

FOREWORD

Gareth Evans*

Connie Peck and her colleagues are insufficiently acknowledged international heroes. The Fellowship Programme that this book celebrates has played a critical role over the last two decades in developing the culture of conflict resolution and prevention that is genuinely now taking root in the United Nations system. New initiatives appear every year for recording lessons learned, supporting negotiation and mediation efforts, and building new and ever more effective institutional mechanisms. Without the 730 alumni of this Programme, many now in senior positions and crucial support roles, we would not be remotely so far advanced.

I had a sense from the very beginning that big things were achievable. When I was Foreign Minister of Australia, back in 1992, Connie Peck – then lecturing in psychology at one of my local universities – came to me with a proposal to examine how the UN might improve its effectiveness in conflict prevention and resolution. I liked her focus, energy and enthusiasm and found a way – I’m not sure in retrospect how on earth I managed this – to post her to the Australian Permanent Mission to the UN in New York as my Special Consultant to interview UN staff and diplomats and to develop a set of recommendations.

There she discovered, among many other things, that the Organization seemed to be forever condemned to repeat its mistakes. There was virtually no systematic recording of institutional memory. Every effort at peacemaking started from square one: a formula for forever flying by the seat of one’s pants. Prevention measures were undertaken far too late or mostly not at all: everything learned was almost immediately forgotten. Equally startling was the complete absence of training for UN staff in negotiation and mediation, already an established field in academia and key to effective peacemaking and preventive diplomacy. The myth still prevailed that mediators could only be born, not made. It was obvious, but utterly unacknowledged, that without systematic professional training in this area, the Organization would simply be unable to effectively address the myriad of conflict-related problems it faced around the globe.

Step by step, during her time in New York, Dr Peck began working on ways to fill these critical lacunae in the UN system. Her first major effort is the subject of this book: the UNITAR-IPI Fellowship Programme in Peacemaking and Preventive Diplomacy, which she established in 1993 and is now 20 years old. This is a programme for experienced UN staff, personnel from regional organizations, and diplomats working with the UN, and it has established a stellar reputation for excellence. The Australian Government, I am proud to say, provided seed money to get it off the ground, and further support over the years, together with many other contributors. Norway, with the generosity and commitment for which it is famous, has now hosted the Programme for many years.

The Fellowship Programme is by no means the end of the story. Under the umbrella of the wider UNITAR Programme in Peacemaking and Conflict Prevention, again a Connie Peck brainchild and legacy, the Fellowship Programme spun off into a number of other training programmes modelled on its curriculum. These include one specifically for participants from the African continent and another for representatives of indigenous peoples.

To overcome the problem of a lack of institutional memory, Dr Peck launched the UNITAR Programme for Briefing and Debriefing Special Representatives and Envoys of the Secretary-General to share and record the valuable experience of UN peacemakers and peacekeepers at the highest level. One part of this is an annual seminar to provide a regular forum for the exchange of ideas and experience amongst the most senior appointees in the UN system. A second part, aimed more at institutional memory, is a book, *On Being a Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General* (now in its second edition), brilliantly compiled from her extensive interviews with SRSGs. She has now condensed that volume's most important lessons into the shorter *Manual for UN Mediators: Advice for UN Representatives and Envoys*. Both are available to all newly-appointed and serving SRSGs, their staff, as well as more generally to staff in the Departments of Political Affairs and Peacekeeping Operations.

Connie Peck has further influenced the UN system in other writing. Some years ago, I had the honour of providing the Foreword for another of her books, *The United Nations as a Dispute Settlement System: Improving Mechanisms for the Prevention and Resolution of Conflict*. That work, as well as her next book, *Sustainable Peace: The Role of the UN and Regional Organizations in Preventing Conflict*, made specific proposals for UN reform, many of which have since been adopted, including a dramatic increase in the staff and travel budget of the Department of Political Affairs, so that it can more effectively carry out its mandate in peacemaking and preventive diplomacy. And some of her most ambitious practical proposals have begun to see the light of day, for example, her call for the establishment of regionally-based "UN Conflict Prevention and Resolution Centres." Initially considered a radical idea, centres such as the UN Office for West Africa, the Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, and the UN Regional Office for Central Africa are now being established and are already showing their worth.

Other ideas have been articulated in Peck's *Increasing the Effectiveness of the International Court of Justice*; many journal articles and book chapters (including her important contribution to my own 1995 book, launched at the UN. *Cooperating for Peace: The Global Agenda for the 1990s and Beyond*) and, ultimately, her authorship of the first-ever "Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on enhancing mediation and its support activities." Connie Peck has now turned over the management of the UNITAR Programme in Peacemaking and Conflict Prevention to her trusted colleague, Trisha Riedy, but she still organizes the Fellowship Programme as a Consultant to UNITAR. Her legacy will live long.

I applaud the enterprise involved in this volume in setting down an outline of the core curriculum developed and refined by the Fellowship Programme's distinguished faculty over the last two decades. It's a vital continuing part of learning from experience, learning from experts, transmitting knowledge and experience to future generations, and learning above all not to reinvent the wheel –putting lives at risk in the process. This compendium of this very seminal work will be a hugely valuable resource for all those interested in conflict prevention and resolution through the United Nations. And it will be a continuing inspiration for all future efforts to shape the UN into the truly effective force for international peace and security that its founders envisioned, and on which respect for and protection of our common humanity so obviously continues to depend.

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