

# *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. Sustainability

In the beginning of the 1970s the world community began in earnest to grapple with the issue of sustainability and the need for creating a good and enduring relationship between development and the environment.

In 1987 the World Commission on Environment and Development published the result of its findings and worldwide consultations in a report “Our Common Future”, which also included recommendations for establishing sustainable development.

But although we all may have an instant ‘feel-good’ response to the concept – what do we actually believe sustainability to mean? The dictionary offers two main interpretations to the word sustain: to ‘bear weight of’ and to ‘support for a long period’. Each seems to clarify the underlying dynamics of the inter-active relationship between environment and the continuous growing, developing and maturing of all living things – urged on by the shifting seasons.

However, as science is opening the door wider to our starry neighbourhood, perhaps we shall need to consider the much larger and time-wise much longer evolutionary cycles and seasons, embracing galaxies and solar systems throughout the universe, within which our little planet, including all life upon it, is also developing and coming of age - every atom of it infused with and radiating energy?

So how come we are experiencing an energy crisis? How come human development is depleting the earth’s resources and degrading the environment?

Curiosity, recklessness, wastefulness and self-centeredness will often be the characteristics of adolescence on its passage of learning how to create mutually supportive and co-creative relationships. And, as many past civilizations have shown, this natural process can be stunted, sidetracked and prolonged by insatiable and unsustainable appetites and fiercely defended materialistic lifestyles.

But, although humanity appears to be stuck in self-indulging and potentially self-destructive adolescence, at no time in human history has the individual human being been more aware of the situation at hand, and so well prepared to make the decision to grow up.

In 2005, nearly two decades after the publishing of “Our Common Future”, the UN Millennium Project, directed by Jeffrey D. Sachs, has published its report, “Investing in Development – a Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals”.

In his preface Professor Sachs points out that this report has been compiled through a ‘labour of love’ by a worldwide network of development practitioners and experts across an enormous range of countries, disciplines, and organizations, and concludes that: “The world community has at its disposal the proven technologies, policies, financial resources, and most importantly, the human courage and compassion to make it happen”.

It is the courage, the compassion and, as Jeffrey Sachs puts it, the ‘truly indomitable human spirit’ which will triumph: a re-energised, re-focused and re-committed humanity growing into the fullness of its being and making all things new.

## II. WATER FOR LIFE 2005 - 2015 – an International Decade for Action

The year 2015 is the deadline that all UN Member States have set themselves for achieving the goals agreed upon at the Millennium Summit.

These goals range from reducing/eradicating poverty, hunger, diseases, to promoting education, health, environmental sustainability and development, and to creating new global partnerships for bringing all this about.

Presenting his 5-year progress report “In Larger Freedom” to the UN General Assembly, Secretary-General Kofi Annan asked that his proposals for achieving the Millennium Goals by 2015 be treated as a single package, implying that only together can the problems of the world be solved. (<http://www.un.org/largerfreedom>)

The interconnectedness between water and human rights, health, poverty, education, gender issues, environment and development as well as violent conflicts are highlighted in many of the Water for Life Decade publications.

The “Water for Life” decade is dedicated to achieving the agreements made at the Johannesburg Summit of developing integrated water resource management and water efficiency plans, and of halving by 2015 the proportion of people lacking sanitation.

The role of women and the importance of their active involvement and cooperation reaching these goals are emphasized. A paper published by Women’s Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO) called “Untapped Connections: Gender, Water and Poverty”, highlights how, in every corner of the Globe, women play a central role in managing water supply and distribution, and presents strategies for translating government commitments on gender, poverty eradication, and water and sanitation into action.

### Water Privatisation

Insisting that water – fundamental to all life – should remain protected as a common resource WEDO strongly opposes the privatization of water: “As a public good, water must be managed for social needs and environmental sustainability rather than for short-term profit”.

According to international human rights law all people have the right of access to the amount of water required for sustaining life and fulfilling basic needs. But corporate control could cement already existing inequalities and endanger the quality of life – even the survival – of poor people. Furthermore the global trend towards privatization of water reduces the involvement of both governments and peoples in water management decisions. Corporations have “minimal disclosure requirements in most countries”, and once a private monopoly, it is, according to Gill Yarn’s working paper “The Final Frontier”, extremely difficult to reverse it. WEDO underscores

the general public unease regarding privatization of this the world's last public resource with a quote from another source: "In a globally competitive economic climate, transnational corporations will threaten to withdraw their investment plans in a given country unless the government changes the environmental regulation in question". Consequently many regulations have either been overturned or left un-enforced.

Three Water Corporations, Veolia, RWE and Suez, are currently, together with their subsidiaries, controlling 40% of the world's commercial water market, respectively receiving \$14.5 billion, \$2.4 billion and \$15.2 billion in annual water revenues.

Women are at the forefront of the opposition to 'trading away of the human right to water', and are vigorously challenging the efforts by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and other institutions to privatize water. Water is also included in regional trade agreements, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and being considered in current Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) discussions.

Backed by the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Women are asking that a human rights approach to water and other common resources be applied on local, national as well as global levels, and that water management becomes more transparent and accountable through an increasing active involvement by civil society.

WEDO offers some strategies, which could help ensure that control over basic human services stays within local communities. Among these are:

- Network and build coalitions by joining with others who are organizing around the issues in your community;
- Investigate who owns your water;
- Demand participatory water management;
- Promote democratic, gender-sensitive, people-centered, sustainable models of water management in your community.

### UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)

This Commission, established in 1992, provides an international forum for governments to discuss and make decisions on environment and development related issues.

CSD meetings are presently focusing on water, sanitation and human settlements. Building upon the deliberations of previous conferences, summits and meetings and the resulting declarations, recommendations and plans and frameworks for action, the Chair of the CSD's 13<sup>th</sup> Session has presented its "Draft Elements for Decision", April 2005.

This Draft emphasises that:

- *Water, sanitation and human settlement are closely interlinked and should be addressed in an integrated manner, taking into account economic, social and environmental aspects and all cross-cutting issues;*
- *Governments have the primary responsibility to ensure access to safe drinking water, basic sanitation, housing and related basic services;*

- *Measures to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation goals and targets on water, sanitation and human settlements should be integrated into poverty reduction strategies and national sustainable development strategies;*
- *Increased financial resource transfers, debt relief, technical cooperation, technology transfer, and capacity building will be essential to meeting the targets.*

The Draft calls on all governments, the UN system, international financial institutions, and other international organizations and stakeholders to work in partnership for the implementation of these goals, and goes on to specify the areas where action should be taken to:

Provide basic access to water;

Advance the implementation of an Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM);

Provide access to basic sanitation - involving sanitation and hygiene education and wastewater collection, treatment and reuse (in developing countries more than 90% of sewage and 70% industrial wastewater is dumped untreated into surface water);

Human settlements - involving affordable land, housing and services, and employment and enterprise promotion; and

The International Institutional Arrangements for Follow-Up of the Commission on Sustainable Development's 13<sup>th</sup> Session Decisions.

WEDO urges that women's organizations and civil society in general seek information from their country's environment and finance ministries about national preparations for regional and global CSD meetings and ask that their views and proposals be taken in account in government discussions. CSD sessions are held in April/May each year.

Contacts: WEDO, 355 Lexington Ave, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10017, USA  
[www.wedo.org](http://www.wedo.org), Water for Life Decade: [www.un.org/waterforlife](http://www.un.org/waterforlife)  
 CSD website: [www.un.org/esa/sustdev/index.html](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/index.html)

### III. Book: SEARCHING FOR PEACE IN ASIA PACIFIC - an Overview of Conflict Prevention and Peace building Activities -

While the Searching for Peace in Asia Pacific project of the European Centre for Conflict Prevention (ECCP) began already in early 2000, the work on this publication started in January 2002, only three months after the September 11 attacks in the USA and the subsequent announcement of "war on terrorism".

These events had an "enormous" impact on the Asia Pacific region. In their Introduction, the book's three editors, Annelies Heijmans, Nicola Simmonds, and Hans van de Veen, point out how many governments chose to reassert their security policies, believing that militaristic responses are the only right means to crush phenomena such as terrorism: "Efforts to establish standards for human rights protection and humanitarian law through long and difficult processes

of collaboration between governments and civil society organizations were overruled and fragile peace processes stagnated.”

Following the structure of previous Searching for Peace publications, this book consists of three main parts:

1. The chapters, which are providing readers with reflections and analyses of issues that are influencing conflicts and communities everywhere in the Asia Pacific region, like regional security cooperation, globalisation, democratisation, and the impact of the “war on terrorism”. It provides also insights into the current field of conflict prevention and transformation in the region, and closes with a wide range of lessons learned from the peace building practices of civil society organizations.
2. The chapters, written mainly by local peace builders and researchers about specific violent conflicts that they are working to resolve. This part presents regional surveys, including general chapters that describe the dynamics and political developments in each region.
3. The part of the book, which contains a directory of some 350 organisations in the area of conflict prevention and transformation active in Asia Pacific.

Kevin P. Clements, Director of the Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Queensland, who wrote the Foreword to this book, believes that “the twenty-first century will belong to Asia Pacific if the states, peoples and regional institutions within the region take seriously the importance of ensuring that political systems serve the interests of all citizens and peoples rather than just the elites...”, and concludes:

“Achievement of human security for all peoples within the Asian region is not an impossible goal. All it requires is political will and the development mechanisms that remove the root causes of violence and desire to utilize economic prosperity in the service of all. Asian states and societies have all the resources to make this possible. All that is needed are national and regional visions of how to realize this goal. This book is an important contribution toward understanding the impediments. It is up to all who live within the region, with the support of others outside, to transcend the impediments and realize the possibilities.”

Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 1800 30<sup>th</sup> St, Boulder, Colorado 80301 USA. [www.rienner.com](http://www.rienner.com)

**IV. TRANSCEND Advanced International Training Programme**  
PEACEBUILDING, CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION & POST-WAR REBUILDING, RECONSTRUCTION  
AND RESOLUTION  
July 11 – 15 , 2005, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

This is a five-days international training programme for practitioners, policy makers, international and national agency staff and NGOs working in peacebuilding, conflict transformation and post-war recovery, organized by TRANSCEND and the Peace Action, Training and Research Institute of Romania (PATRIR).

The Peacebuilding, Conflict Transformation and Post-War Reconstruction, Reconciliation and Resolution (PCTR 2005) is the only five-days intensive training programme of its kind, intending to explore all three phases of violence and war: pre-violence, violence, post-violence.

Increasingly, governments, development organizations, the United Nations, and national and international NGOs have recognized the need of developing effective and constructive responses to the challenges of conflict and war. Bridging the fields of theory and practice this programme will be particularly helpful to those working:

- To prevent the outbreak of violent conflict in their countries/communities;
- To transform violent and intractable conflicts towards peaceful and constructive outcomes;
- To mobilize and empower communities for broad-based, comprehensive and inclusive approaches to conflict transformation and peacebuilding;
- To improve participants' abilities to map conflicts effectively and develop appropriate strategies and responses for integration into their work, organizations and programmes;
- To develop effective methods, tools and approaches for conflict transformation and peacebuilding;
- To develop/improve and implement programmes within their organization/communities either directly addressing or affected by conflict and war;
- To carry out reconstruction, rehabilitation, reconciliation, and healing in post-violence/war situations, going from cease-fires (halting the violence) to peace processes (addressing root causes, transforming the underlying conflicts, and building resources for peace and reconciliation);
- To realize effective policies/programmes for responding to conflict and dealing with the impacts of war and violence on national and community social, economic, political and development related programmes.

The trainer and facilitator throughout the 5-day event will be Kai Frithjof Brand-Jacobsen, PATRIR founder and director, together with additional trainers and supporters from the Institute's staff.

For registration or further information contact Training Coordinator  
Calina Resterman: [training@transcend.org](mailto:training@transcend.org) or  
visit website: [www.transcend.org](http://www.transcend.org)

## V. Darkening Clouds in the Shadows of Mount Everest

Rene Wadlow wrote the following article on the civil war tearing apart the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal. Foreign observers speak of 'unspeakable brutality' from either side of the long running conflict. The world community seems at a loss how to assist Nepal in finding a solution acceptable to two fiercely opposed parties – with the peoples of the land paying the price. Let us at least hold them in our thoughts and hearts.

On 1 February 2005, Nepal's King Gyanendra dismissed the government of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba claiming that the government was incompetent in the fight against the 'Maoist' insurgency, which began in 1996. The King assumed direct power and declared a state of emergency, suspending constitutional provisions on freedom of the press, speech and expression, peaceful assembly and the right against preventive detention. Three leading human rights organizations – Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the International Commission of Jurists – warned that "Nepal's last state of emergency in 2001-2002 had led to an explosion of serious human rights violations, including increased extra-judicial killings, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention, and a breakdown in the rule of law."

The King has now appointed a 10-man cabinet under his chairmanship with no prime minister. The short-term consequences mean probable repression, especially in the Katmandu area, of the press, non-governmental organizations, and political leaders.

The longer-range significance of this most recent state of emergency is that it is the start of the third and final act of a drama which is likely to see the end of the monarchy as an institution, increased suffering among the already poor population and the danger of a 'power vacuum' between India and China.

Nepal, landlocked between India and China, has a terrain which ranges from the flat river plain of the Ganges in the south, through its large central hill region to the Himalayas in the north. Each ecological area has been populated by different peoples, some coming from India and others from Tibet. It was only late in the 18<sup>th</sup> century that the country took its current shape with the elimination of local chiefs in favour of a monarchy with its seat in Katmandu.

The monarchy has tried to impose one Nepalese language and the Hindu religion as a cement on this diversity of ethnic groups, languages, and religions.

The often antagonistic relationship between India and China is a sub-theme of the drama. Nepal is strategically situated between Tibet and the northern border of India. Both powers view Nepal as a buffer zone over which each has jockeyed for influence. India considers Nepal as part of its 'zone of influence'. China is concerned that Nepal not be used as a base for Tibetan independence activities as it had been in the 1960-1972 period with Tibetan insurgency with its headquarters in the Mustang area of Nepal. China wishes to prevent India from being the sole influence in Nepal and is concerned that India might invade Nepal to prevent a change of regime. India, for its part, is concerned that China could take advantage of any upheaval in Nepal to strengthen its hand against India in the whole region.

Thus, one has to see the action in Nepal against a background of major regional politics and not simply as an insurgency in a far away area of interest only to mountain climbers and Buddhists going to the birthplace of the Buddha.

There is a long prologue to the first act of the drama during which a more-or-less constitutional monarchy is put into place and a parliament with political parties created in 1990. Unfortunately neither the Monarchy nor the Parliament has done much to restructure the economic and social life of the country. The poorer Nepalese, although they constitute the bulk of the population, have remained on the margins of public life. Nepal's economic policies have been shaped by the development ideologies and strategic interests of the donor countries. This has led to shortsighted, dependent forms of development based on playing aid donors one against the other. Development has been in the interest of the elite and of a growing urban middle class, which has benefited without making sacrifices or building up domestic savings. There has been little land reform or modifications in the land-holding patterns. With an increase in population but without adequate growth in education and jobs, the young are discontented and open to political violence as well as crime.

The first act of the drama starts with bangs in February 1996 when the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) initiated an armed struggle against the Nepalese government with simultaneous attacks in different areas of the country. The leadership of the armed movement is 'Maoist' – having read books of Mao on the importance of rural guerillas holding the countryside while letting the cities rot and fall. It is not influenced by the current Chinese government. The real nature of the revolt is more 'Naxalite', named after the village of Naxalbari in north Bengal where tea plantation workers revolted in 1967. Such rural revolts against persistent injustices are often linked to utopian ideologies of equality but do not have a coherent alternative program for



government. The 'Maoists' are not a single movement with a well-defined chain of command but many separate revolts with local leaders. This makes negotiations or mediation difficult.

The 'Maoist' insurgency spread to most parts of the country feeding on poverty, class and caste discrimination, ethnic divisions and a lack of government development activities. The 'Maoists', however, do not administer the areas – they are only able to prevent the government from administering the areas. Thus, the bulk of the rural population must cope for themselves.

The first act ends with another bang on 1 June 2001, when King Birendra, his wife and seven other members of the royal family are murdered by his son, the Crown Prince, who then kills himself.

Act II begins with the brother of the murdered king becoming King Gyanendra. The King decided that he will play an important political role directly, having little taste for parliamentary life. His first major decision is to call for a ceasefire and negotiations with the 'Maoists'. Thus between July and September 2001, there are three series of talks between representatives of the 'Maoists' and the royal government. The 'Maoists' called for an end to the monarchy, the drafting of a new republican constitution, and an interim government in which they would have a major influence.

No common ground was found between the two sides. Thus in November 2001, the 'Maoist' guerillas began a new offensive, and the King responded by getting more and newer weapons.

The rest of the act is taken up with more fighting, more repression, a few inconclusive talks off stage, but with a larger audience starting to look at the play as government officials in the USA and the UK join Indians and Chinese in looking at what is going on. A few non-government organizations in Asia, the USA, and Europe have become interested in the conflict and seek to play a positive, mediation role, but with little impact as yet. The divide between the government and the 'Maoists' is very wide. Some independent non-governmental groups in Nepal have proposed some peace measures such as the Birat Declaration for Action: Challenges for Peace and Development in Nepal (November 2003).

February 2005 is the start of the third and probably final act. The clouds darken, increased fighting within Nepal is probable. A greater flow of arms to the area is likely – government to government – from the USA and the UK to the Royal Nepal government – from arms dealers via non-governmental groups in India to the 'Maoists'. The danger is real that India and China can be 'sucked into' the power vacuum or more likely willingly stepping in.

What is to be done?

I had written in September 2002 for the New Delhi-based Tibetan Review an article "Nepal Watch: A priority" indicating that "the situation requires careful study to see if there are ways to help the forces of democratic change." It is still not clear to me what we outside Nepal can do usefully. There seems to be no 'middle ground' between the King and the 'Maoists'. Each wants the other to disappear. The political parties, which functioned when there was a parliament, are weak and had little base among the people. Non-governmental organizations outside the control of political parties are weak, but there might be ways to strengthen them.

For the moment, I believe that our priority should be to alert a wider group of people to the dangers of the situation, stressing that non-military means of conflict resolution should be found, and that we should be prepared to help quickly when we find proper and useful channels.

Rene Wadlow is editor of the on-line journal of world politics: [www.transnational-perspectives.org](http://www.transnational-perspectives.org)

## VI. Update on the NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns (CSVGC)

Committee of the “Conference of NGO’s in consultative relationship with the United Nations” (CONGO)

A year after CSVGS’s inception, it’s subcommittees and working groups have embarked upon a multitude of ambitious projects, which ”aim to incorporate spirituality into all areas of the United Nations (UN) agenda” based upon “the recognition and acceptance that spirituality and adherence to universal values are key factors in providing solutions to global concerns”-- as two lines from the mission statement read.

The Culture of Peace Subcommittee is planning a seminar in June, which will focus on new ideas emanating from Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s UN report, “In Larger Freedom”, including the proposed development of a Peace Building Commission and Peace Support Office in the UN. Invited speakers are Congressman Dennis Kucinich, who wrote the Department of Peace Legislature proposed in the United States Congress, and Marianne Williamson, author and international lecturer.

Other recent activities have included assisting the Fundacion Cultura de Paz in the collection of Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) civil society reports for the Mid-Decade World Report on the Culture of Peace, which will be presented to the UN Secretary General in June 2005; ways to participate in and promote the observance of International Day of Peace (GA Resolution 55/282), which is celebrated on September 21<sup>st</sup> each year; and, the International Day of Peace Vigil.

On May 26, 2005, the Spiritual Dimensions of Science and Consciousness Subcommittee (SDSC) will hold a seminar at the UN entitled: “How Can the Spiritual Dimensions of Science and Consciousness Help the UN and Humanity Achieve Better Standards of Life in Greater Freedom?” Featured speakers will be Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury, UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, and Dr. Masaru Emoto, research scientist and author of *The Hidden Messages in Water*. The purpose of the meeting is:

(1) To bring attention to the fact that the spiritual dimensions of science and consciousness can help the United Nations and humanity achieve the eight Millennium Development Goals;

2) To join with civil society around the world and help create a Solidarity Society that promotes the United Nations Millennium Declaration statement:

"We solemnly reaffirm, on this historic occasion, that the United Nations is the indispensable common house of the entire human family, through which we will seek to realize our universal aspirations for peace, cooperation and development.";

3) To re-affirm the importance of the Charter of the United Nations, accentuating its declaration: "We the peoples of the United Nations [are] determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom."

The meeting will also include group discussion, and music by Eileen Ain.

The Spiritual History of the United Nations Subcommittee is working on the idea of presenting awards to recognize the unsung heroes and heroines at the UN—the common invisible people who are instrumental to its functioning and usually do not ever get noticed. The group is also involved in the ongoing research of the spiritual history of the UN.

The Subcommittee of Universal Ethics & Global Concerns is seeking to find and highlight all those ethical practices that support the universal search and practical implementation of peace building.

Additional subcommittees and working groups in the process of developing ideas and plans of action are as follows:

Business & Spirituality Subcommittee

Subcommittee on Conscious Education

**Spiritual Council for Global Challenges**

Sacred Transcendental Arts Subcommittee

Many of the CSVGC members participate in several subcommittees and working groups. Additionally, as the ideas and projects intersect and overlap, support and cooperation is given and shared among the various subcommittee groups. There seems to be no formula, which makes this newly expanding and continually evolving group work thrive, aside from the self-sacrificing energy and heartfelt goodwill of all its members.

More information may be obtained from the website: [www.csvgc.org](http://www.csvgc.org)

Iris Spellings, OPTU representative to the UN NGO/DPI and on the CSVGC (NYC),  
contributed this article

***Peace through Unity invites you to visit our new website***

[www.peacethroughunity.info](http://www.peacethroughunity.info)

**which is dedicated to the worldwide work for  
a culture of peace**

## ***VII. ActionAid International's Report on Global Food Transnational Corporations***

The new report by ActionAid, entitled "Power hungry: six reasons to regulate global food companies", doesn't mince its words when speaking of transnational corporations (TNCs), such as Nestle, Unilever, Monsanto, Parmalat, Cargill and Wal-Mart who, according the ActionAid, have succeeded in gaining control of the global food chain "all the way from seed to supermarket shelf and are threatening the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of poor farmers and undermining their basic rights."

The report spells out six reasons for the need to reform global food markets and prevent multinationals from abusing their power:

1. TNCs use their market power to drain wealth from poor communities.
2. The gap between farm and retail prices is growing, particularly in countries where TNCs have concentrated market power. The World Bank estimates that the farm retail price gap is costing commodity-exporting countries more than US\$100 billion each year.
3. TNCs marginalize poor farmers and rural workers by imposing tough standards that they cannot afford to meet.
4. TNCs are not fully accountable for their impacts on human rights and the environment.
5. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is optional and insufficient. Out of an estimated 64,000 TNCs operating today, only 1,500-2,000 produce annual CSR reports.
6. People harmed by corporate activity are denied access to justice and national authorities are often unwilling or unable to prosecute companies.

The influence of TNCs are highlighted through some statistics: trade within multinationals accounts for about 60% of all global trade; three companies control 85% of the world's tea market; two companies handle 50% of the world's trade in bananas; in Cote d'Ivoire four multinationals control 95% of cocoa processing; in Peru Nestle controls 80% of milk production.

The report also mentions the grassroots action that is being mobilized by many rural communities to protect their interests against any negative impacts of TNCs.

ActionAid International's report offers some solutions, calling on governments to:

1. Re-govern agrifood markets towards pro-poor development goals by:
  - Preventing the misuse of TNC buyer power in agrifood markets,
  - Strengthening, and where appropriate establishing, rural producer organizations,
  - Addressing the global agricultural commodity crisis affecting small-scale farming communities.
2. Hold TNCs legally accountable for their impacts on human rights and the environment by:
  - Ensuring that TNCs fulfill their obligations to promote, secure and protect human rights under the UN Human Rights Norms for Business,
  - Introducing and enforcing domestic legislation to regulate TNC activities in developing countries,
  - Building capacity in developing countries among farmer organizations and civil society groups

Contact: ActionAid UK, Hamlyn House, Macdonald Rd., Archway, London N19 5PG, UK E-mail: [mail@actionaid.org.uk](mailto:mail@actionaid.org.uk) website: [www.actionaid.org.uk](http://www.actionaid.org.uk)

## VIII. Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Report

It took four years for the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) staff to comprise information from the extensive field of science and all the knowledge held by the private sector, local communities and indigenous peoples, and more than 1350 experts from 95 countries to prepare the MA Report for the launching in London, 30 March 2005.

This report, released together with a statement by the MA Board of Directors "Living Beyond our Means: Natural Assets and Human Well-being", is the first in a series of "synthesis and

summary” reports, aiming to help raise the awareness of both decision makers and the public of the consequences of ecosystem change, as well as to provide the assessment need of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention to Combat Desertification, and others. The MA is intended to be used:

- *To identify priorities for action;*
- *As a benchmark for future assessments;*
- *As a framework and source of tools for assessment, planning and management;*
- *To gain foresight concerning the consequences of decisions affecting ecosystems;*
- *To identify response options to achieve human development and sustainability goals;*
- *To help build individual and institutional capacity to undertake integrated ecosystem assessments and act on the findings; and*
- *To guide future research.*

Among its findings MA highlights that humans have changed the ecosystem more extensively in the last 50 years than in any other period, and that more than half of all the synthetic nitrogen fertilizers, first made in 1913, ever used on the planet has been used since 1985, resulting in substantial and largely irreversible loss in diversity of life on Earth.

The MA board of directors’ statement stresses that “The over-riding conclusion of this assessment is that it lies within the power of human societies to ease the strains we are putting on the nature services of the planet”. The statement also points out, however, that achieving this will require “radical changes in the way nature is treated at every level of decision-making and new ways of cooperation between government, business and civil society. The warning signs are there for all of us to see. The future now lies in our hands”.

In his message for the launch of the MA report, the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan says that this, the first comprehensive global evaluation of its kind, “fills a global knowledge gap” and is an unprecedented contribution for “our global mission for development, sustainability and peace.”

<http://www.maweb.org>

## **IX. EARTH CHARTER+5 MEETING Amsterdam, Netherlands, 7-9 November 2005**

In March 2000, after years of discussions and deliberations between peoples and organizations throughout the world, the final text of the EARTH CHARTER found its final form.

The Charter is a declaration of “fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable and peaceful global society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century”. Its aim is to inspire in all peoples a sense of global interdependence and shared responsibility for the well being of the human family and the larger living world. Key principles are: Respect and care for the community of life; Ecological Integrity; Social and Economic Justice; and Democracy, Nonviolence, and Peace.

Among the November gathering objectives will be:

- Assessment of the impact of the Earth Charter initiative; its strength and weaknesses;
- Setting goals, priorities and strategies for the future, and

- Providing Earth Charter organizers and activists with an opportunity to share with and learn from each other.

Contact: Earth Charter International Secretariat, C/o Earth Council, POB 319-6100,  
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## X. The Great Invocation in English and Maori

### THE GREAT INVOCATION

From the point of Light within the Mind of  
God  
Let light stream forth into the minds of men.  
Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the Heart of  
God  
Let love stream forth into the hearts of men  
May Christ return to Earth.

From the centre where the Will of God is  
known  
Let purpose guide the little wills of men –  
The purpose which the Masters know and  
serve.

From the centre which we call the race of  
men  
Let the Plan of Love and Light work out  
And may it seal the door where evil dwells.

Let Light and Love and Power restore the  
plan on Earth.

### TE INOINGA NUI

Na te maramatanga kei te  
Ngakau o Te Atua  
Kia koha te maramatanga ki te  
Ngakau o te tangata  
Kia koha te maramatanga ki te ao

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

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

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

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