

**Talking Points for the Director-General  
Rotary Day at the United Nations  
10 November 2018**

- Mr. Barry Rassin, President of Rotary International,
  - Distinguished members and staff of Rotary International,
  - Invited guests,
  - UN Colleagues,
  - Ladies and gentlemen
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- Welcome to the United Nations Office at Nairobi!
  - Pleased to be with you today for the Rotary Day at the UN.
  - Event is a both manifestation of, and an opportunity to reflect on, the strong links and enduring partnership between Rotary International and the United Nations.
  - Our two organizations have a lot in common: Both strive to make our world a better and more harmonious place. Both are taking action to tackle global problems. Both are committed to advancing global social justice and providing humanitarian support to the most vulnerable people.
  - The theme you have selected for this Day – Youth Innovation – is very important and relevant to our time.
  - Today’s world has the largest young generation in history: there are now 1.8 billion young people between the ages of 10 and 24 in the world.
  - They face enormous challenges – changing labour markets, uncertainties caused by globalization and new technologies, the impact of climate change, exclusion and marginalization, and, for those living in conflict-affected areas, frequent violence and instability.
  - At the same time, young people are an important source of innovation, ideas and solutions.
  - If we are to create a more peaceful, healthier and sustainable world for all, we need the active participation, and indeed the leadership, of young people.
  - Young people are critical to the attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Goals.
  - Let me take this opportunity to congratulate the six Young Innovators who are being honoured here today. Their efforts to address a wide range of challenges -- through new and creative means -- underscore the critical role that young people can play in solving problems.
  - They also exemplify how local issues are inextricably linked to global concerns, including the SDGs.
    - With its unique convening role and mandate to serve the world’s people, the United Nations has a great opportunity to support young people and provide a platform through which their needs can be addressed, their voices can be amplified, and their engagement can be advanced.
  - Towards this end, the Secretary-General, just two months ago, launched Youth2030 -- a UN strategy aimed at ensuring the engagement and participation of young people around the world in the 2030 Agenda and other relevant global agendas. The strategy will act as an umbrella framework to guide the entire UN as it steps up its work with and for young people across its three pillars – peace and security, human rights, and sustainable development.
  - Youth2030 identifies five key areas for UN action: First, we will open new routes to engage and involve young people and amplify their voices. Second, we will strengthen our focus on their access to education and health services. Third, we will place their economic empowerment to the fore of our development strategies, through a focus on training and jobs.

- Fourth, we will work harder to ensure young people’s rights are upheld and promote their civic and political engagement. And fifth, we will prioritize support for young people in conflict and in humanitarian crises, including their participation in peace processes.
- Your active participation – as partners and leaders – together with the participation of other young people throughout the world – will be critical to ensure the effective realization of the Youth Strategy.
- Let me take this opportunity to thank you for choosing UNON as the venue for this Rotary Day event. UNON is particularly proud to be hosting this year’s event, as this is only the second time that the Rotary Day at the UN is being held outside of New York, and the first time that it is taking place in Africa.
- As the only UN Headquarters in Africa, and indeed in the entire global South, it is fitting that you have come together here at UNON for this event today.
- With over 60 different UN offices, this compound is a crucial hub for the UN’s activities – in Kenya, in the region and around the world.
- As the global headquarters of UNEP and UN-Habitat, Nairobi has become a center of expertise and innovation in environmental protection and sustainable urbanization – issues which are of crucial importance for the attainment of the SDGs, particularly goals 11, 12 and 13. But the large and varied UN presence on this compound is also advancing the entire 2030 Agenda.
- Achieving the SDGs requires a collective approach and the commitment and participation of everyone: Governments, UN entities, civil society, the private sector, academia, and committed global citizens, of which Rotarians are a prime example.
- The United Nations will continue to rely on Rotary International as we collectively strive to create a more peaceful and sustainable future for all the world’s people.
- Thank you for travelling to Nairobi from so many different countries to join us today.
- I wish you fruitful deliberations.
- Thank you for your kind attention.