

Many to Many

A Quarterly Publication

Issued by
**Peace Through
Unity**

Accredited NGO in
association with the UN
Department of Public
Information

“Many to Many” under the aegis of Peace Through Unity is a communicating link between “we, the peoples” of all nations, races, creeds and ideologies offering in the spirit of the preamble of the United Nations Charter an instrument for the furthering of better relationships based on deepening mutual understanding and the aspiration to promote unity and cooperation beyond all differences.

Issue Number 139

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I Who am 'I' – who are 'We'?

The rapid collapse of relationships at every level of the world community is evoking many different reactions from us all. As news media is saturating space with a continuing stream of updates and soundbites from deeply traumatic events suffered within every corner of the planet, it stands to reason that anxious and heated discussions are taking place within and throughout the human family. Between outbursts of indignation, name-calling and finger-pointing, the attempts to outline possible solutions will often be shot down or slowly dissolve into further arguments and nit-picking around details on plans of action.

This incessant flow of words, whether loud and opinionated or soothing and reassuring, seems to have devalued their content through sheer misuse - or overuse. Added to this, we may also find ourselves becoming less sensitive to ceaseless streams of images of people running away from the burning ruins of their homes; the small boats packed to overflowing with people fleeing from the mayhem of war; the intimate close-ups of a child dying of hunger in the arms of an equally mal-nourished parent; all of these human tragedies topped up with 'fly-over' images revealing the vanishing of forests, the butchering of wildlife, the polluted oceans and rapidly melting polar ice – all displaying today's state of affairs of our planetary home.

It is hard, near impossible, to respond to - or take in - the sheer magnitude of this systemic condition affecting, it seems, each and every part of our planetary environment. People in power are likely to engage in personal and/or political mudslinging and weapon-rattling, while others can tend to sink into a state of passive, self-indulging gloom and doom. But throughout the entire human family there is also a rapidly growing number of people of all ages, who are sensing the heartbeat of a new lease of life stirring within their own being; people who are eagerly nurturing this 'source of newness', this groundswell from within themselves and recognised in the eyes of others.

A strong network of interconnectedness is emerging between 'we, the peoples of all nations'; together we are, albeit cautiously and slowly, waking up to the call of our Mother who is, and has been, preparing the soil for new beginnings. With boundless patience and persistence She teaches us to let go of all our many unsustainable habits and attachments which are nailing us to the past.

Through the ages, humanity has searched for and, step by step, acquired answers to its many questions. Propelled by curiosity and the constant urge to overcome any recognised boundaries has led to continuous explorations of outer spaces as well as inner spheres of relationships. With youthful zest a wealth of knowledge has been accumulated by the human species, living on this minute and precious planet we call home, journeying around the Sun in accordance with the higher order of things. The time has come for us to mature into adulthood, wake up to the inner sense of purpose and shoulder the responsibility for our actions.

With each day the rising rays of the Sun will bring us further into the Aquarian millennium in which humanity will learn to temper its own cravings with the needs of other lives which are also evolving within other planetary kingdoms. With deepening sensitivity the human being will learn to understand and *express* – and will learn also to *receive* - the kind of Love that asks nothing in return. Thus the human adolescence shall earn the right to become a trusted – trustworthy - co-worker within the greater Whole.

Let us - for the Love of God - grow up! Let us resolve to become who we are - *truly* are – and were always meant to be.

The rite of passage goes through Heart.

II End Violence Solutions Summit

Stockholm, Sweden 14-15 February 2018

This first ever Summit to end violence against children, hosted by the Swedish Government in cooperation with the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children and the WePROTECT Global Alliance, brought together 386 people from 67 countries in a firm resolve to protect children from violence through '*increased political will*', together with '*accelerated and strengthened collaboration*'. <http://www.end-violence.org/>

In his opening speech the Swedish Prime Minister, Stefan Löfven, underscored this point by urging all leaders to '*step up to give every girl and boy the opportunity to grow up to be a strong and confident individual*'. He hoped that the solutions presented at the summit would not end up as '*just high-sounding words*' but lead to permanent change. We must keep our promise to end violence against children in our time, he urged. Violence affects hundreds of millions of children, girls and boys, every year, but its impacts are largely ignored. Every five minutes a child dies from violence, while many more suffer physical and psychological harm.

The Summit Proclamation acknowledges the unprecedented number of people that had gathered in Stockholm from all sectors of society and all parts of the world as partners to share and advance our work to end violence against children. At the heart of this work are the rights, enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, together with the renewed global commitments of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. In target 16.2 and associated targets of Agenda 2030 all UN member nations express their commitment to end all forms of violence against children by the year 2030. The right to grow up free from violence has been placed well and truly at the centre of the political agenda. It also expresses a deep appreciation of hearing the voices of the children 'as equal members of our society', and having been 'moved by their power, vision and demands of us, the adult world, to act and do more'.

The importance of shifting the focus towards 'prevention' was underscored at the Summit, reflecting an emerging consensus that a systematic holistic approach can provide a framework for ending violence against children, such as INSPIRE and the Model National Response, developed by the WePROTECT Global Alliance.

<http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/207717/1/9789241565356-eng.pdf>

The Summit has celebrated the commitment of pathfinder countries whose leadership is at the core of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children. It is important that they continue to demonstrate significant, sustained and measurable reductions in violence. We call on more countries to become pathfinders, learn from each other's successes and hold each other accountable for delivering results that change children's lives.

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/?p=9061>

“We now return to our home countries with five overarching conclusions. Building on children's rightful demands, the global community needs to:

1. Demonstrate leadership at the most senior levels of governments, international organizations, civil society, faith groups, and the private sector to take action, engage more countries to join the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children as pathfinders and improve cooperation and coordination between different actors and policy areas.
2. Increase knowledge on how to prevent, detect and treat violence against children, girls and boys, and accelerate implementation of evidence-based strategies to end violence against children. INSPIRE strategies is a guide.
3. Develop and share solutions and best practices to defend the safety, integrity and dignity of every child, in every setting, including in cyberspace.
4. Invest more resources to prevent and respond to violence, from all relevant sources (national budgets, development cooperation, etc.) including through the Fund to End Violence Against Children as a vehicle to support solutions and innovation.
5. Place all children – and especially those most vulnerable at the centre of Agenda 2030 and its progress review at the High-level Political Forum in 2019. There Heads of State and Government will meet for the first time to review progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Let them make the children of the world a priority.”

In her closing remarks, Swedish Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality, Åsa Regnér, emphasized the need to keep learning from one another, to support each other and to accelerate action both globally and at home, and stressed that: “We, the global community, need to demonstrate leadership, build knowledge, develop and share solutions, invest more resources and place all children – especially the most vulnerable – at the heart of Agenda 2030.”

Let us, she urged, *‘do all we can to ensure that every child, everywhere, can live a life free from violence.’* [End_Violence_Solutions_Summit_Proclamation.pdf](#)

Among the many steps through the years toward the 2018 Stockholm Summit are:

- ! **The text of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**, which came into force on 2 September 1990 and outlines the agreement between UN members states to ‘respect and ensure’ the rights set forth in the Convention: *‘...irrespective of the child's parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status’*. Article 12 of this Convention further calls for States Parties to assure that the rights of the voice of the child be heard - ‘in all matters affecting the child’, and it is

‘given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child’.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

- ! **The final report by the Independent Expert for the Secretary-General Study on Violence against Children** (of October 2006), that was presented to the UN General Assembly and outlines States parties’ obligations to protect children from ‘all forms of physical or mental violence’. The Study on Violence, supported jointly by OHCHR, UNICEF and WHO, subsequently resulted in the more detailed ‘**World Report on Violence against Children**’. In his foreword to this Report, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan stresses that no country is immune, whether rich or poor; violence against children ‘*cuts across boundaries of geography, race, class, religion and culture*’. While states bear ‘primary responsibility for preventing and responding to violence against children’ there must be action in all sectors ‘from health and education to labour and justice’ – and ‘at all levels, local, national and international’. (<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/CRCIndex.aspx>)

III Rights of Women

In their Statement for Women’s Day the UN Women’s Human Rights Experts remind us that the long and hard road toward equality and rights for women started more than one hundred years ago. Already in the early 1900s women began to share experiences with each other and discuss possible solutions for change, and in 1908 some 15,000 women marched through New York City to make publicly known their demands for ‘shorter hours, better pay and voting rights’.

The Statement for Women’s Day also pays tribute the ‘brave women who have spoken out against sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence’, thus broken the silence on this issue, too often tolerated within ‘*environments which normalise such violence*’.

The UN Women’s Human Rights Experts also pay tribute to Women who, individually as well as collectively throughout the years, have ‘*always been the active driving forces for social and cultural change*’, and now we have a significant moment ‘*where the shame and fear have shifted from the victims to the side of abusers and perpetrators of sexual violence*’; a moment where the complacency of others and the indifference of our institutions are no longer accepted without challenge.

“This is a transformative moment, a liberating and an empowering moment”, the Statement tells us, and what is so significant about this moment is that it is ‘*no longer just about individuals, it is about society*’; it is about women’s rights as human rights.

However the Statement warns that there are still places, far away from the spotlights of international media, where ‘women have little resort to justice and no choice other than carrying the burden of shame and blame’. True equality between women and men is still ‘a struggle of humanity’.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22759&LangID=E>

IV Commission on the Status of Women - 12 March 2018

In his opening statement at the 62nd session of the Commission of the Status of Women, the President of the UN General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, stressed the ‘fundamental role’ that the Commission had played within the United Nations system since its very first meeting in 1947, mentioning in particular its contribution to the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and also the creation of the most comprehensive instrument for women’s rights: “The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women”. <http://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/cedaw/pages/cedawindex.aspx>

The President pointed to the past mistake of trying to ‘tackle challenges’ and find solutions without considering and addressing their gender dimensions. This has had a particularly damaging effect on women, and rural women in particular. To highlight this point the President said that when the low education rate of rural areas was discussed, it should be taking into account that more rural women, some 50 percent more, than men were lacking basic literacy skills; and that the pay gap between rural women and men could be as high as 40 percent.

The empowerment of rural women is already proving to be beneficial to rural communities, the President told the meeting. He mentioned the Nigerian woman, Mariama Mamane, who had developed an eco-solution to the ‘availability of irrigation and drinking water, while also producing energy’, and Sunita Kashyap, from India, whose organisation supports 3000 women farmers to grow and sell their own crops.

These kinds of women do not need our help in finding solutions, said the President: “*What they need is our support in turning their ideas into reality*’. Such support is not only critical, it is also smart, he insisted, because ‘*it will allow us all to see progress, across the board – from agriculture and education, to the rule of law and peace*’.

<https://www.un.org/pga/72/2018/03/12/commission-on-the-status-of-women/>

V UN Women Training Centre eLearning Campus

The UN Women Training Centre eLearning Campus is ‘a global and innovative online platform’ dedicated to supporting the realisation of gender equality and to building a society that respects and promotes human rights for all women and men. The training is seen as a transformative process that aims to provide knowledge, techniques and tools to develop skills and changes in attitudes and behaviours.

The Training Centre is committed to ‘delivering high quality training for gender equality by offering a diverse range of self-paced, moderated, blended and face-to-face courses, tools and services’

For more, see: <https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/>

VI Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls

On the International Women's Day 2018 a new regional program to improve gender equality and address violence against women and girls was announced. Funded primarily by the European Union with support from other donors, such as UN Women, this Pacific Partnership will bring together representatives from governments, civil society organisations, communities and other partners, to actively promote gender equality, prevent violence against women and girls. This partnership will also aim to increase access to quality response services for survivors. <http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2018/03/new-pacific-partnership-addresses-gender-equality>

VII Establish Governmental “Infrastructures for Peace” (I4P) to Help Achieve the UN Culture of Peace and Sustainable Development Goals

By Anne Creter – UN NGO Representative “Peace Through Unity”

March 27, 2018

SUMMARY: Violence is a major worldwide public health hazard. Violence also greatly impedes implementation of two standard-setting United Nations General Assembly resolution initiatives currently guiding member state governmental and civil society actions for the health of the planet. Establishing governmental “infrastructures for peace” (I4P) - particularly departments or ministries - can help transform this harmful global epidemic of violence that prevents realization of the UN vision for world peace ... because political will is needed if humanity truly wants peace! The legal heft of a governmental “department of peace” intentionally aligned in policy at all levels with the proven science of nonviolence as a national priority organizing principal makes common sense. Its comprehensive institutional structure would proactively articulate, teach and encourage nonviolent “best practices.” Such a concentrated focus would surely shift our culture of violence to a culture of peace because what we pay attention to grows. We must evolve from the century’s old dysfunctional “peace through strength” worldview to the proven one of “strength through peace.”

We live in an escalating worldwide *culture of violence* of catastrophic proportions which threatens the very survival of our planet. **This global violence epidemic is a major public health hazard that greatly obstructs humanity from achieving the lofty UN vision of world peace and sustainable development.** Since government was created by humankind to improve lives and ensure our basic right to live in peace, clearly it is failing us. Something fundamental is missing in its construction. If peace is the paramount value for which governments are instituted, what structures are in place to foster it? I believe what is missing are “*infrastructures for peace*” (referred to as “I4P”) -- particularly national departments and ministries of peace. This is not a new idea. In 1793 when the U.S. government was being formed, founding father Dr. Benjamin Rush (a signer of the Declaration of Independence) advocated for creating a Peace Office “for equal footing with the Department of War.” At different periods throughout U.S. history various Peace bills have been introduced but in the end they have always failed due to lack of political will.

Evidence based research on the science of nonviolence suggests that **departments or ministries of peace -which make “nonviolence” a national organizing principle focus and priority - would logically help advance the global UN movements for the culture of peace and sustainable development.** Since we create our world by what we collectively

pay attention to, having governmental I4P would help achieve peace and sustainable development by being the *institutional glue binding these two inextricably linked elements together with intentional, purposeful nonviolent actions at all levels of existence*. Violence is inherent in life, yet the many sophisticated forms of manmade violence are learned behaviours. If we are capable of learning greater ways of more deadly violent destruction with nukes and assault weapons, then we are capable too of learning nonviolent ways. In “civilized” society, this new learning is long overdue.

I4P as a concept is a new approach in peacebuilding with varying definitions, first introduced by Peace Studies giant John Paul Lederach in his 1997 book *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. He defined I4P as *an ongoing platform for collaboration and dialogue between all stakeholders which is a fundamental building block for supporting constructive social change over time*. Another peacebuilding authority Paul van Tongeren defines I4P as *institutional mechanisms appropriate to each country’s culture which promote conflict solving approaches based on dialogue and nonviolence within communities aimed to prevent or diminish violent conflicts*. The **UN Development Programme** defines I4P as *a network of interdependent systems, resources, values and skills held by government, civil society and community institutions that promote dialogue and consultation; prevent conflict and enable peaceful mediation when violence occurs in society*.

Creation of the United Nations in 1945 after World War II was an historic evolutionary leap in human consciousness, along with its brilliant normative-setting adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. More recent evolutionary leaps occurred with two additional normative-setting General Assembly resolutions mandating specific actions known to foster peace and sustainable development: the 1999 **UN Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace** (A/RES/53/243) <http://www.un-documents.net/a53r243.htm> and the 2015 **Transforming our world: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**(A/RES/70/1). http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E.

September 13, 1999 was a watershed UN moment when the **Culture of Peace** resolution was adopted by consensus. For when the UN was first created as the highest world peace authority in 1945, **the scientific discipline of Peace & Nonviolence** had not materialized yet, so the UN was not able to provide a specific roadmap on how to actually achieve peace. That did not happen until the precedent-setting Culture of Peace resolution was passed for it established for the first time in human history (*through an integral approach to preventing violence*) certain inter-related universal normative standards for action that must happen to build a culture of peace in eight key Action Areas (education, sustainable economic and social development, human rights, gender equality, democratic participation, tolerance and solidarity, free flow of information and international peace and security). **Article 5 of the Culture of Peace resolution states that governments have an essential role in promoting and strengthening a culture of peace, which chronicles why governmental I4P are important**. The reason I4P are a basic missing link so desperately needed in government for peace and development to flourish, is because principals of the relatively new professional field of Peace & Nonviolence are intentionally built into how they are organized and operate.

Another big consciousness leap happened at the UN on September 25, 2015 after years of negotiations with governments and civil society, when it was agreed that all nations would

individually and collectively work in collaborative partnership to achieve **17 Sustainable Development Goals** (SDG) with 169 specific operationally defined targets by 2030 (www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/).

As stated in its preamble, “*this agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity that seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom.*” The SDG’s are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental. Yet when they were being developed at the UN, passionate debate arose over where “peace” fits in. Peace advocates (such as myself) thought “peace” should over-arch all the SDG’s as conceived in the prior Culture of Peace resolution, not merely be part of a separate goal (**SDG#16 -- Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions**). Because all the SDG’s are aspects of the culture of peace and visa-versa (one does not exist without the other), I4P adds substance or legs and balance to the “*peace – sustainable development*” equation. This makes establishing I4P a rational, innovative governmental construct in order to build and strengthen implementation of the Culture of Peace Programme of Action and the SDG’s.

A growing international movement advocating for I4P’s has been in existence for over 10 years, known now as the *Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace* (GAMIP). GAMIP has had 6 international summits with a global community of dedicated government and civil society representatives from well over 50 countries in all continents. Its mission is to develop local, regional and national I4P that are not only governmental but in other forms as well, such as councils, peace academies etc. Several countries have operational ministries of peace: Costa Rica, Solomon Islands, Nepal and the autonomous region of Bougainville in Papua New Guinea. Other countries such as the U.S. and Canada have legislation pending in their governments associated with long-enduring national grassroots lobbying campaigns. For the Canada Department of Peace campaign see www.canadianpeaceinitiative.ca and for the U.S. Peace Alliance campaign for Department of Peacebuilding bill H.R. 1111 visit www.peacealliance.org.

The theme of this year’s annual “**World Beyond War**” Conference in Toronto, CA on Peace Day September 21, 2018 is “**Designing a World Beyond War: Legalizing Peace.**” There will be a workshop on “*Departments and Infrastructures for Peace*” presented by Dr. Saul Arbess, GAMIP cofounder and Canadian Peace Initiative Director and me. See <http://worldbeyondwar.org/nowar2018/>.

For more information on this topic, visit www.gamip.org (currently under reconstruction) and sign the global www.PeaceNow.com petition seeking a billion signatures worldwide asking the UN to pass a General Assembly resolution encouraging all countries to develop departments & ministries of peace.

Anne Creter (New Jersey, U.S.) can be reached at annecrets@aol.com (609-744-9439).

Anne Creter, MSW is a retired Licensed Social Worker and long-time "peace advocate" who has served the U.S. Peace Alliance in many capacities: *National Department of Peacebuilding Committee*, NJ State Coordinator, NJ-3 Congressional District Leader and on their Board of Directors. Globally, she is a UN NGO representative for *Peace Through Unity* and UN Liaison to the *Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace*; also a founding member of the *Global Movement for the Culture of Peace* at the UN. Locally, inspired by having been a Bernie Sanders "peace" delegate at the 2016 DNC (*Bernie was an original cosponsor of the first Dept of Peace bill in 2001*) her peace pursuits now include appointment to her County Democratic Committee and grassroots community peacebuilding organizing.

VIII Water for Sustainable Development

On World Water Day, the 22 March 2018, the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, officially launched the **International Decade for Action on Water for Sustainable Development**. He also expressed his deep appreciation for the role that President Rahmon of Tajikistan had played in spearheading this effort at the UN General Assembly.

The UN Secretary-General drew attention to the High-Level Panel on Water's outcome report, entitled "Making Every Drop Count: An Agenda For Water Action", published on 14 March. The Secretary General expressed his gratitude for their work which is '*deep, serious and inspiring for us all*', and promised that the United Nations will stand ready to help countries implement the Panel's recommendations in every possible way, including through 'promoting policy dialogues, exchanging best practices, raising awareness and forging partnerships'. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/making-every-drop-count-agenda-water-action-high-level-panel-water-outcome-document-14>

With the support of UN-Water (<http://www.unwater.org/about-unwater/>) the UN Secretary General will prepare an Action Plan for the Water Decade, which will include three 'core objectives', to:

- 1) *transform our silo-based approach to water supply, sanitation, water management and disaster risk reduction to better tackle water stress, combat climate change and enhance resilience;*
- 2) *align existing water and sanitation programmes and projects with the 2030 Agenda, and*
- 3) *generate the political will for strengthened cooperation and partnerships.*

Although safe water and adequate sanitation is in particular related to the object of Goal 6, the Secretary-General pointed to the inter-relatedness of the aims and objects of most, if not all, of the Sustainable Development Goals. Together these goals will be contributing to social well-being, inclusive growth and sustainable livelihoods throughout the world.

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

But growing demands for water and poor water management, as well as the effects of 'climate change' have increased 'water stress' in many parts of the world, he said. Offering a few statistics he pointed out that:

- * 40 per cent of the world's people are affected by water scarcity;
- * 80 per cent of wastewater is discharged untreated into the environment and more than 90 per cent of disasters are water-related;
- * About 2 billion people lack access to safe water and more than 4.5 billion people lack adequate sanitation services.

“Quite simply – water is a matter of life and death”

IX International Day of Happiness 2018

Happiness at the Centre of Government Work

20 March 2018 – UN Delegates Dining Room – Morning Session

The global movement to put happiness at the center of governance reflects a mix of inspiring idealism and down-to-earth realism. Skeptics of the happiness movement believe that power, not happiness is the (inevitable) business of government. Yet pursuing happiness is not only idealistic, it is the world's best and perhaps only hope to avoid global catastrophe.” Chapter 1: Good Governance in the 21st Century by Jeffrey Sachs, Global Happiness Report 2018 ~

This year the fifth International Day of Happiness (IDH) was celebrated on 20 March 2018 at UN Headquarters-NY by the convening of an interactive dialog on *'happiness at the centre of government work'*. This working roundtable event was co-hosted by the intergovernmental Global Happiness Coalition (GHC) founding members: Costa Rica, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Portugal, Slovenia and UAE.

Welcoming remarks were given by *UN Under-Secretary General Alison Smale* and were followed by members of the GHC who shared their experiences involving efforts to mainstream happiness, wellbeing and quality of life in public policy, programs and budgeting. Speakers were as follows, including a few highlights from their remarks:

H.E. Ambassador Lana Nusseibeh, Permanent Representative of the UAE—GHC was initiated by the United Arab Emirates (UAE). We believe the achieving of the 2030 Agenda is part of the blueprint for governments in achieving happiness for their populations. The coalition's launch on this day marks a new milestone in the understanding of happiness as a public policy prerogative. We warmly invite new member states to join this founding group.

H.E. Ambassador Darja Bavdaž Kuret, Permanent Representative of Slovenia—We believe that all governments have the responsibility to work for and live up to the expectations of the people. We found out that the development tools we have in common are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and that implementing the SDGs is a prerequisite for the wellbeing and quality of life.

H.E. Ambassador Juan Carlos Mendoza-Garcia, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica—With happiness, you live not only better, but also longer. Focusing on what really matters... It's the golden rule we should live by today. It's also a necessity.

H.E. Ambassador Juan Sandoval Mendiola, Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico—In a recent survey of 130 million people in Mexico last January, results showed that on a scale of 1 to 10 the average measure of satisfaction [happiness] was 8.2...this despite lack of currency, corruption and other challenges in the country.

H.E. Ambassador Yerkin Akhinzhanov, Deputy Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan—True happiness cannot be achieved without sharing it...when you share it, yours increases 100%.

Mr. João Serrão Lopes, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Portugal—The efforts of advancing happiness are fundamental to achieving global prosperity and wellbeing. Every government should aim to create an environment for the pursuit of happiness.

H.E. Hamid Al-Bayati, former Permanent Representative of Iraq gave an overview of IDH. Resolution A/RES/66/281 was passed in 2012 by the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaiming 20 March the International Day of Happiness.* This resolution recognizes the relevance of happiness and wellbeing as universal goals and aspirations in the lives of human beings around the world, and the importance of their recognition in public

policy objectives. It also highlights the need for a more inclusive, equitable and balanced approach to economic growth that promotes sustainable development, poverty eradication, happiness and the wellbeing of all peoples. *Ambassador Al-Bayati* said: We must care for other human beings because we are one human family from the same Source. Real happiness comes from within; it's not about money. It's about spending less and giving more. Suggesting middle-class people can and need to give up some things to save the poor, he then announced that he would be giving up 50% of all he owns to widows, orphans and the poor.

"It is not happy people who are thankful. It is thankful people who are happy."
~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Dr. Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the Global Happiness Council and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), provided an overview of the Global Happiness Policy Report 2018 <www.happinesscouncil.org>. He said that governments are increasingly using indicators of happiness to inform their policy-making decisions. Finland ranks as the #1 happiest country measured by surveys undertaken by Gallup from 2015-2017. The rest of the top ten in order of overall happiness are Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Switzerland, Netherlands, Canada, New Zealand, Sweden, and Australia. The US dropped four spots down last year, ranking 18th—(and falling in part because of the ongoing epidemics of obesity, substance abuse, and untreated depression).

Richard Layard from the Wellbeing Programme, Centre for Economic Performance, at the London School of Economics and Political Science gave a brief overview of the **World Happiness Report** <www.worldhappiness.report>. This 6th edition of this report focuses on Happiness and Migration. He noted that the major cause of misery in rich countries is mental illness, and in poor, it's poverty.

The later part of the event featured small-group breakout roundtables structured around 6 themes underpinning the 2018 Global Happiness Policy Report: (1) mental health, (2) positive education, (3) work and wellbeing, (4) social wellbeing, (5) happy cities and (6) wellbeing and happiness metrics. Roundtables were co-chaired by Permanent Representatives from GHC and non-coalition members in order to facilitate an interactive dialog on key policy opportunities and barriers. Because of time constraints a summary of the roundtables are to be forthcoming.

"GDP (Gross National Product) measures everything in short, except that which makes life worthwhile." ~
Robert F. Kennedy

Increasing numbers of people realize that money, although necessary to fulfill certain needs, is no guarantee for happiness. People yearn for happiness, not war. GDP agendas do not capture important quality of life elements, which are important for the wellbeing of any community. And, they are blind to the effects that changes in the scale of economic production may impose on our resources that sustain our wellbeing over the time. In conclusion, measuring happiness is, perhaps, also an attempt to measure peace in the world; it can provide a valuable and productive opportunity to look at more sustainable ways to improve life on this planet for all.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, "*Happiness for the entire human family is one of the main goals of the United Nations,*" and called upon all human beings to "*dedicate our efforts to filling our world with happiness.*" ~ International Day of Happiness, 20 March 2015

**Note:* The date of 20 March for the International Day of Happiness was chosen for its significance as the March equinox, a universal phenomenon felt simultaneously by all of humankind, and which occurs the moment when the sun crosses the celestial equator, when day and night are of equal length.

By Iris Spellings, Peace Through Unity Representative to the UN, Department of Public Information < optu.ny@gmail.com >

X Human Kindness

Letter from Ananda Young

I recently had a conversation with a friend who argued that people never do anything if they have nothing to gain from it themselves. Happily, I have had many experiences to prove him otherwise, especially on my most recent trip where I hitchhiked to Barcelona from Edinburgh in an annual hitchhiking competition to raise money for charity run by my university, the University of St Andrews.

Our adventure started out in the center of Edinburgh in the wee morning while my team partner and I were still half asleep and yawning. Having never done anything quite like this before, we were eager but nervous. We were not quite sure what to expect or what we would find on the 1,400 mile journey to Barcelona. As we began our trip, the sight of us waiting by the side of a road and holding a sign elicited blank stares, bewildered but curious glances, honks of support and the intermittently a person who would stop, ask us where we were going and offer us a ride. From engineers to lorry drivers to retirees to people our own age, during our next four days we met a host of unique characters from all walks of life. We met an aeronautical engineer who spends half of his year working and half sailing his boat through the canals of Europe, a young French couple on their way home from a road trip and a suspicious businessman who, even though he thought picking up hitchhikers from the side of the highway in the middle of the night was crazy, did so against his better judgement and delivered us right to the finish line.

The only thing they all had in common was their willingness to help two strangers on the side of the road. We found that people's generosity to us often stretched beyond simply giving us a ride. They shared with us perspectives, stories, advice and even their homes. A lorry driver from Glasgow who, having been a backpacker in his youth, shared with us handy hitchhiking advice. A chicken deliverer shared with us the story of how he had come to live in Birmingham after growing up in a small town in Pakistan and how difficult it had been to move to country so different from the one he had known but how it was worth it because his children now have new opportunities that he did not have (he has never gone to school and is illiterate whereas here his children go to school and hope to go to university). A very concerned music teacher offered us dinner and a place to stay for the night and even to come back and pick us up again if we had not found a ride by dinner time while a pastry deliverer from Tunis cancelled plans with his friend and drove us 5 hours to our next location, filled our hands with pastries from his bakery and offered us a place to stay for the night. A retired cop on his way to Stratford-Upon-Avon offered to take us into the town to see Shakespeare's

birthplace before dropping us off at a service station along a different highway upon hearing about my curiosity of seeing the place we learned so much about in the classroom.

With all the disheartening news we hear about on a daily basis, it is easy to lose faith in the goodness of humanity and of the world; I know I do. But the four days our journey took were filled with adventure and kindness and I am once again touched and humbled by the generosity of this world--from the generosity of my fellow racers to our collective community who donated to our causes and to everyone who helped all of us along the way. Overall the 2018 hitchhiking race raised over £30,000 for our selected charities and everyone arrived safe and sound.

Ananda Young is our newest Youth Representative to the United Nations Department of Public Information. In a short background note she says: 'I am from New York but currently I live in Scotland where I study International Relations and Arabic at the University of St Andrews. I was asked to write a short blurb about my most recent trip to Barcelona on a hitchhiking competition for charity which I have included as an attachment.' Let me know if you have any feedback for me or really any questions at all! My e-mail address is: <anandayoung154@gmail .

XI # WalkTogether

The #WalkTogether campaign is an initiative by The Elders Foundation which aims to inspire hope and compassion and 'celebrating communities working for the freedoms that unite us'.

The Elders is an organisation of independent leaders, initiated more than a decade ago by Nelson Mandela, who are committed to continue to bring people together from all walks of life to realise the 'Freedoms' to which Nelson Mandela had dedicated his life and work: the Freedoms of Peace, Health, Justice and Equality.

#WalkTogether campaign is an initiative **is** funded philanthropically, without affiliation to political or commercial interests. <https://www.walk-together.org/freedoms/>

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 me
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