

A Future Beyond War: Inclusion, Justice and Sustainable Peace

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This article argues that a sustainable *future not only without wars* cannot be adequately captured by the prolonged absence of armed conflict. Even a durable peace, understood as a stable “no war” condition, may remain insufficient if the structural determinants of violence continue to operate beneath the surface of formal pacification. From this perspective, peace is conceptualized as a multidimensional policy objective grounded in human development, social justice, and inclusive access to essential resources. The analysis identifies social marginality—manifested in multidimensional poverty, unequal access to education, healthcare, employment opportunities, and territorial disparities—as a key structural driver of instability. Crucially, the persistence of marginalization is examined not primarily as a consequence of absolute resource scarcity, but as the outcome of institutional, distributive, and monetary arrangements that regulate access to wealth, services, and opportunities. Despite the planet’s potential capacity to generate essential goods compatible with widespread human well-being, asymmetries in access and circulation contribute to reproducing exclusion, eroding institutional trust, and sustaining latent conflict dynamics. The article advances the claim that conflict prevention must begin well before diplomatic mediation and military de-escalation. It depends instead on measurable and durable interventions capable of transforming structural conditions that render violence socially or politically viable. In this framework, alongside traditional social and institutional policies, particular attention is devoted to the role of monetary and financial mechanisms in shaping inclusion, resilience, and peace outcomes. By integrating peace theory, social marginality analysis, and distributive considerations, the paper aims to contribute to a more robust understanding of *positive peace*, understood as the reduction of structural vulnerabilities that allow war to remain a recurrent possibility rather than a historical exception.

Keywords: peacebuilding, conflict prevention, social marginality, multidimensional poverty, institutional trust, inclusive development

Introduction

A credible horizon of peace cannot be reduced to the mere absence of armed conflict. In a substantive sense, peace refers to political, economic, and socio-cultural conditions that affect the determinants of violence. When such conditions are lacking, the outbreak of conflict becomes more likely and its reproduction more convenient. Within this framework, social marginality—multidimensional poverty, educational exclusion, job insecurity, territorial inequalities, and discrimination—is not a secondary issue, but a structural factor of instability. Limited access to rights, essential services, and opportunities tends to fuel distrust in institutions and latent conflict. It also increases vulnerability to illegal networks and processes of radicalization. By contrast, expanding the effective capabilities of individuals and communities strengthens social cohesion and resilience.

Starting from these premises, an understanding of peace as a policy objective grounded in human development and social justice is essential, but not sufficient if it remains confined to the negotiating dimension or to the simple suspension of hostilities. The analysis therefore examines the contribution of integrated strategies aimed at reducing areas of exclusion and transforming them into effective spaces of citizenship. The levers considered include investments in education and health, social protection instruments, the promotion of decent work, the regeneration of peripheral contexts, the strengthening of institutional quality and administrative transparency, as well as international cooperation oriented toward equity. The underlying assumption is that conflict prevention constitutes a long-term process in which public action affects the conditions that make violence a viable option for individual and collective actors. In other words, the goal is not only to prolong the duration of peace, but to reduce the likelihood that social and political competition will turn into war.

Conflict prevention begins before diplomatic mediation and requires measurable and lasting interventions in the life opportunities of the groups most exposed to marginalization. From this perspective, a future not only free of wars, but also characterized by lower social exclusion, constitutes a necessary condition for more robust stability and sustainable development.

From this standpoint, it is necessary to distinguish between “negative” peace (the absence of war) and “positive” peace (the reduction of the structural causes of violence). Even when the cessation of hostilities is prolonged over time, the mere maintenance of a “no war” condition may prove insufficient: Competition over resources, status, and power may reactivate cycles of escalation if deep imbalances persist in the distribution of opportunities and in the capacity of institutions to manage social conflict credibly. It follows that the duration of a truce, while relevant, is not in itself a guarantee of stability; the object of analysis must therefore shift from the manifestations of violence to the mechanisms that make it possible, acceptable, or instrumentally convenient.

It is within this framework that the theme of marginality assumes primary analytical relevance. The argument starts from one premise: The overall capacity of the planet to produce essential goods and technical knowledge is, in principle, compatible with widespread levels of human well-being. The persistence of deprivation and insecurity therefore cannot be attributed solely to constraints of “natural” scarcity, but requires us to examine the social and institutional arrangements that regulate the production, access, and allocation of resources (income, services, infrastructure, protections). In other words, the problem becomes eminently political and organizational: Where the benefits of development remain concentrated and access to fundamental goods is selective, marginality becomes a risk multiplier, feeding social fractures and lowering the threshold of resilience within systems of coexistence.

On this point, it is worth clarifying that the argument does not intend to call into question the legitimacy of institutions or the competence of public actors as such. The focus is instead on a possible structural gap in the mechanisms through which economic benefits are distributed, with particular reference to the role of money and the channels through which it reaches (or fails to reach) marginalized social segments. Even in the presence of a substantial monetary mass used in international exchanges, effective access to liquidity and financial instruments may remain asymmetric, with the effect of limiting the capacity of vulnerable families and communities to transform formal rights into real opportunities. In such a scenario, the limited penetration of money toward social and territorial peripheries may contribute to reproducing deprivation, distrust, and fragility, thereby amplifying the risk factors already mentioned.

Hence the working hypothesis that guides the following discussion: Alongside the social and institutional policies traditionally associated with conflict prevention, it may be necessary to introduce instruments capable of improving the transmission of monetary resources toward excluded groups, reducing access constraints and barriers of intermediation. In analytical terms, the issue concerns not only how much money exists within the system, but also how it circulates, according to which priorities, and with what distributive effects on incomes, services, and investment in fragile contexts. A monetary mechanism oriented toward inclusion—defined according to criteria of transparency, accountability, and measurability of impacts—may therefore be considered a potential component of positive peace, insofar as it reduces marginality and strengthens social cohesion.

The purpose of this contribution is therefore to: (i) clarify the links between marginality, deficits in access to resources, and the risk of instability; (ii) discuss how monetary and financial architecture may affect, directly or indirectly, the capacity of societies to prevent escalation; and (iii) advance a conceptual proposal for a device that, by combining the objective of restoring peace in ongoing conflicts with that of reducing marginality, may help make more credible a future “not only without wars”. The following section reconstructs the main mechanisms through which social exclusion is translated into collective vulnerability, thereby preparing the ground for the discussion of possible instruments of intervention.

Another issue remains, for the time being, hypothetical. The idea of a magic wand capable of ending all the many wars currently underway in Europe, Africa, the Americas, and elsewhere—that is, of bringing about a simultaneous and abrupt end to conflicts—is the stuff of sorcery and fairy tales. Yet it is not impossible to set the objective, within the shortest feasible time, of freezing wars while at the same time improving the social and economic conditions of the population.

We intend to address several central questions that will guide the development of the following sections: How does social marginality (see Appendix) contribute to keeping open the possibility of war, even in formally pacified contexts? Which mechanisms of access to and distribution of resources, and particularly of money, affect the capacity of societies to transform formal peace into substantive peace? Is it possible to conceive economic and monetary instruments that, alongside traditional social policies, help reduce marginality and strengthen a “positive” peace understood as stability grounded in inclusion and cohesion? The underlying hypothesis is that an authentic no war condition requires not only the management of ongoing conflicts, but also the transformation of the structural conditions that feed exclusion, insecurity, and distrust. The following sections develop this approach, first by analyzing the link between marginality and instability, and then by discussing the potential role of redistributive and monetary mechanisms oriented toward inclusion in the construction of a truly sustainable peace.

Once the Cessation of Hostilities Has Been Stabilized, the Eternal Friendship Scheme Should Be Translated Into an Operational Agreement

The hypothesis from which we begin, in reasoning about a *no war* world, is that a peace limited to temporarily interrupting hostilities risks becoming merely a corridor toward the next war: precisely what must be avoided. Today conflicts are numerous and heterogeneous: Some stand at the center of media attention, and others remain at the margins of global public opinion; still others are fueled by internal competition and armed actors seeking power and rents, often in connection with the exploitation of strategic resources. In many cases, moreover, wars are intertwined with energy dynamics and with global interests that may come into tension with the urgency of an ecological transition and with the spread of alternatives to fossil fuels.

In this sense, conflict not infrequently also takes on the features of an ideological clash even before it becomes a strictly political one.

To call it “ideological” means that, beyond immediate material interests, a system of beliefs and narratives comes into play that justifies hostility and makes it acceptable in the eyes of populations and elites. When a conflict is structured around identity-based images of the enemy, “salvific” visions of one’s own historical role, or absolute moral representations, war tends to shift from a contingent instrument to a permanent political language. Under such conditions, even the end of military operations may leave intact the symbolic and cultural premises that make a resumption of hostilities plausible.

For this reason, peace cannot be reduced to a simple ceasefire or to an agreement that freezes existing balances of power. A “peace that leads to war” is often the result of compromises that do not address the deep causes of mobilization: unresolved collective traumas, war economies, political incentives toward polarization, inequalities perceived as humiliation, and propaganda mechanisms that continue to operate even during a truce. If these factors remain unchanged, the absence of war becomes an interval, not a paradigm shift.

Hence the need to think of arrangements capable of transforming the end of war into a long-term process of social reconstruction, able to replace logics of revenge and retaliation with incentives for cooperation. In other words, a credible constraint is needed to shift the horizon from victory to coexistence, and to make it more costly—politically and materially—to reopen the fronts. A durable pact, supported by verifiable obligations and tangible benefits for the marginalized groups of both societies, can affect the ideological dimension of conflict because it produces interdependence on a daily basis and reduces the space available to hostile narratives.

From our point of view, in a *no war* perspective, the conclusion of conflicts through peace should be built on a common strategy aimed at the almost simultaneous closure of war fronts, not through a peace that leads back to war, but through a pact of *eternal friendship*. Such a pact would also establish that the wealthier country, bound in this lasting friendship between the two former belligerents, should, for a period of at least thirty or forty years and in reciprocal spirit, provide the other party with essential goods for life, to be distributed to the marginalized segments of the populations of both countries. In substance, this would trace, as an alternative to the resentment nurtured under temporary peace, an enduring friendship that provides, precisely for the shared management of a common future, an exchange of essential goods intended to assist the poor and marginalized. Such an agreement should be conceived *not as an act of charity*, but as an architecture of security and cohesion, with programmed transfers and transparent criteria for allocation to marginalized groups. Only by making interdependence stable and measurable—and thus making the benefits of cooperation visible—can the political convenience of propaganda and renewed escalation be reduced.

Not only that. The *no war* perspective also requires a meeting of the leaders of many States, not only those adjacent to the belligerents, coordinated by a supranational Organism or Agency. Such a body should be entrusted, over a predetermined period of time, even if not a short one, with the difficult task of taking the decisions necessary first to suspend the war; the immediate objective of this body would be to contribute to the closure of conflicts. At a later stage, following the end of each war, it should submit to the now pacified contenders a scheme of *eternal friendship*, together with the rule that the richer—or less poor—of the two former contenders assume, for more than 30 or 40 years, the related obligations in terms of assistance to the marginalized people of the signatory country.

For such an initiative to be more than a declaration of intent, the supranational body should have a precise and clearly delimited mandate: to convene heads of government and the main regional actors regularly, to define

a sequence of minimal and verifiable decisions for the suspension of hostilities (ceasefires, humanitarian corridors, prisoner exchanges, guarantees for civilians), and to establish a framework of incentives and sanctions that makes cooperation advantageous and the resumption of operations costly. In this first phase, the objective is not to resolve all disputes immediately, but to make the “freezing” of the conflict feasible within a defined time frame, reducing the intensity of violence and opening spaces for negotiation that are less exposed to propaganda and military pressure.

In the subsequent phase, once the cessation of hostilities has been stabilized, the *eternal friendship* scheme should be translated into an operational agreement endowed with joint governance: a mixed commission between the two former belligerents, assisted by a technical secretariat of the supranational body, charged with planning for several decades the flows of essential goods (food, medicines, medical devices, light infrastructure, school materials) and directing them, according to transparent criteria, toward the most marginalized areas and groups in both countries. The key point is that such transfers should not be presented as “concessions” or unilateral reparations, but as a symmetrical security arrangement: Economic and social interdependence, made stable over time, reduces the political space for narratives of revenge and creates concrete interests in the continuity of cooperation.

For the agreement to be credible, mechanisms of financing, traceability, and independent evaluation are also required. Support for marginalized groups could be funded through contributions proportionate to the fiscal capacity—or relative wealth—of the signatories, supplemented by multilateral funds and guarantee instruments designed to reduce the procurement costs of essential goods. Distribution should be accompanied by public records (periodic audits, indicators of territorial coverage, anti-corruption checks) and by measurable social metrics: reductions in multidimensional poverty, access to healthcare and education, improvements in decent employment, and greater institutional trust. Within this framework, *eternal friendship* is not merely a diplomatic symbol, but a bridge between “negative” peace and “positive” peace, because it acts upon the material and institutional conditions that make war socially and politically reactivatable.

At this point, a procedure of technical meetings should be agreed upon, so that each time the context of ongoing conflicts can be examined and an order of priority for pacification interventions can be defined. The idea is that the effective end of conflicts becomes possible when belligerents agree to suspend the use of arms and to discuss, with the support of the international Agency/body, their respective positions in view of an agreement. Thereafter, the signing of the *eternal friendship* pact would serve to make the return to war less reversible. Every decision that leads to the suspension of a conflict produces a cumulative benefit: It consolidates trust in procedures, reduces bellic emulation, and strengthens the horizon of a *no war* planet.

Operating Method and Priority Criteria

If the supranational Organism/Agency is to contribute to the closure of conflicts, public criteria of priority and a repeatable method of work must be established: humanitarian severity, risk of regional spillover, probability of negotiating success, availability of guarantees on the ground, and logistical capacity to deliver essential aid to marginalized groups. In other words, the task is not merely to “convene” meetings, but to build a decision-making cycle with stages, deadlines, and defined responsibilities, thus preventing mediation from remaining trapped in generic declarations or cross-vetoes.

This should be accompanied by technical instruments of monitoring and verification: fact-finding missions, minimum common indicators (respect for the ceasefire, reduction of incidents, humanitarian access, protection

of civilians), independent audits, and rapid channels of communication with local authorities and civil society. The transparency of procedures—including through periodic reports and explicit criteria for the allocation of transfers—is an integral part of the initiative’s credibility: It reduces suspicions of favoritism, limits the propagandistic use of results, and makes more stable the transition from truce to the *eternal friendship* agreement as a measurable long-term device of cooperation.

Success and Risks Conditions

Lastly, the issue of the conditions for success remains. Such a framework can function only if the Agency possesses sufficient political legitimacy, operates with perceptible impartiality, and is not interpreted as an instrument of interference or of externally imposed rebalancing. In addition, the financial sustainability of multi-decade obligations must be protected by simple rules: predictable contributions, revision clauses, safeguard mechanisms in the event of economic crises, and above all periodic checks on the effective reach of support to marginalized groups, in order to prevent cooperation from turning into rent for intermediaries or into a mere unfulfilled promise.

If these conditions are respected, each suspension of war does not remain an isolated episode but becomes part of a cumulative procedure: The experience acquired, the technical protocols, and the social benefits generated by interdependence progressively reduce the political space for a return to arms. It is on this basis that the discussion can now shift, in a more analytical manner, from general principles to the concrete dynamics that fuel conflicts and to the levers—social, institutional, and monetary—capable of reducing marginality and strengthening positive peace.

Marginality and the Consolidation of Peace

We have considered the problem of a “chain” closure of conflicts, on the assumption that the conclusion of one confrontation after another would produce a progressive advantage for the *no war* initiative, and that the overall cessation of ongoing wars would mark the beginning of a new era. However, we remain convinced that the closure of fronts alone does not represent sufficient progress. It is not plausible to imagine a world without wars but with millions of human beings marginalized in every country: Marginality is not necessarily the direct cause of war, but it constitutes fertile ground for it, because it feeds frustration, distrust, and social conflict. For this reason, one cannot “close one door” (war) while leaving “another” open (exclusion): The *no war* project requires pacification and inclusion together.

At this point a new factor comes into play, given that the condition established with definitive closure through the signing of *eternal friendship*, that is, the reciprocal pact binding the country that is better endowed economically to transfer goods for the marginalized in the less-endowed country—is certainly insufficient to reduce fully the risk of marginality. Yet it is essential that marginality be reduced to the greatest extent possible or disappear altogether. This is why a new instrument must come into play, one that can continue to operate until the multitude of people who today live in marginal conditions disappears from the face of the earth together with *no war*.

This instrument is the very same money used in traditional markets, which would however be employed in those same markets, or in special sub-markets, to make possible the solution of the puzzle of the marginalized. In other words, the aim is to put back into circulation, for the specific function of assisting marginalized people, the large quantity of money withdrawn from circulation in markets because of the limited enterprise of its holders,

who deposit it in banks, in safe-deposit boxes, or abroad to escape taxation, and so forth; in any case, dormant money that could be used for the benefit of marginalized populations throughout the world, waiting for a normal life if possible. Such a possibility could become reality if this hoarded and inert money were put back into circulation. How?

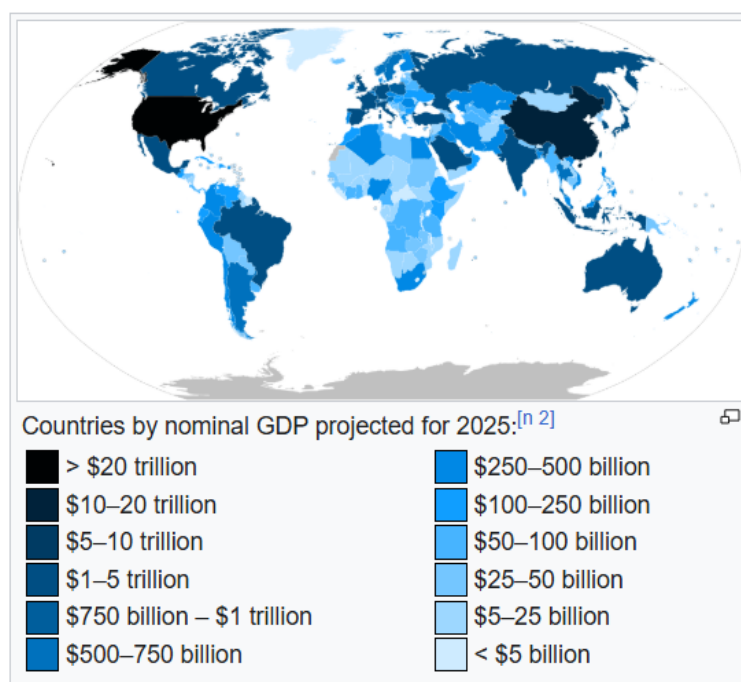


Figure 1. Largest economies in the world by nominal GDP in 2026 according to International Monetary Fund projections.

Source: Wikipedia.

The idea is to distinguish between “existing” money and “effectively operating” money. A significant share of liquidity, although it is formally present in the system, remains in practice inactive because it is held in forms of accumulation (unmoved deposits, excessive precautionary reserves, balances not directed toward investment or consumption) or removed from ordinary circulation. Such immobilization is not neutral: It reduces the velocity of circulation, compresses demand, and above all leaves unanswered the essential needs of marginalized populations that do not access the market not for lack of desires or capacities, but because of insufficient monetary means and inadequate channels of inclusion.

To make possible the reuse of this liquidity without confusing it with the rest of the circulating money, one may hypothesize the introduction of a *distinguishing mark* (a physical or digital identifying sign) applied to money that is “set back in motion” for social purposes. The distinguishing mark does not create new money: It qualifies a share of already existing money, making its origin and, above all, its intended use recognizable. In this way, the marked money may circulate in ordinary markets or in dedicated sub-markets, but according to a simple rule: It must be spent and accepted within circuits that produce essential goods and services (food, health, education, housing, socially useful work) and that have marginalized people as their final beneficiaries, according to public and verifiable criteria.

Operational guarantees must be few but stringent. First, public rules of activation: The share of liquidity “set back in motion” must be defined according to transparent criteria (ceilings, gradualness, measurable purposes) and without arbitrariness. Second, accreditation of the entities allowed to accept the distinguishing

mark (local authorities, certified suppliers, social programs), so as to avoid unproductive intermediation and overpricing. Third, proportionate traceability and independent audits: not to monitor individuals, but to verify flows and results (aggregate amounts, categories of expenditure, territorial coverage), with sanctions and revocations in cases of abuse and with impact indicators (access to essential goods, reduction of deprivation, socially useful employment).

Above all, “dormant money” would not suffer any harm: It would neither be confiscated nor devalued, and property rights would remain untouched. The idea is, on the contrary, to transform a portion of inactive balances into effective exchange capacity through voluntary participation or incentives (for example, fiscal or reputational conditions), while maintaining unchanged nominal value and full convertibility according to predetermined rules. The distinguishing mark is not a penalty on saving, but a mechanism for the temporary qualification of the use of money: It distinguishes the social purpose of a share of liquidity and ensures its employment toward essential needs, without “punishing” those who hold resources and without altering the overall money supply.

Conclusion

Peace can lead to a new war, and so on. To avoid this danger, which affects almost all conflicts currently underway on Earth, the procedure of pacification must not end with the cessation of fighting but must continue through the mediation of a specific UN Agency, which would have the task of carrying forward the work of pacification until an *eternal friendship* agreement is drawn up between former belligerents. This relationship of friendship between former opponents is completed if the parties decide that, for the following 30-40 years, the better-endowed country will provide essential goods for the marginalized population of the weaker country. The premise is a chain of interventions touching all countries at war, on the assumption that, as the chain of countries at peace or bound by an *eternal friendship* advances, the closing of conflicts becomes, with the progress of peace decisions, a great help in ending—one after another—the wars currently underway.

However, this chain procedure does not assure us of a successful final outcome—the end of wars on the planet—because there are millions of human beings and children in the world who live in conditions of marginality, an obscure factor that contributes to creating the grave hardships that can lead to war. Therefore, in order to achieve a *no war* extended across the planet, there must also be an instrument capable of alleviating everywhere the vast host of marginalized people in the world, using common means such as money.

From this perspective, the monetary device outlined here is neither utopian in nature nor to be confused with a mere act of charity. It should instead be conceived as a stable component of collective security: a set of rules and incentives designed to foster the reallocation of portions of inactive liquidity toward verifiable circuits for the production and distribution of essential goods, with clearly identifiable beneficiaries and measurable impact indicators. The condition for its effectiveness is governance: public access criteria, proportionate traceability, independent audits, anti-abuse clauses, and periodic review mechanisms to correct distortions and prevent the measure from turning into rent for intermediaries or into propaganda.

If the goal is a future not only without wars, but also capable of structurally reducing the conditions that make violence possible, then peace must be understood as a process rather than an event. The “chain” of pacifications and *eternal friendship* pacts may create the political framework for cooperation; yet it is the measurable reduction of marginality—through access to food, healthcare, education, decent work, and social dignity—that makes that framework durable. In other words, global stability emerges when ceasefires and inclusion advance together: Only in this way does *no war* cease to be a mere interval and become a credible historical trajectory.

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The text highlights, on the basis of UN data, a sharp increase in inequalities and persistent global poverty. In 2025, about 808 million people live in extreme poverty (less than \$3 a day) and wealth is highly concentrated: The richest 1% owns more wealth than 95% of humanity. Economic insecurity is exacerbated by informal and precarious employment, human trafficking and violence, rapidly growing urban poverty, and shortcomings in access to education, safe water, sanitation, and health care.

- Extreme poverty (2025): ~808 million people with income < \$3/day.
- Low-income poverty: ~2.9 billion people live on \$3-8.3/day.
- Multidimensional poverty (2024): ~1.1 billion in acute multidimensional poverty.
- Informal work: ~60% of global employment (almost 2 billion); up to 88% in low-income countries.
- Young people: three times more likely to be unemployed than adults; 1 in 5 (15-24 years old) are not in education, employment, or training.
- Disability: only ~1/3 are employed; ~70% out of the labour market.
- Forced labour and children: more than 28 million victims of forced labour; 138 million children employed in often dangerous work.
- Trafficking: over 200,000 victims identified in 2020-2023; routes involving at least 128 countries (2022).
- Violence against women: almost 1 in 3 women have suffered physical and/or sexual violence at least once in their life.
- Urban poverty: +130 million (vs 2015) in informal settlements; over 1.12 billion in 2022.
- Education: 272 million children and young people out of school; in low-income countries, 1 in 3 young people without access to formal education.
- Water and sanitation (2024): 2.2 billion without safely managed drinking water; 3.4 billion without safe sanitation.
- Health: Health expenditures push more than 1 billion people into poverty or deeper poverty each year.

Pope Leo XIV's first apostolic exhortation, "Dilexi te", speaks of an increasingly less equitable world. This is confirmed by UN data: In 2025 it is estimated that 808 million people will be in conditions of extreme poverty, with an income of less than \$3 a day. Wealth is increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few: the 1% own more wealth than 95% of humanity.

The economy that kills, the lack of equity, the condition of migrants, violence against women, human trafficking, malnutrition, the educational emergency: These are some of the themes dealt with by Pope Leo XIV's first apostolic exhortation "Dilexi te", a work begun by Francis on the theme of service to the poor in whose face one can find "the suffering of the innocent". These are highly topical issues, if we refer to the United Nations data. An in-depth overall picture was provided by the General Secretariat's report published on 11 September, entitled "Fairness, Economic Security for All and Solidarity: Reaffirming Social Development for a Sustainable Future", which underlined the commitment to promote the provisions of the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development.

What is worrying globally is the huge amount of people in difficulty. In 2025, an estimated 808 million people will be in extreme poverty, with an income of less than \$3 a day. Another 2.9 billion live on an income of between \$3 and \$8.3 a day, which is insufficient to ensure a decent future. The Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2024 indicates that 1.1 billion people were living in acute multidimensional poverty in 2024, due to the overlapping of different forms of hardship.

The main causes of economic insecurity, especially in low- and middle-income countries, are precarious and irregular employment. In fact, 60% of the globally employed, almost 2 billion workers, have an informal job, with percentages of 88% in low-income countries, 83% in lower middle-income countries, 52% in upper middle-income countries, while in high-income countries irregular work is at 14%. Young people are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults, and one in five between the ages of 15 and 24 are neither in training, employment, nor a student. Alarming data, which become even more so if we consider the condition of people with disabilities, who are particularly vulnerable in this context: Only a third of them are employed while

70% are out of the labor market. Non-regular employment produces minimum wages that fail to provide the necessary livelihood for a decent standard of living.

Trafficking and Violence Against Women

Furthermore, without legal protections, it is easier to get involved in illicit trafficking or forced labor, of which more than 28 million people are victims in the world, including 3.3 million children, while 138 million minors are employed in often dangerous jobs and part of global production chains. In the period 2020-2023 alone, more than 200 thousand victims of human trafficking have been identified, as confirmed by recent data from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), but many others do not emerge, due to the difficulty of asking for help. The routes of the route touched at least 128 countries in 2022. Those affected are mainly women and girls, who are exploited in all forms of trafficking, particularly for sexual purposes, but children, especially unaccompanied children, are also targeted. The condition of women, in addition to the various forms of slavery, is particularly vulnerable, considering that, globally, almost one in three women have suffered physical and/or sexual violence at least once in their life, often within the home, according to United Nations data.

Urban Poverty and Inequalities

Inequality is particularly increasing in cities, as reported in the aforementioned report of the UN Secretary-General on equity and economic security. In cities, housing costs are rising faster than wages and have become a major household problem. Thus urban poverty accelerates at a frightening rate: 130 million more people than in 2015 live in informal settlements or slums, for a total of over 1.12 billion detected in 2022. Thus, three decades after the adoption of the Copenhagen Declaration in 1995—which prioritised the eradication of poverty, the promotion of full and productive employment and social integration—persistent and growing inequalities continue to undermine the commitments set out in the text. Today, two-thirds of the world's population lives in countries where inequality has grown, while wealth is increasingly concentrated: The richest 1% owns more wealth than 95% of humanity.

Lack of Education and Healthcare

The marginalization of poor countries is becoming more and more increasing and the figure is not destined to improve if the development of the new generations is undermined. In fact, 272 million children and young people in the world do not attend school. In low-income countries, one in three young people do not have access to formal education, also due to economic problems. Families in low- and lower-middle-income countries are forced to bear nearly 40 percent of the cost of education, often for materials and uniforms. There is also much to be done in the field of access to water and sanitation. In 2024, 2.2 billion people did not have access to safely managed drinking water and 3.4 billion were unable to use safe sanitation. It is precisely health care spending that pushes more than a billion people into poverty every year or into even deeper poverty.

One in five children live in extreme poverty. In 2024, an estimated 412 million children aged 17 or younger were residing in households living on less than \$3 a day. Globally, child poverty has been on a steady, if slow, decline since 2014, when an estimated 507 million children lived in extreme poverty. However, the pace of poverty reduction among children has been slower compared with the general population. Children continue to be disproportionately affected, comprising more than 50% of those in extreme poverty, although their share of the global population is only 30%. Similar to the general population, extreme poverty among children is increasingly concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa and places affected by fragility and conflict. Child poverty rates vary substantially across regions. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to about 23% of the world's population of children, yet it is home to three quarters (over 312 million) of all children living in extreme poverty. In 2024, the extreme child poverty rate in Sub-Saharan Africa remained the same as in 2014, around 52%.