

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. EDITORIAL – Freedom**
- II. “INVESTING IN DEVELOPMENT”**
- III. ENVIRONMENTAL TERRORISM**
- IV. 2005: INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MICROCREDIT**
- V. SOBERING THOUGHTS ON NATURAL DISASTER PREVENTION**
- VI. THE SHADOW OF DEATH: The Future of Chechnya**
- VII. STATE OF THE WORLD’S CITIES**
- VIII. “CLAIM YOUR RIGHT TO DECISION MAKING”**
- IX. THE II WORLD WITHOUT BORDERS MEETING**
- X. “SOLDIERS IN THE LABORATORY”**
- XI. THERE IS A PEACE – poem**
- XII. THOUGHTS ON DEMOCRACY**

THE GREAT INVOCATION – in English and Hungarian

I. FREEDOM

When President George W. Bush in his inaugural speech recently declared his goal to be nothing less than ‘freeing every human being on earth’, explaining that this “is the urgent requirement of our nation’s security” – then perhaps people everywhere should take note. Because human freedom and national security is an urgent issue that concerns us all – each one of us – wherever we live.

2004, the International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and Its Abolition, gave us the opportunity to discuss the issue of slavery in all its forms and identify new types of slavery afflicting our modern world that also will need abolishing.

The inner urge for greater freedom is often closely linked with a compulsion to rebel; to release oneself from the shackles of the old and explore the new. Humanity shares this inner perpetual drive towards new goals, horizons and relationships with all other forms of life. Every limitation, imposed upon intelligent life within any temporary state of confinement will cause intense activity leading to the release of energy into the wider world holding promises of new freedoms to be gained.

Extracting energy from our environment has given the world more light and heat, greater speed and power than ever before, which we can use as we will. And perhaps this is where we might find some clarification of the president’s statement quoted above. Through joint effort scientists from many parts of the world found a way of releasing and controlling the energy of the atom. This energy is now largely in the control of a few of the world’s nations, for the protection of the ‘way of life’ of the citizens within their borders against those living outside them. In the hands of the leaders of the nuclear power nations lie now the kind of freedom they propose to distribute “into the darkest corners” of the world and apportion to peoples living there. This might be how the “freeing” of all human beings can come to be seen as an “urgent requirement” for securing the American way of life.

But as it has been said, freedom cannot be imposed or dictated, controlled or forced. A self-serving, self-indulging lifestyle within a heavily armed border will not feel free for long. The only assurance life offers is constant change and transformation.

As individual human beings have demonstrated to their fellow human beings throughout the ages but perhaps even more so in today’s polarized and violent world, it is within the incorruptible, indestructible, enduring and ever victorious human spirit that true freedom has its seat. It is no other power but the spirit of the women and men of Iraq, of Ukraine – indeed of any country - that will set their nation free. It is no other but the light of the human spirit that will shine into the darkest corners of the world and in solidarity and respect release their fellow men and women from the tyranny of poverty, abuse and neglect.

Life tolerates failure and forgives mistakes, but rebels against any form of slavery. Life gives us the freedom to express inherent qualities so that we can learn to express them better. Through the law of cause and effect we will learn to choose wisely. Through choosing with greater wisdom and increasing love of fellow human beings we earn our freedom – real freedom.

II. INVESTING IN DEVELOPMENT

Report by the Millennium Project

On 17 January this year, the UN Millennium Project presented its report: “Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals” to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. This document, the outcome of the combined effort of an independent advisory body of 265 of the world’s leading development experts, provides a comprehensive strategy to combat global poverty, hunger and disease.

According to renowned economist, Professor Jeffrey D. Sachs, who directed this 3-year UN Millennium Project, the report provides the first ever concrete plan for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It is the beginning of a yearlong series of global initiatives aimed at making the Goals a reality, including a report to UN member states in March, which will draw heavily on the Project’s recommendations. “We are”, says Professor Sachs, “in a position to end extreme poverty within our generation. Not just cutting poverty in half – if we want to eliminate extreme poverty, we can do that by 2025”.

The authors of the report insist that the question is not whether aid works because “ample evidence shows that it does, when it is sufficient and well directed.” But the report calls for a major overhaul of the international development system, which is found to be too often “unfocused and inefficient” The Project’s research shows that only about 30 cents of each dollar of international aid actually reaches on the ground investment programmes in poor countries aimed at extreme poverty, hunger and disease.

The Millennium Project completed a study to help determine how much investment was needed in countries with high concentrations of people living in extreme poverty to confront hunger, education, gender equality, health, water and sanitation, slums, energy and roads. It found that in low-income countries it would mean an increase to US\$70-80 per capita in 2006 for investment, rising to US\$120-160 per capita in 2015. According to this study many middle-income countries will largely be able to finance these investments on their own – though in many cases they will require adequate debt relief and specialized technical assistance. However the domestic resources of the poorer countries will be insufficient, and external financing would be needed to fill the gap.

Among the many recommendations offered in the Project’s report are:

- **A practical plan**, which shows, in rigorous technical detail, how the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) to cut extreme poverty in half by 2015, can be achieved.
- **Affordable:** In the first detailed costing exercise of its kind, the report outlines how the MDGs can be achieved with an investment of just one half of one per cent of the incomes of the industrialized countries – well within the international aid targets that wealthy countries have already promised to meet.
- **Governance matter:** If the MDGs are to be reached, policy reform at local level and a national commitment to help the poorest of the poor are essential
- **Expanded trade and private capital** are the key to sustained growth in all developing nations, but the poorest countries cannot take advantage of trade and investment opportunities without first getting help to building a vital public infrastructure, like roads, ports, clinics and schools, and raising the health and skills of the labour force through investments in disease control, education, nutrition and job training
- **Fast tracking for success:** The report strongly recommends that assistance be given immediately to countries already deemed eligible for debt relief under the HIPC

- **Too big for government alone:** This recommendation highlights that the challenges of growth and job creation and the delivery of service to poor communities require a broad partnership, involving the public sector, civil society and the private sector. Unless women's groups and civil society organizations are brought into the economic and political mainstream, the goals will remain unobtainable.
- **Quality aid:** While an increase in the quantity of assistance is vital, better quality aid is equally important. The report offers carefully designed blueprints for efficient, effective investments in public health, education, and economic development, arguing that a "front-loading" of these expenditures now will ultimately save billions of dollars – and tens of millions of lives – over the long term.
- **"Quick Wins":** The report recommends that both developing and developed countries should immediately undertake a series of quick-win actions which could save millions of lives at modest cost: from providing free school meals and small diesel or solar power generators for hospitals and schools to antiretroviral AIDS medicines and anti-malarial bed nets (US\$5 each).

The authors of this unique report are calling for **"a decade of bold action"** and offers many poignant guidelines, among which are the following:

High-income countries must open their markets to developing countries and help the poorest countries to raise export competitiveness through investments in infrastructure, trade facilitation and science and technology. The Doha Development Round should be completed by 2006.

Regional groups, like the African Union, should (with financial help from donors) promote regional trade and cross-border infrastructure and strengthen environmental management.

The UN Secretary-General should strengthen coordination among UN agencies to support the MDGs at both international and country level.

The report strongly urge donor nations to make, maintain or accelerate commitments to reach the long-standing target, reaffirmed in Monterrey 2002, of 0,7 per cent of GNP for international aid by 2015.

In absolute dollar terms, the authors of the report urge wealthy nations to disburse US\$135 billion in 2006 – an increase over existing commitments of US\$48 billion, equivalent to about five per cent of global military spending.

Professor Sachs sees the Millennium Development Goals as an insurance for global security, stressing that "when people lack access to food, medical care, safe drinking water, and a chance at a better future, their societies are likely to experience instability and unrest that spills over to the rest of the world".

Mark Malloch Brown, Chairman of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) who, together with UNDG partners financed and supported the Millennium Project, said: *"We hope that the Project's report will help catalyze world support for a 'grand bargain' between global poverty reduction and security at the Millennium+5 Summit in New York in September"*, and continued: *"We need a firm commitment from rich and poor nations alike that policy reforms and the genuine efforts to eradicate poverty within developing nations will be met by promised trade and debt concessions and assistance from the developed countries, and quickly. Taken in parallel with the Secretary-General's High Level Panel on Security Threats, this offers the world a new start on this critical inter-connected agenda: security and development"*.

www.unmillenniumproject.org

The High Level Panel on Threats Challenges and Change (December 2004), mentioned in the statement by Mark Malloch Brown quoted above, highlights the

importance of seeing the interconnectedness between the different types of threats to our security in today's world: Economic and social threats, which include poverty, infectious diseases and environmental degradation; inter-state as well as internal conflicts; weapons of mass destruction; terrorism and organized crime.

In his statement regarding the Panel's report, the UN Secretary-General says: "We cannot treat issues such as terrorism or civil wars or extreme poverty in isolation... Our strategies must be comprehensive. Our institutions must overcome their narrow preoccupations and learn to work across issues in a concerted fashion"

www.un.org/secureworld

III. ENVIRONMENTAL TERRORISM

On the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict, 6 November 2004, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan - in his message - mentioned the impact of conflict on the environment and the peoples living there and said: "As long as wars have existed, the environment and natural resources have been their silent victims".

Whether intentionally or unintentionally crops have been torched, waterways or wells polluted, soils poisoned and animals killed. During the Gulf War Kuwait's oil wells were set on fire: two decades of civil war in Cambodia saw 35 per cent of the country's forest destroyed; Angola's wildlife dropped by 90 per cent as a result of the conflict there; and during the Vietnam War millions of tons of Agent Orange was dropped over vast areas of vegetation, some of these areas still too poisoned to be used for growing food products.

Adding to these examples of some of the consequences of war and armed conflict on the environment from the past, the Secretary-General warned that: "modern warfare techniques and armaments continue to develop rapidly, with potentially catastrophic environmental consequences. At the same time, too many conflicts are left to fester along for years and even decades, slowly chipping away at natural resources". Kofi Annan hoped that this International Day would result in a universal pledge to fight against this "common yet oft-forgotten threat to our lives and well-being".

IV. 2005: INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MICROCREDIT

The United Nation's primary theme for the year 2005 is International Year of Microcredit. (The year is also being observed as International Year of Sport and Physical Education and as World Year of Physics.)

'Microcredit' sounds so utilitarian, so devoid of poetry. What does it mean? The word does not even get a mention in my 1995 *Concise Oxford Dictionary*. 'Micro', small, minimal credit, as distinct from 'big' credit - hardly reflecting an abundant consciousness we might say.

Yet if we do a little bit of exploring 'microcredit' can be seen to encapsulate all of the promise of the new millennium. Put simply, and in its most general form, it involves advancing small financial loans to people (often women) in some of the poorest communities in the world. Microcredit represents a simple, radical new approach to the great dream of eradicating poverty. It is about banking, but not banking as you have ever understood it before. When I think of banks, I think of

grey suits, book-keepers, accountants, and corporate culture. Microcredit awakens other images: bare-foot bankers on bikes, excitement, passion, self-esteem, abundance.

Listen to the inspired pioneer of microcredit, the founder of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, Muhammad Yunus:

Grameencredit is based on the premise that the poor have skills which remain unutilised or under-utilised. It is definitely not the lack of skills which make poor people poor. Grameen believes that the poverty is not created by the poor, it is created by the institutions and policies which surround them. In order to eliminate poverty all we need to do is to make appropriate changes in the institutions and policies, and/or create new ones. Grameen believes that charity is not an answer to poverty. It only helps poverty to continue. It creates dependency and takes away the individual's initiative to break through the wall of poverty. Unleashing of energy and creativity in each human being is the answer to poverty.

Using money to unleash the energy and creativity in human beings – this is the poetry of microcredit. Take a woman with a dream of a small project that can enable her to earn money and goods and so care better for her family. Use a non-traditional bank, with some roots in the local community, and motivated by a will to help ending poverty by kick-starting small flows of money, goods and services between local families. More than individual creativity is stimulated – a new spirit comes into the community – a spirit of self-reliance, co-operation and exchange. Microcredit provides seed money, at no more than regular interest rates, to income generating projects in poor communities.

The International Year web site gives several moving stories of the magic that can flow from a microcredit loan. Take, for example, Phorn Hun in Cambodia. She lived in very poor circumstances, but dreamt of how things could change if she could get enough money to start a noodle-selling business. She was so poor that no-one would give her credit – not even the local money-lenders who charged exorbitant interest. In 1998 she approached ACLEDA, a micro-credit bank. They checked out her business plan, and loaned her US\$25. That's all it took.

Only a few years later, Mrs. Hun's profit's enabled her to buy a small piece of land to build a wooden house with a metal sheet roof, a luxury she could never afford before. She is still an active borrower of ACLEDA Bank; she has since had ten subsequent loans.

The Sarvodaya Shramadana grassroots development movement in Sri Lanka is applying the principles of Buddhist economics to the work of transforming the poorest village communities in the island into 'No-poverty – Full Engagement' societies with right livelihood at their core. Village banks, owned and managed by a co-operative of villagers, with local women providing a major role are a key element of Sarvodaya communities. By the end of the 90's, the latest figures I could find, there were 258 rural village banks providing small loans for local businesses and socially and economically productive enterprises and receiving savings deposits from the villagers. The associated Sarvodaya Economic Enterprises Development Services offer a wide range of training and advisory services. On average, 10,000 new enterprises were established every year in the late '90's with loans from these village banks.

Some friends of Sarvodaya in the USA operate a Partnership Programme which offers a further extension of microcredit. The US partners provide an initial investment of US \$50-100 with the goal of helping a woman establish a new business. Business proposals are thoroughly vetted by the Sarvodaya Women's Movement

Partnership investments are treated as loans by the women receiving them. Their intent is to gradually re-pay their loan to the Sarvodaya Bank so that another woman can be given a loan for a business enterprise. In this way, the effects of one donation will continue to ripple throughout a village or community and give numerous families a "hand-up."

Microcredit makes us think of how spiritually vital and sustaining a resource money can be – a golden flowing substance, unleashing energy and nourishing creativity. During this Year of Microcredit, can we visualise a blossoming of all socially-responsible, small-scale banking initiatives.

For further information:

www.yearofmicrocredit.org ; www.microcreditsummit.org ; www.grameen-info.org
www.sarvodaya.lk

The United National Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs have been chosen by the UN General Assembly to focalize and coordinate UN activities for this International Year of Microcredit.

Microfinance is seen as a powerful tool for meeting the Millennium Development Goal of cutting in half – by 2015 – the number of people living on less than 1 dollar a day. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is calling for global efforts to accelerate the growth of microfinance so that millions of people around the world with little income to invest – especially women – can be helped to start up businesses and support their families.

Some 90 percent of the world's self-employed poor, more than one billion people, lack access to basic financial services, depriving them of the means to improve their incomes and secure their existence. In partnership with, what IFAD's Chief Development Strategist, Gary Howe calls "an amazing array of institutional partners – commercial, cooperative and village banks; post offices..." IFAD is working hard to develop greater diversity in financial services for the poor in rural areas.

In his message for the launching, the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said that microfinance has proved its value as a weapon against poverty and hunger, and as a way of changing peoples' lives for the better. Kofi Annan also pointed out that: "microfinance is not charity. It is a way to extend the same rights and services to low-income households that are available to everyone else. It is recognition that poor people are the solution, not the problem. It is a way to build on their ideas, energy, and vision".

V. SOBERING THOUGHTS ON NATURAL DISASTER PREVENTION

In the wake of the tragedy and devastation caused at the end of 2004 by the tsunami that hit the coastline of so many Asian countries, perhaps we should remind ourselves of the note of warning coming from the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) on the International Day for Disaster Reduction, 13 October last year.

WMO Secretary-General, Michael Jarraud, urged that more effort was put into building “a culture of prevention”, stressing that: “*further improvements in risk assessment, monitoring, forecasting for early warnings, capacity building and raising the awareness of the public as well as decision makers...*” was greatly needed.

The link between environmental neglect and poverty was highlighted by UN Environment Programme’s Executive Director Klaus Toepfer: “*time and again we see ordinary natural phenomena, such as heavy rains or prolonged dry spells, triggering extraordinary and sometimes catastrophic events*”. He pointed out that wetlands could reduce such flooding; forested watersheds could help prevent landslides, and mangroves and coral reefs could lessen the effect of coastal storms and extreme tides.

We must hope that the January 2005 World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe will prove successful in gathering the political will and public support for reducing the effect of future natural disasters, through education and shared effort.

Websites www.unisdr.org and www.wmo.int

VI. THE SHADOW OF DEATH: THE FUTURE OF CHECHNYA

by Rene Wadlow*

Recent violent events in Chechnya and Russia – the hostage-taking in Beslan that resulted in some 300 deaths (many of them children), the downing of two Russian airliners and the assassination of the pro-Russian president, Akhmed Kadyrov, by a bomb blast in a stadium – have brought world attention to the ongoing conflict in Chechnya.

While many governments have been willing to give the Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin the benefit of the doubt in his fight against ‘terrorism’ in Chechnya, non-governmental organizations have constantly stressed the massive violations of human rights carried out by Russian troops as well as by Chechen resistance groups.

However, there has been less emphasis on political solutions to the Chechen crisis and the need to develop new forms of federalist thinking to establish real autonomy without breaking up the ever-fragile Russian Federation.

Ethnic, religious, and nationalist passions with their interstate and intrastate repercussions continue to jeopardize regional security and pose a serious threat to peace. The conflict in Chechnya is a manifestation of long-term instabilities in the Caucasus. The successor states of the USSR in the Caucasian region of Azerbaijan, Moldova, Georgia and Russia found themselves confronting a wave of demands for independence in Nagorno-Karabakh, Transdneister, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Tatarstan and Chechnya.

Initially, both Tatarstan and Chechnya refused to sign the 1992 Federal Treaty that would have integrated them into the Russian Federation. However, Tatarstan eventually reached an agreement with Moscow through a bilateral treaty in 1994, which ensured broad economic, administrative and political autonomy to Tatarstan.

Federalists had played an important role in developing the ideas and practice of Tartastan autonomy. However, there were no such civil society groups in Chechnya who could put forth ideas of autonomy and cooperation. Neither the Russians nor the Chechens found a middle way that could harmonize the Chechen demand for independence with the Russian apprehension of the rupture of territorial integrity.

Therefore, the Chechens rejected compromises and it led to the Chechen War in 1994. There were severe losses of both Chechens and Russians that led to a popular backlash in Moscow. As a face-saving device, the Russian government signed a cease-fire agreement and a peace treaty – the *Khasavyurt Agreement* – in 1996 which postponed the issue of the status of Chechnya until December 2001.

The period of de facto Chechen independence between 1996 and late 1999 under President Aslan Kaskadov was not used to build stable governmental institutions or a vigorous civil society. Disorder and criminality became wide spread. Divisions arose among Chechen clans and factions. A floating population of armed Islamic fighters who had been trained in Afghanistan and elsewhere drifted to Chechnya. The economy could not be re-established, and kidnappings for ransom were numerous. The Maskadov government had less and less control of the country. There was little economic or social aid or investment from outside.

Thus in October 1999, after a series of bomb explosions in Moscow attributed to Chechens and an attack by armed Chechens on camps in neighbouring Dagistan, Russian troops again entered Chechnya. Death, the flow of refugees, violations of basic human rights and the disintegration of the economy have followed.

The Russians tried to establish a semi-colonial order in March 2003 with a referendum on the future of Chechnya and an election in October 2003, which Kadyrov won. His death brought on the election August 2004, which brought Moscow-backed Alu Alkhanov to power and a return to indirect colonial rule.

Though Putin has refused to negotiate with Chechen opposition, an alternative would be to return to the 1996 Khasavyurt Agreement in which both parties agreed to renounce the use of force and to conduct relations in accordance with recognized principles of international law. Within such a framework, and on the basis of negotiations, an autonomy model such as that of Tatarstan could be worked out.

Today, Tatarstan has become one of the more prosperous parts of the Russian Federation. The Tatarstan negotiations that led to the 1994 treaty were difficult and called for creative imagination, as well as leaving some things in an ambiguous form.

In Chechnya, negotiations would be more difficult, as blood and death have erased goodwill and a spirit of compromise.

*Rene Wadlow is the editor of the online journal of world politics:
www.transnational-perspectives.org and representative to the United Nations,
Geneva, of the Association of World Citizens.

VII. STATE OF THE WORLD'S CITIES Report 2004/2005

The cities of the world are increasingly becoming multicultural communities, says this report,

should be welcomed, not feared. About 175 million international migrants worldwide are contributing to the flow of peoples into the world's cities, bringing with them colour and vibrancy and the potential for broadening the cultural and ethnic dimensions of our cities.

However the report also points out that this new multiculturalism can cause an increase in ethnic tension and xenophobia and urges local governments to help create harmonious and inclusive cities by “combating xenophobic ideologies and anti-immigration policies”.

The report tells us that most migrants (77 million) are attracted to “the more developed economies”, followed by Eastern European countries, Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, and finds it unfortunate that the lack of affordable housing and discriminatory practices in many cities are forcing migrants to live in ghetto-like conditions, suffer labour exploitation, social exclusion and violence.

It should be more widely recognized that immigrants make important economic contributions, not merely to the economy of host countries, but also to the countries they left behind. The money immigrants sent back to their home countries are, according to the report, second only to oil in terms of international monetary flow, providing an important and reliable source of foreign exchange finance.

The report shows how poverty is increasing in many cities, partly due to the uneven costs and benefits of economic globalisation. The last two decades have witnessed a transformation of the global economy, which has led to vast economic, social and political realignments in many countries and cities. The trend towards open markets has enriched some countries and cities tremendously while others have suffered greatly, says the report. In this period, world trade has grown from about US\$580 billion in 1980 to a about US\$6.3 trillion in 2004, an eleven-fold increase.

The State of the World's Cities makes the prediction that the world's urban population will grow from 2.86 billion in 2000 to 4.98 billion in 2030. The UN-HABITAT Executive Director, Anna Tibajuka, believes that “in the next 25 years, virtually all population growth will take place in the world's cities, most of it in the cities of developing countries”.

“Policy makers need to plan for ‘cities of difference’ that are open to all and exclude none”, says UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in his foreword to the report, “and which are able to capitalize on the benefits of a multicultural existence”. This will require “the engagement of all non-governmental and community stakeholders, on the basis of legislation that guarantees citizens' right to the city, and judicial systems that enforce those rights”.

The report is available online (www.unhabitat.org/mediacentre/sowckit.asp)

VIII. CLAIM YOUR RIGHT TO DECISION MAKING

During the 1995 United Nations Beijing Women's Conference the World Rural Women's Day was launched, and on 15 October 2004 the Women's World Summit Foundation (WWSF) chose this day to post an open letter to the rural women of the world on its website

The letter starts by saying: *“This year, we wish to empower you in claiming your right to decision making at the legislative level so that your voices are heard both locally and in society at large. Until you are fully represented at senior levels of public, professional and economic*

Stressing the right of rural women (according to the commitment made in 1995 by governments) to full participation in structures and decision making, the letter urges the rural women to become “*part of designing your development process and evaluate for yourself what you need and what you can contribute.*”

The letter offers some practical guidelines on what demands, suggestions and proposals that the rural women can put to their governments and concludes by saying: *Dear Sisters, remember: you are one among 1.6 billion rural women and represent about a quarter of the total world population. You produce on average more than half of all the food that is grown: up to 80% in Africa, 60% in Asia, between 30% and 40% in Latin America and Western countries. You own only 2% of the land, and receive only 1% of all agricultural credit. Your number living in poverty has doubled since 1970. Your voice needs to be heard NOW!*”

Contact: Elly Pradervand, WWSF Executive Director,
PO Box 2001, 1211 Geneva 1, Switzerland.
E-mail: wwwsf@vtxnet.ch website (www.woman.ch)

IX. THE II WORLD WITHOUT BORDERS MEETING **22 – 29 July 2005**

This meeting will take place on the shore of the beautiful Lake Baikal and is organized by the Siberian centre for Eurasian projects together with the Government of Buryatia.

The World without Borders meeting is a gathering of men, women and children of all ages, beliefs, cultures and nations, coming together to discuss and find ways of dissolving borders so that all citizens of the world can work and live together in peace and harmony. The main focus of the meeting is *the role of a Culture of Relationships*.

At the meeting participants will focus on the vision of the future for the planet and create together a joint plan of coordinated action for the building of a new and exciting civilization.

Among the activities planned for the meeting are:

- An open ceremony for presenting unity of all cultures
- A presentation of people’s visions, passions and actions for the future
- Workshops for combining all the different thoughts and plans for action for the future in a joint project
- Informal meeting on Baikal
- Master classes on health, collective art creativity etc

All are invited to present their proposals on the theme of the meeting through the arts, radio, TV, films or the Internet.

The organizers of the II World without Borders meeting hope that the result of this gathering will further the creation of a multicultural new society, through uniting the efforts of the governments, teams from all over the world, youth, men and women in a shared endeavour.

Fees: For the entire 8 days: Adults US\$500 and Children (12-18yrs) US\$300

For more information, contact: Nina Goncharova, Zheleznodorozhaya str., 8/1 – 250,
Novosibirsk 63132, Russian Federation. E-mail: gong3000@ngs.ru

X. SOLDIERS IN THE LABORATORY

On the 19 January, at the British Parliament, the independent UK-based Organisation Scientists for Global Responsibility (SGR) launched a report, which details the ‘pervasive military presence within science and technology in the UK’.

The report shows how a new generation of multi-million pound military partnerships has been developed involving UK universities, and these groups pursue high technology, largely weapons-based research in a climate of commercialization and secrecy.

Four case studies are included in the report, on: new nuclear weapons; nanotechnology; biological sciences; and the “Missile Defense” programme. These case studies show that much military science and technology helps to narrow thinking on security issues, focusing on the use of military technology while marginalizing attempts to understand and tackle the roots of conflict. The report argues that more balanced funding of science and technology, which would include more resources directed towards solving global environmental and social problems (e.g. climate change, clean water and sanitation, resource depletion), would have greater benefits, including in terms of global security.

At the launch, Dr Chris Langley, author of the report, pointed out that this disproportionate role by the military sector in setting the research agenda for science and engineering, did not address the wide variety of security threats by current military thinking, which is, he said, ‘outdated and reminiscent of the Cold War’.

Dr. Philip Webber, Chair of Scientists for Global Responsibility, stated that: “The report reveals a new military-industrial complex of the 21st century – military-led funding of exotic technologies and hi-tech weaponry rather than technology to address pressing social and human needs. This situation can only lead to greater long-term insecurity and needs to be challenged.”

A copy of the full report can be ordered from the SGR office. Cost: GBP12.50 (SGR members GBP 7.50), plus 10% for p&p.

SGR address: Scientists for Global Responsibility, PO Box 473, Folkestone, CT20 1GS, UK.

Summery and full report are available to download from the SGR website: <http://www.sgr.org.uk/> E-mail: info@sgr.org.uk

XI. THERE IS A PEACE

There is a peace
That has no name
It sleeps on the floor
In the temple of thoughts
It climbs the tree crowns

It kisses the ground
Where men and angels walk

Eva Jagrell

From: Mellan tid och rum (Between time and space) - 1999

XII. THOUGHTS ON DEMOCRACY

According to Mark Malloch Brown, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, *democracy* is a long-term process that depends on strong institutions and requires participation and accountability. Improving the quality of democratic institutions and processes is vital, says Malloch Brown, because “it offers the best means through which society can discuss, approve, criticize, challenge and change the route to development when the majority so decides”.

It also provides the essential foundation for national efforts to reduce poverty, sustain the environment, and promote human development “as encapsulated in the universally agreed Millennium Development Goals”.

Says Mark Malloch Brown: “While freedom and democracy are not necessarily prerequisites for development, very few democratic countries are among the world’s poorest. Countries where political rights and civil liberties are limited, where corruption is rampant, where ruling parties dominate for decades, where women have less opportunities or where there is ethnic or religious discrimination, tend to be among the poorest and the least likely to achieve the Goals.

Malloch Brown calls for a ‘culture’ of democracy; a word also used by the Algerian journalist and social theorist, Malek Bennabi, when speaking of democracy. It is a culture – a virtue – he says, which can neither be imposed nor imported. It is a three-stage process: *realizing God in ourselves; seeing Him in others, and then acting accordingly in social and political space*”.

“An order that bestows a ballot and allows a man to starve is not a democratic order”, says Malek Bennabi.

THE GREAT INVOCATION IN ENGLISH AND HUNGARIAN

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.

See a full list of translations of the Great Invocation at:

<http://www.lucistrust.org/invocation/gitrans/translations.shtml>

The beauty and strength of this invocation lies in its simplicity, and in its expression of certain truths which all people innately and normally accept. Many religions believe in a World Teacher, knowing him under such names as The Lord Maitreya, Krishna, Imam Mahdi and the Messiah and these terms are used in some Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Jewish versions of the Great Invocation.

A NAGY FOHÁSZ

A FÉNYFORRÁSBÓL, AMELY ISTEN ELMÉJÉBEN ÉL
ÁRADJON FÉNY AZ EMBERI ELMÉKBE.
SZÁLLJON VILÁGOSSÁG A FÖLDRE.