

Many to Many

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“Many to Many” under the aegis of Operation Peace Through Unity is a communicating link between “we, the peoples” of all nations, races, creeds and ideologies offering in the spirit of the preamble of the United Nations Charter an instrument for the furthering of better relationships based on deepening mutual understanding and the aspiration to promote unity and cooperation beyond all differences.

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I. Tension

One of the simplest definitions of the word ‘tension’ could be the ‘*effect produced by forces pulling against each other*’.

Tension is, it seems, the dynamics of all relationships within the different parts of any one form of matter, from the smallest to the largest, and also the effect produced by the relationships between any forms of life - anywhere.

Different types of tension enable light to display a spectrum of colours, evoke a symphony of sounds, and determine shapes and designs of things, from raindrops to planets. And using the various qualities and potentialities of tension with increasing insight and understanding, humanity has created bridges and cathedrals; music and works of art; ever more sophisticated means of travel and communication - and has also developed ever more effective methods of healing and of destroying.

Scientists, psychologists, farmers, parents, in fact all of us, are continuously grappling with the issue of how these dynamically interactive forces can be harnessed for our own as well as the general good – bringing harmony from conflict.

In all creation there appears to be an inner determined striving to achieve the highest possible point of tension for reaching the next step towards greater perfection and freer expression. Whether it is a child’s determination to walk, or the dynamic balance holding a solar system on its course through the universe, there is a point of ‘focused immovable will’, as it has been called, which seems to cause the moving forward of all creation..

The tension in the world today is felt intensely by all planetary life. In the words of the Tibetan Master, Djwal Khul: “*every Kingdom on earth is encumbered with shock – animal, vegetable, mineral as well as human. This disturbance is a phase of promotion. There are crashed areas of released energy causing forces to be freed, which again can and will be used for reconstruction.*”

All kingdoms are today involved in this ‘disturbance’. All planetary life including humanity is, to use a phrase from anthropologist A.L. Kroeber, at “the highest state of tension that the organism can bear creatively”. At this pivotal point of extreme tension the energy is released which will bring into being new forms, new worlds, new ways of thinking and states of consciousness.

There seems to be a deep and purposeful relationship between the urge within humanity to move from one point of tension to another in order to achieve greater freedom from boundaries, and the point of ‘focused immovable Will’. At each step we take towards new expansions we include, and become included in, a greater whole.

In the hands of human beings; in our hearts and minds are the tools for using the forces freed by the collapsing structures of old habits and habitats for reconstruction. Inherent within each person is an unbreakable link with the immovable Will of God. As we work and labour we will learn to use all forces to good effect.

II. Civilizations and the Challenge for Peace: Obstacles and Opportunities ***UN General Assembly Informal Thematic Debate*** ***10-11 May 2007***

The President of the UN General Assembly, H.E. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, expressed early in the presidency her intention to convene a series of 'informal thematic debates'. The two first in the series focused on the issues of *development* and *gender equality*. The third debate covered some of the many aspects of the theme '*Civilizations and the Challenge for Peace: obstacles and opportunities*' and brought together political leaders and peoples from all countries, representing governments, media, churches, academia and others.

In his opening statement, the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, set the theme for the discussion in relief by telling the meeting that: "*In our age of satellite television and jet travel, distances have collapsed but divisions have not*", adding "*Instead, our proximity has heightened longstanding suspicions of 'the other' – the other religion, the other ethnicity, the other nationality*". The truth is, said Ban Ki-moon, that diversity is a virtue and not a threat. It is the very essence of the human condition and a driver of human progress.

The Secretary-General also highlighted the urgent need to rebuild bridges, and to enter a 'sustained and constructive intercultural dialogue' that stresses common values and shared aspirations, and saw the General Assembly providing a unique platform for bringing together representatives of all countries in 'one chamber' in what might prove to be 'the highest possible forum for a dialogue among nations and civilizations.

The General Assembly President, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, said that dialogue among cultures had always played a prominent role on many United Nations agendas and reminded the Assembly that the theme of this debate aimed to continue the efforts made during the 2001 United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. These efforts, she said, go "hand in hand with the Charter, which called for respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion". The President also stressed that the responsibility of each and every nation, and each and every citizen, was – now more than ever before - to "stand together... and ascribe common meaning to our existence".

Focus for the first day's morning panel was: "Respect for cultural diversity is a prerequisite for dialogue" (moderated by **Regine Boucard**, of the West African Museum Programme).

Referring to the closeness of people brought about by modern means of communication and travel as well as by political and economic turbulence, the panel moderator suggested in her opening remarks that this closeness might be 'too close for comfort'? Socio-cultural confrontations were creating incredible consequences, growing rifts and instability, and "*social misperception, cultural assumptions, ill will and manipulative agendas were predators on the vulnerable and disenfranchised*". Even so, she maintained, the new global order had also brought about success stories which gave hope for a future of social unity.

Agreeing with the moderator's remarks, **Ghassan Salame**, former Minister for Culture of Lebanon, said that Globalisation paradoxically had triggered cultural and social disintegration while at the same time creating deeper financial and economic integration. People were inventing new borders in order to insulate themselves from those who had become too close for comfort.

Ghassan Salamale believed that respect and tolerance would be prerequisites for successful dialogue, as well as a *'psychological predisposition not to see dialogue as an opportunity to alter the other's views and values, but possibly to see yours altered as well'*. Dialogue is, he maintained, *'a transformative process in which all parties involved took the risk of becoming different..'* **Fatemeh Keshavarez-Karamustafa**, Professor of Persian and Comparative Literature, agreed and stressed the importance of the United Nations keeping cultural interaction on its agenda and ensure that it remained part of educational curricula in the classroom, and **Trond Bakkevig**, pastor of the Lutheran Church of Norway, pointed to the need for developing national instruments to deal with cultural diversity.

'Religion in Contemporary Society' was the theme of the afternoon session, with **Robert Thurman**, Chair of the Department of Religious Studies at Columbia University, as the moderator. He believed that *"never before had the world's peoples been so challenged to form a 'global humanity'"*, and saw the worst enemy of a global identity in the *"regressive effort to re-establish some of the 'long lost empires' in the present era of 'not quite post-colonial'"*.

Mary Anne Glendon, Learned Hand Professor of Law, Harvard Law School, felt that one did not need to look far to find an encouraging example of a cross-cultural dialogue that had overcome enormous obstacles *'to yield one of the most enduring UN contributions to peace'*, namely the debates leading up to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights: the result of an impressive multicultural collaboration. She maintained that not many remembered *'how deep had been the divisions overcome by a drafting group that had included a Confucian scholar from China, Muslims from Egypt and Iran, a French Zionist, an Indian woman of Hindu origin, members of various Christian denominations and four devout Marxists'*. She also pointed to the great potential of local communities for healing wounds, building bridges and banding together with those of other faiths against extremists, and said that young people were learning from and listening to one another and having their horizons broadened.

The themes for the second day's morning and afternoon panels were: "the responsibility of the media" and "civilizations and the challenge for global peace and security".

At the morning discussion on media responsibility (moderated by Warren Hoge, UN Bureau Chief of The New York Times), panelist **Robin Mansell**, Head of the Department of New Media, stressed the urgency of giving high priority to 'media literacy'. She also said that media literacy principles were being developed under various charters and conventions, adding that these principles still needed to be more widely translated into teaching resources.

With the aid of ever more sophisticated technology today's world media had become an interactive, collaborative, inexpensive and, in the case of online news, unprofitable enterprise in which professional and amateurs often met to share facts, questions, answers and perspectives. While 'new journalism' could give rise to 'heated and contested debates', such debates, she argued, would also provide *'new moral spaces for collective deliberation and action.'* New media, said Robin Mansell, presented a chance to support mutual understanding among those whose world views were different and at odds with each other; improved media literacy meant increasing capabilities for 'critical evaluation'.

Mohamed Al Rumaihi, Professor of Political Sociology, Kuwait University, asked: *"Is the media leading the world to more understanding or new strife?"* Media, both in the West and the East, seem to weave a social fabric that calls for extremism and advocate conflict and not peace. In order to turn

media into a ‘unifier’, it was necessary to promote knowledge on both sides among the wider public, he said.

The responsibility of media could not be overemphasized, said **Mona Siddiqui**, Professor of Islamic Studies and Public Understanding, underscoring this point by giving the example of a headline appearing in Newsweek after 9/11, reading “Why they hate us – the roots of Islamic rage and what we can do about it”. The ‘they’ in this headline implied the whole Muslim world and Muslim faith as a “monolith”, and the “us” was the other “monolith”. Journalists, she maintained, had a responsibility to reflect what they saw and heard without fear or favour, but freedom of expression must also be accompanied by sensitivity of the belief of all peoples.

There was general agreement among many speakers from the floor that the role of media was crucial in today’s world, and that it had the potential for creating respect for cultural diversity and promoting understanding between civilizations. It was however also capable of inciting hatred and bias.

One speaker believed that, ideally, media should present information in an objective fashion and allow ‘the public to form its own opinion’. But, in practice, journalists worked for corporations which had their own interests. The ‘incestuous relationship’ between some governments and the media was also mentioned.

Regarding the question of an international code of conduct for journalists, Ms. Siddiqui felt that society did not want media ‘to just paint the rosy picture’. While she was advocating personal responsibility of journalists, the media must be able to report a story as they saw it, adding that the person reporting that story was not ‘raised in a vacuum’ and had his or her own set of values: “*Diversity is only a good thing when people come together knowing that their voices have equal value*”, she said.

As moderator of the afternoon panel, **Shashi Tharoor**, former UN Under-Secretary- General for Communication and Public Information, opened the discussions on “civilizations and the challenge for peace and security” by stressing the importance of tolerance and imagination for the nurturing of humanity’s sense of self; for the preservation of cultural and imaginative freedom in all societies, and for letting all ideas flourish without threatening individual identity. This would, he said, help to overcome the problems of the world. He identified violence as the consequence of blind hatred of an “*other*”, which in turn was the product of fear, rage and incomprehension, and said that without education, people would find it difficult to understand that others shared the same hopes and dreams. The time has come, he said, to make the world safe for diversity.

Karen Armstrong, author and TV broadcaster, suggested that the world needed a new kind of religious discourse, based on the golden rule: *Do unto others what you would have done unto you*. This would enable dialogue between peoples, in which parties did not simply try to impose their points of view on one another, but had a willingness to be transformed.

Anne Moussa, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, queried the notion of ‘Clashes between civilizations’. He also urged that the world apply reason and wisdom when attempting to solve the question of Palestine, and take joint action to push for a just solution.

Souleymane Bachir Diagne, Northwestern University, described pluralism as “*a continuous openness from within to otherness*”, and presented the optimistic vision that the meeting of cultures would be characterized by an aspiration by each culture to ‘recognize the truth of another’.

Participating in the discussions was also **Jorge Sampaio**, the Secretary-General's High Representative of the Alliance of Civilisations, who informed the meeting that he was currently developing an action oriented strategy to promote better understanding and interaction in the world of politics and religion, and to ensure that such understanding was reflected in global diplomatic efforts and political decisions.

Mr. Sampaio also said that today's trend towards extremism affected societies other than Islam and Christianity, a sentiment with which many other speakers agreed. A representative of Rwanda said that many conflicts resulted from an "*extreme cultivation of difference*" between different groups and had caused genocide in his country.

Ms. Armstrong reminded the meeting of the value of not attacking extremists and instead addressing the underlying reasons for the disillusion, bitterness and dismay that they voiced. The Czech Republic representative believed that tolerance was not simply 'indifference': tolerance required an active relationship between two parties, helping them to create a new, shared, beginning.

In her closing remarks on the final day of the sixty-first General Assembly Informal Thematic Debate, the General Assembly President promised, that the ideas emerging from these deliberations would form a basis for the future handling of United Nations discussions. The purpose of the United Nations was, she said, to act as Humanity's collective conscience and to establish peace by ending conflict and bringing countries together.

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/ga10589.doc.ht>

III. Building Trust In Government

'Building Trust in Government' will be the theme of the 7th Global Forum on Reinventing Government, taking place between 26-29 June 2007 in the UN Headquarters in Vienna. This is the first time the Forum will be hosted by the United Nations with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) focalizing the preparations and the support for the Forum. In previous years the Global Forums were hosted by the governments of different countries: the USA, Brazil, Italy, Morocco, Mexico, and the Republic of Korea.

The 7th Global Forum is expected to be attended by heads of state and government, several thousand senior government officials, civil society organizations as well as representatives from the private sector.

A Forum information paper entitled "Aide Memoire" points out that while trust must be seen as fundamental to good governance, partnerships and capacity will be key instruments for translating the trust into concrete results: "*the formation and maintenance of a successful and effective partnership between Government and other institutions depends on trust, mutually agreed upon objectives, and a governance framework that establishes the rules and guidelines for each partner.*" And "*a successful partnership must reflect and address the concerns of all members, as well as the interests of third parties that are affected by them.*"

The 7th Global Forum will offer the opportunity to:

- *discuss key issues in strengthening sound governance and public administration to promote trust in government and achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);*

- *provide a platform for introducing various countries' experiences in government reinvention and seek a framework and strategy for future innovations in governance and public administration;*
- *promote cooperation among government, the private sector and civil society organizations to improve the quality of governance at national and local levels;*
- *identify potential areas of South-South and North-South cooperation and action at the local, national and international levels to enhance the capacity of countries for participatory and transparent governance and the necessary conditions for building trust in government; and*
- *lay the foundation for a 'Global Network for Reinvention' which interconnects the key players in governance – government, business, and civil society.*

Plenary sessions and workshops will focus on seven inter-related sub themes on the different components of good governance:

1. **Public Sector Capacity for Service Delivery** *(among possible topics for discussion will be a 'paradigm shift in the role of the State, public and private sector partnerships for service delivery)*
2. **Decentralization and Local Governance to Bring Government Closer to People** *(within the framework of democratic governance, decentralization and local autonomy are seen as crucial for fostering more participatory governance and reducing poverty, allowing citizens' voice to be heard and become more active partners in all stages of policy decision, implementation, and evaluation, thereby 'bringing government closer to people and enhancing trust between Government, civil society, and the private sector')*
3. **E-Governance for Access to Information** *(the Millennium Declaration and Road Map ask for numerous knowledge, innovation and technology (KIT) related interventions, seeing such tools as critical inputs for meeting pressing development goals in the areas of governance, economic development, protection of the environment, poverty alleviation, health, and also for the improvement of overall conditions for society.)*
4. **Electoral and Parliamentary Process for Legitimacy and Participation** *(among possible topics to be discussed are crises of representative democracy and citizen participation; roles and capacity of parliaments and electoral management bodies; independence of the judiciary and access to justice; institutional arrangements at national and local levels for citizen participation; political leadership for government innovation; establishment of systems of checks and balances; the role of the press and public opinion in responsible politics)*
5. **Accountability and Transparency to Promote Confidence in Government** *(because of the exponentially positive effects that accountable and transparent governance could have on the entire world community this subject will be discussed in the areas of: Ethics advances and core public service values and standards in public service; tools to enhance integrity in governance including codes of conduct and conflicts of interest policies; anti-corruption commissions/bodies and their effectiveness; cross-border corruption and the role of multinational organizations; transparency and accountability of corporate governance; and corporate ethics, including the social responsibility of corporations.)*
6. **Partnerships for Service Delivery and Access** *(the State, private sector, and civil society each have different knowledge resources, and skill sets that can be used to complement each other. An effective partnership will take advantage of the relative strengths of each member).*
7. **Inclusion and Dialogue to Strengthen Social Trust** *(the establishment of trust is a gradual process that is based on perceptions of cumulative actions and experiences. Areas which will be discussed under this heading will be: the role of social inclusion in conflict prevention, management, and resolution; the costs associated with a lack of trust; guidelines, methods,*

and techniques of establishing, developing, and reinforcing social trust; alternative truth and reconciliation processes; and the role of dialogue and participatory mechanisms.

The 7th Global Forum on Reinventing Government will provide a meeting place for ministers, senior government officials, parliamentarians, mayors, other local government officials, and representatives of the private sector, civil society, and international organizations to agree on ways of restoring trust in government, creating constructive partnerships for a better world – and laying the foundation for a ‘Global Network for Reinvention’.

E-mail: 7thglobalforum@un.org Website: www.7thglobalforum.org .

IV. Climate Change

Achim Steiner, United Nations Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of UN Environment Programme (UNEP) hoped that *the 2nd of February 2007* might be remembered as the day where the question mark was removed on whether human activity had anything to do with climate change on the planet. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has changed the question mark to a ‘full stop’: climate change is happening, and it will impact on every corner of the planet.

In IPCC’s recent reports the impact of climate change was discussed, such as the increasing drought in Africa, crop failure due to water shortages, the spread of disease in areas previously unharmed, sea level rise potentially affecting many major cities worldwide, and the fact that climate change was the main driver for biodiversity loss.

In preparation for the major world conference in Bali (December 2007), parties to the UN-backed agreements on climate change met in Bonn, May this year, to discuss the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released earlier the same month. Among topics discussed were methods for increasing transfer of clean technologies, adapting to the inevitable effects of climate change and preventing deforestation, which accounted for more than 20 per cent of the world’s greenhouse gas emissions.

This report maintained that climate change could be mitigated at relatively low cost (0.1 of annual GDP) provided right policies and incentives were put in place.

The Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Yvo de Boer, stressed that failure to enact wise long-term policy direction could put the question of climate change into overdrive. Many developing countries that were least prepared to protect themselves are already experiencing the most severe consequences of climate change, he said. We need to move quickly.

The Executive Secretary also mentioned some encouraging signs of commitments made by key developing nations along with major corporations in industrialized countries to ‘reign in’ greenhouse gas emissions and move the global climate change agenda forward, saying also that *“the major developing countries are beginning to take a very proactive position on this particular issue and the business community is calling for clarity and a clear policy direction. All of that auger well for the big climate change conference in Bali in December”*.

V. International Biodiversity Day – 22 May

Recognising the need for greater awareness of and action on the consequences of global warming

and changing climate, the Convention on Biological Diversity chose the theme 'Biodiversity and Climate Change' for the 2007 International Day for Biodiversity.

The UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon spoke in his message for the day of the timeliness of the theme, pointing to some of the many issues at hand: *"Mangrove forests and other coastal wetlands represent a bulwark against extreme weather events and rising sea levels. As agricultural landscapes become warmer and drier, the diversity of livestock and cereal crops can provide farmers with options to cope with new conditions. Forests, peatlands and other ecosystems contribute to sequestering carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, thereby helping to mitigate increases in greenhouse gas emissions"*. Ban Ki-moon also urged that the global response to all these challenges move *'much more rapidly and with more determination at all levels – global, national and local'*

UNEP also used the day to announce that the Global Tree Planting Campaign's pledge of planting one billion trees to help alleviate the consequences of climate change had already been reached. *The Billion Tree Campaign* was one of the outcomes of the November climate change conference held in Nairobi and had since then been enthusiastically embraced by people of all ages in developing as well as developed countries. The organizers, which include the Green Belt Movement and the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), were overwhelmed by the support from 'communities, kindergartens, scout groups, schools, universities, artists, city councils, companies and countries', all contributing to achieving, even exceeding, the initial goal. In total one billion and 12 million trees had been pledged of which over 13.5 million had been planted so far.

The original inspiration for the Billion Tree Campaign came from the Green Belt Movement's founder, Professor Wangari Maathai, who called for the creation of a green belt across the Sahara Desert, from Dakar to Djibouti, as part of the Billion Tree Campaign: *"I am quite sure that, with the support of the African Heads of States whose countries border the Sahara Desert, we could achieve this goal"*, she said, and added: *"We need to empower communities along the route and persuade them to both plant and be the caretakers of the trees to ensure that they survive."* Wangari Maathai pointed out that not only would a billion trees, once planted, *"contribute to addressing the climate change by utilizing the ability of trees to sequester carbon from the atmosphere, but a range of other pressing issues from soil, stabilization and watershed management to improved prospects for wildlife, agriculture and tourism."*

According to the World Conservation Union (IUCN) the hope of reversing the rate of biodiversity loss and reach the 2010 target (Johannesburg) is very slim: two out of five species known to science could face extinction, including one in eight birds, a quarter of all mammals and one third of amphibian species.

Private sector companies, United Nations agencies and the World Bank has teamed up with UNEP to catalyze further involvement in the campaign and an exchange forum has been put on line on the International Biodiversity Day to enable participants to volunteer time, expertise, funding, or provide land and seedlings under the Billion Tree Campaign project.

For more information contact Nick Nuttall, UNEP spokesperson: nick.nuttall@unep.org or mellab.shiluli@unep.org Websites: <http://www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign>
<http://www.greenbeltmovement.org>

VI. 2008 – The International Year of Planet Earth

On the 11 November 2006 the UN General Assembly approved without vote that the year 2008 should be the International Year of Planet Earth. It will be encouraging UN Member States, the UN system and other actors to use the Year for increasing awareness of the importance of Earth sciences in achieving sustainable development and promoting local, national, regional and international action.

VII. A United Nations Emergency Peace Service (UNEPS)

The incapacity of the UN to move quickly to prevent genocide, ethnic cleansing and other crimes against humanity has prompted the creation of a growing movement of citizens groups, academics, government officials and UN agencies working together to establish a permanent UN Emergency Peace Service through:

- (1) identifying interested parties throughout the world to expand the number and diversity of those committed to this initiative;
- (2) securing agreement on the principles, composition, and financing of a UN emergency service;
- (3) drawing on expert knowledge to ensure that the growing constituency is accurately informed and to write detailed plans for the emergency service and how to establish it;
- (4) developing a well-organised network of support with a compelling website, promotional materials, list of endorsements, and speakers' bureau; and
- (5) encouraging a wide consultative process among non-governmental organizations, the UN system, and national governments to ensure the implementation of a successful strategy.

Sir Brian Urquhart, former UN Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs, believes that this initiative is of “*the greatest importance both to the UN and to the millions as of yet unknown innocent victims who might in the future be saved by this essential addition to the UN’s capacity to act on their behalf*”.

***To help, contact Global Action to Prevent War: info@globalactionpw.org
www.globalactionpw.org***

VIII. Spirituality, Nonviolence, Gender equality and Human dignity

Every four years the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR) holds its Council meetings. In October last year the Council met in Japan, where IFOR branches, affiliates and other related groups gathered to assess past achievements and challenges and adopt the working plan for the next four years which is outlining priorities and offering proposal for future action.

The theme for the meeting was: Spirituality, Nonviolence, Gender equality and Human dignity – described as the four inseparable pillars of peace.

In the post Council issue of their International Reconciliation Magazine the Council has included an extract from the Constitution of Japan, explaining that this special Council edition would be incomplete without this remarkable expression on the spirit of reconciliation. The following excerpt is from the Preamble of the Constitution of Japan:

“We, the Japanese people, acting through our duly elected representatives in the National Diet, determined that we shall secure for ourselves and our posterity the fruits of peaceful cooperation with all nations and the blessings of liberty throughout this land, and resolved that never again shall we be visited with the horrors of war through the action of government, do proclaim that sovereign power resides with the people and do firmly establish this Constitution. Government is a sacred trust of the people, the authority for which is derived from the people, the powers of which are exercised by the representatives of the people, and the benefits of which are enjoyed by the people..... We, the Japanese people, desire peace for all time and are deeply conscious of the high ideals controlling human relationship and we have determined to preserve our security and existence, trusting in the justice and faith of the peace-loving peoples of the world. We desire to occupy an honoured place in an international society striving for the preservation of peace, and the banishment of tyranny and slavery, oppression and intolerance for all time from the earth. We recognize that all peoples of the world have the right to live in peace, free from fear and want.”

International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR), Spoorstraat 38, 1815 BK Alkmaar, Netherlands. Website www.ifor.org

IX. Widening the door to the United Nations – A Smile Within

The well-known and often quoted opening words to the Charter of the United Nations: *We, the Peoples of the United Nations...*” are coming alive and being given substance and meaning through the United Nations welcoming more interaction and multi-level cooperation between itself and peoples from all walks of life.

Despite tight security measures a breath of fresh air is breezing through the institution, accentuated this year by Chief of the UN Department of Public Information, Carlos Brandt’s suggestion that NGOs encourage Youths between 18-28 years of age to attend the 2007 Annual NGO Conference (New York HQ, 5-7 September). Each NGO responding to this suggestion is allowed 5 representatives – one more than last year – to the conference. (e-mail: dpingo@un.org)

The smile within –

Several UN NGOs have been thinking of how to make children feel more at home within the walls of this meeting place of the peoples of all nations, and one member, Eileen Ain, had the inspired thought of asking a group of lively 9-11 years old children, playing in the hall outside the Dag Hammarskjöld meditation room, if they would like her to tell them the story of how the meditation room came about? And would they like to see it? They all, including the person in charge, got really interested and the whole group, about 20 in all, entered the room and soon settled quietly into the atmosphere of this remarkable place.

Prompted by this experience Eileen has made the proposal to

- Include an introduction to the meditation room on children’s guided tours during respective UN visits;
- Have meditation as an option and/or part of the general public tour of the UN;
- Develop a specialized tour and programme on the Spiritual Values of the UN, arranged for the many groups visiting the UN, in conjunction with NGOs assisting in the tours. This could provide a good beginning for UN staff to see kids participating and be inspired;
- Invite adults to visit the meditation room.

Contact: Eileen J. Ain, e-mail: Silonah@aol.com

X. World Invocation Day *May 31st, 2007*

World Invocation Day is based on the fact that by the focused power of thought and aspiration men and women of goodwill throughout the world can influence the course of world affairs. It is a day of prayer, invocation and meditation, which since 1952 is recognized and celebrated by great numbers of people of all religions, or of none. Today, millions, especially the youth, share the conviction that there exists an interdependence and interrelatedness of all life, an inner spiritual unity, which transcends the outer differences of faith and belief.

We now face the fact that our very survival is threatened by crises of our own making, not just by militarism but, by our lack of wisdom and will to end poverty, share the Earth's bountiful resources and take responsibility for the life of our planet. Materialistic values have led us to create the problems that we ourselves must solve. Yet, we are not alone, as the essence of the spiritual life attests. The energies of divinity are abundantly available awaiting human appeal, and on World Invocation Day, such an appeal is made by people of all walks of life throughout the world for the release of energies, which will enable humanity to create a new civilization—a world of justice, unity and peace, which is based on spiritual values.

Also known as the Festival of Humanity and the Festival of Goodwill, the theme of World Invocation Day is reconstruction of the world. It is the third of three spiritual festivals following the Easter festival of the West with the theme of rebirth, revitalization and resurrection of all life, and the Wesak festival of the East with the theme of enlightenment. As most festivals of the major world religions are held in accordance with the lunar calendar, World Invocation Day is fixed annually in relation to the full moon of Gemini, just as the Festival of Easter is to Aries and the Festival of Wesak to Taurus.

This year, World Invocation Day is celebrated on Thursday, May 31st. On this day all are invited to join in the affirmation of the oneness of humanity, the livingness of humanity's relationship to God/the Divine, and the responsibility of humanity for the working out of the Plan on Earth by using a world prayer, a sacred mantram, the Great Invocation.

The Great Invocation was given to humanity in 1945 by the Masters of Light and Love as a means to focus our combined thought and aspiration to channel spiritual light and strength into human consciousness, and therefore, belongs to all humanity and not to any one religion or group. It has been translated into over 70 languages and dialects and expresses truths common to all the great religions, including that of the reappearance of the World Teacher expected by countless numbers of every faith under such names as the Christ, the Lord Maitreya, the Kalki Avatar, Messiah, Imam Mahdi and the Bodhisattva. The Great Invocation is used daily by millions of people all over the world and is one of humanity's most potent instruments in preparing human consciousness for this event and for bringing about right human relations.

It may be of interest to note that in the ancient archives, Christ is a term attributed to the One, Who at any given time in the history of humanity, holds the title of the World Spiritual Teacher...and that the word "man" is derived from the Sanskrit term *Manas* which refers to the mind or mental principle that characterizes humanity.

Will you join in using the Great Invocation to invoke the needed Light and Love and Power to restore the Plan on Earth?

For copies of the Great Invocation, please go to:

http://www.lucistrust.org/en/service_activities/world_goodwill_1

or write to: World Goodwill, 120 Wall St., 24th Floor, New York, NY 10005 USA

I. The Great Invocation in English, Russian & Hebrew

THE GREAT INVOCATION

From the point of Light within the Mind of God
Let light stream forth into the minds of men.
Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the Heart of God
Let love stream forth into the hearts of men
May Christ return to Earth.

From the centre where the Will of God is known
Let purpose guide the little wills of men –
The purpose which the Masters know and serve.

From the centre which we call the race of men
Let the Plan of Love and Light work out
And may it seal the door where evil dwells.

Let Light and Love and Power restore the plan on
Earth.

See a full list of translations of the Great Invocation at: <http://www.lucistrust.org/invocation/gitrans/translations.shtml>

The beauty and strength of this invocation lies in its simplicity, and in its expression of certain truths which all people innately and normally accept. Many religions believe in a World Teacher, knowing him under such names as The Lord Maitreya, Krishna, Imam Mahdi and the Messiah and these terms are used in some Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Jewish versions of the Great Invocation.

ВЕЛИКИЙ ПРИЗЫВ

Из точки Света в Разуме Всевышнего
Пусть льется Свет в разум людей:
Да снизойдет на землю Свет!

Из точки Любви в Сердце Всевышнего
Пусть льется Любовь в сердца людей:
И да вернется на землю Христос!

Из Царства Воли Всевышнего
Пусть Цель направит воли малые людские
Та Цель, которой сознательно служат
Учители Мудрости.

Из царства, называемого родом человеческим,
Осуществится пусть Любви и Света План
И да замкнет он дверь, ведущую ко злу!

Да восстановят Свет, Любовь и Сила
План на земле!

הקריאה הגדולה

מנקודת האור אשר בדעת אל
יזרום האור אל דעת האדם.
ירד האור אל פני האדמה.

מנקודת האהבה אשר בלב האל
תזרום האהבה אל לבבות אנוש.
ישוב מורה עולם אל פני האדמה.

מהמרכז שבו נודע רצון האל
תנחה תכלית את רצונות אדם הפעוטים,
תכלית אותה מורי האנושות יודעים ומשרתים.

מהמרכז אשר נקרא המין האנושי
תוגשם תוכנית האהבה והאור,
ויחתם הפתח אל הרע.

יהי רצון ויחדשו
אור אהבה עוצמה
את התוכנית על פני האדמה.

אום