



University for Peace

Universidad para la Paz



Rector

LEARNING PEACE: A UNIVERSITY AT THE WORLD'S SERVICE

Julia Marton-Lefèvre, Rector of the UN affiliated University for Peace, will talk about the University's unique mission, as set forth by the UN General Assembly Resolution which set up the University in 1980, to:

“provide humanity with a international institution of higher education for peace with the aim of promoting among all human beings a spirit of understanding, tolerance and peaceful coexistence, to stimulate cooperation among peoples and to help lessen obstacles and threats to world peace and progress, in keeping with the noble aspirations proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations.”

She will also refer to the challenges educational institutions in general, and universities in particular, face in their limited ability to address real-world problems which are interdisciplinary in nature and not necessarily organized around classical disciplines often separated by thick walls. Peace and security, while not mentioned explicitly, are intimately linked to the issues being addressed this year by the UN, under the heading of the Millenium Development Goals. We cannot think about ensuring a world in which peace reigns without considering the fate of the world's poor and the speed in which the rich are using the Earth's limited resources. All of these things are related, and the only way to bring about change is to reach the hearts and minds of men, women and children in all parts of the world who will no longer accept to live in poverty, inequity and fear.

Achieving such a world is perhaps the most ambitious challenge faced by humanity, and in order to even begin this journey, educational institutions (as others) will need serious re-organization. The University for Peace is among the handful of institutions which has taken this challenge seriously through its conviction that education is the way to provide the knowledge and skills as well as the determination for human beings to take control of their fate and use their immense talents to bring about a world in which peace is sustainable and sustained.

History has given humanity ample opportunities to learn from its mistakes, but sadly these lessons seem to evade us. A path towards lasting peace requires us to be able to think “outside the box” of the frameworks we have created . Educational institutions must take on this challenge and deal not only with past worlds, but also with the realities of the present and the world that awaits future generations.

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