

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. *Treating / Healing*

Modern science is constantly challenged to find remedies for the many human ills and environmental deterioration and come up with solutions on how to provide for the needs of a growing world population. More often than not science has risen to the task and found effective methods and means for repairing or managing conditions that even a few years ago would have been deemed un-treatable. So it would seem that, with the almost instant contact between all parts of the organic whole we call home, human inventiveness and technical wizardry should be capable of treating, repairing and providing for many if not all the dire human and planetary needs.

But scientists are not only opening the doors to new technologies – they are also revealing and recording, in ever greater detail and depth, the intriguing relationships and interconnectedness between all forms of life; and they are warning us of the many signs and symptoms of systemic stress and exhaustion, linking most of these with excessive demands and a corrupt sense of values. We are advised that science and modern technology, however advanced, cannot heal the wrongs that stem from the insatiable appetites and dysfunctional relationships whether between human beings themselves or with their environment.

Healing, scientists seem to suggest, must come from a profound change and transformation of the way we live and relate to one another and to all other planetary life. The Dictionary highlights the small but distinct difference in the emphasis of the two words *treating* and *healing*, showing that: to treat means to *act* or *behave* towards others or things in a certain way, to *apply* medical care ... or to *offer* food. (from Latin: ‘tracto’: to handle), while the meaning of: to heal is to *become* sound or healthy again - or to *cause* to do this. It also means to *alleviate* and *put right*. The noun Health is defined as ‘*a state of being well – body and mind*’. (Old English for Whole).

Witnessing or experiencing first hand the rampant rage of deranged leaders, the waywardness within democracies or splintered families; seeing, or personally living with, the fear, hopelessness and hunger of an ever increasing number of people, forced into a state of homelessness within our planetary home – all this is setting the heart of humanity alight with the urgency of the matters at hand. Although old habits die hard, the disturbing sight of the underbelly of the creature we have for so long allowed to reign or dominate, will fan the fires of our resolve to restore the state of being well – body and mind, to us all and to our sorrowful planet.

Once again the essential truth of the old proverb: ‘*as a man thinketh in his heart so is he...*’ is standing like a lighted arch over the battlefield on which our lessons are learnt. And perhaps we should welcome this poignant reminder that only the Heart can - and has the care and courage - to see the Truth, within the whole as well as within the particular.

On 22 April 2016 - the International Mother Earth Day - the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has invited all world leaders to a signing ceremony at the UN Headquarters for the Paris climate agreement: ‘Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’. Ban Ki-moon observed that this is ‘*the first agreement that joins all nations in a common cause based on their historic, current and future responsibilities*’.

The agreement came into being through the efforts made, not only by members of governments, but also through the initiatives of an unprecedented number of non-governmental organisations, people within the scientific, medical and educational

professions as well as the world of business - and not least through the worldwide pressure of public opinion.

In the Preamble of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development governments declare their resolve to act in a collaborative partnership with all stakeholders and all people ‘to free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want and to heal and secure our planet’ and to take ‘the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world on to a sustainable and resilient path’.

http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Resolution_A_RES_70_1_EN.pdf

This is indeed the season for healing and restoring of all relationships, between human beings and nations and with every form of life as it appears and evolves through all kingdoms within the planetary sphere of our Mother, the Earth.

***“I am not an Athenian – nor a Greek,
But a citizen of the world’
Socrates (around 400 AD)***

II. The Paradigm of the New Civilisation

The **Fuji Declaration** urges people from all walks of life to have the courage to ‘venture beyond their personal, cultural, and national interests and beyond the boundaries of their discipline, and come together in wisdom, spirit and intention for the benefit of all people in the human family’. It tells us that it is imperative ‘to bring together individuals from diverse fields – scientists, artists, politicians, business leaders and others – to create a solid multi-dimensional foundation for catalyzing a timely shift in the course of history’ ...

The Fuji Declaration is described as an international alliance of individuals, groups and organisations, united by a commitment ‘to live and collaborate toward the advancement of a more harmonious and flourishing world.’ It invites people from all nations and walks of life ‘to join in a communality of purpose beyond borders’.

(<http://fujideclaration.org/#sthash.KW7u4Lhk.dpuf>)

“The paradigm of the new civilisation is a culture of oneness with respect for diversity.

Just as the myriad cells and diverse organs of our body are interconnected by their oneness and work together in harmony for the purpose of sustaining our life, so each and every living thing is an intrinsic part of the larger symphony of life on this planet.

With the conscious recognition that we are all a part of a living universe consisting of great diversity yet embracing unity, we will co-evolve with one another and with nature through a network of constructive and coherent relationships.”.

(<http://fujideclaration.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/The-Fuji-Declaration.pdf>)

World Peace Youth:

On the 30th April the World Peace Youth will organise a live video webcast in which youth from around the world will share thoughts on the Five Principals of the *Fuji Declaration*. They are inviting all youths to join in this webcast event. For further details see: <http://worldpeaceyouth.org/upcoming-event/>

World Peace Youth aims to provide ‘a needed space where young peace ambassadors can have a voice without adult intervention and moderation’.

It aspires to provide ‘a meeting place where young people from around the globe can share ideas and network with one another’, and a place where the adults can listen and learn from these inspiring young people.

‘The youths of today are not only our future, but our present’

III. World Resources Institute

The World Resources Institute (WRI) is a global research organisation reaching more than 50 countries, with offices in US, Europe, India, China and other countries and with more than 450 staff and experts who work closely with leaders to ‘turn big ideas into action to sustain our natural resources – the foundation of economic opportunity and human well-being’.

The WRI points to the rapid depletion of these natural resources on which all planetary lives depend and has both internal as well as external processes for ensuring that their strategies will achieve tangible results. <http://www.wri.org/our-work/outcomes> - <http://www.wri.org/about>

World Resources Institute Internship Programme:

The WRI Internship Programme offers a variety of paid and unpaid internship opportunities throughout the year in offices around the world, which will provide unique learning experiences for students, recent graduates as well as other candidates who may wish to gain knowledge about a specific area of work.

The WRI look in particular for interns who are passionate about the environment and who will help WRI make a ‘direct global impact’.

<http://www.wri.org/internships-wri> <http://careers.wri.org/>

IV. Sustainable Development Through Tourism

The first World Conference on Tourism for Development will be organised by the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and the Government of the People’s Republic of China and take place in Beijing on 18-21 May 2016.

The theme is ***Tourism for Peace and Development***, which aims to focus a ‘high level debate on the contribution of tourism in the Sustainable Development Goals’, and how tourism can help ‘promote local culture and be ‘an agent of change towards more sustainable consumption and production (SCP) practices’.

The two high level discussions: ‘*Tourism for Poverty Reduction*’ and ‘*Tourism for Peace*’ will discuss how the international community, the private sector, and academia can cooperate with governments to enhance the contributions by tourism to poverty reduction and to peace. Particular emphasis will be given to find ways in which tourism can contribute to poverty reduction and the integration of ‘*marginalised and disadvantaged groups, particularly youth and women, into the global tourism value chain*’.

The Chinese authorities aim to launch a five-year nationwide tourism development plan to lift 17 % of the country's impoverished people out of poverty by 2020.

<http://media.unwto.org/press-release/2016-02-24/unwto-and-china-organize-first-world-conference-tourism-development>
www.tourismfordevelopment.org

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) is: *“guided by the belief that tourism can make a meaningful contribution to people’s lives and our planet. This conviction is at the very heart of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, a roadmap for tourism development. I call on all to read, circulate and adopt the Code for the benefit of tourism, tour operators, host communities and their environments worldwide.”*
Taleb Rifai, UNWTO Secretary-General

<http://dtxtg4w60xqpw.cloudfront.net/sites/all/files/docpdf/gcetbrochureglobalcodeen.pdf>

V. 2017 – International Year of Sustainable Tourism

On 4 December 2015 the UN General Assembly adopted the resolution which declared 2017 as the *International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development*.

The UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai said that the ‘*International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development will provide a ‘unique opportunity to advance the contribution of the tourism sector to the three pillars of sustainability – economic, social and environmental, while raising awareness of the true dimensions of a sector which is often undervalued’.*

A ‘*well-designed and well-managed tourism*’ can contribute considerably to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and is included in three of the SDGs – SDG 8: promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; SDG12: sustainable consumption and production, and SDG14: conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

[Read the adopted resolution. Tourism and the SDGs](#)

V. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Nairobi, Kenya, 17 – 22 July 2016

The theme for this the 14th conference of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) is “From decision to action: moving toward an inclusive and equitable global economic environment for trade and development” and describes the overriding focus of this event, while 4 sub-themes emphasise specific points for discussion:

- ! Challenges and opportunities in multilateralism for trade and development;
- ! Promoting sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth through trade, investment, finance, and technology to achieve prosperity for all
- ! Advancing economic structural transformation and cooperation to build economic resilience and address trade and development challenges and opportunities, at all levels, within the UNCTAD mandate, and
- ! Contributing to the effective implementation of and follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and relevant outcomes from global conferences and summits, as related to trade and development.

As Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD says in his Report to the Conference, UNCTAD XIV will be marking *'a critical moment not only for economic and social progress in the developing world, but also for the common future of all countries and communities'*. In his Report the UNCTAD Secretary-General highlights four *'action lines'* that are needed so as to fulfil the ambitions of the post-2015 development goals, namely:

1. building productive capacity to transform economies;
2. more effective States and more efficient markets;
3. tackling vulnerabilities, building resilience,
4. strengthening multilateralism and finding common solutions

Parallel events will be taking place during the Nairobi conference: a Civil Society Forum (14-21 July), a Global Commodities Forum (15-16 July), a World Investment Forum (18-21 July), and Youth Forum (19-21 July).

For details see: <http://unctad14.org/EN/Pages/Participation.aspx>
http://unctad14.org/Documents/tdxivpc_d1_en.pdf

'Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man or woman whom you may have seen, and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him or her' - Gandhi

VII. World Humanitarian Summit

<http://sgreport.whsummit.org/>

The first-ever World Humanity Summit (WHS) will take place on 23-24 May 2016 in Istanbul Congress Center, and the Lutfi Kirdar Convention and Exhibition Center in Turkey.

This is a *'global call to action'* by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon who, in his Summit Report *"One Humanity Shared Responsibility"*, outlines three main WHS goals:

1. To re-inspire and reinvigorate our commitment to humanity and to the universality of humanitarian principles;
2. to initiate a set of concrete actions and commitments aimed at enabling countries and communities to better prepare for and respond to crises, and be more resilient to shocks;
3. to share innovations and best practices that can help to save lives around the world, put affected people at the center of humanitarian action, and alleviate suffering.

From May 2014 to July 2015 regional consultations took place, involving more than 23,000 people as well as major thematic and stakeholder consultations, and also on-line consultations, which resulted in some 400 written submissions.

According to the Executive Summary this worldwide consultation consistently called for change in how we prepare and respond to crises; it generated a demand for a vision of a world whose *fundamental humanity* is restored i.e. *"a world that puts people and principles at the heart of humanitarianism"*

These consultations also show general agreement on the point that *'ambition without the commitment to act will not build on the best practice and create far-reaching change'*,

urging that *'decisive, collective action is needed to uphold our responsibility to save lives, protect people and preserve dignity'*.

In his recent Member States briefing the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon highlighted five 'core responsibilities for action' from his Report which he urges all stakeholders to accept and act upon:

- *Leaders must assume their responsibility to prevent and end conflict*
- *States must affirm their responsibility to uphold the norms that safeguard humanity*
- *Let us leave no one behind – let us reach those who are furthest behind*
- *A core responsibility is to change people's lives by moving from delivering aid to ending need; and*
- *We must invest in humanity – in enhancing local capacities, reducing risk and building effective and inclusive institutions, especially in fragile contexts.*

https://www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/whs_summit

'Human rights are not only violated by terrorism, repression or assassination, but also by unfair economic structures that creates huge inequalities.'

Pope Francis

VIII. International Peace Bureau (IPB) World Congress at Technical University of Berlin 30 September – 3 October 2016

The theme for this Congress: ***'Disarm! For a Climate of Peace – Creating an Action Agenda'*** aims to highlight the need for bringing the issue of military spending *'into the broad public debate and to strengthen our global community of activism'*.

IPB is convinced that the enormous global challenges, such as hunger, jobs and climate, could be brought closer to a solution by real disarmament steps; but such steps shall need to be *'clearly formulated and put into political reality'*.

The overriding objective of the World Congress could be seen as clarifying the *'connection between, on the one hand, the current global militarization and wars, and on the other, the need for a great transformation'*.

The IPB takes inspiration from a poignant quote by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon which states: *"The world is over-armed and peace is under-funded."*

IPB has been outlining the different themes and elements it hopes to see included and discussed at the Congress, and to be developed into effective and realistic *'strategies for change'*. It stresses that the Global Campaign on Military Spending is not merely about cuts in the military budget; it also includes:

- *conversion to a civilian-oriented economy;*
- *creating work for humanitarian solutions and sustainability in general;*
- *development of cooperation and prevention and resolution of violent conflicts, and*
- *demilitarisation of minds - new ways of thinking for all.*

Among speakers will be parliamentarians, religious leaders, journalists, community organisers and artists, as well as Nobel Prize winners and speakers from the areas of economics, economics, social sciences - *and* politics

The organisers stress the need for developing ‘*comprehensive visionary descriptions of the path to take - building a culture of peace*’.

The International Peace Bureau has gained broad support from numerous organisations, including Friends of the Earth, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Pax Christi International, World Future Council, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and UNI Global Union, as well as from other groups working within development, environment, social welfare, women, workers’ and youth organisations.

The Congress will also hold numerous cultural events and exhibitions and feature music from around the world.

<https://www.ipb2016.berlin/event/ipb-world-congress-berlin/press-release-IPB-01.02.2016>

IPB Youth Gathering

In order to create a platform of communication among Youth activists, the IPB World Congress has invited youths from around the world to an International Youth Gathering, which will take place from 29th September to 2nd October.

The IPB also invites organisations and individuals working with young people to become partners and help in setting up the Congress, offer suggestions to workshops and side-events, to bring in speakers and work together on the outcomes and follow-ups.

<https://www.ipb2016.berlin/youth/first-program/> www.ipb2016.berlin/youth

IX. Right to Peace

The UN Human Rights Council (HRC)* has created a Working Group (WG) to draft a UN Declaration on the Right to Peace. The process has been controversial, and the current draft is neither substantive in content nor does it enjoy a consensus among Member States. With the upcoming WG session in July, States are supposed to agree on a final version to either adopt by consensus or vote on at the HRC, before it is considered by the UN General Assembly and becomes a UN Declaration.

Given the controversial nature of *the right to peace* and the relatively low priority it has for States, NGO input has been largely ignored.

The following text contains excerpts from the oral statement recently delivered by Oliver Rizzi Carlson, UNOY Peacebuilders**, in which he acknowledges the significance of the ongoing discussions - and sometimes challenging but important deliberations - on the right to peace, which will be adding further ‘*substance as well as strategy*’ to the document for the next HRC session in June and the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) session in July.

Before sharing the following joint statement, Oliver acknowledges the need for gathering NGO input more efficiently, so that in the future we will have ‘*an effective way of developing a draft more NGO’s can support*’.

“We call upon States to include, in particular:

1. Both the individual and collective dimensions of the human right to peace;
2. A recognition of peace as more than the absence of violence or armed conflict;
3. The relationship between peace, development and human rights, and positive peace as an important dimension that goes beyond mere security;
4. The negotiation and settlement of all disputes and conflicts through peaceful and nonviolent means;
5. The crucial importance of peace education;
6. The recognition of the crucial link between the human right to peace and the right to life, which is indispensable for the enjoyment of all other human rights.

Oliver makes an appeal to all of us to help this effort by advocating for the right to peace with our governments, as it is ‘*essential to have more State allies in this process*’.

Oliver Rizzi Carlson, (oliver.rizzicarlson@unoy.org>)

* <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Pages/Home.aspx>

** UNOY is a network of 70 youth organisations in 45 countries with the shared vision of a world free from violence, and in which young people can and will be actively contributing to peace.(<http://unoy.org/>)

X. Women’s Leadership Paving the Way To Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

The above was the title of the parallel event at the 60th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW60), which took place on 16 March at the Church Centre for the United Nations, New York. It was organised by Soka Gakkai International and co-sponsored by Soroptimist International and the Global Movement for the Culture of Peace.

The event started off with two brief presentations by John Romano, Network Coordinator for Transparency, Accountability & Participation (TAP) for the 2030 Agenda who offered a general overview of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) process and how civil society organisations and individuals can get involved in the implementation process. Emilia Reyes, Director of Public Policies and Budgets for Equality and Sustainable Development at Equidad de Género (Gender Equality), and a facilitator for the Women’s Major Group, pointed out the fact that there are structural barriers we still need to overcome for women's human rights. This provided an overview of the UN intergovernmental process and the priority for all Member States for the next 15 years and information on how we can get involved in SDG implementation. This set the stage for the discussions which followed, focused on four different sets of SDGs.

Highlights from these discussions which addressed how women’s leadership and participation can help achieve the SDGs; what has worked and what are the remaining challenges to empower women as leaders in implementing the SDGs, are summarized below.

People: End poverty, hunger and reduce inequalities (Goal 1, 2 &10)

Initially, the group spoke about the symptoms of poverty, hunger and inequalities and the fact that they all affect women's leadership. The root cause came from lack of education. If hungry, a person is not able to think. Once women are fed, they can be taught and be encouraged to be involved in politics. Someone from Africa shared that votes were bought by bags of rice because women are hungry. Poverty stems from discrimination and inequalities. But the main problem is in changing mindsets and traditions. Mothers can plant the seed and change the way their sons think and help their daughters not have to repeat the abuse they themselves suffered. It starts with women's education and acquiring skills. This is the way to empower women.

Planet: Sustainable consumption and production and climate change. (Goals 12 & 13)

People from eight different countries were part of the group. There is a correlation between the way women and the earth is treated. Unhealthy consumption and production patterns drive forward the trend of the commodification of women. The quality of women's lives matter. Women intersect and engage in all areas, by facilitating input and cross pollinating solutions. Partnership is essential to accomplishing new objectives and creating practices, transparency and accountability. It was mentioned that we should not wait for governments to investigate and implement climate issues but work proactively in community clusters to uncover truths and get support for dissent. Women are the mothers of the earth - often at risk acting as protectors of the family and society as Human Rights Defenders, empowering each other.

Prosperity: Inclusive and equitable quality education (Goals 4)

The discussion started by someone mentioning how a particular Member State has not yet embraced the SDGs, lacking national action plans to implement it—which lead to the importance of civil society and NGOs engaging with them to raise these issues. One idea shared was to start involving state government officials in the goal of education and role of women's leadership. There is a need to address STEM when girls are younger (elementary school). More women need to teach Advanced Placement subjects in school as they would be good mentors to girls. Informal educational approaches which are offered by programs by organizations such as WAGGGS and AAUW for elementary and high school students are important. Women's leadership begins at the family level where mothers including daughters go to school. Mothers are children's first teachers.

Peace: Peaceful, just and inclusive societies (Goal 16)

There were quite a few people from Africa, such as Sudan, Nigeria and Uganda, where people have been affected by recent series of conflict and violence. For them SDGs and aspirations for peace were not just theory, it was their urgent reality. It was stressed by many that women in such countries need to be educated and empowered to know their rights and encouraged to exercise those rights. People also have to be educated about what SDGs are and how they relate to their lives. Conversation circles and discussions can be used to heal the paradigm of competition and be recognized by men. Women's unique qualities of intuition and empathy should be utilized to guide these discussions. One person said, peace starts with family, and women have to be role models at home. Some said that peace starts within, which will then have ripple effects on our environment. Another person said that instead of competing against men, we have to appreciate them, and practice different kind of leadership as women.

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw60-2016>

XI. The 60th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW60)

The UN CSW60 concluded on the 24 March with UN Member States committing to ‘the gender-responsive implementation of Agenda 2030’. The advanced unedited version of CSW60 Agreed Conclusions states in the first two paragraphs that:

1. The Commission on the Status of Women reaffirms the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and the declarations adopted by the Commission on the occasion of the tenth, fifteenth and twentieth anniversaries of the Fourth World Conference on Women.
2. The Commission reaffirms that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Optional Protocols thereto, as well as other relevant conventions and treaties provide an international legal framework and a comprehensive set of measures for realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women and girls throughout their life cycle..

UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka expressed her appreciation of the commitment of UN Member States to make the 2030 Agenda a reality in countries around the world, and stated:

***“Countries gave gender inequality an expiry date: 2030.
Now it is time to get to work.”***

For full text of *Agreed Conclusions* see:

<http://www2.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/60/csw60%20agreed%20conclusions%2024march.pdf?v=1&d=20160328T173209>

XII. Putting the World on Track Towards a Sustainable Future: The 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement

On 25 September 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted a Resolution “*Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*”. The Agenda offers a new set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a plan of action for people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership, “a charter for people and planet in the twenty-first century”. These 17 Goals, plus 169 targets, build on the 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), adopted in 2000, and complete what they did not achieve. But beyond the 2000 MDGs, with their emphasis on eradication of poverty, gender equality and health (the good news being that poverty and infant mortality have indeed greatly declined), the SDGs set out a wide range of other economic, social and environmental objectives. In particular, the SDGs highlight the need to ensure *sustainability* of human life, and life of other species, on Earth. Although avoiding alarming language, they thus carry a sense of urgency: at this point in time humanity is faced with a real risk that, if no radical change of direction is taken, life on Earth will *no longer* be sustainable, due to a one sided, carbon based and addicted lifestyle, which we humans have developed.

While the Agenda speaks of a commitment of world leaders to achieve them, and include a specific Goal (Goal 17) on means of implementation, the document, unlike the 1945 UN Charter, is not legally binding either with respect to the standards it sets, or its

implementation and follow up. It is, therefore, above all an aspirational document, a call on governments, stakeholders, and civil society to work together to turn the Goals into reality. Its significance lies in the agreed direction for “transforming our world”, and the ambitions it spells out. The document’s authority will grow as states, organisations, and individuals will orient themselves to, and base themselves on, it, pursuing its Goals and targets. It is then, also, that choices will have to be made, which do not yet appear at the level of the Resolution, and more concrete ambitions and commitments will have to be formulated and accepted.

Against this background, the Paris Agreement, adopted on 12 December 2015, a few months only following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, emerges as a landmark achievement – not just in terms of its key substantive features, but of its negotiation process and the dynamic mechanism it provides to take stock and strengthen ambition over time. Unlike the 2030 Agenda – a non-binding UN Resolution – the Paris Agreement is a treaty, that will be open for signature from 22 April 2015, and in order to become effective will require approval by 55 countries that produce at least 55% of the world’s greenhouse gas emissions. It is based on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, adopted in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, which earlier on gave rise to the 1997 Kyoto Protocol and the 2009 Copenhagen Accord.

“Paris” intends to improve on “Copenhagen”, which was entirely based on voluntary pledges, and to replace “Kyoto”, which will come to an end by 2020. The latter treaty was negotiated “top down”, on a sharp division between developed countries that were required to make a number of reductions and undeveloped countries that were under no obligation, but gained the participation only of countries accounting for 12 % of total emissions. Unlike “Kyoto”, “Paris”, adopted by all 195 participating countries, establishes an inclusive arrangement that involves *all* countries.

The Paris Agreement sets out a long term goal to put the world on track to limit global warming. Its three main goals are (1) Reduction: holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius (3,6 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees C; (2) Adaptation: increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development, that does not threaten food production (Goal 2 of the 2030 Agenda), and (3) Financial support: making finance flows consistent with these aims.

The Paris Agreement is based on “nationally determined contributions”, which are essentially voluntary. But several procedural mechanisms, which are obligatory, are put in place to make sure that these contributions will become more ambitious over time, in order to reach the overall purpose of the Agreement. The Parties are to submit every two years greenhouse gas inventories and information to track their progress. Technical expert review, a facilitative, multilateral consideration of Parties’ progress and mechanism to facilitate implementation of and promote compliance is also provided. The implementation of the Agreement by all participating countries together will be evaluated every five years, with the first evaluation in 2023, and a preparatory “facilitative dialogue” in 2018. Instead of a mandatory enforcement mechanism, which was beyond reach, a “name and shame” system should encourage countries to comply and gradually step up their efforts.

The Paris Agreement thus puts all major greenhouse gas emitting countries, including Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, the European Union, India, Indonesia, Russia, and USA, on an upward, transparent path to cutting greenhouse gases. That this was possible

is due to a large degree to a world-wide bottom up mobilization of governments and non-State actors, business, investors and civil society. For example, associations between cities were formed, and ingenious new avenues explored, including the use of court proceedings to force governments to do more to combat climate change.

But at least as much as its genesis, the implementation of the Paris Agreement, the realization of its goals essential to avoid global catastrophe, will require sustained efforts by governments and citizens, indeed by all of us. Carbon pricing at a global scale will be essential, and fossil fuel subsidies must be removed. Beyond, a reorientation of our consumption habits (Goal 12 of the 2030 Agenda), indeed a resetting of our perception and deepening of our awareness of the core values of our lives will be critical. However, rethinking energy, transport, economy, competitiveness, industrial and digital innovation, is also an exciting and morally satisfying prospect, because it will necessarily be based on a more harmonious, respectful relationship with Mother Earth than the carbon based society we have created since the industrial revolution, and which we are now urged to leave behind us.

The Paris agreement gives a great boost to the 2030 Agenda. Together they stand out as beacons of hope. They act as a wakeup call, an appeal on our responsibility, an urgent invitation to all of us to join the path towards a sustainable future for humanity and life on Earth.

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XIII. 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.

TE INOINGA NUI

Na te maramatanga kei te
Ngakau o Te Atua

Kia koha te maramatanga ki te
Ngakau o te tangata
Kia koha te maramatanga ki te ao

Na te aroha kei te ngakau
O Te Atua
Ki horapa te aroha ki te
Ngakau o te tangata
Kia hoki mai ano te Karaiti
Ki te ao

Na te mauri o Te Atua
Kia marama te haere a te tangata
I te huarahi o Te Atua

Na roto mai I te Tangata
Ma te maramatanga me te aroha
Tatau e arahi
A ma tenei e pa kuaha ki te Kino

Ma te Maramatanga,
Ma te Aroha,
Ma te Kaha e whakau
Te whakaaro nui te ao