

**Explanation of Vote
Promotion of the Right to Peace**

Statement by the Delegation of the United States of America

**Human Rights Council 20th Session
Geneva**

Thank you, Madame President.

Like all peace-loving nations, the United States is deeply concerned whenever conflict erupts and human rights are violated. We also know that any peace is unstable where citizens are denied the right to speak freely or worship as they please, choose their own leaders or assemble without fear.

In this vein, we will continue our work on many of the underlying issues that the supporters of this resolution have argued the creation of a 'right to peace' would advance, such as women's rights, disarmament, and development. We will address each of these issues in the appropriate UN body, utilizing deep reservoirs of subject matter expertise and building on years of diligent and robust efforts.

We appreciate the leadership of several members of this Council to build bridges and focus on issues where there is space for productive engagement. However, the inter-governmental Working Group created by this resolution takes as its basic premise drafting a declaration that would cover many issues that are, at best, unrelated to the cause of peace and, at worst, divisive and detrimental to efforts to achieve peace. Rather than building on the existing consensus-based paths that have been developed over the years in the UN on a variety of topics related to peace-building, this resolution seeks to sow division and embroil the Council in contentious negotiations.

Regardless of how it has been promoted, studied or framed, past efforts to move forward with a 'right to peace' have always ended in endorsements for new concepts on controversial thematic issues, often unrelated to human rights. The result has inevitably been to try and circumvent ongoing dialogue in the Council and across the UN system by using the broad support for the cause of peace to advance other agendas.

This Council can make the greatest contribution to promoting peace by focusing on the implementation of human rights obligations and commitments. Human rights are universal and are held and exercised by individuals. We do not agree with attempts to develop a collective 'right to peace' or to position it as an 'enabling right' that would in any way modify or stifle the exercise of existing human rights.

No country wants to be cast as 'voting against peace'. However, this resolution and its Working Group will not contribute to the cause of peace or human rights. A vote against this resolution is not a vote against peace, but rather a vote against continuing an exercise fraught with divisions that makes no meaningful contribution to the protection of human rights on the ground.

We therefore must call a vote and vote against this resolution, and we ask that other countries vote against the establishment of this divisive, time and resource intensive Working Group.

Thank you, Madame President.

