

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. *Home is where the Heart Is*

Was there ever a time when human beings like so many other species did not seek a shelter or build a dwelling that could be considered *home*; a safe place in which the future of the species could be secured? Yet these shelters would be in danger of being taken over by stronger members of the same or other kinds of species - or destroyed by winds or floods. Through centuries human beings have fought to create, maintain and safeguard territories and dwellings for future generations; walls were erected and weaponry refined to more effectively invade or defend such habitats. Long generational grudges could, and sometimes would, explode into open warfare between rulers, families and peoples alike.

Some 70 years after the war was fought against a totalitarian might which aimed - and still aims - not merely for superiority over territories and nations but also for the control and dominance over the mindset of peoples, we are still experiencing this subtle, ruthless and systemic manipulation throughout the world community. With promises and sweeteners, our dreams of a home, a car and other modern commodities are made to come true - at a price. And throughout today's global community an intricate web of indebtedness to some lending institution is conditioning, controlling and depleting the general state of human affairs as well as the planetary environment.

Totalitarianism, in all its many disguises, depends on a general state of mistrust and alienation between peoples as well as a polarization of 'power' and control. And today it could indeed seem as if this ancient tester and 'manipulator' has succeeded in derailing humanity's sense of direction and destination and numbed the mind into a state of fearful apathy and submission.

But just as the midnight blue sky accentuates the brightness of the stars so does the dark backdrop of despair and gloom show up the increasing - glorious - light of the human spirit. So much is and has been learnt during our long travail in the forecourt of the Temple. Among the rubble we are discovering - re-discovering - the carefully chiseled stones which contain records of knowledge, vision and wisdom from the past. And, beyond the swarms of gossip and snippets of news on the internet, a wealth of thoughts and information from our thinkers and scientists can be found.

Today we can instantly watch - and *see* - the cost to human and all other planetary life of the way we have been using force *forcefully* to satisfy our appetites. And in front of us is the crossroad where a decision must be made. We are required to take a good and steady look at the sorry state of affairs in the forecourt of our Home - still to be built on planet Earth. We need to ask ourselves: 'Is *this* what we will be bringing to other places within the universe that we shall be capable of visiting? Is this the footprint - the mark - that an intelligent species will leave behind wherever it goes?'

Throughout time the human being, the carpenter and builder of homes and the constructor of bridges of relationships, has honed the skills of many tools. Now we must discover - re-discover - the blueprint entrusted to us, a blueprint which will keep testing and teaching, guiding and expanding our mind and vision so we can - and will - fulfill our destiny.

On 25 September 2015 the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution entitled: Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1). The text of this document is the result of more than 2 years intensive public consultation throughout the world community and includes the voices of the

poorest, most vulnerable and oppressed among us. The vision and resolve of the resolution is to create a world, free of poverty, hunger, disease and want; a world in which all life can thrive - and in which we will be living in harmony with nature.

So, with the skills acquired, the tools at hand, and with a blue print outlining the design for our future planetary home – will we rise to the task of building the ‘Home where the Heart is’? I believe we will.

For the blueprint see: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E

The Gayatri

O Thou Who givest sustenance to the universe
From Whom all things proceed
To whom all things return,
Unveil to us the face of the true Spiritual Sun
Hidden by a disc of golden Light
That we may know the Truth
And do our whole duty
As we journey to thy sacred feet

II. UNESCO Science Report: Towards 2030

This latest [World Science Report](#) was launched at UNESCO headquarters in Paris on the 10th November 2015, only a few weeks before the 2015 UN Climate Change Conference taking place in Paris from 30 November to 11 December.

This is the only report that (since 1993) has been regularly monitoring the status of support for science, technology and innovation (STI) worldwide, and this latest report is based on the regular mapping of science, technology and innovation throughout the world for the past couple of decades. As the introduction of the report points out: *‘Since STI do not evolve in a vacuum, this latest edition summarizes the evolution since 2010 against the backdrop of socio-economic, geopolitical and environmental trends that have helped to shape the contemporary STI policy and governance’*.

The UNESCO Science Report believes that ‘a quinquennial report has the advantage of being able to focus on longer-term trends, rather than becoming entrenched in descriptions of short-term annual fluctuations’. With some 60 experts sharing their findings from their particular country or region the 2015 report provides more country-level information than ever before. It also highlights the slowly disappearing North-South divide in research and innovation, underscores the value of sustained public investment in scientific research, and highlights the *‘growing collaboration to solve pressing sustainable developmental challenges, including climate change’*.

The UNESCO Science Report 2015 is an important tool which every country can use to monitor progress toward achieving the goals agreed upon by UN member nations in the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. http://en.unesco.org/unesco_science_report .

UNESCO stresses that: *It is high time to redirect our technology, science, finance and ingenuity to transform our economies, ensure equality and promote a sustainable future for all, including young people, women, and indigenous and ethnic minorities’*

From, UNESCO, Climate Change and COP21:
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002336/233685e.pdf>

III. Paris Agreement

In his statement to the High-Level Event on Climate Change, 4th November 2015, the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed that *‘an agreement in Paris must mark a decisive and irreversible turning point in the world’s collective response to the climate challenge’* and represent a *‘significant down-payment on a safer, healthier and more prosperous future’*, advancing progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Ban Ki-moon reminded the meeting that people from every walk of life and every corner of the globe are taking action to reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions and build a climate resilient future. All sectors of society – cities and local communities; civil society groups; business people and investors; faith leaders and young people – are hoping for a leadership which has the courage, and the will, to provide a comprehensive, long-term vision, which sends a *‘clear signal to the private sector that the low-carbon transformation of the global economy is inevitable, beneficial and already under way’*.

Bridges must be built, said the UN Secretary-General; bridges, which will span the traditional divides between developed and developing countries.

Countries must look beyond narrow national interests and work toward the common good.

"2015 is not just another year, it is a chance to change the course of history"
Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

IV. Positive Impact Manifesto **Transition to Inclusive Green Economy**

On the 13 October a group of 10 banks issued the Positive Impact Manifesto, which offers a *‘bold and innovative vision of the banking sector’s central role in achieving sustainable development’*. A newly released report, The Financial System We Need, highlights thoughts and suggestions on how to *‘integrate sustainable development considerations into financial systems’* so as to make them fit for the 21st century. It also discusses persisting core obstacles to shifting to a greener and inclusive development pathway, namely the *“elusiveness of the commercial viability and ‘bankability’ of many of the products, activities and services that define the new economy”*.

This is the challenge which the UNEP Finance Initiative, (UNEP FI)* has pledged to take on in the Manifesto, launched at its 2015 AGM.

Severin Cabannes, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Société Générale, called the Manifesto a *‘real milestone which will help us make decisive progress toward sustainable development goals and shows the willingness of the banks to engage in order*

to address the challenges of evolving towards a more inclusive and greener economy’. The Manifesto proposes a ‘roadmap’ for establishing a new, impact-based and market driven paradigm: positive impact finance.

In the immediate years ahead the UNEP FI’s Positive Impact Working Group will be working with peers, clients, and other stakeholders: ‘to deliver a set of Positive Impact Principles’ which will guide providers of financial services in their efforts to increase their positive impact on the economy, society and the broader environment.

Mr. Christopher Bray, Head of Environmental Risk at Barclays and Co-Chair of Banking Commission Board said that this is clearly an approach which will enable us ‘to be systematic in evaluating positive impacts as well as assessing negative impacts’ and which ‘holds a lot of promise in terms of new business opportunities, whilst continuing to help in countering a build-up of environmental and social risk across the financial sector’. (<http://www.unepfi.org/fileadmin/documents/PositiveImpactManifesto.pdf>)

** The UN Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP FI), created in the wake of the 1992 Earth Summit, is a unique partnership between UNEP and a global network of over 200 banks, insurers and investors from 51 countries, and provides a neutral space and platform at the intersection between finance, science and policy.*

<http://www.unep.org/newscentre/Default.aspx?DocumentID=26851&ArticleID=35496&l=en>

For further information, please contact: careen.abb@unep.org +41 22 917 8529 or Robert.bartram@unep.org +41 22 917 8934

V. New Humanism

From 3rd to the 18th November the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) held the 38th session of its biennial General Conference and also commemorated its 70th anniversary in Paris. In her address to the meeting Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, said that after seven decades UNESCO’s core idea resounds more powerfully than ever. We can, and will, build stronger and more resilient societies through education, the sciences, cultures and the free flow of ideas. And: “*these are our ultimate renewable energy sources*”, she added.

Irina Bokova stressed that the role – indeed ‘the founding audacity’ – of UNESCO is to propose initiatives that bind people together, strengthen intellectual and moral solidarity among peoples and strengthen the conviction of humanity as a single family, united in diversity. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001887/188700e.pdf>

International Day of Tolerance:

UNESCO was born 16th November 1945, the International Day of Tolerance. In 1995 UNESCO adopted the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance which re-affirmed the basic principles that wars were avoidable if people learned to get to know each other better and understood that, in the fertile diversity of their cultures, *that* which unites them is stronger than *that* which divides them’ (quote from Irina Bokova’s 2015 message). The message makes clear that tolerance is not passive acceptance of differences and is inseparable from respect for fundamental human rights: “*when violent extremism spreads messages of hate and intolerance, both on the ground and on social media; when human*

beings suffer persecution, exclusion or discrimination on the basis of their religion or background; when economic crises accentuate social divides and stand in the way of acceptance of others, such as minorities, foreigners or refugees, we must offer up a different discourse, an open message which calls for tolerance. We must make the lessons of the past more visible and remind people of the extreme situations which can result from rejection of others”.

Irina Bokova’s message concludes by making it clear that the founding mission of UNESCO is not decreed through laws and declarations: ***‘it relies on the will and daily efforts of the citizens of the world who are developing this culture of tolerance, and today is the time to support them’.***

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/events/prizes-and-celebrations/celebrations/international-day-for-tolerance>

On the 13 November: UNESCO Director-General, Irina Bokova expressed her deep sorrow and solidarity with the peoples of France, saying: “On behalf of UNESCO and in my own name, I present my most heartfelt condolences to the people of France and to all the mourning families so terribly bereft by these barbaric acts.’ Adding: *“this crime affects us all. It represents an attack against the whole of humanity”* Her letter concludes:

“At a time when UNESCO and the United Nations, founded in the aftermath of World War II, celebrate their 70th anniversary, this crime reveals new and horrible forms of a violence that knows no borders and can strike anywhere. This resurgence of hate calls for a new response based on greater unity to reinforce our affirmation of the values of peace, dialogue and compassion, and to stand up to barbarism”.

Aung San Suu Kyi’s response to question:

“You believed that democracy would come one day?

“Oh, yes. Because, if you believe in the people you believe in democracy!”

(interviewer Lally Weymouth, senior associate editor for the Washington Post
www.washingtonpost.com

VI. Status of the World Soil Resources **New Report**

This Report was released 4 December at the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Headquarters in Rome; a high-level event which also marked the official closure of the 2015 International Year of Soils.

The 600 pages long *Status of the World Soil Resources (SWSR)*, which offers the first ever global assessment of soils and soil change, provides documented scientific data from more than 200 environmental scientists on *“soil erosion, soil organic carbon change, soil biodiversity changes, soil acidification, soil compaction, soil sealing, soil salinization and sodification, soil contamination, soil nutrient changes and water logging”.*

The report’s ‘overwhelming conclusion’ is that the majority of the world’s soil resources are in *‘only fair, poor or very poor condition’*. While it stresses that further loss of productive soils will severely damage food production and ‘amplify food-price volatility’, the report also offers evidence that such loss of soils resources and functions

can be avoided, and that: “Careful soil management, using proven methods and technologies, can increase the food supply and provide a valuable lever for climate regulation and safeguarding ecosystem services”.

<http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/e60df30b-0269-4247-a15f-db564161fee0/>

World Soil Charter:

An updated and revised version of the first World Soil Charter, adopted by the FAO member countries in 1981, was produced by the Intergovernmental Technical Panel of Soils (ITPS) to coincide with the 2015 International Year of Soils. It was subsequently unanimously endorsed by member countries during the 39th FAO Conference ‘as a vehicle to promote and institutionalise sustainable soil management at all levels’.

In its ‘Guidelines for Action’ the World Soil Charter stresses that the overarching goal for all parties – ‘from States, other public authorities, international organisations, individuals, groups, and corporations’ – is to ensure that soils are managed sustainably and that degraded soils are rehabilitated or restored.

The Charter reminds us that soils are a key reservoir of global biodiversity, which ranges from micro-organisms to flora and fauna: ‘All soils – whether actively managed or not – provide ecosystem services relevant to global climate regulation and multi-scale water regulations.’ The new Charter has updated and revised the 13 principles of the 1981 Charter, especially with respect to issues such as soil pollution and its consequences for the environment, climate change adaptation and mitigation as well as ‘urban sprawl impacts’. (<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4965e.pdf>)

VII. SOIL: The World beneath our feet

‘Soil: The World beneath our feet’ is a website, designed and prepared for the New Zealand Society of Soil Science to ‘promote the public understanding and appreciation of soils and to celebrate the International Year of Soils’.

The website reminds us of the indispensable role soil plays in our lives and quotes one soil scientist as saying that without soil we would be ‘hungry, thirsty, naked, homeless and breathless’!

The website draws our attention to the many important processes happening under our feet every day, such as the breaking down of waste, the recycling of nutrients and the storing of water – all among the many other crucial services to every form of life on the planet. There are, we are told: ‘more living things in one teaspoon of soil than there are people living on the Earth’.

It reminds us of the direct link between soil health and human health and stresses that: ‘good quality food can only be produced if the soil is healthy’ and both human and animal health is affected by eating foods grown in polluted soil.

<http://nzsss.science.org.nz/> / <http://ilovesoil.kiwi/>

DIG IT! The Secret of Soil: is the title of a series of educational booklets for young people between 5 to 14 of age, which – together with an educator’s guide – can be obtained from: <http://www.fao.org/soils-2015/resources/educational/en/>

“The best and shortest road towards knowledge of truth is Nature”

(quote used by UNEP Deputy Exec.Dir. Ibrahim Thiaw in speech of 19 Nov, 2015.

Text said to be found in one of Pharaoh's temples in Karnack)

<http://www.unep.org/newscentre/Default.aspx?DocumentID=26855&ArticleID=35565&l=e>

VIII. World Cities Day 2015 **Theme: ‘Designed to live together’**

The 31st October has been declared ‘World Cities Day’ and will aim to promote sustainable urban development around the world. It will offer the opportunity for the international community to address the many challenges of increasing urbanisation and to cooperate toward realising the opportunities to create cities which consider the welfare and wellbeing of all its citizens.

The UN-Habitat Executive Director, Dr. Joan Clos, opened his message by saying that: ‘Cities are one of the most complex human creations’. He stressed that good design will contribute to social integration, equality and diversity. Planning residential areas with different possibilities in terms of typology and price will provide space for different cultures, ethnicities and lifestyles to mix and come together. Good design will also foster sustainable use of shared resources.

Referring to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular goal 11*, which stresses the importance of ‘*making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*’, Dr. Clos believes that the October 2016 “Habitat III” will provide a ‘key milestone’ for achieving an effective implementation of a transformative urban agenda.

How we all ensure that good design is part of the planning and managing process of a city is key for our urban future, he said. (www.urbanoctober.org/wcd)

*** Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable**

11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums

11.2 By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons

11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries

11.4 Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage

11.5 By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations

11.6 By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste

management

11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities

11.a Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning

11.b By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels

11.c Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials

IX. International Day of Rural Women

15 October 2015

In her Statement for the International Day of Rural Women, Professor Megan Davis, Chairperson of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, called on global, national and local leaders to *'make the 2030 Agenda truly transformative for and with indigenous women from rural backgrounds'*.

Paying tribute to the tremendous contributions that indigenous women make to the well-being of their families, communities and national economies she pointed out that indigenous women in rural areas are in general lagging behind compared to rural men: *'They are discriminated as women; they are discriminated as indigenous and they are discriminated as rural'*, she declared and urged: *'We must help break these triple layers of discrimination.'*

"While the recently adopted 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development talks about eradicating extreme poverty and placing the furthest behind first, indigenous women in rural areas must be at the centre of these efforts", urged Professor Davis.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon agreed with Professor Davis' sentiment and pointed out, that 'the new Sustainable Development Goals have gender equality and women's empowerment at their core'. And added: "Indeed, rural women are critical to the success of almost all of the 17 SDGs"

Our challenge now is to seize the opportunity offered by this inspiring new framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to transform rural women's lives.

<http://www.un.org/en/events/ruralwomenday/2015/messages.shtml>

X. International Day of Peace 2015

Partnerships for Peace – Dignity for All

Legislative Chamber, Parliament Buildings, Wellington, New Zealand

Creating a Culture of Peace in local communities was the theme of an event to celebrate the International Day of Peace, 21 September 2015 proposed by OPTU to UNANZ

(United Nations Association of New Zealand), as part of the Global Movement for a Culture of Peace.

When proposing this event, we used the following quotation from Federico Mayor's statement, "The Crime of Silence" (2011):

"... at last the time has come for the peoples, the women and men of the whole world, to take the reins of their destinies into their own hands..."

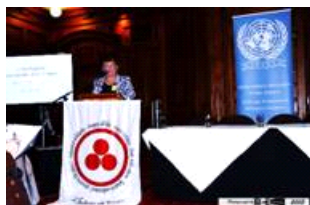
Finding out what local communities felt about a culture of peace and how it could look in their own community would form the starting point. The opportunity to link this with the imminent proposal for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) programme, "Transforming our World by 2030: A New Agenda for Global Action" to the United Nations in late September, was used as a means of gathering material. A questionnaire, along with background information, was sent to all local government councils, a wide range of NGOs, community organisations and individuals, seeking their thoughts for possible local actions to achieve the 9 point summary, listed below, of the SDGs and thereby create a culture of peace within their community.

- ! 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;
- ! Revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

The responses received covered a wide range of local groups although not as many replied as we had hoped. We found that, while e-mail may be faster and able to reach a wider audience, it does not always create a response. The material collected was summarised into a draft document for further discussion.

Although this was an OPTU initiative, support was needed from Wellington. This was given by UNANZ who also secured the sponsorship of the Wellington City Council.

The event, which was held in the Legislative Chamber, NZ Parliament Buildings, Wellington, had an audience of around 200, despite the weather! Her Worship the Mayor of Wellington, Celia Wade-Brown, welcomed the guests to the city saying she was pleased to support the event in her position as the head of the NZ Mayors for Peace.



Kate Smith MC for evening



Panelists

I was asked to act as master of ceremonies. Invitations were issued to those with an interest in developing a culture of peace, as well as participants – local, and Wanganui Maori, our keynote speaker, six panelists and three groups of entertainers from the Multicultural Council of Wellington. The original intent was followed through – to involve a cross section of any community – and it was very successful. I entertained a

vision of having a final document available on the night for distribution to those present and especially to the NZ permanent representative to the UN. Although this was not possible this time, I have not given up the dream of turning talk into action!

The planning and organisation was not without challenges, mainly dealing with communication at a distance, all of which acted as excellent learning opportunities for everyone involved. We can apply the experience gained for future activities. After a few false starts, we ended up with a committed, enthusiastic and energetic group of co-workers.

Choosing the panelists gave another opportunity to get input from a range of sectors of the community. They covered the law, human rights, philosophy, diplomats and academia.

A copy of the collated responses from the questionnaire was sent to them ahead of time and they were asked to contribute further thoughts and possible actions. This they did within their allotted time – Dr Graham Hassall, UNANZ National President acting as facilitator and time-keeper. A summary of the event including the key points made by each speaker is available from:

<http://www.unanz.org.nz/Portals/0/Peace%20and%20Security/2015%2009%2021%20International%20Day%20of%20Peace%202015%20Summary%20Document.pdf>

There were many young people in the audience which was most encouraging. They made a contribution to the event despite a lesser involvement with the questionnaire. Hearing the voice of the young people is vital if we are to create a true and lasting culture of peace.

Our Keynote Speaker was Dr Kennedy Graham, MP, who also acted as the Parliamentary host. His deep appreciation of the intent behind the event was evident in his speech on the theme of “The Invincible Power of Community Spirit”. His combination of intellectual rigour and easily recognisable examples set the whole audience thinking on many levels, from spiritual to citizenship, the UN to the global community. (A copy of his speech can be sent if required). Giving the audience food for thought was continued by the panelists.

The audience was invited to ask questions of the panelists and many took advantage of the opportunity. The questions covered a wide range of topics, many of a global nature relating to the UN, which gave some insight into what current concerns people have. This all added to the positive atmosphere giving encouragement to the creation of a culture of peace locally.

In keeping with the theme of community inclusiveness, the Multicultural Council of Wellington agreed to arrange some entertainment to round off the evening. There were two Indian groups – one presenting classical dance and the other a more modern setting – and a group representing Latin American women. These were enthusiastically received and proved a very positive way to end the evening.

Events in New Zealand begin with a Maori prayer and end with a Maori blessing. In this case the blessing was given by a Wanganui Kaumatua (leader) who travelled down with a group from Wanganui for the evening. All agreed that it was a most worthwhile journey.



Gita Brooke, OPTU co-founder



Young co-workers distributing CoP booklets

OPTU arranged the printing of copies of the Declaration and Plan of Action for a Culture of Peace which were distributed to guests as they were leaving.

All the hard work and effort needed to organise an event from a distance was alleviated by the enthusiastic help from youthful volunteers in Wellington who gave the event its special character, and the night will be remembered for the sense of hope and determination to make a peaceful future. I will end as I began with a quote from Federico Mayor (2011):

"It is time to take action against those who perceive the world simply as an immense market and the world's inhabitants as mere consumers. It is time to apply our great stock of available knowledge to meet the challenges of a raging environment." (Federico Mayor, 2011)

Photographs courtesy of the official photographer at the event, Eva Kaprinay

Kate Smith k_smith@clear.net.nz

OPTU Co-worker, Wanganui UNANZ President

XI. Building Trust Across the World's Divides **Initiatives of Change International**

President of *Initiatives of Change International*, Dr Omnia Marzouk, visited New Zealand from 31st October to 15th November this year where the theme of 'Building Trust across the World's Divides' resonated deeply with people she met within the fields of development, child health, leadership and governance.

Dr Marzouk has been active with Initiatives of Change for thirty years and spoke of her experiences in intercultural and interfaith dialogue in the UK, Europe, the Middle East and Asia. Her commitment to building bridges of understanding between the West and the Muslim/Arab world was clear as she instanced a visit to Lebanon this year, where Syrian and Lebanese women, Christian and Muslim, had worked together in the Creators of Peace programme.

As the first woman to be President of Initiatives of Change International, she was welcomed by Maori at Pipitea Marae and the headquarters of Te Kohanga Reo, the Maori language nest.

Dr Marzouk is a UK based emergency paediatrician. Born in Madrid, she spent her early years in Egypt. Moving to Australia as a teenager, she studied medicine at Sydney University while her father served as Egyptian Ambassador. She has an MD with distinction from Liverpool University and is a Fellow of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (FRCPCH), and a Fellow of the College of Emergency Medicine

(FCEM). She has been Consultant in Paediatric Emergency Medicine for 20 years at UK's busiest Children's Hospital – Alder Hey, Liverpool. She is now Associate Medical Director.

Initiatives of Change International is a non-governmental organization working for peace, reconciliation and human security worldwide. It has Special Consultative Status with UNESCO, and Participatory Status at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. For more information: www.iofc.org

XII. Reclaiming the Heart of Our Humanity – Working Together for a World of Compassion

“Reclaiming the heart of our humanity, where we can together discover the spirit of God living in each human being, and begin to serve each other out of a deep love and compassion will lead us to a new place, a civilization with a heart for all living beings and nature. A deep awareness arising out of a vision of the sacredness of life, both our own and others, and the environment, should lead us to treat everyone and everything with care and respect and into a gentle kinder way of living and treating each other.”

Quote from Nobel Peace Laureate, Mairead Maguire's presentation to the World Parliament of Religions, Salt Lake City Utah, USA, 15-18 October 2015.

Contact: <https://www.transcend.org/>

Mairead Maguire's book “The Vision of Peace” (foreword by Desmond Tutu and preface by Dalai Lama) can be obtained at www.wipfandstock.com ..

XIII. World Teacher's Day – 5 October 2015 Empowering Teachers, Building Sustainable Societies – Mobilizing for a Roadmap 2030 for Teachers

In a joint statement on World Teacher's Day 2015, the Director General of UNESCO, together with numerous senior UN officials as well as the General Secretary of Education International, acknowledges the indispensable role that education will play for achieving all the global development goals, outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Education is essential for the elimination of gender inequality, reducing poverty, creating a sustainable planet and fostering peace, but throughout the world today ‘*far too many teachers are undervalued and disempowered*’. There is also a ‘*mounting shortage of quality teachers, unequal distribution of trained teachers, and inadequate or non-existent national standards for the teaching profession*’ all of which is contributing to ‘*wide equity gaps in access and learning*’. Warning that this is a global education crisis in the making unless determined action is taken, the statement reminds us of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics findings which estimates that ‘*to achieve universal primary education by 2020 countries will need to recruit a total of 10.9 million primary teachers*’.

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002347/234755E.pdf>

Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals confirms the joint commitment to ‘ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’, and to ensure that: “*by 2030 all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality,*

promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.” (4.7)

The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) Director of Education, Dr. Caroline Pontefract reported on the progress that had already been made since the launch of the Agency in 2011. Expressing her deep gratitude to the teachers she pointed out that, being well-trained, dedicated, enthusiastic and interactive: ***“our teachers are reshaping the future of our school children’.***

<http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/unrwa-celebrates-world-teachers-day>

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.