

DEAR FELLOW ROTARIANS,

Seventy-two years ago, the United Nations was founded “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war ... [and] to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors.” Despite those worthy aspirations, and generations of investment in achieving them, the “scourge of war” is still with us: Last year, more than 102,000 people died in 49 armed conflicts around the world. Some of those conflicts were in their fifth decade or beyond. Terrorism, intolerance, and extremism; the refugee crisis; and environmental degradation are now global challenges.

Collectively, we seem further than ever from achieving the goals that were set with such ambition and optimism in 1945. Yet hope endures, as long as there are people willing to work for a more peaceful future – not only through their governments, but also beside them and beside each other. Today, Rotary is better placed than ever to have a real and lasting impact for peace: through our peace-focused programs, such as Rotary Peace Fellows, and through every area of our service. Water, sanitation, health, education, and economic development are all interrelated and part of the complex interactions that can lead to conflict – or avert it. To best leverage our service in all these areas, and to maximize their impact for peace, it is essential to understand these interactions and plan our service accordingly.

For these reasons, we have scheduled a series of six presidential peacebuilding conferences between February and June in Canada, Lebanon, the UK, Australia, Italy, and the United States. These conferences will focus not on peace but on *peacebuilding*: We will share ways that we can work to build peace through the service of our Rotary clubs and districts. Five of the one-day conferences will illuminate the connections between peace and another area of focus. The first conference, in Vancouver, B.C., will explore the link between peace and another sphere of great concern to us in Rotary: environmental sustainability. You can view the full schedule and register at www.rotary.org/presidential-conferences.

The goals are simple: to help Rotarians find new ways to advance peace through their service, to learn from experts, and to strengthen our abilities to build peace. It is my hope and belief that these conferences will help us move closer to a more peaceful world, through *Rotary: Making a Difference*.

IAN H.S. RISELEY
President, Rotary International



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