

Fostering Global Citizenship

Newsletter with August-September 2015 Articles

This newsletter is part of IPS-Inter Press Service and Soka Gakkai International (SGI) project. It includes independent news and analyses as well as columns by experts, news from international NGOs and a review of the global media for a glimpse of what is happening on the ground. Newspaper articles reproduced in this newsletter are for personal use and aim at giving information to readers. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is forbidden.

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The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are all about “finishing the unfinished business” of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), says Amina Mohammed, special adviser to the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on post-2015 development planning.

The international community adopted a set of 17 new development goals with its 169 targets by 2030 during the Sustainable Development Summit at the United Nations headquarters September 25-27 in New York. Instead of eight MDGs that expire this year, the post-2015 agenda has gathered a higher number of objectives. It required three-and-a-half years to get the scope of what would be the challenges the world should prioritize in the next 15 years. >> *Pages 2-3-4*

UN’s New Development Goals Need Funds, Political Commitment for Success



The U.N.’s much-ballyhooed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), unanimously adopted by over 150 world leaders at a three-day summit meeting, which concluded Sep. 27, has been touted as the biggest single contribution to humanity since the invention of sliced bread. Speaking at the opening ceremony of the Summit, the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon described the 17 SDGs as an integral part of a post-2015 development agenda to end poverty in all its forms. “The true test of commitment to

Agenda 2030 will be implementation. We need action from everyone, everywhere. Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals are our guide. They are a to-do list for people and planet, and a blueprint for success,” said Ban. >> *Pages 5-7*

Pope Francis Appeals to World Leaders’ Conscience at UN Summit



Pope Francis – born Jorge Mario Bergoglio in Buenos Aires in 1936 – has been noted in his home country “for his humility, his emphasis on God’s mercy, his concern for the poor, and his commitment to interfaith dialogue”. But in his wide-ranging address at the United Nations General Assembly on September 25, the Argentine pontiff has proved himself the sole world leader, unfettered by parochial interests of any sort whatsoever. Speaking just ahead of the formal adoption of a new global framework, ‘Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,’ composed of 17 goals and 169 targets to wipe out poverty, fight inequality and tackle climate over the next 15 years, Pope Francis endorsed a series of specific economic policies on debt, trade and tax to alleviate poverty. >> *Pages 8-9*

UN High Level Forum Pleads for Culture of Peace



The United Nations General Assembly deliberated on peace and non-violence at the UN headquarters in New York on September 9, making a significant contribution to fostering global citizenship at a point in time when the world is torn apart by multidimensional conflicts in all sectors of the globe. At the fourth UN High Level Forum on the Culture of Peace, convened by General Assembly President Sam Kahamba Kutesa, senior UN officials and eminent peace advocates pointed out that peace neither meant absence of conflict nor did it automatically result from ending conflict, but rather from building societies that embraced diversity, equality, democratic participation and access to education. >> *Pages 10-11*

How Israel Contributes to Global Citizenship



Israel has contributed to Global Citizenship in a number of ways including assisting students from developing countries to tackle development challenges, using the Jewish state’s experience in emergency situations to provide assistance and emergency relief around the world. Israel’s founding fathers, including David Ben Gurion, expressed a vision to be a force for good in the world by sharing expertise and resources with developing countries. “I am prouder of Israel’s international cooperation programme than I am of any other single project we have ever undertaken. It typifies the drive towards social justice that is at the very heart of Judaism,” said former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir as she highlighted the importance of Israel’s foreign aid programme. >> *Pages 12-14*

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Finishing the Unfinished Business with Sustainable Development Goals

By Fabíola Ortiz



Amina Mohammed, special adviser to the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on post-2015 development planning Credit: Fabiola Ortiz

UNITED NATIONS (IDN) - The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are all about “finishing the unfinished business” of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), says Amina Mohammed, special adviser to the UN Secretary- General Ban Ki-moon on post-2015 development planning.

The international community adopted a set of 17 new development goals with its 169 targets by 2030 during the Sustainable Development Summit at the United Nations headquarters September 25-27 in New York. Instead of eight MDGs that expire this year, the post-2015 agenda has gathered a higher number of objectives.

It required three-and-a-half years to get the scope of what would be the challenges the world should prioritize in the next 15 years.

Mohammed assures that this time it won't be putting a 'band-aid' on the world's problems. “We are going to talk about the root causes not the symptoms. The MDGs were a success, we wouldn't be talking about a successor set of goals if they hadn't worked to a degree, but the MDGs remain unfinished business,” she said talking to a small group of journalists. ➔

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There is a difference from what MDGs represented in the early years of 2000 “when a few men prescribed for the world what we should be doing in the following 15 years”.

Much has changed since then. “What we have now is universal goals. The agenda is for everybody. It is about a world that we all understand that it is inextricably linked. The SDGs are a response to the shared vision of how we are going to make sure by 2030 that we do eradicate poverty and how we deal with a number of complex issues”, Mohammed stressed.

For Kitty van der Heijden from the World Resources Institute (WRI), it may not sound as a revolution but the new set of goals has in its essence an innovative content. “It has the potential to transform our economies, our lives and our ecosystems. The 17 goals do something that MDGs have never done, that is, leaving no one behind. It is a step beyond,” she told IDN in an exclusive interview.

Sustainable development means a balance between three pillars of the economic, environmental and social. According to Heijden, in the past decades global economies grew significantly (world’s GDP more than tripled since 1990), the world achieved some equity by halving extreme poverty, but there are still big challenges in terms of gender equity and sexual reproductive health.

“We have grown our economies but have not been able to distribute economic and social wealth equitably across the world. In this regard, we have seen very bad news, rates of biodiversity loss, soil degradation, climate change, ocean acidification, fresh water scarcity, all these are in an accelerating negative trend,” declared Heijden.

According to the UN special adviser on Post-2015, MDGs did not look at the “root causes” of what was excluding people from the economy and why there was poverty. It failed to address a much wider and integrated perspective.

“On health, we did manage to deal with diseases such as HIV and Tuberculosis. But they were dealt in a silent manner; we didn’t look into the health systems. With the neglect of health systems we saw the outbreak of Ebola that really set us back years because our systems were too weak,” commented Mohammed.

That is the ‘band-aid’ the world should avoid and do not repeat, she stressed. “We tried to address problems up the face, but we didn’t go to the root causes. Now we should go beyond the quick fix.”

However civil society groups view the new development agenda with some scepticism, especially in regard to implementation.

“We’ve made huge progress on the MDGs, but if we don’t get the environmental component we face the huge risk of eroding all the gains we’ve made. Ultimately, this agenda needs to be judged not on the words that are written but on the actions that are implemented,” said Deon Nell, Acting Executive Director for Conservation at WWF, thinking ahead.

The world is reaching an irreversible tipping point in which there are many reasons to be “quite negative”, Nell told a small group of journalists. Humanity is consuming a huge amount of resources at about 1.5 planets each year, 60 per cent of the vital life ecosystems are declining and 2015 was considered the warmest year on record, Neil added.

On the other hand, civil society organisations have taken note of some signs of change. “This new agenda is literally a grassroots business plan for transforming the planet. There’s a lot to be done, but it is certainly a starter of transforming the world. We have more ownership to this process, it might not be perfect but it was developed from the ground up”, Nell highlighted.

Nevertheless, in the opinion of Eni Lestari, an Indonesian rights activist, the SDGs show contradictions and are failing in address migrants’ needs.

“Millions of women and men are pushed away from their land into poverty to make way for development, agribusiness, oil plantation, mines and real estates. Millions of us are forced into becoming a cheap explored labour force and many may also become refugees. Millions of us are displaced by climate change and disasters becoming the underclass of globalization having denied our basic rights of citizens”, criticized Lestari who chairs the International Migrants Alliance (IMA).

Although some development goals tackle general inequalities, there have been no funding commitments to make real changes, Lestari told a small group of journalists reporting from the UN. “There is nothing in the agenda that commits governments to change the system that causes poverty.” ➔

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In her opinion, if the private sector and corporations are to finance the SDGs, there is a risk that they may not properly address the root causes.

There is still a gap between how much it is going to cost to realize the SDGs and the willingness of the international donors. “That gap is huge and it runs into the trillions of dollars every year”, stated Paul O’Brien, the vice president for Policy and Campaigns at Oxfam America.

For him, given incentives for domestic expenditures particularly in developing countries, there would be enough money available to finance SDGs.

“We have time and money to achieve all the goals,” assured O’Brien. The question is if there is enough political will. “I don’t think that everybody is going to rush back to their own countries and start investing in their goals”.

According to Amina Mohammed, the UN special adviser, the answer lies in making global partnerships. “The trillions exist in this world, they are locked up in private equity funds and different sources of investments. And we have to find the keys to unlock them, we do have the resources to do the SDGs.” [IDN-InDepthNews – 28 September 2015]

The Beyond 2015 Campaign said it welcomes the focus on inclusion and participation reflected in the current draft that is being negotiated at the United Nations, and “we count on governments to translate their commitments into action as soon as the SDGs are adopted.”

In implementing the SDGs, it is crucial that states honour their commitment to “leave no one behind”.

“This means tracking progress for all social and economic groups, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, drawing upon data from a wider range of sources, and regular scrutiny with the involvement of people themselves,” the statement added.

Additionally, an even higher level of participation and inclusion is needed, at all levels, when implementation starts.

“People must be aware of the new agenda and take ownership of the goals for real and sustainable changes to occur.”

The Beyond 2015 campaign also welcomed the commitment to an open and transparent follow-up framework for the SDGs, grounded in people’s participation at multiple levels.

“We believe the current draft could be improved by including specific time-bound commitments and endorsing civil society’s role in generating data to review commitments,” it said.

“We insist on the need for governments to translate the SDGs into national commitments as this is a crucial step for governments to be genuinely accountable to people everywhere.” (IPS | 29 July 2015) ◆

| 持続可能な開発目標 | 未完の仕事を終わらせる

【国連IDN=ファビオラ・オルティス】

持続可能な開発目標（SDGs）とは、ミレニアム開発目標（MDGs）という「未完の仕事を終わらせる」ためのもの—こう語ったのは、ポスト2015年の開発計画に関する潘基文国連事務総長の特別顧問であるアミナ・モハメド氏である。

国際社会は、ニューヨークの国連本部で開催された「持続可能な開発に関するサミット」（9月27日～29日）において、2030年までの17の新たな開発目標と169のターゲットを採択した。今年で期限を迎える8つのMDGsに替わって、ポスト2015年のアジェンダはより多い目標数を定めた。

国際社会は、今後15年間で世界が優先すべき課題とその範囲を定める作業に実に3年半を費やした。

モハメド特別顧問は、国連での記者会見において「今般の開発目標は、世界が直面している諸問題に対して対症的な対応に留まりません。」と指摘したうえで「私たちは問題の表面的な現象ではなく根本原因について議論していきます。MDGsは一定の成功を収めました。もっとも仮にMDGsがあまり機能していなかったら、その後継目標について話し合うこともなかったでしょう。ただし（期限を迎えた）MSGsは未完の仕事のままなのです。」と語った。

<> <http://www.fostering-globalcitizenship.net/index.php/asian-languages/japanese/308-2015-10-13-17-03-29>

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UN's New Development Goals Need Funds, Political Commitment for Success

By Thalif Deen



UNITED NATIONS (IPS) - The U.N.'s much-ballyhooed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), unanimously adopted by over 150 world leaders at a three-day summit meeting, which concluded Sep. 27, has been touted as the biggest single contribution to humanity since the invention of sliced bread.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the Summit, the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon described the 17 SDGs as an integral part of a post-2015 development agenda to end poverty in all its forms.

“The true test of commitment to Agenda 2030 will be implementation. We need action from everyone, everywhere. Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals are our guide. They are a to-do list for people and planet, and a blueprint for success,” said Ban.

But what does it really take to ensure the SDGs are implemented over the next 15 years so that the world will witness a radical transformation of global society, including the elimination of poverty, hunger, gender discrimination, spreading diseases and environmental degradation — all by the year 2030.

Political will? Increased domestic resources and official development assistance (ODA)? A rise in private sector investments? Or all of it?

Ambassador Macharia Kamau of Kenya, one of the co-facilitators of the SDGs inter-governmental consultative process, told reporters last month the implementation of the agenda could cost a staggering 3.5 trillion to 5.0 trillion dollars per year.

Winnie Byanyima, Executive Director of Oxfam International said: “The new Sustainable Development Goals are ambitious on paper – and they could be historic in their impact. They seek to go beyond band-aid solutions by setting out to eradicate – not just reduce – extreme poverty and hunger in every country.”

“The key is to welcome the richest people back in touch with the rest of society, rather than allowing them to exist on the margins of privilege,” she added.

Leida Rijnhout, Director of Global Policies and Sustainability at the European Environmental Bureau, (in New York) said the 17 goals have the potential to push for higher ambitions and more coherence in policymaking, although the goal of ‘sustained economic growth’ could undermine the others.

“It is clear that the Earth’s carrying capacity is not increasing and that some countries need to substantially decrease their resource use to achieve more equitable sharing of resources and to allow other countries to develop and meet basic needs.”

“We are massively over-consuming in Europe at the expense of the climate and the development of poorer countries – a trend that is causing increasing conflicts over ever scarcer resources.” ➔

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The European Commission, she said, has the perfect chance when it reviews the Europe 2020 Strategy and the EU Sustainable Development Strategy to come up soon with an action plan for the implementation of the SDGs that shows it has understood the goals and the need to change track.

Asked if SDGs are realistic and implementable over the next 15 years, Zubair Sayed, Head of Communication and Campaigns at CIVICUS, the global civil society alliance, told IPS the SDGs are much wider in scope than the MDGs and are also universal in scope which means they apply to both developed and developing countries.

There are two issues, however, with regard to their implementation, he pointed out.

“Do states have the means and more importantly, do they have the will to implement them,” he asked.

What will be common in all contexts is that their success will depend on the political will of governments to take them seriously, to include transformative targets in their national development plans, to put the necessary resources behind them and to include citizens and civil society in all aspects of the design, implementation and monitoring, he noted.

“It’s also important that relevant indicators are identified by the international community to underpin the targets.”

Asked what is most needed through 2030, Sayed told IPS the success of the SDG’s will depend on the extent to which decision makers take them seriously and commit to their implementation through the setting of transformative national targets and committing financial resources to achieve them, the full and meaningful involvement of citizens in setting targets, reporting, and monitoring progress, and the inclusion of civil society as an equal partner in multilateral forums and processes.

The mobilisation of public opinion to ensure meaningful implementation of the goals by leaders will also be critical, he added.

Yolanda Kakabadse, President of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) International, said “most importantly in the coming months, countries need to figure out how they’re going to contribute to achieving these goals and set benchmarks and indicators so they can report on their efforts.”

“We’re in the race and can finally see the finish line – but we need some runners at the starting line if we’re going to make this happen in 15 years.”

Every country is required to develop national indicators and programmes of implementation through individual development plans, she pointed out.

In March, countries will crucially agree a set of indicators that will allow the UN to report annually on global progress in coming years.

“The indicator question will be challenging, but if countries can unite to solve the financial crisis, they can figure this out. The crucial part will be working together and being as transparent with data as possible,” said Kakabadse.

Manish Bapna, executive vice president and managing director of World Resources Institute said the SDGs are a remarkable achievement that set a bold new agenda for international development.

Reflecting profound changes in the world, the new SDGs apply to all countries and importantly put environmental sustainability at their core.

“The SDGs recognize that we cannot eradicate extreme poverty and ensure lasting economic growth without also caring for the planet,” he noted.

“Fortunately, there are a growing number of examples where poverty reduction, economic growth and environmental protection go hand-in-hand. This includes creating compact cities that focus on people, restoring degraded land, expanding access to low-carbon energy, and many more.

“Of course, it’s not enough to have good goals. Now, it’s up to governments – and others in the private sector, international organizations, and civil society – to follow through on this vision. By setting smart policies, encouraging sustainable investment, and measuring progress, countries can put us on a path to achieve these goals. ☺

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“If successful, the SDGs will usher in a radical shift in development. We can move away from today’s imbalanced approach to one that benefits all people and protects the planet at the same time.

Adriano Campolina, chief executive at ActionAid, told IPS the SDGs are a step forward as they identify the causes of poverty, “but unless we change the rules that govern the global system, the same players will keep winning.”

“We need to build a more just future for all people and the planet where it’s no longer just money that talks and the gaps in society are narrower.”

“We need to make sure that people living in poverty around the world benefit from these new development goals. Massive corporate investments alone will not guarantee a reduction in poverty and inequality. Governments must change the rules of the game and stop looking to the corporate sector for all the answers. We urgently need to address inequality if these new development goals are to stand a chance of succeeding in the next 15 years.”

The SDGs, proposed by an Open Working Group comprising all 193 U.N. member states, are the result of a three-year-long transparent, participatory process inclusive of all stakeholders and people’s voices.

The 17 SDGs and 169 targets of the new agenda will be monitored and reviewed using a set of global indicators. The global indicator framework, to be developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators, will be agreed on by the UN Statistical Commission by March 2016. (IPS | 28 September 2015) ◆

国連の新たな開発目標には、成功のための資金と政治的意思が必要

9月27日まで3日間に亘って開催された「持続可能な開発に関するサミット」（過去最多の世界150か国以上の首脳が出席）において、前評判が高かった「持続可能な開発目標」（SDGs）が全会一致で採択された。この新開発アジェンダは、前代未聞の人類への素晴らしい貢献だと謳われている。

サミットの開会式で演説した潘基文国連事務総長は、「17の目標から成るSDGsは、あらゆる形態の貧困をなくすための『ポスト2015年開発アジェンダ』の不可欠の一部を成すものです。」と語った。

潘事務総長はまた、「『持続可能な開発のためのアジェンダ2030』の試金石は、『履行』にあります。あらゆる場所の全ての人々の行動が必要です。17の持続可能な開発目標は、私たちの指針、つまり、人類と地球にとっての『ToDoリスト』であり、成功への青写真なのです。」と語った。

しかし、今後15年かけてSDGsを実行し、貧困や飢餓、ジェンダー差別、病気の蔓延、環境の悪化をなくすことなど、グローバル社会の根本的な変革を2030年までに実現するには、実際に何が必要とされる条件だろうか？

それは政治的意思だろうか？それとも、国内資源や政府開発援助（ODA）の上積みだろうか？或は民間投資の拡大だろうか？それともその全てだろうか？

政府間のSDGs協議プロセスの共同議長であったケニアのマチャリア・カマウ国連大使は先月の記者会見において、「『持続可能な開発のためのアジェンダ』の実行には、毎年3.5兆ドルから5兆ドルもの巨額の費用がかかる可能性があります。」と語った。

オックスファム・インターナショナルのウィニー・ビヤニマ代表は「新たに採択された『持続可能な開発目標』は、文書の上では野心的なもので、インパクトの点で歴史的なものになる可能性があります。あらゆる国における極度の貧困や飢餓を単に減らすだけではなく根絶するという目標を掲げることで、従来の応急措置的な解決策からさらに踏み込んだものにしようとしています。」と指摘したうえで、「その中で大事なことは、最も裕福な人々が特権に居座ることを許すのではなく、社会の他の人々との関わりを持つように引き戻してこられるかどうかにかかっているでしょう。」と語った。

<http://www.fostering-globalcitizenship.net/index.php/asian-languages/japanese/304-2015-10-08-15-37-03>

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Pope Francis Appeals to World Leaders' Conscience at UN Summit

By J R Nastranis



Pope Francis is welcomed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and receives flower bouquets from children of UN staff members at the start of his visit to UN Headquarters. UN Photo/Mark Garten

NEW YORK (IDN) - Pope Francis – born Jorge Mario Bergoglio in Buenos Aires in 1936 – has been noted in his home country “for his humility, his emphasis on God’s mercy, his concern for the poor, and his commitment to interfaith dialogue”. But in his wide-ranging address at the United Nations General Assembly on September 25, the Argentine pontiff has proved himself the sole world leader, unfettered by parochial interests of any sort whatsoever.

Speaking just ahead of the formal adoption of a new global framework, ‘Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,’ composed of 17 goals and 169 targets to wipe out poverty, fight inequality and tackle climate over the next 15 years, Pope Francis endorsed a series of specific economic policies on debt, trade and tax to alleviate poverty.

The Pope’s UN speech followed his address to a joint session of the U.S. Congress on September 24 where he emphasized the need for building bridges to protect the vulnerable and address inequality.

"The Pope just called for responsible lending policies to benefit the vulnerable," noted Eric LeCompte, executive director of the religious anti-poverty coalition Jubilee USA Network. LeCompte advises the Vatican and the UN on finance and poverty issues. "He's connecting the failure of austerity and reckless lending policies to poverty and plight," Le Compte said. ➔

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Pope Francis began his speech by calling on international financial institutions to prevent "oppressive lending systems" from harming vulnerable communities. He specifically referenced "usury" – the practice of charging exceptionally high interest rates – as a form of abuse hurting developing countries.

The Pope encouraged the United Nations to use its administrative agencies to address structural poverty issues. This summer, Pope Francis endorsed a UN global bankruptcy process for countries.

"It's amazing to see Pope Francis talk about usury and the responsibility of creditors," stated LeCompte. "Pope Francis told the UN that it has a responsibility to use its agencies to solve the debt crisis."

Pope Francis said: "The present time invites us to give priority to actions which generate new processes in society, so as to bear fruit in significant and positive historical events. We cannot permit ourselves to postpone 'certain agendas' for the future."

"The future demands of us critical and global decisions in the face of world-wide conflicts which increase the number of the excluded and those in need," he declared.

Pope Francis also warned that the realities in the Middle East and Africa were grave. "I must renew my repeated appeals regarding the painful situation of the entire Middle East, North Africa and other African countries," he said. "These realities should serve as a grave summons to an examination of conscience on the part of those charged with the conduct of international affairs."

"Not only in cases of religious or cultural persecution, but in every situation of conflict, as in Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, Libya, South Sudan and the Great Lakes region, real human beings take precedence over partisan interests, however legitimate the latter may be," he continued. "In wars and conflicts there are individual persons, our brothers and sisters, men and women, young and old, boys and girls who weep, suffer and die."

Noting the achievements of the UN as it celebrates its 70th anniversary, the Pope said: "The history of this organized community of States is one of important common achievements over a period of unusually fast-paced changes . . . Without claiming to be exhaustive, we can mention the codification and development of international law, the establishment of international norms regarding human rights, advances in humanitarian law, the resolution of numerous conflicts, operations of peace-keeping and reconciliation, and any number of other accomplishments in every area of international activity and endeavour."

But he cautioned that the experience of the last 70 years had revealed that reform and adaptation to the times were necessary. "The need for greater equity is especially true in the case of those bodies with effective executive capability, such as the Security Council, the financial agencies and the groups or mechanisms specifically created to deal with economic crises," he said.

Addressing the effects of exclusion and inequality, Pope Francis said the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, was an important step forward, adding that he was confident that the December Conference of States Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), widely referred to as COP 21, would secure fundamental and effective agreements. [IDN-InDepthNews – 25 September 2015] ◆

フランシスコ法王、国連サミットを前に世界の指導者の良心に訴えかける

【ニューヨークIDN=J.R.ナストラニス】

ローマカトリック教会のフランシスコ法王（本名ホルヘ・マリオ・ベルゴリオ、1936年ブエノスアイレス生まれ）は、故国では「謙虚で熱心に神の慈悲を説き、貧しい人々への奉仕と宗教間対話にも強い関心を持つ」人物として知られてきた。しかし9月25日に国連総会で幅広いテーマについて演説したこのアルゼンチン人の法王は、いかなる偏狭な利害にも束縛されない唯一の世界的リーダーであることを証明した。

<http://www.fostering-globalcitizenship.net/index.php/asian-languages/japanese/303-2015-10-07-13-53-25>

Fostering Global Citizenship

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UN High Level Forum Pleads for Culture of Peace

By J R Nastranis



NEW YORK (IDN) - The United Nations General Assembly deliberated on peace and non-violence at the UN headquarters in New York on September 9, making a significant contribution to fostering global citizenship at a point in time when the world is torn apart by multidimensional conflicts in all sectors of the globe.

At the fourth UN High Level Forum on the Culture of Peace, convened by General Assembly President Sam Kahamba Kutesa, senior UN officials and eminent peace advocates pointed out that peace neither meant absence of conflict nor did it automatically result from ending conflict, but rather from building societies that embraced diversity, equality, democratic participation and access to education.

The one-day UN High Level Forum has been convened since 2012. It highlights the importance of implementing the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace adopted by the Assembly 1999, with former UN Under Secretary General and Bangladesh Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury as Chair of the drafting committee.

September 9 Forum focused on the roles that all stakeholders – Governments, community and religious leaders, educators, the media and others – could play in creating a culture of non-violence. In the post-2015 era, many speakers agreed, the priority must be on advancing a vision for overall improved well-being for the peoples of the world.

“Peace is a distant dream without development,” said Einar Gunnarsson of Iceland, speaking on behalf of UNGA President Sam Kutesa. “This is part of the core challenge in promoting a culture of peace and ensuring peaceful societies,” he said. For more than 70 years, the desire for peace had driven nearly every facet of the UN’s work. However, new challenges such as terrorism, cybercrime, human trafficking and climate change continued to defer that dream.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to be endorsed at UN Summit from September 25 to 27, he pointed out, contained goals that required the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies. “The onus is upon us to ensure effective implementation,” he stressed.

In a similar vein, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the Forum was about confronting the “very hard truths in our world”, where, across many war-torn regions, there were brutal violations of international humanitarian and human rights law and, even in mostly peaceful and democratic societies, minorities were attacked. “We cannot turn our eyes away from the suffering,” he stressed. “We cannot close our hearts.”

Ban invoked the stern warning of Mahatma Gandhi: “There will be no lasting peace on earth unless we learn not merely to tolerate but even to respect the other faiths as our own.”

Elaborating on that theme in a keynote address, Arun Gandhi, grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, said his grandfather did not believe that nationalism could sustain the world, as it created the impression that one could exist without concern for others. “Our futures and destinies are interconnected,” he said. “The only way to live in stability was to create stability. That ought to be the common endeavour,” he added

His grandfather’s philosophy of non-violence was about personal transformation, he noted. “We are all part of society”, he said, “and unless we, individually, recognize non-violence and live it, we cannot have a Government that believes in peace.” Peace must begin with the individual.

To drive home the point, he shared a memory of throwing away a pencil as a young boy, only to have his grandfather ask him to retrieve it. People’s use of natural resources, his grandfather had explained was, in fact, violence against nature. Violence was committed by over-consuming resources and depriving others. Today, in the United States alone, he pointed out, USD20 billion in food was thrown away annually, while more than 1 million people went to bed hungry.

A culture of non-violence was built through love, respect, understanding, appreciation and self-realization. “We have to respect our connection with all of creation. We are here for a purpose. We have to find and fulfil that purpose.” ☺

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The Forum discussed the core themes in two round tables. The first round table, titled ‘promotion of the culture of peace in the context of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda’, examined strategies for fostering a culture of peace in over the next 15 years. The second, on ‘the role of the media in the promotion of the culture of peace’, considered how various forms of media could be used to foster tolerance and mutual understanding.

Opening the discussion in the first round table, Ambassador Chowdhury said that the international community must work to eliminate the structural violence embedded in society, stressing that in the absence of peace it would be impossible to achieve the goals of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

Former President of Romania Emil Constantinescu stated that recent popular movements in Tunisia, Egypt and Syria had drawn attention to the absence of a dialogue and efficient diplomacy. Preventing conflict required a comprehensive, balanced vision, which took into consideration the interests of various ethnic and religious communities and the rights and obligations of independent States’ citizens.

Former UNESCO Director General Federico Mayor pointed out that in the last 25 years, there had been many excellent plans and agendas and programmes of action that had been “completely useless”. Commitments had been made, but there had been no action. The reality was that children were dying of hunger everyday while countries invested in military spending. Sustainability was already at risk because there were potentially irreversible processes at work in the environment.

The present generation had an immense responsibility to reverse this situation, added, because the international community was on the verge of the point of no return. “I am sure that the measures that are going to be adopted here in a few weeks will be very good. But we have wonderful documents already. Afterwards nothing happened,” he said, warning that tomorrow could be too late.

Other panellists included Maria Emma Mejia, Permanent Representative of Colombia; Amina Mohammed, the Secretary-General’s Special Adviser on Post-2015 Development Planning; and Barbara Adams, Adviser at the Global Policy Forum and Social Watch. In addition, Elizabeth Shuman, representing the Executive Committee of the Department of Public Information’s programme for non-governmental organizations (DPI/NGO), acted as the designated discussant.

The panel discussion on ‘role of the media in the promotion of the culture of peace’ was chaired and moderated by Marjon V. Kamara, Permanent Representative of Liberia. The panellists included Abulkalam Abdul Momen, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh; Cristina Gallach, UN Under-Secretary-General for Communication and Public Information; Michael Nagler, President, Metta Centre for Nonviolence; and Sharon Bhagwan-Rolls, Founder-Director, FemLINKPACIFIC, Fiji.

Opening the panel, Liberia’s Permanent Representative Kamara said the media, a powerful driver of change through the free and participatory exchange of information, had a crucial role in advancing a culture of peace.

Speaking from personal experience, Bangladesh’s Permanent Representative Momen said the media wielded enormous political power and was a vital agent of social change if mobilized properly. The media had transcended its traditional existence to encompass online social platforms that informed and educated people in an unprecedented way. The saying that “the pen is mightier than the sword” underscored the urgency of efforts to encourage the media towards positive change. Specifically, the media needed to end hatred and intolerance and create a mind-set of mutual respect.

Rounding out the panel, Bhagwan-Rolls, Founder-Director, FemLINKPACIFIC said community media had the ability to transform the notion of security based on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). Unless there was an express role for the community media beyond traditional public relations, its role in the post-2015 agenda would be limited. Content should be able to reflect progress or lack thereof in terms of achieving goals while ensuring that women were able to define peace, security and development.

Who made the news and why should not be based on patriarchal patterns of power, she said, emphasizing that Member States should be responsive to the views of local communities. A legislative and regulatory environment was needed to ensure diversity and decentralization of power in an effort advance sustainable peace and development with a view to fostering global citizenship. [IDN-InDepthNews – 12 September 2015] ◆

Photo: UN General Assembly | Credit: Wikimedia Commons

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How Israel Contributes to Global Citizenship

By Mel Frykberg



'Breaking The Silence' takes a group on a tour of Hebron where they learn first hand about life under occupation. Credit: Mel Frykberg

HAIFA (IDN) - Israel has contributed to Global Citizenship in a number of ways including assisting students from developing countries to tackle development challenges, using the Jewish state's experience in emergency situations to provide assistance and emergency relief around the world.

Israel's founding fathers, including David Ben Gurion, expressed a vision to be a force for good in the world by sharing expertise and resources with developing countries.

"I am prouder of Israel's international cooperation programme than I am of any other single project we have ever undertaken. It typifies the drive towards social justice that is at the very heart of Judaism," said former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir as she highlighted the importance of Israel's foreign aid programme.

A number of Israeli universities provide scholarships for students in developing countries to study public health and agriculture in Israel.

[The Pears Foundation](#), a British Foundation, which works closely with Israeli universities and academia, is one such organisation, which provides support infrastructure for Israel's emerging international development sector.

"Our initiative contributes essential skills and builds lasting relationships between Israel and the developing world," said the organisation. ➡

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“Our programmes set out to create meaningful social change, increase respect and understanding and inspire people to support their communities and the causes they care about.”

As part of it Global Citizenship enterprise, Israel has also developed a formidable conflict resolution industry offering MA graduate programmes to international students.

“Israel has about 65 academic institutions and dozens of programmes involved in conflict resolution which is a significant number for a country of less than eight million people,” Professor Gad Barzilai, the dean of Haifa University’s Law Faculty told IDN.

However, Palestinian critics say there is a wide chasm between Israel’s expertise in theory and its behaviour on the ground.

“Israel giving advice on resolving conflict is a bit of an oxymoron when it fails to put its advice into practise,” media consultant, former Al Jazeera correspondent and Palestinian Authority (PA) spokeswoman, Nour Odeh told IDN.

Barzilai said that most Israeli academics were critical of the occupation and that they were more active than American academics when it came to involvement in human rights issues.

“Israel has enormous security challenges and this has to be part of the discussion. Israel is stuck in a turbulent Mideast and ISIS is only 9 miles away,” said Barzilai.

Odeh countered, “Israel has been using the security context since its inception and it’s become a bit of a self-fulfilling prophecy as well as a means of justifying the occupation.”

“While talking about security Israel continues to build more settlements and commit more human rights abuses, further fuelling the conflict,” added Odeh.

Under Barzilai, Haifa University’s Law Faculty holds about 40 conferences annually on human rights in Gaza, international law, and the rule of law under extreme circumstances, and many of its students are involved in human rights issues. The University also holds ‘legal clinics’ across the spectrum of human rights.

Students at Israeli schools also have at least one programme on democracy.

“From an early age Israelis are politically aware and concerned about the problems with our neighbours,” said Barzilai.

“The views on how to resolve the conflict, however, differ between the left-wing and the right-wing which compromise 50-50 of Israeli society respectively.

“Thirty percent of Israelis believe human rights trump security while the other 70 percent say security is more important.

“These views have been convoluted and polarised due to rocket attacks from Gaza. Some Israelis advocate a military solution, while others want a more peaceful resolution.

“Although Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s government is the most right-wing in Israel’s history it only has a narrow margin,” Barzilai told IDN.

Nour disagrees with Barzilai.

“Israeli settlers are part of Israel’s government and most Israeli governments have supported the settlements politically and economically,” said Odeh

“When Israelis say they are against the occupation one has to define their definition of the occupation which differs from that of the international community and international law.

“Many of them support the separation wall, the larger settlements remaining in place, and the continued Judaisation of East Jerusalem,” Odeh told IDN.

“I think the Israelis have an immature interpretation of the occupation with their refusal to acknowledge the historical background of the conflict and the dispossession of Palestinians.

“Let’s not forget Netanyahu won the 1996 elections by saying there were no Palestinians.” ➡

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Dr Keren Sharvit, heads Haifa University's International MA Programme, Peace and Conflict Management Studies, a programme which has been running for four years with the majority of students coming from abroad and the rest Israeli.

"It is an inter-disciplinary programme founded on the social sciences, part of it in English," Sharvit told IDN.

"My students study intergroup conflicts on the local level, diverse communities, ethnic conflict at the intra-state level and on the international level.

"In regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict there are different perspectives and approaches.

"Some of the students research the community level, including how it would be possible for Israeli Jews and Palestinians to live in the same neighbourhood.

"Other students look at the issue at the state level in regard to what policies could be implemented to facilitate a better relationship between Jews and Arabs, the latter believing they are second-class citizens in Israel.

"On the international level the input of the global community is examined," said Sharvit.

Despite Sharvit's programme only running for four years, already some of her students have made significant contributions to the peace industry.

One of her graduates is the coordinator of the Haifa Centre for Dialogue and Conflict Resolution, which was created by the Haifa Municipality.

"Another of my students has developed a programme at Givat Haviva, The Centre for a Shared Society," said Sharvit.

Sharvit says many Israelis are not concerned with resolving Israel's conflict with the Arabs and believes there has to be more education.

"If we want to resolve our political problems there needs to be more work done to educate the public," Sharvit told IDN. [IDN-InDepthNews – 8 September 2015] ◆

イスラエルはいかに世界市民に貢献しているか

【ハイファIDN=メル・フリクバーグ】

イスラエルは様々な方法で世界市民に貢献している。例えば、途上国から留学生を受け入れ開発問題に対処する支援を行ったり、緊急事態を潜り抜けてきた自国の経験を生かして世界各地で支援活動や緊急援助を実施している。

ダヴィド・ベングリオン氏など、イスラエルの創始者らは、専門知識や資源を途上国と共有することによって、善への力になるというビジョンを表明している。

「私は、これまで手掛けてきた他のいかなるプロジェクトよりも、イスラエルの国際協力プログラムを誇りに思っています。それは、ユダヤ主義の中核にある社会的公正への取り組みを象徴するものだからです。」と、ゴルダ・メイヤ元首相は、イスラエルの対外支援政策の重要性について見解を述べている。

多くのイスラエルの大学が、公衆衛生や農業を学ぶ途上国からの留学生に奨学金を提供している。

イスラエルの大学・学界と緊密に協力している英国のピアース財団もそうした組織の一つだ。イスラエルに登場しつつある国際開発部門に対して、支援インフラを提供している。

「私たちの取り組みは、必須技術を提供し、イスラエルと途上国との間に永続的な関係を育んでいこうとするものです。」とピアース財団は述べている。

<http://www.fostering-globalcitizenship.net/index.php/asian-languages/japanese/297-2015-09-19-15-16-22>

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http://www.fostering-globalcitizenship.net/documents/Education_for_Global_Citizenship_Project_Report_2014-2015.pdf

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