

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. LIGHT - Editorial**
- II. A LIVING THING IS BORN**
- III. BREAKING WALLS**
- IV. 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD – 20 November 2014**
- V. I BELONG – Campaign to end statelessness**
- VI. NURTURING A SAFE PLACE FOR DIALOGUE**
- VII. THE ROAD TO DIGNITY BY 2030**
- VIII. CLIMATE CONFERENCE – LIMA**
- IX. FIFTH ASSESSMENT REPORT – by International Panel on Climate Change**
- X. INTERNATIONAL DAY OF HUMAN RIGHTS 2014**
- XI. CULTURE OF PEACE**
- XII. THE ALEPPO PROJECT**
- XIII. UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE DAY**
- XIV. THE GREAT INVOCATION**

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I. Light

When the tension within the mother's womb reaches its peak the Child will make its way into a new environment in which Light reveals a world of a multitude of differentiations, continuously communicating and interacting with one another. Here the child will develop its inherent creative faculties; desires and dreams will attract the individual to group action toward common goals. Through rises and falls of many civilizations knowledge and insight have been accumulating and will be leading to the expansion of our horizons ever further and deeper into space, within and outside ourselves.

In December 2013 the UN General Assembly proclaimed 2015 as the International Year of Light and Light-based technologies (IYL2015). This was the initiative of a large range of scientific bodies which, in cooperation with UNESCO, aim to “*raise global awareness of the ways in which light-based technologies promote sustainable development and offer solutions to global challenges in the fields of energy, education, agriculture and health*”. (www.light2015.org) (www.eps.org/light2015). New Zealand born scientist, John Dudley, Chairman of IYL2015 steering committee, stresses that the year will provide a ‘*tremendous opportunity to ensure that policymakers are made aware of the problem-solving potential of light technology*’. The year will also remind us all of past scientific milestones which have led to today's findings and enhanced our understanding of the universe. And a series of forums will be organised in which engineers, artists, poets, as well as ‘all others inspired by light’ can share and discuss how light has influenced their lives and work.

Among the most significant milestones within light-science is Arno Penzias and Robert Woodrow Wilson's discovery (in 1965) of the Cosmic Microwave Background Radiation (CMB). This, the ‘*oldest light in our Universe, imprinted on the sky when the Universe was just 380,000 years old*’, has enabled scientists to detect what is believed to hold the ‘seeds’ to all structures throughout Cosmos.

As John Dudley suggests, this may be a good time for considering how ‘*the problem-solving potential of light technology*’ can help heal and restore relationships between members of the human species, with the many other lives co-habiting the Earth - and perhaps even living beings in Space? Stressing the ‘gift’ of conscious communication, John Mather (2006 Nobel Laureate for discovery of the blackbody form and anisotropy of the CMB) says: ‘*Light gives us life through photosynthesis, lets us see back in time towards that cosmic big bang, and helps us communicate with the other sentient beings here on earth*’, adding: ‘*...and, should we find any, perhaps those in outer space as well*’.

When the Astronauts broke through the boundaries of the Earth's atmosphere and landed on the moon, yet another dimension was acquired within which humanity will learn about, deepen and widen relationships. Looking back from the barren moon and seeing the blue sphere of their Mother, the Earth, from space, the astronauts shared their deep sense of wonder and gratitude while also testifying to the gaping wounds and lifeless areas caused by reckless pursuits and disregard for other forms of life

Many thinkers, philosophers and scientists have through the ages spoken of an Intelligence, described by Albert Einstein as of ‘*such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection*’. Einstein also spoke of the ideals which ‘*lighted*’ his way and gave him the courage to face life cheerfully as being ‘*Kindness, Beauty and Truth*’.

However much knowledge is obtained, it will be these Heart qualities which will open the door to the Supreme Intelligence – the Source of Light and Love, of Life and Truth – which permeates *All*.

II. A Living Thing is Born

by Rene Wadlow, President, Association of World Citizens

“A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small States alike.”

(the last of 14 points set out by President Woodrow Wilson in the Allied war aims, January 1918)

15 November marks the anniversary of the first session (in 1920) of the Assembly of the League of Nations. Representatives of 44 States entered La Salle de la Réformation in central Geneva. The Salle had been built originally as a meeting place for Protestant refugees from France and Italy who needed a place of worship and a place for discussions and welfare. In the large hall, there was Léon Bourgeois, the oldest delegate and a long-time French worker for peace. Ignacy Paderewski headed the Polish delegation in a room where he had given piano concerts. There was Lord Robert Cecil, who with Jan Christian Smuts of South Africa was a principle author of the League Covenant. There were delegates from South Africa and India which had “dominion status” but were not yet fully independent.

Significant were the countries not represented: the USA, the USSR, Germany, Austria and Hungary – all of whom had participated in parts of the First World War. Woodrow Wilson had welcomed the birth of the League of Nations. “A living thing is born.” Unfortunately, the League ran into difficulties from the start. The United States refused to join; too long a time elapsed before Germany was admitted or the USSR asked to join. The legacy of the First World War, codified in the Versailles Treaty, upset both the political and economic climate: huge reparations due by Germany, the payment of large debts by the Allies to the US, monetary collapse in several countries and economic protectionism rampant. All this contributed to the Great Depression of the 1930s.

The greatest trouble, however, was the mentality of the officials in national foreign ministries and war offices who were thinking in terms of the balance of power and who could not bring themselves to face new challenges. Nor was there among the general public a sense of global citizenship, of world loyalty which might have influenced government leaders in a more positive direction. Even today, as Brian Urquhart has said of the United Nations: “There has yet to emerge, on the international scene, a great combined popular constituency to insist on the necessity of a respected central order and an orderly process of law and the keeping of peace.” However, there were real contributions of the League to the development of world institutions. The United Nations’ structure is that of the League – only the names have been changed: The League Assembly became the General Assembly; the League Council became the Security Council, and the Mandates Commission became the Trusteeship Council.

A crucial contribution was the creation of an impartial civil service, responsible only to the head of the organization and under the obligation not to accept instructions from any government or outside authority. The League created a high quality staff under the direction of the first Secretary-General, Sir Eric Drummond, who served from the start until 1933.

The League also provided the starting point for future work on refugees, drug control, health and agriculture through its close cooperation with the International Institute of Agriculture set up in Rome. The International Labour Organisation functioned alongside the League, its budget being voted by the League Assembly.

Looking back, we can mark the progress not only of the institutions but also the persons who shape them. A new breed of international civil servants is evolving within world organizations as well as non-governmental organizations active within the UN system to make this earth a true home for humanity. They have dedicated themselves to the same tasks that the League began but left unfinished.

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III. *breaking walls*

breaking walls* Arts Education is a new initiative involving creative writing, poetry, theater and performance for high school students at-risk of not graduating. It seeks to build literacy, critical thinking, and presentation skills as well as focuses teen minds on identity, values and empathy, while exploring issues of social unrest, intolerance, peer pressure and life in a "virtual world". It is currently being employed in several high schools within NYC.

Students enrolled in these schools have been extremely challenged by their family, environmental and economic conditions, and have had to develop various coping mechanisms to survive. They have been unable to keep pace with educational requirements of others their own age. ***breaking walls*** helps them get in touch with their feelings, builds understanding, overcome prejudices and work through anger and frustrations.

Last spring in connection with this program, Operation Peace Through Unity (OPTU) representative Iris Spellings was invited by Fran Tarr, ***breaking walls***' founder, to speak at Independence High School on the Culture of Peace and OPTU 's work with Global Movement for the Culture of Peace (GMCoP) <http://www.gmcop.org> at the United Nations. This was in connection with one of ***breaking walls***' semester programs on empathy.

Ms. Spellings' introduction to and explanation of the Global Movement to the Culture of Peace's ideas and ideals triggered a thought-provoking discussion; and, inspired moving post-discussion writing. We are pleased to share one example written by Victoria Middleton:

I want my words to speak out, tell the truth and stand out
I want my words to hurt, make you think and let you know
I want my words to heal the pain, make you listen and let you know I care
I want my words to make you feel the pain, make you want and to become
I want my words to make people love one another, make you dislike me and have
meaning.

I want my words to reach others as their words reach me. Communication is key in a
Culture of Peace.

Building on Ms. Spellings' introduction to the Culture of Peace, ten NYCDOE high school students involved in ***breaking walls*** Arts Education initiatives participated in the *United Nations High Level Forum on the Culture of Peace* on September 9, 2014. As guests of Ambassador Anwarul Chowdury and GMCoP, these young men and women were present for the opening remarks; crafted and signed their own Culture of

Peacebuilders Statement**); and, finally created a video in support of youth involvement on The 2014 International Day of Peace.

breaking walls Arts Education Initiative looks forward to an ongoing partnership with the Global Movement for the Culture of Peace, and its amazing possibilities for youth everywhere!

* **breaking walls**, a non-profit, international creative writing and performance initiative, empowers youth to discover their voice, and offers them a platform on which to use it. **breaking walls** relies on partners, sponsors, mentors, volunteers and friends to engage and support young people as they become creative artists and empathetic leaders of tomorrow who actively advance personal transformation and social change on the global stage and within their home communities.

At **breaking walls** our artists are our writer-performers, and our ambassadors are youth facilitators who were once artists themselves. Each **breaking walls** artist and ambassador is a part of a forum where young voices are creatively represented and nurtured on the path to leadership. <http://breakingwallsprogram.org>

* * **Brooklyn 2014 Culture of Peacebuilders**

We, the Brooklyn 2014 Culture of Peacebuilders, declare our dedication to bringing a sense of hope to our neighborhoods and community by setting a positive, personal example by:

- ! Sharing positive information and knowledge with younger children and our peers;
- ! Providing positive guidance, inspiration and aspirations for younger children and our peers;
- ! Creating a culture of Up-Standers Not By-Standers to take a stand against the bullying of younger children and our peers;
- ! Creating a rallying cry among younger children and our peers of “If you’re smart—act smart”.

Signed on this day, the 9th of September 2014:

Jabari Ashe, Catherine Jacobs, Shanna Campbell Packer, Carleesha Best, Shatera Scott, Jennifer Peters, Kyonna Pelote, Kahill Stephens, Jajuan McDonald

IV. 25th Anniversary of the Convention of the Rights of the Child 20 November 2014

The recognition that children have special social, health and cultural rights of their own led to the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (20 November 1989) which subsequently was adopted by almost every nation, with the exception of Somalia, South Sudan and the United States.

On the 20 November the United Nations held a high-level meeting to celebrate the achievements of this landmark treaty and also to recognize the many disparities and shortcomings that urgently must be addressed with regard to the well-being of all children. Acknowledging the Convention as a collective commitment to the rights of every child in the world, the UN General Assembly President, Sam Kutesa, called on all

Member States to safeguard that these rights be fully reflected in the post-2015 development agenda. We must, said the President, “*continue investing in the rights of all children across the world – no matter their gender, ethnicity, race, disability or economic status*”.

UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Executive Director, Anthony Lake, stressed that while millions more children are surviving past their 5th birthday, the lives of some 17,000 children that die daily, mostly due to preventable causes will not be better! Mr. Lake also noted that, too often progress regarding the well-being of children is measured through national statistical averages, but ‘*averages don’t capture every life or see the children being left behind in today’s turbulent times*’.

Although the humanitarian community may feel it is losing ground in today’s escalating emergencies, the ground that is gained should be recognized and even celebrated ‘*as those small and individual wins are ultimately the primary concern*’, he said and added: “*It is our job, our responsibility, our obligation under the Convention to show every child the best of humanity: cooperation, not conflict; humanity, not hatred; reconciliation, not revenge.*”!

Among other speakers were UN Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Ivan Simonovic, who urged that the time has come to bring children and their rights more centrally into our peace, security and development goals, and added: ‘*Our future in these areas depends on our children and on our respect for their rights*’.

Other speakers highlighted specific and serious aspects of the Rights of Children, such as: Children and Armed Conflict; Violence against Children; the Sale of Children; Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. And in the morning of this day a high-level panel discussion on the Convention had been organized by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=49398#.VHqF3MIcS70>

http://www.unicef.org/media/media_76447.html

“The health and the soul and the intelligence of a society are measured by how the human rights of its youngest – its smallest children – are recognized everywhere,”

Anthony Lake, UNICEF

In 1988 UNICEF established a global Office of Research (in Florence) with the main objective of improving international understanding of issues relating to children’s rights, and to help facilitate full implementation worldwide of the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

“Through strengthening research partnerships with leading academic institutions and development networks in both the North and South, the Office of Research seeks to leverage additional resources and influence in support of efforts towards policy reform in favour of children.”

Each year the Office publishes summaries of the papers considered to be of particular interest. <http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/742/#pdf>

A 10 year global campaign to end statelessness

This global campaign to end statelessness was launched on 4 November 2014, the 60th anniversary of the *UN Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons* and also the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. Acknowledging some signs of progress and a real ‘shift’ in attitudes around statelessness, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Gutierrez, stressed that ‘new risks have emerged with the growing number of major conflicts’, mentioning in particular the wars raging in Central African Republic and Syria which have forced millions of people into becoming people without a country. There are still at least 10 million stateless people in the world today and ‘*a baby is born stateless every ten minutes*’, he said.

A Special Report, entitled “Ending Statelessness within 10 Years” was also released which highlights the human impact of this “*form of punishment more primitive than torture*” as US Supreme Court Chief Justice, Earl Warren, in 1958 described this soul-destroying state and statelessness. The report further outlines a 10-point *Global Action Plan to End Statelessness*. (http://unhcr.org/statelesscampaign2014/Stateless-Report_eng_final3.pdf).

The campaign will also aim to raise awareness and encourage practical responses through a series of dialogues with stateless people and to bring together policymakers, international organizations, NGOs, and academics in a First Global Forum on Statelessness, to discuss and tackle some of the most urgent statelessness situations around the world. (<http://unhcr.org/stateless2014/>)

The Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, adopted on 28 September 1954, defines a ‘stateless person’ as someone “*who is not considered as a national by any State under operation of its law*”.

The Convention requires that stateless persons have the same right as citizens ‘*with respect to freedom of religion and education of their children*’. It also mentions other rights, such as the right of association, to employment and housing. These rights however exclude individuals who are believed to have committed a ‘*crime against peace, a war crime, a crime against humanity, or a serious nonpolitical crime abroad*’.
<http://www.unhcr.org/3bbb25729.html>

The **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**, was established to assist stateless refugees and ‘*to identify, prevent, and reduce statelessness*’. But while millions of people around the world are today becoming stateless or already facing the plight of statelessness, too few States are parties to this important instrument. The High Commissioner is calling for the eradication of statelessness by 2024 with UNHCR increasing its efforts to ‘*encourage States to accede to both statelessness treaties*’. www.refworld.org/statelessness.html.

VI. Nurturing a Safe Place for Dialogue

The Rwanda based non-governmental organization **Shalom Educating For Peace (SEP)** is working for ‘*building and sustaining positive peace through education*’. The organisation’s objectives are:

- ! Educating for peace;
- ! Researching for peace, and
- ! Cultivating the culture on non-violence

Shalom meets with members of communities, mainly within the Great Lakes region, to *'draw out the stories and conversations that would lead to more deeply understanding and accepting of one another'* and reminding us of our shared humanity.

In their recent newsletter, SEP intern, Michelle Aldridge, tells about her experience as the facilitator of a workshop in Rulindo on the important question: *'how can we create a safe space for honest community dialogue?'* The ongoing community dialogues in Rulindo represent people who are either the victims or the perpetrators of genocide, as well as people not directly affected.

On arrival at Rulindo, Jean de Dieu, SEP co-founder, suggested that everyone work together to cut down the weeds that was covering the peace pole and to help each other make the area around the peace pole look nice and welcoming for all who would be participating in the community dialogue. It seemed to Michelle that this cooperative preparation of the meeting place played an important role in creating the atmosphere, the feeling of a 'safe space' in which an honest community dialogue could take place.

However, a safe space is not merely 'a physical or symbolic location', says Michelle; some ground rules are also needed, such as mutual respect, honesty, active listening - and empathy. <http://www.shalomeducatingforpeace.org/>

VII. The Road to Dignity by 2030

Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet

On 4 December the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon presented his *Synthesis Report* which the General Assembly had asked to have in hand before the end of the year and contribute to the intergovernmental negotiations before the Summit. We have, said Ban Ki-moon, *'a historic opportunity and duty to act, boldly, vigorously and expeditiously, to turn reality into a life of dignity for all, leaving no one behind'*.

With its 17 goals and 169 targets, this report (available by 31 December in all 6 UN languages) will aim to guide the negotiations towards agreement on a new global agenda, *'centred on people and the planet, and underpinned by human rights'*.

http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5527SR_advance%20unedited_final.pdf and <http://outreach.un.org/ngorelations>

Through widespread consultations and 'global conversation' people throughout the world have had the opportunity to participate in the formulation of these goals, such as *'A Million Voices: The World We Want, Delivering on the Post-2015 Agenda; the Global Youth Call* and the 65th Annual UN DP/NGO Conference *'2015 and Beyond'*.

The report also acknowledges the contribution by the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development, who called for 5 *transformative shifts*, that would leave no one behind:

- 1) ending extreme poverty;
- 2) placing sustainable development at the core;
- 3) transforming economies for decent jobs and inclusive growth,
- 4) building peaceful societies, as well as open, transparent, accountable governance;
- 5) forging a new global partnership for sustainable development.

Since the Rio+20 conference in 2012 we have indeed come a long way ‘in shaping a development agenda for the period beyond 2015’ said the Secretary-General. “In two short years, Member States, the UN system, experts, a cross-section of civil society, business and millions of people from all corners of the globe have come together with creativity and a shared sense of purpose.”

In the *Road to Dignity by 2030* report, Ban Ki-moon offers an integrated set of ‘Essential Elements’, stressing that these are not intended to replace the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), but instead aim to offer ‘some conceptual guidance for the work ahead’:

1st element: *dignity, an essential element for human development, encompassing the fight against poverty and inequality;*

2nd element: *millions of people, especially women and children, remain excluded from full participation in society. We must finish the work of the Millennium Development Goals;*

3rd element: *prosperity, we must develop a strong and inclusive and transformative global economy.*

4th element: *our planet, we have an urgent duty to address climate changes and protect our ecosystems, for ourselves and our children;*

5th element: *justice, to build safe and peaceful societies, and strong institutions.*

These 5 elements conclude with a final element: **partnership** – *because this agenda will be built on a foundation of global cooperation and solidarity.*

These elements draw strength from each other, and each is an integral part of the whole, said the UN Secretary-General.

Under the heading: *Together in a Universal Compact*, the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon ends his report by asking that transformation be our common aim: *If the global community does not exercise national and international leadership in the service of our peoples, we risk further fragmentation, impunity and strife, endangering both the planet itself as well as a future of peace, sustainable development and respect of human rights.* We must, he said, change old mindsets, behaviours, and destructive patterns, and more fully *embrace the integrated essential elements of Dignity, People, Prosperity, Planet, Justice and Partnership.*

The post-2015 development agenda will be launched at the Summit in September 2015

<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015>

http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5527SR_advance%20unedited_final.pdf

Call for civil society responses to Ban Ki-moon’s Synthesis Report on the Post-2015 Agenda:

The UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS) as well as the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs Division for Sustainable Development (UNDESA-DSD) are inviting civil society stakeholders and Major Groups to submit their official responses to the UN Secretary-General’s Synthesis Report.

For further information: <http://bit.ly/Submit-CSO-Response-SG-Synthesis>
<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/account.php?menu=1486>

VIII. Climate Conference – Lima

The UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC) held in Lima and attended by 196 Parties, concluded on 14 December on a positive note after having overcome some difficult hurdles. Running 33 hours over time, the countries came to an agreement on a four page document (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2014/cop20/eng/l14.pdf>). This document will in turn pave the way for the deliberations in Paris and the adoption of a *universal and meaningful agreement in 2015*.

UNFCCC Executive Secretary, Christiana Figueres acknowledged that the two-week conference had been *very, very challenging* but also praised the achievement of agreements on a range of key decisions, as well as the launch of the action agendas, including *how to better scale up and finance adaptation, alongside actions on forests and education*.

In a letter to Peru's Minister of the environment, Manuel Pulgar Vidal, who led the Lima discussions, Pope Francis urged all the delegates to overcome all divisions and to agree on a strong deal to tackle climate change, adding: *We can find solutions only if we act together and agree*. A statement by nine Catholic bishops from five countries in four continents, pointed out that humankind is ordained to live in equity, justice and dignity, peace and harmony in the midst of the order of Creation, and that

Humanity is ordered to treat respectfully Creation, which has a value in itself
<http://www.rtcc.org/2014/12/12/pope-francis-urges-progress-at-lima-climate->

IX. Fifth Assessment Report

***By
the International Panel on Climate Change***

The text of this Synthesis Report is considered the most comprehensive assessment of climate change yet undertaken. It contains the findings of the three working groups to the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)**, produced by hundreds of scientists, assessing

- ! the physical scientific aspects of the climate system and climate change;
- ! the vulnerability of socio-economic and natural systems to climate change, negative and positive consequences of climate change, and options for adapting to it; and
- ! options for mitigating climate change through limiting or preventing greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing activities that remove them from the atmosphere.

A shorter version of this Report: *Summary for Policymakers* follows the structure of the full Report with the headings,

Observed changes and their causes;

Future climate change, risks and impacts;

*Future pathways for adaptation, mitigation and sustainable development; and
Adaptation and mitigation*

Among the observed changes and their causes mentioned in the report are:

- human influence on the climate system is clear and these climate changes have had widespread impacts on human and natural systems;
- warming of the climate system is unequivocal – and many observed changes are *'unprecedented over decades to millennia'*;

- anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions have increased ... and led
- to atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide that are unprecedented in at least the last 800,000 years
- continued emission of greenhouse gases will cause further warming and long-lasting changes in all components of the climate system, increasing the likelihood of severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts for people and ecosystems.
- The risks of abrupt or irreversible changes increase as the magnitude of the warming increases.

The report points out that: *Behaviour, lifestyle and culture have a considerable influence on energy use and associated emissions, with high mitigation potential in some sectors, in particular when complementing technological and structural change. Emissions can be substantially lowered through changes in consumption patterns, adoption of energy saving measures, dietary change and reduction in food wastes*

It concludes with the following statement: *Strategies and actions can be pursued now which will move towards climate-resilient pathways for sustainable development, while at the same time helping to improve livelihoods, social and economic well-being, and effective environmental management. In some cases, economic diversification can be an important element of such strategies.*

The effectiveness of integrated responses can be enhanced by relevant tools, suitable governance structures, and adequate institutional and human capacity.

Integrated responses are especially relevant to energy planning and implementation; interactions among water, food, energy and biological carbon sequestration; and urban planning, which provides substantial opportunities for enhanced resilience, reduced emissions and more sustainable development. <http://www.ipcc-syr.nl/>
http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/syr/SYR_AR5_SPMcorr1.pdf

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change dedicated their Fifth Assessment Report to the memory of **Stephen H. Schneider**: *one of the foremost climate scientists of our time, who had been closely involved in IPCC work since 1990 and who would at all times remain intrepid and forthright in expressing his views, his conviction always driven by the strength of his outstanding scientific expertise.*

Stephen Schneider's knowledge was a rare synthesis of several disciplines which are an essential part of the diversity inherent in climate science

* IPCC, is the leading international/intergovernmental body (under the auspices of the UN) for the assessment of climate change, established in 1988 by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)

X. International Day of Human Rights

10 December 2014

- The power of ideas to change the world -

In his statement for the Day the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said: *"the power of the Universal Declaration is the power of ideas to change the world."* Human Rights are essential and indivisible each and every day of every year, he stressed, and are the rights of people of *'every colour, from every race and ethnic group; whether or not they have disabilities; citizens or migrants; no matter their sex, their class, their caste, their creed, their age or sexual orientation'*.

Also referring to the 2014 theme: *'Human Rights 365'*, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed that on this day we, all of us, must speak out and declare that human rights are for each and all – *all* the time. Violations of human rights are more than personal tragedies, he declared; they are 'alarm bells that may warn of a much bigger crisis'. The United Nations Human Rights up Front initiative is dedicated to heed these alarms and will aim to rally in response to such violations *'before they degenerate into mass atrocities or war crimes'*.

Ban Ki-moon called on all States to honour their obligation to protect human rights, every day of the year and on people everywhere to hold their Governments to account.

International Decade for People of African Descent:

This year's Human Rights Day also marked the beginning of the International Decade for People of African Descent and the two were linked through a commemoration hosted by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), held in the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture*, Harlem, New York.

Speaking at this event UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson expressed his deep appreciation of the Center as a 'repository of history in the centre of Harlem for more than 100 years'. He also acknowledged with gratitude the long-time partnership between the Center and the United Nations in projects on ending racial discrimination and remembering past atrocities against humanity.

Referring to the coming Decade of People of African Descent, Jan Eliasson pointed to the important role that the Center could play as a catalyst for spreading information that could lead to greater understanding and awareness of the plight of people of African descent.

On the 23 December 2013 the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution which proclaimed the International Decade for People of African Descent, to begin 1st January 2015 and conclude on 31 December 2024. The theme: ***People of African Descent: recognition, justice and development.***

On the 10 December the UN General Assembly President, Sam Kutesa officially acknowledged the launching of the Decade of People of African Descent which will allow people everywhere to explore the many challenges that people of African descent are faced with *'due to pervasive racism and racial discrimination engrained in our society today'*.

<http://www.un.org/en/events/africandescentdecade/index.shtml>

<http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=A/RES/68/237>

* *The Schomburg Center was established in Harlem in 1905 as a research library and an archive repository for information on people of African descent worldwide.*

***"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights":
'in perhaps the most resonant and beautiful words of any international agreement, the
Universal Declaration of Human Rights promises, to all, the economic, social, political,
cultural and civil rights that underpin a life free from want and fear.'***

Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein

XI. Culture of Peace ***Tolerance – Respect – Love***

On the 15 December the UN General Assembly met to consider the UN Secretary-General's report on the culture of peace (document [A/69/413](#)). The Assembly also adopted the resolution entitled: *“Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace” (L.34)*. This resolution was introduced by the representative of Bangladesh, who stressed the urgent need for the creation of a mind-set of tolerance, respect and love.

The resolution asks that the UN peacebuilding architecture will continue to promote all peacebuilding activities and efforts on country level. It further urges that ‘age-appropriate’ education will be provided in schools at all levels, which will enable the building of tolerance, mutual understanding, and respectfulness of human rights. It calls on the involvement of media in promoting a culture of peace and non-violence.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said that education was more than cognition and knowledge; it was also about *‘instilling and nurturing human values and skills such as empathy, non-judgement, active listening, non-violence communication and collaborative negotiation’*.

The representative of Kazakhstan said that the work at the global level *‘could be achieved through individual efforts of Member States’*, and mentioned his country's *‘unique mechanism of interethnic and interfaith dialogue’*, known as the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan. This assembly brings together some 130 ethnic groups and almost 20 different religious denominations.

The UN Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace can be read at www.un.org/Docs/asp/ws.asp?m=A/RES/53/243

XII. The Aleppo Project ***By Tamilla Dauletbayeva***

I was lucky and privileged to meet Gita and active community of Whanganui during one of their lunches. After hearing lots of interesting stories of people who came to that lunch in June 2014 I had a chance to talk about my internship with the United Nations Association New Zealand and the project I am involved in in Budapest, Hungary.

I study at the Central European University in Budapest, in the School of Public Policy. As an option we can choose not to write a MA thesis but we have to complete what is called a "Passion Project". We are a team of three graduate students, me from Kazakhstan, Yuxin from China and Attila is from Hungary.

We are working with Syrian refugees from Aleppo living in Istanbul, Gaziantep, some in Germany, some in France, UK and other big cities where they are many in numbers.

The project we are working on is on mapping of Aleppo in conjunction with the Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation in New York.

The aim of the project is to gather data from a group of Aleppo residents from various ethnic, religious, socio-economic backgrounds. With the help of data we will be able to create digital maps, which will help to repair damaged infrastructure, help rebuild

destroyed public buildings, houses, etc. involving people in rebuilding their own homes and communities.

What we also hope to achieve is to allow people to talk about what they remember about Aleppo, their memory of the city and what they envision its future might be like when the war is hopefully over.

We have developed a survey asking about 20 questions about these topics. We try to get in touch with as many Syrians from Aleppo as we can and get their take on the project, listen to their insights, opinions, suggestions, advice and needs.

Currently we are at this stage of our project when we need to collect as much information about destruction in Aleppo (houses, schools, hospitals, cultural and historical sights). We need to find out how do they imagine the best way to reconstruct their cities, villages, and communities. This is really a very practical project to help people somehow to be heard, allow sometimes voiceless populations have a say in policy making, incorporate their immediate needs if they sometime in the future would want to go back to their homes.

For more information please visit website of the Center for Conflict, Reconstruction and Recovery - <http://ccnr.ceu.hu/future-syrian-cities>

For updates about the project and the School of Public Policy - <http://spp.ceu.hu/article/2014-11-27/spp-passion-project-team-develops-aleppo-reconstruction-plan>

Tamilla Dauletbayeva welcomes any comments or cooperation on this project and can be contacted on e-mail: dauletbayeva_tamilla@spp.ceu.hu

XIII. Universal Health Coverage Day Health for All – Everywhere 12.12.14

The 12th December 2014 is the two-year anniversary of the United Nations resolution on Global Health and Foreign Policy adopted 12 December 2012.
<http://universalhealthcoverageday.org/un-resolution/>

On this first **Universal Health Coverage Day** a Coalition of more than 500 organisations worldwide came together in the united resolve to work for the realisation of the pledges made by the UN General Assembly at its 67th Session. ‘*Health is a human right*’, stresses the Global Coalition on its website <http://universalhealthcoverageday.org/un-resolution/> and is a cornerstone of sustainable development and global security: ‘*universal health coverage changes the way that health care is financed and delivered – so it is more equitable and more effective.*’

Lack of affordable, quality health care can trap families and nations in poverty; the recent Ebola outbreak is only one example of the urgent need to strengthen health systems, but to effectively fight such threats ‘*we must reach everyone, everywhere with health care.*’

Health can transform communities, economies and nations, says the Global Coalition: ‘every \$1 that a country invests in health today can produce up to \$20 in full-income growth within a generation’

In his ‘year-end’ press conference the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, summed up a year of *‘discord, disease and disruption’* in which UN peace operations, diplomacy and humanitarian capacities had been pushed to the limit.

‘The year 2015 must be a time for global action’, he declared, and *“the world must keep ambition high to forge a new development agenda and secure a climate change agreement”*. The United Nations itself must continue to adapt itself *‘to a new global landscape’*.

Looking toward the future, the UN Secretary-General said:

“the stars are aligned for the world to take historic action to transform lives and protect the planet”

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.