

Many to Many

A Quarterly Publication

Issued by

**Operation Peace
Through Unity**

Accredited NGO in
association with the UN
Department of Public
Information

“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.

Issue Number 130

March 2015

- I. SEEDS - Editorial**
- II. UPROOTING TERRORISM – countering violent extremism through prevention**
- III. ‘OUR WORLD AT A TURNING POINT’**
- IV. PEACE AND PLANET**
- V. CHIEFS OF DEFENCE CONFERENCE – 27 MARCH 2015**
- VI. THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF IRAQ AND SYRIA - destroyed by human ignorance – rebuilt by human hope**
- VII. UNITED NATIONS ECOSOC YOUTH FORUM – 2-3 February 2015**
- VIII. ‘TURNING SWORDS INTO PLOWSHARES’**
- IX. WATER FOR A SUSTAINABLE WORLD**
- X. ‘GENDER EQUALITY DEMANDS A CONCERTED PUSH’**
- XI. ‘CHANGE IS COMING. CHANGE HAS TO COME.’**
- XII. GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP**
- XIII. 2016 – THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PULSES .**
- XIV. THE GREAT INVOCATION**

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I. Seeds

The word '*climate*' is becoming a concept more generally understood by us all. There is increasing acknowledgement that the many challenges we face could be interlinked and pointing to basic causes they have in common. We are realising that people, neighbourhoods and the planet are enfolded in an atmosphere which contains the sum total of exhausts from the physical, emotional and mental states of health and well-being of us and all other planetary lives. So, although our '*climate*' deliberations can tend to get trapped in hot disputes and attempts to apportion blame elsewhere, we are nevertheless, one way or another, contributing to the general debate regarding our common future. We are in fact becoming increasingly well informed regarding the general states of affairs, and what can, and what urgently needs, to be done.

Today the icy resolves of the past to resist any changes to the status quo are slowly melting in the growing determination to explore healthier and more sustainable ways of life and living. The new millennium is bringing a profound change of season which will, inexorably, release all life from a state of frozen standstill. Spring gales are uncovering all hidden and rigid thought forms, all self-destructive habits and general insensitivities of the past, and warming the soil for new sowing. This is indeed an opportune time for considering and choosing what seeds to sow for future generations to harvest.

In December 2014 the UN General Assembly adopted its first resolution on Evaluation and designated 2015 as the International Year of Evaluation. At the High-level Event of the Evaluation Week (March 2015), UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon acknowledged that evaluation is neither easy nor popular, but: "*it is essential*"; we have a shared responsibility to '*strengthen this important function*', because: "*evaluation everywhere, and at every level, will play a key role in implementing the new development agenda*". The new Report published by the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG)'s, entitled "Evaluation Changes Lives – Realizing Evaluation's Potential to Inform the Global Sustainable Development Goals", focuses on topics such as gender equality, improving public accountability, cutting greenhouse gas emissions and protecting civilians in conflict zones (<http://www.unevaluation.org/>)

Former Assistant Secretary-General, Sir Richard Jolly, recently pointed to what he saw as a significant difference between the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which established consensus on what the development goals for the 21st century should be, and the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which expand and reframe the agendas and policies for the next 15 years: "*The SDGs are universal, which is a major advance*", Sir Richard explained, and "*instead of the North speaking to the South, we're now really recognizing that all countries need to take action for all peoples*". Another fundamental development is, he said, that the SDGs are integrating sustainability and climate change. Based on public responses to the thorough and comprehensive worldwide consultation 17 key sustainable development goals have been formulated which encapsulate our collective vision of how to heal and build a better world for all: "*End Poverty; end hunger; well-being; quality education for all; gender equality; water and sanitation for all; affordable and sustainable energy; decent work for all; technology to benefit all; reduce inequality; safe cities and communities; responsible consumption by all; stop climate change; protect the oceans; take care of the earth; live in peace; and build mechanisms and partnerships to reach the goals*". (<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=50165#.VRtBNclfq71>)

Thus the soil has been prepared for sowing and the seeds chosen. Let us then sow, nurture and shelter these seeds into full maturity so as to feed and inspire future generations. Let the good, true and beautiful infuse and uplift all life on this planet.

II. *Uprooting Terrorism:* Countering Violent Extremism through Prevention

In the beginning of this year the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) had an in- depth look into the possible causes for the rise of extremist groups a decade after the 11 September attacks. Director of the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) and the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) within DPA, Jehangir Khan, is inviting the international community to rethink the approach of confronting violent extremism through ‘counter’ measures alone, suggesting this as being too narrow. However, a shift towards a more integrated policy of preventing violent extremism is emerging, with emphasis on *preventing*, said Mr Khan.

Opening the Summit for Countering Violent Extremism in Washington DC 19 February, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced that a *UN Plan of Action on Preventing Violent Extremism* would be presented to the UNGA later in the year.

At this meeting, hosted by the United States Government, Ban Ki-moon urged that “all countries – along with regional and international organisations – as well as political, religious, academic and civil society leaders – should join hands to forge a multi-faceted response that respects international human rights and humanitarian law”.

https://un_dpa.creatavist.com/uprooting_terrorism

Warning that ‘*counter-terrorism strategies that lack basic elements of due process and respect for the rule of law are often the most effective recruiting agents for extremism*’, he reminded the meeting of the most powerful weapons at our disposal, namely ‘*human rights, accountable institutions, the equitable delivery of services, and political participation*’ .

The UNGA resolution, adopted by consensus in 2006 (*resolution 60/288*), outlines four ‘pillars’ for the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy:

1. addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism;
2. measures to prevent and combat terrorism;
3. measures to build states’ capacity to prevent and combat terrorism, and to strengthen the role of the United Nations system in that regard,
4. measures to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis for the fight against terrorism.

“Missiles may kill terrorists. But good governance kills terrorism”.

Ban Ki-moon

III. *Our World at a Turning Point*

In recent statements the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al-Huseein, has been urging Member States to *'uphold the human rights principles underlying their communities in their fight against radicalism'*. There is a real danger, he said that opinion-leaders and decision-makers could lose their grasp of the values that States built 70 years ago and enshrined in the UN Charter to *ward off the horror of war*. Strong international treaties were and have since then been written and agreed upon, to be established in binding law as the legal principles of human rights. These are, said the Human Rights Commissioner, *"a distillation of all human experience, all the warnings and screams of our combined human history"*.

In the fight against terror the values of democracy and human rights must be upheld, not undermined, said Mr. Zeid, and *"Counter-terrorist operations that are non-specific, disproportionate, brutal and inadequately supervised, violate the very norms that we seek to defend"*. Furthermore *"they also risk handing the terrorists a propaganda tool – thus making our societies neither free nor safe"*. At this turning point in history the world is provided with an unprecedented opportunity to face and overcome all past unresolved challenges, and *"member states must enforce human rights amid rising tide of extremism"*.

In his Opening Address to the High Level Segment of the UNHR Council, the Human Rights Commissioner warned that, although we are justifiably condemning the cruelty, the merciless conduct and moral bankruptcy of violent extremism, we must ensure that we are *'completely principled and cunning in our collective attempt to defang them'* so that we do not – unwittingly - advance their interests.

Yet human rights are disregarded and violated with *'alarming regularity'* throughout all nations. And, said Mr Zeid, the overwhelming majority of victims of human rights abuses around the world have two characteristics in common: deprivation and discrimination – whether it is based on race or ethnicity, gender, beliefs, sexual orientation, caste or class. All these are not spontaneously generated but resulting from *'policy choices, which limit freedom and participation, create obstacles to the fair sharing of resources and opportunities.'*

Crying out for profound and inspiring leadership:

People throughout our troubled world are *'crying out for profound and inspiring leadership equal to the challenges we face'*, said Mr Zeid. We, all of us, must work and dedicate ourselves to end discrimination, deprivation and seemingly inexhaustible litany of conflicts and crises that generate such terrible, and needless, suffering:

"Together, if we succeed in turning the corner, in improving our global condition, we can then say the screams of history and of the millions upon millions of victims, have been heard, - finally. Let us make it so"

http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15628&LangID=E&utm_source=emailcampaign270&utm_medium=phpList&utm_content=HTML&utm_campaign=Transforming+Planetary+Consciousness+Aries+2015

The High Commissioner's Annual Report can be read at
[http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?
NewsID=15642&LangID=E](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15642&LangID=E)

*"It is the people who sustain government, create prosperity, heal and educate others and pay
for governmental and other services with their labour.
It is their struggles that have created and sustain States.*

Governments exist to serve the people – "

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al-Huseein
[http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewYork/Stories/Pages/ZeidPresentsAnnualReport.aspx#sthash.vtE
rx8B.IMGyFbA7.dpuf](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewYork/Stories/Pages/ZeidPresentsAnnualReport.aspx#sthash.vtErqx8B.IMGyFbA7.dpuf)

IV. Peace and Planet **Mobilization for a Nuclear-Free, Peaceful, Just, and Sustainable World**

2015 marks the 45th anniversary of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which outlines the agreement obligating all States parties to undertake negotiations for the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

From 27 April to 22 May this year representatives from all 189 NPT members, including the U.S., Russia, the U.K., France and China, will meet at the UN, New York, to review once again the obligations and requirements of the Treaty to free the world of all nuclear weapons.

A Global Wave 2015:

The 'Global Wave' initiative plans to involve people everywhere throughout the world and will include parliamentarians, mayors, religious leaders, youth, environmentalists, human rights activists, sports clubs, and other members of the global community. Global Wave will start in New York 26 April, proceeding westward through each time zone every hour and include many unique and symbolic Wave events. Whether these events will be large or small, they will all demonstrate a united resolve to build a fair, democratic, ecologically sustainable, and peaceful future for all.

On the eve of the NPT Review Conference, the International Peace & Planet will be holding its Conference in New York City on the theme: *Nuclear-Free, Peaceful, Just, and Sustainable World*. For more information on this event and details on how to cooperate see (<http://www.peaceandplanet.org/>)

The Global Wave petition can be signed at <http://www.peaceandplanet.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/3-20-Print-Petition.pdf>

On 8 December 2014, a statement was published entitled '*Nuclear Disarmament: Time for Abolition – A Contribution of the Holy See*'. This document contains the thoughts of H.H. Pope Francis which, in the words of Jonathan Granoff, President of the Global Security Institute, '*skilfully sets a moral compass that all the world's nations should follow*'. The full text of this statement can be read here:
[http://gsinstitute.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/attachment/95/Holy_See_Statement.pdf?
1427144795](http://gsinstitute.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/attachment/95/Holy_See_Statement.pdf?1427144795)

*"Nuclear deterrence and the threat of mutually assured destruction cannot be the basis
for an ethics of fraternity and peaceful coexistence"*

V. Chiefs of Defense Conference
27 March 2015

This first-ever United Nations Chiefs of Defence Conference took place in New York and brought together senior defence and military officials from more than 100 member nations to discuss the role of peacekeeping in an increasingly dangerous and, as UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon described it, “*complex global security landscape*”.

Today there are more than 130,000 military, police and civilian staff from around the world serving in the UN’s 16 peacekeeping operations – the largest number in history. This is our largest deployment in history, and ‘*it must be matched by a stronger international partnership for peacekeeping*’.

The UN Secretary-General appealed to the military officials and pointed to two elements, which he believed were essential for success:

1. ‘When the Security Council calls on us to deploy peacekeepers, the UN needs to be ready. This means more diverse and more quickly available contributions from Member States. It also includes additional ‘boots on the ground’ from developed countries with more technologically advanced militaries.’ And
2. ‘We need unity and backing. Effective performance demands broad consensus on why where and how peacekeepers carry out their mandates.

Referring to the harrowing effects of the terrorizing campaigns by ISIL/Da’esh spreading through the world community he urged all political leaders around the world to look at the root causes and breeding grounds for any kind of extremism and terrorism. In many cases, failed leadership, corruption, injustice, inequality will drive people to desperate decisions of hopelessness.

We have to eliminate this kind of situation, said the UN Secretary-General and told the meeting: “that is why the United Nations counterterrorism is going to submit to the General Assembly in September a comprehensive plan of action to counter this violent extremism and terrorism”.

In his closing statement, Deputy Secretary-General, Jan Eliasson said that ‘*when peacekeeping missions are deployed in post-conflict situations, countries are 50 per cent less likely to experience renewed conflict*’. Peacekeeping missions are promoting successful transition to sustainable peace, inclusive governance and protecting civilians, he added.

Jan Eliasson urged the military officers present to ‘*provide the capabilities needed to fulfill peacekeeping mandates; to unite politically behind peacekeeping missions, and to continue to work towards a common understanding of peacekeeping and build support for it.*’

We will show that: ‘*true strength is built on universal values laid down in the UN Charter*’, said the Deputy-General.

<http://foreignaffairs.co.nz/2015/03/28/deputy-secretary-generals-closing-remarks-at-chiefs-of-defence-conference-as-prepared-for-delivery/> <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=50437#.VSX6ksIfq70>

VI. The Cultural Heritage of Iraq and Syria **Destroyed by human ignorance – rebuilt by human hope** *By Rene Wadlow*

On Friday, 27 February 2015, the United Nations Security Council condemned "the deliberate destruction of irreplaceable religious and cultural artefacts housed in the Mosul Museum and burning of thousands of books and rare manuscripts from the Mosul Library" and having burned a few days earlier thousands of books from the Mosul, Iraq, University Library.

The Mosul Museum which was not yet open to the public had a large number of statues from the pre-Islamic Mesopotamian civilizations as well as statues from the Greek Hellenistic period.

The spokesman for the Islamic State (ISIS) faction which carried out the destruction – filmed and posted on the internet by them – maintained that the statues represented gods which had been worshiped while only the true god should receive worship.

This approach to pre-Islamic faiths and their material culture is the same as had led to the destruction of the large Buddha statues in Afghanistan – monuments that attested to the rich culture along the Silk Road.

There have been iconoclastic movements in the past, especially among Muslims and early Protestants holding that the spiritual world cannot (and thus should not) be represented in forms. All forms lead to confusing the specific form with the spiritual formless energy behind it. The iconoclastic reasoning can be defended, but not the destruction of objects which represented other philosophies, cultures and levels of understanding. (1)

As if to drive home to the least philosophical in the area, the ISIS also attacked Assyrian Christian villages in the area; villages were emptied, persons taken as hostages and younger women forced into slavery. The Assyrian Christians are among the oldest of the Christian communities; some speak Aramaic, the language spoken at the time of Jesus.

There are world laws against slavery going back to the abolitionist movements of the 1800s and made universal by conventions of the League of Nations and the United Nations. These conventions are rarely cited except in discussions of the current trafficking of persons as a "modern form of slavery". Now the ISIS has given us examples of slavery in its old forms, nearly to the point of caricature. We need to dust off these conventions and see that they are applied.

Syria and Iraq are home to some of the world's first cities, a complex and unique meeting of states, empires and faiths. The protection of works of art and cultural heritage is a newer aspect of world law in which UNESCO is playing a leading role. Until the filming and posting of the destruction in Mosul, the looting of museums in Apamea, Aleppo and Raqqa as well as numerous archaeological sites had been known to specialists but had not gained wide public attention. Most of the looted objects were not destroyed but sold on a parallel international art market to fill the ISIS coffers. There is a need to develop global awareness and to campaign against this illicit trade in looted Syrian and Iraqi artefacts which first pass through the neighbouring countries of Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan

before ending in the hands of dealers and small auction houses who also profit from the theft.

The protection of cultural heritage owes much to the vision and energy of the Russian artist Nicholas Roerich (1874-1947). Roerich's desire to make known the artistic achievements of the past through archaeology, coupled with the need to preserve the landmarks of the past from destruction, led to his work for the Banner of Peace to preserve art and architecture in time of war. Roerich had seen the destruction brought by the First World War and the civil war which followed the 1917 Russian Revolution. He worked with French international lawyers to draft a treaty by which museums, churches and buildings of value would be preserved in time of war through the use of a symbol – three red circles representing past, present and future – a practice inspired by the red cross to protect medical personnel in times of conflict.

Roerich mobilized artists and intellectuals in the 1920s for the establishment of this Banner of Peace. Henry A. Wallace, the US Secretary of Agriculture and later Vice-President, was an admirer of Roerich and helped to have an official treaty introducing the Banner of Peace – the Roerich Peace Pact – signed at the White House on 15 April 1935 by 21 States in a Pan-American Union ceremony. At the signing, Henry Wallace on behalf of the USA said: "*At no time has such an ideal been more needed. It is high time for the idealists who make the reality of tomorrow, to rally around such a symbol of international cultural unity. It is time that we appeal to that appreciation of beauty, science, education which runs across all national boundaries to strengthen all that we hold dear in our particular governments and customs. Its acceptance signifies the approach of a time when those who truly love their own nation will appreciate in addition the unique contribution of other nations and also do reverence to that common spiritual enterprise which draws together in one fellowship all artists, scientists, educators and truly religious of whatever faith.*"

As Nicholas Roerich said in a presentation of his Pact "*The world is striving toward peace in many ways and everyone realizes in his heart that this constructive work is a true prophesy of the New Era. We deplore the loss of the libraries of Louvain and Oviedo and the irreplaceable beauty of the Cathedral of Rheims. We remember the beautiful treasures of private collections which were lost during world calamities. But we do not want to inscribe on these deeds any words of hatred. Let us simply say: Destroyed by human ignorance – rebuilt by human hope.*"

After the Second World War, UNESCO has continued these efforts, and there have been additional conventions on the protection of cultural and educational bodies in times of conflict, in particular the Hague Convention of May 1954, though no universal symbol as proposed by Nicholas Roerich has been developed.

As too often, governments and people react after events rather than affirm from a deeper level of consciousness. Now, we have seen mindless but deliberate destruction of both art and people. Let us not inscribe on these deeds any words of hatred, but let us work unitedly and creatively to establish a just peace.

(1) *A good overview of iconoclastic movements in the non-Muslim world see: Alain Besancon L'Image interdite. Une histoire intellectuelle de l'iconoclassme (Paris: Gallimard, 1994, 722pp.)*

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*“Through Culture we have ever been striving to express
the fullness of our being;
to interpret our relationships to each other,
to the environment, to nature -
to God”*

VII. United Nations ECOSOC Youth Forum 2 – 3 February 2015

Nearly 500 youth representatives met at the UN Headquarters in New York to mark the 20th anniversary of the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY), and to participate in the discussions on: *“Youth Engagement in the Transition from MDGs to SDGs: What will it take?”*. Also present were Member State representatives, leaders from civil society, the private sector, media and the UN system who would participate actively in ‘identifying the key priorities that might be missing or require greater attention from policymakers in the transition from the MDGs to the post-2015 context’ (http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/youth2015/pdf/informal_summary.pdf)

In his opening remarks the ECOSOC President, His Excellency Martin Sajdik, stressed that rather than often being viewed as potential liabilities young people should be welcomed as development partners with unique contributions to offer, and added: *“the question is no longer if youth engagement is necessary, but how to strengthen it”*. Agreeing with this statement the UN Secretary-General’s Youth Envoy, Ahmad Alhendawi said that a ‘sense of ownership’ was critical to the success of the future sustainable development agenda, and that: *‘young people worldwide are ready to carry their share of the post-2015 development’*. The Youth Envoy also strongly recommended that all UN Member States should consider including a young participant in their delegation at the Summit in September.

There was general agreement with the statement of one youth participant who stressed that *‘Youth delegates to the UN are a ‘must-have’, not a ‘nice-to-have’*. For more information about how to become a youth delegate see: <http://undesadspd.org/Youth/OurWork/Youthdelegateprogramme.aspx>

Youth activist and co-founder of *‘KidsRights Youngsters’*, Thandiwe Chama, saw youth leadership, education, health and gender equality as key preconditions for a successful post-2015 sustainable development agenda, adding: *‘We cannot achieve the SDGs without ensuring that my rights are the same as those of my brothers’*.

KidsRights stressed that sustainable development starts with educated, safe and healthy children, who are able to grow up in inclusive, supportive and peaceful societies. (<http://kidsrightsyongsters.org/the-youngsters.php>)

The *HeforShe* campaign was also mentioned as a successful tool for changing the mind-sets of young people themselves. (<http://www.heforshe.org/>)

The *World Programme of Action for Youth* can be read at: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/wpay2010.pdf>

VIII. Turning Swords into Plowshares

By Meredith Paterson

The following is based on a presentation I gave in the JC Beaglehole Room, the library special collection at Victoria University of Wellington, on 31 March, 2015. A poster from the library collection was chosen on which to build a social context. The talk was structured in three sections: the poster, the protests and the person. All three are connected by the theme of disarmament and the year 1983.

The poster, “The Real War”, by Masuteru Aoba, depicts three black rifles against a grey background. The barrels of three rifles spout gardening tools. Running landscape are the words “The Real War,” translated into smaller Japanese characters above. The poster suggests the bigger battle is making peace out of the context of war. Guns kill and destroy life. Gardens create and sustain life. Putting down arms that lead to destruction, and picking up tools, using the strength of your own arms, to cultivate peace.

The imagery links to that of disarmament in the allusion to Isaiah on the wall of the Ralph Bunche Peace Park near the UN in New York: ““They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nations shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more”

Closer to home, this imagery links to Parihaka - the active, peaceful resistance campaign of Te Whiti and his Iwi in Taranaki, New Zealand, who continued to work their land even as the colonisers forced them from it. The same tools of active peaceful resistance were used later by Ghandi resisting British colonising forces, MLK in the American civil rights movements and in political struggles today.

Work for peace is global in reach, as evident in the poster. “The Real War” was designed by Masuteru Aoba, a relatively well-known Japanese designer and was published in 1983 in Finland by the World Peace Council, an organisation founded after the devastations of WWII, especially the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. That it was a Japanese designer, born in 1939, so growing up in the aftermath of this event, is poignant.

The poster was part of a substantial collection of posters and other ephemera, recently donated to the JC Beaglehole Room, by Ron and Carmen Smith, a Wellington couple who were active in the NZ chapter of the World Peace Council – probably how they came by the poster. Ephemera is not long lasting, but it offers provocative evidence of public opinion at a given time, particularly of citizen activism.

The collective action and organised campaigning of the nuclear free movement in NZ is probably the most well-known and best remembered peace activism in NZ. It took on the challenge of disarmament and the nuclear threat by opposing US military presence in the Pacific. US military presence included nuclear armed and powered ships and submarines as well as US intelligence bases. Peace motivated community groups made their stance known to the government, and to the world.

In 1983, the same year the poster was published, the National government was in power, and were less sympathetic to a nuclear free position. The USS Texas, invited by the NZ government, entered Wellington harbour on 10 August. Peace activists camped on the

wharf in protest for a 3 day peace vigil. The Wellington harbour filled with sailboats, canoes, kayaks – vessels of all sorts under the banner of peace – impeding the entry of US nuclear armed or powered ships and submarines.

Peace groups organised a campaign to get local municipalities to declare themselves nuclear weapon free, suburb by suburb. According to peace researcher Owen Wilkes, they: *“set themselves the goal of having 50 percent of New Zealanders living in nuclear-free zones by 1983. They passed that goal and by the time the election was called in 1984, 64 percent of New Zealanders were living in municipalities that had declared themselves nuclear-free zones.”*

At the next general election, a Labour government was elected which passed legislation in 1987 to declare NZ and its waters a nuclear-free zone, a move still praised last year by Angela Kane, visiting representative from the UN Office of Disarmament. People power lobbied the government, and effected change. That David (NZ) stood up to Goliath is now part of the NZ national identity myth. But NZ nuclear-free was part of a global impetus for disarmament and peace.

This research is part of my wider Master's thesis project on a culture of peace. I am undertaking narrative research on another peace campaigner and traveller – Gita Brooke. In 1975, she and her husband Anthony co-founded the NGO Peace Through Unity and spent 10 years travelling the world spreading the message of disarmament.

Gita now lives in Whanganui, surrounded by a beautiful garden above the Whanganui River. From her garden, you can see Queen's Park, where the war memorial stands. Next to it sits an even greater testament to the power of “we, the peoples” of the United Nations – the Handspan Sculpture – a double spiral covered in moulds of hands from the community. It is a reminder of the potential for collaborative action for peace in local communities.

The “Real War” - turning the tools of war into the tools of peace – sowing, nurturing, growing, strengthening peace in our communities, is an on-going struggle. This year 2015, marks the state-sponsored commemorations of the battle at Gallipoli. At the same time, the current NZ government sends troops to participate in the US military machine in Iraq. US military presence is still felt worldwide, and in NZ.

As a child of the 1990s, I never saw the heady days of nuclear-free mass protest – the harbour filled with vessels of peace confronting military might. I missed the time of citizen activists and organisers as those movements have broken down – shattered and left disillusioned by the neo-liberal economic reforms of the late 1980s and 1990s. Now, more than ever, we need informed, active and engaged citizens. We need collective action and organised campaigns. We need to oppose the doctrine that says might is right, puts profit over people, spreads hatred and lies over compassion and truth.

As conscientious objector to WWI, Archie Baxter, wrote: *“The military machine is turned against that communal life which is the seed-bed of future generations.”* Let's have the vision to see the real-war. Let's remember what has gone before. Let's put down our rifles and take up our spades, and grow beautiful gardens.

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IX. Water for a Sustainable World **World Water Development Report 2015**

This latest report, coordinated by UNESCO's World Water Assessment Programme contains contribution from a vast number of Agencies, Scientists, Environmentalists, local and regional reports and observations and others, highlights the many crucial and complex linkages between water and human health, food and energy security, urbanisation, industrial growth and climate change. It demonstrates how water is critical to almost every aspect of sustainable development and how sustainable development goals for water could *'create social, economic, financial and other benefits that would extend to poverty alleviation, health, education, food and energy productions, and the environment.'* The report hopes to reach not only national-level decision-makers but also the broader *'development community as well as by those who care about the common future of our planet'*.

The new World Water Development Report (WWDR) starts by sharing how 'in the not-so-distant future' water resources and water-related services could be managed in such a way that *'the benefits derived from water are maximised and shared equitably throughout the world.'* This is not a 'fictional utopian outlook: *"it is a future that we believe is entirely achievable – a future in which water is recognised and managed as the fundamental resource that supports all aspect of sustainable development"*.

However, the report makes the important point that *"decisions that determine how water resources are used (or abused) are not made by water managers alone, but driven by various socio-economic development objectives and the operational decisions to achieve them"*. The global water crisis is one of governance, much more than of resource availability, we are told, and *'this is where the bulk of the action is required in order to achieve a water secure world'*.

The vision represents a new and innovative approach ***'which we hope will prompt readers to reflect on how our world could be, provided we make appropriate changes to the ways we do things'***

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002318/231823E.pdf>

'Whatever you can do or dream you can begin it. Boldness has genius, and magic and power in it. Begin it now'

Goethe

X. "Gender Equality Demands a Concerted Push"

The Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, opened her statement to the Intergenerational dialogue, held at the 59th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (March 2015), by stating that: *"the year 2015 is the start of a make-or-break period for gender equality and women's empowerment"*. We must in whatever way we can *"ensure that the commitment of Beijing to gender equality and women's empowerment is taken forward in the post-2015 development agenda"*.

If we can get substantive, critical game-changers on the table early on, *'we can project that by 2030 we can talk of Planet 50-50'*; not merely equal representation but also the depth and substance of their participation and contribution.

Although much work has been done and progress made regarding the rights of children, child marriages, child labour, and female genital mutilations are still taking place. And the talents and decision-making capacities of women also continuously being undervalued, even undermined, throughout the world community.

It is therefore important that we look at this agenda as a universal agenda' stressed the UN Women Executive Director. Noting that the interest groups represented at this meeting would each have their own specific agendas, we nevertheless *'have the drive for gender equality in common'*.

However, gender equality has to be everybody's agenda; we have got to make sure that our own organisations, our programmes and campaigns are gender-equal, she said. Underscoring the importance of partnerships, she acknowledged that working with people who do not agree with us and people who we do not understand can give us 'great headaches, but also great strength.' If we try to avoid controversy and work only with likeminded people we shall be working *'with a small circle of people who are fighting for gender equality'*!

The UN Women Executive Director also encouraged all present to work with and support young people. They are leaders in their own right, she said: *'they are making fundamental changes in their own lives and they are raising the bar for others'*.

In her concluding remarks she once again stressed that *'we can never succeed without a strong civil society that is united in its efforts'*. We need to work with men and boys and make sure they take their responsibility to be partners. *'Men must say 'I will not marry a child; I will not be involved in violence against women – I will not take a pay cheque that is unequal to that of my female counterpart...'*

The Executive Director of UN Women's final appeal to men is that they *'must be the ones who are actually taking the lead in changing the status quo that affects them, and that benefits them'*.

"We, however, must continue to be the torch-bearers".

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw59-2015>

XI. "Change is Coming. Change has to Come"

On the last day of the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW59/Beijing+20 (2015)), UN Women Executive Director, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, thanked UN Member States, civil society and the UN system for the dynamic and forward-looking sessions, which were richly enhanced and complemented by almost 200 side events and 400 parallel events. Through frank and fruitful discussions on lessons learnt understanding has been gained, and remaining gaps and challenges been recognised and proposals for action shared.

We have all recognised that there is much, much more to be done. Our discussions the last two weeks have confirmed that *‘the gaps and the issues are both structural and psychological..’* . All of us need to change.

The UN Women Director thanked UN Member States for their Political Declaration, which includes the Ministers’ Pledge to ‘take further action to ensure the full, effective, and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. ‘ These actions include the

- Strengthened implementation of laws, policies, and strategies,
- Strengthened and increased support for institutional mechanisms for gender equality
- Transformation of discriminatory norms and gender stereotypes
- Significantly increased investment for gender equality to close resource gaps
- Strengthened accountability for the implementation of existing commitments and
- Enhanced capacity building, data collection, monitoring and evaluation.

Her closing statement also pointed to the ‘systemic under resourcing and underfunding of gender equality work’ and the need to ‘ensure that the Financing for Development Conference is a game-changer for financing gender equality’. We shall need to see *‘solid, measurable progress by 2020, and make sure that 2030 is the expiry date for gender inequality.’*”

“Change is coming. Change has to come“, urged the Executive Director.

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/directorate/executive-director>

XII. Global Citizenship

As a speaker at a panel discussion on women’s leadership during the 2015 Commission on the Status of Women, Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury told the audience, representing a multitude of cultures and faiths that, through developing the sense of global citizenship we can together solve the seemingly insurmountable challenges besetting the world community.

Global citizenship is believing in the oneness of humanity, and that we are all connected, interconnected and interdependent: “the days of staying in our national boundaries are gone” stressed the Ambassador, and it is necessary for us *‘to see women’s rights and equality as human issues, not just women’s issues’*“.

Ambassador Chowdhury has long been championing the idea of global citizenship and for more emphasis on education, which will enable young people to better understand and appreciate the wider world and their own place within it. He spoke of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s 2012 “Global Education First Initiative”, which emphasizes that good education must be more than an entry point into the job market, and that: *‘education has the power to transform people and bring shared values to life’*“.

The following quote is from the brochure from the launch of the Global Education First Initiative’ http://www.globaleducationfirst.org/files/GEFI_Brochure_ENG.pdf :

“People around the world are connected as never before. In the face of global pandemics, conflict, climate change and economic turmoil, it is clear we sink or swim together. We must forge a new way of relating to each other— as individuals, communities, and countries. Education can cultivate in us a vision that sees beyond one’s immediate interests to the world at large. It can give us a profound understanding that

we are tied together as citizens of the global community, and that our challenges are interconnected.” (http://www.globaleducationfirst.org/files/GEFI_Brochure_ENG.pdf)

Stressing that humanity cannot make progress unless all of us recognise and embrace this interconnectedness, Ambassador Chowdhury added: *“whatever I do in my community, it has an impact – positive or negative – on the rest of the world. Nothing and no one can feel independent of connection with the world”*

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2015/03/global-citizenship-essential-for-gender-equality-ambassador-chowdhury>

‘When we put ‘Education First’ we can reduce poverty & hunger, & wasted potential, & look forward to stronger & better societies for all”

(Global Education First Initiative)

XIII. 2016 – The International Year of Pulses

The United Nations declared 2016 the International Year of Pulses, to highlight the critical role these ‘grain legumes’ play in feeding the world. This group of 12 crops, including dry beans, chickpeas and lentils, is very high in protein, various vitamins and amino acids. It is also one of the most sustainable crops a farmer can grow; one pound of pulses takes just 43 gallons of water while soybeans take 216 and peanuts 368 gallons. Pulses are also used as feedstuff for animals, such as pigs and poultry.

<http://www.fao.org/pulses-2016/en/>

The IYP 2016 will create a unique opportunity to encourage connections throughout the food chain that would better utilize these pulse-based proteins, which also have ‘nitrogen-fixing properties that can contribute to increase soil fertility and have a positive impact on the environment.’ ([A/RES/68/231](#))

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.