

**Remarks for ASG Pobee's participation in the  
Sant' Egidio Peace Conference**

Rome, 23-25 October 2022

*[You have been invited to deliver remarks on “No One is Saved Alone: Dialogue and Multilateralism in a Divided World”? The conference theme is “War has again, powerfully entered the Western world in the 21st century. Every war promises to be short and decisive, but all wars are self-perpetuating, open to scenarios unthinkable before they began, unpredictable. They depend on the decisions of a few but involve everyone. The food crisis, social and political instability now affect not only the populations of warring countries, neighboring countries, but the rest of the world, other continents, dialogue and the world's geo-political rifts. We need to rediscover the ways of dialogue and multilateralism to patch up the world's wounds and reopen to the taste of peace.”]*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to join you today at this peace gathering.

More than three decades ago, from the Italian city of Assisi, the city of Saint Francis, Pope John Paul II launched an initiative to strengthen the cause of peace worldwide through dialogue. This initiative continues to inspire people all over the world, creating generations of peacemakers, connected together by ‘the Spirit of Assisi’.

Today, 36 years since the launch of the initiative, dialogue and multilateralism are as important as ever to achieve peace in an increasingly divided world. We are witnessing a rapidly deteriorating global peace and security environment. Violence is on the rise, human rights violations are increasing, and humanitarian needs outpace our ability to respond.

We see a series of threats to peace and security that are converging with drastic implications. The nature of conflict is evolving, accompanied by significant levels of violence in several regions, along with greater regionalization of local conflict dynamics. The climate emergency and digital disruption are impacting conflict dynamics across the world. A perceived failure of governance – of the ability of States to deliver essential services that respond to the aspirations of their people, young people in particular, – is giving rise to tensions and social unrest in many countries.

The uneven recovery from the multi-dimensional impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic coupled with the recent spike in food and energy costs have further heightened these threats and the risk of social upheaval in several countries. This has also put significant pressure on the ability of States to deliver and revealed significant limitations of global preparedness, cooperation and solidarity. The growing global youth population is aspiring for more, but feels that, instead, it is getting even less.

Increased competition and related fragmentation at the geostrategic level is making international cooperation to address these threats more difficult, just when it is most needed. The global architecture to manage disputes and de-escalate conflicts seems weaker now than in past decades. This is of significant concern, as it heightens the threat of miscalculation, with potentially devastating global consequences.

We are indeed at a turning point.

In the face of this complex global environment, we will have to adapt and continue to demonstrate the vital value of global cooperation, dialogue and multilateralism. We need a multilateralism that is just and inclusive, with equitable representation and voice for developing countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the United Nations, we have worked hard to adapt our peace and security work so that it is better suited to the complexity of today's conflicts. We are striving to understand how climate change and technology are affecting conflict, and to adapt our responses. At the heart of this approach is the need to engage earlier and proactively, and not wait to react to a crisis after it has escalated. To focus not only on high-level political engagement, but also on helping build resilience at community level.

A central part of our strategy is to strengthen our partnerships with other actors involved in peacemaking, who themselves are at the forefront of many of our efforts to prevent conflict and build peace, be it at global, regional, national or local level.

The significant role played by His Holiness the Pope and the Community of Sant 'Egidio is a case in point. Their engagement has played an important role to promote peaceful solutions, often in situations in which the United Nations is directly involved.

In South Sudan, for instance, the Community of Sant' Egidio has played an important role by facilitating talks between the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity of South Sudan and non-signatory opposition groups, in an effort to achieve sustainable peace in the country.

Similarly, in Chad, I would like to highlight the critical contribution Sant' Egidio has made in facilitating a meeting of politico-military groups in Rome last January, where in a joint statement, the groups underlined their willingness to contribute to the stabilization of Chad through meaningful dialogue.

We also have a history of working together in Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and others.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the UN Charter, member states pledge to save the succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Two years ago, during the commemorations of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations, the General Assembly adopted an ambitious declaration that recognized the urgent need for collective solutions, and the centrality of the United Nations in addressing emerging challenges.

In response to the UN75 Declaration, the Secretary-General presented his report on “Our Common Agenda”. The report offers an ambitious vision for sustainable peace, development and human rights. This included a commitment to prepare a New Agenda for Peace that puts prevention and violence reduction at the centre of our work. The Agenda offers a robust vision for strengthening the “diplomatic toolbox” contained in Chapter VI of the UN Charter and seeks to reforge a global consensus around cooperation for our collective security.

Delivering on these commitments will be a significant undertaking, particularly in the polarized and fragmenting global environment we face today. It will require all of us to work together, building on our respective strengths. I look forward to your support to this Agenda, and to your continued cooperation with the United Nations.

Thank you.