

## Brazil Bestseller Paulo Coelho's Latest Mission: Peace Messenger

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Paulo Coelho, a Brazilian writer with international renown, has been appointed messenger of peace by the United Nations. He became part of a handful of international personalities chosen by the UN for this mostly symbolic post.

It was in 1998 that the UN started selecting famous people who somehow contribute to global development to represent the UN in certain occasions.

Coelho, author of novels, has already had his books translated into 65 different languages. He has sold over 100 million books, and was the world's best selling author in 2003. The main feature of his work is mysticism.

One of his first books, *The Diary of a Magician* ('Diário de Um Mago'), launched in 1986, described his own pilgrimage on the Route of Santiago de Compostela, in Spain.

Born in the southeastern Brazilian state of Rio de Janeiro, in 1947, Paulo Coelho also wrote song lyrics in partnership with some of the most famous Brazilian singers, such as Elis Regina and Raul Seixas.

He also adapted the books 'The Greatest Thing in the World', by Henry Drummond, and 'Beloved Prophet', by Khalil Gibran.

The writer maintains the Paulo Coelho Institute using funds from the copyrights of his works. The institute provides aid to children and elderly people who have financial problems. The idea is to give them opportunities. Elderly people receive financial assistance.

The institute makes contributions to Solar Meninos de Luz, a day nursery located in the Pavão-Pavãozinho and Cantagalo slums, in the city of Rio de Janeiro, which caters to 430 impoverished children.

Before being appointed UN messenger, Paulo Coelho was already a Special Counselor for Intercultural Dialogues and Spiritual Convergences at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Along with the Brazilian bestselling author also appointed last week by the secretary general at the UN, Ban Ki-moon, were Argentine pianist Daniel Barenboim, Japanese violinist Midori Goto and Princess Haya from Jordan. Actor Michael

Douglas, conservationist Jane Goodall, cello player Yo-Yo Ma, and writer Elie Wiesel were already part of the list.

The messengers of peace are usually people renowned for their talents in the fields of art, literature, music, and sports, who embark on a mission of propagating the UN's ideals and activities throughout the world.