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“Building and reconciliation through the creation of the Ministry of Peace”

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SPEECH OF H.E. MR. GUERRINO ZANOTTI

Minister of Home Affairs, and Minister of Peace of the Republic of San Marino

on the occasion of the International Day of Peace, established by the General Assembly of the United Nations to strengthen the ideals of peace, both within and between all nations and Peoples, in the spirit of the "Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace".



SEGRETERIA DI STATO
AFFARI INTERNI

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Peace cannot be understood simply as the opposite of war, but as a condition of harmony in political, social or private relations.

Even if history has sadly demonstrated that peace is not an option for the human race, today it is more necessary than ever that every country, every community, every social group and every individual pursue the objective that the words of Pope Francis precisely outlined in an audience before nearly seven thousand children:

"Peace is first of all that there be no war, but also that there be joy, that there be friendship among all, that every day a step forward be taken for justice, so that there be no starving children, so that there be no sick children without the opportunity to have assistance with their health. Doing all this is making peace. Peace - he said - is work; it isn't being calm. True peace is working so that all will have solutions to the problems, the needs that they have in their land, in their homeland, in their family, in their society. This is how peace is made — as I said — it is "handcrafted". [...] There is such need for peace factories, because unfortunately there is no shortage of war factories".

Therefore, the search for peace requires joint and continuous efforts on the part of individuals and not only of supranational bodies, nations or humanitarian associations.

Starting from these concepts, even a micro-State like the Republic of San Marino, which I have the honour to represent today, must constantly contribute to this search.

Of course, we do not have powerful economic means, nor the political weight of the largest and richest States, but we also can, thanks to the strength of our history and ideas, make an important contribution by acting in international fora and in diplomatic relations, to uphold the principles of democracy, solidarity and tolerance.

"Tolerance and Solidarity" are the fundamental principles and values to affirm a widespread thought that protects us from the rising of new walls and prevent personal interests from taking precedence over the search for a renewed civic sense.

San Marino diplomacy and the governments that have followed one another over the years have always worked to this end. Our country has always made its voice heard in international fora, and historically San Marino people have always shown particular attention to solidarity, while pursuing a policy of neutrality but never of convenience.

The decision of this Government to designate the Ministry of Internal Affairs as the Ministry also responsible for Peace has an important political significance. Though being aware of its small size and limited resources, in these two years of government this Ministry has tried, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to bring its contribution of ideas on different occasions.

An example of this is San Marino's participation within the OSCE on current issues such as those concerning migrants. In this regard, our country counters the spread of populism and nationalism, in the awareness that such social phenomenon, which has always existed, involves problems and tensions even in the so-called recipient populations.

Civic sense and statehood must be reaffirmed and consolidated as fundamental values of political action, as well as tolerance and the protection of minorities and less recognised rights. Unfortunately, at international level the political and ruling class does little in this sense. More and more often politics is pervaded by the desire for easy consensus, losing sight of the highest interest of a civil and supportive coexistence. In a historical moment which is not positive from an economic point of view, a large part of international politics is rapidly taking the dangerous path of populism by instilling the fear of what is different and taking advantage of the malaise, often real, which the majority of persons are experiencing.

There can be no true prosperity and social peace without understanding what is different. Everyone must be guaranteed the opportunity, within a framework of clear rules, to live and think according to their convictions (when these are equally based on correctness of civil living) in a society that must avoid the temptations of selfishness and nationalism, which often conceal the exploitation and isolation of people in difficulty.

I would like to focus, albeit briefly for reasons of time, on the burning issue of the so-called forgotten or marginal conflicts, which are often considered as regional or domestic issues. This is an issue involving civil rights and the dignity of people who have been at war for generations and towards whom the whole world has duties and responsibilities beyond religious, economic or national positions. Indeed, as Pope Francis said, "No conflict can become a habit impossible to break."

In the pursuit of Peace a fundamental role must be attributed to education, information and to the search for dialogue, whether between populations, inter-religious or intergenerational.

We are called upon to promote the high value of training and education of our young generations, especially by urging educational institutions to be pro-active in transmitting the value of diversity.

We must combat political exploitation and populism fuelled by frequent disinformation, which I consider a crime.

As a generation of adults, we must commit ourselves to providing young people with the interpretative tools required to fully understand and properly assess the results achieved by their predecessors in this respect, while recognising the right and duty to further democracy, the capacity for self-determination, the affirmation of civic and community sense.

For this reason, it is fundamental and qualifying that our country becomes a promoter of dialogue between different persons and ideas.

Our Republic has a long history of freedom, tolerance, solidarity and support vis-à-vis the weakest. Today, the political class must be firm in maintaining these characteristics and pursuing these objectives in every forum.

To this end, for some years the Republic of San Marino has been hosting the "Dialogue Forum", organised by various voluntary associations under the auspices of the Ministry of Peace, which has also received the patronage of the Council of Europe.

In San Marino, a group of citizens has promoted a popular petition for a draft law on the establishment of a Peace Corps.

In this regard, I think it would be useful to present to you a significant extract from the report on the draft law.

"The promoters of this draft law point out that there are experienced people in the territory, since San Marino citizens, through voluntary associations and NGOs, have already participated in peace-building operations in conflict regions.

These operations normally involve intervention in the various phases of the conflict, according to the following scheme:

a) before the outbreak of armed violence, to build relationships of trust, to support those already working for a non-violent solution by raising local and international public awareness;

b) during the acute phase, with the aim of lowering the level of violence, by flanking those who suffer most from the destructive effects of war;

c) after the conflict, to rebuild relations between the parties and to create the conditions for dialogue and reconciliation.

The method of intervention in conflicts is, therefore, aimed at reconciliation by working with all parties in conflict, without taking sides except against violence and injustice".

Against this background, it is believed that the establishment, training and development of our own Civil Peace Corps represents a great opportunity for our country given its moral, social and political value, because the Republic of San Marino would be among the first States in the world to adopt a law on such issue. This decision would strengthen the authoritativeness of the Republic. Indeed, our country is already recognised for its strong vocation for peace and, also recently, it has distinguished itself in the field of intercultural and interreligious dialogue in the context of its six-month Chairmanship of the Council of Europe. Therefore, this decision would enable San Marino to be accredited at international level as a Republic for peace in the world.

The Government of the Republic of San Marino concretely shares the Sustainable Development Goal 16 of the Agenda 2030. It confirms its commitment to the goals set out, making all efforts in every international forum, taking into account its own strengths and

diplomatic weight to pursue, and I quote, “the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the provision of access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels”.

The establishment of a Ministry for Peace politically implies a special attention towards the affirmation of a much wider concept of Peace than the absence of war and would lead States to have a common goal and language, thus making joint action and international cooperation more fruitful.

We believe that our small but democratic and supportive country can be an example by having assigned responsibilities for peace to one of its ministries.

Thank you very much for your attention.