

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. Chemistry- our life, our future

“*Chemistry – our life, our future*” is the thought-provoking theme chosen for the 2011 International Year of Chemistry (<http://www.chemistry2011.org>). The main organizers, the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC, formed in 1919) and UNESCO, aim to raise greater public awareness of the central role that chemical research is, and has been, playing in solving some of the many problems besetting the world community within areas such as nutrition, health and energy. It is also their hope that the year will help foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of what has been described as the '*dynamic interrelation between the elements of a complex entity*'.

Upon receiving her second Nobel Prize in December 1911, Marie Curie spoke of a new kind of chemical research which she suggested could be called the *chemistry of the imponderable*. And, with accelerating speed, modern chemical research is probing ever deeper into matter, studying its composition and structure, and revealing the relationships and transformations happening on atomic and subatomic levels.

The study of Chemistry has not only provided much knowledge which aims to serve and promote humanity's material interests and welfare; it also continues to offer illuminating glimpses of insight into, as the 19th century scientist Justus von Liebig puts it: '*those wonders of creation which immediately surround us, and with which our existence, life, and development, are most closely connected*'.

Thomas Edison expressed his firm belief that all life forms, including the atom, are infused with life and a measure of intelligence, and that the existence of God can and eventually will '*be proved from Chemistry*'. For untold centuries human beings have undergone countless inner and outer changes and transformations; individual and collective choices have steered the general course of progression, and from time to time catalysts have speeded up the process and illumined the mind. Through increasingly refined methods of measuring all observations and of recording thoughts and theories, humanity has learnt much about the infinitesimal entities imbued with intelligent life that ceaselessly are making up and giving quality and substance to all bodies within the universe.

As intelligent elements of the 'complex entity' called humanity, we are now sufficiently aware of this universal interconnectedness to consider together what qualities and ingredients are needed to form our future. But Henry Thoreau warns that the facts of science can dust the mind by their dryness unless they are '*rendered fertile by the dews of fresh and living truth*'. "*Knowledge*", says Thoreau, "*does not come to us by details, but in flashes of light from heaven*". Thoreau seems to suggest that to truly understand and benefit from these flashes of light from heaven we need more than an analytical mind. We need to open up and absorb the fullness of this 'fresh and living truth' with the whole of our being so that it can be 'rendered fertile'.

This UN International Year of Chemistry offers us the opportunity to learn more about the role that chemistry is playing in our individual lives today, and also consider how it might influence our future. Will we see the facts of science as through a dust-covered lens? Or will we welcome the 'flashes of light from heaven' with open hearts and minds?

Marie Curie assures us that: "*Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less*". Approaching the second decade of the new millennium let's heed the call of this fearless and outstanding scientist - and server of humanity.

II. “Women Count for Peace”2010

Perhaps one of the most remarkable initiatives to signify the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Security Council resolution 1325 (at its 4213th meeting, on 31 October 2000) on Women, Peace and Security, is the 2010 Open Days on Women, Peace and Security. These Open Days, organised by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the UN Department of Political Affairs, UNIFEM and the UN Development Programme, were attended by more than 1,500 women from civil society and senior UN leaders in 25 countries affected by serious conflicts.

In his foreword to the report “Women Count for Peace”, which provides an account of all the 25 dialogues on conflict and peacebuilding which took place between June and August 2010, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon acknowledges that these Open Days have highlighted serious challenges which still remain, requiring *‘our strongest commitment in implementing resolution 1325 in the coming years’*. At the launch for the Open Day events Ban Ki-moon stated that *“sustainable peace is possible only with women’s full participation – their perspectives, their leadership, their daily equal presence wherever we seek to make and keep the peace.”*

The main issues raised by the women in conflict-affected areas were identified as:

- Participation – increased political empowerment for women and engagement at all levels of decision-making;
- Justice, Protection and Security – a more effective and credible justice and security environment for women during and after conflict; and
- Economic Resources and Support – allocation of greater and more sustainable financial resources to support women in recovery processes

These Open Days brought UN leaders and women from 25 different conflict stricken countries together in an unprecedented way, and in a safe space where their voices were listened to and their proposals accepted as providing *‘transformative steps toward a shared goal and lasting peace for women and men around the world’*. In the words of a participant from Pakistan: *“We don’t want to make conflict or crisis safer for women. We want to stop these altogether.”*

A woman attending the Sudan Open Day said: *“We have taken enough of the brunt. Now it is time for us, the Dafur women, to struggle and stand up against the discrimination and marginalisation. Let’s make our voice heard and show that we have the courage to bring change in the society”*, and a participant of the occupied Palestinian territories shared how important this meeting was for Palestinian and Gazan women: *“in the sense that it gives us a chance, though besieged, to address the Security Council and call for concrete and full application of resolution 1325 (2000)”* (http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf)

The Tajikistan/Central Asia Open Day brought women together from Afghanistan, Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Pakistan and Tajikistan, as well as peace activists, refugees, former military servants, representatives from the Tajik Parliament and others, to *“come to a common vision on what should be done to translate women’s priorities into practical and efficient actions to promote peace and security in the region, and to strengthen the position of peace activists seeking justice for women and more inclusive peace processes”*.

Among the 12 points of this shared vision for the improved implementation of resolution 1325 were, to:

- Accelerate implementation of global policy commitments to promote the women, peace and security agenda at regional and national levels, and, in particular, urgently address violence against women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations.
- Require more accountability in the implementations of international humanitarian law in situations of conflict to protect civilians, particularly women and children, from all types of violence, including sexual violence, and for increased prosecution of war crimes through national and international judicial mechanisms, including the International Criminal Court;
- Support women's dialogues, including through women's people-to-people diplomacy initiatives, involving women from conflicting sides and reaching out to women in conflict areas across the ceasefire lines;
- Strengthen and expand capacity-development initiatives directed, in particular, towards the most vulnerable and excluded groups of women to ensure the quantity and quality of their participation in all peace and security-related processes. Address the needs and concerns of disabled people, single women and female-headed households in all relief and recovery efforts and ensure their full and equal participation in all peace processes.

The Open Days on Women, Peace and Security provided a means of ensuring that women's concern were expressed directly to the UN's leadership, and led to the recommendation that such Open Days should be held again; not just '*on an ad hoc basis, but as a regular, scheduled practice of UN mission organisation.*' And a further recommendation suggests that '*an annual review of the Open Day, would be desirable, to allow for follow up on the implementation of commitments made by all stakeholders including senior UN leadership.*' (http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/documents/1325_open_day_report.pdf)

III. UN Study on Women in Peacekeeping

The 8 February 2011 saw the launch of the Ten-year Impact Study on Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security on Peacekeeping. This study, carried out by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Field Support (DFS), is also reflecting the viewpoints of the national partners in post-conflict countries. As the Preface to the Study points out: "*It is our local partners, after all, who must be the ultimate judge of our efforts*".

While the Study reports on some areas where progress has unquestionably been made, it also reveals others areas where much work still needs to be done to accelerate implementation of resolution 1325 in peacekeeping.

At the launch, Alain Le Roy, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, pointed to some of the areas where peacekeeping has played a crucial role, such as in advancing women's participation in politics as voters, candidates and elected officials in different countries; peacekeeping has also influenced legal and judicial reforms by supporting the adoption of gender equality laws in several countries, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone; and in recent years there has been an 'exponential' increase of women in UN peacekeeping missions, currently reaching 30 per cent of the civilian staff of 19,800.

However peacekeeping has not succeeded significantly in protecting women against conflict-related sexual violence and more resources are needed for protecting women who are refugees or internally displaced.

The conclusions and recommendations contained in this Study aim to help shape future strategies for the implementation of resolution 1325, and calls on the United Nations, member states, national authorities in post-conflict countries, and in particular local women, to work together to promote and restore peace and security for all.

http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/documents/10year_impact_study_1325.pdf

IV. The Commission on Status of Women to Promote Access to Education, Training, Science

The Commission on Status of Women holds its fifty-fifth session at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 22 February to 4 March. Here government officials, representatives of the United Nations, civil society, the media and the private sector and other participants will share experiences and seek agreement on priority actions to promote implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

The overriding theme chosen for the fifty-fifth session is: *“Access and participation of women and girls in education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women’s equal access to full employment and decent work”*.

In her opening speech UN Women’s Executive Director, Michelle Bachelet said: *“This Commission is a forum for each of you to share your innovations, your best practices and experiences about what works and how the policy and legal reforms you secure are contributing to concrete changes in the lives of women and girls, as well as of men and boys. It is also the forum where you agree, and commit to additional measures to accelerate progress towards gender equality and women’s empowerment”*.

Throughout the many panel discussions and meetings of the session there seemed to be general agreement that while progress is being made it tends to be ‘uneven and fragile’. As UNICEF’s Deputy Executive Director, Saad Houry, pointed out during the panel discussion on the ‘elimination of discrimination and violence against the girl child’, the root causes of violence against the girl child are still not receiving sufficient attention. Far too often the girl victims were themselves treated as criminals, exposing them to more systemic and physical abuse. *“While direction of change is to be celebrated, its pace is not”*, declared Saad Houry, adding that countries would *‘be failing morally if they measured pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals by statistics only’*. He stressed the importance of the transformation of ‘power relations’ within communities, and that: *“a better understanding of social norms and how they affected decisions was needed in order to define better policies”*.

All panel discussions and meetings, each focussing of the different subjects within the overall theme, aim to contribute to the adoption of the draft report on the fifty-fifth session on the afternoon of Friday, 4 March. (<http://www.unwomen.org/how-we-work/csw/>)

V. International Women’s Day

Celebrating its 100th anniversary on 8 March, the Executive Director of the newly established UN Women, Michelle Bachelet, vowed to use her own journey, and all the collective knowledge and experience around her, towards progress towards true gender equality across the world. One hundred years ago, only two countries allowed women to vote. Today that right is almost

universal, she said, and women are being elected to leading positions within the community. Yet, women still only make up 19 percent of legislatures; 8 percent of peace negotiators; and almost two out of three illiterate adults today are women.

In one of her addresses leading up to the International Women's Day celebrations, Michelle Bachelet referred to a Latin American saying that when one woman comes into politics, she changes; but when many women come into politics, politics changes.

'That', she said, 'is the kind of change that UN Women hopes to support'.

VI. State of the World's Children's Report 2011 "Adolescence: an Age of Opportunity"

The United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF, launched its annual report on 25 February with the theme: Adolescence: an Age of Opportunity. At the launch, the UNICEF Deputy Executive Director, Hilde Frafjord Johnson, pointed out that it was during adolescence that *'poverty and inequity were most often passed from one generation to the next'*, and that *'breaking that cycle was imperative to improving the lives of future generations'*.

Sarah Kambou, President of the International Centre for Research on Women, praised the report and the detailed information it contained, providing such useful and reliable data for policy analysts and decision-makers. Commenting on the information on child marriage and pregnancy of some 60 million child brides in the world today, she said that these early marriages occur *'as part of a broader social pattern,'* where choices were often limited by poverty and gender inequality. But: *"pervasive, child marriage is not inevitable, and social norms are not immutable"* insisted Sarah Kambou. With communities responding to programmes which aim to provide empowerment and training in basic life skills, the cycle of early marriage could be broken, she said.

Hilde Johnson informed the press that nearly 90 percent of the world's adolescent population lived in the developing world; that one in two girls aged 15 to 19 (except in China) did not attend secondary school, and that one in five was already married. Furthermore adolescents also struggled against institutional challenges, including sex and labour trafficking, recruitment by armed groups and the denial of proper nutrition and basic services. But, said Ms. Johnson, *'while the challenges were vast and cyclical, the reverse was also true'*, emphasising that even a single year of education could greatly improve a woman's ability to provide for her family; that educated women were also less likely to marry early and more likely to send their children to school. Therefore, *"investing in adolescent girls can have cascading benefits – the so-called 'girl effect'"* she said.

Estimates show that only 2 cents of every development dollar go towards supporting adolescent girls. However, the United Nations Foundation and the United Nations Adolescent Girls Task Force, spearheaded by UNICEF and other agencies, are working together on key initiatives to rectify this imbalance (www.unicef.org)

VII. Young people key to reducing rural poverty

At the opening of the annual meeting of the UN International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), taking place in Rome, President Kanayo F. Nwanze (Nigeria), stressed the importance of supporting young women and men in building *"vibrant rural economies, which in turn is key to*

overcoming larger challenges such as reducing hunger and poverty, mitigating climate change, achieving energy security and protecting the environment”.

The main focus for the two-day meeting is rural youth and will offer the opportunity for young entrepreneurs and leaders from rural areas to meet agricultural and rural development experts and explore some of the many challenges facing the future generations of farmers, producers and workers. According to IFAD, agriculture is already the leading provider of employment for young people in most developing countries. However, with low levels of productivity, dangerous work and lack of social protection, together with wages that rarely cover mere necessities, young people *‘have little option but to leave their homes and families to search for work in the cities’*. We need, said President Nwanze, to give young people the skills and confidence they need to run profitable farms or start businesses, so they can become *‘the upstanding citizens and community leaders of tomorrow’*.

In her stirring keynote address to the IFAD Governing Council, Princess Haya Al Hussein called for an urgent and effective global response to food shortages and world hunger, saying that *‘somehow, in a world exploding with prosperity and possibility we have forfeited our moral authority.’* Many politicians are still lacking understanding of those who live at the brink of starvation, she said, and are failing to honour the pledges they make: *“We can spend over a trillion dollars for armaments as we fight over scraps of land, ideology and religion and, yet, we let 300 million children starve..”*

At the 2011 annual meeting, the International Fund for Agricultural Development announced the establishment of an indigenous peoples’ forum under the auspices of IFAD with the aim of advancing the participation of indigenous people in IFAD discussions and programmes which have an impact on them. Spread over 70 countries and representing diverse cultural backgrounds, indigenous peoples *‘share many common challenges such as limited access to healthcare and education, loss of control over lands, displacement and violations of basic human rights’*, IFAD stated. However, IFAD’s special interest in supporting of indigenous people *‘is based not only on poverty reduction, social justice and humanitarian concerns, but also the value that indigenous people in many cases contribute to sustainable agriculture, especially given the rich knowledge and understanding of ecosystem management that they have.’*

The Rural Poverty Report 2011 - new realities, new challenges: new opportunities for tomorrow’s generation, provides a comprehensive overview of rural poverty, its global consequences and the prospects for eradicating it. (www.ifad.org/rpr2011/index.htm)

VIII. A Salute to the great Youth of Egypt

Dr. William F. Vendley, Secretary General of Religions for Peace, has kindly given OPTU the permission to reprint the profound reflections by Dr. Ismail Serageldin, Director of the prestigious Library of Alexandria, on the ongoing change and transformation taking place in Egypt:

“To the great youth of Egypt, the leaders of the Egyptian revolution of 25 January 2011, I salute you. For – in the nobility of your spirit; in the exuberance of your youth; in the quality of your contacts; in the unsullied idealism that you possess; in the dedication to our common humanity that you bring – I find the hope of mastering the challenges of the difficult transition ahead, to complete the revolution you have initiated and of building the better Egypt that your actions have made possible.

The secret of your success lies in the bedrock of your values, not just in the specific knowledge you have gained. You have learned to learn, but more importantly, you have grown to care.

So, harness your skill, your imagination and your determination to create a better Egypt, a better world for all, guided by a vision of a caring society where (in keeping with Gandhi) there would be:

NO Politics without principle; NO Wealth without work, NO Commerce without morality; NO Pleasure without conscience; NO Education without character; NO Science without humanity.

A vision where a people's greatness is measured by the quality of the lives of their poorest citizens not by the size of their armies or the scale of their buildings.

Yes! You have changed Egypt forever, and now we will follow your leadership and join with you in the task of creating the new Egypt.

My friends, you have been called the children of the internet, or the Facebook generation, but you are more. You are the vanguard of the great global revolution of the 21st century. So, go forth into the journey of your lives, and create a better world for yourselves and for others. Lead and all shall follow. Think of the unborn, remember the forgotten, give hope to the forlorn, include the excluded, reach out to the unreached, and by your actions from this day onwards lay the foundation for better tomorrows."

Religions for Peace works to transform violent conflict, advance human development, promote just and harmonious societies, and protect the earth. The global Religions for Peace network comprises a World Council of senior religious leaders from all regions of the world; six regional inter-religious bodies and more than eighty national ones; and the Global Women of Faith Network as well as Global Youth Network.
(<http://www.religionsforpeace.org/>)

'The events which have shaken the Arab world over the past few weeks remind us that there can be neither security nor development unless human rights are respected.'

Statement by UNGA President Joseph Deiss, 1 March 2011)

IX Christchurch Earthquake Prayer

God – the world is in an uproar.
While ordinary people in the Middle East
call for justice and a fair way of life,
the ground rolls beneath Christchurch again

It's incongruous that I sit here looking out at green trees
and a still horizon beckoning me to hope
while troops are opening fire on demonstrators in Libya
and the Cathedral tower shatters.

Life is not fair – life is not just.
Nor is it able to be taken in measured doses.
Chaos can mean there is nowhere else to go
and nothing left to do

but to cry out to you
as though you are the silent ear,
hearing our cries
absorbing them into yourself
and crying with us.

Even as bullets fly and buildings disintegrate,
may compassion rise in all of us
to be the God that walks and talks in the world today

This poem by Sande Ramage was printed with her permission. (sande@spiritedcrone.com)

X. Conflict Resolution Network

Helena Cornelius, president of the Australian based Conflict Resolution Network (CRN), is offering a preview of an E-Learning course in Conflict Resolution, which is now officially available through their website.

(http://www.crnhq.org/pub/CRN_ELearning_sneakprev_v2.pdf)

For a long time it has been their dream to make the CRN training materials easily accessible world-wide. The whole course can be done from the computer through the internet, and will be 'busy and involving', and it will be taking about 30-40 hours to work through the in-depth course.

Each student is assigned a qualified teacher, who will comment on their student's 'forum posts', mark assignments and monitor progress. The student forums will personalize the materials and make them relevant to the issues and challenges of each student. When the course is completed successfully, each student will receive a Certificate of Achievement.

CRN hopes that universities, tertiary colleges and organizations will eventually take on and adapt the course as part of their own Conflict Resolution training.

e-mail: crn@crnhq.org website: www.crnhq.org

XI. International Year of Forests Launch

At the launch Jan McAlpine, Director of the UN Forum on Forest Secretariat, said that: *"every one of us, all seven billion people on earth, has our physical, economic and spiritual health tied to the health of our forest ecosystems."* And throughout 2011 this *'intricate, interdependent relationship between forest and people'* will be celebrated, recognizing *'the role that forests play in everything from mitigating climate change to providing wood, medicines and livelihoods for people worldwide'*.

The Executive Director of UN Environment Programme, Achim Steiner, agreed that forests represent many things to many people including spiritual, aesthetic and cultures that are priceless, but pointed out that *'they are also cornerstones of our economies, whose real value has all too often been invisible in national accounts of profit and loss'*. (<http://www.unep.org/>),

UN General Assembly President, Joseph Deiss, who presided over the launch ceremony, pointed to the deep significance of the International Year of Forests following on the heels of the 2010

International Year of Biodiversity that concluded with the adoption of a new strategic plan, containing specific targets for reducing, by 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests and sustainable management of forests.

Every second year, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) publishes a report, entitled State of the World's Forests, and the 2011 report aims to promote deeper and more widespread awareness and understanding of forest and forestry issues. The four chapters of this year's report will focus on key areas that warrant greater and urgent attention in the future, namely:

- ! Regional trends on forest resources;
- ! The development of sustainable forest industries;
- ! Climate change adaptation and mitigation; and
- ! The local values of forests

In his foreword, Eduardo Rojas-Briales, Assistant Director-General of FAO, stresses that the aim of the 2011 report is to '*maximize the contribution of forests to poverty eradication*' through identifying some of the areas that can enhance or challenge the sustainability of people's livelihood. "*Forest industries*", he says, '*have the opportunity to maximize energy efficiency, spur innovation, create a reliable fibre supply and contribute to local economies.*' However, efforts to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD+) in developing countries must also be addressed in order to help alleviate poverty.

Chapter four expands upon the theme "Forests for People" and the topics of traditional knowledge, community-based forest management (CBFM) as well as small and medium forest enterprises (SMFEs). It also stresses the need to explore further the importance of the 'non-cash' values of forests, which often provide vital support to households and can sometimes make larger contribution to households than cash income - particularly in remote rural areas.

Each of the four themes in the State of the World's Forests 2011 will have implications for the various upcoming assessments of progress towards sustainable development, including the Rio+20 Summit in 2012 and the 2015 Millennium Development Goals Review Conference.

"Forests have unrecognized potential in furthering the development agenda" says Mr Rojas-Briales, and urges everyone who reads the report to make their contribution to the ongoing discussion of the key themes during the International Year of Forests. (<http://www.fao.org/>)

"Provoke a revolution – in attitudes. Not a political or economic revolution but a spiritual revolution, in the sense of ethics and morality, so people ask themselves: 'Do I have the right to do this? Can I live my life without considering my impact on the environment, on the planet that I share with others?'"

(From UNEP interview with Yann Arthus-Bertrand, French photo-journalist and Goodwill Ambassador)

XII. Earth – Our Common Home

In his article: "**Earth is Our Common Home: The Forest Year**", Rene Wadlow* reminds us of the longstanding and close relationship between human beings and forests and trees; a relationship which has influenced our daily lives throughout the ages, and is reflected in the myths and symbols of many different cultures. The following are taken from this article with the kind permission of Rene Wadlow:

“In Scandinavian mythology, the Great World Tree, Yggdrasil, is the tree of existence, the tree of life and knowledge. Care of the tree is entrusted to three maidens named Urdhr (Past), Vervandi (Present) and Skuld (Future). From this tree springs forth our visible universe. On the topmost branch of this tree sits an eagle, who symbolizes light and whose keen eyes see all things taking place in the world. The tree is the cosmic pillar that supports heaven and at the same time opens the road to the world of the gods. The tree permits an opening either upwards (the divine world) or downward (the underworld). The three cosmic levels — earth, heaven, the underworld — have been put into communication.”

“In the myths and legends of other cultures as well, we also find the importance of the tree as a symbol of life with its roots underground, its trunk in the world of humans, and its top-most branches touching the sky. Branches are compared to steps or a ladder and so are a way by which the hero climbs, through initiations, to higher consciousness. The loss of the leaves of a tree in Winter and their renewal in Spring has served as the symbol of death and regeneration. Thus, the tree is a living symbol. A grove of trees was often considered sacred and the sanctuary where religious rituals were carried out.”

“Thus, the tree is an appropriate symbol for the integration of human, animal and plant life. This feeling of harmony with nature is what the former Harvard biologist Edward O. Wilson called biophilia — connections that human beings subconsciously seek with the rest of life. Our natural senses are designed to bring our being into harmony, fulfilment and community with the world. Re-contacting with nature can produce joy, regeneration and community bonding.”

“Obviously, there are many different aspects to the protection and wise use of forests, measures which need to be undertaken within the United Nations system, by national governments and by local authorities. However, individual action is necessary and important. The world grows ever more inter-dependent. Thus we need a renewed sense of responsibility, of nation to nation, of human to human, but also human to other forms of life.”

*Rene Wadlow, Representative to the UN, Geneva, Association of World Citizens and Editor,
For full article go to: Transnational Perspectives: www.transnational-perspectives.org

XIII. Think Tanks

“The challenge for the new millennium is to harness the vast reservoir of knowledge, information, and associational energy that exist in public policy research organizations in every region of the world for public good.” (Think Tanks and Policy Advice McGann 2007)

On 18 January 2011, as part of an event organized by the United Nations University (<http://unu.edu/>) entitled: ***“2010 The Global Go-To Think Tanks Index”***, Dr. James G. McGann, Director of Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program and Assistant Director of the International Relations Program at the University of Pennsylvania explained *The Global Go-To Think Tanks Index* and how think tanks can offer new keys to peace and security by bridging the gap between knowledge and policy. Dr. McGann is a senior fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, and author of *Global Think Tanks, Policy Networks and Governance*. The meeting was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Think tanks are a subset and are independent of government. They are also called governments in waiting, needed by leaders around the world to provide independent analysis, help set policy agendas, and bridge the gap between academia and policy-making. They provide a bridge between policy elites and civil society. In fact, in Dr. McGann’s opinion this is a key role for think tanks. We all need people or groups who are independent to tell us things we might not want to hear. Generally, think tanks:

- Are knowledge-based, policy-oriented institutions
- Serve governments, intergovernmental organizations, and civil society
- Generate policy-oriented research, analysis and advice on domestic and international issues
- Engage policymakers, the media and the public on key policy issues
- Enable policymakers and the public to make informed decisions about public policy issues

Many think tanks are non-profit organizations; others are funded by governments, advocacy groups, or businesses, or derive revenue from consulting or research work related to their projects. They vary by ideological perspectives, sources of funding, issues of focus and prospective audience. Sometimes think tank “experts” are depicted as neutral sources without any ideological predispositions when in fact they represent a particular perspective. Think tanks require a holistic approach—ideally, that they are interdisciplinary, balanced regarding areas and funds, and that the process is democratic. Their ability to impact problems becomes complicated by overspecialization in particular areas and considerable amounts of money donated for specific areas when problems may lie elsewhere.

A new trend, resulting from globalization, is collaboration between think tanks across continents. Truly a tool of civil society, there is no protocol, no barrier to contacting these think tank organizations. If an NGO is doing research on a project, it can go directly to them.

It is important for countries to forge links with think tanks in their own country, and globally around the world, not just domestically. It is equally important that think tanks within a country are not underrepresented, as there is a connection between areas that are better represented by think tanks and a reduction in conflict. Notably, within Iraq, think tanks are underrepresented. Distilled from almost 5,500 nominated think tanks from every region on earth, and based on a worldwide survey of some 1,500 scholars, journalists, policy makers and peers from almost 120 countries, *The Global Go-To Think Tanks Index* is a comprehensive ranking and insider’s guide to think tanks around the world. Therefore, much of the meeting’s discussion focused on the rankings system of the index, how it was derived, it’s pros and cons, and possible improvements in the future, etc.

According to the report, United Nations University (UNU) is ranked as 7 among the world’s top-ten “Best Government-Affiliated Think Tanks” and its World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) is number 7 in the “International Development Think Tanks” category. The top think tank with the most dominant brand, and most identified by others around the world, is Brookings, yet Dr. McGann stressed that it’s important to look below the top think tanks because, in his opinion, the real interesting ones are in the developing world.

In closing, Dr. McGann shared insights on his latest research, which he calls *‘policy tsunami’*. His thoughts are that we are ill prepared for crises, because all of our thinking is forensic. Few are investing in identifying the trends (...citing that think tank information clearly indicated the current economic crisis long before it happened.) He knows we can do a lot better at connecting the dots early on, and that those who do, will have the advantage.

He went on to say that there is a liberating dimension to crises politically, otherwise governments are not inclined to change...and that still remains. Having experienced impacts from the current economic crisis and Wikileaks, etc., they are beginning to realize they must look at other things... that there are other indicators. How do we break a cycle that no longer serves us well? Identify where these trends are. He calls it *‘policy intelligence’*.

It will take a truly global crisis to wake up. He believes, clearly, that these upcoming policy tsunamis will be severe and global. Offering that the economic structure must be as modern as the markets. The better way may be not following the traditional sense, and instead, thinking and acting outside the box, while remaining centered on policy that serves the real world. It’s not hard to imagine that, perhaps, the domino effect going on in the Middle East, which surfaced 25 January, is an example of a “policy tsunami” predicted by Dr. McGann.

Think tanks cannot solve all problems, nor can they do it alone. They are a supplement—a most valuable supplement—to governments and civil society, which can create a bridge between

knowledge and policy. Understanding and appreciating their value requires a new way of thinking with an eye on prevention and investing in the future.

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Iris Spellings, Representative to the United Nations for Operation Peace Through Unity

XIV. Anthony Brooke 1912 – 2011

Anthony Brooke, co-founder of Operation Peace Through Unity, died peacefully at his home in Wanganui New Zealand, in his 99th year, on March 2, 2011. Loved by those who knew him, Anthony had a remarkable life. His story is told, in his own words, on the Peace through Unity web site at: <http://www.peacethroughunity.info/background-anthonystory.html> .

A few months before his death, Anthony's grandson, Jason Brooke, Honorary Secretary of the Brooke Family Trust, wrote a personal account of his meeting with Anthony in April, 2010. You can read this account on the web at:

http://www.peacethroughunity.info/background_brooketrust.html .

Gita's eulogy to Anthony – Thursday, 3 March, 3 p.m., 2011:

“It is as if I - for a long time – have been witnessing the slow, slow setting of the most glorious and beautiful sun. And now I – the earthling - feel the numbing chill of dusk.

But Anthony would have reminded me that a sun never sets – and he would have told me that all forms come and go, but Life never ceases to live. My beloved companion of more than 30 years would not have me mourn his passing but have urged me focus on and continue the work which brought us together.

Anthony greeted everyone, everywhere, with the same - almost overwhelming – enthusiasm, recognising the spirit, the divine spark of life, within all living beings, within all kingdoms of the planet. And each morning and throughout the day, I would be greeted this way. He knew no other way -

Anthony was a tireless and tirelessly enthusiastic campaigner. And the ultimate optimist.

I feel certain that Anthony - from the vantage point of his soul – will have been watching the upheavals and suffering throughout the world whether caused by oppression or natural catastrophes with great compassion. But above all, his heart would have soared with joy of seeing the human spirit rising in unity and resolve to rebuild, restructure and transform our world.

Throughout the last period of Anthony's life on earth, dear friends and dear neighbours, caregivers and nurses from the Hospice have all been offering us their help, their support and their love, for which we have both been so deeply thankful.

And thank you for being here with me today. Some of our dear and longtime co-workers from out of town are also here despite such a short notice. Thank you and bless you all for coming. And our UN family has written to say they are with us in their thoughts of love.

Anthony's son Lionel, and daughter Celia, his grandchildren, Jason, Lawrence and Sura, and the rest of the family from the Northern Hemisphere are very much here in spirit and in my heart.

Anthony has asked me to read the following text from HEART, a book which traveled with us throughout a decade or more, and from which we often read to each other:

'It is preferable to bring oneself to the conviction that the heart is not wholly one's own organ but is granted for highest communion. Perhaps if people would begin to consider the heart as a thing ordained from Above they would be more solicitous about it.

A certain hermit emerged from his solitude with a message, saying to each one whom he met, 'Thou possessest a heart.' When he was asked why he did not speak of mercy, of patience, devotion, love, and other beneficent foundations of life, he answered: 'The heart alone must not be forgotten, the rest will come.'

Verily, can we turn toward love, if there is nowhere for it to dwell? Or, where will patience dwell if its abode be closed? Thus, in order not to torment oneself with blessings that are inapplicable, it is necessary to build a garden for them, which will be unlocked to the comprehension of the heart.

Let us stand firmly upon the foundation of the heart, and let us understand that without heart we are but withered husks.”

XV. 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.