



Remarks by

**Acting United Nations Resident Coordinator a.i.
and UNFPA Representative to Namibia**

Ms. Dennia Gayle

on the occasion of

***the International Day of Living
Together in Peace***

16 May 2018

UN House, Klein Windhoek Namibia

Hon. Sylvia Makgone, Deputy Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources,

Hon. Maureen Hinda, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs and Immigration,

Hon. Lucia Witbooi, Deputy Minister of Gender Equality and Child Welfare,

Your Excellency Sid Ali Abdelbari Ambassador of Algeria to Namibia,

Honourable Representatives of the Government of the Republic of Namibia,

Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Fellow members of the United Nations Country Team;

Members of the civil society organisations, NGOs and academia;

UN Colleagues;

Invited Guests;

Members of the media

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good morning!

I welcome this opportunity to stand before you as part of the commemoration of the first ever International Day of Living Together in Peace.

At the end of last year¹, the UN General-Assembly declared 16 May the International Day of Living Together in Peace to mobilise the international

¹ The UN General Assembly declared 16 May as the International Day of Living Together in Peace on 8 December 2017 through resolution 72/130.

community's efforts to promote peace, tolerance, inclusion, understanding and solidarity.

The day aims to uphold the desire to live and act together, united in differences and diversity, in order to build a sustainable world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today's commemoration comes at a time when the world is shifting beneath our feet. Across the globe, societies are undergoing deep transformation as globalisation continues to accelerate.

While this is opening vast opportunities for dialogue and exchange, it is also raising new challenges, sharpened by inequality and poverty, enduring conflicts and movements of people.

These new challenges are also being compounded by cultural challenges. We are seeing a rise of exclusive politics, increased discourse of division as well as diversity being rejected as a source of weakness.

These challenges have also spread to the African continent².

- Climate change threatens economic, social and environmental development - 250 million people could face water shortages by 2020.
- Over 40% of the population of sub-Saharan Africa lives in extreme poverty.
- Major conflicts are concentrated in nine African countries, and ongoing conflicts are widespread across the continent³.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Considered a highly peaceful country and ranking 50th in the world for peace⁴, Namibia has shown and continues to show best practice on the continent.

² United Nations. Africa, Challenges. <https://bit.ly/2jUdJsA>

³ Major conflicts are concentrated in: Somalia, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Sudan, Egypt, Libya: <https://bit.ly/2bpw6Dh>

⁴ 2017 Global Peace Index. Institute for Economics and Peace. <https://bit.ly/2ud8vfg>

- Namibia ranks #5 in Africa on the Ibrahim Index of African Governance⁵.
- Namibia has effected one of the fastest reductions in poverty on the continent and has managed to reduce inequality while growing its gross national income (GNI)⁶.
- Namibia has also mainstreamed peace into her development agendas, with clear reference in Vision 2030, the Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP) and the Fifth National Development Plan (NDP5)⁷.

However, despite these achievements, Namibia faces challenges.

- Namibia has one of the world's highest levels of income inequality⁸.
- Unemployment remains high, standing at 34%⁹.
- And, Namibia is prone to climate-related disasters which negatively impact livelihoods of people across the country¹⁰.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Namibia continues to set goals and targets to ensure that it becomes an industrial nation where all people enjoy prosperity, harmony, peace and political stability.

Namibia has also committed to and localised Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development¹¹ and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This agenda emphasises that all cultures and civilizations can contribute to, and are crucial enablers of, sustainable development.

Specifically, SDG 16 'Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions' aims to address challenges that exist in ensuring peace and prosperity for all – a goal which is fully aligned to today's observance.

⁵ Ibrahim Index of African Governance. 2017 IIAG Namibia Scores, Ranks & Trends. <http://bit.ly/2CrKX9J>

⁶ World Income Inequality Database (lastest data, 2010).

⁷ Through the Good Governance pillar, Namibia aims to continue being a safe, secure and peaceful as well as upholding the rule of law.

⁸ NDP5 M&E, page 67, Gini co-efficient of 0.572

⁹ Namibia Statistics Agency. The Namibia Labour Force Survey 2016 Report. Page 15. <https://bit.ly/2Imckpn>

¹⁰ 600,000 people were fed in 2016.

¹¹ The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. The Agenda was adopted in September 2015.

The SDGs also aim to foster inter-cultural understanding, tolerance, mutual respect and an ethic of global citizenship and shared responsibility. Tolerance itself must be nurtured every day and strengthened by policies that respect diversity and pluralism of human rights.

At the end of the day, there are many different types of cultures, but we are all part of one community. To live together in peace, we need to deepen the binds of a single humanity, through understanding, dialogue and knowledge. If we can do this, we will be able to work together to find innovative, effective solutions to the world's most pressing challenges.

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am proud to tell you that over the decades, the UN has helped to end numerous conflicts for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The General-Assembly has also adopted¹² the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace which serves as the universal mandate for the international community to promote a culture of peace and non-violence that benefits all of humanity, including future generations.

The Declaration embraces the principle that peace is not merely the absence of conflict, but also requires a positive, dynamic participatory process, in which dialogue is encouraged and conflicts are resolved in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation. It also recognizes that to fulfil such an aspiration, there is a need to eliminate all forms of discrimination and intolerance.

The International Day of Living Together in Peace builds on this Declaration and all of the UN's peace efforts, providing another platform for pertinent dialogue aimed at promoting peace and tolerance.

Your Excellency Sid Ali Abdelbari,

¹² 1999, Resolution 53/243

We are proud to be part of this new observance that was tabled by your country, Algeria.

The UN acknowledges its active and continued engagement with partners to promote peace – as we all need to make changes in our lives to ensure that everyone enjoys prosperity, lives in peace and is free from discrimination.

This starts with coming together, breaking down barriers and identifying common objectives.

Ladies and Gentlemen, and in conclusion,

National and international development agendas are clear - we must promote societies where all people can live in a peaceful and united way. With a foundation of listening to, respecting and appreciating each other, we can celebrate our differences and use them to bring about the changes we want to see.

The UN, your 'Partner of Choice', is committed to ensuring the message of living together in peace is spread across Namibia and look forward to working with you in this endeavour for years to come.

I thank you!