

*Environmental Sustainability, and Peace
10 February 2018 — Vancouver, Canada*

Attachments: background and photographs below, photographs attached

Road to peace through environmental sustainability focus of first of six peacebuilding conferences worldwide

VANCOUVER, BC (January 11, 2018) Having played a key role in founding of the United Nations and led the 30-year global campaign to rid the world of polio, from 350,000 cases in 120 countries to 15 over the past year in three countries, Rotary International is highlighting opportunities to address the massive, complex challenge of peacebuilding through a series of six international conferences, the first to be held in Vancouver on February 10, 2018. The theme of this first conference is peacebuilding through environmental sustainability.

Conflict and violence displace millions of people each year. Half of those killed in conflict are children, and 90 percent are civilians. Often conflict starts and continues over long periods in competition for dwindling resources and as environmental changes force people to migrate.

The conference <https://environmentandpeace.com/> will examine sustainable global and local environmental practices, and their contributions to peacebuilding and peacemaking. Participants will discuss the impact of environmental issues on health, fresh air, clean water, vegetation, and food production - and how improved environmental conditions are a fundamental condition of building peace within communities. The conference will bring together global and local community leaders, youth, and representatives from the public, private, and government sectors.

This Rotary Presidential Peacebuilding Conference in Vancouver is the first in a series of six in 2018 to be held on different aspects of peacebuilding, with others scheduled for Beirut, Lebanon, Coventry, United Kingdom, Sydney, Australia, Taranto, Italy and Chicago, United States.

"The six peacebuilding conferences are designed to help us better understand the connections between Rotary's six areas of focus – disease prevention and treatment, water and sanitation, maternal and child health, basic education and literacy, and economy and community development – and our commitment to building peace." says Ian Riseley, President of Rotary International. "Environmental issues have a significant and lasting impact on every one of Rotary's six areas of focus. By addressing challenges with the environment, we can make a difference in all of those areas."

Conference chair John Anderson says: "For over 110 years Rotary has been serving communities here at home and around the world where there is a need for support. It is an honour for Vancouver and Canada to host the first of six Rotary Presidential Peacebuilding conferences also to be held in the Middle East, Europe, Australia as well as North America. Canada, British Columbia and Vancouver are known for their leadership not only in

peacekeeping, but environmental issues, so it is fitting that the theme of this first conference is peacebuilding as it relates to environmental sustainability. In the end, through this conference, we can re-focus on another way of viewing peacebuilding through the lens of protecting our environment and reducing conflict over increasing competition for dwindling resources. It's a huge challenge, but Rotary is up to it, as we have demonstrated in pursuing other global causes of making the world a better place."

The 1.2 million business and professional leaders as members of 35,000 Rotary clubs around the world are engaged in meeting needs of their own local communities and the shared world community, bringing together leaders who exchange ideas and take action to create positive change on priorities such as: • promoting peace • fighting disease • providing clean water • saving mothers and children • supporting education and • growing local economies.

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PHOTO CAPTIONS:

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Vancouver February 10, 2018

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Environmental Sustainability and Peace

Volatile rainfall and temperature trends in many parts of the world have exerted significant pressure on available land, water and food resources leading to diminishing food stocks, inadequate water supply, mass migration and desertification, according to the [United States Institute of Peace](#).

The *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* projects that rapidly changing variables in the atmosphere could expose an additional 250 million people to increased water stress in Africa by 2020, with yields from rain-fed agriculture dropping by 50%. The likelihood of flooding in Asia could rise from 10 to 40%, affecting lives and livelihood of millions. The loss of biodiversity in Latin America would have global ramifications and could precipitate mass displacement.

By 2050, water resources in Caribbean and Pacific Islands are expected to be insufficient to meet demand. Subsequently, millions will be pushed from subsistence to desperation and heightened competition for scarce resources would create flash points that could trigger violence. These developments have dire implications for peace and sustainable economic development.

Environmental peacebuilding examines and advocates environmental protection and cooperation as a factor in peaceful relations. Those engaged in peacebuilding aim to identify the conditions that lead beyond a temporary cessation of violence to sustainable processes of conflict management and mutual cooperation between those who have previously been adversaries.

Advocates of environmental peacebuilding examine the role of environmental factors in moving towards a sustainable peace. For instance, warfare devastates ecosystems and the livelihoods of those who depend on natural resources, and the anarchy of conflict situations leads to the uncontrolled, destructive exploitation of natural resources.








Preventing these impacts allows for an easier movement to a sustainable peace. From a more positive perspective, environmental cooperation can be one of the places where hostile parties can sustain a dialogue, and sustainable development is a prerequisite for a sustainable peace.

Rotary's areas of focus summary next page

Rotary's global commitment

Rotary is dedicated to six areas of focus to build international relationships, improve lives, and create a better world to support our peace efforts and end polio forever.

<https://www.rotary.org/en/our-causes> All six areas of focus form one integrated system for a more peaceful, collaborative world all co-habiting a shared sustainable environment. In promoting peace, Rotary sponsors every year 100 peace fellowships – 50 Master's degree and 50 certificate programs -- at Rotary Peace Centers at universities around the world, with over 1,000 graduates from the program.

 <p><u>Promoting peace</u> Rotary encourages conversations to foster understanding within and across cultures. We train adults and young leaders to prevent and mediate conflict and help refugees who have fled dangerous areas.</p>	 <p><u>Fighting disease</u> We educate and equip communities to stop the spread of life-threatening diseases like polio, HIV/AIDS, and malaria. We improve and expand access to low-cost and free health care in developing areas.</p>
 <p><u>Providing clean water, sanitation, and hygiene</u> We support local solutions to bring clean water, sanitation, and hygiene to more people every day. We don't just build wells and walk away. We share our expertise with community leaders and educators to make sure our projects succeed long-term.</p>	 <p><u>Saving mothers and children</u> Nearly 6 million children under the age of five die each year because of malnutrition, poor health care, and inadequate sanitation. We expand access to quality care, so mothers and their children can live and grow stronger.</p>
 <p><u>Supporting education</u> More than 775 million people over the age of 15 are illiterate. Our goal is to strengthen the capacity of communities to support basic education and literacy, reduce gender disparity in education, and increase adult literacy.</p>	 <p><u>Growing local economies</u> We carry out service projects that enhance economic and community development and create opportunities for decent and productive work for young and old. We also strengthen local entrepreneurs and community leaders, particularly women, in impoverished communities.</p>
 <p><u>Ending polio forever</u> Rotary has been working to eradicate polio for over 30 years, and our goal of ridding the earth of this disease is in sight. We started in 1979 with vaccinations for 6 million children in the Philippines. Today, Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Pakistan are the only countries where polio remains endemic.</p>	