**Contributing to peace on earth**

[**Atle Hetland**](https://nation.com.pk/Columnist/atle-hetland)

December 10, 2020

The holy books teach us to do good deeds for others and to work for peace in the world. The Quran says that we should compete in doing good deeds, and the Bible says that those who create peace, or work for peace, shall be called the children of God. True, we may not always do what we intend and wish to do. As human beings we are never quite perfect, as it is only God who is perfect. But to have the right intention and will, that is possible, and then we ask for forgiveness when we stumble, remembering, too, that the only way ahead is to stand up again and try even harder. To try our best, that is all we can do.

Every year on 10 December, the Nobel Peace Prize is awarded to the winner or winners; up to three can share the prize, but usually there are not more than two. It is one of the most prestigious prizes in the world. It is a great honour for the recipient/s to receive, and for the awarders to name the winner/s, the Norwegian Nobel Committee, consisting of five members appointed by the Norwegian Parliament. There are rules for who it is that can be members, but once appointed, they are independent and not spokespersons for those who appointed them or anyone else.

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed made interior minister as PM Imran Khan reshuffles federal cabinet](https://nation.com.pk/11-Dec-2020/sheikh-rasheed-ahmed-made-interior-minister-as-pm-imran-khan-reshuffles-federal-cabinet)

This year, the winner is the World Food Programme (WFP), a United Nations organisation, playing a key role in food provision during wars, conflicts and natural disasters. WFP is the UN’s largest humanitarian organisation combating the use of food as a weapon. It also carries out research and advises on longer term issues to improve food security, food production and distribution. WFP cooperates with many UN and other organisations, and it is a partner with the country authorities where assistance is needed, over 80 countries, and with the donors of aid, mostly rich countries.

In 2015, eradicating hunger was adopted as one of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals, with WFP as essential in implementation. In countries such as Yemen, DRC, Nigeria, South Sudan, and Burkina Faso, the combination of hunger and the corona pandemic has led to a dramatic increase in the number of people living at the brink of starvation, and WFP has intensified its efforts to help to avoid suffering and chaos, yes, as a vaccine while waiting for real vaccine.

[EU agrees to cut greenhouse emissions by 55% by 2030](https://nation.com.pk/11-Dec-2020/eu-agrees-to-cut-greenhouse-emissions-by-55-percent-by-2030)

Alas, in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia, an armed conflict has broken out since Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed does not want to allow the existing autonomy for the region, and he has sent the country’s military forces to control the region and its leaders, who were earlier often national leaders. The PM was last year’s recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize for settling the long-lasting conflict with Eritrea, formerly a part of Ethiopia, and other democratic processes. People ask why the military might should be used, and it took several weeks for humanitarian aid and tens of thousands continue to flee to neighbouring Sudan. Again, WFP faces new challenges and proves its importance, and the Abiy Ahmed must re-approve that he was a worthy Peace Prize winner.

In October, when this year’s prize winner was announced, I congratulated WFP in my column in this paper; it was a safe and good choice. Yet, WFP is not a perfect organisation, but it does its best in the world we live in, with its many political, economic and other shortcomings and conflicts. There are always more needs than seeds, and WFP can also improve its operations. We should remember, though, that it can only do as much as the UN member states allow, and we live at a time when there is need for revival and strengthening of multilateral cooperation, not reduction, as we have since during Donald Trump’s lack of leadership in the field as president of the world’s richest and most powerful country. However, cooperation doesn’t necessarily have to be led by America, but the country must at least play a supportive role.

[Senior Indian diplomat summoned as protest over LoC violations](https://nation.com.pk/11-Dec-2020/senior-indian-diplomat-summoned-as-protest-over-loc-violations)

The celebrations of the Nobel Peace Prize ceremonies and the Peace Week 2020, will be toned down due to the current corona pandemic. The award ceremony will be implemented with Committee Chair Berit Reiss-Andersen giving a short statement from Oslo, not even with the other committee members present, and the recipient, the WFP Director-General David Beasley, will be sitting at the organisation’s headquarters in Rome. Beasley’s Nobel Lecture and other events in Oslo will be postponed till a time when reduced spread of the pandemic allows it. Instead of a large torch procession in Oslo, there will be a smaller link-procession with 200 registered members. But this and other things will be transmitted online to the world, including an art exhibition, which will only open later. The main event of the Nobel Peace Prize Forum, where Secretary-General Antonio Gutters of the United Nations (which was winner of the Nobel Prize in 2001 when Kofi Annan was chief), will speak, along with former Norwegian PM Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, who served as WHO chief almost 20 years ago. The theme is ‘International Cooperation after COVID-19: Multilateralism and Global Governance in the wake of the Corona Pandemic.’

[Japan extends Middle East defense mission for one year](https://nation.com.pk/11-Dec-2020/japan-extends-middle-east-defense-mission-for-one-year)

Allow me to boast of having met Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, and her husband, Political Scientist Arne Olav Brundtland here in Pakistan when she visited in 2001 and I worked with Afghan refugee issues in UNHCR. I still remember that when trying to make conversation with him, I said: “You are also a social scientist.” He replied humorously that he was perhaps more ‘social’ than ‘scientist’. I often quote that when I meet people because it is effective in loosening up the atmosphere. Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland must now be about 80, but I saw her on TV a few days ago, and she was as vital and clear-thinking as ever. So, we have things to look forward to later today, if we have our computers and Internet up and going. In Pakistan, we are four hours ahead of Norway, thus, we can follow most of the events live after working hours. Maybe the audiences this year will actually be much larger than the otherwise quite limited seats at the events in Oslo—not to forget either, the events in Stockholm related to the five other Nobel Prizes in the fields of literature, medicine, chemistry, physics, and the related prize in economic sciences.

[Twitter unamused as Time magazine picks Biden-Harris duo as 'person' of year](https://nation.com.pk/11-Dec-2020/twitter-unamused-as-time-magazine-picks-biden-harris-duo-as-person-of-the-year)

But it is not only big organisations, institutions, and groups that contribute to peace. As I began my article stating, it is important that we as individuals speak up for peace and do good deeds. The moral foundation, which is often based on religious or philosophical principles, lie behind what we do as individuals, groups and organisations. The moral foundation and our conviction for doing good deeds and work for peace lie behind what we do. In our time, as earlier, too, there is a debate about the contributions to the common good of rich individuals, multinationals and the role of states in sharing and helping those who need help. In future, there must be a much clearer will and duty to be good stewards and share better what God provides in abundance so there can one day indeed be peace on earth.