



Many to Many

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I Becoming

It is almost impossible to truly comprehend how and why so much human effort, ingenuity and resources, slowly and methodically, have been - and *are being* - bent toward the creation of an ever growing arsenal of tools for mass destruction. Only a minute number of these 'tools' would be needed to destroy all life and living beings within our increasingly polluted and exhausted planetary environment; and yet, this year further capital and energy is being invested so as to add to this lethal stockpile of atomic weaponry.

Should we sincerely ask ourselves how this situation could come about on our watch? Despite prayers invoking peace and goodwill are continuously sounding forth from throughout the world, and although letters are written, petitions are signed, and public demonstrations are appealing for human rights and good relations between all peoples and nations ..., have we somehow become resigned to the current state of affairs and accustomed to the steadily increasing tension? Is the energy behind our prayers, words and actions slowly eroding – the hope for change suffocating in the air of despair and/or cynicism?

Whatever the reason may be, we seem at a loss to come to grips with the sheer magnitude and complexity of the challenges now facing us and all other planetary life. Despite the tendency to ignore subtle warning signals we cannot avoid becoming increasingly aware of the ever growing number of human beings, fleeing from areas overcome by extreme conflict and/or devastated by natural disasters, one often the consequence of the other. We see people in poor as well rich nations, who are homeless and suffering from hunger and disease next door to absurd luxury and riches. We watch with dismay animal species slowly disappearing within their depleted and polluted habitats.

Although standing knee-deep in opinions and somewhat mesmerised by eye-catching/fast-selling news-bites we are becoming increasingly resolved to let a steady eye and compassionate heart guide our way to right response and useful action. Confronted with all these systemic challenges people worldwide are not merely protesting and analysing, discussing and arguing how to remedy and/or provide for immediate as well as long-term needs: we also reach out to one another across all borders and offer whatever personal skills and/or resources we may have to heal, to bring sustenance and to help rebuild and restore whatever is broken or needing support. Today the long and intense analytical discussions and finger-pointing are slowly mellowing into an attitude of deep listening, so as to better understand where we can, effectively, help bring the changes we agree are so sorely needed.

Have we perhaps reached a 'point of transition', not too dissimilar to that of the caterpillar, where the initial state of 'crawling, eating and consuming' comes to an end? A point in time where the vehicle, severely restrained by old limitations, will be surrendering into and allowing for the process of transition to begin to take place into a whole new dimension of living? This process, called metamorphosis, is, we are told, not merely a spectacular physical transformation but a '*... complete change of form and nature*', and '*...a stunning display of evolutionary mechanism at work*'.

Not unlike the caterpillar, human beings have been eating, consuming and exhausting our natural environment. With ingenuity and skill humanity has been reaching out to explore new territories, providing further opportunities for consumption. And from space we can see – *are* seeing – the spherical form of our own planetary home from a new perspective.

Let us hope and believe that we too shall ‘metamorphose’! Let us have faith that we shall - when our hearts open wide - develop wings and *fly!* And, indeed, throughout the world the young among us are rising up and out of the general state of anxiety and indecision. Fearlessly they seem to see the weakening of old structures, habits and hierarchical state of affairs, as a welcome, albeit challenging, opportunity to break free of the old confining mould, and create a world community in which each and all living beings can thrive and evolve.

Heart teaching us to fly.

II. Highlights from Mary Robinson’s address to the UN Security Council – 12 June 2019

As the current Chair of the Elders (founded in 2007 by Nelson Mandela), Mary Robinson opened her statement by thanking the Security Council for the opportunity to participate in this session focussing on conflict prevention and mediation. She shared how Nelson Mandela had charged every member of the group with the mandate to dedicate their skills and energy to: *“support courage where there is fear; foster agreement where there is conflict and inspire hope where there is despair”*.

His urgent appeal for us to express such courage of heart is as urgent today, she said. Fear, conflict and despair are all too obvious throughout the entire world: *“from the streets of Khartoum to the townships of Harare; the bombed-out hospitals of Idlib to the ruined schools of Yemen; and the slums of Gaza to the Rohingya refugee camps of Cox’s Bazaar in Bangladesh.”* But too often the UN Security Council, in particular the five permanent members, *‘has failed to live up to its responsibilities and has favoured realpolitik or short-term power stratagems rather than meeting the solemn commitments outlined in the UN Charter’*. And, *‘nowhere has this been more apparent than in the repeated use of the veto by certain permanent members on resolutions aimed to prevent mass atrocities, including the use of chemical weapons on civilians’*.

In the conclusion of her address Mary Robinson, on behalf of The Elders, offers three specific areas within which the Council can play a ‘proactive and positive role on conflict’:

1. The importance of prevention: pointing out that everyone in this room will recognise that prevention is by far the most effective way to deal with conflicts. But ‘prevention’ has occasionally been distorted to *‘justify deals with unscrupulous leaders who pay lip-service to peace and mediation as a way to*

retain power without ever taking the necessary steps to address the root causes of conflict and division'. Insufficient attention has also been paid to the 'role and voice of women on the ground in terms of conflict prevention.'

Acknowledging the leadership role the Council has shown through the passing of the Resolution 1325, she called for the Council to *'redouble its collective efforts to make sure women's perspectives and experiences are reflected in the mainstream of peacekeeping and conflict prevention policy'*.

2. Climate Change: Together with nuclear weapons there is no greater existential threat to our planet than climate change, stressed Mary Robinson, and expressed her deep appreciation that the United Nations showed *'commendable leadership on this issue, brokering the Paris Agreement in 2015 and ensuring that climate is an integral element of the Sustainable Development Goals'*.
3. Impact of technology: The issue regarding the more long-term and holistic view of the causes of conflict and how to prevent conflict will need to include considerations as to the impact of technology, including artificial intelligence and automation. We need, said Mary Robinson, to listen to and learn from the young people: *"the 'digital natives' who are fluent in this brave new world of technology, but who also risk paying the price for progress as previously secure jobs and career paths become obsolete"*. Further to this: *'social media, while being a powerful tool for connecting people around the world, has also been used as a tool for enabling violent extremism, and for spreading misinformation which has contributed to violence and social unrest'*.

There is an urgent need to develop a process whereby states and governments become more transparent about their cyber capabilities and deterrence mechanisms, said Mary Robinson, and: *"the international community must not wait until a major tragedy occurs to develop these rules"*.

I believe, she added, that: *'the Security Council is uniquely placed to lead the efforts to find a progressive, inclusive consensus'*. <https://www.theelders.org/news/unsc-must-work-together-deliver-its-mandate>

III. United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech

In his statement on 18 June this year, introducing the *'United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech'*, UN Secretary-General **António Guterres** stressed that this plan of action was in response to the *'menacing wave of intolerance and hate-based violence'* that is and has been targeting worshippers of many faiths across the globe.

The world has witnessed Jews murdered and their graves defaced with swastikas; Muslims gunned down in Mosques, their religious sites vandalized; Christians killed at prayer, their churches torched...And *'beyond these horrific attacks, increasingly*

loathsome rhetoric is being aimed not only at religious groups but also minorities, migrants, refugees, women and any so-called "other".

Reminding us that the very identity and establishment of this Organisation are *'rooted in the nightmare that ensues when virulent hatred is left unopposed for too long'*, UN Secretary-General shares his fears that the world is reaching *'another acute moment in battling the demon of hate'*. And this is precisely why, *'...I have launched two United Nations initiatives in response'*:

* *'a Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech to coordinate efforts across the whole United Nations system, addressing the root causes and making our response more effective' and*

* *'developing an Action Plan for the UN to be fully engaged in efforts to support and safeguard religious sites, and ensure the safety of houses of worship'*.

Governments, civil society, the private sector and the media – indeed *each and all of us* – have important roles to play, stresses the UN Secretary-General, and political and religious leaders have *'a special responsibility to promote peaceful coexistence'*.

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/articles/2019-06-18/the-wildfire-of-hate-speech>

Hate speech is defined as: *'abusive or threatening speech or writing that expresses prejudice against a particular group, especially on the basis of race, religion, or sexual orientation.'*

IV. 8th Annual UN High Level Forum on The Culture of Peace

The 20th anniversary of the adoption of the landmark UN "Culture of Peace" Resolution is being observed by the UN on 13 September, at this year's 8th Annual High Level Forum on The Culture of Peace at the UN headquarters. On 13 September 1999, the United Nations General Assembly adopted, by consensus and without reservation, its resolution A/RES/53/243 on the **Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace**.

This historic norm-setting document is considered as one of the most significant legacies of the United Nations that would endure generations and manifests very significantly that the culture of peace is a process of individual, collective and institutional transformation. 'Transformation' is of the most essential relevance in its implementation. Asserting and re-affirming the commitment of the totality of the Member States for building the culture of peace, since 1997 the UNGA has adopted every year resolutions on the subject.

The Global Movement for the Culture of Peace (GMCoP) is urging all peoples throughout the world to join us during this special observance - to amplify the importance of the concept of the culture of peace and the urgency of fully and effectively implementing the universally accepted **UN Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace**.

When we see what is happening around us and throughout the world, we realize the urgent need for promoting the culture of peace, peace through dialogue - peace through non-violence. The culture of peace begins with each one of us; and unless we are ready to integrate peace and non-violence as part of our daily existence, we cannot expect our communities, our nations, nor our planet to be peaceful in the real sense.

The day-long UN High Level Forum on The Culture of Peace is intended to be an open public opportunity for the UN member states, UN system entities, civil society including NGO's, media and private sector to have an exchange of ideas and suggestions on the ways to build and promote the Culture of Peace. This year's High Level Forum will be convened by the President of the UN General Assembly Her Excellency Maria Fernandez Espinoza of Ecuador. Office of the President of the General Assembly (OPGA) with the leadership of Bangladesh supported by GMCoP has been engaged in preparatory activities for this major UN observance.

Bearing in mind the broader dimension and potential impact of the Culture of Peace, OPGA chose this year's theme to be **"The Culture of Peace: Empowering and Transforming Humanity."** Their concept note states that: *"In the light of the importance of the Culture of Peace and its potential for responding to the global challenges facing mankind, the 20th Observance should be central to the pivotal discussions and commitments expected at the General Assembly in September. The theme reflects the enduring value of the Culture of Peace for the transformative 2030 Agenda."*

The 20th anniversary UN High Level Forum on The Culture of Peace will be broadcast worldwide by the UN WebTV - www.un.org/webcast/index.asp.

Plans for further activities:

To manifest their own commitment to the culture of peace, various activities have been initiated by civil society organizations in different parts of the world.

A unique mind-body-spirit Culture of Peace event is planned separately as a contribution by Pathways to Peace to the 20th anniversary observance on Saturday, 14 September – titled 'On, By and For Youth' in New York.

A universal meditation on the Culture of Peace is also in the works. GMCoP will provide details of these and other observances as they become available. So please stay engaged and proactive if you want to participate.

Further, we invite you and/or your organization to align with these efforts around 13 September by creating and/or participating in events of your choosing within your community to demonstrate your commitment to the Culture of Peace. Suggested actions could be: mention Culture of Peace anniversary on your website front page, conduct a Culture of Peace workshop, initiate an educational Culture of Peace campaign, advocate with your government officials for Departments, Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace, citing the Culture of Peace resolution as the basis for them.

Pathways for Peace has set up a website dedicated to the Culture of Peace 20th anniversary that is designed to collect all the Culture of Peace actions taken around the world in observance of this milestone anniversary. A Culture of Peace World Map will be produced from the data showing the range and depth of Culture of Peace activities occurring globally. Civil society is encouraged to provide input to it at this link: www.internationaldayofpeace.org .

GMCoP Coalition <http://cpnn-world.org/new/>

V. United Nations Annual Civil Society Conference

This year the UN Annual Civil Society Conference will take place in Salt Lake City, Utah from 26th to 28th of August. It will be the first US City to hold this conference outside the UN Headquarters in New York. The City's Mayor, Jackie Biskupski, welcomed the decision, saying that she *'could think of no better time or place than Salt Lake City, for the United Nations to reintroduce its vision, mission, and values to the American people'*. These NGO conferences usually attract more than 3,000 participants, representing over 700 civil society organisations from over 100 countries.

What makes these conferences important and meaningful for NGOs and civil society organisations throughout the world is, according to Bruce Knotts, Chair of the Committee, that we are not simply invited by the UN to share our views; we are seen as *'equal partners who are shaping the dialogue and making a substantive difference in the strategic planning to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals'*. The significance of the above sentiment was underscored by Naruxa Cardama, Sec/Gen. of the non-governmental organisation Partnership on Sustainable Low Carbon Transport (SloCaT), who agreed that the Sustainable Development Goals were providing a global framework for cooperation to *'tackle the great challenges of our day'*. Cities are now growing so quickly, and we must ensure that they are being built with careful thought, and that extra effort is made to ensure that *'no person or group is left behind'*. While our 'outcome document' will reflect what civil society demands from governments and corporations, it will more importantly outline: *'what we ourselves can concretely do as empowered citizens to ensure our communities are inclusive and sustainable'*.

Youth representatives, Ali Mustafa and Madison Denkers, will be presenting the survey which will reflect the thoughts and proposals of Youth, as to *'carving out a dedicated space within the conference for youth-led conversations...'* However, we want *'...not only to be visible as part of the legacy of this conference but also to inform the broader conversation on behalf of youth around the world, who will inherit this earth'*.

<https://outreach.un.org/ngorelations/dpi-ngo-conference>

"The real makers of history are the ordinary men and women... their participation in every decision about the future is the only guarantee of true democracy and freedom"
– Nelson Mandela

VI. United Nations Global Compact Leaders Summit 2016

Making Global Goals Local Business :

On the 22 June 2016 business leaders from 75 countries, leaders from civil society, the UN and Government came together in New York 'to advance private sector actions for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals'.

UN Global Compact Executive Director, Lise Kingo, saw it as an encouraging sign that a growing number of CEOs were already recognising that the SDGs were offering a *"roadmap for business to rethink approaches to sustainable value creation, but the challenge is now to scale up this movement to include companies everywhere."* Supporting this point at the meeting, the UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, said that the SDGs will create huge market opportunities everywhere and allow companies: *"to do well by doing good"*. He stressed that *'the optimism and entrepreneurship of the private sector must be a driving force'*.

Through several 'opportunity sessions' held at the Summit, participants were looking at the potential for transforming risks into opportunities. Among the 'key topics' were

- ! Changing lifestyles to promote sustainability,
- ! Addressing climate change,
- ! Building peace through responsible business,
- ! Financing sustainable solution and business models,
- ! Ending poverty to create new markets, and
- ! Translating global goals into local business action.

A number of announcements were made during this summit which included the announcement of the result from the 2016 CEO Study (conducted with more than a thousand UN Global Compact participant CEOs in 108 countries across 26 industries). The Study shows that 87 per cent of CEOs believe that: *'the SDGs represent an essential opportunity to rethink approaches to sustainability'*, and nearly half of the participants believe that businesses will be the most important actors in their delivery. <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/take-action/events/leaders-summit/leaders-summit-programme>

This year's summit will take place in New York from 23-26 September.

<https://www.unglobalcompact.org/take-action/events/1704-un-global-compact-leaders-week-2019>

VII. World Economic Forum, Global Summit, 2019, Osaka, Japan

The delegates at the Global Summit in Osaka discussed the risks to the world economy, as well as individual country economies, from climate change to cyber security.

Børge Brende, the President of the World Economic Forum*, has alerted countries to the urgent need for a multi-stakeholder collaborative approach to overcome the risks and their effects, facing the world today.

A summary of findings, found at <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/07/multi-stakeholder-risk-resiliency-climate-change-trade/>, begins by saying, *"While there is profound opportunity to be captured in the new era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, there will also be immense disruption across industries."* This current revolution is technology based. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming an increasing part of everyday life, and keeping electronic data safe and secure from cyber-attack, are examples challenging all individuals, companies and countries.

Multilateral international co-operation can overcome challenges, as seen after the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, when Central Banks around the world worked together to prevent even greater disruption. But at present, division rather than co-operation is happening at the same time as the global economy is slowing and financial markets are more volatile, in the face of uncertainty over trade and political conflicts.

This is expected to continue according to, *"The World Economic Forum's Global Risks Perception Survey of 916 experts, policymakers and members of the non-profit community, 91% of respondents believe that economic confrontations/frictions will increase in 2019 between major powers."*

However, the damage being caused to the environment poses a bigger risk to society over the long term. The top three risks identified by the Global Risks Perception Survey are climate related – “...*extreme weather events, failure of climate-change mitigation and adaptation and natural disasters.*” The effects of these, along with others listed, will affect people in all parts of the world. They are already becoming the norm rather than just being occasional events.

While the trade risks and those of climate related events, are easy to see and measure, the risks and effects from technology challenges may not be so obvious. Data fraud or theft affects individuals, business and governments, while the effects of cyber-attacks can be even greater and more widespread. Added to this is the rate of adoption of AI and its application to an increasing range of human activity. While this can offer new opportunities for improvements in business and lifestyle, there are also risks attached.

More detail can be found on the website relating to the World Economic Forum’s Osaka Summit, as well as in depth information on the risks and challenges identified.

* *Børge Brende, "A multistakeholder approach to risk resiliency" (2019), Journal of Risk Management in Financial Institutions, Vol 12, No 3, pp. 223–231.*

VIII. Sustainable Development Goals Report 2019

In his introductory remarks to this new, 2019 report, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres reminds us that the 2030 Agenda, since its inception in 2015, has provided us all with a blueprint on how we can together live ‘*productive, vibrant and peaceful lives on a healthy planet*’.

With 2030 rapidly approaching he suggests that perhaps we should ask ourselves ‘*if our actions today are laying the right foundation to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals*’. The new 2019 Sustainable Development Goals Report will be providing us with evidence-based insights and answers to any such questions.

The Report shows that some progress has been made, among these:

- * Extreme poverty has declined
- * The under-5 mortality fell by 49 per cent between year 2000 and 2017
- * Immunizations have saved millions of lives
- * Marine protected areas have doubled since 2010 and countries are working ‘*concertedly to address illegal fishing*’
- * 186 parties have ratified the Paris Agreement on climate change
- * 71 countries and the European Union have more than 300 policies and instruments supporting sustainable consumption and production, and
- * A wide range of other actors – international organisations, businesses, local authorities, the scientific community and civil society have: ‘*engaged with the SDGs in a manner that generates great hope for the coming decade*’.

However, the Report also identifies numerous areas that shall need ‘*urgent collective attention*’, in particular within the natural environment, which is deteriorating at ‘*an alarming rate*’: *sea levels are rising; ocean acidification is accelerating, one million plant and animal species are at risk of extinction and land degradation continues unchecked.*

In addition to this: *'global hunger is on the rise, and at least half of the world's population lacks essential health services'*.

The Report stresses that, collectively, we are moving too slowly in our efforts to end human suffering and create opportunity for all: *'our goal to end extreme poverty by 2030 is being jeopardized as we struggle to respond to entrenched deprivation, violent conflict and vulnerabilities to natural disasters'*.

In September this year the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, the Climate Action Summit and other crucial meetings will be provided with update statistics and detailed facts and figures as to the general state of affairs of our societies and planetary environment. Hopefully our leaders will have the courage of heart to lead the way into a fairer world - in *every* meaning of this word.

<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2019/>

IX. The Power of Words

When words are so powerful, why are we not more careful when using them?

Care is needed when choosing the right words, how they are delivered and how they are received. Once said, words cannot be taken back. It is all too easy to say something which is either mis-heard or misinterpreted by the listener and this can lead to an unwanted or unexpected reaction. Misinterpretation is usually the catalyst for violence. Why is it that people can react so differently to what is said? Very often a reaction is an unconscious pattern learned in early childhood in a given cultural setting. Reasons for this are not necessarily logical, nor do they apply to today's circumstances. Being aware of this, it is possible to avoid knee-jerk reactions. Think first before responding.

Communication for a peaceful outcome has been well researched and the following work may be easily recognised: Marshall Rosenberg on non-violent communication (NVC, <https://www.cnvc.org/>), the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP, <http://avpq.org.au/>) and Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP, <https://www.nlp-techniques.org/>). NLP is the base for Language and Behaviour Profile* (LAB Profile®, <https://www.successtrategies.com/lab-profile/what-is-lab-profile/>) which provides a set of skills based on a person's language and behaviour.

Each of these has common elements. Think before saying anything, choose your words carefully and, where possible, anticipate the reaction to what you say and how you say it. Avoid making judgements, using labels or showing disrespect. If you were the receiver, how would you react to what is said, and why? This might take a bit of practice to identify the real emotion being triggered by words, however, once identified, an appropriate and relationship-building response can be made. It could be useful to ask your listener what they heard to ensure the correct message is being communicated.

Why is this important? Apart from an obvious violent reaction, there may be other more subtle effects which can cause long-term harm. We are being bombarded by seemingly endless information on all sides, some of this is useful, some interesting, some informative, some stimulating, some baffling, and some incendiary. How do we cope with it all? What about the oxymoron of 'fake news'? How can we judge the worth of the 'news'? How can we assess the intentions of the writer/speaker?

We are faced every day with communication: family conversations, teaching, work discussions, social conversations, marketing and political rhetoric. In each case, we need to ask ourselves – is this true, or is it only an opinion? Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but trying to force others to agree with you is neither ethical nor likely to lead to long-term improved relationships. Aim to do the ‘right’ thing by following your heart.

The ability to evaluate the intent of what is being said is becoming more necessary to combat the propaganda being published on social media and in the more traditional news media. History provides clear examples of the results of blindly believing and following the crowd (peer pressure). Just because something is said loudly and often does not make it either true or right – but it can lead to disastrous consequences. We are being subjected to increasing instances of ‘hate’ speech and mass agitation, which is the slippery slope to demonising and dehumanising human life, leading to violence at all levels of society. It is up to all of us to urgently find a voice to give a clear message that this behaviour is neither right nor acceptable.

Individually and collectively, we must apply the principles of non-violent communication in all its forms to call out blatant propaganda and replace it with heart inspired messages to promote lasting and peaceful relationships.

However, a careful choice of words is not the whole story. What is being said needs to come from the heart to complement the energy provided by a change in mind-set: heart and mind working in unison. Use the power of words for the good of all.

Kate Smith, PTU co-worker

Kmwsmith48@gmail.com * Rose Charvet, Shelle. Words That Change Minds: The 14 Patterns for Mastering the Language of Influence, Institute for Influence.

X. Climate Action Summit

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has planned a Climate Action Summit to take place on 23 September this year with the aim for world leaders to arrive at agreement on ‘*concrete and realistic plans to rapidly accelerate action*’ leading to the implementation of the Paris Agreement. This agreement, he hopes, will lead to a ‘*pivotal shift toward a cleaner, safer and greener future*’, and be ‘... *backed by the ‘passionate voices of young women and men around the world who understand their future is at stake*’.

This is ‘*the battle of our lives*’ he urges, which we can and *must* win, and the solutions are ‘in our hands’. He proceeds to offer some clear and concise suggestions as to solutions, which he believes will meet the enthusiastic support of young people around the world: ‘*tax pollution, not people; stop subsidizing fossil fuels; stop building new coal plants by 2020, and to focus on a green, not a grey economy*’.

The special envoy chosen for the Summit, Luis Alfonso de Alba, aims to ensure that the world community has the tools, the vision, and not least the political will, necessary to ‘*move forward on ambitious climate action for the benefit of all aspects of society*’. <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/> <http://sdg.iisd.org/events/un-2019-climate-summit/>

XI. The 26th Annual World Yoga Festival

On 20 June 2019, the 5th International Day of Yoga was observed at the UN. Recognizing the universal appeal of yoga, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 21 June as the International Day of Yoga by resolution 69/131.

The World Yoga Community organized its 26th Annual World Yoga Festival on the same day at Tillman Chapel in the UN Church Center. Over 30 spiritual workers of all faiths and leaders from around the world gathered together to celebrate. There were interfaith prayers, meditations, mantras for Peace, dance, music, bhajans, kirtan, devotional songs and an award ceremony. Speakers included H.E. Adama Dieng, the UN Secretary-General's Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide, H.E. Ambassador Toshiya Hoshino, Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations, Shri Devadasan Nair, Consul, Cultural Affairs, the Consulate General of India – New York.

Sharon Deep, NY Representative to the UN for PTU was also one of the many who were invited to speak. Sharon quickly explained how the type of yoga that she practices is called Raja Yoga (unity) "which leads," she explained, "to Agni Yoga (synthesis). Just like more familiar types of yoga, various postures are exercised, creating a channel for energies to stream forth ... BUT Raja Yoga and Agni Yoga stretch the mind with the creative imagination being used to visualize various thoughtforms created in unity (Raja Yoga) with the One Soul, which eventually, over time, rather seamlessly leads into an identification of a synthesis (Agni Yoga) with the One Life." So, she continued, "we can use our creative imagination to visualize various thoughts with a knowing that energy follows thought. Always, we practice holding the thought close to heart that all of us are working together. It is as if we are each contributing to the light above all of us. The light gets brighter as we focus our attention on it and as we work together, united, in bridging energies purposefully (with Purpose being an aspect of Divine Will seeking immediate expression as understanding (standing under) the Will to Good and seed goodwill)." All those gathered were then invited to use their creative imagination to visualize:

From a point of Light within the Mind of the One Life, Let light stream forth into all human minds

From a point of Love within the Heart of the One Life, Let love stream forth into all human hearts

From the Center of the One Life, where Divine Will is known, Let Purpose guide all human free will

From the center which we call the human race, Let the Plan of love and light work out

Let Light and Love and Power restore the Plan of love and light on Earth

The festivities were orchestrated by Guru Dileepkumar Thankappan, Founder and NGO Representative to the UN of World Yoga Community. The event proved evident that one can practice one's own religion as well as acknowledging, honouring, and respecting all the paths that lead to the Divine. The intention set for the day was to celebrate human and divine oneness.

So may it be and help us each and all to know and to do our part.

Sharon Deep & Iris Spellings, NY Representatives to the UN for PTU