

# *I. Many to Many*

*“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. *Cooperation*

Throughout the ages humanity has persistently pushed every boundary in its yearn to expand the horizon and reach envisioned goals. Coordinating energy, skills and muscle power, and with the luminaries of the sky to guide them, human beings have set out on their journey across all lands and seas and declared dominion over every territory of the earth. Slowly, through the ages, all kingdoms within the planetary whole have been bent to serve human needs.

The scientific expertise of modern days and the availability of increasingly sophisticated technology is enabling humanity to cross new frontiers, into the world of atoms and beyond the Earth's atmosphere. Teams of scientists, entrepreneurs and visionaries from all nations, stretching to meet the needed demands for precision, discipline and focus, have summoned their collective skills in joint efforts to gain clearer understanding on how to control and manipulate the energy in matter and how, effectively and safely, to send probes or manned spacecrafts ever further and deeper into space.

With this continuous expansion of horizons new light and perspective is cast on the way we relate and interact with each other and our environment. Our ambitious research into the subtle and delicate world of subatomic particles and the potential benefits issuing from stem cell manipulation requires our most conscientious consideration, far beyond the one-pointed, at times reckless, pursuit of results, power or prestige. So too must one hope that the wondrous images of planet Earth from space will awaken in us - re-awaken perhaps – a sense of belonging to something infinitely greater than ourselves. Seeing the globe, which sustains all life forms within its circumference, journeying through space among its family of planets, should make us realise that the Earth itself is a living, breathing being; that speaking of Earth as the Mother is more than mere poetic license.

*“It takes more than a moment to fully realise that this [‘small pearl in a thick sea of black mystery’] is Earth – home”,* says Edgar Mitchell. And Sigmund Jaehn shares that, only when he saw the planet Earth from space, *‘in all its ineffable beauty and fragility’*, did he realise that *‘humankind’s most urgent task is to cherish and preserve it for future generations’*. The voices of numerous space travellers are now joining the call, rising from every corner of the planet, for all humanity to consider together the consequences of our narrow-minded, sometimes ill considered, explorations and the dire costs to the planet, to the global environment, as well as to future generations.

Even a casual look at statistics will reveal the unsustainable imbalance between what we *give* and what we *take*. Despite all modern science and expertise our world is in a bad state of health; in the shadows of magnificent cities our sisters and brothers are living in slums of squalor and misery; multi-national factories are producing the largest amount of goods for the greatest profit and least possible cost, at the expense of the poorest among us, and careless mineral explorations and extractions have left deep poisonous scars on our Mother, the planet.

But the human heart is rapidly awakening and making us see, calmly, clearly and constructively, the causes and effects of our actions. We are taking stock while also proceeding to heal, re-build and move forward - wisely. Looking from his vantage point at our planetary home, Edgar Mitchell said: *“my view of our planet was a glimpse of divinity”*. Perhaps Nature, the Mother, is providing the fertile ground for all seeds of divinity, offering each the opportunity to grow and unfold - in time and space – to the

fullness of its being. Maybe the human being is learning that true cooperation is to serve and nurture the spark of divinity in All.

## II.

*Where the mind is without fear and the head  
is held high  
Where knowledge is free  
Where the world has not been broken up into  
fragments  
By narrow domestic walls  
Where words come out from the depth of  
Truth  
Where tireless striving stretches its arms  
toward perfection  
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost  
its way  
Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit  
Where the mind is led forward by Thee  
Into ever-widening thought and action  
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let  
my country awake .*

(from Gitanjali – Rabindranath Tagore)

## III. A New Global Partnership

On the 30 May 2013 the Report by the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, entitled *Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development*, was launched by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. ‘We are at the beginning of an historic journey’, said Mr. Ban as he presented the report to the UN General Assembly; it has set out a roadmap to fill the key gaps in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), such as building institutions ‘that are honest, accountable and responsive to people’s needs’.

Throughout the time of producing the UN Secretary-General’s brief to produce a ‘*bold yet practical vision for development beyond 2015*’, the 27 panel members had consultations with more than 5,000 civil society groups in 121 countries within all regions in the world; had spoken to experts from national governments, local authorities, multilateral organisations as well as the academic and scientific communities, and also to 250 companies from the private sector.

The introduction to their Report the Panel writes that: “*Our vision and our responsibility are to end extreme poverty in all its forms in the context of sustainable development and to have in place the building blocks of sustained prosperity for all*”.

The Panel shares some of its core agreements and stresses that - above all: “*we agreed that a new vision must be universal, offering hope – but also responsibilities – to everyone in the world*”. The Panel members also share how the many consultations and meetings had left them ‘energised, inspired and convinced of the need for a new

paradigm.” Business-as-usual is not an option, they declare; the post-2015 agenda will be a **universal agenda**, which will need to be driven by **5 big, transformative shifts**:

1. **Leave no one behind:** after 2015 we should move from reducing to *ending* extreme poverty in all its forms. We should ensure that no person – regardless of ethnicity, gender, geography, disability, race or other status – is denied universal human rights and basic economic opportunities. We can be the first generation in human history to end hunger and ensure that every person achieves a basic standard of wellbeing. There can be no excuses...
2. **Put sustainable development at the core:** Despite all aspirations the international community has yet to succeed in integrating the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainability. Immediate action is needed to halt the alarming pace of climate change and environmental degradation. ‘We must bring about more social inclusion. This is a universal challenge, for every country and every person on earth’
3. **Transform economies for jobs and inclusive growth:** the panel calls for a ‘quantum leap forward’ and economic opportunities for all and a ‘profound economic transformation’ to end poverty and improve livelihoods: “diversified economies, with equal opportunities for all, can unleash the dynamism that creates jobs and livelihoods, especially for young people and women.”
4. **Build peace and effective, open and accountable institutions for all:** freedom from fear, conflict and violence is the most fundamental human right, says the panel; governments of every country will need to be honest, accountable and responsive to the needs of all its peoples. The report is ‘*calling for a fundamental shift – to recognise peace and good governance as core elements of wellbeing, not optional extras*’. Point 4 stresses the need for ‘a transparency revolution, so citizens can see exactly where and how taxes, aid and revenues from extractive industries are spent’ These are ends as well as means.
5. **Forge a new global partnership:** the panel believes that the most important transformative shift is towards a new spirit of solidarity, cooperation, and mutual accountability, a new partnership that is based on common understand of our shared humanity: “*this partnership should involve governments but also include others: people living in poverty, those with disabilities, women, civil society and indigenous and local communities, traditionally marginalised groups, multilateral institutions, local and national government, the business community, academia and private philanthropy*”.

Annexed to the Report the panel is offering some illustrative goals and targets as a basis for further discussion.

The Panel of Eminent Persons, consisting of an equal number of women and men and representing a multitude of cultures, faiths and ethnicities, envisions ‘*a new global partnership as the basic framework for a single, universal post-2015 agenda that will deliver this vision for the sake of humanity.*’

We have a choice to make they say; we can “***muddle through as we have done, making progress on some fronts but suffering setbacks elsewhere. Or we can be bold and set our eyes on a higher target, where the end of many aspects of poverty is in sight in all countries and where we have transformed our economies and societies to blend social progress, equitable growth and environmental management***”.

At the launch of the Report, Mr. Vuk Jeremic, President of the UN General Assembly, expressed the hope that it would serve as a wake-up call: “*I am truly convinced that we must act now to slow the alarming pace of climate change, which poses and unprecedented threat to humanity*”. We must, urged the UNGA President: “*act now to*

*profoundly transform the ways our economies work.” We shall also need to look at how we can make a smooth transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals, said the President. This is “- a critical issue on which there was no agreement reached in Rio”.*

The full Report can be read at <http://www.post2015hlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/UN-Report.pdf>

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The following quotes are taken from the Global Thematic Consultation on Addressing Inequalities in Post-2015 Development Agenda held under the auspices of the UN Development Group from September 2012 to January 2013:

*“Addressing inequalities is not a choice – it’s a moral and practical necessity. A moral necessity that speaks directly to our conscience... our sense of fairness and justice .... Our conviction that all people must have a fair opportunity to live full, healthy lives, no matter where they live, no matter what barriers they face. That is their right. And a practical necessity, because a focus on equity in our work saves more lives – is more cost-effective – spurs economic growth – and is an important means of ‘getting to zero’ in preventable deaths, malnutrition and denial of basic services.” - Anthony Lake, UNICEF Executive Director*

*“Ultimately, there is no ‘us’ and ‘them’ ... We have divided ourselves up into ‘developed and developing’ countries, into ‘benefactors and recipients’, into ‘North’ and ‘South’ ... We must come to see ourselves as ‘we’” - Beyond 2015 Coalition*

[www.worldwewant2015.org/inequalities](http://www.worldwewant2015.org/inequalities)):

#### ***IV International Year of Family Farming - 2014***

With the support of more than 360 civil society and farmers’ organisations and promoted by the World Rural Forum the United Nations General Assembly has declared 2014 the International Year of Family Farming. This year will aspire to strengthen existing while also developing new tools which will aim to *‘stimulate active policies for sustainable development of agricultural systems based farmer families, communal units, indigenous groups, cooperatives and fishing families’*. There is a determined effort worldwide to combat poverty and hunger, while also searching for a rural development based on respect for the environment and biodiversity. (<http://www.familyfarmingcampaign.net/>)

#### **Antigua Declaration:**

The International Land Coalition (ILC) brought together nearly 300 people from 47 countries in Antigua, Guatemala, between 23 and 27 April 2013 to discuss food security and territorial governance within a world with increasing demands. The Global Forum meeting resulted its members approving the document entitled **“Antigua Declaration. Inclusive and sustainable Territorial Governance for Food Security: Sharing Lessons from Around the World”**. The Forum explains that this declaration aims to highlight the need for land to be looked at *‘not just as a productive asset, but to be valued for the various functions that it plays, including cultural, spiritual and ecological functions’*. It also stresses that *‘land is a means of establishing the dignity and inclusiveness of people’*.

The Antigua Declaration expresses concern for the ‘gap between aspiration and reality’, and mentions the impact of ‘agrarian economies’ affecting, taking control and alienating land-users from their environment.

*“Land rights are fundamental to addressing the common challenges of humanity, including overcoming poverty and hunger, recognising the rights of Indigenous Peoples, mitigating and adapting to climate change, reversing desertification and land degradation, sustainable development and peace-building.”*

## ***V. World Environment Day 2013***

The theme for the 2013 World Environment Day, “ThinkEatSave”, highlighted the enormous loss of food due to wastefulness within the food industry, as well as the thoughtlessness of the individual human being. The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) estimates that, every year, 1.3 billion tonnes of food is wasted, equivalent to the amount produced in the whole of sub-Saharan Africa.

While one in every seven people in the world go to bed hungry and more than 20,000 children under the age of 5 dies daily from hunger, a third of global food production is either wasted or lost which is an enormous drain on natural resources.

The 2013 ThinkEatSave campaign aims to help people and industries to become more aware of the detrimental effect that our collective wastefulness has upon our planetary environment and become more conscious and conscientious of our daily habits.

(<http://www.unep.org/wed/theme/>) - ([www.thinkeatsave.org](http://www.thinkeatsave.org))

### ***‘Save Food’:***

The ‘Save Food: Global Initiative on Food Losses and Waste Reduction’ is described as a global platform for reducing food losses and food waste. It works with public, private and civil society organisations to develop awareness, collaboration, knowledge and effective solutions to reduce food losses and waste.

<http://www.fao.org/save-food/newsletter/2013/newsletter06/en/>

### **Climate-Smart Agriculture – Sourcebook:**

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) explains that climate-smart agriculture (CSA) will aim to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development, the economic, social as well as the environmental, by jointly addressing food security and climate challenges. It is composed of three main pillars:

- sustainably increasing agricultural productivity and incomes;
- adapting and building resilience to climate change, and
- reducing and/or removing greenhouse gases emissions where possible.

CSA is not a single specific agricultural technology or practice that can be universally applied; site-specific assessments will be required to identify suitable agricultural production and practices. CSA is bringing together practices, policies and institutions to address, simultaneously and holistically, the multiple challenges facing today’s agriculture and food systems. This approach aims to help avoid counterproductive policies, legislation or financing.

However, while the international community is rapidly embracing the concept of climate-smart agriculture, the implementation of this new approach is a new and challenging venture, partly due to a lack of tools and experience. Building on past efforts to achieve sustainable agricultural development CSA offers the opportunity to revitalize these initiatives, overcome adoption barriers and adjust them to the ‘new realities of climate change’. An increasingly number of other UN agencies, other organisations, educational

establishments and other entities are working together ‘to address knowledge gaps and support countries in the implementation of climate-smart approaches.’ The ‘sourcebook’ is a continuously updated reference tool for planners, practitioners and policy makers working in agriculture, forestry and fisheries at national and sub-national levels. The sourcebook material will be available on the website [www.climatesmartagriculture.org/72611/en](http://www.climatesmartagriculture.org/72611/en)

## ***VI. Who Will be Accountable? Human Rights and the Post-2015 Development Agenda***

The Report, “Who will be Accountable: Human Rights and the Post-2015 Development Agenda” co-authored by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR) was launched at the UN Headquarters in New York in May this year. Welcoming this important publication, the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said: “*Shortfalls have occurred not because the goals are unreachable, or because time is too short. We are off course because of unmet commitments, inadequate resources and a lack of focus and accountability*”.

The Report sees the post-2015 development framework as an ‘unmissable opportunity’ to address the lack of accountability and unfilled development commitments of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and hopes it will come to reflect the ‘freedom from fear’ and the ‘freedom from want’, based on the principles of equity, equality and non-discrimination.

The publication acknowledges that the Millennium Goals have had a significant impact on shaping international as well as national development policies while also pointing out that indicators show that the commitments to the Goals over the past 12 years have often been more ‘rhetorical than real’. It also maintains that ‘*accountability has been undermined by a lack of clarity about who should be responsible for what*’.

New global development goals cannot be taken as a ‘one-size-fits-all yardstick of national performance says the report and makes an eight step suggestion on how the global goals could be tailored to the national and sub national levels. The second of these steps suggests that placing human rights principles at the heart of the process of setting new goals and ensuring compliance with them ‘fosters the active participation of those most affected by poverty and deprivation, increasing the responsiveness of those who answer to them’. Accountability mechanisms, anchored in the human rights framework, will help create ‘*the conditions in which people can meaningfully participate in decision-making*’.

For full report:

<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/WhoWillBeAccountable.pdf> and further information: <http://post2015.iisd.org/news/ohchr-report-calls-for-integrating-human-rights-standards-in-post-2015-goals/>

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### ***‘Participation is a fundamental human right – not a simple policy option’:***

As Magdalena Sepulveda, UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, presented her annual report to the Human Rights Council, she recalled how the Human Rights Council had asked her to make recommendations on how persons living in extreme poverty can participate in ‘the definition of measures affecting them’. Poverty is not merely lack of income, but also characterized by lack of capabilities, choices, security

and power. *“Lack of power is a universal characteristic of poverty”*, says Ms, Sepulveda, and it manifests itself in many ways, in particular in the *‘inability to participate in or influence decisions that profoundly affect one’s life’*.

Although the issue of participation has been discussed for some time, the participatory processes, put in place by States, donors, international financial institutions, UN agencies or even NGOs, have often been *‘tokenistic, cursory consultations, conducted to give a veneer of legitimacy to an already-decided policy’*, says the UN Special Rapporteur. The focus of her Report examines key human rights principles and standards which determine the right to participation of the poorest and most marginalised members of society and present concrete recommendations to States and other key actors on how to ensure the meaningful and empowering participation of the poor.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Poverty/Pages/SRExtremePovertyIndex.aspx>

***‘Knowledge from Experience: Building the Post-2015 Agenda with People Living in Extreme Poverty’:***

This two-day seminar (26-27 June), held at the UN Headquarters NY and organised by the International Movement ATD Forth World, aims to give people living in poverty the opportunity to exchange ideas and insights on an equal footing with international development actors. This seminar forms part of ATD Fourth World’s participatory research, conducted alongside its grassroots members. (<http://www.atd-fourthworld.org/Knowledge-From-Experience-Building.html>)

## ***VII. The State of the World’s Children 2013***

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)’s annual flagship publication, the ‘State of the World’s Children’, focuses this year on the plight of children with disabilities. The report estimates that more than 90 million children under the age of 14 are today living with moderate to severe disability of some kind.

Children with disabilities tend to be seen as ‘inferior’ to other children, and there is a general tendency to focus on the handicap of the child, without considering the positive qualities and potential capacities of the whole person. The report stresses that: *‘when given a chance, children with disabilities are more than capable of overcoming barriers to their inclusion; of taking their rightful place as equal participants in society and of enriching the life of their communities’*.

The report points to several positive signs of progress in reducing general ignorance and prejudice, and welcomes the increasing efforts made on a global scale to include children with disabilities in community life. Public awareness campaigns as well as inclusive social and sports activities are helping to reduce stigma. However, inclusion, in the true sense of the word, will only happen when the world community is *‘investing in removing physical, cultural, economic, communication, mobility and attitudinal barriers that impede the realisation of children’s rights’*.

In its Agenda for Action the report urges countries that have not yet ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) to do so. It also calls on all countries to honour their commitments *‘in practice and to enforce and monitor their implementation’*.

The State of the World's Children 2013 makes a strong plea that children and adolescents with disabilities should be involved 'in the making of decisions that directly affect their lives'. <http://www.unicef.org/sowc2013/report.html>

***“We recognize that, in addition to our separate responsibilities to our individual societies, we have a collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level.***

***As leaders we have a duty therefore to all the world's people, especially the most vulnerable and, in particular, the children of the world, to whom the future belongs”.***  
***(from the United Nations Millennium Declaration)***

## ***VIII. AccountAbility***

'AccountAbility' is the name of an international organisation which, since 1995, has focused on '*mainstreaming sustainability into business thinking and practice*' and helping corporations and governments '*embed ethical, environmental, social and governance accountability into their organisational DNA*'.

On 6 June 2013 (New York), AccountAbility released their research findings, conducted in partnership with the UN Global Compact, entitled: "Growing into Your Sustainability Commitments: A Roadmap for Impact and Value Creation".

With an increasing number of companies volunteering their commitments to sustainability there is an urgent need for replacing today's multitude of performance standards and reporting requirements with a simple and compelling framework that will allow companies to assess their own performance and get the most out of their voluntary commitments to sustainability.

After extensive consultations with leading companies the 'Sustainability Commitment Growth Curve' (SCGC) was created. This is a practical management framework, designed to help companies to:

- ! determine why and how they make a voluntary sustainability commitment to optimize participation;
- ! map where their voluntary sustainability commitments currently function to provide impact and value;
- ! identify and implement actions that generate increased return on investment and impact from these voluntary commitments over time;
- ! utilize voluntary sustainability commitments as a strategic governance and management tool, and
- ! utilize voluntary sustainability commitments to achieve improved business and sustainability performance.

[http://unglobalcompact.org/docs/publications/AA\\_UNGC\\_Report.pdf](http://unglobalcompact.org/docs/publications/AA_UNGC_Report.pdf)

## ***IX. Water Cooperation – Building Partnerships*** ***Stockholm 1-6 September 2013***

In response to the UN General Assembly declaring 2013 the International Year of Water Cooperation the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) resolved to rise to the challenge and focus its forthcoming World Water Week on finding answers and

solutions to the questions: “*why do we need to cooperate, on what, for what aim, at what level, with whom and, not least, how?*”

This year’s World Water Week, taking place in Stockholm, Sweden, between 1-6 September on the theme ‘Water Cooperation – Building Partnership’, is expected to be attended by over 2000 scientific experts as well as business people, policy makers and other people within civic communities from around world. The focus of the forum is to help stimulate new thinking and positive action toward water-related challenges and their impact on the world’s environment, health, climate, economic and poverty agendas. SIWI aims to help building partnerships through:

- linking scientific understanding with policy and decision-making to develop concrete solutions to water, environment and development challenges,
- fostering proactive partnerships and alliances between individuals and organisations from different fields of expertise,
- highlighting ground-breaking research, best practices and innovative policy work by stakeholders and experts around the world and from multiple disciplines,
- reviewing the implementation of actions, commitments and decisions in international processes and by different stakeholders in response to the challenges, and
- awarding outstanding achievements.

With a rapidly increasing world population and the same finite and vulnerable water resource to sustain the lives and welfare of an estimated 9 billion people and other planetary life, it is vital that we find ways of cooperating together; of reaching future-oriented decisions, and of building effective and reliable partnerships to achieve common goals.

The World Water Week aims to bring the issues of water use, right down and through to the personal level and take a good look at how ‘my water use’ will affect everybody else’s. It will encourage meaningful and informed dialogue between people and communities regarding using, wasting or polluting our common and shared water resource.

We need, say the organisers, to engage with groups of people who can help us understand the very essence of cooperation:

- What is cooperation?
- What drives people, states and organisations to ‘cooperate’ rather than ‘defect’?
- What determines the direct and indirect reciprocities that make us cooperate, and the mechanisms of selection of those with whom we want to do so?
- How do we identify and measure the quality, aim, benefits and barriers to cooperation, and create an enabling environment for cooperation?
- How can more effective cooperation enable us to reach future-oriented decisions and force implementation, and
- How can we best build partnership among actors to achieve common goals?

<http://www.worldwaterweek.org/sa/node.asp?node=472> <http://www.unwater.org/water-cooperation-2013/events/milestone-events/en/>

Prior to the World Water Week a High Level International Conference on Water Cooperation will be held in Dushanbe, the capital city of Tajikistan on 20-21 August. (<http://www.hlicwc.org/>)

## ***X. Become a Culture of Peace Reporter***

The Culture of Peace News Network (CPNN) is a space where readers can exchange information about events, experiences, books, music, and web news that promote a culture of peace. It invites 'You' to write a story and send it, with a photo or logo, to the article page on: <http://cpnn-world.org/write/reporter.html>

CPNN is a project of the United Nations International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World. For the early history of the culture of peace see: <http://culture-of-peace.info/history/introduction.html>

## ***XI. We the Peoples: the Culture of Peace & Fulfilling the Mission of the United Nations***

The United Nations has been referred to as the hope of humanity, as 'humanity's most far-sighted and significant undertaking'. It represents the fact of our oneness—a reflection of, perhaps, the highest achievement in consciousness marked by humankind as a whole at this time.

The UN was created in 1945 after the Second World War with the principal aim to maintain international peace and security—prevent future wars—essentially, to bring about the culture of peace. Has it been successful? Statistics show that new wars are fewer; recurring wars are the primary problem, especially when people's needs are not met—i.e., poverty, hunger, unemployment, etc.—and often, if this was not the case before the war began, it becomes greater afterwards.

Responding to this problem, the General Assembly (December 2005) established the UN Peacebuilding Commission—to be distinguished from UN Peacekeeping Operations, which are a non-violent force of 'boots on the ground'. The Peacebuilding Commission's main task is to assist countries emerging from conflict to achieve sustainable peace. One way is by providing a necessary link between the Security Council (security issues) and ECOSOC (economic and social development issues), which will facilitate coordination between all parties involved—namely, the countries, other UN bodies and donors, who might provide funding in post-conflict situations, i.e., World Bank, International Monetary Fund, etc.—and making sure help gets delivered in a timely fashion. Another way is by sticking around long enough with dedicated commitment. Other groups (like NGOs and peacekeepers) are called in during the main conflict and once a settlement has been reached (due to limited resources and personnel) they must rush to the next crisis and are unable to remain long enough to secure a lasting peace.

The cost of war, not only for arms—but, the price of war—the fatalities, mental illness, mass destruction of towns and lives that must be rebuilt is enormous. Let's remember: If we can risk nuclear war, we can risk disarmament.

Until we start focusing more energy into creating a culture of peace, starting with peace education, the UN will be forced to continue rushing from one crisis to another, putting out one fire after another. To say the least, it is unsustainable and economically unsound. Peace education is essential, and the role of the family—the oldest institution in human history—is at the heart of this education, beginning at the youngest age.

The Preamble to the UN Charter begins: "We the Peoples". This means that collectively, every human being from the current 193 member nations—we are the UN! It is more

than an organization, it's a living organism made up of all of us. Therefore, for the UN to be successful, we must all help in meeting its goals.

Three UN documents that stand out in order of importance are: Charter of the United Nations; The Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and the landmark United Nations Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, which was adopted by consensus on 13 September 1999 by the UN General Assembly. It defines a culture of peace as: "a set of values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behaviour and ways of life". Based on—to name a few—respect for life, commitment to peaceful settlement, efforts to meet developmental and environmental needs—or sustainability, equal rights, freedom of expression and information, and adherence to the principles of justice, democracy, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation, pluralism, cultural diversity, dialogue and understanding...at all levels of society.

As we know, peace is not just the absence of war and violence, but entails the responsibility of all of us as one humanity to "live together as good neighbours"—To live the Golden Rule, which is at the core of every religion: Love your neighbour as yourself; treat others as you want them to treat you. Essentially, peace is the establishing of these 'right relations'. As the Earth Charter states, peace is right relations "with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth, and the larger whole of which all are a part."

In the I Ching, peace is described as the opposite of standstill or stagnation. The Chinese word for peace (t'ai) means: union, interrelation. It is also much broader and includes: contentment, rest, bringing about a time of flowering and greatness. It denotes a time in nature when heaven seems to be on earth, and so their powers unite in deep harmony... when inner nature is stronger and richer than anything offered by external fortune.

Peace in the world is a direct result the inner experience of each one of us; inner peace is the source of peace for all else and seeking it brings equilibrium. Inner peace is an imitation of the Divine. The way to this realm lies through the mind. We remember the familiar UNESCO quote: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed."

Sogyal Rinpoche calls meditation "the true practice of peace, the true practice of nonaggression and nonviolence, and the real and greatest disarmament...Only when we have removed the harm in ourselves do we become truly useful to others."<sup>1</sup>

By rendering ourselves harmless, we allow the fundamental goodness and kindness that are our real nature to shine.

Culture is the essence of a civilization. It sheds light on the meaning of our time. War has been the result of an emphasis upon a material culture. Now is the time to focus on creating a spiritual culture—a culture based on loving understanding, goodwill and in harmony with all life, the Culture of Peace—a culture of Heart. This is not an impossible dream, but the next step.

All the great spiritual teachings testify to the great reality of peace. There are many dreams that can be transformed into reality, even though they seem unattainable or unreasonable. Education for all is one such dream, ending poverty, meeting the MDGs—the Millennium Development Goals. Difficult as it is to fulfill these dreams, within them are fragments of truth that can be realized in day-to-day life. Peace, being one of them, is an effect based upon actions or movements, and simple ones at that.

Statistics prove that the role of women is critical for achieving lasting and sustainable peace. They bear the brunt of poverty and the disproportionate burden of violence therefore their contribution around the negotiating table is critical and valuable. Their qualities of creativity and patience, the capacity to love and build consensus, all of these

highlight the importance of women's contributions into all aspects of peacemaking and peacebuilding. Ensuring equality for women and girls—in schools, at home, in the workplace, in government, etc.—provides one of the greatest potentials for positive change at this time, and even more in the long run.

Our world is very far from the world we wish for ourselves and much of the culture of peace will belong to the future. Peace is indeed much more difficult than war. There is a constant fragility to it to maintain it. We need to constantly be reminded of its existence. Only by its loss do we recognize its true value.

In matters of peace or justice, we are called to be both idealists and realists, yet never give up... to realize it's never too late to try again. Changing the present situation is a Herculean task, yet not impossible. The focused effort of all of us is required and the practice of right human relations, or human rights, is essential.

Human rights, in general, are defined as those rights, which are inherent in our nature and without which we cannot live as human beings. They're based on humanity's growing demand for a life in which the inherent dignity and worth of each human being is accorded respect and protection. Their denial, aside from being an individual and personal tragedy, also creates conditions of social and political unrest, spreading the seeds of violence and conflict within and between societies and nations.

Currently, there is a worldwide group arising from civil society who is working on a proposed UN resolution on the Right to Peace. The Right to Peace translates the universal value of peace into the legal category of human right. It has been the main goal designed by the Spanish Society for International Human Right Law since it was established in 2004. The right to peace reaffirms the common will of all people to live in peace with each other.

On the world stage, the challenge continues to be between the collective ideal that is the UN versus the individual behaviour of member states. It comes down to the sacrifice of selfishness, which is being demanded of those whose responsibility it is to determine policies (national and international) and to take those steps, which will establish right human relations.

The UN complex is undergoing change both inwardly and outwardly. On a physical level, the Capital Master plan is transforming this architectural masterpiece, built in 1950-1951, into another architectural masterpiece of this time by transforming it into a greener, more energy efficient, safer and technologically up-to-date infrastructure—all without changing the look of the public spaces.

The second change influencing the UN is by civil society itself. A heart-centred culture is emerging...from the inside out. NGOs are working together as groups with each other and with other organs of the UN, thus multiplying the potential and in the process learning how to work together in love, cooperation and unity.

One example is Global Movement for the Culture of Peace <[www.gmcop.org](http://www.gmcop.org)>, a loosely knit consortium of representatives for civil society holding space for the synthesis of the sustained efforts of men and women of goodwill all around the planet who work, in many varied aspects, toward establishing right human relations for a lasting and sustaining peace. This group seeks to promote the UN Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace. Please join us on Facebook in amplifying some of the various endeavours being realized and in connecting with them, providing strength and support, firing the entire world with a spirit of relationship.

The Tibetan Master DK says, symbolically speaking—“when the United Nations has emerged into factual and actual power, the welfare of the world will then be assured. What is that welfare but love in action? What are right human relations but love among men, groups and nations? What is international cooperation but love on a world scale?”<sup>2</sup>

Peace, like love, is a cohesive principle. It is an essential principle in nature belonging to the innate essence of all things, not merely a quality to be acquired. To create the Culture of Peace, the goal is love-in-action, expressed as goodwill. When we truly LOVE each other there will be peace. How is it that we failed to recognize the most important word in the human language and that it is not only a noun, but also a verb!

Humans create evolution, and nothing can impede it. But only when we are nearer to solving the problems of poverty, homelessness, education, discrimination, etc., only when the world will be a better place to live, for us, and future generations, only then through our combined efforts will the movement for a culture of peace achieve its objective. We're shifting from a focus on material values and a fear of war to one of spiritual values and the culture of peace. We are in the midst of an immense economic shift from 'guns into ploughshares' on a global scale.

We are one Humanity, yet each of us has a responsibility. Peace is an effect, based upon our motives and actions. The seeds of peace will flower when we work together responsibly, to do what is best for the whole of humanity—as one would do for oneself.

<sup>1</sup>Tibetan Book of Living and Dying, Sogyal Rinpoche, p. 62-63

<sup>2</sup>The Reappearance of the Christ, Alice A. Bailey, p.50

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## ***XII. Education for Peace***

### **III. International Day of Peace - 2013**

For about a decade, since 1982, the International Day of Peace was celebrated on the third Tuesday of September, the opening day of the regular sessions of the UN General Assembly. However, in 2001 the UN General Assembly decided to determine a fixed date, the 21<sup>st</sup> September, for the observance and promotion of the ideals of peace. The UNGA resolution (A/RES/55/282) declares that *'the International Day of Peace shall henceforth be observed as a day of global ceasefire and non-violence'*, thus linking *peace* with a commitment to end hostility and conflict on both national and personal levels.

In his message on 13 June, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced that the theme chosen for the 2013 International Day of Peace will be “Education for Peace”. The United Nations will focus on examining the role that education can play in ‘fostering global citizenship’; education will need to help cultivate mutual respect for others, create peaceful and inclusive neighbourhoods and societies and caring for our natural environment.

The Secretary-General’s Global Education First Initiative calls on governments to place education at the top of their agenda, and urges everyone – *‘whether governments, parties to conflicts, religious institutions, community leaders, the media, academics, or civil society groups’* – to support peace education programmes, protect students and teachers

from conflict, help rebuild schools, and ensure all girls and boys have access to quality education, which will include teaching about how to prevent and resolve conflict. “*Let us resolve to learn together how to create a universal culture of peace*”, said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

[http://www.un.org/en/events/peaceday/2013/sgmessage\\_countdown.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/events/peaceday/2013/sgmessage_countdown.shtml)

### ***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.