

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. Investing in the Future

The collapse of large banks and investment companies has shattered the lives and livelihoods of people everywhere. Now we have to face the consequences of compulsive and excessive lending and spending habits, and the fickleness of a life built on debts and shaky deals. As the attitudes and habits of fallen business giants are coming under public scrutiny we should perhaps ask ourselves: How come that we, ordinary people, got caught in this race for instant gratification, ignoring both inner and outer warning signals? Why did we allow ourselves to become so deeply indebted to materialism?

The moral and financial bankruptcy sweeping through the entire world community is causing heartbreaking hardship and suffering to individuals and families everywhere. Other life forms too are showing clear signs of fatigue and depression, and the entire eco system is heaving under the pressure to cope with the excessive demands upon it. The way that shared planetary resources have been accumulated, administered and exploited, and human skills manipulated, has had dire systemic consequences.

However, humanity's debt to the planetary household cannot be paid in money alone. As scientists have revealed, even the tiniest unit of life forms an intimate part of, is dependent upon, and is contributing to, the environment in which it lives and moves and has its being. We know how even the smallest entities that for some reason have developed a malfunction can, unless a remedy is found, cause unbalance, collapse or rearrangement of their environment. Yet, despite humanity's tremendous and ever increasing wealth of knowledge about many forms of life, from atoms to galaxies, we still have difficulties in establishing a harmonious way of relating to each other and to the planetary whole.

It is indeed merciful that, beyond human laws, there seems to exist incorruptible, impersonal and beneficial Laws, which in unison oversee, affect and adjust the course of the evolutionary journey of all lives within the cosmic whole. We can be truly thankful that the boundaries of human free will are tempered by these universal laws, and that, within a gradually expanding perimeter, the self conscious human being is free to learn, through trial and error, how to use energy correctly, wisely and for the benefit of all.

The long journey toward self-discovery has brought us to where we are today. Materialism and self-indulgence seem to be peaking, and a clearer understanding and recognition of the significance of the individual self to the whole is making us reach out to others with a deeper sense of sister/brotherhood. In our hearts we know that money, even acts of good intent, will not in themselves be enough to change and transform the present unsustainable state of affairs. We shall have to show the courage of investing our whole being, body and soul, into bringing health and prosperity to the planetary Household and harmony within the Home we share.

However, a revered world Teacher has told us that harmony cannot be established by reason: "*only the heart is the abode of harmony*". And today's heated debate on how to create a better world often ends up in tedious splitting of words and legal grandstanding.

The time may well have come when human laws will become more attuned to the beneficent universal laws that oversee each evolutionary step of all Creation; and when the human heart will be the custodian of harmonious relationships between all the kingdoms which live and evolve together within the planetary Whole.

II. Decent Work and Fair Globalization: A Guide to Policy Dialogue

UN Non Governmental Liaison Service, 2010

(www.un-ngls.org)

The title of this paper was a commitment made in 2005 by Heads of State and Governments:
... to strongly support a “fair globalization” and to make “full and productive employment and decent work for all” a central policy objective in all relevant national and international policies. (UN World Summit Document, 2005, para. 47)

For this to be achieved, a major rethink or paradigm shift is needed in the relationship between macroeconomic, trade and financial policies and those of development aid. This had been echoed in a 2006 ECOSOC directive to include this in MDG 1- poverty reduction. The effects of the recent series of global crises have increased the support for a nascent global decent work movement. This will attempt to simplify complex economic debates, so that, “... economic policy makers cannot anymore hide behind obscure concepts and terminology” (p.2).

Decent work is based on four core principles: full employment, respect for basic human rights, social protection and social dialogue (p.3). These aspirations reflect the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Articles 22, 23 and 28, as well as International Labour Organisation (ILO) pronouncements. A robust debate is to be encouraged at all levels.

Unemployment has played a large part in reducing real wages and widening the existing income inequality gap. As it can be proved that ‘poor people’ spend while ‘rich people’ do not, the result is reduced aggregate (overall) demand, which has led to the USA becoming the ‘consumer of last resort’ (p.5). However, with much of this consumption based on rising levels of credit, the collapse of the US housing /sub-prime mortgage market was almost inevitable. The financial crisis effects were felt worldwide with ILO estimates of over 200 million people unemployed in 2009. The World Bank estimates around 64 million will be in poverty by 2010 (p.5).

If current conventional economic policies are followed, a prolonged depression could result. The dilemma of wage reduction or no job for workers or reduce labour costs or no business for employers could become self-fulfilling with further contractions in aggregate demand. The ILO summit in 2009 adopted the Global Jobs Pact (summarized on p.6) with a major aim of increasing the proportion of wages in a country’s national income, which will restore a better balance of income distribution. To achieve this, a multilateral approach involving all government departments, NGOs and international institutions will be required.

Globalisation has brought many benefits in freer trade, increased productivity and communications, but at the expense of increasing inequality, insecurity and social problems. The full effects of the problems are not always reflected in official statistics. For globalization to raise standards for everyone, Juan Samovia, ILO Director-General (2004) suggests that, “... there can be no successful globalization without a successful localization” (p.10). Think local first and concentrate on productive investment, which will improve local employment and economic activity and lead to future sustainable export potential

A variation on the UK social welfare system, established early in the 20th century, to provide support to the most vulnerable in society from suffering through no fault of their own, is being proposed in this paper: a global social floor, “...(to) prevent people from falling into destitution” (p.13). The prospect of securing a decent job and a future for their children is promoted by Juan Samovia, in line with Article 22 of the UNDHR. Several successful examples of universal social

benefits are explained, such as the Bolsa-Familia Programme (Brazil, p.15), Plan Jefas y Jefes de Hogar Desocupados (Argentina, p.16) and The National Rural Employment Guarantee (NREG) Act (India, p.16). Such expenditure needs to be seen as an economic investment rather than a 'drain' on public finances, as the benefits will be reflected in a higher national income, more equitably distributed. In poorer countries this may need outside funding, while others may be able to rearrange current spending.

The 2009 G-20 Summit decided to, "... put quality jobs at the heart of the recovery, ... (agreed on) the importance of building an employment-oriented framework for future economic growth" (p.19). While this may take some time to implement, it is at least a step on the way to finding local solutions to improve a country's social welfare. A change in economic thinking in both fiscal (government taxing and spending) and monetary (interest rates and money supply) policies away from the current reliance on free-market-self-regulating assumptions to a more Keynesian approach is essential. Government investment in productive employment, including infrastructure, along with its multiplied effects, will be more beneficial than tax cuts or fiscal support to the financial sector. (p.20)

Liberalisation of capital markets has had an adverse effect on social wellbeing in all countries, whether developed or developing. An example of this is the outcomes of massive injections of aid into developing countries – where very little improvement in the welfare of the ordinary citizen has been obvious. Much of the benefit has gone to speculative and other non-productive ends. (pp22, 23) There are examples of capital management techniques, such as capital controls and regulation of financial institutions, being effective such as Malaysia in 1997/98. (p.26)

An opposing view about the relationship between inflation and unemployment is the Non-Accelerating Inflation Rate of Unemployment (NAIRU) (p.28), where working toward full employment is expected to lead to uncontrollable inflation. This supply-side economic view leads business to view and treat employees as an expense rather than units of human capital and discounts the power of consumer demand. An UNCTAD report from 1995 warned about this theory turning into a self-fulfilling prophecy with potential growth being stifled. Inflation and unemployment connections are overdue for further research.

The recurring themes throughout this paper include, the importance of decent work and attention to the social consequences of a fully employed, productive workforce. For an emphasis on meaningful employment, a new economic paradigm may be needed, and the failure of the 'self-regulating free market' recognized. Best use of resources, especially in agriculture; improved terms in trade agreements and a realignment of wages with productivity growth. However, perhaps the most important area for realignment is the financial sector and fiscal/tax regimes. When these serve the local workforce, the improved level of employment will increase economic activity, leading to a higher national income. The fiscal co-operation between government departments and civil society will place an emphasis on a more balanced distribution of income. All of these areas are also critical components of most of the MDGs, already accepted by all governments.

It is not possible to give a fuller appreciation of this paper in a short review, and a careful reading of the full document is highly recommended. It gives a guide to the kinds of discussion, and the various parties whose contributions are necessary to improve local conditions and to achieve the MDGs by 2015.

By bringing together the UN and civil society concerns in effective campaigns to demystify economic debates and alleviate general concern over jobs and livelihoods, complex issues can be solved with collective and concerted efforts.

III. 'BE A GLOBAL CITIZEN' A Campaign by the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong

On 15th May 2010 the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong held the kick-off ceremony and press conference for its "Be a Global Citizen" Campaign. The 'Global Citizenship' Steering Committee Chairman Tsang Wai Hung (also Deputy Commissioner of Hong Kong Police Force) gave a speech to encourage local youths to extend their global vision. Representatives from different consulates in Hong Kong and 200 students also attended the ceremony.

During the event, the Chinese YMCA announced the results of a survey conducted as part of the campaign as well as further details about the campaign.

The survey, called "Who is a Global Citizen?", was conducted between February and March this year. Some 2,488 valid questionnaires were collected from F.1 to F.6 students. The results showed that 30% of the students paid attention to international news, and many said that while they had the knowledge about world issues they lacked the means to respond to these issues. When talking about their knowledge of world issues, many only had some knowledge of environmental protection and showed little concern for the topics of peace and cultural diversity.

The Association's Deputy General Secretary, Karl Lau, said that the aims of the survey were to determine whether local secondary students were knowledgeable about global issues and to find out what their attitudes and responses were to these issues in order to help develop ways of fostering young people to be 'global citizens'. To help young people meet the challenges of globalization, Lau said that the Chinese YMCA would take the initiative to develop young people to become responsible global citizens and encourage them to care more about the world they live in.

Researcher Gladys Ho said that 55% of the responses agreed that two important qualities of a global citizen were to pay attention to international news and to have respect for cultural diversity.

However, less than 20% said they valued knowledge about cultural differences, and 70% did not regularly pay attention to international news and seldom took action to help solve global issues. For example, only 7% used handkerchiefs in place of paper tissues.

It was found that the lack of response to issues of global concern was common among the students, who expressed concern about 'global climate change', but at the same time chose 'low carbon living' as the topic of least concern. Gladys Ho said that a reason for the contradictory result could be that the former was knowledge-based, while the latter was about change in one's daily life patterns. The overall result showed that local youths were less focused on taking action.

University YMCA (HKBU) student, Fong Man Hung, said that he was not interested in international news. He did not think there was anything about the world he could relate to. When he joined the University YMCA (HKBU) as its president, he participated in a regional conference about poverty and went with a tour promoting environmental protection to Australia.

He has since then become more knowledgeable about global issues and has taken initiatives to draw other people's attention towards them: *"It is not enough to change our world if we will only rely on our government's promotional efforts and appeals"*, Fong said. Since returning from the tour he has been urging his friends to recycle their old used clothes and not to order too much food when dining at restaurants.

Karl Lau suggested that the Hong Kong government should allocate more resources in experiential exchange programmes. He also suggested that parents and teachers should discuss international issues with their children and students to draw their attention towards more important world events.

As a person experienced in leading poverty and peace explorations tours, registered social worker Joe Lee of the Chinese YMCA Tsuen Wan Centre, said that *"Young people have sufficient knowledge about famous international brands of fashion or of football teams, but not about global issues."* Lee believes that secondary or university students would have a certain level of knowledge about world issues, but secondary students are more likely to feel they can do nothing to help solve global problems. On the other hand, university students spend too much time focusing on their own future or entertainment, and as a result they might lose the motivation to take action to help address global issues.

Lee added that changing young people's values was more effective than just providing them with lots of global news and information: *"We have to use visuals or share our experiences with young people in order to touch their hearts and arouse a passion in them to get them to play close attention to our world. Encouraging them to join voluntary services in developing countries can help them experience the real world so that they would begin thinking about changing our world to become a better place"*, Lee said.

She also mentioned that there was a lack of funding for local youths to explore the world. Some funding schemes are only aimed at promoting the understanding of mainland affairs among students, while a few others were about global issues. Lee felt that it was difficult for NGOs to organize experiential learning programmes for in-depth exploration of global issues without additional resources.

In order to promote global citizenship, the Chinese YMCA launched its ***"Be A Global Citizen"*** Campaign for young people aged 15 to 25. This was announced by the Association's General Secretary, Lawrence Yick, who stressed that the campaign aims to equip participants with the knowledge of four major global issues:

- *environment and sustainability*
- *poverty;*
- *peace; and*
- *cultural diversity*

The ultimate winner or winning team of the campaign will be awarded a grand prize: a subsidy of up to HK\$100,000 for undertaking a 6-month plan for overseas exposure tour(s), to allow more in-depth exploration of global issues affecting target countries. After the exploration tour, the winner or winning team will share their experiences and help promote the concept of global citizenship to other local youths.

The "Global Citizenship" Steering Committee Chairman, Mr. Tsang Wai Hung (Deputy Commissioner (Operations) of Hong Kong Police Force); Consul General Ms. Tembi Tambo of the Consulate General of the Republic of South Africa in Hong Kong and Macau; Consul Mr. Han

Jae-heuk of the Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in Hong Kong; Legal Consultant Mr. Ingo Politz of the German Consulate General in Hong Kong; Legal Attache Mr. Nelson Low of the Consulate General of the United States in Hong Kong and Macau, together with the Association's General Secretary, Deputy General Secretary and the youth representative, placed a "fingerprint" sticker on a giant-sized "*global citizen passport*" to kick-off the "***Be a Global Citizen***" Campaign.

For more details on this Campaign, please visit <http://www.ymca.org.hk> or contact Mr. Eric Wong at ericwong@ymca.org.hk

IV. UN Women

In July 2010 the UN General Assembly voted unanimously to establish a new 'UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women', to be called UN WOMEN (A/RES/64/289 – System-wide coherence).

UN WOMEN will come into effect in January 2011 and provide a dynamic and powerful voice for women and girls at the global, regional as well as local levels. It aims to enhance, not replace, the efforts by other parts of the UN system, such as UNICEF, UNDP and others.

On the occasion of the establishing of this new historic entity the following ***Joint Statement*** was issued by the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW); the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW); the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), and the United National Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM):

"We enthusiastically welcome the unanimous decision by the General Assembly to establish the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, to be known as UN Women.

UN Women will be a dynamic and strong champion for women and girls around the world, providing them with a powerful voice at the global, regional and local levels. Its establishment will boost the United Nations' ability to support and work with Member States in accelerating progress towards achieving the goals of gender equality and the empowerment of women, expanding opportunity and tackling discrimination against women and girls. UN Women will work with the entire UN system, and will forge effective partnerships with all stakeholders, including with civil society and women's organizations.

We are committed to jointly implementing our mandate and functions as UN Women, with renewed vigour to meet oncoming challenges and help fulfill the rights and expectations of the world's women and girls that this opportunity affords. We are confident that Member States will provide UN Women with the robust resource base necessary for the effective fulfillment of its mandate. We look forward to the appointment of the Under-Secretary-General to head UN Women and lead this work."

Praising Ambassador Tiina Intelmann, Estonia, and Ambassador Ghazi Jomaa, Tunisia for their tremendous efforts and skills in guiding the negotiations to a positive outcome, the UN Secretary-General stated that the creation of "UN WOMEN" is a recognition of a simple truth, that "*Equality for women and girls is not only a basic human right, it is a social and economic imperative. Where women are educated and empowered, economies are more productive and strong. Where women are fully represented, societies are more peaceful and stable*". (www.unwomen.org)

V. The International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)

ICAN was formed in 2006 for the purpose of strengthening civil society and in particular women's participation and influence in conflict prevention, social justice, coexistence, and peacebuilding efforts. Partnership and collaboration forms the core principle of this network.

ICAN's goals are:

- to bridge the knowledge and information gap between the international policy community and national level developments as they affect women;
- to strengthen the capacities of women to engage more effectively in peace-related initiatives and to enhance their interactions with their international counterparts; and
- to bridge the resource gap between major donors and women's peacebuilding initiatives by setting up a fund to administer small and medium grant-making targeting organizations in conflict-affected societies.

Its work inter-relates three different strands, which includes the collection and dissemination of objective information on the situation of women in conflict-affected countries; the provision of training to local organizations in conflict-affected countries, based on the needs of these groups; and the provision of concrete recommendations to the international community on practical actions to support women's inclusion in peacebuilding processes.

ICAN is supported by several independent foundations, the United Nations, and the governments of Ireland, Norway, and the Netherlands.

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VI. The SCR1325 Assessment Project

On 31 October 2000 the UN Security Council passed the resolution 1325; a ground-breaking document which urges all Member States to ensure that women are represented at all levels of decision-making for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict.

Further recommendations are made in the resolution's 18 points, among these:

- the Secretary-General is asked to seek to expand the role and contribution of women in UN field-based operations, especially as field-based observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel;
- UN Member States urged to increase their voluntary financial, technical and logistical support for gender-sensitive training efforts;
- all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from violence;
- all States be responsible for putting an end to impunity and prosecuting those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes including those relating to violence against women and girls; and
- the Secretary-General requested to include in his reporting to the Security Council progress made 'on gender mainstreaming throughout peacekeeping missions and all other aspects relating to women and girls'.

The final point of the resolution expresses the Security Council's decision '**to remain actively seized of the matter**'.

This resolution has raised the hopes of women throughout the world and inspired national and international NGOs, UN groups and members states to work together to increase the involvement of women as well as men in the task of building a peaceful and safe environment for all.

But ICAN points out that many of these efforts are not well documented, and that only limited progress has been made in the past 10 years on translating the resolution goals into action. UNIFEM figures show that less than 7 percent of negotiators on official delegations in peace processes have been women; and not a single woman was appointed as mediator in the 13 major peace processes since 2000.

ICAN believes that one of the obstacles to be overcome is that: "*21st century warfare is still being addressed through 20th century mechanisms and perspectives. The emphasis is on 'ending the war' rather than the complex range of issues and people that define peace and peacebuilding*". And that peace processes are mainly taking place within the exclusive domain of political and military leaders: "*Civilians and civil society groups that are major stakeholders in peace and are often involved in pragmatic peacebuilding efforts remain systematically excluded*".

So, on the 10th anniversary year of the UN Security Council resolution 1325, ICAN and the MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)'s Center for International Studies has proposed – in partnership with UN agencies and interested governments – to examine recent cases of peace processes, through:

1. documenting and assessing whether and *how* various actors (UN, donors, national governments, NGOs) have made more efforts to include women and to ensure gender sensitivity in the language of peace accords;
2. examining the outcomes of such efforts, in terms of the impact for/on women, as well as for peace in general; and
3. determining the specific strategies and key elements which the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and other actors could undertake to ensure that women's voices and their concerns are addressed equitably in current and future processes.

MIT's Center for International Studies and ICAN stress that: "*A critical dimension of this project will be to return to women in conflict zones, to capture and elevate their voices and experiences regarding the actual and potential relevance and impact of SCR 1325-related activities in their country.*"

Up to ten cases will be conducted, which will detail and assess:

- the level and types of involvement and influence of women in formal negotiations and in informal processes, and their impact on outcomes;
- the involvement and effectiveness of women in civil society at large in promoting, facilitating, and inventing peace processes and projects; and
- the role of governments, mediators/facilitators, and external actors, including international agencies, in enabling or hindering efforts at implementing UNSCR 1325.

The aim of the '**1325 Assessment Project**' is to provide useful documentation and highlight lessons to be learnt so as to strengthen and inspire future efforts.

(<http://www.icanpeacework.org/>) (<http://web.mit.edu/>)

‘Peace is a question of will’

Martti Ahtisaari, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

VII. “The Vision – Tales from Ockenden”

In Woking, Surrey, England, an extraordinary event took place in 2010. A magnificent community play was staged by the Woking Community Play Association and directed by Rib Davis, an eminent oral historian and prize-winning playwright. Rib Davis also wrote the script for the Vision, based on an overwhelming abundance of material (thousands of documents) and interviews with people who remembered the three remarkable women teachers whose vision and dedication started the Ockenden Venture: *Joyce Pearce, Margaret Dixon, and Ruth Hicks*.

The Ockenden Venture started in a small way after the Second World War. Seeing the result of war and the hundreds of unwanted innocent people left behind in the most deprived conditions, Joyce, Margaret and Ruth felt compelled to take action, regardless of difficulties and lack of resources. What began in this small way in Woking gathered in volunteers, generous support from well-wishers and eventually government funding. The Ockenden Venture was soon to be registered as a charity and became internationally recognised, working throughout the world.

A Community Play tells a story from local history, and the actors will be local amateurs who are guided by professionals. It will involve a large number of people in many ways and brings them together in a joint project which can inspire and empower others: “It has the power to transform a community” (Trustees, Woking Community Play Association).

Rib Davis felt that the Ockenden Story deserved a series of 10 plays, and his statement in the Vision Souvenir Programme concludes: *“The issue of refugees has not gone away. There are millions of refugees and displaced people in the world right now, suffering as the result of conflicts and disasters which are no fault of their own. But attitudes here have changed, and hardened. Political parties vie with each other to show how tough they can be on immigrants in general and refugees – now called asylum seekers – in particular. This play should help to remind us that things have not always been so, and need not be so. And who knows, perhaps one day we may find ourselves refugees, reliant upon the compassion of others – the sort of compassion shown by Ockenden”*.

Ailsa Moore, a major initiator and motivator behind the realisation of this project, says: *“I have no doubt that it has left an everlasting belief in the minds of many that when the power of the motive is right there is nothing to stop ordinary people achieving great things towards lasting peace in the world.”*

Contact: Ailsa Moore: e-mail: ailsamoore@tinyworld.co.uk

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VIII. The Arts Miles Mural Project

The Arts Miles Mural Project has since its inception come to include and involve the enthusiastic participation of people throughout the world, from children to grown ups of all ages and from all cultures and persuasions. The founders, Joanne Tawfilis and her husband Fouad, express the vision and goal of the Arts Miles Mural Project in its Missions Statement as:

“a passionate and colourful 12 year movement combining the efforts of children and adults worldwide to promote Global Peace and Harmony through Mural Art. Each hand and every mural aims to create and express a Global Voice to develop and advocate Art rather than Violence; Cooperation instead of War; and the continuation of Life rather than death.

Mile by mile across countries, borders and oceans, the Art Miles has become the resonating artistic symbol for Peace.

The Art Miles Mural Project supports the International Decade for a Culture of Peace, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Millennium Development Goals”

Joanne Tawfilis describes how the mural project can help those who have been growing up in a world of bigotry and racism, sexism, and the many other ‘isms’ by working as ‘*an electric eraser*’ and “*wash away the years of tears, the injured heart, the clipped wings, the prisons and ropes that always get in the way of letting us care, really care, about each other*”. Joanne Tawfilis says that to watch a twelve foot by five foot piece of blank canvas transform into a masterpiece; to look at the children’s faces before they start painting and when they stand back and look at the final product: “*is a delight that tingles my heartstring and fills me with indescribable joy*”.

To learn more about this project, how to participate and offer your support, go to:

<http://www.artmiles.org/>

IX. Let the True-Hearted Leaders Step Forth

Become part of the history of your own times

The following Message to the World comes from Seneca Hawk Elder Edna Gordon (Grandma Edna), who says:

*“You can’t JOIN the **Broomstick Revolution**; you’re already PART of it if you believe in peace and Mother Earth and respect for all living things. The Broomstick Revolution is NOT an organisation. The Broomstick Revolution is inside of each of us, a sacred place where we listen to the Creator and follow the Creator’s instructions to sweep out injustice and violence.*

Never raise a broom in violence; your broomstick is a symbol of PEACE. Peace is our purpose. Peace is our method. Peace is our philosophy.

How do you do that? You are the one to determine that. No one else can tell you. There are no followers in the Broomstick Revolution. We are ALL LEADERS! Become the Leader you are! Inspire others to their own responsibility of Leadership. Each of us is responsible for sweeping out injustice and violence from our world – and from our own hearts.

Look around you, right where you are now – that’s where you begin. Heed the Instructions that arise within you. Only PEACE will be effective. Love all people, even – especially – your perceived ‘enemies’. We want to save the world, not destroy it. My love and encouragement to each of you. Let the true-hearted Leaders step forth!”

Grandma Edna advises us to ‘stay out of big mobs’ and let our actions be peaceful and non-destructive - standing in unison for the true, good and beautiful.

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=28486656905>

X. The International Year of Forests - 2011

The United Nations General Assembly (RES/61/193) decided to declare 2011 the International Year of Forests, to highlight the need for sustainable management of all types of forests, including fragile forest ecosystems. The United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat will be the main focal point for the implementation of the Year, while governments, regional and international and civil society organizations will create national committees and designate focal points within their respective countries to facilitate activities in support of the International Year of Forests.

The resolution requests that: *‘concerted efforts should focus on raising awareness at all levels to strengthen the sustainable management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests for the benefit of current and future generations’*, and recognizes that *‘forests and sustainable forest management can contribute significantly to sustainable development, poverty eradication and the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals’*.

The resolution also requested that the UN Secretary-General report to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session on the state of preparations for the Year; and in his preliminary report the Secretary-General highlights some of the key initiatives and activities organized by governments, the UN and other stakeholders to celebrate the Year. His report also recommends that the General Assembly convene a special one-day event at its 66th session, September 2011, to *‘generate public awareness and political action towards sustainable forest management’*.

UN Forum on Forests Director, Mr. Pekka Patosaari, expressed the Forum’s readiness and deep commitment to shoulder its responsibility to serve as the focal point for implementation of the Year, and expressed the hope *“that it will be a highly effective tool in heightening awareness of the role of forests in the maintenance of our planet’s vigour and vitality, as well as in the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals”*.

“To bring about real change in how our world’s forests are managed, broad public participation is vital”, he said and added: *‘Children and youth are the future implementers of sustainable forest management, and thus education can be one of the main tools in raising awareness of nature and forests’*. (<http://www.un.org/esa/forests/index.html>)

XI. INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF YOUTH: DIALOGUE AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING 12 August 2010 – 11 August 2011

The main aim of the 2010 International Year of Youth is to encourage governments, civil society, individuals and communities worldwide to support activities at local and international levels to stimulate dialogue and understanding across generations, cultures, religions and civilizations; to promote the ideals of peace and the respect for human rights and freedoms. The Year will coincide with the 25th anniversary of the first International Youth Year (1985), which carried the theme: Participation, Development and Peace.

The ‘Brochure of the Year’ provides an overview of the importance of the International Year of Youth and will be available in all UN six official languages. It invites everyone to participate in the promotion of youth development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

According to statistics, about 87 per cent of youth live in developing countries and are facing the challenges brought about by limited access to resources, healthcare, education training, employment and economic opportunities.

The new 2010 edition of the **World Programme of Action for Youth** provides a policy framework as well as practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people around the world. It covers 15 youth priority areas and contains proposals for action in each of these areas. The World Programme of Action for Youth was prepared in response to requests by youth NGOs, youth policy practitioners and young people. (<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/global.htm>)

*“Imagine a year when everyone from all sectors of society can engage in a dialogue about issues affecting young people a year we all listen with respect and speak with dignity –
The International Year of Youth is this opportunity.
This is our year to find, define, and make our voice heard – let’s not waste it”*

Christopher Derige Malano, Pax Romana
www.social.un.org/youthyear

XII. ‘911 STORIES: Our Voices, Our Choices’

In 2002 the *September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows*, with the sponsorship and support of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the American Friends Service Committee and the Hague Appeal for Peace, journeyed to Afghanistan and, under the auspices of Medea Benjamin and Global Exchange, were able to meet with Afghani family members, who had lost their dear ones to U.S. bombings as a reaction to 9/11. Here they were able to share and listen to each other’s stories.

These stories forged a connection between this group and people from around the world who had similar experiences; who shared a common desire for non-violent alternatives; and who had formed like-minded organizations, such as the Israeli and Palestinian members of The Parents Circle, Japanese Hibakusha, the Iraqi peace coalition La’Onf, and the South African Institute for Healing of Memories and many others.

The September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows will launch their new website: 911 Stories, Our Voices, Our Choices, at www.911stories.org, beginning 11 September 2010. The website will profile members; collect their public statements, speeches, essays etc, and tell stories of projects undertaken, as well as *“shine a light on the work of those others around the world who have been similarly affected by terrorism, political violence and war and have chosen to work for peace and nonviolence.”*

David Potori, Co-founder, September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, says that *“in the critical year leading up to the tenth commemoration of the September 11th attacks, it will provide a key opportunity to revisit the paths that could have been taken in the days after 9/11.”* The website will offer us an opportunity to share our thoughts and reflections on questions such as: *“How could we have responded differently? What could 9/11 families, and citizens around the world, have taught us about their experiences of terrorism, political violence and war? What choices could we have made, and what choices can we make today, to create peaceful tomorrows for everyone?”*

From article by David Potori, appearing in Global Campaign for Peace Education newsletter August/September 2010 newsletter. Contact: 911voiceschoices@gmail.com

XIII. 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.