

ROTARY RESOLUTION

FOR THE 2026 MEETING OF THE COUNCIL ON RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION To request the RI Board to consider reaffirming its commitment to the United Nations' dual responsibilities to both promote peaceful cultures and avoid the "scourge of war".

Purpose and Effect

Rotary has a long history of working for international peace. In 1921 at the Rotary convention in Edinburgh, Scotland, Rotary added its fourth objective "The advancement of international understanding, goodwill, and peace ...". In 1945 at the formation of the United Nations, Rotary helped draft the UN Charter, including the UN's Mission Statement "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

At that time, promoting peace and opposing war were considered equally essential to creating a peaceful world. Today, that balance is more important than ever. The Global Peace Index tells us that peacefulness on the planet has been declining steadily, while militarism (war and the preparations for war) has been increasing exponentially. Clearly militarism is not making us safer. We are in a downward spiral to more war.

Many Rotarians would like to interrupt this downward spiral. As a natural extension of our humanitarian efforts to build "positive peace" (the attitudes, institutions and structures for a culture of peace), they also want to work for Global Peace (a world without war) by challenging the systems, policies and ideologies that lead to armed conflict and a culture of war. In so doing, they are aligned with The Rotary Foundation's commitment to avoid investing in weapons manufacturers.

Promoting peace and opposing war are not separate agendas. They are distinct but overlapping and mutually reinforcing. Promoting peace helps build the conditions for human flourishing and planetary survival; and opposing war and militarism helps protect those conditions from being destroyed. Every war reverses decades of peaceful development, creates horrific suffering, destroys our environment, deepens mistrust between nations, and hijacks the resources needed to make peaceful co-existence possible.

Paul Harris wrote "The most virtuous war is the war against war." For Rotarians to be as impactful as possible in helping to create and sustain global peace, we must reaffirm our commitment, as a non-partisan organization, to the United Nations' dual responsibilities to both promote peaceful cultures and to oppose the wars and militarism that destroy them. This is essential if we are to avoid "the scourge of war".