

Statement by the Secretary General Thomas E. Garrett on the International Peace Day

The International Day of Peace, observed each year on September 21, promotes strengthening of the ideals of peace within and among nations and people.

Peace plays a central role in the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, which highlights that sustainable development cannot take hold in the midst of violent conflict, or in societies without legitimate governance. The Community of Democracies' (CoD) mission to strengthen and defend democracy worldwide is firmly anchored in the 2030 Agenda, particularly in SDG16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, which creates a framework to contribute to strengthening of democracy worldwide, and its elements of peace, just and inclusive societies are central to the mandate of the Community.

Building sustainable peace should always go hand in hand with promoting democratic values based on respect for universal human rights. Democracy, when able to consolidate and flourish, is the best option for achieving domestic and international peace and security, as shown in research commissioned by the CoD as part of its Democracy and Security Dialogue. The strong interdependence between peace, development, human rights and democracy is also highlighted in the Community's Warsaw Declaration.

Sustainable peace cannot be achieved without the inclusion of women, youth, and marginalized groups. In keeping with the continued commitment towards the advancement of women's participation in all aspects of democratic governance and development, the CoD recent efforts on supporting the inclusion of women in sustaining peace show that peacebuilding and reconciliation processes are more durable when women are meaningfully involved.

The CoD new publication *'Engaging Women in Sustaining Peace: A Guide to Best Practices'*, to be launched at the upcoming CoD side event at the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly, outlines best practice case studies from Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. The event will present the opportunity to discuss the significant role that women play in building and sustaining peace.

Peaceful and inclusive society is one where justice and equality are enjoyed by all. Observing the International Day of Peace, let us remember that peace should always be built together and for everyone.