

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. Trust

The Dictionary tells us that the word **trust** is of Old Norse origin and means **strong**. Trust has also come to mean: *firm belief that someone or something is reliable, true, or able to do something.*

Today the tremors of the Earth are becoming increasingly powerful and devastating shaking even the highest mountains and the disturbances of the atmosphere wreaking havoc throughout every continent and surrounding seas. These planetary convulsions are coinciding with the systemic erosion of the fundamental structures of human societies; the world of economics and people in powerful, decision-making, positions revealing their true worth.

The fickleness of the human law and justice system within different nations is also being brought to light. The yawning gap between rich and poor has been increasing while more than 50 million refugees, asylum-seekers and displaced men, women and children – the largest number since WWII – are living in camps between borders waiting and hoping for the opening of a welcoming door.

But this invasive systemic condition, which has been able, indeed enabled, methodically to permeate every part of today's debt-ridden societies and environment, seems to have reached its peak and is now slowly losing momentum. The cost of this state of affairs to the dignity and worth of an increasing number of people can no longer be ignored.

Although general fatigue, hurt, or attempts at denial may have us resorting to readily available 'comfort foods' to soothe, entertain or distract, the response to the rhythm of changing seasons, inherent in us all, is hard to ignore. We, and all living things, including our planet - indeed all bodies within the entire universe - go through steps and stages of evolution, each forward step shattering the 'shell' of the old. The journey toward a common goal will proceed within the wider scheme of things. If we ignore or resist this law of nature, the Earth, our Mother, will remind us.

So, where shall we find that which can be trusted? What is 'reliable, true, or able to do something'? Maybe another definition in the Dictionary holds the answer: Trust is: *the state of being responsible for someone or something.*

It has been said that we have the leadership that we deserve; the kind of leadership that reflects the values we have in general chosen to live by. We now have the opportunity to move beyond despair, self-pity and finger-pointing and use our hard-earned democratic freedom to become responsible for 'someone or something'; and re-connect with that 'state of being', that clear and strong place within ourselves, on which the future civilisation can be built..

On his recent visit to Sarajevo, Pope Francis, stressed that it is so easy to talk about peace: *"Leaders across the world often talk of peace while they sell weapons and spread war. From you, the first generation of children born after war, I expect integrity and harmony between what you think and what you do – anything else is hypocrisy"*.

Yes, let us listen to the heart which keeps things simple and true. Let us fearlessly and conscientiously - as individuals within one human family within the unity of nations - build the world in which we all can live together in peace with one another as good neighbours. Yes, let us together walk through the welcoming door into our common future.

II. *The Role of Human Dignity in the Culture of Peace*

The Role of Human Dignity in the Culture of Peace was the title of a Panel Discussion organised by the NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns (CSVGC-NY) at the United Nations Church Center, New York on 21 May this year, honoring a 20-year Benchmark for Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury.

Before panelist, Iris Spellings * offered her presentation, she acknowledged her fellow panelists ** and paid tribute to Ambassador Chowdhury underscoring that *'today we are honoring a person of great dignity, Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury, for his dedication and lifelong commitment to the Culture of Peace.'*

What follows is the full text of Iris Spelling's panel contribution:

The primary impetus on which the United Nations was founded was to end war and create a new culture...of peace. The word 'dignity' is prominently sited in the first sentence of the Charter of the UN, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and included in many other UN documents and resolutions. This should give us a clue as to its considerable significance.

I. What is dignity?

The concept of *dignity* is used critically in moral, ethical, legal and political discussions to express the idea that *a being has an innate right to be valued, respected, and to receive ethical treatment*. It's also an extension of the concept of inherent, inalienable rights. Clearly, it pertains to *worth*, although there is no exact or agreed-upon definition of this worth.

Essential to human dignity is the ability to exert "*free will*". Dignity is *irreplaceable*, and *gives value* to life.

Understanding dignity's moral dimension requires us *not only to avoid harming, but also to actively assist one another in achieving and maintaining a state of "well-being" for all!* As the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize, leaving no one behind.

II. What prevents dignity? – How can we achieve it?

Human dignity is known both individually, and collectively. This is interesting—we belittle ourselves and *lose* our dignity by not respecting the dignity of others; as we respect and acknowledge the dignity of others, we *gain it* ourselves.

In addition to an economic measure to end poverty, increasingly, there is a need for a socially inclusive approach focused on the restoration of a sense of connection with others and of purpose in life. Inequalities—whether financial, through poverty, gender or racial-related—carry the potential of deeply *wounding* dignity.

No one has ever advocated remaining indifferent to the *debasement* of human dignity. In fact, *indignation* as a reaction to injustice can open the eyes of the blind!

Devaluation *undermines* the dignity of all. We are called on to *defend* and *bring forth* (our own and others) dignities. Only by doing so can inequalities be rectified and the foundation for the Culture of Peace be built.

Irritation is *incompatible* with human dignity, and malice is *beneath* human dignity.

What are nuclear weapons, drones, missiles and guns but *implements of our malice*?

Don't they all begin with thoughts? When will we, humanity, understand this significance? This brings us back to the potent opening line of the UNESCO constitution: "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed".

The power of our thought should not be underestimated. “Energy follows thought” is a fact proven in Einstein’s formula $E=MC^2$. It is, certainly, one of our most potent tools, along with mindful speech. Particularly, when it begins to affect public opinion. Literacy *enhances* inherent individual dignity and, as UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon says, “advances the universal goal of peace”.

Reverence for heroism in all manifestations teaches us—and this is especially important for children—to realize the *grandeur* of human dignity and destiny, and teaches us to love self-sacrificing attainment. We can see this exemplified in the Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, and also in those around us.

III. Why is the role of dignity important in the Culture of Peace?

Peace flourishes in harmony. Only through harmony and dignity can the beauty of the Culture of Peace be realized.

It appears dignity is the *foundation* for the Culture of Peace; the *key ingredient* in a formula, which also includes the ingredients of compassion, empathy, justice, solidarity, respect for diversity, dialog and understanding...among others. It is a recipe for success, a sure means or way of creating the Culture of Peace, which manifests within the context of human connections and interrelatedness—not in isolation. It is built out of trials and tribulations, amid the turbulence of daily life.

For me, human dignity is *an expression of the divine spark*, or soul, which shines and resides in each of us. We can make it brighter, or diminish it by the choices we make, by our actions.

When the heart and the mind are united for Good (with a capital G), goodwill, or love-in-action, is possible. Peace is an effect of these actions.

The Culture of Peace is defined as “a set of values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behaviour and ways of life”. It is based on loving understanding, goodwill and right relations with all life. This coming new era, the Culture of Peace, is the result of right relationship to each other, to all life, because the peace of the world results directly from the inner experience of each one of us. Peace within, begets peace without.

Harmlessness, although difficult, is as simple as it gets. Let us hold harmlessness as our keynote.

The Culture of Peace comes in the realization of human dignity, in austere understanding of duty and the responsibility of each one of us to humanity and the Whole.

I’d like to close with a quote from Ambassador Chowdhury that I used in my introduction for him in ‘07 when he was given the Spirit of the UN Award, because it emphasizes the need for us as individuals, and groups, to work together in a spirit of joy and cooperation, which is essential!

“Global efforts towards peace and reconciliation can only succeed with a collective approach built on trust, dialogue and collaboration. For that, we have to build a grand alliance amongst all, particularly with the proactive involvement and participation of civil society and young people... No social responsibility is greater nor task heavier than that of securing peace on our planet.” (from “The Role of the United Nations and Civil Society in Promoting the Culture of Peace” given for the Aquarian Age Community seminar: *Building the Culture of Peace and the Evolution of Consciousness* on 2 June 2004.)

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III. Climate Summit

Bonn, June 2015

“Think Ahead, Act Together” is the title of a 17-page document resulting from the Bonn Climate Summit, in which the G7 leaders agree to back the recommendations of the intergovernmental panel on climate change (<http://www.ipcc.ch/>), to drastically reduce global greenhouse gas emissions and cut greenhouse gases by phasing out the use of fossil fuels by the end of the century. They also agreed on a global target for limiting the rise in average global temperature to a max of 2C over pre-industrial levels.

After the conclusion of the Summit the German Chancellor Angela Merkel told the press that the G7 countries (Germany, Britain, France, the US, Canada, Japan and Italy) had all *‘signed up to initiatives to work for an end to extreme poverty and hunger, reducing by 2030 the number of people living in hunger and malnutrition by 500 million, as well as improving the global response to epidemics in the light of the Ebola crisis’*.

The co-chairs of negotiations on a climate deal, Ahmed Djoghlaif from Algeria and Dan Reifsnnyder from USA, now have the challenging task of condensing the vast outcome document and formulate a clear set of options, by 24 July, which will form the basis of the next round of negotiations. This text should make it easier for governments and ministers to identify ‘key political decisions that will have to be taken at, and in advance of, the UN climate convention conference in France’.

But before the Paris conference takes place, countries under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will meet in Bonn from 31 August – 4 September where this new text by the co-chairs will be discussed. Further key ministerial meetings have also been organized by the French Presidency of the UN climate Conference. <http://www.unep.org/newscentre/Default.aspx?DocumentID=26827&ArticleID=35194&l=en> <http://un.org.au/2015/06/12/sustainable-development-goals-sdgs/>

Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of UNFCCC, said that *‘the path to Paris is now happening on both the political and negotiating levels and with a mood of exceptional confidence and engagement..’* She pointed out that these negotiations are occurring *‘against the backdrop of an accelerating wave of climate action from non-state actors including cities, regions, territories and companies which is contributing confidence to the process’*.

Ms Figueres also believed that what is occurring is in many ways unprecedented in the history of international cooperation in respect to vision and scale: *“Everyone’s concerns are being accommodated and everything has to move in parallel”* This is understandably *‘a complex but now also a very dynamic process’*

https://www.wmo.int/pages/themes/climate/international_unfccc.php#b

Climate talks are like pregnancy –

France’s top climate diplomat urges journalists to be patient. It may look like nothing is agreed, but in the womb of the negotiating chamber a deal is slowly maturing.

‘You just have to wait until the baby is born to see its face’

Laurence Tubiana

IV. Transforming Our World by 2030 **A New Agenda for Global Action**

As the target date for realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) draws near, the next round of development goals, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), the post-2015 development goals are being worked out through an unprecedented process by the UN. The MDG process was top-down, with Secretary General Kofi Anan challenging the member states to take aim at the goals. The SDG process was bottom up, with everyone from around the world being prompted to share their individual view of a better world; the views were translated and collated and compiled and prioritized based on responses (education was first in the majority of “my better world” views).

Imagine the amount of time and effort it has taken for the member states to work out a new proposal in moving forward, post-2015, that now has 17 goals, 169 targets and countless indicators. It is clear that the world now is radically different from when the MDG’s were defined. There is a much clearer call for inclusivity and that no one is left behind. Also, the 17 goals are not being viewed as a linear list of aspirations as much as an interconnected web.

There are 3 more meetings scheduled, between now and the end of July, before the proposed agenda is submitted to the UN Summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda (September 25 -27). Before then, all eyes and ears will be on the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on July 13 -16. And after the UN Summit in September, the Conference on Climate Change in Paris will be held (November 30 – December 11) in the light of the new agenda. It’s all an interconnected web.

That very same note, “it’s all an interconnected web,” was also struck at the Interactive Hearings with Civil Society and the Private Sector that took place at UN Headquarters in New York at the end of May. All participants were invited to speak out with equal voice and equal commitment with a knowing that the post-2015 agenda will be unattainable without civil society as an equal partner. Amina Mohammed, special advisor on post-2015 development planning, was calling everyone to play an essential and leading role in the people and planet centred agenda, reminding us of the millions who live in poverty and hoping that the reminder gives us strength to press forward toward a life of fuller service.

Participants voiced the need to hold governments accountable while member states voiced the need of holding civil society accountable. Participants voiced the concern about where the money was going to come from, and the question of “*why not stop the wars?*” as well as the importance of community and of family. There was also a lot of anxiety expressed over the public/private partnerships being considered as a way to reach the post-2015 goals (“*nothing about us without us*”).

Member states made it clear that partnering with civil society was key to tapping the transformative potential of the agenda. The youth had a voice. The LGBT community had a voice. We heard from the elderly and the entrepreneurs, human rights advocates and health advocates, the philanthropists and the social activists. Stakeholders became right holders. Problems became opportunities.

Underlying the discussion were two threads: one thread had to do with being inclusive and not leaving anyone behind, and the other thread had to do with how there was much value added in bringing everyone to the table (“We are not victims. We are the change

makers.”). At one point, a representative of Latin American Youth apologized for presenting what he considered to be a harsh wake up call, “*but the reality of millions of people’s lives are much harsher than my words.*”

Clearly, the work of developing a new agenda for global action, transforming our world by 2030, is being based upon a steady determination to further right human relations and to prevent selfish control ... anywhere, in any country. May we all see the way, through simplicity and understanding, toward all of us living and moving within the beauty of transformation.

The webcast of the first meeting of the Interactive Hearings with Civil Society and Private Sector on the Post-2015 Development Agenda can be watched:
<http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/general-assembly/watch/1st-meeting-interactive-hearings-with-civil-society-and-private-sector---post-2015-development-agenda/4258215584001>

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The following quote is from a recent interview with the Youth Climate Change activist, [Xiuhtezcatl Roske-Martinez](#):

“The future of energy comes from the sky, natural sources, things that will last forever. Fossil fuels are finite! We’re going to run out of them, soon. It’s just a matter of when at this point. The only thing in our way are multi million dollar industries that don’t want to put aside their dough for the greater good of the planet.”

For full text go to: <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/jun/11/my-generation-does-give-a-damn-about-climate-change-says-14-year-old-activist> . See also website <http://www.earthguardians.org/>

V. Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals **Zero Draft Agenda**

The preamble of this Zero Draft Agenda points out that it is *a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity* which also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. The Heads of State and Government of 193 UN member states agreed on new global goals for the sustainable development of humanity and our planet, which will be *implemented by all of us acting in collaborative partnership*.

The preamble also reflects their determination to take the ‘bold and transformative steps needed to shift the world on to a sustainable path’ and their pledge to leave no one behind. This new agenda will aim to:

- ! End poverty and hunger;
- ! Secure education, health and basic services for all;
- ! Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;
- ! Combat inequalities within and between countries
- ! Foster inclusive economic growth, shared prosperity and sustainable lifestyles for all
- ! Promote safe and inclusive cities and human settlements

- ! Protect the planet, fight climate change, use natural resources sustainably and safeguard our oceans
- ! Strengthen governance and promote peaceful, safe, just and inclusive societies, and
- ! Revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

The Zero Draft agenda envisions a just, equitable and inclusive, and one *in which humanity lives in complete harmony with nature.*

For full text see: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/7261Post-2015%20Summit%20-%20202%20June%202015.pdf>

VI. Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions Promoting Dialogue for Peace and prosperity in Turbulent Times

Astana, Kazakhstan – 10 June 2015

In his address to the Congress, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon thanked the Kazakhstan President, the Government and the people of Kazakhstan for their *‘timely initiative to promote a much needed dialogue between religious and political leaders from around the world to enhance understanding and build a culture of cooperation and mutual respect’*. He also expressed his real appreciation that, rather than simply issuing declarations to trumpet that truth, *‘you are striving for something deeper’* by recognising that harmonious societies cannot be taken for granted but must be nurtured, day after day.

We live in a world in transition, said Ban Ki-moon, and we are faced with enormous opportunities as well as tremendous challenges. In tumultuous times such as these, religious leaders can provide *‘a values-based glue to hold communities together and provide common ground for peacemaking and problem solving’*. He also urged religious leaders to teach followers the true meaning of reconciliation, understanding and mutual respect, and to take responsibility for speaking out *‘when so-called adherents of their faith commit crimes in its name’*.

“By seeking to know more about others, we grow more ourselves. By welcoming communities and ideas into our own, through exchange and enrichment, societies become greater than the sum of their parts.”

<http://www.un.org/press/en/un-bodies/statements-and-messages>

VII. United Nations Global Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism

At the *Working Session on Terrorism* of the recent meeting of the Group of 7 leading industrialized nations (G7) in Munich, 8 June, the UN Secretary-General spoke of his intent, later this year, to present the “United Nations Global Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism”.

This Global Plan of Action will provide Member States with ‘concrete recommendations for action’ and proposals for how to deal with the causes of violent extremism – ‘such as intolerance, governance failures and political, economic and social marginalization.’

In the past most efforts to combat or control terrorism have been reactive – even at times ignoring common rule of law and fundamental human rights. We must, urged Ban Ki-moon, “take special care not to exacerbate the problem.” The international community needs to pay careful attention to the underlying contexts and drivers of violent ideologies, and “...addressing violent extremism demands a proactive, ‘all-of-society’ approach that includes minorities, women and youth as partners”.

Governments have a particular responsibility to encourage and support the aspirations of youth, said the UN Secretary-General. While youth can be prone to radicalization and violent extremism, they are also a vital and essential part of the solution to the prevention of violent extremism. And added: *‘we all need to do a better job of engaging them.’*

“Networks of young peacebuilders and activists confronting violent extremism will do more than any government programme.”

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=51084#.VXyVKMIw-73>

VIII. The Global Enterprise Experience 2015

Operation Peace Through Unity (OPTU) was invited to attend the Prize Giving ceremony of this year’s Global Enterprise Experience (GEE), which took place in the Banquet Hall of Parliament in Wellington on 17 June 2015.

What do you think might happen if young people from all over the world were asked to develop solutions to assist vulnerable communities?

That is exactly what the Global Enterprise Experience provides, and has done for the past twelve years. Students from the Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand and Otago University, Dunedin, New Zealand are given the opportunity of acting as team leaders for up to eight students from, “... *radically diverse countries and world views.*”. Over 800 students from almost 200 universities in over 50 countries took part. All participants received a certificate.

The challenge posed to the students was to provide a business concept proposal for, “... *an idea that profitably addresses the needs of the vulnerable in society.*” In addition to a monetary element, it was emphasised that ‘profitable’ had to include sustainability. There were many magnificent ideas suggested, including turning street waste into fertiliser to help grow food for the community. The grand winning entry was to produce an earthenware water purifier - by introducing straw into the clay prior to firing, the pot acted as a filter for local water supplies. Simple, but very effective.

The teams were given three weeks to prepare their proposal. As young people, their means of communication were many and varied making use of the internet and cloud computing. Teams are encouraged to make full use of technologies available to them and they did! Given the difficulty in several countries for access to internet facilities, speaks volumes about the dedication and perseverance of the students – examples given included walking over 50 kilometers to the nearest access, Nepalese students contending with the after-effects of the recent severe earthquakes and holding meetings at all hours of day and night to allow everyone to contribute. In some countries, female students faced extra challenges as did those from countries where education is not encouraged.

By taking part in this experience, students are being exposed to a variety of cultures and ways of thinking, alongside the obvious advantages of developing skills in leadership, innovation, communication and creativity. They are getting themselves ready to be part of a global economy which can only survive with understanding and co-operation in sustainable enterprises.

If you want to become a social entrepreneur who can make a difference, consider the GEE.

For further information on the Global Enterprise Experience, visit the web sites listed below from which the quotes cited are taken:

Global Enterprise Experience. <http://www.geebiz.org/>
Te Kaihau, The Windeaters. <http://www.windeaters.co.nz/innovation-through-education/our-projects/>

Kate Smith, OPTU co-worker k_smith@clear.net.nz

IX. New Zealand at the UN Fulfilling Nationhood through Global Citizenship

The following is a speech given on this topic by Alister Hughes- a Year 11 student from Wanganui High School. Alister was the Wanganui Regional winner in the United Nations Association of New Zealand' Speech Awards. The final was held in the Legislative Chambers in Parliament Buildings, Wellington on Friday 5 June 2015. Although Alister was not the eventual winner, he did give a credible presentation, speaking with feeling and passion. He received very encouraging feedback from the judges and he is already planning to be part of the 2016 UNANZ Speech Awards.

“We’re a nation in search of an identity, but it’s quite exciting. I don’t regard it as a problem. It’s a challenge.” With these words in 2000, Helen Clarke summed up New Zealand’s readiness to fulfil our nationhood. Ladies and Gentlemen, this year, marks exactly seven decades since the United Nations was formed. And over these past 70 years, we have proven ourselves as a Global Citizen. We have taken an active role in humanitarian affairs through the United Nations. This means that even as a small country, New Zealand has a lot to be proud of.

This year, New Zealand has once more been elected to be a member of the United Nations Security Council. This means we will be prominently involved in addressing global humanitarian issues and will (have) greater influence in remedying these. This shows our fulfilment of nationhood in regards to the United Nations - because, in 1945, when the UN was newly formed, New Zealand was just becoming a nation within its own right, politically. Then the USSR nominated us for a seat on the Security Council; but as a fledgling nation we felt it above our capability, so we supported the Australian bid instead. We have progressed a long way since then. In the last thirty years alone we have played significant roles in over 40 peacekeeping operations - sending troops to 28 countries - such as Timor-Leste, Sudan, and Korea. And now, in 2015, we have successfully won a seat on the Security Council for the next two years, alongside fourteen other states; including France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the USA. Being such a small country, surrounded by such powerful nations shows us that we are truly punching well above our weight. It means we can fulfil our nationhood and Global Citizenship

Commitments by taking a more prominent role in responding to threats to our international community's security.

The journey to today, began in 1945 after World War Two ended. As a global community we understood the need for an organisation of peace that would succeed where the League of Nations failed - to prevent conflict and promote international unity. Together, we formed the United Nations.

Meanwhile, New Zealand was realising that it could no longer rely on the protection of Great Britain after the imminent threat faced from the Japanese through World War Two. New Zealand soon became politically independent; thus the journey of fulfilling our newly bestowed nationhood began and continues as we participate on the Security Council.

However, it is important to remember the United Nations is a wide reaching organisation. It's made up of other components than just the Security Council - such as the UN Development Program, and the United Nations Children's Fund. It is through these other organisations as well that we are fulfilling our nationhood and proving our worth as a global citizen. In 1945, our prime minister, Peter Fraser, was a key participant in the formation of the United Nations Charter. And since then, we have progressed as a nation immeasurably. We are actively initiating projects through organisations such as UNICEF. The difference we make around the globe is immense. The lives affected by our actions as a Global Citizen, innumerable. Through this, we are once again participating on the international stage and fulfilling our nationhood through the United Nations.

Our recent ascension to the Security Council means we have been given greater power to address issues, so it is up to us to determine how we use it. Will we be seen as the country that was not ready for this station on the Security Council or the responsibilities it entails? I don't think so, I think we will be the small country that performed with pride as a global citizen. We need to continue to prove our worth and show that we are willing to step in as a Global Citizen. We have a responsibility to participate in actions to influence our future even when we are not immediately involved. We need to address today's issues, such as those surrounding refugees in the Mediterranean.

New Zealand is not immediately affected by this issue; the refugees are not attempting to enter our nation, nor is an influx of refugees adding economic or social pressure within our country. So why should we act? What makes this is a problem of the international community?

The essence of this issue is to do with the sheer number of people forced to flee their country due political conflict and religious persecution. Their desperation is forcing them to journey across the Mediterranean Sea, in unsafe conditions to seek asylum; causing, within this small area, the deaths of over 4500 victims this year alone. Prime Minister Matteo Renzi of Italy, the closest and most popular destination (for) these refugees, has simply asked "*How can it be that we daily are witnessing a tragedy?*" Pope Francis supported Renzi's pleas for help as he said... "*They are men and women like us – our brothers seeking a better life, starving, persecuted, wounded, exploited, victims of war.*" This is no longer Italy's issue alone to deal with; it is a responsibility that must be shouldered by the entire United Nations community. Including ourselves.

The United Nations must address the root of these issues causing the refugees to flee. No one has the ideal solution for this, I understand, but we will only be able to reach a conclusion if time is spent evaluating possible action, and *the consequences of inaction*. New Zealand has the opportunity to be involved in these discussions because of our seat on the Security Council, and we must use this to fulfil humanitarian responsibility as a Global Citizen.

Through the years, we have taken consistent steps in the journey to fulfilling our nationhood through the UN, culminating with our acceptance onto the Security Council once more, showing our newly found maturity as a nation.

But it is where we go from here that is important; how we prepare for the times ahead; and this isn't New Zealand's responsibility alone, the entire United Nations must prepare for the future. To quote the president of the Security Council for 2000 and 2001, Anwarul Chowdhury; it is only 'through developing the sense of global citizenship we can together solve the seemingly insurmountable challenges besetting the world community.'

Alister Hughes alisterhughes3472@gmail.com

X. Care for Our Common Home

Pope Francis long awaited Encyclical Letter, **Laudato Si – Praise be** - is calling for a *bold cultural revolution*. We need to look at reality in a different way, says the Pope. We need to appropriate the positive and sustainable progress which has already been made, and we also need to recover the values and the great goals that were almost forgotten and 'swept away by our unrestrained delusions of grandeur'.

The Pope stresses that we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we also attend to the causes that are related to human and social degradation. And we are reminded that 'both everyday experience and scientific research show that the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest'.

However there is a growing realisation that a "true ecological approach" will always need also to be a 'social approach'; the question of justice is gradually being integrated into debates on the environment so that we all will come to hear: "both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor".

The Encyclical stresses that we shall need to redefine the commonly held notion of progress, because: 'it is not enough to balance, in medium term, the protection of nature with financial gain', adding that such halfway measures will 'simply delay the inevitable disaster'.

The Pope's 180 pages Letter also expresses concern that the growth of the past two centuries has not always 'led to an integral development and an improvement of quality of life'. There are signs which are symptomatic of *real social decline*, and 'the silent rupture of the bonds of integration and social cohesion'.

When media and the digital world become 'omnipresent' their influence could 'stop people from learning how to live wisely, to think deeply and love generously'. The paper suggests that 'real relationships with others, with all the challenges they entail' can tend to be replaced with 'internet communication which enable us to choose or eliminate relationships at whim'. Such relationships have more to do with 'devices and displays than with other people and with nature'. While today's media do enable us to communicate and to share our knowledge and affections. Yet at times they also shield us from direct contact with the pain, the fears and the joys of others and the complexity of their personal experiences. For this reason, we should be concerned that, alongside the, a deep and melancholic dissatisfaction with interpersonal relations, or a harmful sense of isolation, can also arise.

Efforts therefore need to be made to help the 'exciting possibilities offered by these media' to become sources of new cultural progress for humanity and not 'a threat to our deepest riches'.

Throughout the pages of the Encyclical sounds the urgent message that we are all part of one creation: *“Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth”*.

Now our Mother cries out to us, says the Pope in the opening pages of Laudato Si: *“because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life.”*

And *“this is why the earth herself, burdened; and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor”*.

In the section of the Encyclical headed *‘my appeal’* the Pope recognizes and thanks all those *‘striving in countless ways to guarantee the protection of the home which we share’*. He also urgently appeals for a new dialogue, stressing the need for a *“conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all”*.

Throughout the world the *‘ecological movement’* is making considerable progress, but *‘regrettably many efforts to seek concrete solutions to the environmental crisis have proved ineffective, not only because of powerful opposition but also because of a more general lack of interest’*. The reasons for this situation are many and range from denial, indifference, nonchalant resignation ... to blind confidence in technical solutions. However, *‘everyone’s talents and involvement are needed to redress the damage caused by human abuse of God’s creation’*, says the Pope.

Throughout the Laudato Si – Praise be Pope Francis urges us to *‘see God reflected in all that exists’ because then our hearts will awaken - re-awaken – and ‘praise the Lord for all his creatures and to worship him in union with them’*. This sentiment which Saint Francis of Assisi expressed in his hymn:

‘Praised be you, my Lord, with all your creatures, especially Sir Brother Sun, who is the day and through whom you give us light. And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendour, and bears a likeness of you, Most High.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars, in heaven you formed them clear and precious and beautiful.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Wind, and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather through whom you give sustenance to your creatures.

Praise be you, my Lord, through Sister Water, who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom you light the night, and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.”

“There are certain things that science will never be able to say so beautifully’, said a very moved top U.S. federal climate scientist, Deke Arndt. I think the Encyclical speaks across the spectrum of human experiences’It speaks to the soul and the inner part of us”.

XI. Uniting our Strengths for Peace, Politics, Partnership and People Report of the High-level Independent panel on UN Peace Operations

This report was presented to the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on 16 June 2015..

The report calls for ‘essential shifts, which will be needed if the UN is to tackle the complex peacekeeping challenges of today. UN missions need to be more ‘tailored to context’, and a more resilient global and regional architecture for international peace and security is required.

The UN Headquarters will need to “*lay out a ‘vision’” and to focus more on enabling field missions. There should be a renewed resolve ‘to serve and protect the people’, having one goal mind: “the well-being of civilians on the ground”*

The Independent Panel calls for a stronger emphasis on prevention and suggests that an *international forum on prevention* is established which will draw on ‘external resources and knowledge’.

The Report opens by telling the story of the three-year old girl, Nyakhat Pal who walked for four hours, leading her blind father through the harsh and dangerous conflict-ridden area to reach the UNICEF World Food Programme (WFP) rapid response distribution centre in Pagak, Upper Nile State of South Sudan. The UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) had been deployed to create ‘a zone of safety’ for the civilian population. Here Nyakhat and her father received the help and life-saving supplies so dearly needed before embarking upon the long walk back to their village.

This story reflects the very essence – the very heart – of the United Nations principles, stresses the Report: ‘*to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person*’. The Report urges that:

“The Organization will remain relevant to the extent that it responds effectively to the expectations of people experiencing great hardship, sometimes in remote and inaccessible places, and who yet demonstrate enormous resilience, pride and bravery.

The Organization will remain legitimate to the extent that it acts as a voice for the unheard, seeking their views and ensuring their full participation.

The Organization will remain credible to the extent it is served by leaders and staff who demonstrate courage, integrity, compassion and humility, and who act upon the norms, principles, and values upon which the Organization was founded.”

‘For many, peace operations are not simply something the United Nations does but what the United Nations is.’

The content of this Report includes and reflects the information gathered through consultations with Member States, civil society, and more than 80 written submissions from more than 50 Member States, regional and other organisations - as well as UN partner entities, civil society, academia and research outfits.

http://www.un.org/sg/pdf/HIPPO_Report_1_June_2015.pdf

XII. 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.