



General Assembly

Distr.: General
XX May 2026

English only

Human Rights Council

Sixty-second session

15 June–10 July 2026

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement submitted by New Humanity, a non- governmental organization in general consultative status*

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[25 May 2026]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.

“Youth, Sustaining Peace and International Solidarity”

62nd session of the Human Rights Council (15 June – 10 July 2026)

Written Statement submitted by New Humanity of the Focolare Movement to the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity*

“Youth, Sustaining Peace and International Solidarity”

This Written Statement is submitted within the framework of the mandate of the Report of the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity. We sincerely thank Ms. Baillet for her detailed and valuable report on Peace and International Solidarity (A/HRC/62/38), which highlights the urgent global need to prioritise peace through solidarity, and we would like to offer the following comments.

The report argues that the contemporary world is facing “the astounding level of militarization around the world, the resurgence of nuclear arms testing, environmental crises, the deepening of inequality within and between States, the expansion of transnational organized crime, the spread of divisive disinformation and polarization within societies, as well as the weakening of multilateral institutions” (para. 1). This diagnosis strongly echoes Pope Francis’s repeated warning that humanity is living through a “piecemeal Third World War.”

An important concept developed in the report is the distinction between “negative peace” and “positive peace” proposed by Johan Galtung. Galtung argued that peace requires not only the absence of direct violence, but also the elimination of structural conditions—such as poverty, exclusion, and discrimination—that prevent individuals and communities from flourishing. Furthermore, the report explains that “negative peace” (the absence of violence or war) receives primary attention from policymakers, while “positive peace” requires equality, non-discrimination, and social inclusion through programmes addressing poverty, education, housing, and healthcare (paras. 5–7). In addition, Jacques Maritain, in *Man and the State*, also emphasized that “peace cannot be preserved by a mere balance of forces,” but requires an organized political community oriented towards justice and the common good [1]

In this regard, Member States of the United Nations must reaffirm their commitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations (1945), beginning with the vision expressed in its Preamble — “We the Peoples of the United Nations” — which recognizes that peace, justice, and human dignity are a shared responsibility of all humanity. International solidarity was implicitly embedded in the very creation of the United Nations in the aftermath of the Second World War, as a collective commitment to prevent future conflicts through cooperation among nations and peoples. Recovering this spirit of political solidarity and shared responsibility is essential to building a more peaceful and just international order.

We also share the view that renewed focus is needed on creating a culture of peace and solidarity through education in order to improve social cohesion and inclusion (para. 7). Based on our extensive experience in the field, we can confirm that intercultural and interfaith dialogue are essential components of peace education and key instruments for promoting peaceful coexistence (para. 69).

A significant example of this commitment to a culture of peace is the recognition granted by UNESCO to Chiara Lubich, founder of the Focolare Movement, who received the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education in 1996 for her contribution to promoting dialogue, fraternity, and unity among peoples. In her address before the Council of Europe, she emphasized that peace cannot be built solely through political or economic agreements, but requires a renewed commitment to fraternity, mutual recognition, and solidarity among peoples and cultures. Her vision highlighted the importance of dialogue and shared

responsibility as essential foundations for peaceful coexistence and international solidarity. [2]

While we fully support the need to create a global coalition for solidarity and peace (para. 90), we firmly believe that this objective must be supported primarily by young people, in dialogue with other stakeholders, including policymakers and academics.

Sustaining peace must be an inclusive and shared process involving the whole of society, including the active participation of young people at all stages of the conflict cycle. Youth should be recognized as genuine “agents of peace,” and partnerships for peace should meaningfully include youth organizations. Empowering young people is essential to promoting human rights, strengthening the rule of law, eradicating poverty, and advancing sustainable and peaceful development. [3]

Young people are often more inclined towards international solidarity, as reflected in the growing levels of youth participation in international volunteering initiatives and cross-cultural cooperation programmes worldwide. With the aim of supporting the recommendations contained in paragraph 91 (a), (c), (g), (m), (p), (r), (s), and (t), we present the initiatives carried out by the Youth of the Focolare Movement in promoting international solidarity for sustaining peace.

The Youth of the Focolare Movement believe in the profound impact that spiritual values can have in promoting peace and unity worldwide, and their commitment to these principles leads them to engage actively with the United Nations in addressing global challenges.

Genfest 2024: Together to Care

In July 2024, the Youth of the Focolare Movement organized “Genfest 2024: Together to Care” in Aparecida, Brazil.[4] The event brought together more than 4,000 young people from around the world, fostering collaboration on pressing issues such as human rights, climate justice, and intercultural and interreligious dialogue. In parallel, 30 local events were held in cities across the globe, further amplifying the impact of this shared mission.

A key outcome of Genfest 2024 was the launch of the 8 United World Communities, an initiative aimed at mobilizing individuals and organizations to contribute to a more united and fraternal world. These communities focus on different dimensions of society, including the economy, dialogue, peace, and active citizenship.

These initiatives and objectives closely align with the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and with the UN Pact for the Future, particularly in the areas of sustainable development and climate action, the promotion of peace and human rights, the fostering of intercultural dialogue and social cohesion, and the empowerment and participation of youth in decision-making processes.

The Youth of the Focolare Movement have also proposed the establishment of a High-Level Youth Forum to foster intergenerational dialogue between young people and policymakers, showcase youth-led solutions to global challenges, and integrate youth perspectives into UN decision-making processes. The Forum would create dedicated spaces where young people connected with NGOs and academic institutions could engage directly with senior UN officials and global leaders.

The initiative seeks to promote meaningful discussions on key issues such as employment, mental health, technology, the environment, faith, and gender equality, with the aim of ensuring that youth-driven initiatives lead to tangible and lasting impact. The Forum would include thematic sessions on major global challenges, roundtable discussions to encourage in-depth exchange, and concrete action tracks designed to produce implementable outcomes.

A High-Level Forum sponsored by the UN would increase the visibility of youth in the global decision-making process, promote stronger intergenerational collaboration, and strengthen the knowledge and appreciation of the values and principles that inspire the work of various UN agencies among current and future generations.

Living Peace International Project

The Living Peace International initiative is a network involving more than 2 million students, adolescents, and young people engaged in peacebuilding activities and peace education programmes in schools, community centres, and religious institutions.[5]. It is a peace education programme designed for teachers, educators, children, and teenagers at all educational levels, as well as for youth groups. To date, more than one thousand schools and groups participate in the project, reaching over one million children and young people across the five continents through its initiatives.

Living Peace International aims to strengthen collaboration among individuals and groups in order to build a global “network” of peace. It also serves as a platform through which more than 80 international organizations, working in synergy with the project, share peace initiatives and actions, which are then promoted throughout their respective networks.

Youth, Cities, and Peace Congress

An important event was held in Nairobi from 10 to 12 November 2025 to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the United Nations. The event connected five cities across different continents and was organized in collaboration with UN-Habitat and UNESCO under the theme “Youth, Cities, and Peace,” highlighting the essential role of young people in fostering inclusive and sustainable urban spaces. The gathering showcased youth-led initiatives promoting peace and contributing to the development of more sustainable urban environments in diverse neighbourhoods.

Youth participation in these initiatives is closely aligned with several key UN policies, including United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015), which recognizes the important role of young people in peace and security and provides a framework for their involvement in conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts.

The “Nairobi Charter” adopted during the “Youth, Cities, and Peace” conference recognized young people as key “peace influencers” and agents of change, calling for stronger youth participation in decision-making processes, intercultural dialogue, sustainable urban development, and the construction of local and global networks of solidarity and peace.[6]

M. Esther Salamanca-Aguado

Consultant pro bono, New Humanity NGO (Geneva Office)

Associate Professor of Public International Law and International Relations

(University of Valladolid)

New Humanity of the Focolare Movement, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.

[1] Maritain, J. (1951). *Man and the state* (pp. 210 y ss.). University of Chicago Press.

[2] UNESCO. (1996). UNESCO Prize for Peace Education awarded to Chiara Lubich. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

[United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office. (2017). What does “sustaining peace” mean? United Nations.

[4] <https://genfest.org/en/home-en/>

[5] <http://livingpeaceinternational.org/en/>

[6] Focolare Movement. (2025, November 21). Youth, Cities and Peace: The Nairobi Charter and the contribution of the new generations. <https://www.focolare.org/en/youth-cities-and-peace-the-nairobi-charter-and-the-contribution-of-the-new-generations/>