

Press release

Announcing the Inaugural Kofi Annan Geneva Peace Address

Geneva, 12 October 2021

Twenty years ago today, the Nobel Peace Prize Committee announced it was awarding the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations and its Secretary-General Kofi Annan, for “their work for a better organized and more peaceful world.”

On the occasion of this twentieth anniversary, the Kofi Annan Foundation, the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies and the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform are pleased to announce the launch of the **Kofi Annan Geneva Peace Address**, a high-level lecture on peace, to be held every year as part of Geneva Peace Week.

“Peace”, said Kofi Annan, “must be sought, above all, because it is the condition for every member of the human family to live a life of dignity and security.” As international tensions rise, solutions to new and old conflicts remain elusive and nationalist agendas threaten international cooperation, it is more important than ever to talk about peace and offer a platform to those who are building it, day after day. There is no better place to do so than in Geneva, “city of peace”, a major multilateral hub and a preferred site for diplomatic summits, peace negotiations and discreet mediation efforts.

The inaugural Address will be delivered on 4 November 2021 at 6 pm by Nobel Laureate Ellen Johnson Sirleaf at the Graduate Institute in Geneva, Switzerland. Africa’s first democratically elected female president, Ms. Johnson Sirleaf was President of Liberia from 2006 to 2018 and is a member of The Elders. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011 for her “non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to full participation in peace-building work.”

The lecture will be followed by a public Q&A session moderated by Heba Aly, CEO of The New Humanitarian. The entire event will be live streamed on the [Graduate Institute’s YouTube channel](#). Participants who wish to attend in person* are invited to register on the [Graduate Institute’s website](#).

The **Kofi Annan Geneva Peace Address** is organized with the support of the Republic and State of Geneva, the City of Geneva and the Fondation pour Genève.

**Access is limited to attendees with a Swiss or European COVID certificate. Face masks must be worn at all times.*

Background

The Kofi Annan Foundation was established in 2008 by the former Secretary-General to apply his expertise and experience to help build peaceful societies. From its earliest days brokering peace in Kenya to supporting democracy and elections with integrity in Nigeria, to changing drug policies in West Africa, combatting hunger, and helping post-conflict societies back onto the road to peace and empowering young leaders, this small Geneva-based Foundation has undertaken -and continues to run- a range of targeted programmes to help build peaceful, democratic, and resilient societies. Its “Vision Annan” programme aims to raise awareness of Kofi Annan’s values and actions, safeguard his name, and promote his core belief that structured international cooperation is key to solving challenges in today’s interconnected world.

www.kofiannanfoundation.org

Geneva Peace Week (GPW), a leading annual forum in the international peacebuilding calendar, is the flagship initiative of the **Geneva Peacebuilding Platform (GPP)** convened in collaboration with the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, the United Nations Office at Geneva, and the Platform’s five partners – the Graduate Institute’s Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding; the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance; the Geneva Centre for Security Policy; Interpeace; and the Quaker United Nations Office, Geneva.

www.gppplatform.ch/

The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies is an institution of research and higher education dedicated to the study of world affairs, with a particular emphasis on the cross-cutting fields of international relations and development issues. Through its core activities, the Graduate Institute aims to promote international cooperation and contributes to the progress of developing societies. More broadly, the Graduate Institute endeavours to develop creative thinking on the major challenges of our time, foster global responsibility and advance respect for diversity. It is one of the GPP’s five partners and hosts many events during Geneva Peace Week.

www.graduateinstitute.ch/

For questions, please contact the Kofi Annan Foundation: media@kofiannanfoundation.org