Rector’s Introduction to the
UNSG’s Report on UPEACE 2018-2021

Your Excellency, Madam Chairperson of the Fourth Committee of the General
Assembly,

On behalf of the University for Peace community, I am honoured to present the UN
Secretary-General's Report 2018-2021 on the University for Peace, an international
academic entity established by the General Assembly in 1980.

The Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath have left a troubled world, as Secretary
General Guterres has pointed out. Inequities have grown and are expressed in more
poverty, more hunger, more malnutrition and in different and recurring cycles of
strife. Achieving harmony is made more difficult by the lack of cooperation. The
increase in these deprivations is a direct consequence of the lack of solidarity in
today's world. The international context shows an increase in de-institutionalisation,
as well as an increase in mistrust, both in a context of the emergence of new and
varied conflicts, all of which have been aggravated by the pandemic.

This shows the profound need to develop leaders for peace, to broaden education to
empower new generations, and to broaden the knowledge of others. This is one of
the roles of the University for Peace. This role and these tasks are more important
today than they’ve ever been. The work and progress of the University for Peace is
clearly expressed in this report of the UN Secretary-General.

As Rector of the University for Peace, I thank the Secretary-General for the report he
is presenting to the General Assembly. In it, he highlights how education facilitates
dialogue and the exchange of ideas, how education creates opportunities for
tolerance, civic and harmonious coexistence and the building of peaceful societies.
Education builds informed societies with more opportunities for all. Conflicts can be
transformed through education; likewise, education opens opportunities for
cooperation. Education makes it possible to break down inequalities and facilitates
the closing of gaps, creating opportunities for sustainable development and
innovation.

The new leaders for peace, trained at the University for Peace, will be able to
empower people by contributing to change the environments in which they live,
where they suffer from different types of conflicts and discrimination. Through
education, they will be able to empower people to break down myths and fears.
Without education, there will be no peace. Education produces peace. Education
enables an informed and tolerant national and global citizenry that reaffirms social
cohesion and strong institutions.
As UN Secretary General’s Report explains, during these almost two years of pandemic, the University for Peace continued to carry out its work. Following rigorous protocols and health prevention measures, we have been able to continue with academic research and dissemination activities, as well as seminars, conferences, and graduations. We very quickly adopted a hybrid model, with students at the central campus and in the different regional headquarters, together with online students in different parts of the world. The University has enabled to continue on the path of training on the Sustainable Development Goals and building human capital capable of addressing the serious problems inherited from before and exacerbated by the pandemic.

Globally, protectionism, nationalism and trade tensions are on the rise. Similarly, there is a rise in authoritarianism, a discrediting of democracy and the emergence of messianic populism. These weaknesses augur the emergence of new and deep conflicts, all the more so in a context of a crisis of global and regional multilateralism. This crisis is destroying years of institution-building. Trust will need to be rebuilt on the basis of cooperation, as highlighted by the Secretary General. The absence of cooperation makes progress and peace impossible. Hence, training leaders for peace, who can understand the deep roots of conflicts and who incorporate knowledge in the areas of negotiation, mediation and prevention, can lay the foundations for effective cooperation for a harmonious and better world.

Global uncertainties generate more insecurity, and these are increasing and accelerating. Putting citizens at the centre makes it possible to understand how people-based security is what makes development possible. Without sustainable development, there will be no peace. In contexts of conflict and war, no human rights can be exercised. As has been said before at the UN, there is no peace without development, there is no development without peace, and there is no lasting peace or sustainable development without respect for human rights and the rule of law. The Secretary General highlights the need to stop confrontations, create spaces for dialogue, and stop wars.

Building mutual trust is an indispensable task. This can be learned. It is possible, based on concrete experiences, to learn lessons that allow progress to be made in building trust. Trust makes institution building and the development of effective cooperation possible. Trust is built through education. This is the role of universities, and in particular, the role of the University for Peace, in training new leaders for peace that will contribute to creating a more just, sustainable, non-violent, progressive, and harmonious world.

Climate change is the main threat to humanity. We need to protect the planet. Today, it is essential to take emergency measures to confront this, the greatest threat to humanity and the planet. Fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals is essential,
as part of the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda. This is complex context, full of uncertainties and difficulties, achieving sustainability is essential.

Solidarity is required to take the necessary measures to address the new serious threats, including the pandemic. Without vaccine solidarity, there will be no chance of defeating the pandemic, containing it, and saving millions of lives. Either we are all free of Covid-19 or no one will be safe. More humanity is required in order to guarantee vaccination for all. Compassion is a key element for living together and for recognising each other as humans.

The High Level Forum Panel for Culture of Peace and Nonviolence shows us an essential way to confront ideas, to de-escalate tensions, to confront hate speech and xenophobia. The Culture of Peace and Nonviolence generates opportunities to move towards a better world, with progress, through tolerance, peaceful and democratic coexistence, and cooperation.

**UPEACE has developed important actions on a global level.**

UPEACE is training leaders for peace in countries large and small, in stable countries and in conflict zones. From China to Central America, from Costa Rica to Somalia, through the Balkans, and Southeast Asia, fulfilling the mission assigned by the UN General Assembly 41 years ago, in 1980, through its Resolution 35/55.

The Report presented by the Secretary General shows the joint programmes with UNITAR and UNICRI continue to be very successful, as does the traditional Asian Peacebuilders Scholarship programme, APS. The development of activities in the University's 9 Masters and doctoral programmes on its main campus have been made possible by the generous support of philanthropic institutions, specialised identities of various governments, as well as voluntary contributions from them. We would like to highlight the sustained support of the Nippon Foundation, the China Scholarship Council, the DAAD, the German government and Rotary International, among others.

In the Middle East and the Arab world, the University for Peace have developed important actions through the signing of cooperation agreements with different Diplomatic Schools in that region and the teaching of the essential values of the United Nations and conflict resolution. Among the achievements, the agreements signed with Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Azerbaijan, and the United Arab Emirates stand out. The agreement signed on 22 September 2020, in which the University for Peace played an important role, resulted in the formulation of a Joint Oral Statement on Peace, Women and Diplomacy (item 3 on the agenda of the Human Rights Council). This statement, delivered by Bahrain on behalf of the United Arab Emirates, Morocco, Israel and UPEACE, has garnered more than 60 endorsements from different governmental delegations to date.
UPEACE have also contributed to a rapprochement between the Vatican and Saudi Arabia which was expressed by an exhibition of the works of a Saudi artist, Othman Alkhuzaiem, at the Vatican. We hope that works of art from the Vatican can be exhibited in Riyadh.

In the field of eradicating hate speech, cooperation with KAICIID has been a great success.

The University for Peace has initiated a specialised master's degree in "Religion, Culture and Peace Studies", with students coming from the Muslim World League, the Vatican and the World Jewish Congress, as well as from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. This master's degree has been generously supported by the Dr AL-ISAA Fellowship Program, through a set of scholarships.

In Africa, the University for Peace opened its headquarters in Somalia. This took place in the context of the graduation of 75 Masters and Doctoral students in four areas of specialisation of high relevance to Somalia: Peace, Governance, and Development; International Law and Human Rights; Disaster, Resilience and Leadership; and Humanitarian Action.

In the Americas, the Report of the Secretary General about UPEACE explains the collaboration with various United Nations entities developing courses on post-conflict in Colombia and courses on negotiation and training of youth leaders in Venezuela, teaching workshops on gender and women in Mexico and a set of programmes in Honduras on teaching journalists to deal with fake news and hate speech in the electoral context, as well as training for entrepreneurs who may have the capacity to generate innovations and opportunities for the well-being of women and their families. In the case of Costa Rica, we developed, for the Central American area, a special training programme for journalists, with an emphasis on new communication technologies and their impact on electoral and democratic contexts.

On the central campus, we have implemented as part of a public-private partnership and in the context of SDG 17, the Chair on "Combating Illicit Trade and Preventing Transnational Organised Crime." We also established the "Japan Chair." In addition, UPEACE was appointed as an academic hub for SDG 12 by the United Nations Academic Impact.

We have set out to advance the Peace Innovation Initiative, with the Peace Commission. The Peace Innovation Initiative seeks to create a global culture of peace, founded and inspired by innovation and the use of Information and Communication Technologies. In doing so, we will expand our global virtual action.

Your Excellency, Madam President,
All these results, these efforts, explained on the Report of the Secretary General are possible thanks to the work and the dedication of the international resident professors, the visiting professors, the permanent staff of the university, and the efforts of our students. Our graduates, as updated by our registrar department are more than 3,800 of them, working in more than a hundred countries contributing to the values of the UN and UPEACE. Of these, over 65% are women. In addition, more than 125,000 people have passed through our training courses and diploma programmes around the world. The work of our representatives in Geneva, and in New York at the General Assembly, should be highlighted.

Special thanks go to the Government of Costa Rica for its guidance and support to the University for Peace. It is worth remembering that Costa Rica is the only country in the world where disarmament is established in its Political Constitution. I thank the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rodolfo Solano, and especially the President of the Republic, Carlos Alvarado, who took the decision to personally participate in the Council of the University for Peace, alongside great personalities from different parts of the world. Among them are Nobel Prize winners, high dignitaries of multilateralism, distinguished academics, and intellectuals.

I am also grateful for the support and work carried out by the Costa Rican Ambassador Rodrigo Alberto Carazo, who was part of the origins of the University, of the special delegation created in 1980 by his father, the President of the Republic, Rodrigo Carazo Odio. His permanent work before the General Assembly and the Secretariat is very significant and increases our efforts in our pursuit of the mission of the University, which is expressed synthetically as follows:

If we want peace, we must work for peace.

New York, 15 October 2021