

Seventy Years of the United Nations

By Boutros Boutros-Ghali

(An Article by the late former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, published in the *UN Chronicle* special double issue in 2015 celebrating the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. It is one of the last articles former Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali wrote. In it, he reflected upon the future and what would make the Organization stronger and better able to serve humanity. Ghali passed away 16 February 2016)

To highlight the achievements of the United Nations in the past 70 years would fill many volumes, and I'm afraid that writing about my wishes for the United Nations in the next seven decades would fill even more books.

But perhaps two moments stand out in the proud history of our Organization: the first is the invention of peacekeeping that allowed the United Nations to truly foster world peace through a mechanism we take for granted today, but which is unique in the history of international relations.

When I became Secretary-General, the first-ever summit meeting of Heads of State and Government of the Security Council took place, and their mandate to me was clear: develop the next generation of peacekeeping operations. Out of that mandate came *An Agenda for Peace*. I wish we still heeded the messages of that proposal.

Another great moment for the United Nations was the declaration of human rights, at the start of our Organization's history, and the World Conference on Human Rights held at Vienna in 1993. There have been many conferences setting world agendas and goals before and after Vienna, but for the world to come together to define human rights, and to state clearly a global commitment to their achievement, was an important moment in history.

So what do I wish for the future? My wish is that we build on past achievements and update them for the modern world. Just as the United Nations invented peacekeeping, we now need to modernize the practice, and the Security Council's use of the instruments at its disposal to promote international peace and security. We need a new *Agenda for Peace*.

We also need to build on the tremendous movement for human rights, and to help ensure that they are universally adopted. It took the same courage to state the universality of these principles in the Declaration and in Vienna, and apply it to the new attacks on the most basic human right: the right to life. Furthermore, we need courage and vision to reach a global consensus in an agreement on defining the scourge of terrorism, and a strong global commitment to fighting this evil.

I am confident that the United Nations, our United Nations, will continue to lead in innovation so that we reach the aim of the Charter for life "in larger freedom".

**Boutros Boutros-Ghali is a former Secretary-General of the United Nations, having served from January 1992 to December 1996.*