

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

MAGAZINE FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Education for global citizenship, funded among others through tax on financial speculation, will not only promote enlightened patriotism but also foster the cause of peace and counter nationalistic and fundamentalist trends, says Professor Carlos Alberto Torres. Pages 6-8.

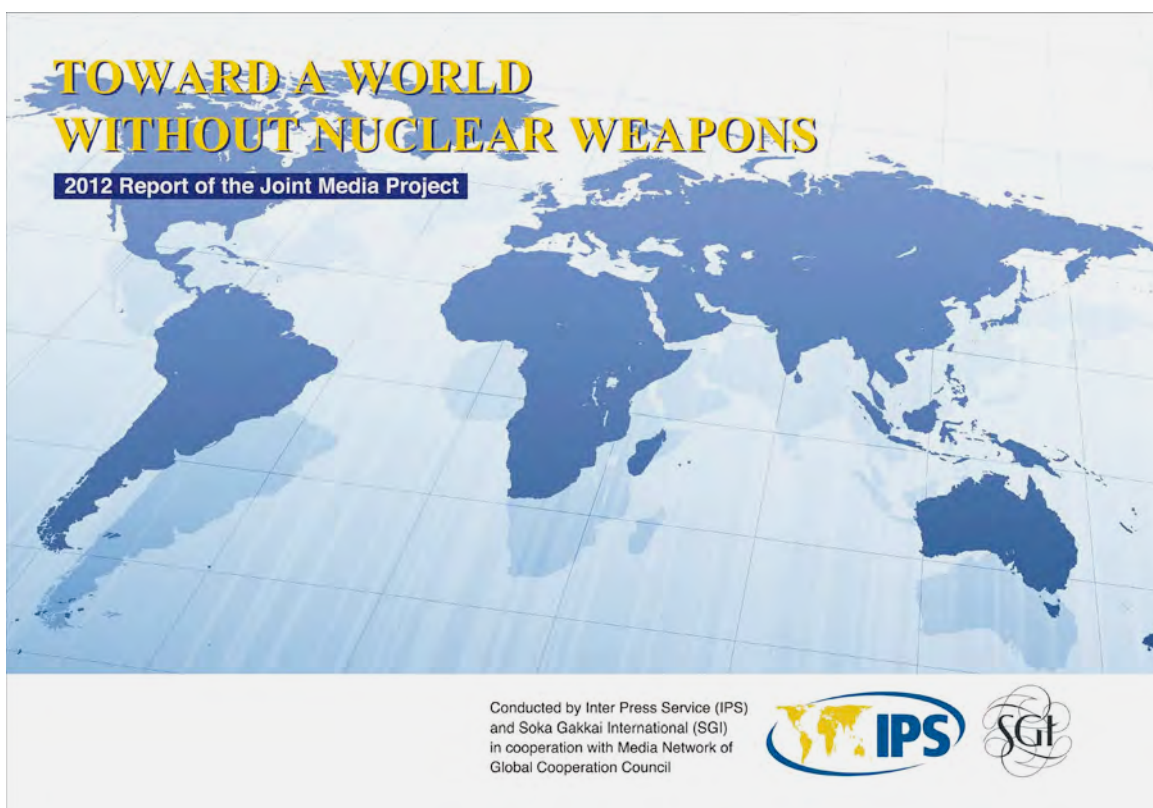


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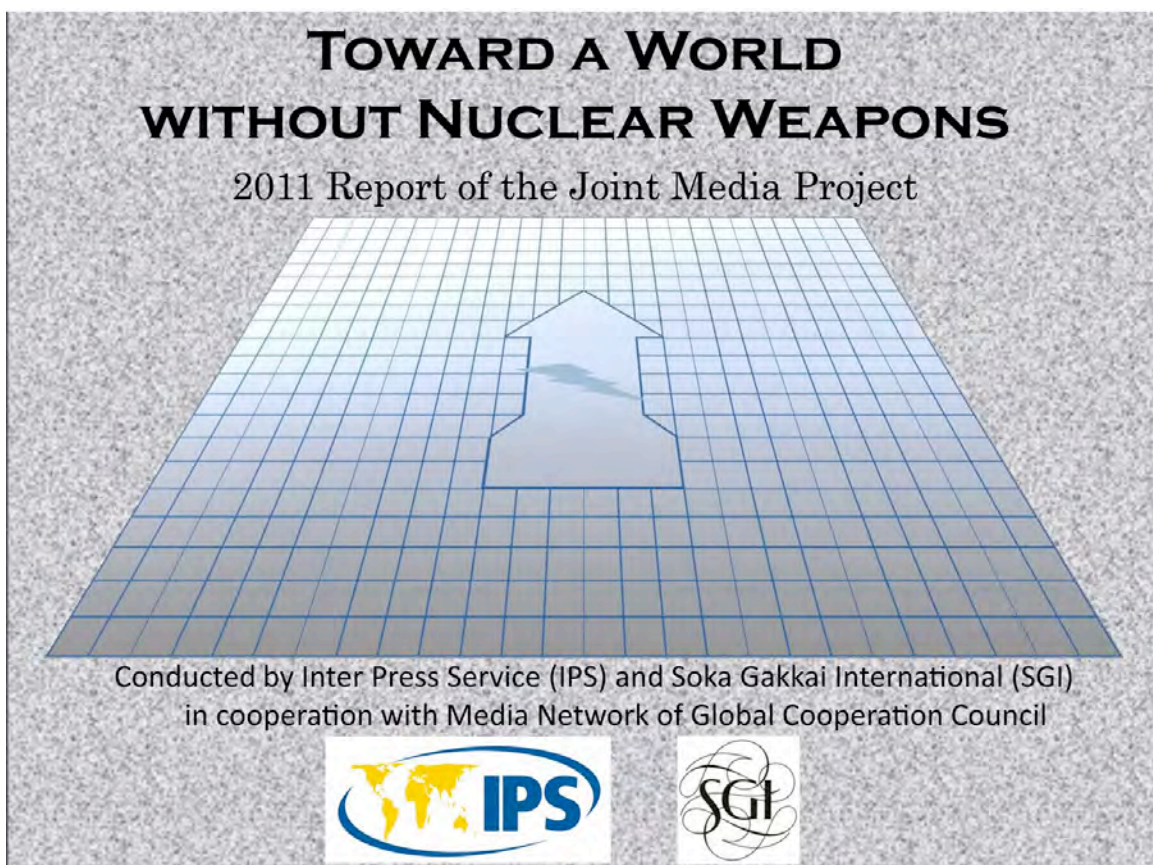
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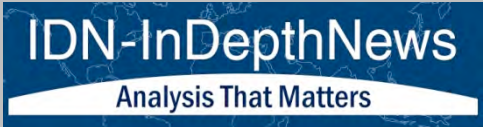
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GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Rising Importance Of Educational Initiatives

By Jaya Ramachandran

NEW YORK (IDN) - When United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched the Global Education First Initiative in September 2012, “fostering global citizenship” was one of his three priorities, along with “putting every child in school” and “improving the quality of learning”. Ban said: “Education is much more than an entry to the job market. It has the power to shape a sustainable future and better world. Education policies should promote peace, mutual respect and environmental care.”



As the international community moves toward adopting the post-2015 development agenda, popularly known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the need for education for global citizenship is becoming increasingly important.

Because none of the goals impacting the Earth and its inhabitants can be achieved without

people and governments around the world transcending narrow national interests and acting in the interest of the planet.

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in June 2012 in Brazil gave the mandate that the SDGs should be coherent with and integrated into the UN development agenda for universal good beyond 2015.

The Open Working Group established by the Rio outcome document has meanwhile agreed on 17 goals and 169 targets, which aim at poverty eradication, changing unsustainable and encouraging sustainable patterns of consumption and production and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development.

These are the overarching objectives of and essential requirements for sustainable development as explained in Ban's “synthesis report”, *The Road to Dignity by 2030*, released on December 4, 2014.

Ban proposes an integrated set of six essential elements that taken together will aim to facilitate the deliberations of Member States ahead of the special UN Summit on sustainable development from September 25 to 27 and enable them to arrive at the concise and aspirational agenda mandated by the Rio Conference.

The six essential elements are: (1) to end poverty and fight inequalities; (2) to ensure healthy lives, knowledge, and the inclusion of women and children; (3) to grow a strong, inclusive, and transformative economy; (4) to protect our

ecosystems for all societies and our children; (5) to promote safe and peaceful societies, and strong institutions; and (6) to catalyse global solidarity for sustainable development.

ESD and EGC

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and, by implication, Education for Global Citizenship (EGC), is a critical component in the proposed post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

The proposed Goal 4 (the post-2015 education goal) seeks to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all”. While proposed Goal 12 aims to “ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns”; and Goal 13 states the need to “take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”.

ESD (and EGC) is included in the three proposed targets to help achieve these goals:

- First, “by 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development”.

- A second ESD-related target proposes to “ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature” by 2030.

- And finally a third target suggests to “improve education, awareness raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, and early warning” in order to help combat climate change.

This analysis, posted on the website of the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, affirms the three key elements that Soka Gakkai International (SGI) president Daisaku Ikeda suggested as the basis of an educational program for global citizenship.

Already back in in June 1996, in a lecture at the Teachers College, Columbia University, Ikeda spelt out the following as essential elements of global citizenship: ➔

- The wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life and living
- The courage not to fear or deny difference; but to respect and strive to understand people of different cultures, and to grow from encounters with them
- The compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy that reaches beyond one's immediate surroundings and extends to those suffering in distant places.

Education for global citizenship, he said in his Peace Proposals 2014, should include:

- Deepen understanding of the challenges facing humankind, enable people to explore their causes and instill the shared hope and confidence that such problems, being of human origin, are amenable to human solutions;
- Identify the early signs of impending global problems in local phenomena, develop sensitivity to such signs and empower people to take concerted action; and

- Foster empathetic imagination and a keen awareness that actions that profit one's own country might have a negative impact on or be perceived as a threat by other countries, elevating this to a shared pledge not to seek one's happiness and prosperity at the expense of others.

The Aichi-Nagoya conference in November 2014 in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, launched the Global Action Programme (GAP) on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), focussing on action on the ground.

The GAP and further outcomes of the World Conference will inform the deliberations of the World Education Forum to be held from May 19 to 22, 2015 in Incheon, South Korea.

It will aim to reach agreement on a new education agenda post-2015 and to adopt a global framework for action for the years to come. [IDN-InDepthNews – December 28, 2014]❖



UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development



World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development

Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, 10-12 November 2014

Stakeholder Meetings, Okayama, Japan, 4-8 November 2014

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

The Long Journey Ahead

Monzurul Huq* Talks To Professor Carlos Alberto Torres

NAGOYA, Japan (IDN) – Education for global citizenship, funded among others through tax on financial speculation, will not only promote enlightened patriotism but also foster the cause of peace and counter nationalistic and fundamentalist trends, says Professor Carlos Alberto Torres in an exclusive interview.



Professor of Social Sciences and Comparative Education at the UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles) Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, Torres is a leading expert on issues related to global citizenship. For the last decade, he has been working from a global perspective on human rights, pluralism and citizenship. He has contributed significantly to defining the theoretical perspective of educating the global citizen. Together with some of his colleagues, he established in 1991 Paulo Freire Institute and is currently serving as its Director.

Professor Torres, who was in Nagoya in November 2014 to attend the UNESCO Conference on Education for Sustainable Development and talked to IDN-InDepthNews about the concept of global citizenship – its dimension, possibilities and also the difficulties that we face in transforming the idea into reality. Below extensive extracts from the interview:

IDN: How optimistic are you that global citizenship is achievable in the near future?

Torres: If we were not optimistic we would not be talking about it. Paulo Freire (the Brazilian pedagogue pioneering the tradition of popular education in Latin America and an icon of social changes through education) used to say that we have to work on our own dreams. And he said there are dreams for today and there are dreams for tomorrow. My goal is that we have dreams for today.

The notion of global citizenship has several different aspects as a concept. One is to articulate a critical perspective. Second is to help replace the notion of a global model of neo-liberalism, which has produced an impact on education that I consider deleterious. And this impact is concentrated around the regime of high stake testing and models of accountability, which are usually more connected with the ways to manipulate power than actually to see what is happening and how you connect global citizenship education.

Having said that, what we need for this concept to be successful is clear conceptualization. Secondly, we need what I'll call a legal bind. There must be some legal elements in international law that defend some of the definitions proposed in this concept. Third, we need principles that articulate and will define the bases on which we're operating; and in this context is to defend the planet, to defend the people and to defend peace.

When I use the term peace as an immaterial good, I'm serious about it because the moment we achieve some peace, even individual, we can move forward. I'm not sure if you're a religious man or not, but my own perception of spirituality is connected with achieving inner peace. And by achieving inner peace, you achieve a sense of "perfection".

Otherwise, you'll not have it. That does not mean you're escaping reality. It means that you're engaging in reality, trying to use this newfound peace to promote your struggles. It might look like a paradox, but it is not. So, I'll say - peace is an immaterial good of society and we need to promote it as a global movement.

Once you have all these things in place, you have to create some revolutions. These revolutions could be used at several levels. Let me give you one example, why we have so much inequality.

Because there are some people who are taking advantage of the way the system works and accumulate resources without saying that you need peace. Ok, so you can work on this and there is the notion of Tobin tax. It has been endorsed in Europe.

Tobin tax is a very small percentage tax on speculation and currency, which means that if someone speculates, he has to pay a tax in every transaction. The amount of money involved is very small, but with the speed of circulation of financial capitalism, the amount involved can become immense. So what do we do with the money? I put it in education. And why you do that? Because we want global citizenship education. So, you see, this is one example of a revolution, and I can give you several more.

Is it going to be a concept that is easily and immediately accepted? Of course not. So we have to create a model of intellectual persuasion in which people begin to see the importance of this concept, the implications of this concept and how they can be applied in our daily life. Finally, one of the great dilemmas is, can we find the way in which this concept of global citizenship will help national citizenship. The answer is yes and I'm working on that with some other colleagues. ☺

IDN: Doesn't this idea come in conflict with nationalism?

Torres: Well, in a way it does not have to be in conflict because we're looking at the local and the global. If the global works in the local and the local works in the global, then it does not have to be in conflict. But it will conflict with ethnic nationalism, because it is a model of nationalism that privileges a particular ethnic group. It will also be in conflict with a model of nationalism that plunders resources of the environment that nobody should.

And it will conflict with the model of nationalism in which pollution is allowed and this nationalism is usually also one sided, or if I may put it in this way, is controlled by economic elites that want to continue their model of capital accumulation without any concern about environment. In that regard it is in conflict with nationalism.

Does it get into conflict with nationalism in terms of patriotism? No, it does not. What kind of patriotism are we talking about? Here is one of the wonderful dilemmas of this discourse from a political and philosophical perspective. Think of this – patria means motherland. Patriotism is love for the motherland. So, love for the motherland could guide you into being essentially active in promoting attacks on other motherlands. So, this notion of helping global citizenship and peace is to moderate some irrational trends in some models of nationalism, not all of them. The second element is that nationalism is always attached to some founding documents. These founding documents are connected with some constitutional source. The US constitution has been the most successful one that inspired hundreds of other constitutions. So, in the US what defines patriotism? The only answer that you have is the idea of freedom. Then how could you be emotionally attached to an idea?

IDN: Is it through the American way of life?

Torres: But how do you define that, the idea of freedom? You want to be more specific and want to say ok, the American notion is an exception. But I think you have to create some kind of a narrative to explain this notion of patriotism attached to freedom. Another example very much in discussion in some European countries, but has reached also the US. It is constitutional patriotism. You really look at the constitution and you try to live by the principles of the constitution.

What happens when nationalism triumphs over constitution? What happens when nationalism takes a political perception of patriotism that is extremely damaging to the basic socialization inside a country? Answer to all such assumptions is, you need global citizenship. It works as a moderator.

IDN: How will this perception work in reality?

Torres: I said that you need some global laws. I think what we need to do is to persuade people, I think we need to create more interest groups that are concerned about this. We do have lot of global citizens already.

IDN: But we have other the side as well, like the fundamentalist trend, nationalistic trend and so on.

Torres: You have to face that trend, confront that trend peacefully and try to persuade. But we do have already the global citizenship. Imagine all those people connected with environmental struggles. They are global citizens. Are they pursuing interests independent of you or me? No. They are pursuing independent interests of the planet. Then you have businessmen, people who live on airplanes, who cut a deal today in Osaka and then they go tomorrow to Malaysia, cut another deal there and then come back to London. And in less than three weeks they have been in five different continents cutting all sorts of deals. These people are also global citizens. I want them to abide by a global citizen ethic, not a business ethic. So, it's a long haul, it has to start somewhere. My first work on this was in 2002. Academics have meanwhile written a lot about the contradictions and all sorts of things. Now I want people to begin to look at how we change the world.

I come from a perspective which is critical theory. In critical theory we don't teach or do research to reproduce the world. We do teach and do research to change the world. This is a fundamental principle. And if we can achieve some of that, living more and more in peace and creating better and better defenses for the planet, then we would have achieved what I call the idea of the global commons – the planet, the people and the peace.

IDN: I guess one of the difficulties we face in understanding global citizenship is the existence of military forces. Armies are usually trained from a narrow national perspective of defending the patria from presumed enemies. Do you think we can become true global citizens without demilitarization?

Torres: I will love to say one day that there is no more need for military men. I will love to say that. But I know this is not going to happen ever. Psychoanalytically speaking, individuals are built on pressures – we can modify them, we can control them, we can supplement them.

But they are in us. We may diffuse some of the pressures, but they are in us. One is the sexual stimuli, which correlates with so many things from good and bad to violence, but which also correlates from good and bad; because if suddenly somebody attacks you or attacks your wife or your daughter and you react with violence defending someone else, your ability to react will obviously be seen as positive. But if you, without any provocation and for no particular reason, attack somebody then it'll not be seen as a good thing. But you and I, and everybody around have these two portions – the libido and the violence. Because of this, it will be absolutely impossible to eliminate the option of violence.

Revolutions take place because people decide to end a state of affairs in which they are denied, some of them are violent and some of them are non-violent, but changes occur. ➡

My view is that, when you look at citizenship, one of the real questions that you come across is: are you ready to die for your citizenship? Are you ready to die for your belonging to the patria? If you were not in this job, say in Bangladesh army; then you probably have to tell me yes. If I'm forced through conscription into the Bangladesh army and I did not join voluntarily, I probably could say no. But I would rather prefer not to be that bold.

I think Voltaire said something that applies to my perception. He said, I should be ready to die for what I believe, but I should not be ready to kill for what I believe. So, when you look at fundamentalism, that's one of the problems, when you look just at the basic violence in society in the pursuit of individual interests, that's one of the problems. When you're looking at the world divided into pieces and somebody tries to take control of someone else, then there is another conflict and you've war.

But look at what has been happening in Europe. Think historically. The incredible amount of wars was connected with the constitution of the nation states in Europe. Look

now. I mean there is no guarantee. We have the Crimean Republic or we have Russia – there is no guarantee. But we have come a long way.



**Monzurul Huq is a Bangladesh journalist, who has authored a number of books in Bengali on Japan and other subjects. He moved to Japan in 1994 after working at the United Nations Information Center in Dhaka and BBC World Service in London. He represents two leading*

national dailies of Bangladesh – Prothom Alo and the Daily Star – and contributes regularly to a number of other important publications in Bangladesh. of the Club for two consecutive terms and was elected president of the Club in 2009. [IDN-InDepthNews – November 25, 2014] ❖

Photo on page 6: Professor Carlos Alberto Torres | Credit: Monzurul Huq



© UNESCO, The Director-General of UNESCO at the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development welcome reception on 9 November 2014, hosted by the Government of Japan

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

The Road To Understanding

By Kartikeya V. Sarabhai*

AHMEDABAD, India (IPS) - Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) brings together concerns about the environment, economic development and social aspects. Since 1972, when the first UN Conference on the Human Environment was held in Stockholm, Sweden, there has been increasing awareness of the intricate link between conserving the environment and human development.



Kartikeya V. Sarabhai | Photo courtesy of Purvivyas/cc by 3.0

The fact that our lifestyles and the way we have developed have a major impact on the environment was known earlier. Rachel Carson's book, *Silent Spring*, in 1962, had been an eye-opener, especially in the United States where it was published.

But the 1976 UN Conference on the Human Habitat was perhaps the beginning of the realisation that development and environment had to be dealt with together. By the time of the first Rio conference in 1992, the deterioration of the environment was recognised as a global issue. ☞

The conventions on biodiversity and climate change both were formulated at this conference. It was increasingly clear that no longer could countries solve their problems at the national level. With greater awareness especially on climate change one realised that what happens in one part of the planet has an impact on another.

Notwithstanding what President George W. Bush declared at Rio – that “The American way of life is not up for negotiations” – the world came to realise that ultimately these issues had to do with people’s lifestyles. The development paradigm that had emerged was carbon intensive and extremely wasteful.

The global footprint measure was developed in 1990 by Canadian ecologist William Rees and Swiss-born regional planner Mathis Wackernagel at the University of British Columbia. It was a good way of knowing just how an individual’s action impacted the planet. Since the 1970s the total human footprint has exceeded the capacity of the planet.

While the global debate then and to a large extent even today seems based on the idea that making changes in policy and introducing new technologies can somehow shrink this footprint to sustainable levels, this assumption is widely questioned.

At the core of the change that is required is the transformation that happens in the way people relate to the planet and how we produce, consume and waste resources. It is not laws alone that can change people’s behaviour but people themselves behaving with a sense of responsibility. This sense of responsibility is at the heart of the concept of citizenship.

Global Citizenship therefore almost naturally emerges from an understanding of environment and sustainable development. ESD therefore becomes the foundation for Global Citizenship Education (GCE).

A Global Citizen is not someone who can be passive, but needs to contribute. ESD, unlike most formal education

programmes, has the necessary action component built into it. ESD though shortened to three letters actually stands for four words. The missing word in the abbreviation is “for”, a word as important as the other three.

It is not Sustainable Development Education, which would indicate it is about teaching people about sustainable development (SD). What “for” does is, it puts an action goal at the end of the education process. It is not just to increase public awareness and knowledge about SD but in fact to act to achieve it.

The Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) of the UN Secretary-General speaks of Global Citizenship as one of the three key concepts that the world needs to strive for in education today. GCE involves widening horizons and seeing problems from different points of view. Multi-stakeholder discussions are an important part of a GCE Programme. While we may strive for this, it is not always easy to understand and experience different points of view.

The Centre for Environment Education (CEE) in Ahmedabad, India, along with CEE Australia has launched the Global Citizenship for Sustainability (GCS) Programme which involves connecting children in schools in different countries around a nature-based theme.

For instance, Project 1600 connects eight schools on the coast of Gujarat in Western India with similar number of schools on the coast of Queensland in Australia. Through projects concerning the marine environment, children living in very different societies at different levels of development compare notes. The exchange forces students to think out of the box and understand issues from a very different perspective, from a different part of the globe.

Internships where students spend time in countries and environments that are very different from their own are also a very effective tool for GCE. Increasing global connectivity has also opened up possibilities for GCE that would have been unimaginable just a few years ago. [IPS News Agency | December 30, 2014] ❖

CEE

Centre for Environment Education

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ASIA-PACIFIC

What China's Silk Road Project Aims At

By Shastri Ramachandaran*

MUMBAI (IDN) - There is more to China's Silk Route Project — from the sea lanes of East Asia through South and Central Asia to Europe — than is generally perceived in India.

India has been invited to join the project for rebuilding the ancient Silk Road that connected India, China and Central Asia to Europe and reviving the Maritime Silk Route for linking countries in the Asia Pacific and Indian Ocean. Most of India's neighbours see it as an opportunity that should not be missed.

However, given the misgivings in India, the debate on the Silk Route is limited to: Should India be ensnared by the project's economic logic? Or, should India resist this Chinese "strategic ploy" to encircle India?

Such limited viewpoints ignore the larger dimensions of the Silk Road Project with its enormous transformative potential for Asia as a whole. These outcomes — be it "encirclement of India", "upgrading of the Karakoram Highway" or enrichment of Central Asia — however, are not the primary purpose of the Project.

The \$40-billion Silk Route initiative may broadly be divided into the Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) and the Maritime Silk Road (MSR). The initiative's stated aim — such as win-win cooperation between Xinjiang province and neighbouring countries and between China and South and Southeast Asia — may turn out to be a game-changer. The result may well redefine geopolitics, re-set economic equations from Indonesia to Europe, reduce disparities within Asia, develop new hubs and tracks of trade and energy flow, and create a new security rationale to fight terrorism and separatist threats.

This is the narrative that emerges from a week spent in Xinjiang — the emerging core zone of the Silk Road Economic Belt — and talking to experts on China's development strategy and ethnic policies with particular reference to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), which has witnessed recurrent terrorist attacks including bomb blasts, mass killings, riots and arson.

Xinjiang, much more than Tibet or Hong Kong, poses a potent challenge to the idea of One China. The militancy of Uyghurs — the most populous among 55 minorities in the province — makes XUAR a powder keg, where jihadis from outside too are suspected to be active. Xinjiang, adjoining Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), shares borders with India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Separatist groups in Xinjiang, such as the Uyghurs' East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) have forged links with militants and extremists in Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Central Asian republics. Jihadis are said to be eyeing

Xinjiang, where bomb blasts and clashes between Uyghur separatists and security forces left a few hundred dead last year. One of the deadliest attacks — after the 2009 riots that claimed nearly 200 lives — was in July last. At least 97 — including 59 "attackers" shot by the police — were killed.

In Beijing's view, the "three evils" — separatism, terrorism and extremism — rampant in Xinjiang are a threat to the security and stability of China as well as Central Asia, Russia and "Afghanistan's neighbours" (including India and Pakistan). The economic, infrastructural, commercial, industrial and financial development of Xinjiang and bordering countries — as part of the SREB connecting China and Europe by rail and road — is essentially a counter-terrorism strategy to stamp out the three evils.

Economic development in these poor, less developed parts is dictated by the urgent need to smother the restive minorities, especially the Uyghurs, with prosperity and bind the troubled region to the rest of China and in an interlocking arrangement with Central Asia and Russia. The domestic ramifications of the SREB came across clearly in presentations made to visiting journalists by experts not only on economics, reforms and development but also on religious, cultural and minority policies.

Ma Jin, head of the region's Department of Religious Affairs, said: "Ethnic splittism and illegal religious activities are the two major dangers affecting Xinjiang."

The key issue in Xinjiang, he said, is how to strengthen unity among minorities and the biggest mass work is how to achieve national unity and religious harmony. "The religious issue in Xinjiang is closely related to overall social stability and long-lasting security," said Ma.

The population of ethnic minorities has been increasing at a higher rate than the national average in the last 60 years and is still rising as a proportion of the national population, said Wang Ping of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission's Department of Politics and Law.

He attributed this to the "loose family-planning policy" for minorities, reduced child mortality, higher life expectancy and better living conditions.

*Shastri Ramachandran is an independent political and foreign affairs commentator. This article first appeared in [DNA](#) on December 24 and is being reproduced by arrangement with the writer.

[IDN-InDepthNews - December 25, 2014] ❖

ASIA-PACIFIC

Nuclear-Weapon Free NEA Is Possible

By Jamshed Baruah

GENEVA (IDN) - While existing tensions in Northeast Asia continue to be a source of concern and urgent action is required to diffuse these and bring about meaningful cooperation, a nuclear-weapon free zone (NWFZ) in the region is possible and should in fact be a priority, according to an international conference held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on November 26.

Mongolia's single-state NWFZ is a strong illustration of leadership in this area, and should serve as an example to other states wishing to take action against nuclear weapons and the dangers they pose, final document of the international Conference 'Dimensions to create a Nuclear-Weapon Free Northeast Asia' stated.



The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) Northeast Asia and Blue Banner, Ulaanbaatar Focal Point of GPPAC, organized the conference under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Economic Development of Mongolia. Over 60 people, including civil society representatives and scholars from Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Kyoto, Pyongyang, Seoul, Taipei, Tokyo, Ulaanbaatar and Vladivostok, as well as representatives of the GPPAC Global Secretariat in The Hague, attended the conference.

The conference considered "Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status and the role that the country could play in promoting greater confidence, stability and non-proliferation in the region". It reaffirmed the participants' commitment to conflict prevention, peace-building and non-proliferation in the region, as reflected in the previous statements of GPPAC Northeast Asia in the 2005 Tokyo Agenda, the 2006 Mt Kungang Action Plan, and the 2007 and 2010 Ulaanbaatar statements.

The participants were of the view that addressing issues of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons detonation, accidental or intentional, was an important and timely measure that would allow the international community to maintain high awareness of the urgency of nuclear disarmament by deepening the understanding of the devastating consequences of nuclear detonation.

Hence they welcomed the holding of two conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons in Oslo, Norway in 2013 and in Nayarit, Mexico in 2014, and the civil society involvement therein.

The Oslo conference addressed the consequences of a nuclear weapon detonation through a humanitarian lens, while the Nayarit conference allowed a deeper understanding of such consequences focusing on long-term effects as well as effects on public health, environment, climate change, food security, displacements and development.

They said that they expected third conference, to be held in Vienna on December 8 and 9, to highlight further the urgency of abolishing nuclear weapons by hearing further testimonies, looking at consequences of nuclear weapon tests, and the risks of human and technical error and would contribute to starting negotiations aimed at eliminating nuclear weapons.

Therefore they called upon civil society organizations to take an active part in both the governmental conference and the civil society forum being organized by ICAN (International Campaign for Abolition of Nuclear Weapons) on December 6 and 7 in Vienna.

Complete abolition of nuclear weapons

Participants reaffirmed their conviction that the only effective guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons was their complete prohibition and elimination through conclusion of international legally binding instrument to this effect.

In view of this, they rejected modernization of existing nuclear weapons and development of new types of such weapons as acts inconsistent with the goals and obligations of nuclear disarmament.

They welcomed the decision of the General Assembly of the United Nations to designate September 26 as International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, the convening in 2013 of a high level meeting on nuclear disarmament and its outcome, and called upon states to convene the second meeting not later than 2018 so as to identify concrete measures and actions to eliminate nuclear weapons in the shortest possible time. In the interim, they called on the international community to commence negotiations and adopt without delay a universal and ☺

legally binding instrument on negative security assurances. The conference also expressed its support for the Republic of the Marshall Islands' Nuclear Zero lawsuits, holding the nine nuclear-armed nations accountable for failing to comply with their obligations under the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

2015 NPT Review Conference

The participants discussed at length the preparations for the 2015 NPT Review, which was the cornerstone of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. They called upon nuclear-weapon states to fully comply with their obligations to nuclear disarmament under Article VI of the NPT, and fully implement the 13 practical steps towards nuclear disarmament agreed upon at the 2000 NPT Review Conference as well as the Action Plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference, in particular Action 5.

The conference reaffirmed the important role that NWFZs play in strengthening regional and international security, and expressed support for strengthening the existing ones. In that respect it expressed concern that despite the agreements reached by the states parties to the NPT in 1995, 2000 and 2010, the international conference on the establishment of a Middle East NWFZ had not been held and expressed the hope that such a conference would be held before the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

According to the final document, the participants expressed concern over the persisting tensions in the Northeast Asian (NEA) region, including on and around the Korean peninsula. They believed that the Six Party Talks (involving South Korea and North Korea, China, Russia, Japan and the U.S.) still could play an important role in addressing some of their causes, and that other forms of dialogue to contribute to a permanent peace regime be sincerely pursued.

“The participants believed that confidence-building measures to improve relations and a broad approach to addressing this issue, including the feasibility of establishing a NEA-NWFZ, were practically useful, and that the nu-

clear umbrella and extended nuclear deterrence needed to be given up altogether.”

The conference welcomed the Mongolian President's proposal to promote the Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on Northeast Asian Security as an effective way to reduce mistrust and promote mutual understanding and greater confidence.

It expressed the view that civil society needed to play its role in promoting understanding and dialogue in the region and reiterated their commitment to continue cooperation of civil society organizations with a view to developing and strengthening a shared vision for a peaceful and stable Northeast Asia, as the Ulaanbaatar Process proposed by GPPAC Northeast Asia in 2007 and currently in preparation.

The potential agenda for future dialogue sessions was to focus not only on traditional peace and security issues, but also include more comprehensive aspects such as economy, the environment, sustainability, disaster relief, gender, human security and the potential role of civil society.

The participants welcomed Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free zone policy both as a concrete contribution to regional stability, and as an innovative approach to addressing nuclear threat-related issues. They welcomed the joint declaration of the five nuclear-weapon states whereby the latter pledged to respect Mongolia's status and not to contribute to any act that would violate it. The participants expressed the hope that Mongolia's example would be an inspiring example in addressing similar cases.

Further: The participants reaffirmed their support for global efforts to promote nuclear disarmament and conflict prevention in which civil society could play an important role. They, therefore, supported various civil society led campaigns and efforts such as the ICAN, Mayors for Peace, the various national and international campaigns to end the Korean War, and those to protect and promote Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution. IDN-InDepthNews – November 27, 2014] ❖

Photo on page 12: Conference 'Dimensions to create a Nuclear-Weapon Free Northeast Asia' | Credit: ICAN



NUCLEAR WEAPONS

'Their Weapons Possess Them'

By Xanthe Hall*

"Possession does not prevent international disputes from occurring, but it makes conflicts more dangerous. Maintaining forces on alert does not provide safety, but it increases the likelihood of accidents. Upholding doctrines of nuclear deterrence does not counter proliferation, but it makes the weapons more desirable." - UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon.

BERLIN | VIENNA (IDN) - Nearly a thousand people crammed into the conference hall in the majestic Hofburg in Vienna for two full days of discussions on the unspeakable and unimaginable theme - the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. This was the third in a series of state-sponsored conferences taking place outside of the UN, the first two having taken place in Norway and Mexico.



A view of the conference hall

The growing number of states taking part at these conferences is taken to be a sign of their effectiveness in both creating awareness about the unacceptable nature of nuclear weapons and building pressure for nuclear disarmament.

Nearly 160 states were represented, among them the United States and United Kingdom who were taking part for the first time, to the chagrin of Russia and France who resolutely continue to stay away. At the end of the conference, Austria pledged to work to close the "legal gap" that would lead to the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons, inviting others to join them.

The Austrian Foreign Ministry pulled out all the stops for this conference. In the opening session, the young minister Sebastian Kurz called for a new momentum for concrete progress on global nuclear disarmament.

High level messages from the UN Secretary-General and the Pope set the tone. Pope Francis encouraged nuclear

weapons' victims to be "prophetic voices" warning of the potential to destroy "us and the civilisation".

A long list of prominent figures sent a letter to the Austrian Foreign Minister sharing the belief that the risks posed by nuclear weapons are underestimated and need to be reduced. The President of the [International Committee of the Red Cross](#) said that new studies confirmed their already-stated conclusion that there could be no adequate help or relief in case of a nuclear explosion.

Setsuko Thurlow related her personal story of loss and suffering as a Hibakusha (nuclear bomb survivor) and the whole room suffered with her.

"A is for atom, B is for bomb. C is for cancer, D is for death"

The opening session thereby introduced the main themes of the conference that were then covered in depth in the following sessions on the impact of nuclear weapons' explosions, nuclear testing, risks, and scenarios. ☺

Scientific presentations were interspersed with testimonials from “downwinders” (victims of nuclear testing). Wheelchair-bound Michelle Thomas from “HEAL” in Utah gave an impassioned speech about growing up in the radioactive midst of over 100 above-ground nuclear tests and how her community became ravaged by cancer and other illnesses. She spoke of embarrassment at her mother's activism until she herself realised that it was not the Cold War enemy but “Our own country was bombing the hell out of us”. People asked her if she was not afraid to speak out so strongly against the government. She replied: “they already killed me”.

During the Q&A session following three testimonials from women on the destruction of their land, subsistence and health, the U.S. representative made a severe error of judgement. He made a speech, despite the Chair clearly telling states not to do so until the following day. The U.S. representative chose not to apologise to the Downwinders for their suffering, but to make it clear to all in the room that they were not planning on diverting from their “to-do” list of steps in order to increase momentum for nuclear disarmament.

Nuclear weapons are too cruel to tolerate

On the second day of the conference, a panel on International Humanitarian Law (IHL) concluded that the use of nuclear weapons would contravene existing IHL and environmental law, even though no specific ban is in place. A fascinating talk by Nobuo Hayashi of Oslo University delved into the ethical and moral dimensions and concluded that, like torture – which was on everyone's minds that day after the publication of the Senate report – nuclear weapons are “too cruel to tolerate”. Now that “we no longer live in an era when humankind felt compelled to take itself hostage for its own survival” it is an opportune moment to relieve ourselves of this unnecessary suffering.

The political statement section took five hours to slog through, without a lunch break and for some of the time without translation. 100 states took the floor to share their thoughts and their conclusions. Now and again the tedium of the occasion was broken up by a civil society statement, most notably from the Wildfire's ‘Chief Inflammatory Officer’ Richard Lelanne who pleaded with the non-nuclear

weapon states to stop whining and get on with banning nuclear weapons on their own.

The so-called “weasel states” (those under the nuclear “umbrella” of the U.S.) were greeted by a giant weasel that appeared in the foyer when they stepped out for some refreshments. Lelanne likened the nuclear-armed states to alcoholics, possessed by their weapons, and urged nuclear weapon-free states not to support their habit. The ICAN statement was presented by the young director of ICAN Austria Nadja Schmidt who called for a process “open to all and blockable by none” leading to a ban on nuclear weapons.

The humanitarian initiative aims to put the effects of nuclear weapons at the centre of the debate rather than national security interests and these conferences have been effective in achieving that for the large part.

Ukraine, however, was so caught up in its present conflict that it was unable to step outside its own box and indulged instead in a verbal attack on Russia.

The United Kingdom went as far as to say that the humanitarian effects were already clear in 1968 and that a ban or a timetable for elimination would endanger strategic stability, so that they planned to hang on to their missiles for “as long as necessary”.

The “Austrian Pledge” was the main outcome of the conference – a tool that allows countries to signify their preparedness to begin a process leading to the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.

It is unlikely that much more than this could be achieved before the Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in Spring 2015. But unless there is an outcome from the conference in New York, which many hold to be unlikely, Austria may be able to use the support amassed through its Pledge to kick-start negotiations on a treaty, with or without the nuclear-armed states. Given that the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki will be commemorated for the 70th time next year, that might be an apt time for talks on a ban to begin.

**Xanthe Hall is Disarmament Campaigner of [IPPNW Deutschland](#) | [IPPNW Germany](#). [IDN-InDepthNews – December 11, 2014] ❖*

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NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Survivors Aspire For A Nuke Free World

By Neena Bhandari*

SYDNEY (IDN) - Sue Coleman-Haseldine, a Kokatha-Mula Indigenous woman, was about three years old when the United Kingdom began conducting Nuclear weapons tests in Australia's Monte Bello Islands, off the Western Australian coast, and Emu Field and Maralinga in South Australia. The 12 major tests, conducted between 1952 and 1963, contaminated a huge area, including Koonibba, the place where Sue's family and larger community lived.

"There were Aboriginal people living in the region when the tests started. Many people died and became sick in the immediate test areas. The first atomic bomb called 'Totem 1' spread far and wide and there are stories about the 'black mist' it created which killed, blinded and made people very sick," says Sue, who remembers elders in the community telling her about the healthy life of hunting for wild game and collecting bush fruits prior to the tests.



"Older people in our community talked about the Nullarbor dust storms, but it was the fallout from the Maralinga tests. We weren't on ground zero, but the dust didn't stay in one place. It went wherever the winds took it. People were dying of cancer, something that was new to us," recalls Sue, who learnt about the radiation fallout while attending a meeting of the [Australian Nuclear Free Alliance \(ANFA\)](#).

Aboriginal people formed ANFA, formerly the Alliance Against Uranium, in 1997. They were joined by some NGOs concerned about existing or proposed nuclear developments in Australia, particularly on Indigenous homelands.

For Aboriginal people, the land is the basis of their culture. Sue was devastated to learn that the bush foods were possibly contaminated. "It is our supermarket for food and our pharmacy for medicines, and looking after it is our religion. It doesn't matter if you are Aboriginal or not, everyone in this part of the country has a sad story about premature sickness and death in their families. Cancer is the big one, but it is also common for people to suffer from thyroid conditions," she tells IDN.

Fertility problems, still births, birth defects became more common at the time of the testing, but even today people like Sue wonder if their health issues are related to the ongoing radiation in the area or genetic changes passed down through generations. She wants nuclear weapons

permanently banned and the uranium that can create them left in the ground.

Last year, governments, United Nations agencies and civil society members met in Oslo (Norway) for the first ever Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. This was followed with the

Mexican Government hosting 146 countries in February 2014 to build on the evidence. In October 2014, 155 out of 193 member state governments supported the Joint Statement on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons presented to the UN General Assembly. The Third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, held in Vienna (Austria) on December 8-9, heard Sue's shattering testimony.

The momentum to begin negotiations on a binding international treaty to outlaw and eliminate nuclear weapons has grown manifold, according to observers. There has been a renewed global effort especially to raise awareness of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and to ensure that they are never used again.

Today, estimated 17,000 warheads remain in existence, despite a significant decrease in the stockpiles of the United States and the Russian nuclear warheads since the end of the Cold War.

Australia Director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), Tim Wright said, "It's time for Australia to join the overwhelming majority of nations that have pledged their support for a treaty banning nuclear weapons."

ICAN Australia has created a Youtube video '[Don't Want Your Nuclear Umbrella](#)' to drive home the message for all "umbrella states" to stop tolerating the bomb and reject nuclear weapons in their defence policy. The video has attracted almost 16,000 hits. "We wanted to open a discussion about extended nuclear deterrence in a comical and accessible way, especially for young people who haven't

experienced the Cold War,” Gem Romuld, Outreach Coordinator at ICAN Australia, told IDN.

80 percent Australians favour ban nukes treaty

A recent Red Cross survey has found that 8 out of 10 Australians support a legally binding treaty to ban the use of nuclear weapons. As many as 88 per cent said there would be no winners in a nuclear war given the devastating humanitarian consequences that would result.

The International Red Cross and the Red Crescent Movement has consistently voiced its deep humanitarian concerns about nuclear weapons, since they were first used in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945.

The humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons are not limited to space and time. Radiation affects health, agriculture and natural resources over a wide area and for generations to come.

Rosemary Lester, who was born in Adelaide (South Australia) in 1970, recalls how one day her father, who was in bed sick, was listening to Sir Ernest Titterton (nuclear physicist) being interviewed about Maralinga on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) Radio.

“I remember hearing dad swear out aloud. I went into the room and asked him what was wrong. He said it was something that had happened a long time ago before I was born. In fact, when he was a boy. It was when I first heard of Maralinga atomic testing”, Rosemary, Director on the Alinytjara Wilurara (North West) Natural Resource Management Board, told IDN.

She has had firsthand experience of her father, both her grandparents and other family members suffering from ailments as a consequence of the nuclear tests. She herself was diagnosed with a rare auto-immune disease called Scleroderma in 2005.

“There was no awareness then about Uranium mining and its damage to the environment and what it was being used for. I now understand why my dad and my grandparents became strong advocates and felt the need to actively protest, speak, educate and advocate against the Nuclear Industry and protect “nganampa nguru” (our country)”, said Rosemary, who wants oral histories of the time recorded and provided in both English and Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara languages for future generations.

In 1984, the Australian Government established the Maralinga Royal Commission to probe the nuclear tests in response to growing community concern regarding measures being taken to protect people from the exposure to radiation, and the disposal of radioactive substances and toxic materials.

“The secret files did not become available until 2003, 50 years after the Atomic tests. It is well known that Plutonium 239 remains openly exposed in that region. The poison

is in the soil, dust blows in all directions and people are breathing it in. Even that bush tucker you eat is contaminated”, says Rosemary, who is appalled that some people are saying that despite the contamination, the area is safe and want to promote it for tourism.

The responsibility for cleaning up the former test site rests with the Federal Government. Nuclear engineer and former Government supervisor of the Maralinga clean-up, Allan Parkinson, told the ABC that contamination remains widespread.

“There's over 100 square kilometers that is still contaminated above the clean-up criteria . . . Its plutonium 239 and in 24,000 years' time half of it will still be there,” Parkinson told the ABC in June 2014.

Take responsibility

Rosemary wants authorities to take responsibility for the severe impact of the legacy of the nuclear testing. “Many people died immediately, but others are living with chronic health issues, cancers and disabilities. Not to mention depression, the painful loss and trauma suffered mentally, the psychological and social damage, and watching loved ones' lives diminish. It has eroded our culture and further marginalised our people”, she said.

Advocates for nuclear abolition want governments to acknowledge their role in this disaster and stop mining uranium. A recent ANFA meeting heard that around 40,000 rounds of depleted uranium weapons have been deployed in Australian military training exercises. It recognised the intergenerational health impacts from nuclear weapons testing as well as the documented use and impacts of depleted uranium weapons.

“The Government must provide funding for research on the Environmental damage to the Atomic Zone and Fallout area; apologise to First Nations People (Aboriginals); compensate individuals that are affected; and review the Piling Trust to help those that are sick”, Rosemary told IDN.

The Maralinga Piling Trust was set up to manage compensation monies granted by the Australian Government to the Maralinga and Spinifex Country Traditional Owners as a result of the loss of access to lands due to the nuclear tests.

Observers are of the view that the Vienna Conference has given a fresh impetus to the survivors' fight for justice as they aspire for a future free of nuclear weapons.

**Neena Bhandari is a Sydney-based foreign correspondent, writing for international news agencies IPS-Inter Press Service and IDN-InDepthNews as well as other national and international publications. [IDN-InDepthNews – December 9, 2014] ❖*

Photo on page 15: Nuclear test survivor Sue Coleman-Haseldine | Credit: Jessie Boylan

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Atomic States Face Barrage of Criticism

By Jamshed Baruah

VIENNA (IPS) - Sarcastic laughter erupted when a civil society representative expressed his “admiration for the delegate of the United States, who with one insensitive, ill-timed, inappropriate and diplomatically inept intervention” had “managed to dispel the considerable goodwill the U.S. had garnered by its decision to participate” in Vienna Conference on Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons.

The speaker was Richard Lennane, who prefers to call himself the “chief inflammatory officer” of [Wildfire](#), a Geneva-based disarmament initiative. He was making a statement at the final session of the Dec. 8-9 conference in the Austrian capital – the third after the Oslo (Norway) gathering in 2013 and Nayarit (Mexico) earlier this year.

“The consequences of any nuclear weapon use would be devastating, long-lasting, and unacceptable. Governments simply cannot listen to this evidence and hear these human stories without acting.” -- Akira Kawasaki of Peaceboat

Unlike the previous conferences, the United States and Britain – two of the five members of the nuclear club, along with France, Russia and China – participated in the Vienna conference.

But Washington’s diplomatic jargon was far-removed from the highly emotional impact of statements by survivors of the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and of nuclear testing in Australia, Kazakhstan, and the Marshall Islands. They gave powerful testimonies of the horrific effects of nuclear weapons. Their evidence complemented other presentations offering data and research.

Ambassador Adam Scheinman, special representative of the U.S. president for non-proliferation, assured that “underpinning all of our efforts, stretching back decades, has been our clear understanding of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons use”.

This claim not only left a large number of participants unimpressed but also failed to give reason for hope that the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review conference next year would bear fruit.

All the more so, because as the U.S.-based [Arms Control Association](#), [Institute for Energy and Environmental Research](#), [Nuclear Information Project](#) of the Federation of American Scientists, [Physicians for Social Responsibility](#), and the [Union of Concerned Scientists](#) pointed out in a [joint statement](#), “nearly five years after the successful 2010 NPT review conference, follow-through on the consensus action plan – particularly the 22 interrelated disarmament steps – has been very disappointing.

“Since the entry into force of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) in 2011,” the statement added, “Russia and the United States have failed to start talks

to further reduce their still enormous nuclear stockpiles, which far exceed any plausible deterrence requirements.”

2015 will also mark the 70th anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the consequences of which are still being felt by hibakusha (survivors) and their families, as Setsuko Thurlow, Hiroshima Peace Ambassador and survivor of the atomic bombing explosion on Aug. 6, 1945, illustrated in an impassioned statement.

“The consequences of any nuclear weapon use would be devastating, long-lasting, and unacceptable. Governments simply cannot listen to this evidence and hear these human stories without acting,” said Akira Kawasaki, from the Japanese NGO Peaceboat.

“The only solution is to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons and we need to start now,” Kawasaki added.

U.S. ambassador Scheinman sought to reassure in a statement prepared for the general debate: “The United States fully understands the serious consequences of nuclear weapons use and gives the highest priority to avoiding their use. The United States stands with all those here who seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons.

“The United States has been and will continue to work to create the conditions for such a world with the aid of the various tools, treaties and agreements, including the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty regime.”

Irrespective of the veracity of the U.S. claim, Scheinman’s dry and rather formulaic remarks stood in stark contrast to passionate pleas made by representatives of 44 out of 158 participating states, that as long as nuclear weapons exist, the risk of their use by design, miscalculation or madness, technical or human error remains real.

States that expressed support for a ban treaty at the Vienna Conference include: Austria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Burundi, Chad, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea Bissau, Holy See, Indonesia, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Libya, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Senegal, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Echoing worldwide sentiments,

Pope Francis called in a message to the conference for nuclear weapons to be “banned once and for all”.

Echoing worldwide sentiments, Pope Francis called in a message to the conference for nuclear weapons to be “banned once and for all”.

In a message delivered by Angela Kane, High Representative of the U.N. Office for Disarmament Affairs, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said that the Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna initiatives had “brought humanitarian considerations to the forefront of nuclear disarmament. It has energized civil society and governments alike. It has compelled us to keep in mind the horrific consequences that would result from any use of nuclear weapons.”

Questioning the rationale behind nuclear weapons, Ban – who is known to be committed to nuclear disarmament – said that keeping the horrific consequences of nukes in mind was essential in confronting those who view nuclear weapons as a rational response to growing international

tensions or as a symbol of national prestige. In his widely noted message, he criticised “the senselessness of pouring funds into modernizing the means for our mutual destruction while we are failing to meet the challenges posed by poverty, climate change, extremism and the destabilizing accumulation of conventional arms.”

In “the 70th year of the nuclear age”, Ban said “possession of nuclear weapons does not prevent international disputes from occurring, but it makes conflicts more dangerous”.

Besides, he added, maintaining forces on alert does not provide safety, but it increases the likelihood of accidents. Upholding doctrines of nuclear deterrence does not counter proliferation, but it makes the weapons more desirable.

Growing ranks of nuclear armed-states do not ensure global stability, but instead undermine it – a view with which also faith organisations gathered in Vienna agreed. (IPS News Agency | December 10, 2014) ❖



*Delegates at the Dec. 8-9 Vienna Conference on Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons
Credit: IPPNW Deutschland/cc by 2.0*

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NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Civil Society Support for Marshall Islands

By Julia Rainer

VIENNA (IPS) - Ahead of the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, activists from all over the world came together in the Austrian capital to participate in a civil society forum organised by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) on December 6 and 7.

One pressing issue discussed was the Marshall Islands' lawsuit against the United States and eight other nuclear-weapon nations that was filed at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in April 2014, denouncing the over 60 nuclear tests that were conducted on the small island state's territory between 1946 and 1958.

The location was chosen not only because it was an isolated part of the world but also because at the time it was also a [Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands](#) governed by the United States. Self-government was achieved in 1979, and full sovereignty in 1986.

The people of the Marshall Islands were neither informed nor asked for their consent and for a long period did not realise the harm that the testing would bring to the local communities.

The consequences were severe, ranging from displacement of people to islands that were strongly radiated and cannot be resettled for thousands of years, besides birth abnormalities and cancer. The states responsible denied the harm of the practice and refuse to provide for adequate amount of health care.

Castle Bravo was the code name given to the first United States' test of a nuclear bomb in 1954 and was 1000 times more powerful than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945.

Addressing the ICAN forum, Marshall Islands Foreign Minister Tony de Brum explained that his country had decided to approach the ICJ to take a stand for a world free of nuclear weapons.

De Brum said that the Marshall Islands was not seeking compensation, because the United States had already provided millions of dollars to the islands, but wants to hold states accountable for their actions in violating the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and international customary law.

The NPT, which entered into force in 1970, commits nuclear-weapon states to nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear power. The nine countries currently holding nuclear arsenals are the United States, United Kingdom, France, Russia, China, India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel.

Although a certain degree of disarmament has been taken place since the end of the Cold War, these nine nations

together still possess some 17,000 nuclear weapons and globally spend 100 billion dollars a year on nuclear forces.

The Marshall Islands case, which has received worldwide attention and support from many different organisations, is often referred to as "David vs. Goliath". One eminent supporter is the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation (NAPF), whose president, David Krieger, said: "The Marshall Islands is a small, gutsy country. It is not a country that will be bullied, nor is it one that will give up."

"It knows what is at stake with nuclear weapons," he continued, "and is fighting in the courtroom for humanity's survival."

Another strong supporter of the case is Soka Gakkai International (SGI), a Buddhist organisation that advocates for peace, culture and education and has a network of 12 million people all over the world. The youth movement of SGI even launched a "Nuclear Zero" petition and obtained five million signatures throughout Japan in its demand for a world free of nuclear weapons.

The campaign was encouraged by the upcoming 70th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 2015 as well as the holding of the 2015 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference.

Addressing the ICAN, de Brum urged participants to support the cause of the Marshall Islands. "For a long time," he said, "the Marshalllese people did not have a voice strong enough or loud enough for the world to hear what happened to them and they desperately don't want it to happen to anyone else."

He went on to say that when the opportunity arose to file a lawsuit in order to stop "the madness of nuclear weapons", the Marshall Islands decided to take that step, declaring in its lawsuit: "If not us, who? If not now, when?"

De Brum recognised that many had discouraged his country from taking that step because it would look ridiculous or did not make sense for a nation of 70,000 people to take on the most powerful nations in the world on such a highly debated issue.

The Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons is the third in a series of such conferences – the first was held in Oslo, Norway, in March 2013 and the second in Nayarit, Mexico, in February 2014. (IPS News Agency | December 9, 2014)❖

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

UN Urged to Ban Nuke Strikes Against Cities

By Roger Hamilton-Martin

UNITED NATIONS (IPS) - Civil society groups are urging the UN General Assembly to pass a resolution declaring nuclear strikes on cities to be a clear-cut violation of international humanitarian law.

At the December 8-9 Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, supporters of the proposed resolution argued that after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it is undeniable that the explosion of a nuclear weapon on a populated area would engender destruction beyond acceptable human limits.

“There are over 6,000 cities already members of our campaign called Cities Are Not Targets! declaring it illegal to target cities with nuclear weapons,” said Aaron Tovish, campaign director for [Mayors for Peace](#). “This initiative to have the bodies of the United Nations explicitly outlaw such conduct is of great value,” he said.

Proponents argue that just raising the issue would bring a dose of reality into the debate about the threat of nuclear weapons, and that a UN General Assembly (GA) resolution calling on the Security Council to affirm the illegality of using nuclear weapons on populated areas under international humanitarian law (IHL) could be a real, practical step to advance nuclear disarmament.

Jonathan Granoff, head of the Global Security Institute, said that other uses also violate international law but there should be no question that destroying a city is illegal. “Pending obtaining a legal ban, a convention, or a framework of instruments leading to nuclear disarmament, which is required by the promises made by the nuclear weapons states under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and the unanimous ruling of the International Court of Justice, this step would make us all a bit safer and downgrade the political status of these horrible devices,” he told IPS.

In recent years, it has become apparent that failure to fulfill promised progress on nuclear disarmament has been caused by deeply entrenched security policies that do not seem likely to change.

U.S. President Barack Obama and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon have raised hopes of further nuclear disarmament, yet this has flown in the face of a reality in which nuclear weapons states continue to either modernise or expand their arsenals, or do both.

Nuclear states agree that the warheads are bad (often recognising a legal responsibility to disarm), yet critics note that in an act of impressive cognitive dissonance, these states simultaneously advance that they are good because they are necessary for deterrence purposes and strategic stability, the disturbance of which could be bad. Thus,

while they exist, so these states say, it is good to rely on them.

China, Russia, the UK, U.S. and France have agreed they have a legal responsibility to disarm, based on the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1970. India has called for negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva on a universal, nondiscriminatory, treaty to eliminate nuclear weapons and Pakistan has said it would join such a process. Israel has said nothing.

In 2000, 13 steps were agreed upon to move towards disarmament – and then in 2010, 64 additional commitments were made by 188 states.

Yet despite the non-realisation of these incremental moves towards disarmament, the nuclear weapons states maintain that any other attempt to delegitimise, ban, and eliminate the warheads is a distraction.

Proponents of the resolution see it as a step forward towards extrication from the situation.

Speaking to IPS, former deputy judge advocate general, U.S. Air Force Major General Charles Dunlap Jr. expressed reservations about the advancement of such a resolution.

Dunlap remains unconvinced on the question of whether there is an authoritative prohibition on the use of nuclear weapons in IHL, saying, “It sounds as if Granoff assumes that IHL applicable to the use of conventional weapons would automatically apply to the use of nuclear weapons. This is incorrect.

“In fact, even some of the countries which are parties (as the U.S. and some other nuclear powers are not) to Additional Protocol 1 of the Geneva Conventions (which contains targeting rules) made an express reservation to it to the effect that it did not govern the use of nuclear weapons.”

These legal arguments are hotly contested, however. Proponents of the resolution point to the final document from the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference of 2010 which “reaffirms the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law.”

Those in support of the proposal seem undeterred. Alyn Ware of the World Future Council told IPS, “I think it’s a good proposal. I don’t think it’s the only path. The idea of ‘non-first use’ also has traction.” (IPS News Agency| December 10, 2014)❖

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

SGI-IPS Award For Disarmament Crusader

By Roger Hamilton-Martin

UNITED NATIONS (IPS) - Jayantha Dhanapala was awarded the IPS International Achievement Award for Nuclear Disarmament on November 17 at the United Nations in New York.

Dhanapala, UN Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs until 2003, has remained committed to the goal of a nuclear weapons-free world since leaving his post, presiding since 2007 over the Nobel Prize-winning Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs.



From left, SGI Executive Director for Peace Affairs Hirotsugu Terasaki, IPS Director General Ramesh Jaura, and honoree Jayantha Dhanapala. Credit: Roger Hamilton Martin/IPS

“A nuclear weapon-free world can and must happen in my lifetime,” Dhanapala told attendees at an official ceremony sponsored by the Buddhist organisation Soka Gakkai International.

“Scientific evidence is proof that even a limited nuclear war – if those confines are possible – will cause irreversible climate change and destruction of human life and its supporting ecology on an unprecedented scale. We the people have a ‘responsibility to protect’ the world from nuclear weapons by outlawing them through a verifiable Nuclear Weapon Convention overriding all other self-proclaimed ‘R2P’ applications.”

The event was attended by UN ambassadors including the president of the General Assembly, Sam Kutesa, who said that “the work of organisations such as Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs – which Mr. Dhanapala presides over – Inter Press Service, our host this evening, or Soka Gakkai International, the sponsor of this award, contributes to raising awareness of the dangers of nuclear weapons and to advocating for their total elimination.” ☞

Kutesa spoke of the importance of upcoming opportunities to make further inroads into global non-proliferation and disarmament. "The 2015 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference will present an opportunity to further strengthen the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime."

CTBTO support

Kutesa's sentiments were echoed by other speakers including Dr Lassina Zerbo, executive secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO). Zerbo noted that Dhanapala was born in the same month (December 1938) that German scientists Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassmann discovered nuclear fission.

"In 1995, Jayantha chaired the landmark review and extension conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. He masterminded the central bargain, a package of decisions that balanced the seemingly irreconcilable interests of the nuclear weapon states and the non-nuclear weapon states."

The result of this work was that the CTBT, which was being contested in Geneva, was adopted by the General Assembly in 1996. Dhanapala continues to support the CTBTO, as part of a group of experts who work to advance the CTBT's entry into force.

Zerbo recalled Dhanapala's criticism of India's position in opposing the CTBT. India's criticism of the CTBT has been that it will not move disarmament sufficiently forward. In response to this, Dhanapala has said, "Opposing the CTBT because it fails to deliver complete disarmament is tantamount to opposing speed limits on roads because they fail to prevent accidents completely," Dhanapala has pointed out.

Collectively known as the "Annex 2" states, India forms part of a group of eight countries that are required

to ratify before the treaty before it can enter into force. India, Pakistan and North Korea have yet to sign the treaty, while 5 other states have signed but failed to ratify.

Zerbo also noted the relevance of Dhanapala's nationality in his advocacy for disarmament and non-proliferation, saying, "Jayantha and I both come from countries in the developing world.

"One of the most persuasive arguments he has consistently made is the opportunity cost a developing country incurs when embarking on a weapons of mass destruction programme. In particular, a nuclear weapons programme requires vast resources that could have been allocated to support development and infrastructure."

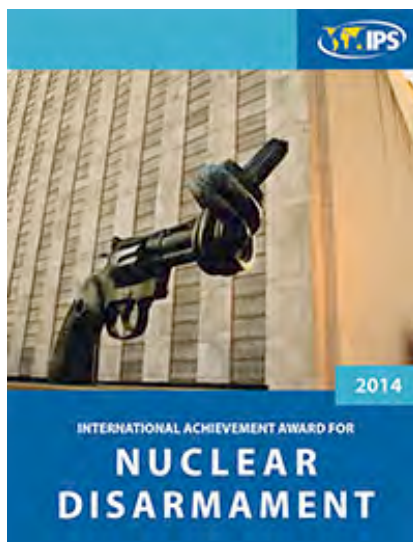
IPS Director General Ramesh Jauraspoke of the origins and importance of the award. "The award was created in 1985 with the idea to provide a link between the action of the UN at global level, and actors who would embody that action," he said.

"The UN way is not to recognise individuals, so the award is a recognition of the bridge between ideals and practice." The award has been resurrected after a six-year hiatus, and will be in place next year again.

There are several opportunities in the coming months for inroads to be made in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Notably, early next month's Vienna Conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons.

In the meantime, Dhanapala called on groups to support the ICAN and PAX "Don't Bank on the Bomb" divestment campaign, saying, "I appeal to all of you present to make your own practical contribution to nuclear disarmament by joining the divestment campaign. The faded rhetoric of President Obama's celebrated Prague speech in April 2009 about a nuclear weapon free world has little to show as results unless civil society acts."

(IPS | November 19, 2014) ❖



ENVIRONMENT

Eco-Drive A Sustainable Solution At The Heart of UN Agenda

By Katsuhiko Asagiri & Valentina Gasbarri

NEW YORK (IDN) - As an American actor Leonardo DiCaprio, the newly appointed UN Messenger for Peace, warned some 120 heads of states at the UN Climate Summit on September 24, impacts of climate change and global warming have been perceived more dangerous and globally widespread and it has become the gravest existential threat to humanity. While he urged governments and industries to take an immediate and decisive actions to tackle this global issue, he stressed that protecting our future on this planet depends on “the conscious evolution of our species”.



Group photo of a Panel Discussion in New York | Credit: Tokyo Trucking Association

Climate change is a problem requiring new and transformative solutions. In order to achieve the goal of sustainability, the role of public-policy makers, governments and international institutions as well as of the private sector and the academia is essential. Taking a cue from the United Nations, the first “International Conference on Global Environment, Carbon Reduction, and Eco-Drive as a solution towards sustainability” was held on October 17, 2014 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. It was co-hosted by the World Association of Former United Nations Internes and Fellows (WAFUNIN), the ASUA Corporation of Japan and the Permanent Mission of Romania to the United Nations.

The Conference represented a unique opportunity to highlight environmental factors of sustainability and, within them, the paramount role of greenhouse gases, especially black carbon, and also to seek visionary solutions through the process of sharing knowledge and best practices among participants from all over the world with different backgrounds, in order to maintain the equilibrium between geographical and thematic coverage of the main issues.

Engagement at all levels was the key element of the conference to examine (1) impact of transportation sector on

the global environment, (2) new transportation technologies for environmental protection, (3) potentiality of eco-drive solution which has impact on fuel efficiency and reduction of traffic accidents, and (4) environmental policies in transportation sector in different countries.

As outlined by Hiroshi Maji, President of ASUA Corporation with more than 20 year experience in eco-green advocacy, the visionary eco-drive method is the answer to reach important environmental benefits, improvement in fuel economy and the reduction of CO2 emissions, reducing at the same time the number of vehicles accidents. Specifically, eco-Drive is based on changing a driver’s habits. “Motorization brought us innumerable conveniences but it also brought us many problems such as environmental pollution, traffic accidents and traffic congestions,” Maji said.

Driving with respect for the conservation of energy and the environment has become a priority for all motorists. Eco-driving is a term used to describe energy efficient use of vehicles. It is an easy way to reduce fuel consumption by road transport so that less fuel is used to travel the same distance.

While engine technology and performance of cars has improved rapidly in the previous decades, most drivers have not changed their driving style. Eco-drive formula seeks to change the mind-set; it entails the re-training of drivers from all countries and cultures to improve their behaviours to make the driving experience more pleasurable while saving energy and money, minimizing pollutants and reducing the number of traffic accidents.

Julie C. Becker, Vice President for Environmental Affairs of the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, encouraged participants to engage with this eco-compatible approach, analysing all factors of sustainability from the automakers side. “All automakers must significantly improve fuel economy and reduce emissions, they must do this even as the price of gasoline drops and, finally, as fuel efficiency and safety technologies leap forward, fleet turnover is one of the most powerful tools for achieving sustainable transportation,” she said.

Ian Jack, Managing Director of the Communication and Government Relations of the Canadian Automobile Association, presented the consumer’s perspective. ➔

Indeed, thanks to its impact on fuel consumption and maintenance costs, as well as its lower exposure to road risk, eco-driving is both a cheaper and safer way of driving for motorists with a 10-15% fuel reduction; improvement of road safety and enhancing driving skills; saving almost 300\$ per year per person; more responsible drivers and higher comfort for the driver and the passengers.

Hence, eco-driving is the global driving culture of the 21st century, which is compatible with modern engines and makes the best use of advantages vehicle technologies offer. It is an energy efficient style of driving motorised vehicles at lower engine speeds.

From Theory to Best Practices

There are many smart and safe driving techniques, which can lead to significant fuel savings possibilities. In 2006, the Tokyo Trucking Association (TTA) launched a pioneering initiative called 'The Green Eco Project' (GEP), including countermeasures for the reduction of CO₂ for the prevention of global warming.

Today, almost 700 companies and 20,000 trucks have joined the environmental-friendly project, Keiji Endo, Director of Environment, Tokyo Trucking Association, pointed out. The main feature of the project is the integrated approach between "paper-and-pencil", training and capacity building activities and the development of a database of fuel efficiency.

Indeed, the GEP starts with a driver hand-filling a form called 'driving management sheet' which enables the driver to grasp his own driving behaviour and fuel consumption as well as serves as a communication tool to improve workplace environment. In GEP, all managers, supervisors and drivers enhance environmental awareness. It also helps tracking companies to be proactive in protecting environment, improving at the same time, the management skills.

Main successful achievements of the project are the improvement of fuel efficiency by 15.6% on average and CO₂ reduction of about 63,000 tons in total. Expressed in terms of planting trees, it would be equal to filling up the whole area of Manhattan, approximately 23 square miles, with forest and in monetary terms a cost reduction of nearly 34 million dollars. Furthermore, it has succeeded in reducing traffic accidents by 30% and cut down on insurance fees by 54%.

Green Eco Project

Another strategic vision applied to the Japanese context was reported and shared by Hirotsugu Maruyama, from the Climate Change Subcommittee, Environment Committee of Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association (JAMA).

He illustrated a set of 10 tips for fuel-conserving eco-driving including: accelerate gently, maintain a steady speed, slow down by releasing the accelerator, making

appropriate use of air conditioner, don't warm up or idle the engine, plan the itinerary avoiding congested routes, check your tire pressure regularly, reduce your load, respecting parking rules and check the readings on your fuel-efficiency monitoring equipment.

Fundamental changes are needed to address the global challenge of climate change. Delays in the transition to a low carbon method will result in less optimal alternatives becoming locked in, resulting in a society that emits an unnecessarily large amount of carbon. Automotive industries all over the world, as reported during the debate, are more focused on innovation to achieve sustainability.

Measures to lower carbon emissions levels and greening the industry are also applied by the American Trucking Association, represented by Glen Kedzie, Vice President, Energy and Environment Affairs Counsel. With the support of the U.S. Government and the Environmental Protection Agency, the Association tries to combine a greater use of eco-driving tools with a long-term commitment of the automotive industries to further reduce fuel consumption and carbon emissions.

Participants of the conference agreed that a sustainable solution of eco-drive directly responds to the UN agenda of climate change and global warming and could have a profound effect on mitigating the problem depending on changes in the consciousness of drivers. Therefore, the prevalence of eco-drive will be the mirror of "the conscious evolution of our species", the key to protecting our future on this planet as described by Mr. DiCaprio at the UN Climate Summit.

Innovative approach

The concept of eco-driving has risen considerably in popularity in recent years, as the impacts of climate change and global warming have been perceived more dangerous and globally widespread.

Eco-driving courses, capacity-building, studies all over the globe have produced evidence of the potential for eco-driving to reduce almost 20% of individual's fuel consumption and emissions.

The eco-driving landscape was drawn during the first International Conference on Global Environment, Carbon Reduction and Eco-drive, as a solution towards sustainability, at the centre of the multilateral diplomacy, the United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York, on October 17.

Co-hosted by the World Association of Former United Nations Interns and Fellows (WAFUNIF), the ASUA Corporation and the Permanent Mission of Romania to the United Nations, the high-level debate witnessed the presence of many governments, institutions and local administrations, academic institutions as well as the private sector at the frontline of instituting positive changes through a full engagement to encourage eco-driving methods and initiatives. ☺

The significance of the Eco-drive concept was underlined by Keiji Endo, General Manager and Director of the Department of Environment, Tokyo Trucking Association, offering an insider's view of the main characteristics of one of the most effective projects developed in Japan in the last nine years.

"The Green Eco Project started in 2006. Around 700 companies and 20,000 trucks joined the project", Endo said. There is a good range of existing information about how eco-driving can reduce the truck fuel consumption and CO₂ emissions. The accumulated data in the last eight years in driving management sheets in which participating drivers provide the amount of fuel used and the driving distance at the time of filling a gas tank anew" that fuel efficiency has improved by 15.6% on average and CO₂ emissions resulted in a decrease by about 63,000 tons.

"If we express this major achievement in terms of planting trees, it would be equal to fill up with trees the whole area of Manhattan (about 23 square miles). In financial terms, it would be 34 million dollars of cost reduction," Endo pointed out. The Green Eco Project also succeeded in reducing traffic accidents by 30%, which consequently resulted in a reduction of almost 54% of insurance fees for transportation companies.

The Green Eco Project has four central tenets: eco-driving is low-cost, accessible and universal, sustainable, accurate in data collection and in behavioural change-based motivation so that drivers are kept motivated.

Moreover, one of the central tenets of the Green Eco Project has been international cooperation to share eco-driving knowledge and experience: good initiatives have been emulated, good ideas have been shared during such conferences as the COP15 side event in Copenhagen in 2009, the 5th Asia EST Forum in Bangkok in 2010, the 1st Low Carbon Summit in Dalian, China in 2011, as well as a meeting with Berlin Brandenburg Transport and Logistics Association (VVL) in Berlin in 2011.

Eco-drive approach brings environmental, financial and safety benefits at zero or low cost. It is therefore no surprise that eco-drive is an increasingly popular concept that was well-received by a wide range of stakeholders during the Conference in New York: policy makers like eco-drive as it contributes to environmental and safety targets; companies like the cost savings; private individuals like the cost savings and the more relaxed and safer style of driving; and vehicle manufacturers appreciate the recognition that it's not just about technologies and that their vehicles can achieve the official fuel consumption results if driven well.

An important element of this project is "the pen-and-paper approach" to raise awareness of the driver, along with the basic and continuous eco-driving education. "Good drivers are given recognition as a means of motivation", Endo

explained, and also "managers are involved in the project as an equal footing and have the chance to participate to seminars".

In partnership with the Tokyo Metropolitan Government's Cargo Transportation Evaluation System, the world's first fuel efficiency evaluation system, to show results and publicize them to the wide public including cargo owners and consumers is a fundamental activity correlated with the project. Indeed, the evaluation system was constructed in 2013 based on a part of over 6 million data accumulated by the Green Eco Project.

Expressing the enthusiasm and positive reactions of all participants, Glen Kedzie, Vice President Energy and Environment Affairs Counsel at the American Trucking Association, said that the good practices and the philosophy of the Green-Eco Project brought to the Conference a valuable added-value.

Hugues Van Honacker, Team Leader, Directorate General of Mobility and Transport, European Commission, expressed his appreciation for the Conference and the Green Eco Project, highlighting the EU commitments in recent years to develop and implement of eco-friendly projects concerning alternative fuels strategy. Some of the main achievements at the EU level would be the creation of harmonised EU-wide standards and common technical specification as well as consumer information and awareness-raising activities.

Following the main theoretical nature and principles of the Green-Eco Project, the EU Commission in partnership with the Intelligent Energy Europe programme of the European Union, designed and implemented a project called ECOWILL. It is aimed at widespread eco-driving training courses by deploying the existing infrastructure of driving schools. ECOWILL further introduced and rolled out e-learning methods. In addition, ECOWILL aimed at harmonisation of driving lessons and driving tests for learner drivers.

The Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association (JAMA) in partnership with the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Road Transport Bureau, and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, edited a publication titled: "Fuel Efficiency of your Car- Why is it different from the Catalogue Fuel Efficiency?".

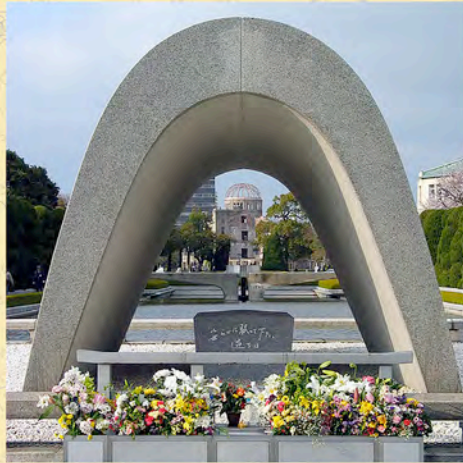
It points out that eco-driving signifies driving techniques and manners that help drivers reduce fuel consumption, exhaust emissions and global warming as well as traffic accidents.

"Fuel-conserving driving not only saves fuel expenses but also gives passengers greater safety and riding comfort, with the key principle of driving in a relaxed and unhurried manner," as Hiroshi Maji, President of ASUA Corporation, told the Conference participants.

[IDN-DepthNews - October 31, 2014]❖

TOWARD A WORLD WITHOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS

2014 Report of the Joint Media Project



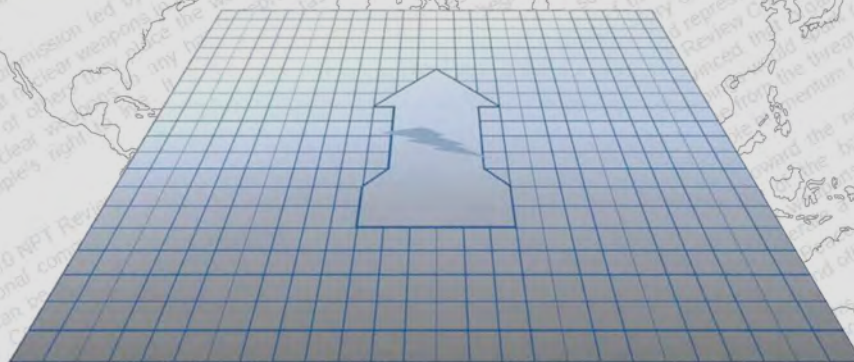
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