

# *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. *Balance*

With Law and Order, as the world has known it, finding itself in different stages of disarray and collapse, and the increasingly complicated and dysfunctional legal system earning the mistrust of the general public, it is not surprising that the two pans of the scales, weighing rights and wrongs, are vacillating at such a dizzying rate. What is protected by law, and what *feels* right, at odds with each other. As long-established demarcation lines between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour within our different societal, religious and cultural make-ups, erode and corrupt, is it any wonder that not even increasingly harsh punitive measures can prevent the human being from rebelling against boundaries of the past. Unease, discontent and stress erupts in widespread social upheaval and mayhem, leading to repetitive outbursts of tit-for-tat vindictiveness within all strata of our communities and polluting the atmosphere of relationships.

Time and again this debilitating systemic dis-ease has brought an aging and ailing civilisation to its knees, inevitably followed by a time of desperate clinging to past dependencies and comfort zones and fearful bouts of forebodings, clouding our capacity to think. However, this period between the subsiding and approaching horizons will also bring eye-opening revelations to those who are ready to welcome the opportunity to move forward and evolve.

From the very first attempts of the child to stand upright supported only by its own two legs to the trained intensity of the ballet dancer's pirouettes, and through all the many mental, emotional and physical challenges of each day in our individual lives we have been, and are, learning to master the discipline of balance and experiencing how one point of focussed effort leads to another. Step by step each one of us is heading in the direction we decided to take, and in today's inter-connected, inter-dependent - and inter-twined - global neighbourhood, humanity as a whole is confronted with a joint decision as to the road ahead.

Amidst the turmoil, chaos and general state of lawlessness, we need to seek to obtain a state of unity; a collective mental and emotional equilibrium, which will allow us to see our predicament in its entirety and as a whole. Faced with an unavoidable 'crisis of choice', we need to stand together at the midway point between the swinging scales, where we shall have a clear view of the whole state of affairs. From here a well considered decision can be made. Here no-decision will also constitute a choice.

At the 68<sup>th</sup> United Nations General Assembly, September this year, President Barack Obama, referring to the human spirit which had never failed to rise victoriously out of past clashes between conflicting values and continued the work for a better future for each and all, asked the Assembly, so - "*who in this hall can argue that the future belongs to those who seek to repress that spirit, rather than those who seek to liberate it?*" Since its inception, people with expertise, understanding and vision have come together from every UN member nation to formulate comprehensive sets of mutually agreed principles and codes of conduct on rights and responsibilities, on which humanity's future legal system can become '*the custodian of a positive righteousness and not simply the instrument of enforcement*'; a system which emphasises educational programmes, puts in place methods of healing and restoration rather than isolation and punishment.

Those who seek to repress the human spirit can only succeed if we allow them to do so. Again and again we have witnessed human beings rising from the most deprived and

devastating circumstances, giving thanks for the gift of life. This is the spirit that defies death and which will liberate and lift humanity to new levels of wondrous beauty.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights; they are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood (Univ. Declaration of Human Rights). When heart and mind, conscience and reason have enabled the two, the sister and the brother, to stand together in perfect balance, we will - as one humanity – continue the journey and fulfil our common destiny.

## ***II. Reflections on the September 2013 GAMIP Peace Summit in Geneva, Switzerland***

***October 19, 2013***



The Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace (GAMIP) held its 6th biennial summit at the College Voltaire, Centre International de Conférences de Genève and the Palais de Nations from 14-20 September with the theme Nesting Peace: Creating Infrastructures to Sustain Diversity. GAMIP ([www.gamip.org](http://www.gamip.org)) is a worldwide community of civil society committed citizens, organizations and government officials from over 40 countries who collaborate to support the establishment of “infrastructures for peace” – including national ministries and departments of peace, as well as other local and regional infrastructures such as councils and academies. I was fortunate to be part of the U.S. delegation representing the Peace Alliance ([www.thepeacealliance.org](http://www.thepeacealliance.org)); my New Zealand based United Nations NGO, Operation Peace Through Unity ([www.peacethroughunity.info](http://www.peacethroughunity.info)) and the Global Movement for the Culture of Peace initiative at the UN ([www.gmcop.org](http://www.gmcop.org)).

Over 160 civil society and government officials from 55 countries gathered to collaborate on building worldwide infrastructures to support a culture of peace. One logistical challenge must have been getting interpreters for all the languages spoken there. For among the countries represented were the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Costa Rica, Ghana, Pakistan, Rwanda, Papua New Guinea, Senegal, Canada, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Nepal, Lesotho, Uganda, United Kingdom, New Zealand, India, Brazil, Georgia, South Africa, Columbia, Palestine, Afghanistan, Mauritius, Italy, Germany, France, Romania and Denmark.

Much has already been written about the Summit. Please see the GAMIP Communiqué: <http://www.gamip.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/2013-Summit-Communiqué.pdf> ...

U.S. outcome report:

[http://peacealliance.org/cms/assets/uploads/2013/10/GAMIP\\_Report.pdf](http://peacealliance.org/cms/assets/uploads/2013/10/GAMIP_Report.pdf)... video of U.S.

Summit presentation: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=555RYzgx6hc> ... and David Adams perspective: <http://cpnnworld.org/cgi-bin/read/articlepage.cgi?ViewArticle=1406>.

Below are highlights that stood out for me from my personal summit experience in Geneva.

The Summit was executed exclusively by a fearless team of committed youth, who produced what all agreed was a heartfelt, multidimensional, innovative networking and learning experience (reassuring us seniors that the world will surely be left in good hands!). A nurturing “nest” was created at its onset after the powerful Pre-Summit Learning Weekend (Walking Toward Conflict – An Introduction to Restorative Systems) led by internationally renowned Brazilian “restorative justice” expert, Dominic Barter. From the principles gleaned there, a live restorative system was actually put in place that offered eight willing “circles” the opportunity to practice dealing with emergent summit discord. I now more deeply appreciate the value “restorative circles” have in providing essential framework for peacebuilding to foster a culture of peace; and how crucial it is for peacebuilders to be willing and able to employ them when conflict arises.

Dominic posed the question: How do we dream we would respond to conflict within our communities in a way aligned with our values? Since a justice system is an organized way of responding to conflict, the idea is to pro-actively choose how to respond. Groups construct a mutually agreed-upon system for what to do when conflict arises, so a pre-determined space and process exists for dealing with it when it does. All points of view are welcomed and need to be heard, for if conflict is not given space to express itself, it energetically stays in suspended animation. The agreement to respond in a certain prescribed way also creates the conditions for the system to be sustainable. Thus, a restorative circle is an “infrastructure for peace” (I4P).

So what is an I4P? It is a relatively new concept that has evolved over time. The United Nations Development Program’s (UNDP) comprehensive definition is: A network of interdependent systems, resources, values and skills by government, civil society and community institutions that promote dialog and consultation; prevent conflict and enable peaceful mediation when violence occurs in a society. They add that recurring conflicts at any level cannot be addressed through a single peace process but require long standing mechanisms for mediation and dialogue. I came away understanding I4P to be any institutional or organizational capacity or mechanism that supports peacebuilding ... ie. any accepted, sustainable system, structure or process within government or civil society that promotes dialogue, mediation, right relationship etc., thus transforming conflict or violence. Such structures can be in the form of ministries or departments of peace, as well as peace academies, institutes, councils, commissions, committees and centers.

The summit itself was designed as an intentional I4P model in ways large and small. Most ambitious was in how it collected monies through a new-paradigm procedure called “crowdsourcing” as espoused by the famous Charles Eisenstein (there as a presenter).

Crowdsourcing is a payment method whereby donations are requested in whatever amount one can afford, rather than imposing a required fee. This assumes those who can give more will cover those who cannot. Registrants agree to work out solutions should revenues fall short. (I was amazed this daunting risk seemed to work out in the end).

There were many smaller I4P’s too, such as peace-inducing spaces for yoga, meditation, art, dance, resource corner, cartooning, and home group dialoguing “nests” and “hatching time” -- plus enlivening morning connection gatherings, world cafe rounds and civil society marketplaces where folks deeply shared. There was a group tour of that famous Swiss I4P – the International Museum of the Red Cross. Plus, in celebration of the International Day of Peace, at the United Nations there was the grand finale I4P Human Rights Council side event panel discussion on the “Role of National Institutions in the Promotion of Education for Peace and Peace as a Human Right” -- at which several GAMIP leaders got to participate in speaking.

My highlight was facilitating an Open Space discussion on seeking a United Nations I4P resolution. It was so well-received that a global citizen petition drive was launched for it, calling on the UN to support building I4P to strengthen the culture of peace! The resolution idea actually originated in 2006 at the second GAMIP Canada summit after a

visioning session, and was supported by Operation Peace Through Unity who concurrently had the same idea.

Since the concept of “I4P” follows from understanding “culture of peace” per the 1999 UN Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (A/RES/53/243), the I4P resolution project was put on hold until the time when the Culture of Peace Program of Action was more widely known. When in September, 2012 the first ever High Level Forum on the Culture of Peace took place at the UN, followed this September with the second one, organized in cooperation with the Global Movement for the Culture of Peace, it seems the time has now come. So after a long prior incubation period working on this project at the UN and letting it sit, it has finally “hatched.” (For more on Culture of Peace Program of Action & High Level Forums see [www.gmcop.org](http://www.gmcop.org)). We hope you will support the on-line petition soon to be circulated globally. For details on it, as available, keep checking [www.gamip.org](http://www.gamip.org).

Another highlight was learning of all the incredible types of effective I4P’s that have recently emerged globally. Four countries already have governmental peace ministries: Solomon Islands, Nepal, Costa Rica and Papua New Guinea. Many others have a blossoming assortment of viable local, regional and national civil society infrastructures, such as peace academies, institutes, councils, commissions, committees, and centers. This knowledge certainly gives credence to advancing our U.S Peace Alliance Department of Peacebuilding (HR 808) legislative campaign back home. It was thrilling to watch the opening welcome video by our visionary U.S. California Representative Barbara Lee, who introduced the updated HR 808

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/hr808/text> in Congress this year.

In conclusion, the summit was a bold experiment in many things – youth organization, employing restorative circles, modeling I4P and crowdsourcing to nest and hatch peace. My most poignant lesson was found in a Time magazine I happened to pick up on the seat during my plane ride home, which mirrored the renewed sense of hope I was feeling. Upon re-entering the dire world I had left not so long before (on the brink of war in Syria) the magazine spilled open to a recent Yoko Ono interview where she was asked: It’s been more than 40 years since “Give Peace a Chance” was recorded and war is still a big part of the world. Do you ever get frustrated? She replied: “Well, we’re still here ... I really think we’re getting wiser and wiser. We can make it.” This resonated with me because it was the same recurring thought I had throughout the summit. Clearly, we ARE getting wiser; for in all our different languages we are speaking “infrastructures for peace” and putting them into action -- thereby bringing forth the culture of peace. YES WE CAN MAKE IT NOW!

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Anne Creter: Peace Alliance Board of Directors, UN NGO Rep for Operation Peace Through Unity (OPTU) and the Global Movement for the Culture of Peace Initiative at the UN.

### ***III. Politics in tough places: UN diplomacy in today’s crises***

On the 15 July 2013, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Jeffrey Feltman, spoke at the Brookings Institution function in Washington, USA, on ‘Politics in tough places: UN diplomacy in today’s crises’.

Jeffrey Feltman, who worked within the U. S. Government for almost 30 years as U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon and Assistant Secretary of State before his recent appointment as head of the UN Department of Political Affairs\*, talked about some of the main differences between working on peace and security issues from the multilateral setting of the UN versus the bilateral diplomacy of U.S., and acknowledged that he hadn’t yet fully grasp what it meant to have had the ‘*Presidency, the Pentagon and the dollar, the*

voting weight at the IMF and World Bank, and a permanent seat in the Security Council' as a back-up when participating in negotiations with other foreign affairs practitioners. Watching and learning from his new colleagues at the United Nations he found that UN officials wield 'important sources of power as they try to coax antagonists toward peace', and noted that 'the UN powers are quite different from what U.S. diplomats carry with them to meetings'. At the top of his own UN education had been to learn how to use the 'intangible powers of ideals, principles, and values', he said; placed on our shoulders are the principles of the UN Charter, and 'legitimacy derived from the universal membership'. It is worth remembering, he added, that these principles and ideals which gave birth to the UN 'derive from U.S. leadership and vision'.

UN's perceived impartiality is another strength, which allow UN diplomats to talk to all sides of a conflict and 'play the honest-broker role'; universal membership furthermore enables the deployment of negotiators and missions that are diverse and have regional and substantive expertise. This, he said, can help win quick respect of the parties concerned; moreover our goal is to prevent and resolve conflicts, period! **"We do not pick winners and losers"**.

The legitimacy that the UN can convey to decisions on peace and security cannot be replicated by any nation, says Jeffrey Feltman, 'no matter how powerful'. While the UN deploys over 110,000 troops around the world to stabilize and provide security on the ground, and humanitarian actors are helping the victims of man-made or natural disasters, Feltman firmly believes that lasting solutions to conflicts will also require 'working the politics in tough places'.

He recalls how, on the day he took office, the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon had instructed him to "strengthen the UN diplomatic engagement across the board, to do better on early warning, preventive diplomacy, and conflict mediation." Thus Ban Ki-moon has made prevention the centerpiece of his leadership at the United Nations – whether it be the prevention of childhood diseases or the prevention of armed conflict anywhere in the world.

Jeffrey Feltman reminds us that while the UN was established after the devastating world war between states, today's conflicts are mostly taking place between warring factions within the borders of 'failing nations'. Such internal conflicts are often exacerbated by cross-border threats, terrorism, military coups and changing patterns of violence. While well established tools are used as effectively as possible, new and urgently needed approaches are also being developed. Our tools and engagement must constantly evolve, he stressed.

By way of highlighting what the United Nations can 'bring to the table in doing politics in tough places' such as Syria, Somalia, Afghanistan and others, Jeffrey Feltman mentioned three of some of the many challenges and needs that emerge:

1. 'going from early warning to early response'. We need, he said, to 'find ways to mobilize early action – rapid and unified diplomatic action – as soon as opportunities open up'. However, sovereignty issues and other questions can affect the ability to broker peace and prevent atrocities and mass loss of lives.
2. 'professionalising the service'. In today's complex peace processes even the most skilled diplomat will need access to a broad range of technical expertise. New instruments, such as the relatively new stand-by team of mediation experts which can be deployed in any part of the world within 72 hours to help deal with issues such as power-sharing, constitution-making and mediation process design, is already in such demand that we can barely keep up, said Jeffrey Feltman, who

acknowledged Norway for its financial, intellectual and logistics support which made this stand-by team possible.

3. The last main challenge is the increasing danger involved: “When our mobility is restricted due to security, our ability to deliver on our mandates is seriously compromised”,

The UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs concluded by saying: “*the real challenge is finding ways to build consensus and to get the international community to speak with one voice*”. We must, he urged, pool our efforts for peace; “*For while bilateral and multilateral diplomacy may work differently, when they combine their clout the results can be powerful.*”

\* The Department of Political Affairs works at the center of UN preventive diplomacy and peacemaking. It oversees political missions and peace envoys abroad, and the UN’s support for free elections worldwide. It monitors political developments around the globe and works hard to mobilize action at the international level to prevent and resolve conflict.

<http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/undpa/main/about/speeches/pid/24707>

#### ***IV. Global Operational Peace Support***

The Global Operational Peace Support (OPS) is described as “the world’s leading on-line and on-site support for experts and practitioners in the field’.

On demand OPS will provide customised support to experts and practitioners, as well as UN missions and agencies, policy makers and government officials. Among the many areas in which OPS will offer its services are: training and professional development, coaching and technical assistance, support for conflict analysis, and programme planning and strategic development.

For further details: [www.globalopsonline.org](http://www.globalopsonline.org)

#### ***V. International Day of Non-Violence*** **2 October 2013**

The International Day of Non-violence is celebrated each year on Mahatma Gandhi’s birthday. In his address on the day, the President of the 68<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly, H.E. John W. Ashe, described Mahatma Gandhi as one of history’s greatest advocates on non-violence. Mahatma Gandhi’s moral and spiritual power of non-violence was far greater than any form of physical force or human brutality, and his legacy of thought and action ‘*is as relevant today as a beacon of hope in our troubled times to the men, women and children living under all forms of oppression*’.

The President recalled how the ‘*shared assembly of nations*’ was founded after the terrible suffering of the World War, ‘*... so grueling that it raised fundamental questions about the very nature of what it meant to be human*’. But it was in the face of such unspeakable atrocities that human decency and the desire to work toward a better tomorrow rose and grew and “*resulted in the key ideas enshrined in our UN Charter including the need to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war*’, and in the resolve ‘*to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small*’.”

Mentioning the importance of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and commenting on some of the progress and shortcomings on realizing our joint

commitment to reduce poverty and hunger, child mortality and disease, education, gender equality, maternal health and ensuring environmental sustainability, the President also pointed to the fast approaching 2015 deadline, and the need for the international community to shape a new agenda for the post-2015 era.

The post-2015 agenda will be one that applies “*to all countries of the world, and one which responds to climate change, preserves our forests and oceans, creates systems of justice within our societies, provides access to clean water, and sanitation services.*” This agenda might well be the boldest and most ambitious – and most collaborative - project that United Nations has ever had to undertake, said the President, adding : “*our Assembly of Nations will need to be equally audacious, ambitious and collaborative if we are to rise up to the task we have chosen for ourselves*”.

The 68<sup>th</sup> General Assembly under his presidency will focus on addressing directly the issues of ensuring peaceful and stable societies in the post-2015 development agenda, ‘*precisely because of the absolutely crippling effect war and terrorism and conflict have on development*’, said the incoming UN General Assembly President.

Non-violence is the path of the courageous, not the fearful, he reminded us, and concluded: “*We are all responsible for employing the tools of non-violence, and thereby helping to create a more peaceful world for all. For it is only when we truly call and accept all as one, and recognize that violence equally diminishes those who are violent and those who are the victims of violence, that non-violence become the moral imperative.*”

<http://www.un.org/en/events/nonviolenceday/2013/gapresident.shtml>

## ***VI. A Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development***

Established in July 2012 by UN Secretary Ban Ki-moon, the 27 members of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons submitted their Report on the Post-2015 Development Agenda in May 2013. The report, entitled “A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development”, forms part of the world-wide inclusive and comprehensive consultations to define and advance the development framework beyond 2015.

The report points to the historic opportunity facing humanity, not only to end poverty but also to tackle ‘*the challenges to people and planet so that we can end extreme poverty in all its forms irreversibly in the context of sustainable development*’. Making this vision a reality must be a universal endeavor, states the report, urging us not to wait for others to act: “*we can, each one of us, begin taking steps towards a more prosperous and sustainable 2030*”. For this we need, says the report, to commit to changing the way we think and the way we act. The high-level panel outlines what it calls five transformative shifts which they think will create the conditions and build the momentum for meeting our responsibilities:

1. Leave No One Behind: We must ensure that no person – regardless of ethnicity, gender, geography, disability, race or other status – is denied basic economic opportunities and human rights;
2. Put Sustainable Development at the Core: We must make a rapid shift to sustainable patterns of production and consumption, with developed countries in



- the lead. We must act now to slow the alarming pace of climate change and environmental degradation, which pose unprecedented threats to humanity;
3. *Transform Economies for Jobs and Inclusive Growth*: A profound economic transformation can end extreme poverty, promote sustainable development, and improve livelihoods, by harnessing innovation, technology, and the potential of business. More diversified economies, with equal opportunities for all, can drive social inclusion, especially for young people, and foster respect for the environment;
  4. *Build Peace and Effective, Open and Accountable Institutions for All*: Freedom from violence, conflict, and oppression is essential to human existence and the foundation for building peaceful and prosperous societies. We are calling for a fundamental shift: to recognize peace and good governance as a core element of wellbeing, not an optional extra;
  5. *Forge a New Global Partnership*: A new spirit of solidarity, cooperation, and mutual accountability must underpin the post-2015 agenda. This new partnership should be built on our shared humanity, and based on mutual respect and mutual benefit.

<http://www.post2015hlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/UN-Report.pdf>  
[-http://www.post2015hlp.org/about/](http://www.post2015hlp.org/about/)

***“This is the moment to shake off complacency and throw aside old habits that reinforce the status quo.***

***It is the moment to re-invent the very definition of human progress – to transform what not so long ago was but a far-off dream, into a reality for all of mankind”***

*President of 67<sup>th</sup> UNGA, Vuk Jeremic. 24 September 2013*

## ***VII. Human Rights day 10 December 2013***

This year’s Human Rights Day will mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, created in 1993 through the UN General Assembly, acting on the recommendation by the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna 1993). The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted at the World Conference, is regarded as one of the most significant human rights documents of the past century decade and has sparked renewed effort in the promotion of human rights. <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/Vienna.aspx>

The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (VDPA) acknowledges the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights which is *‘the source of inspiration’* and which: *‘constitutes a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations’*. It provides the basis for the United Nations *‘in making advances in standard setting as contained in the existing international human rights instruments..’*, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

In his foreword to the VDPA booklet UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recalls how the 7000 conference participants in 1993 overcame major differences to produce a *‘powerful outcome’*. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action *‘unequivocally proclaimed the rights of women and underscored the need to fight impunity, including through the creation of a permanent international criminal court.’* Ban Ki-moon also praised the decision to create the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights, and said

that 'whenever and wherever rights have been violated or threatened, the voice of the High Commissioner has been consistent, clear and resonant, speaking out for dignity and accountability.'

Let us, he urged 'intensify our efforts to fulfill our collective responsibility to promote and protect the rights and dignity of all people everywhere'.  
([http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Events/OHCHR20/VDPA\\_booklet\\_English.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Events/OHCHR20/VDPA_booklet_English.pdf))

The theme for 2013 Human Rights Day is '20 Years: Working for your Rights', and special events will take place at the headquarters of the UN Human Rights Office in Geneva (5 December) and New York (10 December)

### **VIII. From Abkhaz to Zulu**

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has been awarded the *Guinness World Record* for having collected, translated and disseminated the Universal Declaration of Human Rights into more than 300 languages and dialects: 'from Abkhaz to Zulu'.

Former High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson says that this achievement bears a special symbolism and brings to us a sense of the world's diversity. At the same time it shows that: "all of us, in our different forms of expression, can speak the 'common language of humanity', the language of human rights, which is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

The project in itself provides an example of what global partnership for human rights is all about. It was the cooperative efforts by many partners, within as well as outside the UN system. <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/WorldRecord.aspx>

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***"Where after all do universal human rights begin?  
In small places, closest to home –  
so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any map of the world.  
Yet they are the world of the individual person. The neighbourhood he lives in;  
The school or college he attends; the victory, farm or office where he works.  
Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice,  
equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination.  
Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without  
concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for  
progress in the larger world.  
(Eleanor Roosevelt on Human Rights)***  
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### **IX. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 2015**

The tentative time for the 59<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW59/Beijing+20) is set for 9-20 March 2015, and will take place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. It will be attended by representatives of UN member states, the many different UN entities and by ECOSOC-accredited non-governmental organizations throughout the world.

The Commission will review the progress made in implementing the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. This review will be conducted at national, regional as well as global levels.

In her statement on 11 October, the UN Women Executive Director, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka stressed that “*while the responsibility for the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action rests primarily with Governments, the realization of gender equality and women’s empowerment is a collective endeavour to which all stakeholders, at all levels, must contribute*”. Beijing+20 will offer an opportunity for strengthening ‘gender mainstreaming’ in all sectors and contribute to elaborations of the post-2015 development framework.

*“We need to put the rights of women and girls at the center of strategies to fight poverty and to advance peace and security and sustainable development”,* said the UN Women Executive Director. *“Together we can make the 21<sup>st</sup> century the century of women with a vision of equality and dignity for all”.*

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/beijingdeclaration.html>

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw59-2015#sthash.g8v3HCkU.dpuf>

### **New UN Security Council resolution on women, peace and security:**

On the 18 October 2013 the UN Security Council adopted a new resolution, which urges Member States and United Nations entities, to ensure women’s full and meaningful inclusion and participation in peace talks and transitional justice.

Welcoming the resolution the UN Women Executive Director stated that: *“this resolution puts the onus on all of us – the Security Council, the United Nations, regional organisations and Member States – to create the space and provide seats at the peace table for women. I am committed to working with all of you so that we can see better results”.*

### ***More information on women’s efforts for peace and security:***

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/open-debate-on-women-peace-and-security-2013>

## ***X. Many Languages, One World***

This Student Essay Contest entitled “**Many Languages, One World**” was launched on 14 October at the UN Headquarters in New York with a signing ceremony between the UN Department of Public Information and the ELS Educational Services.

The United Nations is asking college and university students to write an essay (2000 words or less) in which they explore how multilingual ability will benefit global citizenship and understanding. The essay should reflect the student’s academic, cultural, and national context; it should be written in one of the 6 UN official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish), and *not* in the entrant’s mother tongue.

Submission deadline: 21<sup>st</sup> February 2014. A panel of international judges will select ten top winners in each language category. The winners will be invited to New York by the ELS to participate in a series of events in June 2014, including a youth forum on 27 June, preceding the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN Charter. For further information go to <http://www.els.edu/en/ManyLanguagesOneWorld>

## ***XI. United Nations High Level Forum on the Culture of Peace September 2013***

*This article was written by Lesley Vann, Good News Agency's Publisher Representative to the UNDPI, and included here with Lesley's kind permission*

On Friday 6 September 2013, in the Trusteeship Council Chamber of the United Nations, New York, the long-awaited High Level Forum on the Culture of Peace took place. The event, the second High Level Forum of its kind, included speakers from around the globe, speaking also to an international audience, while broadcast live on UN TV, and now archived, with ongoing access. The Culture of Peace initiative, examined from diverse perspectives over the course of the day, underscored how vital global civil society has become, in shaping and working to implement a true Culture of Peace around the globe.

This event was convened by H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremić, President of the General Assembly, presenting a call to action for the day, and citing the importance of the work undertaken. He quoted the visionary words of Dag Hammarskjöld, emphasizing the importance of involving youth and children in crafting a Culture of Peace, and its effects, a more peaceful, just and sustainable world. Mr. Jeremić then introduced H.E. Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General of United Nations, who added to the theme of the vision, the role of civil society in advancing peace, and the central role of children and youth.

Keynote addresses were then given by His Holiness, Patriarch Irinej of Serbia, Dr. Sayyid M. Syeed, National Director, Office for Interfaith and Community Alliances, Islamic Society Of North America, Elie Abadie, M.D., Rabbi, The Edmond J. Safra Synagogue (via video message).

Following these Keynote addresses were High Level Segments, featuring H.E. Dipu Moni the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, and H.E. Anwarul K. Chowdhury, Chair of the UN General Assembly's drafting committee for the UN Declaration and Programme of Action on Culture of Peace (1998-99) representing civil society & The Global Movement for The Culture of Peace. In his subsequent interview with the Inter Press Service, Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury of Bangladesh told IPS, "My own perception and experience will not let me say that the U.N.'s message on the culture of peace is failing to get across." Civil society worldwide has been in the forefront of the global movement for the culture of peace, working diligently and patiently at the grassroots level, he said. The interdependence of today's world, if not addressed with sanity, he said, can turn into a social, economic, nuclear or environmental catastrophe. "The magnitude of these problems requires all human beings to work together in finding new, workable, realistic solutions," said the Ambassador.

And the values of non-violence, tolerance and democracy, which augment the flourishing of the culture of peace, will generate the mindset that is a prerequisite for the transition from force to reason, from conflict and violence to dialogue and peace, he continued. "This I have seen first hand as my work took me to the farthest corners of the world," Ambassador Chowdhury noted. "What I have seen has outraged me but also has given me hope and encouragement that there are forces who are determined to turn our planet into a livable place for all and where human dignity has taken strong roots."

Following these High Level Segments were Interactive Panel Discussions. The first of these was, "The Role of Interfaith Cooperation in Promoting a Global Culture of Peace." This was moderated by Dr. John O. Voll, of Georgetown University. The panel members included Rev. Dr. Katherine R. Henderson, President, Auburn Seminary, Matthew Hodes, Director, United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, Dr. William F. Vendley,

Secretary General, Religions for Peace, Hüseyin Hürmalı, Chief Administrative Officer, Journalists and Writers Foundation.

The next interactive Panel discussion considered, “The Culture of Peace as the Agenda for a New Global Civilization: Where are we now?” Moderated by H.E. Joy Ogwu, Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the UN, this panel featured panelists from a broad range of disciplines and locations. These are H.E. Abul Kalam Azad, the Minister of Cultural Affairs of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, Lakshmi Puri the Deputy Executive Director for Intergovernmental Support and Strategic Partnerships, UN Women; Azim Khamisa, Founder, The Tariq Khamisa Foundation, Tiffany Easthom, Country Director for South Sudan, Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP), Grace Akallo, Founder and Executive Director, United Africans for Women and Children Rights (UAWCR).

A musical interlude followed, with Shinji Harada, Hiroshima Peace Culture Ambassador, allowing the notes of culture and the arts to permeate the meeting, and signify peace.

The third and final Interactive Panel Discussion addressed, “Strategy for Advancing the Implementation of the UN Programme of Action on Culture of Peace: What are Needed?” This Panel was moderated by H.E. Carlos Enrique García González, Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the UN, and included these panelists: H.E. Federico Mayor, President, Foundation Culture of Peace, Dr. Nancy Roof, Founder, Kosmos Journal: The Journal for World Citizens Creating the New Civilization, Mikiko Otani, International Human Rights Lawyer, Abigail E. Disney, Filmmaker, President, Fork Films, Patricia Smith Melton, Founder, Peace X Peace.

The culmination of this High Level Forum at UN Headquarters inaugurates the next turn of the spiral of work toward a Culture of Peace, with civil society organizations and actors at the pinnacle of transformative global social change. As Ambassador Chowdhury has stated, "We should not forget that when...people...are marginalized, there is little chance for an open and participatory society." In his role as the leading UN Culture of Peace emissary, he said that peace efforts would continually fail until people embraced humanity's oneness. Ambassador Chowdhury’s words, and the Culture of Peace work he has championed in tandem with broad global civil society and the United Nations, now challenge our world community to take constructive and bold visionary action to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

For more information, see also:

<http://www.gmcop.org/> “Global Movement for the Culture of Peace”

GMCoP is a civil society initiative advocating and networking to build and to promote the Culture of Peace at the global, national, regional, as well as at the societal, communal and individual level through the full and effective implementation of the United Nations Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (A/RES/53/243) unanimously adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1999. For this, their inspiration and determination is founded on the shared reality that we are one interdependent human family belonging to Planet Earth.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/gmcop/>

[www.un.org](http://www.un.org)

Links to the webcast of the HLF:

Part 1: <http://webtv.un.org/watch/part-1-high-level-forum-on-the-culture-of-peace-general-assembly/2654048297001/>

Part 2: <http://webtv.un.org/watch/part-2-high-level-forum-on-the-culture-of-peace-general-assembly/2654246996001/>

Part 3: <http://webtv.un.org/watch/part-3-high-level-forum-on-the-culture-of-peace-general-assembly/2654598620001/>

Part 4: <http://webtv.un.org/watch/part-4-high-level-forum-on-the-culture-of-peace-general-assembly/2654674147001/>  
<http://www.un.org/en/ga/president/67/issues/pdf/Culture%20of%20Peace%20Draft%20Programme%20-%2030.08.pdf>  
<https://www.facebook.com/UNDPINGOsPartners4Change>  
[http://www.peacethroughunity.info/COPbriefingUN2012\\_Gita.html](http://www.peacethroughunity.info/COPbriefingUN2012_Gita.html)  
[http://www.peacethroughunity.info/culture\\_ofpeace.html](http://www.peacethroughunity.info/culture_ofpeace.html)  
[http://www.fundculturadepaz.org/spa/DOCUMENTOS/Report\\_on\\_the\\_Decade\\_for\\_a\\_Culture\\_of\\_Peace.pdf](http://www.fundculturadepaz.org/spa/DOCUMENTOS/Report_on_the_Decade_for_a_Culture_of_Peace.pdf)  
<http://www.wiser.org/article/1f03035cb484340d0270c919d1fe6cca>  
[http://www.pathwaystopace.org/documents/idp\\_essaycontest.pdf](http://www.pathwaystopace.org/documents/idp_essaycontest.pdf)  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anwarul\\_Karim\\_Chowdhury](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anwarul_Karim_Chowdhury)  
[www.goodnewsagency.org](http://www.goodnewsagency.org)

## ***XII. Sustainable Energy For All***

On the 23 October a new global centre – the *Energy Efficiency Hub* - was opened by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in the ‘UN City’ in Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark. The Energy Efficiency Hub (EE Hub) will form part of the Sustainable Energy for All initiative, launched in September 2011 and aims to be at the centre of efforts to double energy efficiency by 2030. Created by the Danish Government, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Technical University of Denmark, the EE Hub will facilitate efforts by governments, development banks, the private sector and civil society on efficiency and become a ‘one-stop shop for information, expertise and collaboration opportunities for Energy Efficiency stakeholders’ – with a special focus on supporting developing countries.

At the climate finance meeting with the Danish Government and large institutional investors, such as the pension funds and insurance companies, Ban Ki-moon spoke of climate financing as an investment in the future, which ‘*must not be taken hostage by short-term budget constraints or profit considerations*’. He also acknowledged the participants’ openness to commit themselves to working together with the international community, and the United Nations on reducing the carbon footprint of their investments.

Ban Ki-moon drew attention to the forthcoming Climate Summit, which will be convened at the UN Headquarters in New York, September 2014. Here governments, business, finance and civil society leaders will discuss climate change and sustainable development issues. <http://climate-l.iisd.org/news/un-secretary-general-launches-se4all-energy-efficiency-hub/>

### **The UN City in Copenhagen:**

Inspired by the 2000 Millennium Summit concern to making the UN more efficient and coherent, the Danish Government considered how it might be able to move the eight UN agencies based in Copenhagen into one single compound. Having all agencies under one roof would make not only economic sense, but also facilitate the cooperation on substance among the agencies and provide opportunity for the UN agencies ‘*to consider the enhanced options for coordinated work within human resources, common procurement, joint tender committees, share support staff, joint information programmes, and more fundamentally a merging of all parallel functions of the same nature*’.

<http://un.dk/en/node/17>

On 4 July 2013 the UN City was officially opened by the UN Secretary-General, Her Majesty the Queen of Denmark and the Danish Prime Minister, Ms Helle Thorning-Schmidt, who said that: *“the United Nations represents a vision of a world order based on peace, joint-prosperity, rule of law and respect for human rights. A world order that Denmark wants to support, strengthen and expand”*.

In 2012 the building won the EU Commission’s ‘GreenBuilding’ Award.

<https://www.unops.org/english/whatwedo/news/Pages/Secretary-General-opens-UN-City-in-Copenhagen.aspx>

***XIII. A Thousand Hills to Heaven:  
Love, Hope and a Restaurant in Rwanda***

*By Josh Ruxin*

The blurb on this new publication (by Little Brown and Company) describes it as part memoir, part history lesson, and *‘part discourse on how to make a public health project work using business standards’* in Rwanda.

Ruxin, a Fulbright scholar and public health activist, and his wife, Alissa, also trained in public health, arrived in Rwanda 2005 with the aim to create health facilities which would effectively help to address the many urgent needs for medical assistance, such as AIDS, TB, malaria and malnourishment. When Ruxin received the Rwandan Government’s approval for his Millennium Village Project, the young couple found themselves situated in the area of Mayange, described as *‘a five-village cluster of dust and despair, lacking in any sense of community’*.

It was here in Mayange that a team of health experts, organizers, agronomists, and others together with the villagers helped the ‘cluster of dust and despair’ become an alive and vibrant community and a ‘productive model’ for other locations to replicate. And it was here Alissa had the inspired idea of creating a restaurant called ‘Heaven’.

In his empowering book Ruxin describes the journey from the depth of destruction to ‘Heaven’: *‘the regeneration of this remarkable country, ultimately revealing the healing power of forgiveness and hope’*.

“A Thousand Hills to Heaven: Love, Hope, and a Restaurant in Rwanda” was released 5 November this year and will make a wonderful gift for friends.

<http://www.publishersweekly.com/978-0-316-23291-3>

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***“Can there be anything more beautiful than  
the road for the foundation,  
the stronghold of the Teaching of Life  
The Star is guiding.  
Walk unwaveringly!”***

*Agni Yoga*

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#### *XIV. 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.