

**WVF PEACE AND SECURITY SUMMIT**  
**Stockholm, 28-30 May 2013**

**Introduction and opening of WVF Peace and Security Summit 2013 by  
Chairman Mr. Dan-Viggo Bergtun**

Your excellences, delegates, guests, ladies and gentlemen,

As the chairman of the summit I am delighted to give you all a warm welcome here at the very first; World Veterans Federation Peace and Security Summit.

First of all, I would like to thank His Highness Prince Carl Philip for his support. He is the patron of the host, the Swedish Veterans Federation and also thanks to President Mr. Bengt Wiktorsson and his team; for the big task they took on their shoulders to host this summit. I would also like to thank the Swedish Government for their support and of course all the veterans and all non-governmental organisations taking part in this happening here in beautiful Stockholm, the capitol of Sweden.

I am indeed also happy to see delegates from more than 40 countries here today; to take part in highlighting the facts that veterans represent an asset that society can utilize in a better fashion. I do hope that this summit will provide us all with ideas, inspirations, working tools and methods that we all can bring back home to create a better future for our veterans. Also inspire them to take part in contributing to peace and security in the society.

As you may know, to maintain peace and international security is one of the aims of the World Veterans Federation, and has constituted one of its main areas of activity.

I would like to briefly explain the principles and the methods applied by the Federation in this regard. I will kindly ask you all to consider the changes that have come about in the Federation's recent history; this is in order to support your study during the summit and make you more able to suggest new paths to follow.

**DOES THE WVF HAVE SOME PRINCIPLES FOR ACTIONS FOR PEACE AND SECURITY?**

Yes we do have it my friends.

Due to the composition of the Federation, we have member associations who are former allies and former enemies and represent a large geographical, philosophical and religious area with different cultures. It was particularly important to establish a common definition and a common understanding of the terms of reference. To do otherwise could have lead to false debates and unnecessary disagreements.

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This common definition and understanding was essential with regard to such complex concepts as peace and security and the different meanings we can attribute to them. This is because they are not limited to the silencing of weapons, but imply a code of ethics in international relations.

The Federation considered that such a code of ethics was set out in the Charter of the United Nations, like human rights, and taken up in our Constitution.

Moreover, we have always taken into consideration the principles by which the security of a country is put into question; when that country puts the security of one or several other countries in danger.

In this regard it is important to create a climate of confidence and respect for different points of view, which encourages freedom of expression.

The “coffee break strategy” during meetings is very useful in this regard.

Reaching an agreement on the items of disagreement, which has been clearly defined, can constitute an important step in overcoming the disagreement.

Meetings on the issues concerning the problems of veterans and victims of war are important for creating primary bonds between enemies of recent conflicts. It can encores progress towards the climate of confidence, which is necessary in the pursuit of action.

I will now give you some methods of action applied by the Federation.

Firstly the General Assembly in the Federation, which meets at three-year intervals. This is an opportunity to collate the positions of member associations and often their respective countries.

Agreements reached after these meetings can constitute an indication of the possibility of an agreement at the diplomatic level.

Meetings of the Regional Standing Committees (Africa, Asia and Europe) work to identify essentially regional problems and recommend solutions.

For its part, the Standing Committee on Women allows for defining the various aspects of their contribution to Peace and Security for women and victims of war.

The conferences, to which member and non-member associations and relevant personalities are invited which concern specific issues (the Middle East, Central and Eastern Europe, conflict in the former Yugoslavia...). According to members, these meetings have contributed to facilitating the solving of post-conflict problems or conflict itself.

We participate often as an observer and contribute to governmental meetings. As a Federation with consultative status at the United Nations we have some impact of their decisions.

We also participate at joint meetings, in particular with international non-governmental organisations, on international security, human rights, international humanitarian law and disarmament.

We do some fact-finding missions, which aim to understand the situation of countries in conflict, without judging, and detect any possible perspectives for agreement through meetings with our members and the proper authorities.

Supporting the United Nations on the International Peace Day with Veterans Walk for Peace every year with millions of veterans participating.

We also make a lot of visits to member associations and contact with the authorities and media of the country to promote our declarations, the wellbeing of veterans and their role in the society.

Result of meetings and other methods of action.

The resolutions and the conclusion of our meetings are:

Regularly forwarded to the United Nations and its specialised agencies; and, depending on the subjects covered, to international governmental organisations, international non-governmental organisations and any other concerned parties.

Also forwarded by member associations to the authorities, media and public opinion in their respective countries.

#### THIS SUMMIT AND CHANGE

The contribution of the Federation and of our members to peace and international security should be redesigned or modified based on recent changes in the world. Can we do it and how?

This is one of the questions that the Summit is well placed to examine.

In this regard, the following recent changes could be considered:

Geopolitical structure and globalisation, with their positive and negative effects.

The development of international terrorism.

Marked tendencies in Europe and on other continents towards a lack of trust in political authorities and international institutions and the development of extremist and racist movements advocating chauvinist nationalism and promoting fear.

Change in the nature of armed conflict: inter-State conflicts replacing non-international conflicts.

Change of the status of veterans, who are increasingly becoming career soldiers.

The increasing role of “UN Peace Soldiers” – Blue Berets.

The new information technology and the extraordinary development of communication: transport, social networks, internet... and the abuse of such means of communication.

Since its creation in 1950, the Federation has always worked towards peace and international security. Its continued action in this regard has been recognised and was rewarded by the United Nations in 1987, when it conferred the title of Peace Messenger on the WVF.

Today the WVF has over 200 member associations in 102 countries on five continents and has become a powerful group. Its methods of action have adapted throughout the years to the various changes that have occurred. Our responsibility, as veterans, is to promote peace and security and I believe we can do more than we have done. Let us use this opportunity to increase our effort during this summit to find methods for creating more peace and security in society.

At the beginning of this second decade of the 21st century, action in favour of peace and international security can be placed in three sectors:

- **Prevention;** by working to ensure that differences do not become crises and then armed conflicts; promoting Human Rights
- **Conflict resolution;** be an active mediator
- **Maintaining peace and security;** taking a more active role in the society to support in crisis management.

**The aim of the Summit is therefore to suggest activities to bring the experience of the federation into line with new demands and form a resolutions to be communicated to all concerned, especially the veterans and the entire international community, because after all:**

*«None can speak more eloquently for peace than those  
who have fought in war»*