its internal administrative division, that is bound by obligations stemming from international

treaties to which it is party. By becoming a party to an international human rights treaty, a State assumes obligations to respect, protect and fulfil human rights. More specifically, “only States are obliged to submit reports as required by the respective universal and regional human rights treaties, and only States can be the subject of individual or inter-State complaints under such treaties” (Human Rights Council, 2015, 5). However, the Advisory Committee also recognizes that while the central government has the primary responsibility for the protection and promotion of human rights, local authorities have a fundamental and complementary role to play, for a number of reasons. First, upon ratifying an international human rights treaty, a State may delegate implementation to lower tiers of government, including local authorities. For example, a central government may establish procedures and controls in order to ensure that the state’s human rights obligations are implemented. Secondly, local authorities are obliged to comply, within their local competences, with their duties stemming from the international human rights obligations of the State. Finally, and even more importantly, “local authorities are actually those who are to translate national human rights strategies and policies into practical application” (Human Rights Council, 2015, 6). This is why the Advisory Committee argues for an active involvement of local authorities in the drafting and realization of human rights policies, since “institutionalized cooperation on human rights between the central and local governments can have a positive impact on the level of implementation of the international human rights obligations of the State” (ibidem).

According to the Advisory Committee, the human rights duties of local governments follow the “classical tripartite typologies of human rights obligations”: the duty to respect, the duty to protect and the duty to fulfil. For what concerns the duty to respect, it means that local officials must not violate human rights through their own actions, requiring them to refrain from interfering with the enjoyment of rights and freedoms of all persons within its jurisdiction. For example, in relation to the freedom of religion, local government may not prohibit religious communities, beyond the permissible limitations, from using public squares or municipal buildings for religious celebrations. Regarding the right to health, local government may not deprive certain communities or groups of access to health care facilities. Regarding the duty to protect, it requires measures to ensure that third parties do not violate the rights and

freedoms of the individual. It is part of the duty to protect, for example, the fact that local authorities are required to take action to ensure that third parties do not violate the rights and freedoms of the individual or that they have to create safer urban environments that reduce the risk of violence, for example against women. As far as the duty to fulfil is concerned, it means that local authorities must take positive actions to facilitate the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms. This includes, among others, the obligation to fulfil the right to education by sustaining a good educational system or to establish local human rights mechanisms (such as ombudspersons or specialized anti-discrimination agencies) in order to fulfil the right of individuals not be discriminated against.

In addition to the tripartite typology of obligations, the Advisory Committee underlines that local authorities should play a fundamental role in promoting the understanding of and respect for human rights of all individuals within their jurisdiction through education and training. Since they can organize human rights training for their elected representatives and administrative staff and promote the dissemination of relevant information among citizens about their rights, “local authorities can help build a culture of human rights in the community” (Human Rights Council, 2015, 7). Moreover, local authorities are in the position of paying particular attention to the rights of vulnerable and disadvantaged persons such as persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities and indigenous communities, victims of sexual discrimination, children and elderly people. For this reason, the quality of services that local governments provide to such groups could be considered as an indicator of local authorities’ engagement for the protection and promotion of human rights.

Together with the necessity of strengthening the role of local authorities in protecting and promoting human rights, the Advisory Committee underlines also the challenges that these actors can face in pursuing this mission. According to the Committee, one of the biggest challenges facing local governments is the lack of political will, particularly in countries with non-democratic systems or with incipient democracies. Indeed, lack of autonomy, the absence of long-term vision/planning and/or commitment and centralized policies and structural adjustment measures may often impede the observance of human rights in the local governments. Another significant challenge is linked with the lack of the necessary resources and budgets to finance the implementation

of projects and services at the local level. Moreover, an effective protection and promotion of human rights at the local level may be diminished by a lack of adequate coordination between central and local governments, since a clear division of powers is a precondition for the implementation of human rights. Finally, human rights are often not realized at the local level because of a lack of information and proper knowledge: since they are not aware of the content and scope of human rights, persons in charge of local government fail to understand and incorporate human rights into local policy and practice. Notwithstanding these obstacles and challenges, a lot of cities around the world are promoting a wealth of best practices of promotion and protection of human rights, adopting legislative measures or implementing policies and programmes (Insight Box 5).

Insight Box 5 - Best practices of human rights protection and promotion at local level

[...] Some initiatives are building local governments' and authorities' capacity on human rights: Burundi has targeted police for human rights training; Mexico conducts sessions for civil servants on the new constitutional principles, including human rights; Georgia focuses this capacity-building on citizens directly, rather than on local governments; the Australian Local Government Association and the National Human Rights Commission in Australia work in cooperation to operationalize human rights locally.

In Hungary, local governments are required to analyse the conditions of disadvantaged groups in their area and promote equal opportunities for them. Luxembourg mandates Consultative Commissions for social integration – these commissions make recommendations to the local governments. Burundi states as a best practice the cooperation between local government and the United Nations system. Luxembourg is promoting multilingualism and multiculturalism in public services, such as for integrating migrants.

In Australia, the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission facilitate local government forums, and has developed a toolkit for local government. The Commission will review local government programmes and practices on request to ensure they are compatible with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, and will provide training to local councils.

In 1980, the Sakai, Japan, City Government recognized the sanctity of human rights, and affirmed that it would enlist the efforts towards the realization of a “Human Rights Protection City”. Sakai City subsequently advanced policy based on the human rights principles and later joined other local governments in formulating its own education and enlightenment plan called the “Sakai City Action Plan for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education”. Following on from previous efforts, in 2007 Sakai enacted the “City Ordinance for Community Development Respecting Peace and Human Rights” and the Sakai City Human Rights Policy Promotion Plan”, and has since comprehensively and systematically advanced human rights policy.

A programme of the People’s Movement for Human Rights Education (PDHRE), since 1998, included the development of 30 human rights cities and the training of 500 young community leaders at four Regional Learning Institutions for Human Rights Education. By 2007, PDHRE had trained 100 community leaders, and 17 human rights cities were in development.

In the Republic of Korea, several local governments and cities have been leading the human rights city movement domestically and internationally. Gwangju was the first human rights city officially announced in the Republic of Korea and Asia in 2010 with full-fledged programmes consisting of its Human Rights Charter, human rights action plan with human rights indicators, ombudsperson, etc. Other local governments, such as Seongbuk-gu and Chungnam Province, have also adopted the human rights city framework as a way to address the challenges in their own contexts, such as a district city within a metropolitan city and an urban-rural complex area.

Seoul, the capital of the Republic of Korea, has also declared itself a human rights city and adopted an ordinance in 2012 to protect and promote human rights for its citizens. The ordinance establishes a Human Rights Division within the City Government, human rights policies, a Human Rights Ombudsperson, as well as concrete measures and guidelines to safeguard adequate housing and protect citizens from forced evictions. Other human rights ordinances include the Ordinance on the Promotion of Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Ordinance on the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights of the Child and Youth. Human rights mechanisms include the Human Rights Division, which carries out human rights education programmes and builds cooperation with civil society, the Ombudsperson, the Seoul Committee on Human Rights and the Citizen Jury on

Human Rights Cases. Major policies on human rights implemented by the Human Rights Division include the Seoul Action Plan on Human Rights, to mainstream human rights in overall administration. Human rights sensitivity has been enhanced through human rights education for civil servants and by supporting human rights organizations and activities.

Like Brazil's ground-breaking City Statute (2001), the Mexico City Charter also establishes new rights at a collective dimension of certain individual rights, such as the social function of property. This is a key component of the right to the city that entails fundamental urban reforms and the redistribution and regulation of urban land for the purpose of constructing a more just and inclusive city.

The Alliance for Democracy and Tolerance against Extremism and Violence focuses on transferring successful projects and possible solutions among municipalities across regions of Germany. In certain cities, local equality bodies as well as regional commissions, human rights centres, equality bodies and other institutions are established by regional or local governments and maintained by law.²⁷ The "human rights city council" of the City of Graz (Austria) stands as one example.

In Slovenia, the Local Government Act (39) defines rights of national minorities and Roma population to have a formal representation in municipal council, and other municipalities might establish municipal bodies to deal with human rights issues. The programme for solving settlement issues of the Roma population is managed by the State and financially supported by the State budget.

In the United States, human rights mainstreaming in local administration is taking place through initiatives such as *Bringing Human Rights Home: How State and Local Governments Can Use Human Rights to Advance Local Policy*. It includes aspirational commitments to, and raising awareness of, human rights, reframing local concerns as human rights issues, reporting on local compliance with human rights treaties, conducting human rights-based audits and impact assessments, and fostering participatory governance. The federal role in respecting and ensuring human rights at the state and local level includes fostering additional reporting, monitoring and education initiatives. The Human Rights Institute at Columbia Law School in the United States works to promote human rights at home and ensure United States compliance with international human rights standards. The project advocates for

greater coordination of federal, state and local efforts to promote and protect human rights within the United States, working directly with state and local agencies. However, state and local efforts are ad hoc, patchwork and vulnerable to elimination through budget cuts.

In Denmark, a development project was launched: “The municipality and Civil Society” (2008) to test the extent to which new ways to share responsibilities between the municipality and civil society can help to increase the quality of local government tasks. There is an untapped potential – both in terms of new areas for closer interaction and in relation to the involvement of new groups of volunteers.

Graz is a member of the executive committee of the European City Coalition against Racism, the “Forum der Europapreisträgerstädte”, and the cities coalition “Cities for Children”, and was the Cultural Capital of Europe in 2003. In November 2009, Graz invited partner-towns to exchange successful methods of integration for immigrants against racism. Campaigns against racism and anti-discrimination have been organized with other cities and with NGOs.

Through its programme “Medellin protects Human Rights”, the City Council seeks to guarantee for the city integral protection, acknowledgement, restoration and reparation of human rights. The organs empowered for the implementation of this goal are the Sub-Secretary of Human Rights, which is composed of three Units, including a Human Rights Unit, whose activities and some of its programmes are described by the collaborator. The Unit has the duty to coordinate its actions with the diverse national organs, social organizations and NGOs. The Unit includes a Municipal System for Information on Human Rights, which consists of a tool for the gathering, processing and analysis of information related to human rights and International Humanitarian Law.

In San Francisco, the Commission on the Status of Women is required by a city charter amendment to conduct gender analysis of its commissions and boards every two years. There also, the San Francisco Gender Equality Principles Initiative is a programme that helps companies around the world achieve greater equality and build more productive workplaces through practical implementations of the Initiative. A Violence against Women Prevention and

Intervention Grants Program addresses domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking in a variety of San Francisco communities. San Francisco's Collaborative against Human Trafficking, launched in 2010, comprises a diverse array of community-based organizations and government agencies dedicated to eliminating modern-day slavery from the city.

Source: Human Rights Council 2015, 14-17.

3.2 The “human rights city” and the “right to the city”

The emergence of local governments as key actors in the promotion and protection of human rights is also strictly linked with the development of the concept of the “human rights city” and the “right to the city”. The idea of a “human rights city” refers in general to a city whose local government and local population are morally and legally governed by human rights principles. The concept was launched in 1997 by the People's Movement for Human Rights Education (PDHRE) and it was further developed by the World Human Rights Cities Forum, which takes place annually in the city of Gwangju, Republic of Korea. In 2011, the World Human Rights Cities Forum adopted the Gwangju Declaration on Human Rights, defining a “human rights city” as “both a local community and a socio-political process in a local context where human rights play a key role as the fundamental values and guiding principles”. According to this Declaration, a human rights city requires a shared human rights governance in the local context where local government, local parliament, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders cooperate to improve the quality of life for all people in the spirit of partnership based on human rights standards and norms. “The concept of human rights city also emphasizes the importance of securing the broad participation of all actors and stakeholders, in particular marginalized and vulnerable groups, and the importance of effective and independent human rights protection and monitoring mechanisms to which all people have recourse” (Human Rights Council, 2015, 12). The Declaration recognizes the importance of inter-local and international solidarity among cities engaged in the protection and promotion of human rights. Moreover, it lists the principles that should be put at the basis of a “human rights city”: democracy, participation, responsible leadership, transparency, accountability, non-discrimination, empowerment and rule of law. These principles have been

further specified and detailed in the Gwangju Guiding Principles for a Human Rights City, adopted at the 2014 World Human Rights Cities Forum on 17 May 2014 (see Insight Box 6).

Insight Box 6 - Gwangju Guiding Principles for a Human Rights City (2014)

Principle 1: The Right to the City

- The Human Rights City respects all human rights recognized by the existing relevant international human rights norms and standards such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and national constitutions.
- The Human Rights City works towards the recognition and implementation of the right to the city in line with the principles of social justice, equity, solidarity, democracy and sustainability.

Principle 2: Non-Discrimination and Affirmative Action

- The Human Rights City respects the principle of equality and equity among all inhabitants within its administrative boundary and beyond.
- The Human Rights City implements the non-discrimination policy which includes gender-sensitive policies as well as affirmative action to reduce inequality and to empower the marginalized and vulnerable groups including migrants and non-citizens.

Principle 3: Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity

- The Human Rights City respects the values of social inclusion and cultural diversity based on mutual respect among communities of different racial, religious, linguistic, ethnic and social cultural backgrounds
- The Human Rights City applies a conflict-sensitive approach to promote cultural diversity which is essential for the promotion and protection of human rights.

Principle 4: Participatory Democracy and Accountable Governance

- The Human Rights City upholds the values of participatory democracy, transparency and accountability.
- The Human Rights City establishes effective accountability mechanisms ensuring rights to public information, communication, participation and deci-

sion in all stages of municipal governance including planning, policy-formulation, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Principle 5: Social Justice, Solidarity and Sustainability

- The Human Rights City respects the values of Socio-Economic justice and solidarity and ecological sustainability.
- The Human Rights City promotes social solidarity economy and sustainable consumption and production as a means to enhance socio-economic-ecological justice and solidarity among urban and rural communities within the country and beyond.

Principle 6: Political Leadership and Institutionalization

- The Human Rights City recognizes the importance of collective high-level political leadership by the mayor and municipal councillors and their commitment to human rights values and vision of human rights city.
- The Human Rights City ensures a long-term continuity through institutionalization of adequately-resourced programs and budget.

Principle 7: Human Rights Mainstreaming

- The Human Rights City recognizes the importance of integrating human rights into municipal policies.
- The Human Rights City applies a human rights-based approach to municipal administration and governance including planning, policy-formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Principle 8: Effective Institutions and Policy Coordination

- The Human Rights City recognizes the role of public institutions and importance of policy coordination and coherence for human rights within local government as well as between national and local government.
- The Human Rights City establishes effective institutions and implements policies, with adequate personnel and resources including the human rights office, basic local action plan, human rights indicators and the human rights impact assessment.

Principle 9: Human Rights Education and Training

- The Human Rights City recognizes the importance of human rights education and learning as a means to foster a culture of human rights and peace.

- The Human Rights City develops and implements various types of human rights education and training programs for all duty bearers, right-holders and other stakeholders.

Principle 10: Right to Remedy

- The Human Rights City recognizes the importance of the right to effective remedy.

- The Human Rights City establishes appropriate mechanisms and procedures including the ombudsman or municipal human rights commission for redress including preventive measures as well as mediation, arbitration and conflict resolution.

Strictly connected with the development and recognition of the concept of “human rights city” are also the international policy documents and declarations that stress the importance of strengthening the protection and promotion of “human rights in the city”. The first declaration to address this topic was the European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City, adopted in 2000 in Saint-Denis (France) by a number of European cities. The Charter was founded in the recognition that, since the city is both “the space of all kinds of meetings [...] and possibilities” and the “field of all contradictions and all dangers”, this involves “the obligation to define certain rights more clearly”, imposing also the recognition of “new rights”. This declaration identifies the basic human rights to be protected and promoted in the city, grouping them into various categories: I) general provisions linked with the right to the city, international cooperation and principle of equality; II) civil and political rights of local citizenship; III) economic, social and cultural rights of accessibility; IV) rights relative to the local democratic administration; and V) mechanisms of guarantee of the human rights of accessibility. These categories have been put at the basis of the development of further policy standards and guidelines at international level.

In order to update and enlarge the contents of the European Charter, the Global Charter-Agenda for the Human Rights in the City was drafted by the organization United Cities and Local Government - UCLG in 2011. The following Insight Box 7 describes the mission and main activities of this organization.

Insight Box 7 - United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)

The United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) is a NGOs that represents and defends the interests of local and regional governments on the world stage. An inheritor of the century-old International Municipal Movement, UCLG was created in 2004 when local and regional authorities across the world decided to unite their voices before the international community. UCLG facilitates the work of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, which gathers over 30 networks active at international level.

UCLG aims to be the united voice and world advocate of local and regional governments. We promote the values, goals and interests of democratic, local self-government through cooperation between local and regional governments and with the wider international community.

The goals of this organization can be summarized referring to four main lines of action:

- reinforcing the role of local and regional authorities in the international decision-making process;
- mobilising local action in favour of development;
- promoting strong and effective local and regional authorities and representative national associations;
- promoting innovation for the benefit of local governance.

The UCLG actually involves more than 240.000 towns, cities, regions and metropolises and more than 175 local and regional government associations based in 140 out of 193 United Nations Member States.

A brief reference to the UCLG Policy Councils and Committees will give an idea of the wealth of activities carried out by this organization.

Policy Councils

The UCLG Policy Councils develop policy recommendations in relation to strategic topics for local governments' development. Concerning the 2017-2019 period, four Policy Council have been activated:

1. The "Right to the City and Inclusive Territories" Policy Council brings to the debate views on how to support inclusive housing policies and ensure the full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing for all, work with communities to upgrade slums and regenerate poor neighborhoods, and support the social production of habitat;

2. The “Opportunities for all, Culture and City Diplomacy” Policy Council debate how to protect the core values of culture, foster city diplomacy and cooperation through capacity development, and promote solidarity and peace as the bases for sustainable development;
3. The “Territorial Multilevel Governance and Sustainable Financing” Policy Council deals with effective territorial and multilevel governance, re-thinking and strengthening sub-national and public financing systems to reconcile financing with sustainability.
4. The “Safer, Resilient and Sustainable Cities” Policy Council debate how to implement local actions that can help to protect the climate, reduce the risk of disasters, enable social and economic vibrancy in urbanization and renewal, and build resilience.

Committees

The UCLG Committees are organized groups of local government members represented by politicians that get together to work on a specific policy area. A Committee has a dedicated Secretariat and a group of members coming from all Sections of the organization. It reports to the World Council, in close coordination with the Policy Councils. There are actually four different Committees:

1. The Committee on Culture is the global platform of cities, organizations and networks to learn, to cooperate and to launch policies and programmes on the role of culture in sustainable development;
2. The Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights brings together local governments committed to the advance of human rights and the right to the city in worldwide cities. In the framework of UCLG, it aspires to articulate a common voice for the world organization of local governments in terms of social inclusion, participatory democracy and human rights;
3. The Committee on Urban Planning aims at sharing urban management experiences among cities and local institutions improving knowledge of planning policies and tools;
4. The Committee on Local Economic and Social Development promotes a view of local development that must be constructed through public participation, it must strengthen decentralisation and it must involve an integrated vision of the territory, through participatory territorial planning.

This Global Charter-Agenda, discussed and approved by elected representatives, experts and representatives of civil society from all over the world, is based on the recognition that “the city is a political community in which all its inhabitants participate in a common project of freedom, equality of men and women’s right and development” and that “local governments must play a fundamental role in guaranteeing the effective exercise of the human rights of all their inhabitants” (Preamble). The Charter recognizes the following as the basic rights to be recognized and enjoyed at local level: I) right to the city; II) right to participatory democracy; III) right to civic peace and safety in the city; IV) right of women and men to equality; V) rights of children; VI) rights to accessible public services; VII) freedom of conscience and religion, opinion and information; VIII) right to peaceful meeting, association and to form a trade union; IX) cultural rights; X) right to housing and domicile; XI) right to clean water and food; XII) right to sustainable urban development. Each of These rights, defined according to the main UN human rights Conventions and to other relevant policy documents of UN specialized agencies, is accompanied by a suggested short-term and mid-term action plan, focusing on specific measures to be adopted at local level such as the development of increased cooperation with local associations and inhabitants, the realization of administrative reforms coherent with international guidelines and the realization of information and raising-awareness campaigns to reach also the most vulnerable groups of inhabitants.

The international debate and standard setting on the “human rights city” was complemented by the emergence of another very connected normative concept: the “right to the city”. This idea, first articulated by Lefebvre (1968), refers to the right of the inhabitants and users of the city to participate in local public affairs to participate in local public affairs and define the space of the city. In Lefebvre’s view, “the right to the city stresses the need to restructure the power relations that underlie the production of urban space, fundamentally shifting control away from capital and the state and towards urban inhabitants” (Purcell, 2002, 101). This right encompasses two fundamental dimensions: a) the right to participation and b) the right to appropriation. While the right to participation maintains that inhabitants should play a central role in any deci-

sion that contributes to the production of urban space, appropriation includes the right of inhabitants to physically access, occupy, and use urban space, referring not only to already existing space, but also to the actions needed to produce a new space able to meet to needs of people (see Insight Box 8).

Insight Box 8 - The “right to the city” according to Lefebvre

Lefebvre’s notion of the right to the city is at once complex and fluid. What I offer is not so much a meticulous restatement of Lefebvre’s arguments as it is an extrapolation of those arguments. I offer a set of principles that grow out of a close reading of Lefebvre’s writing. [...] I suggest that Lefebvre’s right to the city is an argument for profoundly reworking both the social relations of capitalism and the current structure of liberal-democratic citizenship. His right to the city is not a suggestion for reform, nor does it envision a fragmented, tactical, or piecemeal resistance. His idea is instead a call for a radical restructuring of social, political, and economic relations, both in the city and beyond. Key to this radical nature is that the right to the city reframes the arena of decision-making in cities: it reorients decision-making away from the state and toward the production of urban space. Instead of democratic deliberation being limited to just state decisions, Lefebvre imagines it to apply to all decisions that contribute to the production of urban space. The right to the city stresses the need to restructure the power relations that underlie the production of urban space, fundamentally shifting control away from capital and the state and toward urban inhabitants.

Since urban space figures so centrally in the right to the city, it is important to say a word about Lefebvre’s notion of space. He takes an extremely expansive view that encompasses

much more than just concrete space. Lefebvre’s idea of space includes what he calls perceived space, conceived space, and lived space (Lefebvre, 1991). Perceived space refers to the relatively objective, concrete space people encounter in their daily environment. Conceived space refers to mental constructions of space, creative ideas about and representations of space. Lived space is the complex combination of perceived and conceived space. It represents a

person’s actual experience of space in everyday life. Lived space is not just a passive stage on which social life unfolds, but represents a constituent element of social life (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 39; Soja, 1996). Therefore, social rela-

tions and lived space are inescapably hinged together in everyday life. Producing urban space, for Lefebvre, necessarily involves reproducing the social relations that are bound up in it. The production of urban space therefore entails much more than just planning the material space of the city; it involves producing

and reproducing all aspects of urban life. For Lefebvre (1996, p. 158), then, “the right to the city is like a cry and a demand... a transformed and renewed right to urban life.”

[...] The right to the city involves two principal rights for urban inhabitants: the right to participation, and the right to appropriation. The right to participation maintains that inhabitants should play a central role in any decision that contributes to the production of urban space. The decision could be under the auspices of the state (such as a policy decision), of capital (an investment/disinvestment decision), a multilateral institution (a WTO trade ruling), or any other entity that affects the production of space in a particular city. Moreover, the decision could be made at a range of scales. It could involve any level of the state (national, provincial, local), or corporations that operate at any scale (global, national, local). For example, inhabitants who have a right to Seattle would have the right to participate centrally in an investment decision of a corporation like Boeing (now headquartered in Chicago) that would affect urban space in Seattle. Lefebvre is clear that the decision-making role of inhabitants must be central, but he is not explicit about what that centrality would mean. Lefebvre does not clearly say that decisions that produce urban space should be made entirely by inhabitants. But it is clear that the role inhabitants play must be central and direct. Unlike the indirect nature of liberal-democratic enfranchisement in which the voice of citizens is filtered through the institutions of the state, the right to the city would see inhabitants contribute directly to all decisions that produce urban space in their city. Lefebvre gives some idea of what he sees as the agenda of inhabitants in making decisions that produce urban space.

That agenda is embedded in the second aspect of the right to the city, the right to appropriation. Appropriation includes the right of inhabitants to physically access, occupy, and use urban space, and so this notion has been the primary focus of those who advocate the right of people to be physically present in the space of the city (Capron, 2002; Isin and Wood, 1999; Lamb,

2002; Salmon, 2001; Mitchell and Staeheli, 2002). However, Lefebvre imagines appropriation to have a much broader and more structural meaning. Not only is appropriation the right to occupy already-produced urban space, it is also the right to produce urban space so that it meets the needs of inhabitants. Because appropriation gives inhabitants the right to ‘full and complete usage’ of urban space in the course of everyday life (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 179), space must be produced in a way that makes that full and complete usage possible. The use value aspect of urban space must therefore be the primary consideration in decisions that produce urban space. The conception of urban space as private property, as a commodity to be valorized (or used to valorize other commodities) by the capitalist production process, is specifically what the right to appropriation stands against.

Taken together, Lefebvre’s vision of the right to the city is therefore one of radical transformation of urban social and spatial relations. It would transform both current liberal-democratic citizenship relations and capitalist social relations. First, the dominant model of citizenship is entirely upended by the right to participation. Lefebvre’s idea entails much more than simply returning to or enlarging the established liberal-democratic citizenship structures in the face of governance change. Rather urban inhabitation directly confronts national citizenship as the dominant basis for political membership. Because citizens of Vietnam, Mexico, and the United States can all equally be inhabitants of a particular city, inhabitants must have a right to participation regardless of nationality. Therefore, the right to participation rejects the Westphalian notion that all political loyalties must be hierarchically subordinate to one’s nation state membership (Hettne, 2000; Krasner, 2000). It proposes a political identity (inhabitation) that is both independent of and prior to nationality with respect to the decisions that produce urban space. Moreover, as we saw above, the right to participation opens up decisions beyond the state. Unlike conventional enfranchisement, the right to participation expands the decision-making reach of inhabitants to all decisions that produce urban space. Lastly, the right to participation insists that inhabitants participate centrally and directly in decision-making. In place of the current regime in which capital and state elites control the decisions that produce urban space, Lefebvre imagines inhabitants as the majority and hegemonic voice.

Source: Purcell 2002, 99-108.

Building on Lefebvre’s work, the right to the city was specifically laid down in the World Charter for the Right to the City (2005), which was prepared by a wide range of organizations and networks, including UNESCO and UN–HABITAT (see Insight Box 9). The charter defines the “right to the city” as the equitable use of cities according to principles of sustainability, democracy, equity and social justice. It is a collective right of urban inhabitants that confers upon them the legitimate right to action and organization, based on respect of their differences, cultural expressions and practices, with the objective of exercising their right to self-determination and attaining an adequate standard of living. As evidenced by the Human Rights Council (2015), the right to the city is interdependent with other internationally recognized human rights, including civil, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights, as defined in international human rights treaties. For what concerns its institutionalization and concrete implementation at local level, the “right to the city” has currently been recognized by only few cities all over the world. Some relevant examples are the City Statute of Brazil (2001), the Montreal Charter of Rights and Responsibilities (2006) and the Mexico City Charter for the Right to the City (2010).

Insight Box 9 - UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities. It is the focal point for all urbanization and human settlement matters within the UN system.

UN-Habitat envisions well-planned, well-governed, and efficient cities and other human settlements, with adequate housing, infrastructure, and universal access to employment and basic services such as water, energy, and sanitation. To achieve these goals, derived from the Habitat Agenda of 1996, UN-Habitat has set itself a medium-term strategy approach for each successive six-year period. The current strategic plan spans from 2014 to 2019. While every new strategic plan is in continuity with the previous one, this approach allows for a better response to emerging urban trends such as new demographic, environmental, economic, spatial, and social developments. It permits necessary adjustments to address change and evolutions and creates opportunities to incorporate lessons learned.

The current Strategic Plan outlines seven focus areas: a) urban legislation, land, and governance; b) urban planning and design; c) urban economy; d)

urban basic services; e) housing and slum upgrading; f) risk reduction and rehabilitation, and g) research and capacity development.

These priorities are coherent with the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and with the connected New Urban Agenda. In 2015, member states approved the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) including a dedicated goal for urban development, SDG11 which calls to “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.” A year later, at the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development – Habitat III – member states signed the New Urban Agenda. This is an action-oriented document which sets global standards of achieving SDG11, rethinking the way we build, manage, and live in cities and stressing the coordinating role of UN-Habitat in realizing sustainable development at city level.

Through drawing together cooperation with committed partners, relevant stakeholders, and urban actors, including at all levels of government as well as the private sector, UN-Habitat is applying its technical expertise, normative work and capacity development to implement the New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal 11 – to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

3.3 The “city diplomacy”

In the view of better understanding the increasing global role of cities and local authorities and their responsibility in promoting an international world order based on the recognition of human rights for all, the concept of “city diplomacy” should also be addressed. The roots of this idea should be found in The Hague Agenda on City Diplomacy, adopted in 2008 by over 500 municipalities reunited in the first Congress on City Diplomacy organized by the UCLG. The Hague Agenda defines “city diplomacy” as the “instrument local authorities can use to promote social cohesion, prevention and resolution of conflicts and reconstruction in the post-conflict phase, with the aim of creating a stable context where citizens can live together in peace, democracy and prosperity”. Recognizing that “the role of local governments and their national associations in conflict prevention, post-conflict resolution and peace-building has been

insufficiently recognised and supported in national and international policy decision making, intervention strategies and research”, the Agenda proposes a series of practical activities to give a greater space to the cities in the world diplomacy and in the active construction of a culture of peace.

First of all, the Hague Agenda proposed to develop local government peace-building initiatives. The idea is that of encourage local politicians to take their responsibility and use their local leadership to participate in peace-building initiatives and to stimulate local governments to develop projects in this area and to mobilise resources to this end. The UCLG affirmed that a solid group of local politicians and local government officials who are available for activities related to peace-building should be built up and registered in accessible databases managed by the national associations of local governments. This implies also an increased recognition of the role of local governments in peace-building, stressing that national governments and multilateral institutions should be asked by UCLG and its members to ensure local governments' inputs in defining peace intervention strategies and to include local governments in post conflict recovery interventions and peacebuilding initiatives.

Secondly, the Hague Agenda underlined also the necessity of improving the quality of city diplomacy, enhancing the quality of the involvement of local governments and their associations in peace building programmes by stimulating research in the field of city diplomacy and actively disseminating best practices and experience built up by its membership in this field. This is also linked with the possibility of actively assisting local governments in situations of violent conflict, advocating and facilitating city-to-city cooperation between local governments which have faced conflicts in the past and local governments emerging from conflicts, in particular in respect to truth finding, the reintegration of former combatants, after care of victims, and creating conditions for the sustainable return of internally displaced persons and refugees.

Finally, the Hague Agenda stressed the deep connection between city diplomacy and the realization of a "culture of peace". Acknowledging that "a culture of peace has two dimensions, namely raising awareness of citizens for the importance of peace-building in conflict situations and promoting human rights and harmonious relationships within the municipality's own community", the Agenda encouraged cities to stimulate multicultural dialogue and the development of tools for awareness raising, as well as youth exchange programmes, production of school materials and adaptation of the press and communication strategies of local governments.

Papisca (2008) has well interpreted the importance of the emergence of the notion of "city diplomacy" for the recognition of local authorities as key actors in the protection and promotion of human rights and in the realization of a world order based on the recognition of human dignity:

“We are facing a political movement destined to grow and to pursue ambitious goals. Its exponents, mobilizing forces and creating synergies so to speak from below, propose to react to the structural crisis of statehood that has invested the whole world and whose negative repercussions - specifically linked with the scarcity of funds dedicated to social services - are affecting directly the local and regional authorities. The Hague Agenda emphasizes that to cope with the impact that the globalization processes have on the daily life of cities it is necessary the participation of all possible stakeholders, including regions and cities. The overall approach in which we could inscribe the civic engagement and the political action of the City Diplomacy movement is that of global governance, namely that of sharing a common strategy of human development and human security between various territorial levels, from the micro-local to macro-global. The architectural scheme is that of multi-level governance, considered as the most effective way to coordinate the efforts of three typologies of public actors: states, local authorities and international organizations. In this context, local authorities claim for an increased recognition of their role also within the organizational structure and the decision-making processes of multilateral organizations, including the United Nations.

The fact that local authorities have chosen the multilevel governance paradigm, to be implemented according to the principles of subsidiarity, respect for human rights, the rule of law, representative and participatory democracy, contributes to update and develop the federalist doctrine in a much wider context compared to the traditional horizon of that doctrine. Local government agencies are aware of the fact that the a de-territorialization process is in progress and that this is changing the very conception of politics as governed by traditional sovereign nation states. Without repeating the now common reference to the power of multinational companies, to the processes of globalization and to regional integration systems, a convincing argument concerns the typology of questions and needs that are now expressed in the world scenario. People, groups, associations, public and private bodies ask for measures that should be implemented both at national and international level: these requests focus on safety, well-being, healthy environment, protection of the human rights. It emerges from the bottom, in all its complexity, the problem of a correct and effective division of political work between the various levels with an implicit indication of (good) multi-level governance. Paradoxically but not too much, local governments, characterized by the fact of being “territorial”, are those benefiting the most from the phenomenon of deterritorialization. This is only an apparent paradox: the Municipality is territory but not border. It is a territory purified, at least in principle, from the diseases of discriminatory and warlike statehood”.

4. The human rights defenders

4.1 The international guidelines on human rights defenders

Through their committed work to advance human rights, locally, nationally and internationally, human rights defenders (HRDs) have a special part to play in the global civil society's effort to support international democracy and realise the human rights to "positive peace" as defined in art. 28 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized".

HRDs are persons who, individually or in association with others, peacefully struggle to advance fundamental freedoms and internationally recognised human rights, frequently complementing or even replacing public authorities and the state, and often risking their lives due to their commitment. Defending the rights of the defenders is therefore a fundamental aspect of human rights promotion and protection at all levels and is increasingly being understood as a globally shared priority.

Insight Box 10 - Human rights violations committed against defenders, and other difficulties they confront

Not all human rights work places human rights defenders at risk, and in some states defenders are generally well protected. However, the severity and scale of reprisals committed against defenders were one of the primary motivations behind the adoption of the Declaration on human rights defenders and the establishment of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights Defenders.

The Special Rapporteur has expressed concern for the situation of human rights defenders in all countries, including both emerging democracies and countries with long-established democratic institutions, practices and traditions. Nevertheless, special emphasis has been placed on countries where: (a) internal armed conflict or severe civil unrest exists; (b) the legal and institutional protections and guarantees of human rights are not fully assured or do not exist at all.

A great many human rights defenders, in every region of the world, have been subject to violations of their human rights. They have been the target of executions, torture, beatings, arbitrary arrest and detention, death threats, harassment and defamation, as well as restrictions on their freedoms of movement, expression, association and assembly. Defenders have been the victims of false accusations and unfair trial and conviction.

Violations most commonly target either human rights defenders themselves or the organizations and mechanisms through which they work. Occasionally, violations target members of defenders' families, as a means of applying pressure to the defender. Some human rights defenders are at greater risk because of the nature of the rights they seek to protect. Women human rights defenders sometimes confront risks that are gender-specific and require particular attention.

In most cases, acts committed against human rights defenders are in violation of both international and national law. In some countries, however, domestic legislation which itself contravenes international human rights law is used against defenders.

Source: OHCHR, "Challenges they face",

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/SRHRDefenders/Pages/Challenges.aspx>.

As already mentioned in Chapter 2, the milestone in the efforts of the international community and global civil society to set forth a normative framework for the protection of HRDs was reached in December 1998, after more than 10 years of negotiations among states, and lobbying from civil society networks by the UN General Assembly, which unanimously adopted the United Nations Declaration on The Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (or Declaration on human rights defenders). As mentioned by the UN Special Rapporteur for the protection of HRDs in his 2018 report to the General Assembly, the Declaration represents the fruit of the international community's evolving understanding and of its, at times reluctant, embrace of the role of HRD worldwide. The Special Rapporteur continues:

To be clear, human rights defenders were not born of the Declaration, rather the Declaration was born of the recognition of human rights defenders. The Declaration recognized a new approach to human rights as its founding principle: the centrality of individuals and groups within society to the realization of the human rights project. As such, it represents a paradigm shift away from a top-down, State-centric approach to the realization of human rights. 11. The Declaration was an act of international solidarity by the international community, through which it expressed its concern and support for the important role of human rights defenders in the enjoyment of the human rights recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Special Rapporteur recalls the aspiration in that Declaration to: “the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want”. As noted by the previous Special Rapporteur, “the significance of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders lies in its provision of legitimacy and protection to certain activities that protect and promote universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms” (Forst 2018a).

The Declaration is a fundamental document which articulates existing universally recognised human rights to address the challenges faced by HRDs at all levels. Significantly, along the document emphasis is placed on the right to “strive” (this verb is stronger than to act or to operate) to overcome any domestic border.

In setting forth these rights, the Declaration also defines the specific duties of states to protect human rights and those striving to protect them, as well as the responsibility of everyone with regards to actively protecting and promoting human rights.

Insight Box 11 - Responsibilities in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders

Article 2

1. Each State has a prime responsibility and duty to protect, promote and implement all human rights and fundamental freedoms, inter alia, by adopting such steps as may be necessary to create all conditions necessary in the social, economic, political and other fields, as well as the legal guarantees required to ensure that all persons under its jurisdiction, individually and in association with others, are able to enjoy all those rights and freedoms in practice.

2. Each State shall adopt such legislative, administrative and other steps as may be necessary to ensure that the rights and freedoms referred to in the present Declaration are effectively guaranteed.

Article 3

Domestic law consistent with the Charter of the United Nations and other international obligations of the State in the field of human rights and fundamental freedoms is the juridical framework within which human rights and fundamental freedoms should be implemented and enjoyed and within which all activities referred to in the present Declaration for the promotion, protection and effective realization of those rights and freedoms should be conducted.

Article 14

1. The State has the responsibility to take legislative, judicial, administrative or other appropriate measures to promote the understanding by all persons under its jurisdiction of their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.
2. Such measures shall include, inter alia: (a) The publication and widespread availability of national laws and regulations and of applicable basic international human rights instruments; (b) Full and equal access to international documents in the field of human rights, including the periodic reports by the State to the bodies established by the international human rights treaties to which it is a party, as well as the summary records of discussions and the official reports of these bodies.
3. The State shall ensure and support, where appropriate, the creation and development of further independent national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in all territory under its jurisdiction, whether they be ombudsmen, human rights commissions or any other form of national institution.

Article 15

The State has the responsibility to promote and facilitate the teaching of human rights and fundamental freedoms at all levels of education and to ensure that all those responsible for training lawyers, law enforcement officers, the personnel of the armed forces and public officials include appropriate elements of human rights teaching in their training programme.

Article 18

1. Everyone has duties towards and within the community, in which alone the free and full development of his or her personality is possible.
2. Individuals, groups, institutions and non-governmental organizations have an important role to play and a responsibility in safeguarding democracy, promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms and contributing to the promotion and advancement of democratic societies, institutions and processes.
3. Individuals, groups, institutions and non-governmental organizations also have an important role and a responsibility in contributing, as appropriate, to the promotion of the right of everyone to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights instruments can be fully realized.

Source: UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (A/RES/53/144)

Following the adoption of this Declaration the UN and many other international and regional institutions which developed a focus on human rights have established specific mechanisms and procedures to contribute ensuring the protection and promotion of HRDs in their policies and initiatives.

The UN Human Rights Commission established in 2000 a Special Rapporteur on this matter. Since 2014 the post has been held by Michel Forst from France. The tasks of this UN Special procedure include seeking, receiving, examining and responding to information on the situation of HRDs worldwide, establishing cooperation and conducting dialogue with governments and other interested actors on the promotion and effective implementation of the Declaration on HRDs, and recommending effective strategies better to protect them. Over the last ten years, the Special Rapporteur has started developing thematic studies and struggled to further expanding emerging typologies of internationally recognised HRDs including, for instance, those working to protect the rights of people on the move, those working in the area of business enterprises, whistle-blowers and environmental HRDs.

From a multi-level perspective particularly interesting developments for the protection of HRDs have been advanced by some regional organisations. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights established in 2001 a “special rapporteurship” on human rights defenders. The Office of the Rapporteur supports the Commission by preparing studies on the situation of HRDs and justice operators and particularly on the obstacles they face in carrying out their work. These studies also aim to help regional human rights institutions to identify and develop international standards for the protection of these people, as well as to provide guidance to states in terms of appropriate compliance with their international obligations. For instance, on the basis of the information collected and prepared by the office of this Special rapporteur, the Inter-american Commission on human rights published in 2006 a relevant Report on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders in the Americas, which contributed identifying the patterns of violations of those who work in the defence of human rights in the region, reaffirming the legal framework of protection afforded by the Inter-american system for the protection of rights, and proposing to the States Parties to the Organisation of American States, measures to legitimate, promote, and protect the work of HRDs.

As far as the African system for the promotion and protection of human rights is concerned, the Office of the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders, which is also Focal Point on Reprisals in Africa, shares similar functions with the above-mentioned office created in the Americas. A specific focus of the research work of this special procedure has been the protection of women HRDs in the continent, which has been the subject of a report published in 2014 (see Insight Box 12). Other areas of concern for this office are freedom of association and assembly in Africa and the protection of rights while countering terrorism in the Continent. On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Declaration on HRDs, the African Union has published in 2018 a “Compendium on the legal protection of human rights defenders in Africa” in order to bring together all the most relevant documents concerning the protection of human rights defenders in the continent, adopted under the auspices of the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Union, the OSCE and the African Union.

Insight Box 12 - Who are Women Human Rights Defenders?

There is no precise definition of women human rights defenders in the international and regional legal instruments for the promotion and protection of human rights. However, in her report on the situation of women human rights defenders, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders refers to the activities of WHRDs and individuals involved in issues related to gender and sexuality, including those working on sexual orientation and gender identity.

The Special Rapporteur describes human rights defenders as «a very heterogeneous group». Based on its experiences in the field, the Special Rapporteur on human rights in Africa suggests, for her part, that WHRDs are «any women engaged, individually or in association with others, in the promotion and protection of human rights and all those working for women's rights and rights related to gender and sexuality, regardless of their sexual orientation. This includes those who work in human rights organizations and the activists of grassroots organizations».

Thus, in the absence of a doctrinal definition, or any readymade definition, these two mechanisms attempt a definition of their own in terms of the real-life experiences of women human rights defenders. These definitions will be fine-tuned in the course of time and developments in the field of human rights.

Women human rights defenders can suffer backlash because of their gender and the work they do in favour of human rights. Because they are identified as women and human rights defenders, they are perceived as a threat to the «status quo». Women human rights defenders draw more hostility than their male colleagues because they challenge cultural, religious or discriminatory social norms and work to increase respect for the role of women in society. Their work is considered contrary to the stereotypes and dominant social and cultural constructs. The hostility and repression they face can take a specifically gendered form, manifested through verbal abuse, sexual harassment and rape.

Source: African Union 2014.

Moving towards the broader European human rights system, both the EU and OSCE has contributed to develop their own specific guidelines concerning the protection of HRDs in different contexts.

The EU has first adopted its Guidelines on human rights defenders in the framework of a broader process that the EU Council (the European institution that gathers EU member states' ministers) started in 2008 with the goal of providing all EU delegations abroad with specific directions to advance consistently human rights in the whole European external action. These guidelines constitute an important element in the broader EU human rights policy abroad and touch upon on a number of very relevant and sensitive human rights-centred issues such as the moratorium on death penalty, the prohibition of torture, the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief, the promotion and protection of the enjoyment of all human rights by LGBTI persons, the protection of children's rights in armed conflicts, promotion and protection of freedom of expression online and offline, the prohibition of violence against women.

These guidelines are prepared and updated by the COHOM, a working party dealing with the human rights aspects of the external relations of the EU and are adopted by the EU Council. Although these guidelines are not legally binding, since they are adopted at the ministerial level, they represent politically approved practical tools to help EU representations in the priority fields of European foreign policy on this specific matter. An example of the type of activities that are envisaged for EU delegations abroad by these guidelines is provided in the Insight Box 13, below.

Insight Box 13 - The Role of EU Missions in supporting and protecting human rights defenders

In many third countries EU Missions (Embassies of EU Member States and European Commission Delegations) are the primary interface between the Union and its Member States and human rights defenders on the ground. They therefore have an important role to play in putting into practice the EU's policy towards human rights defenders. EU Missions should therefore seek to adopt a proactive policy towards human rights defenders. They should at the same time be aware that in certain cases EU action could lead to threats

or attacks against human rights defenders. They should therefore where appropriate consult with human rights defenders in relation to actions which might be contemplated. Measures that EU Missions could take include:

co-ordinating closely and sharing information on human rights defenders, including those at risk;

maintaining, suitable contacts with human rights defenders, including by receiving them in Missions and visiting their areas of work, consideration could be given to appointing specific liaison officers, where necessary on a burden sharing basis, for this purpose;

providing, as and where appropriate, visible recognition to human rights defenders, through the use of appropriate publicity, visits or invitations;

attending and observing, where appropriate, trials of human rights defenders.

Source: European Union 2008, item 10.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) published through its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) its “Guidelines on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders” in 2014. This document was intended as a contribution to support the effective work of men and women human rights defenders in all OSCE Participating States. The OSCE guidelines, based on the Organization commitments and on internationally agreed standards, do not set new standards or seek to create “special” rights for HRDs but concentrate on the protection of the human rights of those who are at risk as a result of their human rights work. They also try to encourage states in the OSCE area to improve their normative and policy efforts to protect HRDs within their territories.

Following the adoption of this document, the OSCE/ODIHR has continued working on the development, application and monitoring of these standards. Since 2016, the ODIHR has been training HRDs to more effectively contribute to improving the human rights situation in their countries and beyond, while paying due attention to their own security and that of the people they work with. This training has been designed to strengthen HRDs’ knowledge and understanding of national and international human rights instruments, as well as of key principles and concepts related to the human rights monitoring cycle, thus contributing to improving the monitoring, reporting and advocacy skills of participants and increasing their ability to stay safe while doing their work.

In 2017 the OIHR also adopted the report “‘The Responsibility of States’: Protection of Human Rights Defenders in the OSCE Region (2014-2016)” on the implementation of the international standards presented in the guidelines on the protection of HRDs. In this report, the ODIHR provides an overview of the most critical challenges faced by the human rights defenders in the OSCE region, together with a set of best practices developed in the States Parties to the Organisation for the protection of these people and various recommendations.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, an increasing role for the protection of HRDs is played by global civil society and local authorities. November 2018 has seen the first Global Summit of human rights defenders, organised in Paris by a network of international human rights NGOs, including both major organisations with a global human rights scope, such as Amnesty International and the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), and organisations that devote their mandate specifically to the issue of HRDs, such as Front Line Defenders and Protect Defenders. On their part, small and big cities, especially in Europe, have started to develop “shelter cities” initiatives, devoted to offering temporary relocation, training and safety to international human rights defenders who fight against violations in their home countries (see section 4.3). In the specific academic sector, a similar initiative is performed by the “Scholars at Risk” network, as show in the following Insight Box 14.

Insight Box 14 – Scholars at Risk

Scholars at Risk is an international network of institutions and individuals whose mission it is to protect scholars and promote academic freedom.

By arranging temporary academic positions at member universities and colleges, Scholars at Risk offers safety to scholars facing grave threats, so scholars’ ideas are not lost and they can keep working until conditions improve and they are able to return to their home countries.

Scholars at Risk also provides advisory services for scholars and hosts, campaigns for scholars who are imprisoned or silenced in their home countries, monitoring of attacks on higher education communities worldwide, and leadership in deploying new tools and strategies for promoting academic freedom and improving respect for university values everywhere.

Started in 1999 on imitative of the University of Chicago, the network has grown to 506 universities, colleges and associations in 37 countries. These are organized into country sections, with a total of 9 national sections so far, with several more forming. These are joined by 8 partner networks— partnerships with leading higher education associations that help extend the reach of Scholar at Risk activities to every region of the world. All of this means more opportunities and more support for at-risk scholars, and more voices promoting academic freedom for universities and colleges everywhere.

According to the Summary Report on Activities 2016-2017, the main scholars' origins include Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Iran and Ethiopia. The main risks for scholars are arrest/imprisonment, insecurity/conflict, wrongful dismissal, harassments/threats and killing disappearance.

4.2 Human rights defenders in action

As shown by the growing number of initiatives by international institutions, local authorities and global civil society, including academia, being a HRDs is rarely a safe activity, especially in some areas of the world. A few figures, provided in the context of the Global Summit of Paris in November 2018, give an idea of the extent of the risks met by those who, whether aware or not of being a HRD, decide to strive, individually or in association with others, to advance human rights. More than 3,5000 HRDs are estimated to have been killed worldwide since the adoption of the Declaration on HRDs in 1998, only 312 killed in 2017, showing a worsening trend (136 defenders killed in 2014, 156 in 2015 and 281 in 2016). Over half of HRDs killed in 2015 and more than three-quarters of HRDs killed in 2016 were in the Americas region; 106 HRDs were killed in Colombia in 2017, 66 in Brazil in 2016; a total of 58 defenders were killed between January and August 2017, mostly indigenous people, rural landless workers, and others working on issues related to the land, territory and the environment.

Indeed, the situation of environmental HRDs is particularly concerning as stressed in his 2018 annual report to the UN General Assembly, by John Knox, UN Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment:

[...] States have obligations to protect environmental human rights defenders, namely, individuals and groups striving to protect and promote human rights relating to the environment (see A/71/281, para. 7). Those who work to protect the environment on which the enjoyment of human rights depends are protecting and promoting human rights as well, whether or not they self-identify as human rights defenders. They are among the human rights defenders most at risk. On average, four environmental defenders are killed every week because of their work, and countless more receive threats, suffer violence, are unlawfully detained or are otherwise harassed.

27. Like other human rights defenders, environmental human rights defenders are entitled to all the rights and protections set out in the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, including the rights to be protected in their work and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights at the national and international levels. To that end, States must provide a safe and enabling environment for defenders to operate free from threats, harassment, intimidation and violence. The requirements for such an environment include that States adopt and implement laws that protect human rights defenders in accordance with international human rights standards; publicly recognize the contributions of human rights defenders to society and ensure that their work is not criminalized or stigmatized; develop, in consultation with human rights defenders, effective programmes for protection and early warning; provide appropriate training for security and law enforcement officials; ensure the prompt and impartial investigation of threats and violations and the prosecution of alleged perpetrators; and provide for effective remedies for violations, including appropriate compensation.

Another field of action that is particularly risky for HRDs is that related to media, with specific regards to investigative reporting. For instance, according to the Council of Europe's 2019 report on "Democracy at risk: threats and attacks against media freedom in Europe", "press freedom in Europe is more fragile now than at any time since the end of the Cold War. Journalists increasingly face obstruction, hostility and violence as they investigate and report on behalf of the public", which calls for urgent actions backed by a determined show of political will by Council of Europe Member states to improve the conditions for media freedom and to provide reliable protections for journalists

in law and practice. Data from the partners that contributed to this document report 140 serious violations in 32 Council of Europe member states.

The main issues of concerns documented in the report include the problem of impunity, which routinely protects those responsible for violent crimes who deliberately target journalists for their work; the fact that legal protections have been progressively weakened and denied in many CoE Member States and that the space for the press to hold government authorities and the powerful to account has been diminished in many places and other “new” trends, including the impunity for journalists’ murders inside the European Union (EU) as well as elsewhere; attacks on freelance journalists; and efforts to undermine the independence of public service media, including in countries once considered “safe harbours” for such media (Council of Europe 2019).

Another group of HRDs which are at particular risk nowadays includes those who strive for the rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, or, to use a broader term to define of these people, the human rights defenders of the “people on the move”, which has been the subject of a 2018 thematic report by the UN Special rapporteur on HRDs. The expression “people of the move” is indeed used by the UN and its Special procedures to capture the diverse populations and circumstances of individuals and communities that find themselves in new locations. According to the UN Special rapporteur analysis, with the surge in the number of people on the move, a growing number of defenders are seeking to address the human rights violations they face. Unfortunately, defenders of people on the move also face a number of barriers: difficulty in access to people on the move, and the sites of human rights violations against them; the criminalization and stigmatization of their work, and of people on the move; and the growing involvement of non-State actors in violations against people on the move (Forst 2018b).

Several and increasingly more precise recommendations are addressed at different levels of governance to all the actors that share responsibility in ensuring and increasing the level of protection for all types HRDs. At the level of civil society, an interesting and original development is the Action Plan adopted at the Human Rights Defenders World Summit of 2018. The Plan outlines what civil society organisations and HRDs believe to be the leading priorities for states, businesses, financial institutions, donors and intergovernmental or-

organisations in bringing about a safe and enabling environment for the defence of human rights, as well as stronger and more effective protection of HRDs at risk, their communities, organisations and movements and provides a set of recommendations to all actors involved in this process. A summary of the recommendations addressed to some of these actors is provided in the Insight Box 15 below.

Insight Box 15 – Main recommendations for states, businesses and international organisations from the 2018 World Summit Action Plan

Recommendations for states

1. Explicitly recognize the right of everyone to protect and promote human rights and publicly support the important action of defenders, acknowledging their contribution to the advancement of peace, justice, equality, dignity, good governance and sustainable development. [...]
2. Ensure a safe and enabling environment in which human rights defenders are effectively protected and where it is possible to defend and promote human rights without fear of punishment, reprisal or intimidation. [...]
3. Take concrete actions in the context of their foreign policy, both at bilateral and multilateral level, to protect human rights defenders and civil society space. [...]
4. Put in place regulations to ensure that technological advancements foster respect for human rights and are not used as a tool to silence human rights defenders and civil society. [...]

Recommendations for businesses

1. Implement and support robust, transparent and effective human rights due diligence processes [...] paying special attention to the impacts to women defenders who are generally disproportionately affected.
2. Adopt a policy of zero-tolerance towards acts of violence, threats or intimidation committed against defenders opposing or expressing their views about the company's projects [...].
3. Make public statements on the important role of human rights defenders and civil society, publicly condemn attacks, threats and intimidation against them and refrain from making statements or expressing views that discredit, denigrate, discriminate against or stigmatize them.
4. Comply with the principle of free, prior and informed consent of affected communities, in particular Indigenous peoples and conduct meaningful

consultations and meetings with human rights defenders and local communities at critical phases of project planning and implementation [...]

5. Fully cooperate with the state authorities in the investigation of any attack, threat or intimidation perpetrated against HRDs because of their work in supporting communities affected by business activities.
6. Information and communication technology companies whose products perform the function of community forums, social media networks and similar spaces, should review their policies to ensure that the freedom of expression and other rights of human rights defenders as enshrined in international human rights law are fully protected [...].

Recommendations for international organizations

1. Reaffirm the right of every person, individually or in association with others, to defend and promote human rights in accordance with the HRD Declaration [...].
2. Continue to make repeated public statements about the crucial role and legitimacy of the activities carried out by human rights defenders and improve the speed and efficiency of the systems designed to protect them both at headquarters and country level.
3. Take stock of the developments in normative frameworks related to the protection of defenders since 1998 and further develop and deepen the norms contained in the HRD Declaration with the view to afford enhanced protection.
4. Monitor the implementation of states' obligations regarding the protection of human rights defenders, paying particular attention to those defenders who are affected by inequality and intersecting forms of discrimination [...].
5. Formulate policies and strengthen mechanisms to prevent and address acts of intimidation or reprisals against human rights defenders who communicate and interact with international and regional mechanisms and ensure that the crucial information received from them does not place them at risk.
6. Prioritise the situation of human rights defenders, in particular, indigenous rights defenders, women human rights defenders, defenders with diverse SOGIESC such as LGBTIQ defenders, and other marginalised defenders, in their work, create a standing agenda item on human rights

defenders in their formal sessions, and mainstream this issue including in fora that may be not explicitly human rights related.

7. Devise a system to sanction those members who do not cooperate with its human rights mechanisms and ensure that states with patterns of extreme violence against defenders are not eligible for membership of human rights bodies.
8. Ensure human rights defenders are enabled to access and have a voice in international fora on human rights and development without any reprisals. [...]
9. Ensure the inclusion of HRDs and civil society representatives in relevant governance and advisory boards [...].
10. Systematically and regularly engage in proactive and meaningful consultations with diverse groups [...].
11. Ensure that the protection of human rights defenders and the promotion of the essential nature of their work are prioritized at the highest level of the organization and not only through concerned bodies and experts.

4.3 The Shelter City Network

One of the most innovative initiatives addressing the issue of the protection of HRDs is represented by the creation of “shelter cities”. The initiative was launched in 2012 in Amsterdam by the NGO Justice and Peace. The idea emerged from a meeting of HRDs from the NGO’s international network held in December 2010, where the need for safe spaces was expressed as a way to contribute to their security. The response to this need was to provide a number of international HRDs with shelter, rest and respite through temporary relocation.

Insight Box 16 - The added value of shelter cities

Shelter Cities offer temporary rest and respite to the human rights defenders, who can continue their work in a safe environment. They are temporarily relieved of a heavy burden by not having to look over their shoulder continuously, and by leading “normal” lives during their stay. The human rights defenders participate in training courses on, for instance, safety and privacy, lobbying, human rights law and advocacy, as well as practical training courses such as on writing and presenting. The human rights defenders also enlarge

their professional network of civil society organisations and political connections in The Hague, Brussels, and on the local level. Moreover, through public events they contribute to raising awareness about human rights among the citizens of the Shelter Cities. Such public events can, however, only take place if the visibility of the human rights defender does not have negative consequences for their safety or that of their family, and for their possibility of return.

Source: Donders 2016, 282–288.

Since 2010, the initiative has grown significantly and the first shelter city experience has developed into a network that currently involves 11 Dutch cities and 3 international hubs in Tbilisi (Georgia), Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) and San José (Costa Rica), and works in collaboration with government institutions and civil society organizations. The Dutch network has offered shelter and temporary relocation to 80 HRDs from 41 countries worldwide.

The selection of HRDs hosted in the Dutch network of shelter cities is based on periodic open calls for applications and done by an independent Selection Committee whose members have expertise in human rights and knowledge of HRDs' local realities and come from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, national and international NGOs. There are several selection requirements as summarised in the Insight Box 17 below.

Insight Box 17 - Selection requirements for Shelter City Netherlands

The applicant is a human rights defender, as defined in the UN Declaration on human rights defenders.

The HRD is severely threatened or has long been working under pressure.

The HRD is willing and able to return to his/her country of origin and resume his/her work after 3 months.

The HRD speaks English (or French/Spanish) well enough to be able to live independently in The Netherlands and take part in activities.

The HRD is willing to speak about the human rights situation in his/her country of origin, to the extent in which it does not affect his/her security.

Travelling to and staying in The Netherlands will not be at the expense of the safety of the HRD and his/her family in the country of origin.

Source: Justice and Peace 2017, 7.

Shelter City Netherlands has also worked as a role model. Similar initiatives have been developed in other countries, mostly in Europe. Accordingly, the opportunities of temporary relocation for men and women struggling to advance human rights in their homelands or communities are rising. For instance, a few municipal and provincial councils in Italy has taken the lead to advance the project “Città rifugio” (city of refuge).

Besides being a crucial contribution to ensure the safety of a number of HRDs worldwide, this initiative is also a very interesting example of how municipal actors (city councils), national authority (especially the Ministry of foreign affairs) and civil society organisations can interact and cooperate to effectively advance human rights and peace in a multi-level governance perspective. The manual “How to Set Up a Shelter City?”, launched in 2017 to share Justice and Peace’s experience with any party interested in setting up shelters for human rights defenders at risk gives particular attention to the importance of engaging the full range of actors - NGOs, national or local governments, universities - and attribute the correct roles to ensure an effective implementation of these initiatives. In particular, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and/or Ministry of Justice are important to have on board as cooperation with them will facilitate the delivery of visas or permits to stay in the country. Depending on the extent of their commitment to human rights, they can also provide financial support, support human rights defenders in their country, provide advice and information about potential candidates through embassies, etc. Local civil society and municipalities play an important role in the setting up of the local Shelter City Initiative. Their tasks range from financial and staff support to providing accommodation, contacts and training, or helping the HRD to build up a social life. Local partners can also be a good entry point to reach out to networks of people interested in human rights and willing to support the HRDs in different ways (social activities but also psychological support, language teaching, etc.).

Also universities can play a role in the creation of shelter cities: on one hand, HRDs have first-hand knowledge regarding the human rights situation in their country and a very practical experience on a topic that can be very useful to researchers, students and scholars who do not have direct access to the field; on the other hand, courses in human rights law or international politics, for

instance, can greatly benefit HRDs, who do not always have the opportunity to follow such courses in their own country. Other important actors that can be involved in the planning and development of a shelter city or similar initiatives are expert within the medical, psycho-social and legal sectors in order to provide practical support to the needs of hosted HRDs.

Insight Box 18 - A few stories from the Human Rights Defenders hosted through the Shelter City Netherland network

Graciela, Enforced disappearances, from Mexico

Graciela dedicating her life to search for disappeared persons in Mexico, seeking to generate citizens' mechanisms that provide access to truth and identity, and consequently to memory and justice in a peaceful way. As a founding member of the project Forensic Citizen Science, Graciela seeks to strengthen the collection of evidence of disappeared persons. This project has established the National Citizen Registry of Disappeared Persons, which analyses the disappearances independently and researches possible patterns around this phenomenon.

Yamen, Human Rights Violations, from Gaza

Yamen is a human rights defender from Gaza. He is the head supervisor of a team of fieldworkers tasked with monitoring and documenting violations of International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law in the region. The organisation also provides legal assistance and advice to victims and potential victims; including by litigation in the occupied territory, Israel and abroad. In addition, it maintains close relations with human rights networks, coalitions and working groups at the local and international levels, collaborating with UN agencies and mechanisms, NGOs and human rights NGOs.

Rose, Children's rights, Sexual Violence, Women's rights, from Kenya

Rose is a human rights defender from Kenya who focuses on women's and children's rights and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). She leads a network involved in rescuing girls who face early marriages and female genital mutilation (FGM) and making sustained efforts to keep them in education.

Prior to this, she worked as a community health worker for 11 years providing medical services to young girls. Witnessing first-hand the detrimental health effects of harmful cultural habits drove Rose towards activism.

Sirikan, Lawyer from Thailand

Sirikan works as a human rights lawyer In Thailand. In 2014, Sirikan and her colleagues set up a coalition of human rights lawyers and defenders. The collective was formed immediately after the 2014 coup d'état in Thailand. The collective's aim has since been to raise awareness about human rights violations resulting from the imposition of martial law and military rule in the country. The collective runs a 24-hour hotline and uses the information gathered to disseminate public awareness and advice for those summoned or arrested. They also provide free litigation and legal assistance for vulnerable people whose rights have been affected by martial law, the military junta's rules and orders, and who do not have legal representatives. Sirikan provides legal representation in high-profile human rights cases. For example, she has been representing a group of students who were arrested after carrying out peaceful protests calling for democracy and an end to military rule. Since 2009, she has been working to promote and protect human rights in Thailand at various organizations.

The following stories were taken from the Shelter City Netherlands website (<https://sheltercity.nl/en/human-rights-defenders/>) and are among the 80 HRDs hosted by this network as of March 2019.

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