



University  
for Peace



## Concept Note

### **Gandhian Trusteeship: Sustainable Lifestyles and Enduring Peace**

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Date: February 23, 2023

Time: 1500 – 1630hrs (EST)

Venue: ECOSOC Chamber, United Nations

**Objective:** To shine a light on Mahatma Gandhi’s doctrine of Trusteeship and its relevance in today’s world with a focus on the concept of Human Flourishing to promote sustainable lifestyles and enduring peace.

#### **Background:**

The world today grapples with contemporary challenges of armed conflicts, pandemics, climate change and interlinked crises, which threaten the existence of humankind. Armed conflicts continue to threaten the peace and security in various regions of the world, often leading to forced migration, trafficking in persons and sexual violence. Climate and environmental degradation continue to increase in frequency and severity, being manifested globally in form of desertification, land degradation, drought, flood, and sea level rise. The impact of these crises has stalled progress on poverty eradication, gender equality and sustainable livelihoods.

The Father of modern India, Mahatma Gandhi had taught the world the doctrine of Trusteeship. He had said that "the world has enough for everyone's needs, but not everyone's greed." The underlying meaning is that every member of the society should utilise his mental, moral, physical, and material resources for the common interest and welfare of society and not only for his self-interest.

The recent report of the Secretary-General on “Creating full and productive employment and decent work for all as a way of overcoming inequalities to accelerate the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” has noted that “despite the reduction, inequality remained very high, with annual gross domestic product per capita in 2018 ranging from about \$600 at purchasing power parity in the poorest country to more than \$115,000 in the richest country.” There can be no doubt that the doctrine of Trusteeship expounded by Gandhi ji remains as relevant today as ever.

Continuing the idea of Gandhian Trusteeship, India embarks upon the role of the Chair of G20 this year. The motto of the G20 Presidency is "One world, One family, One future", inspired by India's ancient cultural ethos of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam".

As Chair of the G20, two key elements emerge: lifestyle and peace. Speaking in Bali last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had made two important references. One, that for the safe future of the planet, a sense of trusteeship was the solution. LiFE or the 'Lifestyle for Environment' campaign could make a huge contribution towards this end. Two, that 'without peace and security, our future generations will not be able to take advantage of economic growth or technological innovation'.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had also noted that 'we have to extend the benefits of development to all human beings with compassion and solidarity.' The statement underscores the growing importance of the concept of Human Flourishing which rests on the very simple premise that we need to restore to the world today the capacity societies and individuals have historically proven to not just survive but to truly flourish.

Against this backdrop, the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations and the University for Peace are convening a panel of high-level speakers with diverse leadership experiences to discuss examples of how sustainable lifestyles can be promoted to combat the adverse effects of climate and environmental degradation and how the fundamental values of pluralism, democracy and rule of law can be strengthened to build peaceful and inclusive societies. This would also reflect the aim of the University for Peace to promote "among all human beings the spirit of understanding, tolerance and peaceful coexistence, to stimulate cooperation among peoples and to help lessen obstacles and threats to world peace and progress, in keeping with the noble aspirations proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations."

### **Guiding Questions:**

How can Mahatma Gandhi's doctrine of Trusteeship be utilized to eradicate poverty, hunger, and inequalities?

How can the Lifestyle for Environment campaign be strengthened for promoting mindful and deliberate utilization of resources instead of mindless and destructive consumption?

How can the values of pluralism, democracy and rules of law be further strengthened to protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms?

How can the concept of Human Flourishing be further developed to link it to global peace and individual lifestyles?

### **Moderator:**

Mr. Ramu Damodaran, first Chief of the United Nations Academic Impact and Adviser-University for Peace

**Panelists:**

H.E. Ms. Ruchira Kamboj, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations

H.E. Ms. Mona Juul, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Mission of Norway to the United Nations

H.E. Ms. Mathu Joyini, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa to the United Nations, New York

Dr. Juan Carlos Sainz-Borgo, Professor and Dean, University for Peace

Dr. Joel H. Rosenthal, President of Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs