

**National Peace Summit (Volume 2) and Youth Leadership Workshop
organized by the Global Peace Chain (Mauritius Chapter) on Saturday 5
March 2022 at 09:45 at Voilà Business hotel**

It is a pleasure to be with you for this National Peace Summit 2.0 and the Youth Leadership workshop to discuss these extremely important topics: **Promoting Youth in Peacebuilding and Engaging Youth For Positive Change**. I understand that this workshop is live streamed and I there welcome also all the participants from abroad.

This National Peace Summit and Leadership Workshop will serve as a space for youth to come together to share, develop and expound upon tangible ideas. Participants will learn the challenges young persons are currently facing including drug consumption and unemployment and how to overcome and turn those challenges into successful initiatives.

Latest statistics indicate that forty six per cent of the world's population is under twenty-five. The highest proportion of young people being in Africa and the Middle East - two of the most unstable places on earth. Therefore, we have to understand that in such demographic realities, the youth holds an enormous potential for change and positive action. They are a unique resource that can develop innovative solutions for peace and development. And this applies not only to these two regions, but to the entire world.

Bringing about positive change in their own community may be one of the most valuable experiences a young person can have. Active engagement in local community advocacy teaches youth that positive change is both possible and real.

In addition, such an experience can provide youth with the information and skills necessary for a lifetime of active participation in civic life.

Youth inclusion in peacebuilding processes is critical for ensuring sustainable and inclusive peace. So it is important to provide youths with training opportunities to take an active part in peacebuilding. With their youthful energy and capabilities, and ability of adaptation to new technological trends, for example, youths could act as mediators, community mobilisers, humanitarian workers and peace brokers.

I think that we must avoid the well-known cliché that defines the youth as “**future leaders**”. I personally think that they are already leaders of today because leadership should not be considered as a factor of age. We must provide young people with appropriate governance to enable them to flourish as leaders today. In other words, they need to be treated as leaders today without postponing it to an elusive future.

In a world of rapid change, young people need the right mix of skills to thrive. Access to information is increasing. Although academic skills remain important, they are not sufficient to foster thoughtful, productive, and engaged citizens. Young people everywhere need to develop a greater breadth of skills to evaluate and apply knowledge in ways that meet the new demands of our changing social and economic landscape.

This workshop is also about Youth Leadership. Leadership means having the respect of one’s peers as well as having the confidence necessary to speak up in front of peers and in front of adults. Youth engagement can improve young

people's ability to work and think as part of a team, promotes leadership, enhances self-esteem, improves youth's relationship with their community.

To truly empower youth, our society has to be very intentional about the way youth are incorporated into communities and organisations. Empowering youth means to:

- Include youth in decision-making processes
- Honor the youth voice
- Understand and implement their honest opinions and ideas
- Be willing to share your adult power and privilege in order to make the community a better place for both young people and adults alike.

I must commend the excellent work of the Mauritius Chapter of Global Peace Chain, which is a worldwide peace building organisation aiming to foster the peace custom and build the worldwide attitude of acceptance and interfaith harmony. Diversity exists everywhere in this world and it should be accepted to create a balanced and peaceful society. Thus, for each and every country, youth is very important factor in creating a harmony.

Peace is the greatest and highest goal or hope that everyone wishes to achieve personally and expects to be created in society and in the world. People have been trying by all means to gain peace. Therefore history of human beings, in one aspect, is the history of searching for peace. Peace has been talked, thought, taught and studied in many ways and many aspects.

However, we must bear in mind that Peace is not merely the absence of war but the presence of justice, of law, of order. According to Lao Tzu's (Chinese philosopher and writer) famous saying: *If there is to be peace in the world, there must be peace in the nations. If there is to be peace in the nations, there must be peace in the*

cities. If there is to be peace in the cities, there must be peace between neighbors. If there is to be peace between neighbors, there must be peace in the home. If there is to be peace in the home, there must be peace in the heart.

According to His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, Peace, in the sense of the absence of war is of little value...peace can only last where human rights are respected, where people are fed, and where individuals and nations are free.

Talking of war and peace, in what is described as Europe's darkest hour since World War II, the watching world reels in shock as Russia has invaded Ukraine. When hearing tragic news like the current conflict, it is easy to despair. Let us join all those around the world who are praying for swift resolution to this conflict.

I shall conclude by congratulating the Mauritius Chapter of Global Peace Chain for organising this workshop. After this training I expect participants to be inspired to create new, innovative and effective activities towards peace-building and intercultural learning on local and national front. I look forward to learning about the outcomes of the workshop.

For your information, my office is working on a project of creating "Communities of Harmony" across Mauritius and probably we shall involve the Global Peace Chain (Mauritius Chapter) in the process.

Thank you