

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. THE RULE OF LAW - Editorial**
- II. THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE**
- III. TACKLING HATE SPEECH: LIVING TOGETHER ONLINE**
- IV. PALESTINE BECOMES A NON MEMBER OBSERVER STATE IN THE UNITED NATIONS**
- V. RULES**
- VI. INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR ABOLITION OF SLAVERY**
- VII. ROTARY INTERNATIONAL IN THE 21ST CENTURY**
- VIII. INTERNATIONAL VLUNTEER DAY**
- IX. MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE GREEN ECONOMY**
- X. HUMAN RIGHTS DAY**
- XI. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UN ‘PROTECT, RESPECT AND REMEDY’ FRAMEWORK**
- XII. MOMENTUM FOR CHANGE**
- XIII. EDUCATION FIRST**
- XIV. NEWNESS**
- XV. THE GREAT INVOCATION**

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I. The Rule of Law

Since the United Nations came into being, after a war fought against a power which tried to enforce its supremacy upon the world, its main aim has been to bring all governments together to formulate a common rule of law, based on principles on which each member state could agree and uphold. The United Nations has defined the rule of law as “*a principle of governance in which all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, including the State itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated, and which are consistent with international human rights norms and standards.*” This will continue to be a laborious and painstaking journey. With their hands tied by the restrictions, conditions, and specific interests of individual states, the law makers shall have to find ways of producing a text agreeable to all, which then will go through the procedure of being translated into national law, to be honoured and enforced in accordance with the specific culture and history of each country.

Needless to say, human rights norms and standards can easily be lost in the labyrinths of overlapping and mutually contradictory rules and regulations. In the narrow passages of this maze, self-interest, power positioning and the fight for survival can override common decency. Even so, the long and tedious journey with all its many potholes and roundabouts has nevertheless carried the whole matter of Law and Rights forward to greater clarity and understanding. And today the United Nations is laying the issue of rule and law on the doorstep of each human being and at the feet of each culture and faiths within each nation. As UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon puts it: *‘Our times demand a new definition of leadership – global leadership. They demand a new constellation of international cooperation – governments, civil society and the private sector working together for a collective global good’*.

In his stern and uplifting statement on Human Rights and International Law (31 October 2012), Alfred de Zayas (Independent Expert to the UN Human Rights Council), also makes the point that civil society must be given a greater voice in the ‘*globalised international order*’, and insists that international democracy should entail “*a genuine dialogue by all and a renewed commitment to the principles of democratic governance at the domestic level, where the people participate in the political process, and the rule of law ensures equality in form and substance*”. War and war-mongering, says Alfred de Zayas, constitutes a major obstacle to the realisation of a humanized international order. Article 2(4) of the UN Charter must be strictly observed, he added. (<http://www.ohchr.org>)

Although still locked into the juxtaposition between law and punishment and the eye-for-an-eye mentality, humanity is gradually waking up to new, more holistic, aspects and concepts of law and lawfulness. From the time when the 10 Commandments brought order through a set of simple and clear rules which were enforced by severe punishment and retribution, the human being has evolved and matured. We are becoming aware of our co-responsibility for the multitude of challenges we face, which will only be solved and remedied through our united resolve and effort.

As people, often living in the most desolate places and soul-destroying circumstances, are demonstrating to the world: the human spirit will survive where there is a will. It is *‘We, the peoples of the United Nations’* that shall need to respect the dignity and worth of each other and promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom for each and all. Practising common sense we can and will give form and substance to Law and make lawfulness a way of life.

We, all of us, are called upon to work together for the good of the whole. At the very heart of the 10 Commandments lies the Law of Love – loving God with all our heart and our neighbours as ourselves

II. The Council of Europe

Guardian of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

The Council of Europe came into being in 1949 and is the oldest international organisation dedicated to fostering co-operation within and between European States. Since its inception the Council has promoted human rights, democracy and the rule of law within the continuously changing political and social landscape of Europe. Today the 47 members of the Council are working together to safeguard the fundamental rights and freedoms of its hundreds of millions of citizens, through the promotion of social cohesion, intercultural dialogue and finding common solution to major problems. (www.coe.int)

‘We have to listen to new and emerging democracies’

In his keynote address to the Council of Europe’s World Forum for Democracy (Strasbourg, 8 October 2012), UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon praised the bold vision of Council of Europe’s founders for their ‘unshakeable belief in human reason and dignity’ and fundamental trust, that the world’s people can and will change the world for the better. Today the Council has 47 vastly different countries ‘united in purpose... and committed to resolving their differences through dialogue’.

One of the great strengths of democracy is that it has the ability to adapt to new realities, said Ban Ki-moon, but *‘governance can only evolve through inclusive dialogue and broad engagement’*. We must listen to people; and where governments fail to live up to their obligations under international law, we have to remind them to them to do so. The UN Secretary-General is continuously urging leaders to stop flouting human rights and start meeting the legitimate demands of their people. *“This”* he said, *“is my message to leaders around the world, from President Assad of Syria to other who must listen to their citizens before it is too late”*.

European Youth Centres

Two European Youth Centres, one in Strasbourg and one in Budapest, have been established for the implementation of the Council of Europe’s Youth policy as international training and meeting centres with residential facilities.

The European Youth Centre (EYC) in Strasbourg was founded in 1972 with the support of the Norwegian government. The centre also hosts the European Youth Foundation and the Solidarity Fund for Youth Mobility. EYC Strasbourg: www.coe.int/

The Budapest EYC was formed and inaugurated in 1995 and its premises offered by the Republic of Hungary. EYC Budapest: www.eycb.coe.int/

Both these centres run an annual programme of numerous activities in close cooperation with non-governmental youth organisations which represent a wide variety of interests, from party political and socio-educational groups to rural youth movements, trade union and young workers’ organisations, as well as children’s organisations and environmental networks.

“COMPASS – Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People”

This Manual, originally published in 2002 and available in more than 30 languages, has recently been revised and includes new activities and information about human rights issues, such as disability, migration, and terrorism. (www.eycb/coe.int/)

III. “Tackling hate speech: Living together online”

Budapest 27-28 November 2012

This conference was made possible by grants by members of the Council of Europe and the European Economic Association (EEA) and attended by representatives of governments, civil society, research communities, traditional media, social media and web activists across Europe, to discuss how to tackle intolerance and hate speech online while also respecting freedom of speech.

Linking with the conference in a video interview the Norwegian Foreign Minister, Espen Barth Eide, expressed the firm commitment to promoting the values of democracy, tolerance and the rule of law, and underscored the vital importance of these values being honoured in the increasing dialogue between people through the internet. While the internet has increased the potential for participation in public debates, the hate speech online is a very worrying trend, said Mr. Eide.

New communication technologies, including social media, the spreading of expressions which incite, promote or justify hatred have become easier and practically instant. A recent Council of Europe survey shows that,

- 4 out of 5 respondents had encountered hate speech online,
- 2 out of 5 (personally) felt attacked or threatened, and
- 1 out of 20 had themselves posted hate speech

Among the key speakers to the conference were the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Thorbjørn Jagland, former Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Norway and leader of the Norwegian Labour Party.

Mr Jagland told the meeting how personal the issue of hate speech had become to him and to the Norwegian people since the 22nd July 2011 when seventy-seven innocent citizens, most of them young, were killed. *“They were victims of the ultimate consequences of hate speech”*, he said, and *‘a painful reminder that hate speech – online or offline – is real’*.

However, freedom of expression is an essential human right, crucial to any democratic system, and the European Council of Human Rights points out that some information and ideas expressed can sometimes *‘offend, shock or disturb the state or any sector of the population because such are the demands of pluralism, tolerance and broadmindedness without which there is no democratic society’*.

Acknowledging the countless ways the internet and new technologies have enriched the lives of people everywhere and become ‘a force for good’, freedom of expression cannot be unlimited, said Mr. Jagland: ‘We cannot ignore the dark side of the internet. What we say has consequences’. In an instance, with the click of a button, any information can circulate throughout the world, and *‘just as metals can be used in the building of hospitals or of tanks, and atomic energy used to light up a city or destroy it, modern information networks can be used for good or ill’*,

Mr Jagland offered three main suggestions as to how one might strike a balance between ‘clamping down on serious incitement to violent extremism’ and protect the right of free expression:

Firstly: *'we need to fine-tune our technological progress with the principles and ideals that we hold most dearly'*, remembering the values that bind us together are *'the backbone of our shared society'*. We should also remember that online hate speech is not just the work of isolated individuals seeking attention; it could also form *"part of a larger anti-democratic programme, aimed at unravelling the democratic fabric of multicultural societies"*.

Secondly we need to mobilise the vibrant forces of democratic society, said Mr Jagland and proceeded to announce that the Council of Europe is planning to launch a European campaign against hate speech online early next year. The concept for this campaign came from the Advisory Council of Youth and is supported by the governmental partners of the Council of Europe. The campaign will help raise awareness on the effects of hate speech and also how to stand up for the rights and values of a democracy.

The third and final suggestion was that political leaders must assume greater responsibility for the successful outcome of the battle against hate speech. European leaders must give the clear message to their citizens *'that our pluralist and multicultural societies are here to stay'*.

IV Palestine becomes a non-member observer state in the United Nations

On the 29 November 2012, more than 130 countries in the UN General Assembly voted to grant Palestine the status of non member observer state. Following the vote the UN Secretary-General urged that now: *"we must give new impetus to our collective efforts to ensure that an independent, sovereign, democratic, contiguous and viable State of Palestine lives side by side with a secure State of Israel"*.

Prior to the voting on the resolution to grant Palestine Non-member Observer Status in the United Nations, the President of the UN General Assembly, Vuk Jeremic, offered his Remarks on this unique occasion.

This is the full text of his statement to the assembly:

"At the start of this meeting, we had the distinct privilege to hear from representative of two great nations, President Mahmoud Abbas of Palestine and Ambassador Ron Prosor of the State of Israel.

They are each children of Abraham; one a descendant of Ishmael, the other of Isaac. Both come from a land that has been almost continuously tormented by conflict for many centuries, with countless victims on all sides.

The strife has not abated during the sixty-seven years of this Organisation's existence, despite the fact that it came into being 'to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war'".

Notwithstanding the valiant efforts of some of the most courageous statesmen of the 20th century, a negotiated comprehensive settlement enabling Israel and Palestine to live side by side in peace and security has yet to materialize.

And so we still witness the enmity, estrangement, and mistrust as parents continue to bury their children.

In today's globalising, interconnected world, what happens between the river Jordan and the shores of the Mediterranean has become the key to the security and well-being of the entire mankind.

I have no doubt that history will judge this day to have been fraught with significance but whether it will come to be looked upon as a step in the right direction on the road to peace will depend on how we bear ourselves in its wake.

Let us therefore have the wisdom to act in furtherance of the goal I'm sure we all share.

In coming to the end of my remarks, allow me to extend an appeal from this rostrum and in particular to my dear friends from Palestine and Israel to work for peace, to negotiate in good faith; and ultimately, to succeed in reaching the historical settlement.

This is our common and most solemn duty to the whole world but first and foremost to the proud men and women who live in a land that is holy to so many of us.

In the Zohar it is written, "God is peace. His name is peace, and all is bound together in peace". And in the Qu'ran, we read the "Allah invites [all the] nations to the Abode of Peace, and brings whom He wills to a straight path."

In a few moments, I will ask you to cast your ballots as you see fit.

I am sure each of you will do so with a veritable feeling in your heart that your choice is serving the cause of a righteous peace"

[\(<http://www.un.org/en/ga/president/67/statements/index.shtml>\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/president/67/statements/index.shtml)

V. Rules

The word 'rule' has been defined as 'that which is prescribed or laid down as a guide for conduct'. This definition seems to fit any kind of directives, whether within government, religion, music, cooking – or the universe.

In a discussion between Albert Einstein and Rabindranath Tagore in 1930 ("The Religion of Man") they discussed the then new mathematical discoveries which indicated that 'the drama of existence is not absolutely predestined in character'. As Einstein puts it: *'The order is there where the big elements combine and guide existence, but in the minute elements this order is not perceptible.'* Concurring with this statement Tagore added: *"thus duality is in the depths of existence, the contradiction of free impulse and the directive will which works upon it and evolves an orderly scheme of things."*

Their discussion wandered into the world of colour and music and the relationship between rules and the relative freedom of expression of the individual to give his/her particular quality of life and sound to the score of the composer/creator.

Have we become so overwhelmed by the general breakdown of the old social, economical and political order that we have, momentarily, lost sight of the unprecedented opportunity to give new expression to the 'free impulse' and - in an orderly fashion – evolve and fill the world with new vibrancy of colour and sound?

*'In love all the contradiction of existence merge themselves and are lost.
Only in love are unity and duality not at variance.
Love must be one and two at the same time.
Only love is motion and rest in one.
Our heart ever changes its place till it finds love, and then it has its rest.
Bondage and liberation are not antagonistic in love, for love is most free
and at the same time most bound.'*
(Rabindranath Tagore)

VI. International Day for Abolition of Slavery

2 December 2012

Although slavery was abolished 85 years ago the world is still beset with new forms and manifestations of slavery, said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his message for this day. *“The movements against slavery brought together the international community to declare that slavery practices constitute an affront to our common humanity and that no human being should be another’s property”*.

According to the UN International Labour Organisation (ILO), some 21 million women, men and children are today trapped in slavery all over the world. This Day aims to raise public awareness of the urgent need to work together to eradicate all contemporary forms of slavery, such as debt bondage, forced labour, trafficking of persons and for the purpose of organ removal; sexual exploitation focus and all forms of abuse against children, such as children used in armed conflict, forced into marriage.

The UN has different tools for advancing this goal, such as the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, which has assisted tens of thousands of victims of slavery in more than 90 countries. The Fund was established by the UN General Assembly in 1991 (A/RES/46/122), and has the ability to provide concrete assistance to the victims of slavery, such as housing, legal aid, food and medical care, and training toward sustainable sources of income.

In order to fulfil its mandate to assist and actively support people living in bondage or despicable forms of slavery, the Fund is in great need financial funding and support.

UN independent expert on contemporary forms of slavery, Gulnara Shahinian, calls for greater anti-slavery legislation, including criminalisation of all servile marriages: *“women and girls should not be forced to marry”* she says, and they should not be forced to spend their life time in slavery. *“Nothing can justify that.”* However, Ms Shahinian also stressed that focusing solely on the criminalisation of servile marriages would not succeed in effectively combating the problem, and said: *‘such legislation should go hand in hand with community programmes to help detect, provide advice, rehabilitation, education and shelter where necessary’*.

Ms Shahinian and other independent experts, or special rapporteurs, are appointed in an honorary capacity by the UN Human Rights Council (Geneva), to examine and report on their findings within a country or a specific human rights theme.

More information on the Fund can be found on <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Slavery/Pages/SlaveryFundMain.aspx> 8 ,

‘Do small things with great love’
Mother Teresa

VII. Rotary International in the 21st Century

“Rotarians are ordinary people doing extraordinary things.”

This was the way Rotary was described recently by a shop assistant to a Rotary District Governor after recognising his Rotary pin.

This is probably a far cry from another widely held opinion of Rotary and Rotarians as being members of some select and exclusive business men's club!

So, what is Rotary? What is its history? What is its function? Does it have a place in the community of the 21st century?

I firmly believe it does and will prove that by sharing with you my Rotary journey. I have been a Rotarian for 11 years now, but a member of the family of Rotary since I can remember. My father was a very active Rotarian in Scotland until his death in 2000 and my mother was active in the Inner Wheel, the ladies group before women could become full members of Rotary, in 1989. I was convinced that our family ties with Rotary were over with the death of my father, only to be invited to join one of the local New Zealand clubs the following year.

So, what is Rotary? The world's first service club, established in 1905 in Chicago by Paul P Harris, was set up to emulate the friendly spirit found in small towns. It started as a professional club whose meetings were rotated among member's offices – hence the name 'Rotary'. The idea spread quickly and by 1921 there were Rotary clubs on six continents. Today, there are some 1.2 million Rotarians in 32 000 Rotary Clubs in more than 200 countries.

Rotary has a code of ethics in which all Rotarians ask themselves, of everything they think, say or do:

- Is it the Truth?
- Is it Fair to all concerned?
- Will it build Goodwill and better Friendships?
- Will it be Beneficial to all concerned?

This is known as the Four-Way Test and it is often recited at regular Rotary club meetings.

Apart from friendship and fellowship, Rotarians seek to assist their communities and those in need further afield. The Rotary motto is, "Service Above Self" and each year, the Rotary International president will declare a theme – this year it is "Peace Through Service".

Rotary has six areas of focus: peace and conflict prevention/resolution; disease prevention and treatment; water and sanitation; maternal and child health; basic education and literacy; economic and community development. Each individual club will respond to these to suit its particular community needs.

Rotarians were involved in the UN Charter conference in 1945 and have been closely associated ever since as an accredited NGO and with close links to UNESCO.

Rotary has its own charity, the Rotary Foundation, through which international projects can be carried out, such as providing scholarships for higher level study in such areas as peace studies (Peace Scholars) and higher level academic study (Ambassadorial Scholars). The Foundation is funded by donations from Rotarians.

To recognise contributions of \$US1000, a Paul Harris Fellowship (PHF) is awarded. In some countries this is simply a recognition of a donation, while in others, Rotary clubs will pay for a PHF and award it to a member for outstanding service to the club and/or the community. In the UK, Australia and New Zealand, the awarding of a PHF is a prestigious event and can be bestowed on Rotarians or non-Rotarians for community service. My father was awarded a PHF for his work as part of a team who established an eye camp in India, while I was honoured with mine for club and community service.

As part of its education focus, Rotary arranges international student exchanges. I was fortunate to be able to take part in several reciprocal visits to various European countries, including Belgium, Germany, France Switzerland and Italy. Such opportunities to live as part of a family

in a foreign country help to build self confidence, self reliance and provide a window on different cultures, languages and life styles. For me, it was the beginning of a life-long interest in international affairs and a love of travelling. In New Zealand and Australia, travel involves much greater distances so the exchange programmes are tailored to fit the circumstances – for example, a matched twin exchange for a school term between students from New Zealand and Australia, with the students getting the opportunity to study and experience school and family culture in another country. While the European exchanges I enjoyed took place in the summer holidays, older students to and from New Zealand can be away from home for a full year anywhere in the world – our club has in recent years had students from Switzerland and Brazil. This promotes life-long friendships and networks between not only the students but also their families.

For older people just starting in their professional life, there are study exchanges between Rotary Districts worldwide. These might be for a mixture of professions or have a specific theme, such as Family Violence, Indigenous Education or Youth programmes. These groups are away for approximately 4 weeks and have the opportunity of visiting and sharing how things are done in the other community. While away they will speak at Rotary meetings and get some idea of the community life. Often sightseeing will be built in to the programme. Each of these groups is headed by a Rotarian ‘leader’, as members are not Rotarians – although they may consider joining Rotary at a later date.

Rotary is also responsible for carrying out projects to help communities in need all over the world. This includes the world wide campaign to end Polio where Rotary works closely with UNICEF and the World Health Organisation, and more recently with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. They will take part in immunisation drives in, for example, India, where they are able to experience first hand the living conditions of those less fortunate. There are many other health related projects including eye camps in India, water projects in Asia, and a scheme whereby children with physical problems which can’t be treated in their own country, for example, Pacific Islands, are sponsored by Rotary clubs to travel to Australia or New Zealand to receive treatment from top class specialists. There is also an on-going project to build basic, hurricane-proof housing in Fiji – Rotahomes – for the poorest section of the community. Our club has been responsible for building two such houses to date.

At a local level, Rotarians will undertake projects to assist the community. Their efforts will be directed into the Five Avenues of Service: club service, community, vocational, new generations (youth) and international. There will be a group who will concentrate on each of these for one year. Since joining, I have been secretary, bulletin (newsletter) editor, Vocational director and this year, it is my turn to be president of the club. Each year, the members will rotate into a different group. So the original intent of ‘rotating’ is still maintained today. This applies to all appointments in a club, at District level (a geographical grouping of clubs) and in Rotary International itself. While the advantages of this help to increase the knowledge and skills of members, it can have continuity issues.

Projects undertaken are varied and will suit each club’s needs. Often they will utilise member’s many skills to set up the organisation of an activity, then, hand it back to the community to operate. Such activities have seen the establishment of Riding for the Disabled, The Asthma Society, and in co-operation with other groups, Outward Bound Trust and National Women’s Hospital, among other well known New Zealand institutions. Some of our recent club projects include, planting trees around a local park, and establishing a walkway through the countryside and funded these from an annual book fair and collection of scrap metal. There will be such a variety of activities and projects that all members of any age can be involved.

Being a Rotarian is not all about serious matters as a large part of the function of Rotary is to foster friendships and enjoy fellowship. There are many social occasions at which all family members will take part – the ‘family of Rotary’ principle. Rotary is about family, work and community. Often a reason given for joining a Rotary club is to have an opportunity to give

something back to the community in which one lives and works. RI President, Sakuji Tanaka says, "...we have a tendency to be humble and keep our achievements to ourselves. But we must share them with those around us and with the world." (August 2012)

In recent times, people have been travelling more extensively for both work and pleasure. Being a Rotarian gives the privilege of visiting and being welcome in any Rotary club throughout the world. You can feel part of a very 'big family'! I have enjoyed the fellowship of Rotarians in the USA, Canada, Scotland and Australia.

So, has Rotary changed since it was established on 23 February 1905? Yes, it has, but what it does and achieves would still be recognised by earlier Rotarians. Will it change in the future? Yes, it will – to meet current and contemporary demands of a community.

Does it have a place in the 21st century? Most definitely, yes, as long as we live in a community. This is illustrated by the Future Vision policy for the Rotary Foundation and how it will distribute its funds. This will apply from July 2013 with the aim of achieving a more ambitious Rotary in the future. What could be more ambitious than contributing to world peace? As part of RI President Tanaka's "Peace Through Service" theme for this year, is a series of three Global Peace Forums, to be held in Berlin – "Peace Without Borders"; Honolulu – "The Green Path to Peace" and Hiroshima – "Peace Begins with You".

On a local level, the Rotary Club of Wanganui New Zealand will contribute by working with OPTU to preserve the records of the work for peace carried out by Gita and Anthony Brooke by creating a digital archive of Brooke artefacts held in Wanganui/Whanganui.

The last words should go to RI President Tanaka:

I am part of the first generation to grow up in Japan after a terrible war. I think it is natural that my countrymen now place a great priority on peace. We saw where militarism brought our country, and we also saw the great economic growth that came when our nation made the choice to embrace peace. ... Through service, we become more tolerant of our differences and more grateful for the people in our lives. Our sense of gratitude drives us to understand others better and to see the good in everyone. Through better understanding, we learn to respect others. With mutual respect, we live with 9-9others in peace. (RI President Sakuji Tanaka, July, 2012)

For further information on Rotary International, visit the website at www.rotary.org from where some of the material in this article is taken.

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VIII. International Volunteer Day 5 December 2012

In her statement for this day, the UN Volunteers (UNV) programme Executive coordinator, Flavia Pansieri, acknowledged the hundreds of millions of people, young and old, who contribute their time and share their skills, without any expectation of material reward, to make our world a better place. They are, she said 'driven by a desire to contribute to the well-being of their society' and, in turn 'the act of volunteering can transform volunteers'. This

‘transformational relationship’ can help a community’s economic, spiritual and social well-being and help build an active and civil society, *‘critical to a peace that is durable and development that is sustainable’*.

Looking back at her five years as UNV programme Executive Coordinator, Ms Pansieri recalled the tens of thousands of UN Volunteers who had been supporting UN Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding Missions in bringing stability to societies ravaged by violence, and the tens of thousands who had shared their skills with community-based development projects. These volunteers bring not only their skills, said Ms Pansieri, but also hope, bridge cultures, and often reach the most excluded communities.

The world is facing extraordinary challenges, she said, but *‘we can meet these challenges when we commit ourselves to upholding volunteerism’*.

<http://www.volunteeractioncounts.org/ivd2012/statements/statement%20flavia>

IX. ‘Measuring Progress towards an Inclusive Green Economy’

On the 3 December 2012 the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) launched its new report entitled *‘Measuring Progress towards an Inclusive Green Economy’*, which provides green economy indicators that can measure progress toward an environmentally stable, economically sound and equitable society.

Sheng Fulai, co-author of the new report and UNEP Economic Affairs Officer, said that ‘the idea is to supplement gross domestic product (GDP), which monitors macroeconomic activity, with other measures that better reflect the multidimensional nature of human well-being and quality of life.

The report came as governments, major international organisations, research institutes, NGOs, businesses and other groups gathered for their first major meeting since Rio+20.

The three-day gathering (4-6 December) aimed to learn from the countries and businesses which have already developed green economy (GE), and green growth-related indicators and to discuss how to move forward, identify knowledge gaps and research priorities which can advance this work.

The report points out that most countries are concentrating too heavily on gross domestic product as a measure of economic performance. Steven Stone, Chief of UNEP’s Economics and Trade Branch, said that *“When we put in place a framework to account for and value environmental goods and services, we are making the contribution of nature to our collective well-being visible, and acknowledging the fact that investing in natural capital is necessary for our continued economic prosperity”*.

The Geneva meeting will conclude with a closed session between the Green Growth Knowledge Platform (GGKP) partners to finalize the text of a joint publication.

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

X. Human Rights Day

10 December 2012

X.

The theme for the 2012 Human Rights Day is: 'Inclusion and the right to participate in public life'.

In her statement for the day, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, expressed the belief that the groundswell of people taking to the streets over the past years, were asking for more than civil and political rights, and much more than economic, social and cultural rights. People all over the world are not simply *"demanding freedom of expression and freedom to say what they think and make clear what they want"*, she said. They are asking for *'their right to participate fully in the important decisions and policies affecting their daily lives'*.

The High Commissioner reminded us that people are in fact, said: *"asking for what has been, for more than sixty years, under international law, rightfully theirs"*; they are *'asking for the human rights laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights'* (adopted and proclaimed by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948.). The right to vote and be elected; to have access to public service, freedom of expression, assembly and association are all among the rights enshrined in the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights and numerous other laws and documents.

'The pursuit of human rights lies at the heart of the mission of the United Nations', says UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is as relevant today as it was on the day it was adopted: *"I hope you will make it part of your life"*.

<http://www.ohchr.org>

XI. Guiding Principles for the Implementation of the UN 'Protect, Respect and Remedy' Framework

These UN Guiding Principles were developed by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Professor John Ruggie, and the outcome of 6 years in-depth research and extensive consultations with businesses, governments, civil society, lawyers, investors and other stakeholders. The UN Guiding Principles were endorsed by the United Nations Human Rights Council in June 2011.

While not creating new international law obligations the UN Guiding Principles do apply to all States and all business enterprises, both transnational and others, regardless of their size, sector, location, ownership and structure; they are grounded in recognition of:

- States' existing obligations to respect, protect and fulfil human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- The role of business enterprises as specialized organs of society performing specialized functions, required to comply with all applicable laws and to respect human rights;
- The need for rights and obligations to be matched to appropriate and effective remedies when breached.

The UN Guiding Principles have gained extensive support from businesses and civil society organisations as well as governments; international and regional organisations are reflecting them in their own standards and are expected increasingly to do so in the future.

The Corporate Responsibility to Respect Human Rights: An Interpretive Guide:

The Interpretive Guide focuses on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the corporate responsibility to respect these rights and is designed to support the process of their effective implementation. The Interpretive Guide is in the process of being translated into French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese and Arabic.

The purpose of the Interpretive Guide is not to change or add to the provisions of the UN Guiding Principles; its essential purpose is to provide additional background information and explanation which will support a fuller understanding its meaning and intent.

As Professor Ruggie remarked, the UN Guiding Principles *'provide a solid and practical foundation on which more learning and good practice can be built'* and the task is now to ensure their effective implementation. The Interpretive Guide's aim is to support this process.

<http://www.ohchr.org>

<http://www.globalcompact.org>

XII. Momentum for Change

While the governmental debate was grinding on at Doha Climate Change Conference the less noticed but more vibrant discussions and mutual agreements on action took place between 'subnational' groups increasing the momentum for change.

During the conference the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretariat and the Climate Group announced a strategic partnership which will aim to encourage the mutually reinforcing leadership of business and government at all levels through combining their respective global initiatives to raise awareness on climate change: the UNFCCC secretariat's "Momentum for Change" (<http://unfccc.int/2860.php>) and the Climate Group's "Clean Revolution" (<http://www.theclimategroup.org/>)

Executive Secretary of UNFCCC, Ms Christiana Figueres, stressed that action on climate change, both adaptation and mitigations is already happen, both on the ground and in real life and 'making a difference for people and for the environment'. These low carbon success stories, she said, need to be told in a far more vocal way and to a much wider audience *'so they can motivate further action at greater scale, with faster pace'*.

On behalf of the Climate Group, CEO, Mark Kenber welcomed the opportunity to join forces with the UN Climate Change Secretariat and their 'inspirational' Momentum for Change initiative which aims *'to cut through the ongoing pessimism around climate negotiations and show how low-carbon, clean revolution leadership is transforming the lives of millions around the globe'*. Together, he said, *'we want to make sure that this happens faster, better and for more people'*

2012 Lighthouse Activities:

The Momentum for Change's Lighthouse Activities are providing a platform to highlight broad-ranging climate change actions that are already achieving tangible results on the ground. By *'shining light on inspiring and transformational climate change initiatives it aims to strengthen motivation and spur further changes towards 'a low-emission, high resilient future'*.
http://unfccc.int/secretariat/momentum_for_change/items/7176.php

XIII. Education First

An Initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recently launched his Education First initiative in the presence of Nobel Peace Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, whom he appointed as the first special envoy on global education.

Ban Ki-moon asks that education is placed in the heart of our social, political and development agendas. This is not a matter of choosing education over other issues of great importance, he said: *“Our internationally agreed development goals are a complex tapestry, and education is the indispensable thread”*. Recalling his own early education which took place under a tree in the war-ravaged Republic of Korea, the UN Secretary-General stressed that education is hope and dignity, growth and empowerment: it is *‘the basic building block of every society and the pathway out of poverty.’*

The “Education First” document outlines six main Goals:

1. *expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children*
2. *ensure all children, particularly girls those in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality*
3. *ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes*
4. *achieve a 50 per cent improvement in adult literacy, especially among women. Secure equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.*
5. *eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieve gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to basic education of good quality*
6. *improve the quality of education so that measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.*

<http://globaleducationfirst.org> <http://www.un.org/sg>

XIV Newness.

“One must wisely understand the final clash of the two worlds – the one that departs and the one that is born. Signs of madness can be seen in the first and of daring in the second. How long it is since I pointed out the division of the world! Thus one can see to what an extent the cleavage has already begun. It must be understood how near the decisive time has come and how unitedly it should be met.”

(HEART, stanza 158)

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.