



**ISRAEL'S  
PUNITIVE  
EXPANSION  
PLANS  
CONDEMNED  
BY E. COREA**



**LOOK  
BEYOND  
THE  
RAINFORE  
ST BY LUC  
GNACADJA**

# GERMANY AMONG WORLD'S LARGEST ARMS SELLERS



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## Nuclear Abolition News and Analysis

### All Unclear Over Nuclear

Nuclear Abolition News | IPS

By RANJIT DEVRAJ

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By PIERRE KLOCHENDLER

JERUSALEM (IPS) - A meeting between Iran and world powers is tentatively set for the month-end in Istanbul, and might constitute a litmus test over a compromise regarding Iran's uranium enrichment programme. Strangely enough, in Israel, Iran's nuclear quest is now off the public radar.

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By JOHN FRASER

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By R. Nastranis | IDN-InDepth NewsAnalysis

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A Monthly Newsletter for Strengthening Awareness of Nuclear Abolition

April 2012-March 2013

- December 2012
- November 2012
- October 2012
- September 2012
- August 2012
- July 2012
- June 2012
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In order to strengthen public awareness of the urgent need for nuclear abolition, the Tokyo-based Soka Gakkai International (SGI), a Buddhist association, and the Inter Press Service global news agency have initiated a media project which aims to help to shed light on the issue of nuclear abolition from the perspectives of civil society through the global media network of IPS and beyond.

As part of this project, IDN InDepthNews, the news analysis service of the Globalom Media group, in partnership with the Global Cooperation Council, has launched this special website.

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# Israel's Punitive Expansion Plans Condemned

By Ernest Corea\*



WASHINGTON - The Israeli government's desire to extract revenge from the Palestinians for the recognition that the international community has bestowed on the Palestinian Authority (PA) is offensive and inconsistent with the norms of appropriate diplomatic conduct.

The planned revenge is doubly repugnant because

Israel wants to direct its punitive ire at Palestinians for action taken by 138 of the world's established nations.

On Nov. 29, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) decided by democratically determined majority vote to welcome the Palestinian Authority into its fold as a "non-member observer state," not yet a member state but up from the amorphous status of an "observer-entity." The vote was 138 to 9 with 41 abstentions.

Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, and Spain, were among the nations that supported the change-of-status resolution. The nine negative votes were cast by Israel and the US, as well as Canada, the Czech Republic, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, and Panama. UK, Germany, Australia, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK were among the fence-sitters.



The resolution was particularly memorable because it was adopted on the sixty-fifth anniversary of the adoption by the UN of a resolution calling for the establishment of two sovereign states, Israeli and Palestinian, co-existing side by

side on the territory that was under British management. The Israelis have their state. Palestinians do not. They hope that the decision of Nov. 29 will bring them a bit closer to the goals of freedom and statehood.

Israel has different ideas, as its asymmetrical and ill-tempered response (see below) has amply demonstrated. Israel's reaction, not surprisingly, has already caused concern in several countries.

PA President Mahmoud Abbas said at the UN shortly before the vote to change the Palestinian status was taken: "We did not come here to delegitimize a state established years ago, and that is Israel. Rather, we came to affirm the legitimacy of a state that must now achieve its independence, and that is Palestine."

Despite his conciliatory tone, Netanyahu was quick to denounce Abbas for having made a "defamatory and venomous speech that was full of mendacious propaganda against the Israel Defense Forces and the citizens of Israel."

The next morning, the New York Times reported that Israel was moving to build housing in "a controversial area of East Jerusalem known as E1, where Jewish settlements have long been seen as the death knell for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

Israel's show of petulance was widely identified as customary, retaliatory, and disproportionate, once again leaving Netanyahu's cynical approach to the "two state solution" fully exposed.

A source in the Prime Minister's Bureau said Israel was planning more steps against the Palestinian Authority, the Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported.

Haaretz reported as well that France, Sweden and the UK summoned the Israeli ambassadors in their countries on Dec.3 to convey their condemnation of Netanyahu's decision to authorize settlement construction in the E1 area.

Ambassadors Daniel Taub in London, Yossi Gal in Paris, and Isaac Bachman in Stockholm were reportedly told by the three European governments that Israel must rescind its decision to go ahead with the controversial construction plan. British Secretary of State for Middle East and North Africa, Alistair Burt, is said to have told Ambassador Taub:

"The UK deplores the recent Israeli government decision to build 3,000 housing units in the West Bank settlement, and to unfreeze development in the E1 bloc. This threatens the viability of the two state solution and we call on the Israeli government to reverse the decision." ☺

\*The writer has served as Sri Lanka's ambassador to Canada, Cuba, Mexico, and the USA. He was Chairman of the Commonwealth Select Committee on the media and development, Editor of the Ceylon 'Daily News' and the Ceylon 'Observer', and was for a time Features Editor and Foreign Affairs columnist of the Singapore 'Straits Times'. He is a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of IDN-InDepthNews and a member of its editorial board as well as President of the Media Task Force of Global Cooperation Council.

Picture: Yitzhak Rabin, Bill Clinton and Yasser Arafat at the Oslo Accords signing ceremony on 13 September 1993. Credit: Wikimedia Commons

Germany and Russia joined the chorus of disapproval, Germany's official spokesman Steffen Seibert saying at a news conference: "We appeal to the Israeli government to desist from this procedure (for building more settlements)." Seibert explained to the news conference that the new settlement plans reduced the extent of land that would be available for a Palestinian state. The plans thus undermined efforts to revive peace talks.

The US issued a statement asserting that it had "made clear to the Israeli Government that such action is contrary to US policy." Asked on Dec. 3 whether there was "any kind of coordination" between the US and its allies (such as, for instance, France and the UK) on this issue, the US State Department's Deputy Press Spokesman responded:

"Well, I think there's – obviously, we all share the same settlement – sediment – sentiment, excuse me, which is that we consider these kinds of actions, these kinds of unilateral decisions, to be counterproductive and make it harder to resume direct negotiations."

Israel's planned construction program was likely to be discussed when Netanyahu visits Chancellor Angela Merkel on Dec. 5. "The Chancellor expects Mr. Netanyahu for dinner and talks on Wednesday evening... We expect an open discussion between friends," the German spokesman said. Meanwhile, Russia said it viewed plans for expanded construction with serious concern.

### Hope Protected

Back at the UN, meanwhile, party time is over. The speeches have been made, votes have been registered, jubilation has erupted and eventually receded. No delegate left his seat and danced a jig of triumph as a Middle Eastern representative did when the UN decided by majority vote that China's seat had to be occupied by China and not by a pretender regime. Plenty of triumph was on view, and could be heard, nevertheless.

The fact that the PA decided to break through the impasse of stalled negotiations by moving discussion and action into the highest possible international arena, and not to continue "running on the spot," implied that they were willing to take the risk of seeking multilateral judgment.

Dr. Hannan Ashrawi, a highly regarded Palestinian representative, explained when Abbas brought the matter before UNGA last year that the purpose of seeking UN action is a corrective measure in the face of an "endlessly prolonged peace process that has lost its credibility."

Ashrawi said that during the peace process, "Israel has been allowed to act with impunity, particularly with respect



to its continued settlement construction." Emphasising that "we do not want the Palestinians to lose hope," she said that approaching the UN implies a firm commitment to a non-violent resolution of issues, as enjoined by the UN Charter.

"We are adopting a positive and constructive legal approach by turning to the international community and saying we are a part of you. Any solution has to be based on international law," she said. Up to now, the risk has paid off.

### Symbolic Change

The fact that the issue was put to the vote at all despite strenuous efforts to have it sidelined and postponed for a later date shows that the international community has grown tired of the stalling efforts that have accompanied almost every effort to resolve matters through bilateral negotiation.

The size of the majority by which the resolution elevating the Palestinian Authority's status was adopted made this clear. So did the near-universality of the yes-vote. A north-south breakdown of votes, which some UN sources had predicted would have robbed the outcome of some of its significance.

The PA's elevated status has been described as more symbolic than real. It is, indeed, symbolic of the desire nurtured by at least 138 nations to start moving towards justice for the Palestinians and security for all.

Moreover, the way is now open for the UN to play a more influential role in the negotiating process, which it should, considering its significant participation in creating the state of Israel.

Netanyahu's lust for revenge is a glitch that must not be allowed to prolong injustice. His supporters and patrons should remind him that guns, money, and technology can bring his people militarized power, but cannot give them lasting peace. [December 4, 2012] □

Picture above: Abbas and Netanyahu | Credit: sierraexpressmedia



## Half-truths Prevail in the Middle East

By Julio Godoy



Bahrain protests | Credit: english.al-akhbar.com

BERLIN - Late last August, during the conference of the non-aligned countries in Tehran, the Iranian press quoted the Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi saying that the government of Bahrain, given its dismal human rights record, had lost whatever legitimacy it had. Nothing surprising in this quote: The regime of Bahrain has indeed a dismal human rights record, its latest performance being to strip opposition leaders of the Bahraini nationality, after harassing them for many months.

A couple of days later, however, Morsi reacted with indignation to the quote: He had actually denounced the Syrian government, he complained, and accused the Iranian press of intentionally manipulating his statements. Syria, as is well known, is since more than 18 months fighting a most brutal civil war, and, as is also well known, can easily compete with Bahrain on human rights violations.

But, if Bahrain and Syrian are similar regimes behaving criminally against their own people, and there cannot be doubts about it, why did Morsi feel outraged by the “misquotation” in the Iranian press? Why did he emphasise that the Syrian regime of Bashar Hafez al-Assad has lost all legitimacy, but felt offended that somebody might have thought that he had said the same of the Bahraini despot Hamad bin Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa?

Most likely, Morsi cannot answer such questions. But he is not alone in such a situation.

### Turkey

Take Turkey: A couple of weeks ago, the government in Ankara, a key member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), launched a judicial process against 44 journalists, accusing them of being accomplices of terrorism. That very same government has incarcerated 34 democratic elected Kurdish mayors, for the crime of upholding their Kurdish identity.

Just to remind you: the Kurdish population living in Turkish territory encompasses as much as 14 million people, and makes out as much as 20 percent of the population of the country. Still, Turkey, that pea-cockish NATO ally, considers those people non-existent. It has been pressing them publicly to commit themselves to being Turks – second class Turks, mind you. That’s why the government in Ankara is considering cancelling the immunity of another 15 elected parliamentarians who represent the above mentioned ethnic group. The Kurdish congress leader Lelya Zana has suffered numerous years of prison, and is banned from all political activity.

But Turkey, this country which mishandles in such a way its own citizens, is one of the leading forces supporting the Syrian armed opposition to Bashar Hafez al-Assad, along with other flawless and exemplary regimes such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar, allegedly to bring democracy to Damascus.

And what about the Western democracies? Leaders in Washington and London portentously take pride in meeting the long-time incarcerated leader of the Burmese opposition Aung San Suu Kyi. Only a few days ago, they even forced the anti al-Assad rebels to form a united coalition – against the declared will of some of these rebels. But our Western leaders wouldn’t move a finger for Zana, and never bothered to support her while she faced the harassments perpetrated by all kinds of Turkish authorities.

Why is it that the Western democracies express their abhorrence of Assad, but ignore the crimes committed against the Kurds by successive Turkish governments for more than 30 years? Why is it that the Western democracies readily forge alliances with Qatar and Saudi Arabia against Syria, but ignore the bloody intervention of precisely these two regimes to suppress the popular rebellion in Bahrain without ever batting an eyelid?

Could it be that nobody is actually interested in democracy and human rights in Syria, but that the war is being waged to attain other objectives, and whatever happens with the domestic Syrian political mores would be a by-product, welcome or otherwise?

### Qatar and Saudi Arabia

Qatar, for instance, supports radical Muslim groups in Mali and Libya, and helped the regime in Bahrain to brutally suppress the popular insurrection one year ago. The Bahrain government has for years been accused of committing systematic violations of human rights, from torture to summary executions of opposition leaders. As the Human Rights Watch put it, Bahrain’s record in such matters is “dismal”. ☹

Here an example of the atmosphere reigning in Bahrain: On September 23, the Bahraini newspaper Al Watan, widely believed to be controlled by the local government, published an article headlined “List of participants defaming Bahrain in Geneva”, including names, photographs and other details of Bahraini civil society activists who had travelled to the Human Rights Council session in Geneva. The newspaper quoted members of the Bahraini Shura Council, the upper house and main legislative body, saying that “whoever tarnishes the image of the country is a traitor who does not deserve [the Bahraini] nationality” and appealed for such persons to be held responsible for defaming the country.

And yet, other than the regular lip services to democracy, no Western government has ever really done anything to put an end to such persecution; when in 2011 Saudi Arabia and Qatar sent their troops to suppress the Bahraini uprising, leaders in Washington, London, Paris, and Berlin were looking the other way.

In most cases, they even supported the criminals in Cairo and Carthage, as long as they behaved as puppets of the West. Exemplary therefore is the German foreign minister Guido Westerwelle, who recently said, his “sense of justice” demanded that the Syrian dictator Assad be brought before the International Court of Justice. It is the same Westerwelle, whose “sense of justice” in 2010 was not as devel-

oped as nowadays, and at the time praised the Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak as a “man of enormous experience and wisdom,” and who would only be motivated to secure “the future of his country.”

In a nutshell: The international involvement in the Syrian civil war aims less to transform the country into a democracy, and rather constitutes an ‘ersatz war’, one being fought on the Syrian soil and shedding Syrian blood, but aimed at weakening the regional position of Iran.

The Syrian regime is controlled by Alawites, a branch of Shia Islam, and is as such a close ally of the Shia-led regime of Iran. Together, they build an unofficial coalition against the Sunnite front, led by Saudi Arabia and Qatar. In Bahrain, the government is Sunni, but the majority of the population is Shia.

By the same token, no Western leader has shown the least indignation before all the crimes committed by Israel in Gaza. Instead, the same statements come again and again, about Israel’s right to self-defence – and by so doing, cement and aggravate an illegal status quo.

The champions of human rights would recognise only in their ‘pious’ speeches that the Palestinians, suffering under a most brutal occupation for 50 years, enjoy the very same rights. Surely, those words will find a rapid end, if in the newest edition of the Gaza war, Qatar and Egypt and Saudi Arabia materially support the Palestinians against Israel. □



# Look Beyond the Rainforest

By Luc Gnacadja\*



BONN - It is human development, or at least the quest for it, which caused the conversion of billions of hectares of forests into man-made deserts. It prompted, in the middle of the 19th century, the French novelist Chateaubriand to state that *"forests precede civilizations, deserts follow them"*. In other words, human beings are the only desert making species.

To reverse the tide and change such an inherent habit, we must think and operate outside of the "forest" box. We must look beyond the rainforest horizon and embrace holistic approaches to the entire landscape if we want to make sustainable forest management a green pathway for human development.

Why must we look beyond the rainforest? Rainforests are attractive places to be. They have the highest concentrations of biological diversity. They provide some of the rarest and most valuable tree products. They are natural wonders to behold. There are many powerful reasons for our collective fascination.

But the "sexiness" of the rainforests has also done humanity a disservice. Our obsession with rainforests has been at the expense of other kinds of forest. These "other forests" are seriously undervalued and remain a blind spot for policy makers; to the extent that REDD and REDD+ have been designed, quite solely, for rainforests.

Let me elaborate: 40% of the Earth is open or closed forest. Of this 42% is dry forest, 33% is moist forest but only 25% is wet forest. Yet the public is largely, if not wholly, unaware that dry forests are more extensive than rainforests. Is it any wonder then that dry forests receive such little attention in conservation efforts?

There are two further reasons why we should look beyond the rainforest.

In 2010, FAO's Global Forest Resources Assessment stated: "The protective functions of forests are more important in the arid zones than elsewhere." Why? The value of dry forests to humanity is greatest in this ecosystem. Dry forests provide food, medicine, energy and shelter for rural populations. In essence because the majority of the 2.5 billion people living today in the drylands are poor, forests are a major social-safety net. Forest products are an important source of income for the poor in this ecosystem. But dryland forests are an underrated resource.

## More than beating poverty

All over the world, governments provide incentives for start-up businesses.

In China, the government and business are thinking outside the box by providing help and incentives to rural farmers for forest and land restoration. Over a 16-year period, decentralization and land ownership reforms, where those who manage the land own it for 30 to 50 years, have been supported by accountability mechanisms and a systematic, scientific approach to assessment and monitoring.

Along with technical support to improve farming practices, subsidies have been given as an incentive to restore degraded land.

Over time, these initiatives have evolved to become important forms of employment.

For example, by assisting farmers to erect tree shelterbelts in the drylands, the rural poor are now able to farm in areas where commercial food production was not viable.

These innovative policies address many challenges at once. They are at least part of the reason China has lifted so many people out of poverty and hunger. In the process, the government is restoring some 170,000 hectares of desertified land every year, through forestation and afforestation programmes, alleviating pressure on the nation's forests.

But dry forests restoration is about more than beating poverty. In Brazil and in China and in some other countries, adaptive and farsighted policies are attracting private sector investments for sustainable forest and land restoration in the drylands. Recently, I visited Inner Mongolia, Xingiang and Maowosu provinces in China where business entrepreneurs with real foresight are now using innovation and new business models to build thriving restoration businesses. ➔

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\*Luc Gnacadja is UNCCD Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). This Viewpoint is extracted from his keynote speech at the opening ceremony for the 3rd World Forest Week and the 21st session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO 2012) on September 24, 2012 at FAO headquarters in Rome.





Sun, Moon and Telescopes above the Desert

Imagine what could have happened in the Sahel region if there had been such dedicated support to smallholder farmers. Farmers who, with their meagre resources and through what has been labelled as farmer-managed natural regeneration, have now reforested over 5 million hectares of land! We should stop making dry forests deserts of investment.

In fact, dry forests are crucial for human survival. They hold the key to our global food security because they are the backbone of the dryland ecosystems that support 44% of our global food production systems and 50% of its livestock.

As we, quite rightly, claim in the UNCCD "Forests keep Drylands working"! – providing vital water, stabilizing the soil and building resilience to drought.

Let us overcome our misconceptions and misperceptions about drylands and dry forests. Let us look beyond the rainforests. But we should also look beyond the overall forest horizon if we want to make sustainable forest management a green pathway for human development.

Because 70 to 80% of forest degradation has been caused by cropland expansion. If we continue with business as usual, we will need to secure access to another 175 - 220 million hectares of land by 2030 to meet the world's growing demand for food and feed – let alone water and energy needs!

As cropland expansion is the leading cause of forest depletion, the forestry community must be at the forefront of the campaign to restore not just forests but also degraded land in all ecosystems. In the absence of effective alternatives, in order to meet the competing claims for more productive lands, the depletion of forests is bound to continue.

Indeed, more than 2 billion hectares of land are suitable for forest and landscape restoration. Out of this, 75% is best suited to mosaic restoration, where forests and trees can be combined with other land uses, including agroforestry, especially in drylands. The Bonn challenge is a very commendable endeavour with a coalition of the willing committed to restore 150 million hectares of lost forests and degraded lands by 2020.

But you may have noticed on the map titled "World of opportunity for forest and landscape restoration" that the country of Niger is not included, despite the fact that more than 5 million ha have already been restored there. So let us be aware of the lens we are using when we talk about potential for restoration.

We need to work together to restore the degraded forests. But if we cannot stop the degradation of land and halt

deforestation for further agricultural development, this work will be in vain. This is why the outcomes of Rio + 20 on land degradation and land restoration should capture the imagination of every forester and signal a paradigm shift.

I invite you to reflect again on paragraphs 205 to 209 of the declaration of the summit: "The future we want".

The declaration is a call for a paradigm shift which will prompt the alignment of land use policies with accountability mechanisms, the efficient use of available resources and the mobilization of additional resources for nation-wide landscape approaches.

By calling for a land-degradation neutral world, leaders at Rio+20 demonstrated their readiness to support activities that will curb further land and forest degradation. But this will remain a pipe dream unless it can be translated into action. They also agreed to monitor, globally, land degradation and restore degraded land, with a focus on drylands. So let me suggest four areas where we should join forces to advance this common agenda.

If we are traveling together, we need to ensure the global community defines our destination. What do we mean by landdegradation neutrality: what is our goal and what are the related targets? By what date should we aim to be land-degradation neutral?

The Bonn Challenge is a clear example of what needs to be done – ambitious but feasible.

We also need robust institutions, especially in monitoring, to support the scaling up and scaling out of solutions that have worked.

An economic assessment of the true value of sustainable land and forest management, particularly in the drylands, is also needed. It could be one of the best tools to dispel the myths that have made the drylands peripheral to development.

The importance of a solid scientific base to drive this policy agenda forward cannot be overstated. Foresters must be an integral part of the community providing solutions and pathways to change.

In conclusion: future demands for food, energy and water will be a major challenge for the forestry community. Unless you are willing to think beyond traditional forestry, you may win a few battles but you will lose the war. However, if you join forces with like-minded groups, to support the restoration of degraded land as a way to meet humanity's growing demands for productive lands, half of your battle is already won. □

# Aid Should Focus on Sustainable Development

By Jaya Ramachandran



Image: Botswana. Credit: Curt Caremark/World Bank

BERLIN - For the first time since 1997 the net official development assistance (ODA) to countries in dire need of funds declined by 2.7%, says the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), which comprises 24 industrialised states of the 34-nation Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Its Development Co-operation Report (DCR) 2012, which evaluates 2011 preliminary data reported by DAC members, says that the net ODA in 2011 amounted to \$133.5 billion, representing 0.31% of their combined gross national income (GNI). This was a 2.7% drop in real terms compared to 2010, when ODA volumes reached their peak.

"Disregarding years of exceptional debt relief, this was the first decrease in net ODA since 1997 and reflects fiscal constraints in several DAC countries which have affected their ODA budgets. In fact aid budgets fared less well in 2011 than average government spending in OECD countries, which saw marginal growth in real terms between 2010 and 2011," explains the report.

Within the total net ODA, aid for core bilateral projects and programmes – excluding debt relief grants and humanitarian aid – fell by 4.5% in real terms, the report adds.

The largest donors in 2011 were the United States, Germany, Great Britain, France and Japan. Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden continued to exceed the United Nations' ODA target of 0.7% of gross national income.

In real terms, the largest rises in ODA were registered in Italy, New Zealand, Sweden and Switzerland. By contrast, ODA fell in 16 DAC countries, with the largest cuts recorded in Austria, Belgium, Greece, Japan and Spain. The DCR points out that in the decade up until 2011, aid had been steadily increasing. Net ODA rose by 63% between 2000 and 2010, the year it reached its peak.

"ODA has long been a stable source of development financing and has cushioned the immediate impact of previous financial crises (for example, after the Mexican debt

crisis in the early 1980s and the recession of the early 1990s). However, a recession in several DAC donor countries has already severely squeezed government revenue. Large budget deficits in some DAC countries since 2009 have pushed them to cut their aid budgets, and pressure may mount on other donors to do the same in the years ahead," explains the report.

An OECD report issued in April 2012, showed that three of the largest donors – the United States, Great Britain and Japan – require rapid and sustained fiscal consolidations of 8-12% of GDP in order to limit debt/GDP ratios to 50% by 2050. If the adjustments are met solely through spending cuts, this will require reductions in outlays of 12-20%.

The DAC report titled 'Lessons in linking sustainability and development', released on December 4, 2012, says: Despite a steady climb in the world's overall GDP, wide gaps remain from country to country and region to region – and there are growing inequalities throughout.

In the world today: the population has passed the seven billion mark; one billion people live on less than two dollars a day and most of them are malnourished; 1.3 billion people have no access to electricity; one billion people lack clean drinking water; and more than 2.2 million children under the age of 14 die because of unsanitary water. Also: "We are using 1.5 times the resources needed to support global activities." The report explores what such challenges mean for sustainable development.

It pleads for adopting a new model for development co-operation: "The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have guided development co-operation since 2000, focusing political attention on combating hunger, fighting child mortality, providing universal education and promoting environmental sustainability. Looking beyond the MDGs, providers and recipients of development co-operation recognise that the challenges ahead require a new operating model."

To ensure effectiveness in supporting the needs and priorities of developing countries, says the report, this new model must integrate green growth thinking into all areas of development co-operation, which goes beyond emphasising natural resource management in aid portfolios to ensure that aid for poverty reduction promotes livelihoods that are secure and resilient to climate change; ensure that support lent for infrastructure development and land use is climate- and disaster-proofed.

The report also stresses the need for reflecting the value of natural capital in aid-supported programmes. This, it says, is particularly important when prioritising the investment of development financing in physical, natural or human capital; more and more evidence suggests that investment in natural capital pays greater social dividends than investment in carbon-intensive infrastructure. ☺



Solar power towers utilize the natural resource of the Sun, and are a renewable energy source. From left: PS10 and PS20 solar towers.

The report also underlines the importance of ensuring that development resource allocations evolve from the current sectoral approach to a whole-of-government approach: this means that the bulk of funding should be used to finance national sustainable development plans that will support countries in addressing green growth priorities in a more comprehensive manner.

The report further pleads for using aid effectively as a catalyst for sustainable development finance. OECD Development assistance Committee projections forecast a levelling off – if not a decrease – in aid spending in the immediate future.

"But how can we use our limited resources more effectively to ensure value for money," asks the DAC, adding that:

Countries need to stick to their pledges to give 0.7% of gross national income (GNI) as ODA at the same time, they need to make sure that their commitments are feasible, and that they enhance the accountability and transparency of aid.

ODA needs to address wider sustainable development concerns (from food security in Africa to the negative impacts of mass urbanisation in Asia) and a broader range of developing countries; it also needs to comprise a full spectrum of financing instruments (from grants to risk guarantees).

ODA needs to be used as a catalyst to foster private-sector development and stimulate investment and trade flows that can help to "de-risk" sustainable development activities.

Development finance needs to promote the uptake of green growth policies using innovative channels. This can include measures such as putting a price on carbon, thereby encouraging companies to reduce carbon emissions while generating new public revenue for developing nations to support their climate-related development projects.

"As the development community moves toward defining the post-2015 agenda, we should revisit valuable knowledge and experience and integrate relevant ideas and approaches – such as those presented in this DCR – to foster innovation in our thinking, our institutions, our behaviour and our technologies," says the report. □

**ODA needs to address wider sustainable development concerns (from food security in Africa to the negative impacts of mass urbanisation in Asia) and a broader range of developing countries; it also needs to comprise a full spectrum of financing instruments (from grants to risk guarantees).**

# Daunting Development Challenges Ahead

By Richard Johnson

PARIS - Despite development successes over the past 20 years and the progress of many emerging economies, inequality is increasing in all countries and 1.4 billion people still live in absolute poverty.

This gloomy situation was acknowledged by development ministers from industrial and emerging economies, who met in London on December 4 and 5 for the High Level Meeting (HLM) of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), which comprises 24 of the 34-nation Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

A communique emerging from the meeting points out there is unequivocal evidence of absolute poverty having been halved, and progress achieved on all Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), agreed at a summit in September 2000 at the turn of the millennium. Economic growth has been a key factor in reducing absolute poverty, in the success stories of many

Yet daunting challenges persist: 1.4 billion people are mired in absolute poverty; food insecurity affects 850 million people, and 1.3 billion of the world's people – including many women – have no access to electricity. Social inequalities are increasing in all countries – developed, emerging and developing – and are a growing concern given the threat they pose to social, political and economic stability, the ministers agreed.

The HLM also recognised important risks. The world's population will reach 9 billion people in 2050 which, when coupled with changing consumption patterns, is estimated to require a 70% increase in food production by 2050. Within that same timeframe, global GDP may quadruple.

Given current trends and policies, this will result in an 80% increase of primary energy consumption which will impact on climate change and, as a consequence, global health, water management, food security, and poverty reduction prospects – and the protection of natural capital for future generations.

"Sustainable development and green growth are key approaches to address these challenges, and participating governments welcomed the Rio +20 commitment to integrate sustainable development goals in the post-2015 agenda," the development ministers stressed in a communique.

They also recognised that the context for development co-operation has now irrevocably changed. Shifting global wealth is breaking down the former division between North and South.

Co-operation among South-South partners, as well as triangular co-operation, is complementing North-South co-operation, thereby increasing the scope, reach and effectiveness of the international development assistance system. Likewise, civil society and the private sector are play-

ing an increasingly important role as partners in development co-operation.

To address these challenges and opportunities, the ministers said, a new and ambitious global partnership has been established. They expect the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation – launched at the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness from November 29 to December 1, 2011 in Busan, South Korea – to pave the way forward by providing a forum of equal partners with shared principles and differentiated but well-defined commitments.

"This Partnership will enable all providers and partners to focus on results at the country level in support of both national and global goals. For too long a lack of coordination, the fragmentation of efforts and failure to honour country ownership have inhibited the pursuit of goals to which all are committed. The Global Partnership offers a space within the international community to discuss these matters as full and equal partners," the communique stated.

Summarizing the outcomes, DAC Chair J. Brian Atwood stated: "This high-level meeting was a reflection of the changing world of development co-operation: DAC members and developing countries working in tandem with civil society, the private sector and other partners; strong support for a UN-led process for determining development goals; and innovative finance for development at a time of constrained budgets."

The ministers committed to make the effort to connect different agendas – MDGs, financing for development, development effectiveness and policy coherence for development – and thereby ensure that these vital elements are more in sync in the cause of development progress. They recognised that this broader agenda engages a larger set of partners who can contribute in different ways to development progress.

They also recognised that the international community is at an historic juncture. Work on post-2015 development goals will define development co-operation for years to come. In fact the agenda for the meeting provided for briefings by members of the United Nations (UN) High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, providing important insights from their contributions.

According to the communique, the ministers engaged in forward-thinking on development finance and the importance of official development assistance (ODA) and other flows that impact on development. They set out below their views and agreed on next steps regarding each of these important topics. In their discussions about the future of ODA the ministers and agencies agreed that it must be directed to where it is most needed and can best catalyse other flows. ➔

They asked the DAC to work with the UN system together with the IMF and the World Bank on proposals for new measures of total official support for development, including defining what constitutes ODA.

With a view to ensuring that ODA is directed to where it is most needed and where it can catalyse other flows and promote accountability, the DAC will:

- Elaborate a proposal for a new measure of total official support for development.

- Explore ways of representing both "donor effort" and "recipient benefit" of development finance.

- Investigate whether any resulting new measures of external development finance (including any new approaches to measurement of donor effort) suggest the need to modernise the ODA concept.

- Undertake this work in close collaboration with other interested international agencies, in particular the United Nations, and also the IMF and World Bank, while engaging others in this exercise. A first report should be completed in 2013.

According to the communique, DAC members discussed the reporting of ODA loans in light of multiple views on the interpretation of "concessional in character" in relation to such loans. They agreed about a number of key principles that ODA measurement should meet. These are that ODA reporting should:

- Withstand a critical assessment from the public;
- Avoid creating major fluctuations in overall ODA levels;
- Be generally consistent with the way concessionality is defined in multilateral development finance;

- Maintain the definition of ODA, and only attempt to clarify the interpretation of loans that qualify as ODA;

- Prevent notions that ODA loan schemes follow a commercial logic: this includes the principle that financial reflows should be reinvested as development resources.

In this spirit, they agreed to: transparency regarding the terms of individual ODA loans; ensure equal treatment of all DAC members; establish, as soon as possible, and at the latest by 2015, a clear, quantitative definition of "concessional in character", in line with prevailing financial market conditions.

They also agreed to recognise development loans extended at preferential rates – whether "concessional in character" under a future post-2015 definition or not – as making an important contribution to development.

Post-2015 development goals

Participating governments in the London meeting committed to keep their focus on achieving the existing MDGs. "These unique development goals have rallied the global community behind a common vision that has had lasting impact on the lives of hundreds of millions of people. The establishment of a common global development agenda has been an immensely important force for galvanising support, mobilising resources, focusing efforts and making it possible to assess progress," the communique stated.

The ministers pledged to go forward, and agreed to:

- Focus their efforts on achieving the MDGs by 2015, and to work

together with partners and new providers to enhance effectiveness, improve co-ordination of development activities and apply innovative methods to reach these goals.

- Strongly support the High Level Panel and the UN-led process to define a successor set of goals and a framework around which the global community can unite. This process should be inclusive of all partners, not donor-driven. Participating governments were greatly encouraged to hear of the active participation of all regions and of both state and non-state actors in this endeavour. They expressed support for goals that would expand and amplify the overall development impact of the current set of goals, including measurable targets for the global partnership as expressed in MDG8.

- Recognise that global goals were vital in establishing a common accountability agenda for development, and that national goals should be owned by all members of society and reflect the context of a particular country, its state of development and the particular needs of society as determined through the full participation of citizens.

- Recognise the importance of supporting enhanced goals for the future. Participating governments focused on the centrality of poverty reduction, with many expressing support for its eradication. They expressed concern about evidence of growing inequality, and acknowledged the special needs of fragile states.

- Support, in line with the agreement reached at the Rio +20 UN conference on sustainable development, the full integration of the sustainability dimension in the new set of goals, as essential in any development context.

- Emphasise that human rights principles will be important in developing any set of viable goals and the means for achieving them. Development of these goals should also take account of the role of democratic institutions, human security and references to the quality of life as a complementary measure to traditional benchmarks such as national income measures.

- Express the hope that, like their predecessors, future goals will be clearly defined, realistic, politically salient and measurable.

The London High Level Meeting was attended also by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme and other UN representatives, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and co-Chairs of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation. Invited high-level representatives from Brazil, China, India, Indonesia and South Africa were also present as observers to this meeting. □



# Development on the Backburner in Iraq

By Bernhard Schell



Top, left to right: Baghdad skyline with Ishtar Hotel, National Museum of Iraq, Al-Kadhimiya Mosque, Baghdad Tower, Republican Palace, The Monument to the Unknown Soldier

BAGHDAD - Iraq has undergone drastic changes in the last ten years since the 'regime change', but the transition to democracy has failed to pave the way for development. Though the government announced a strategy for poverty reduction in 2009, the efforts, resources and follow-up measures have not been fetched noticeable results on the ground, according to the Iraqi Al Amal Association.

The reason, says the organisation in a contribution to the Social Watch Report 2013, is that political disputes and security challenges have hindered the stability required for development. It states: "Quality of life has fallen: poverty stays firmly, the educational system draws back and women are becoming more and more vulnerable. The inequities persist between cities and rural areas and between men and women. To get on the right track, the Iraqi government must conduct the census that has been delayed since in

2007, to collect reliable information for the design of comprehensive, effective and appropriately funded development plans."

The report's main author Manal J. Putros Behnam points out that though Iraq is not a poor nation, much of its population suffers poverty. "The standard of living of this middle-income country declined over the last 25 years. There is a wide gap between the economics at a national level and the social reality experienced by Iraqi citizens."

Between the 1980s and 2006, the gross domestic product per person declined by a third between, from about USD 3,000 to USD 2,000, according to the World Bank. But the most "striking" data "is not just the decline, but also that reversal in growth stands in contrast to every other country in the Middle East and North Africa region," remarks the World Bank report "Confronting poverty in Iraq". ➔

As an example of this decline, the study also notes that “primary school enrolment, an area in which Iraq once led the region, declined over the past 25 years in Iraq while rising in every other countries of the region.”

The National Strategy for Poverty Reduction (NSPRI) issued in 2009 at the same time as the National Development Plan covers crucial points of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and is aimed to promote the well-being of the Iraqi poor, with the general goal of reducing poverty rate from the current 22.9% to 16% in 2014 by (1) achieving a higher income from work for the poor, (2) improving the health standard of the poor, (3) dissemination and improving education of the poor, (4) achieving a better housing environment for the poor, (5) effective social protection for the poor, and (6) less inequality between poor women and men.

But the government institutions failed to implement appropriate policies and measures to reach those goals, says Putros Behnam.

NSPRI planners stated that although two-third of the population live in cities, half of the poor people reside in rural areas. There are other relevant gaps between governorates, notes the NSPRI: over 40% of the inhabitants of some of them are poor (Muthanna, 49%; Babil, 41%; Salahuddin, 40%), while the proportion falls to 10% in the Kurdistan Region. Disparities in expenditure are lower than disparities in income: the richer quintile of households gets 43% of the total national income and the poorer quintile gets 7%, while the richer households spend 39% of the total expenditure and the poorest spend 9%.

The planners also noted a weak correlation between poverty and unemployment. Poverty rate has reached 39% in rural areas and 16% in urban areas, but unemployment gets to 11% in the countryside and to 12% in the cities. This gap can respond to the links between poverty and low salaries, because of the fact that workers constitute 89% of the labour force in rural areas due to the drop in productivity.

One out of five Iraqis between 10 and 49 years old cannot read or write, according to the Inter-Agency Information and Analysis Unit established by the UN to improve the impact of the humanitarian and development response in Iraq. “Literacy impacts every facet of life”, and affects critically “employment, health, civic participation and social attitudes,” reads a report issued by the Unit in 2010.

There are also “significant disparities” between women and men (24% to 11%) and between rural and urban areas (25% to 14%), and in the countryside the gender gap is even wider.

Decades of wars and years of humiliating blockade against Iraqi citizens (not against Saddam Hussein’s regime), followed after that for the persistent political instability, insecurity, low standards of living and corruption have made up an accumulated process of decline that feeds illiteracy, says the Al Amal Association.

UN agencies and the government run various programs to promote literacy among children, young and adult persons, as well as other schemes that offer training for working and life skills. But those programs need follow-up and sustained support from the Iraqi educational institutions to achieve a visible decline in illiteracy rates. Local NGOs have also implemented many programs all over Iraq, but they are pilot projects, poorly funded or lacking of a proper networking.

### Women’s vulnerability

The number of female headed household increased after 2003, and the women who run those families, around 90% of them widows, are highly vulnerable, as well as their members. Exact figures are not available but the estimates are close to one out of ten Iraqi households, or approximately 450,000.

The statistics of government institutions, international agencies and civil society organizations defer. This unclearness makes the national census a very important task to evaluate women’s conditions of living. The International Organization for Migration confirmed in 2011 critical situations related to the access to work, food security, and housing conditions which make women headed households vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

The Inter-Agency Information and Analysis Unit stated in 2012 that early marriages “remain prevalent”, although they are illegal under 15 years of age and require special authorization from a judge between 15 and 18. But many girls between 11 and 15 years of age enter into marriages outside the court in religious communities. Those girls sink into an illegal status that deprives them of education and health. On the other hand, tribal leaders justify the usual practice of forced marriages on traditional and cultural grounds.

The lack of reliable information about the living conditions of the population put a brake on the development process, but the national census has been postponed four times since 2007 under the pretext of security concerns. The government and its supporters have been delaying indefinitely the survey, although it is required by the article 140 of the Constitution to reach a settlement to the dispute over the internal Kurdish-Iraqi boundaries.

The conflict is not only over the territories claimed by the semi-autonomous Kurdistan Region that are held by four governorates controlled by the central government in Bagdad, but also over the Kurdish share in the national budget, that must be determined by the percentage of the population of each province and governorate.

The census will ascertain whether the territories under dispute have a Kurdish or an Arab majority and will resolve the budgetary confrontation too. But the delay has prevented an accurate assessment of the numbers of orphans and widows who need urgent help. Even so, there is no date scheduled for conducting the survey. □

# Germany among World's Largest Arms Sellers

By Jaya Ramachandran



Leopard 2A5 of the German Army | Credit: Wikimedia Commons

STOCKHOLM - Germany is among the world's largest arms exporters, though estimates of the magnitude of the country's arms sales and of its ranking among arms traders differ. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Germany was the fifth largest exporter of major conventional weapons in 2011 behind the USA, Russia, France and China.

The U.S. Congressional Research Service (CRS) on the other hand ranks the country as the sixth largest arms exporter. The CRS estimates the financial value of German arms deliveries in 2011 at \$1.6 billion (in 2011 U.S. dollars), or approximately 4 per cent of global arms exports. This ranked Germany behind the USA, Russia, the UK, France and Italy.

The CRS annual report *Conventional Arms Transfers to Developing Nations 2004-2011* aims to assist the U.S. Congress "in its oversight role of assessing how the current nature of the international weapons trade might affect U.S. national interests". The report provides the estimated financial value of arms export agreements and deliveries from the largest arms exporters to all regions of the world in constant and current U.S. dollars for the previous eight calendar years.

The CRS report covers transfers to governments of "all categories of weapons and ammunition, military spare parts, military construction, military assistance and training programs, and all associated services". This definition is much broader than SIPRI's, according to the organisation's latest fact sheet titled *Measuring international arms transfers*.

For data on U.S. arms export agreements and deliveries, the CRS report relies on information on government-to-government Foreign Military Sales (FMS). On the sources of data for non-U.S. countries, the CRS simply states that "Statistics for foreign countries are based upon estimated sell-

ing prices", although it is believed that the CRS draws on classified U.S. Government sources.

The SIPRI fact sheet authors Paul Holtom, Mark Bromley and Verena Simmel are of the view that CRS figures for non-U.S. arms exporters are often lower than official government financial values for export licences granted and arms exports.

SIPRI has identified 34 states that have provided official data on the financial value of their "arms exports", "licences for arms exports" or "arms export agreements" to the public for at least 6 years in the period 2001-2010 and for which the average of the reported values exceeds \$10 million. This official data can be provided either in a national report on arms exports, another type of government report, a press release or via an attributed or unattributed quote in a media report.

The SIPRI researchers say that public announcements on the financial value of states' arms exports cannot be easily compared due to differences in the definitions of "arms" used and the fact that many states provide information only on the financial value of either proposed arms exports or completed deliveries. Information on the value of proposed arms exports and completed deliveries of arms refer to different activities, and so should not be directly compared, they add.

States use different methods for collecting and reporting information on the financial value of proposed arms exports or completed deliveries. Data on proposed arms exports can be based on the value of either arms export agreements concluded or export licences issued, which represent two different data sets. Data on deliveries of arms can be based on data provided by the national customs authorities or company reporting on export licences used, which again represent two different data sets.

The CRS estimated the financial value of German arms deliveries in 2011 to be \$1.6 billion (in 2011 U.S. dollars), or approximately 4 per cent of global arms exports. This ranked Germany as the sixth largest exporter of major conventional weapons in 2011, behind the USA, Russia, the UK, France and Italy.

The SIPRI fact sheet authors note that the CRS data is not sufficiently detailed to gain an understanding of which deliveries account for the stated value of German arms exports. The CRS report includes tables detailing the numbers of weapon systems delivered, but these are aggregated over 3-year periods and by weapon category and region, rather than weapon description and destination. Further, there is no separate entry for German exports.

According to the CRS, the financial value of German arms transfer agreements concluded in 2011 totalled \$100 million (in current U.S. dollars), or 0.1 per cent of the global



total value of arms transfer agreements, ranking Germany as the 7th largest supplier listed by CRS.

There is insufficient open source information in the SIPRI Arms Transfers Database on the financial value of arms transfer agreements concluded by Germany in 2011 to corroborate this figure. However, comparisons between CRS data on arms transfer agreements and publicly reported information on the value of signed arms export contracts in previous years indicates a tendency for CRS to underestimate the financial value of arms transfer agreements for states other than the USA.

For example, the 2007 CRS report stated that the financial value of Germany's arms export agreements with developing countries in 2006 was \$1.9 billion, based on an agreement with Brazil for licensed production of a Type ILK214 submarine and the upgrading of existing Type 209 submarines, and from an Israeli order for two Type 800 Dolphin class submarines.

However, according to available open sources, the Brazil deal was worth approximately \$1.6 billion and the Israel deal was worth \$1 billion. This gives a combined value of at least \$2.6 billion – \$700 million more than the CRS estimate – without taking into account other agreements concluded by Germany in 2006.

German national report

The German Government has published a national report on military equipment exports (Rüstungsexportbericht) every year since 1999. The report provides information on (a) the financial value of export licences granted and completed deliveries of "war weapons" (Kriegswaffen); and (b) the financial value of export licences granted for military equipment as defined in the German national control list (i.e. which includes both war weapons and other military equipment that requires an export licence).

Thus, German official data on the financial value of arms export deliveries does not include the value of the many items on the German national control list that are not categorised as war weapons.

The reported financial value of German deliveries of war weapons in 2011 was €1.3 billion (\$1.65 billion), compared to €2.1 billion (\$2.8 billion) in 2010. SIPRI argues: Several major suppliers have not yet provided the financial value of their arms deliveries in 2011, and so a comparison of the German Government's official financial value with its peers cannot be made for 2011. In 2010, in terms of the financial value of deliveries of military equipment, Germany ranked as the fourth largest arms exporter behind the USA, Russia and France.

However, in this case the German data is based solely on reporting on war weapons, which is a narrower range of items than those covered by the U.S., Russian and French data. In addition, such major exporters as China, Israel and the United Kingdom do not provide information on the financial value of their arms deliveries.

Precisely, against this backdrop, SIPRI goes beyond the financial value and estimates the volume of German arms

exports in 2011 at 1.2 billion TIV (trend-indicator value), or 4 per cent of global arms exports, down from 2.5 billion TIV in 2010 (10 per cent of the world total). TIV is a unique pricing system the SIPRI has developed to measure the volume of deliveries of major conventional weapons and components.

The major recipients of German arms exports in 2011 were Brunei Darussalam (accounting for 16 per cent of exports), USA (11 per cent), Singapore (7 per cent), Spain (7 per cent) and Taiwan (6 per cent).

Tanks and armoured vehicles represented 26 per cent of the volume of German major conventional weapons exports in 2011, with ships accounting for 22 per cent, engines 20 per cent, and missiles 15 per cent.

The TIV of an item being delivered is intended to reflect its military capability rather than its financial value. This common unit can be used to measure trends in the flow of arms between particular countries and regions over time – in effect, a military capability price index.

Therefore, SIPRI says, it is important to ensure that the pricing system remains consistent across both the weapon systems covered and over time, and that any changes introduced are backdated.

Weapons that have previously been used by another armed force (i.e. surplus weapons) are given a value equal to 40 per cent of that of a new weapon. Used weapons that have been significantly refurbished or modified by the supplier before delivery are given a value of 66 per cent of the value when new.

The overall volume of arms exports from a particular state in any given year is then calculated by adding together the TIVs for the weapons and components delivered. Since year-on-year deliveries can fluctuate, SIPRI uses 5-year moving averages to provide a more stable measure for trends in international arms transfers.

The SIPRI TIV neither reflects the actual price paid for weapons nor represents current dollar values for arms transfers. The TIV is therefore not comparable directly with gross national product (GNP), gross domestic product (GDP), military expenditure, sales values or the financial value of arms export licences. □

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**There is insufficient open source information in the SIPRI Arms Transfers Database on the financial value of arms transfer agreements concluded by Germany in 2011 to corroborate this figure. However, comparisons between CRS data on arms transfer agreements and publicly reported information on the value of signed arms export contracts in previous years indicates a tendency for CRS to underestimate the financial value of arms transfer agreements for states other than the USA.**

# Stable Nuke Zero is Feasible

By Ramesh Jaura



BERLIN | VIENNA - Before World War II broke out in 1939, German-born Nobel laureate Albert Einstein recommended President Franklin D. Roosevelt to begin research on a nuclear weapon since Germany under Adolf Hitler might be developing such a destructive tool. The result was the Manhattan Project, which culminated in the U.S. dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Einstein deplored use of the new discovery of nuclear fission as a weapon, and signed with the British philosopher Bertrand Russell, the Russell-Einstein Manifesto, highlighting the danger of nukes.

That was back in July 1955. Since then, major atomic powers have looked at nuclear deterrence as guarantor of enduring world peace and security. It was not before April 2009 – a few months before being announced the winner of Nobel Peace Prize – that President Barack Obama in his historic speech in Prague called for “a world without nuclear weapons”.

But in the fall of 2009, another Nobel laureate, Thomas Schelling, vehemently questioned the desirability of a world without nuclear weapons. In an essay – titled ‘A world without nuclear weapons?’ – in *Dædalus*, founded in 1955 as the *Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, Schelling challenged the wisdom of going to “zero” and asked what would happen in the event of another war.

Schelling’s essay would appear to have stimulated the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (VCDNP) to organise an international seminar and a panel discussion on November 19 and 20 to find answers to the question ‘Stable Zero: Feasible, Realistic?’ that is crucial for the survival of Planet Earth and humankind.

The event was organised in cooperation with the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) – Norway’s leading independent centre for research and information on

international political and economic issues as well as on areas of central relevance to Norwegian foreign policy – and the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research, named after Josei Toda (1900-1958).

Toda was a Japanese educator and philosopher who was imprisoned together with his mentor Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871-1944) for upholding the belief in the dignity of life despite persecution by the Japanese military government during World War II. Makiguchi died in prison but Toda was able to survive the ordeal, devoting the rest of his life to the development of a grassroots peace movement in post-war Japan.

The Institute was established in 1996 by Toda’s main disciple Daisaku Ikeda, the President of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI), a worldwide movement for peace, culture and education based on Buddhist Humanism.

Describing the purpose of the seminar, VCDNP, which is backed by the Austrian Foreign Ministry and James Martin Center of Nonproliferation Studies (CNS) at the Monterey Institute of International Studies as its partner, said: One might hope that major war would not happen in a world without nuclear weapons, but it always did, and Schelling worries that the necessary scenario analyses to find the strengths and weaknesses of proposals for a nuclear weapon-free world have not been done.

“Considering how much intellectual effort in the past half-century went into the study of the ‘stability’ of a nuclear deterrence world, it ought to be worthwhile to examine contingencies in a nuclear-free world to verify that it is superior to a world with (some) nuclear weapons,” VCDNP said quoting Schelling. It added: This taps into the question of the meaning of “zero” – reconstitution capabilities; going more or less below “zero” – and in this respect a variety of views have been expressed. Schelling, on his part, emphasizes that a world without any reconstitution capability is illusory.



Panelists included besides Schelling, a distinguished University Professor Emeritus in the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland, who was awarded the 2005 Nobel Prize in Economics; former Swedish Ambassador Rolf Ekeus, Chairman Emeritus of Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and a board member of Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI); Sverre Lodgaard, Senior Research Fellow of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs; and Andreas Persbo, Executive Director of the London-based Verification Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC). ➔

Schelling's argue: "A world without nuclear weapons would be a world in which the United States, Russia, Israel, China, and half a dozen or a dozen other countries would have hair-trigger mobilization plans to rebuild nuclear weapons and mobilize or commandeer delivery systems, and would have prepared targets to preempt other nations' nuclear facilities, all in a high-alert status, with practice drills and secure emergency communications. Every crisis would be a nuclear crisis, any war could become a nuclear war. The urge to preempt would dominate; whoever gets the first few weapons will coerce or preempt. It would be a nervous world."

Such arguments do not detract Ekeus or Lodgaard from pleading the cause of a world without nuclear weapons – a world that would usher in only if the five permanent members of the UN Security Council do not insist on their "divine right" to develop, produce and stockpile nuclear weapons, while denying half a dozen or a dozen other countries such a right in the name of non-proliferation.

The Federation of American Scientists estimates there are more than 19,000 nuclear warheads in the world as of 2012, with around 4,400 of them kept in "operational" status, ready for use. There is no denying the fact, therefore, that transforming today's heavily nuke-armed world into a world without nuclear weapons is not an easy task.

And this particularly against the backdrop, as VERTIC's Executive Director Persbo, points out: "... we do not really know what conditions will enable a world free of nuclear weapons. Will it, as some argue, require a fundamental transformation of world affairs? Do we, as others say, need to live in a world with considerably reduced international tension, and a massive reduction in conventional arms, before we can consider giving up nuclear explosives?"

Persbo adds: "We do not have any good answers to these questions. As we do not, almost every answers assumes almost equal weight. The arguments becomes articles of faith, not carried by empirical evidence. You either believe in deterrence, that nuclear weapons preserved world peace, or you do not. Neither advocate can disprove the other."

With this in view, Persbo rightly stresses the role of safeguards in the future. "Safeguards, as administered by the International Atomic Energy Agency, will become increasingly important in a nuclear weapon free world. Fissile material will need to be accounted for, and the absence of undeclared stockpiles of these materials would need to be confirmed."

He explains: "I think that verification in a nuclear weapon-free world will look very similar to safeguards in non-nuclear weapon states, but on a much larger scale. The fuel cycles of the two largest nuclear weapon states, the United States and Russia, are fundamentally different, and much larger, than cycles found elsewhere. It will be challenging to take them on, and to bring them under full-scope safeguards. There are some large uncertainties in the stockpile numbers, and it may take decades, many decades, before anything resembling a completeness determination can be drawn."



But Persbo thinks that these challenges can be overcome. "Putting some political capital into the negotiation of an FMCT will be a good start. Empowering the IAEA secretariat to be able to address some of the technical tasks that await them is a step that can be taken today. The IAEA already has a reasonably completed technical protocol for material disposition, but need to start to prepare for future verification challenges as well. And let me be clear. I believe that this task belongs with the Agency. Perhaps not the Agency as we know it today, but a stronger, more powerful version of the body."

In fact, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) also plays an important role in bringing about a nuke-free world. The Treaty has a unique and comprehensive verification regime to make sure that no nuclear explosion goes undetected. The International Monitoring System (IMS) will, when complete, consist of 337 facilities worldwide to monitor the planet for signs of nuclear explosions. Over 85 percent of the facilities are already up and running.

The importance of such verification regimes cannot be underrated. But political will to do away with nuclear weapons, which are weapons of mass destruction, whoever might use these, is of utmost importance.

For this reason, SGI and the Toda Institute are wedded to the cause of abolishing nuclear weapons. In fact, back in September 1957. Josei Toda made a declaration against nuclear weapons in Yokohama. He said that the willingness to use these weapons was an expression of the devilish nature lurking within human beings, leading them to control and dominate others through fear and threats rather than choosing dialogue and collaboration. Based on Toda's declaration, SGI President Ikeda has been outlining his vision for a peaceful global civilization in numerous proposals.

In one of his latest 'peace proposals,' titled 'Human Security and Sustainability: Sharing Reverence for the Dignity of Life,' Ikeda pleads for a nuclear abolition summit in 2015 in Hiroshima and Nagasaki on the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings of the two cities so that the growing momentum toward elimination of nuclear weapons becomes irreversible.

2015 will also be the year of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, and, like people around the world, Ikeda expects such a summit to bring home to world leaders the terrible destructive capacity of nuclear weapons and so help ensure the necessary action toward their abolition. □

# NATO Pushing Europe into New Nuclear Arms Race

By Julio Godoy



B61 training unit accurately replicates the shape and size of a "live" B61 | Credit: Wikimedia Commons

BERLIN - Between late 2009 and mid-2010, the German government, represented by its foreign minister Guido Westerwelle, made a case for dismantling B61 atomic bombs on German soil. The actual number of such weapons of mass destruction is a top military secret, but some 20 of these are reported to be stationed in Germany.

The German campaign for nuclear disarmament had relevance also for Belgium, Italy and the Netherlands – as well as Turkey – where the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is stated to have positioned between 150 and 200 nuclear weapons.

Like his predecessor Frank Walter Steinmeier, Westerwelle made the arguments of the anti-nuclear weapons activists his own, and recalled that such arsenal is in many ways obsolete, for it was conceived to be used in conjunction with other armament that itself is out of use, and it aimed at an enemy – the Soviet bloc – that had ceased to exist.

The German campaign, as discreet as it was, was a timely reaction to the historic speech the U.S. president Barack Obama made in the Czech capital Prague in April 2009, where he called the nuclear weapons spread across the world "the most dangerous legacy of the Cold War".

But soon, the German campaign for the denuclearisation of Europe, very much like Obama's speech in Prague, turned out to be no more than pious words. Already in April 2010, NATO had approved the so-called modernization of its nuclear arsenal in Europe, which should be completed by 2020. The modernisation was confirmed in May 2012 at the Chicago summit, during the so called deterrence and defence posture review (DDPR).

By so doing, NATO finally admits that the criticism of the present nuclear arsenal is correct – it is constituted of so-called dumb weapons, for they are to be dropped from war planes over target zones, and be guided by a radar that, according to U.S. senate hearings, was constructed in the 1960s and originally designed for "a five-year lifetime".

This radar also features "the now infamous vacuum tubes", as one U.S. military industry representative stated at

the senate hearing, and "must be replaced. In addition, both the neutron generator and a battery component are fast approaching obsolescence and must be replaced."

Dropping such dumb nuclear weapons from an airplane would mean that, in case they operate as expected, vast areas would be obliterated from the face of the earth.

The old B61 nuclear bombs manifest several dangers: In 2005, a U.S. Air Force review discovered that procedures used during maintenance of the nuclear weapons in Europe held a risk that a lightning strike could trigger a nuclear detonation. In 2008, yet another U.S. Air Force review concluded that "most" nuclear weapons locations in Europe did not meet U.S. security guidelines and would "require significant additional resources" to bring these up to standard.

The modernisation of this archaic arsenal is expected to take place in two phases. In a first step, the B61 bombs currently deployed in Europe will be returned to the United States starting 2016 and converted into precision guided nuclear weapons (the so called B61-life extension programme or B61 LEP) and then brought back to Europe as B61-12, with improved military capabilities around 2019/2020. In addition, a new stealth fighter-bomber – the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter – is under construction to begin deployment to Europe in the early 2020s.

However, this modernisation contradicts NATO's assessment of the present arsenal, and undermines other declared objectives of the military alliance.

First, in its DDPR of May 2012, NATO affirms that "the Alliance's nuclear force posture currently meets the criteria for an effective deterrence and defence posture". As numerous critics of NATO's nuclear arsenal point out, if this arsenal is so efficient, why then is it necessary to improve its capabilities? This is all the more absurd, since the B61-LE "is very expensive, currently more than 10 billion U.S. dollars," as Hans M. Kristensen, director of the Nuclear Information Project with the Federation of American Scientists, said November 7, 2012 during a hearing at the Disarmament and Foreign Affairs Committee of the German Parliament in Berlin.

This high cost, Kristensen added, "is partly said to be necessary to upgrade safety and security features of the bomb. It is a mystery why that is necessary given that the (nuclear) weapons in Europe are always said to be safe and secure."

But the contradictions go beyond the mere nature of the assessment and the technical obsolescence of the nuclear armament. Its modernisation also constitutes a challenge to Russia. For, if the NATO description of the new B61 weapons is to be believed, they would be laser-controlled, thus substantially increasing its precision, and be practically able to hit targets within an error margin of less than 30 meters.



Or, as Kristensen puts it, “The addition of the guided tail kit will increase the accuracy of the B61-12 compared with the current versions and result in a greater target kill capability than the B61 versions currently deployed in Europe.” It is worth to note that the U.S. Congress in 1992 rejected a similar guided bomb proposal out of the concern that it would make nuclear weapons appear more useable.

Such precision would transform the B61 nuclear bombs into a rather flexible arsenal, deployable both as a tactical and as a strategic weapon, and no longer only under the present archaic conditions. “Such a change would revive the worst apprehensions the (post-)Soviet leadership had during the Pershing-II debate” of the late 1970s, early 1980s, warns the German nuclear weapons expert Otfried Nassauer, director of the Berlin information centre for transatlantic security (BITS), and co-author of a recent study on the B61-LEP.

That way, Europe would be heading towards a repetition of the ill-reputed “NATO double-track decision” of December 1979. With this decision, the NATO announced the deployment across Western Europe of 572 mobile middle range missiles, of the types Pershing II and BGM-109 Tomahawk Gryphon Ground-Launched Cruise Missiles, to counter the Soviet deployment of SS-20 mobile missiles in Eastern Europe. The result was a most feared nuclear arms race in the heart of Europe, to rebuild the Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD), which threatened to annihilate life on the continent.

Officially, NATO nuclear weapons in Europe are aimed at targets in the Middle East, especially against Iran. Russia, so NATO’s official line, has no reasons to fear the modernisation of the B61 weapons. However, such a view is at best naïve, at worst cynical. For everybody in the NATO knows how the Russian leadership reacts to such modernisation plans.

Though the Soviet Union never disclosed how large its tactic nuclear arsenal was, experts believe that Russia today still has between 500 and 700 nuclear weapons mostly aimed at targets in Western Europe. This horrendous mass of nuclear weapons is as antiquated as the NATO’s; and the obsolescence and the threat of a modern nuclear arsenal in the hands of a likely enemy, are reasons enough to foresee how the Russian government would react – by modernising its own arsenal.

On the other hand, the European opposition to the B61-LEP is almost non-existent. In Germany, despite all the words the foreign ministry used to campaign for nuclear disarmament, the official government programme of 2009, valid today, explicitly adhered to NATO’s so called “nuclear sharing policy”, which lets European member countries without nuclear weapons of their own participate in the planning for the use of the B61 stationed on their territories.

As German chancellor Angela Merkel said in March 2009, the German government “should be careful and avoid mixing up the goals with the ways leading to them. The

German government has fixed the nuclear sharing policy ... to secure our influence within NATO in this highly sensitive area”.

Similar positions prevail in the other European NATO countries affected by the “nuclear sharing policy”. According to Roderich Kiesewetter, military expert at the ruling CDU party, “the small European countries consider the deployment of nuclear weapons on their territory as a political appreciation of their own position. The Turkish government has even made clear that it would readily take the B61 positioned in Germany, if we were to reject them.”

Other countries, such as Belgium and Netherlands, have also announced that they would upgrade their aircraft military capabilities, to make them compatible with the new B61 nuclear weapons. To that effect, they would command the new F-35 Joint Strike Fighter airplane, to replace their F-16 and B-16 military airplanes which are unable to transport nuclear bombs. Germany still refuses to replace the similarly old Tornado planes, in the pitiful hope, as the military analyst Jochen Bittner put it in the weekly newspaper *Die Zeit*, “that the nuclear weapons disappear faster than the military airplanes corrode”.

Like Germany, Italy also uses Tornado aircrafts, and Turkey F-16 airplanes to transport the nuclear arsenal. That is, the five European countries disposing of nuclear weapons use three different types of aircraft to transport them. As Kristensen puts it, “Adding B61-12 capability to five different types of aircraft (the U.S. military uses yet another different airplane) in six Air Forces is excessive, complex and expensive for the type of security challenges that face NATO today. More importantly, it demonstrates that the nuclear posture is patched together by leftover pieces from an outdated posture rather than reduced, streamlined and adapted to the military and fiscal realities of today.”

Despite all these technical, military, and political obstacles, German government military expert Kiesewetter argues that the NATO would reconsider the B61 LEP only if Russia were ready to disclose the dimensions and locations of its huge tactical nuclear arsenal. However, he also points out that, even in case of such a dialogue, the modernisation of the European nuclear weapons must go on. “Political weapons must be technical functional,” he said, implicitly admitting the obsolescence of the present arsenal.

Kiesewetter’s stance chimes with NATO’s official attitude towards Russia. In the DDRP of May 2012, NATO said that in a bi-polar arms control policy “any further steps must take into account the disparity with the greater Russian stockpiles of short-range nuclear weapons,” and be considered “in the context of reciprocal steps by Russia.”

In other words, says Kristensen, of the Nuclear Information Project, “Given that Russia’s non-strategic nuclear posture is not determined by NATO’s nuclear posture in Europe but by inferior conventional forces, making further NATO reductions conditioned upon Russian reciprocity and disparity would appear to effectively surrender the arms control initiative to the hardliners in the Kremlin.” □

# Hiroshima and Nagasaki Want Nukes Abolished

By Ramesh Jaura\*



Mayors of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. (Left to right)  
Credit: Mayors for Peace

BERLIN | TOKYO - Much to the chagrin of several millions in Japan and beyond, who are relentlessly campaigning for a nuclear weapons-free world, the government in Tokyo has declined to join an initiative calling for efforts to outlaw nukes out of concern it would affect the country's security arrangement under the U.S. nuclear umbrella. But the mayors of Nagasaki and Hiroshima as well as the Hiroshima Prefecture's Governor remain unwavering in their impassioned commitment to abolition of nuclear weapons.

The initiative at issue was announced at the First Committee of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on October 22, 2012 by Swedish Ambassador Benno Laggner on behalf of the 34 member states – Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, the Philippines, Samoa, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Thailand, Uruguay,

The joint statement calls on all states to "intensify their efforts to outlaw nuclear weapons and achieve a world free of nuclear weapons" and expresses "deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons".

Referring to "the horrific consequences" of the use of nuclear arsenals, made clear by the suffering caused by the U.S. atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, the joint statement says the only way to guarantee that such weapons are never used again is "the total, irreversible and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons."

The move was initiated by 16 member states of the United Nations: which include Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, Holy See, Egypt, Indonesia, Ireland, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, the Philippines, South Africa and Switzerland.

At a preparatory committee (PrepCom) meeting on Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference on May 2, 2012 in Vienna, they issued a similar statement. But, unlike this time, they did not ask Japan to endorse the initiative.

Explaining Japan's decision, senior vice foreign minister Kazuya Shinba said at a news conference in Tokyo on October 22: "We have decided to refrain from participating" in the initiative, adding that it "isn't necessarily consistent with our country's national security policy".

Soon after the Japanese government's intention was reported on October 19, 2012, the Nagasaki Mayor Tomihisa Taue visited the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) to urge that the country has a moral obligation – as the only nation that underwent nuclear holocaust – by endorsing the joint statement.

Taue, mayor since 2007, is also vice president of the Mayors for Peace organisation, which was established in 1982 by the mayors of Nagasaki and Hiroshima – on which the U.S. dropped atomic bombs in August 1945 killing more than 200,000 women, children and elderly. Those who survived the first atom bombs in history – known as Hibakusha – suffer even now from the aftereffects of radiation.

According to reports, MOFA explained to Mayor Taue that it was difficult for the Japanese government to have it both ways – approving the joint statement seeking to outlaw nuclear weapons on the one hand and being protected by the nuclear umbrella provided by the U.S. on the other.

After meeting with MOFA officials, Taue reiterated his view in an interview with Nagasaki Broadcasting Company (NBC) published on October 19 on YouTube that the joint statement was just urging nations to make efforts towards outlawing nuclear weapons; therefore, Japan should take a clear stand by supporting the statement.

Taue was born in 1956, a decade after atomic bombs laid waste the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But the eyewitness accounts of those who survived the bombings left a deep impression on him and inspired him to become a crusader for a nuclear weapons-free world.

His commitment was also underlined in an eminent civil society presentation to the Prepcom for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in Vienna. The Nagasaki Mayor asked government representatives: "Isn't it absurd that investing the immense sum of 1.63 trillion dollars worldwide on military expenditures such as in 2010 in the name of national security has only led to a more dangerous world? Is it not time now to display the strong will required to free us from that danger?"

Like Mayor Taue, Mayor Kazumi Matsui, who was born in 1953 in Hiroshima as son to a Hibakusha father, has also been championing the cause of nuke abolition. In fact, he has been exploring the possibility of holding the 2015 NPT Review Conference in Hiroshima city. ☺

**\*Katsuhiro Asagiri, IDN's Asia-Pacific bureau chief and IPS Japan president, contributed to this article from Tokyo.**

On August 6, 2012 – remembering the day atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima in 1945 – Matsui said: "People of the world! Especially leaders of nuclear-armed nations, please come to Hiroshima to contemplate peace in this A-bombed city."

During a meeting with a team of journalists in September, he pointed out that in 2012, which marked the 30th anniversary of the Mayors for Peace, the number of cities calling for the total abolition of nuclear weapons by 2020 has passed 5,300, and members now represent approximately a billion people. "Next August, we will hold a 'Mayors for Peace' general conference in Hiroshima," he said.

"That event will convey to the world the intense desire of the overwhelming majority of our citizens for a nuclear weapons convention and elimination of nuclear weapons. The following spring, Hiroshima will host a ministerial meeting of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative comprising ten non-nuclear-weapon states, including Japan. I firmly believe that the demand for freedom from nuclear weapons will soon spread out from Hiroshima, encircle the globe, and lead us to genuine world peace," Mayor Matsui added.

He and the Hiroshima Prefecture's Governor Hidehiko Yuzaki who has launched 'Global Peace' plan – formally announced on November 4, 2011 – are in fact 'Hiroshima twins' relentlessly campaigning for a nuclear weapons-free world. Under the plan the Prefecture aims to be actively involved in multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations and the development of human resources for peace-building thereby boosting efforts to abolish nuclear weapons.

During a meeting arranged by Hiroshima Soka Gakkai in September, Governor Yuzaki said that the Prefecture had come up with a new approach by which Hiroshima can work toward peace over the next 50 or 60 years. "Thus far Hiroshima has had an influence on the world through the atomic bombing survivors' accounts of their experiences and in other ways. Through this plan Hiroshima will continue to exert its influence on the world but in a new form."

The action plan, the core of the overall plan, consists of five elements: 1) support the creation of a road map for nuclear abolition; 2) reduce the threat of nuclear terrorism; 3) develop human resources for the building of a peaceful international community; 4) amass research on nuclear disarmament, conflict resolution and peace-building; and 5) create a sustainable mechanism to support peace.

Against the backdrop of Nagasaki and Hiroshima striving for a nuclear weapons-free world, the Japanese MOFA's announcement is a source of concern to representatives of the opposition New Komei party's committee for the promotion of nuclear abolition. Addressing Foreign Minister Koichiro Genba, the committee's four members from the lower and upper house of the National Diet have stressed the inhuman aspect of nuclear weapons.

Referring to the debate in the first committee of the UN General Assembly, they point out that Norway will hold a conference in Oslo in March 2013 to focus on the humani-

tarian impact of nuclear detonations, as well as ability to respond to such a disaster credibly and effectively. The conference will provide greater insight and a fact-based understanding of the humanitarian consequences of a nuclear detonation, deputy director general and head of the division for disarmament, non-proliferation and export control in Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Inga M.W. Nyhamar, informed on October 18.



The Japanese government's decision not to endorse the joint statement, backed by 34 nations, sounds puzzling for yet another reason: At the fifth ministerial meeting of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) – initiated by Japan and Australia – on September 26, 2012, Tokyo endorsed a joint statement, which affirmed:

"We, the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates, resolve to move forward with practical steps that will advance the implementation of the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference Action Plan ('Action Plan') and to pursue the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. We acknowledge the efforts of many states towards achieving these objectives but also recognise that much more needs to be done."

Also Ambassador Mari Amano said during the UNGA First Committee discussions on October 17 that "the tragic consequences of nuclear weapon use must never be repeated". He added: "As the only country to have suffered from atomic bombings, Japan had engaged in practical and progressive efforts for a world without nuclear weapons. As part of those ongoing efforts, Japan would once again be submitting to this Committee a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament entitled 'United action towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons'."

The New Komei party members recalled in their letter to Foreign Minister Genba a resolution of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), approved on November 26, 2011. The IFRC said that it was "deeply concerned about the destructive power of nuclear weapons, the unspeakable human suffering they cause, the difficulty of controlling their effects in space and time, the threat they pose to the environment and to future generations and the risks of escalation they create".

The four parliamentarians – Masao Akamatsu, Masayoshi Hamada, Masaaki Taniai and Kozo Akino – stressed that the New Komei party favoured the convening of a nuclear abolition summit in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 2015 inviting heads of nuclear states.

"As a step toward the realization of the summit, we must make the scheduled NPDI foreign ministers meeting to be held in Hiroshima in 2014 a success. Japan should take a leading role as the chairing nation in clearly positioning 'inhumanity of nuclear weapons' in the course of debate on 'lessening roles of nuclear weapons' which has been positioned as one of six NPDI working items," the parliamentarians said. □

# Australia-NZ Treaty Fails To Abolish Nukes

By Neena Bhandari



Credit: The Peace Foundation

SYDNEY - Australia and New Zealand have entered into a scientific and technical cooperation agreement to strengthen detection of nuclear explosions under the framework of the international Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and work together to promote a permanent and effective ban on nuclear weapon tests.

Welcoming the new framework to support the CTBT, Australian Foreign Minister Bob Carr said: "International cooperation enhances the ability of scientific experts to provide advice to their governments on whether a nuclear test has occurred. Cooperation between Australia and New Zealand can serve as a model for others around the world and will strengthen the CTBT."

The framework for bilateral cooperation is set out in a memorandum of understanding between the Australian Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It describes its key aims as aiding sound scientific and technical analysis by Australian and New Zealand agencies of data and information related to verification of the CTBT; promoting the development of similar capacity in regional countries; and promoting development of effective verification tools and methodologies for the CTBT.

The move would see Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency and Geoscience Australia working more closely with New Zealand's Environmental Science and Research (ESR) to enhance their capabilities to detect nuclear explosions.

Carr said in a statement: "Australia strongly advocates the earliest possible entry into force of the CTBT, so we are taking technical steps to prepare for that time." Australia and New Zealand signed the scientific and technical cooperation agreement on September 28, 2012.

But Chairman of the Mayors for Peace Foundation and former expert advisor to the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation, Steve Leeper, feels countries like Australia that

have signed and ratified the CTBT should be doing far more than talking about a new framework.

"It makes it look like the two countries are doing something about nuclear weapons when what they are really doing is refusing to support the nuclear weapons convention. They should be applying serious diplomatic and even economic pressure on the United States to force it to ratify the Treaty," Leeper told IDN.

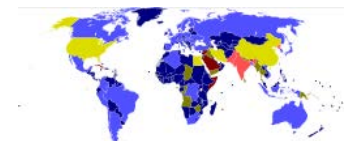
He suggests that one way to do this would be to launch an initiative to deny the U.S. and other non-signatories the extremely valuable information about seismic activity and radiation releases and tests now being gathered by the remarkable network of monitoring stations created by the CTBT Organisation.

The Treaty calls for cooperation among its parties to strengthen their ability to use the monitoring system to verify whether a nuclear explosion has taken place.

The CTBT Organisation has completed work on a global network of over 300 facilities to monitor the environment for acoustic waves and radionuclide particulates and gases from a possible nuclear explosion. Data collected by these facilities is made available to CTBT parties, who have the final responsibility in determining which events – about 30,000 per year – could be a nuclear explosion.

Leeper said: "The CTBT is part of the so-called step-by-step approach, which is nothing more than an effort to trick the non-nuclear weapon states into continuing to abide by the non-proliferation treaty while the nuclear-weapon states continue to maintain their nuclear advantage forever. Japan and Australia are two countries devoted to the step-by-step approach because they don't want to irritate the nuclear weapon states. We need to move quickly beyond the CTBT to a Nuclear Weapons Convention and we need Australia and New Zealand solidly behind the comprehensive approach."

CTBT opened for signature on September 24, 1996 and since 183 countries have signed it, but it is still awaiting ratification by specified states before it can enter into force. With Indonesia's ratification of the Treaty earlier this year (2012), 36 Annex 2 states have now ratified the CTBT. Currently, eight remaining Annex 2 states (China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Pakistan and the United States of America) must ratify in order for the Treaty to be legally binding. ☺





Annex 2 states are the 44 countries designated "nuclear-capable states" that participated in the negotiations of the CTBT from 1994-1996 and that possessed nuclear power reactors or research reactors at that time. In the past 16 years, progress has been made to develop a verification system and analysis techniques to detect and investigate a possible nuclear explosion anywhere around the globe.

**'Prohibit nuclear weapons completely'**

According to a spokesperson for the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "A permanent and verifiable ban on nuclear testing through the CTBT is a vital building block for non-proliferation and disarmament. Australia continues to press for its earliest entry into force".

However, a growing number of nations, organisations and prominent individuals around the world are now calling for negotiations to start on a treaty that prohibits nuclear weapons completely, not just nuclear testing. In recent years, many governments have voiced support for a nuclear-weapon-free world, but precious little has been done to reach that goal.

As International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) Australia's Director, Tim Wright said: "Although the CTBT has certainly helped to restrain some nuclear developments, it has not provided – and was never intended to provide – the necessary legal framework to halt the modernisation of nuclear forces or prevent nuclear proliferation, let alone achieve the complete elimination of nuclear weapons."

"This is where governments should focus their diplomatic efforts. Negotiations need not, and must not, await the entry into force of the CTBT. We need nuclear-free countries to play a leading role, rather than simply waiting for the nuclear-armed countries to act. This is an urgent humanitarian necessity," Wright told IDN.

Australian Red Cross in conjunction with Flinders University and the Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Centre at University of South Australia are co-hosting a conference in

Adelaide in the first week of November 2012 to advance the debate on the urgent need to develop a legally binding tool to prohibit and ultimately eliminate nuclear weapons.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement have been at the centre of the nuclear weapons debate from the very outset. From 1945 to 2011, the Movement has consistently voiced its deep concerns about these weapons of mass destruction and the need for the prohibition of their use.

In November 2011, the International Red Cross and the Red Crescent Movement had come together to pass a resolution, which appealed to all states to "pursue in good faith and conclude with urgency and determination negotiations to prohibit the use of and completely eliminate nuclear weapons through a legally binding international agreement". The resolution has since attracted worldwide attention, including garnering support from the Australian parliament.

Today there are at least 20,000 nuclear weapons worldwide, around 3,000 of them on launch-ready alert. The potential power of these would roughly equate to 150,000 Hiroshima bombs.

As ICAN Australia Advisory Board Member, Catriona Standfield said, "It is the civil society, which first ignited the movement for a nuclear weapons ban, and it has continued to be the most vocal supporter of disarmament and non-proliferation in the face of inaction by nuclear weapon states".

"Civil society continues to be the primary arena in which young people like me become involved in the push for a nuclear weapons ban. I believe that the rapid changes in communication and technology will see my generation build a truly global coalition of young civil society advocates for a nuclear weapon-free world," Standfield told IDN.

This augurs well for a complete elimination of nuclear weapons. □

**"The CTBT is part of the so-called step-by-step approach, which is nothing more than an effort to trick the non-nuclear weapon states into continuing to abide by the non-proliferation treaty while the nuclear-weapon states continue to maintain their nuclear advantage forever. Japan and Australia are two countries devoted to the step-by-step approach because they don't want to irritate the nuclear weapon states. We need to move quickly beyond the CTBT to a Nuclear Weapons Convention and we need Australia and New Zealand solidly behind the comprehensive approach."**

**Stop Investing Australian Taxpayers' Money in Nuclear Weapons Companies**

Petition, March, 2012: The Australian Government says at the United Nations that it's committed to achieving a world free from nuclear weapons. However, by investing in nuclear weapons companies, it is undermining that objective and contributing to the build-up of nuclear forces. Any use of nuclear weapons would have catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences and violate multiple fundamental principles of international law. No country is entitled to retain its nuclear weapons indefinitely; all are legally obliged to disarm.

## Snail's Pace Towards Ban on Nuke Testing

By Jamshed Baruah

VIENNA - Since the then Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru called for a "standstill agreement" on nuclear testing on April 2, 1954, 183 out of 196 states around the world have signed the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) that bans atomic explosions by everyone, everywhere: on the Earth's surface, in the atmosphere, underwater and underground.

157 countries including three of the nuclear weapon States – France, Russia and Britain – have ratified the treaty. But before the CTBT can enter into force, 44 specific nuclear technology holder countries must sign and ratify it. Of these, eight are still missing: China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan and the USA. In fact, India, North Korea and Pakistan have yet to sign the treaty.

Nevertheless since September 24, 1996 when the CTBT opened for signature at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, following three years of intense negotiations, the world has become slightly safer. Because the treaty has a unique and comprehensive verification regime to make sure that no nuclear explosion goes undetected.

In the five decades before the CTBT, over 2,000 nuclear tests shook and irradiated the planet. But, according to the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), the post-CTBT world saw only a handful of nuclear tests: those by India and Pakistan in 1998 and by North Korea in 2006 and 2009.

All these met universal condemnation, including unanimously adopted UN Security Council sanctions.

"The zero-tolerance stance against nuclear tests is reflected by the number of States Signatories to the CTBT: 183, or over 90% of all countries," avers the Vienna-based CTBTO, headed by the Executive Secretary, Tibor Tóth from Hungary.

And yet there is no reason for complacency. With this in view, foreign ministers and other high-level representatives, who met on September 27 at the UN headquarters in New York, issued a joint call for the entry into force of the CTBT.

In their joint statement, the foreign ministers described the CTBT's entry into force as "a vital step towards the reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons by constraining the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons...We call upon all States that have not done so to sign and ratify the Treaty, in particular the remaining eight Annex 2 States [these are China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Pakistan and the United States]."

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon echoed this appeal, urging the states that have yet to sign or ratify the CTBT: "You are failing to live up to your responsibility as a member of the international community."

CTBTO Executive Secretary Tóth provided the historical context to the meeting against the background of the 50th anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis. He called for political leadership to overcome the nuclear danger, stressing that the CTBT is a milestone on the way to a nuclear-weapon free world. The meeting at the UN headquarters was co-hosted by the foreign ministers of Australia, Canada, Finland, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands and Sweden.

Pulitzer Prize-winner Richard Rhodes, author of the Reykjavik play, reminded delegates that the risk of nuclear extinction is man-made. Thus a man-made solution could be found, as the 1986 Reykjavik summit had demonstrated. In Reykjavik, U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev had come close to an agreement to abolish their nuclear arsenals: "A nuclear-weapon free world is not a utopian dream," Rhodes said. He also invited all delegates to the performance of the Reykjavik play later that day at the Baruch Performing Arts Center in New York.

The play re-enacts the moment in October 1986 at the Reykjavik summit in Iceland when Reagan (Richard Easton) and Mikhail Gorbachev (Jay O. Sanders) came close to abolishing all nuclear weapons. More than 25 years later, the drama of the meeting and its potential to fundamentally change the course of history continues to ignite the imagination and inspire hopes for the future. The performance is directed by Tyler Marchant and produced by Primary Stages.

With the file on the Reykjavik negotiations declassified, key players from the summit are now able to speak freely. In the panel discussion after the performance they considered lessons learned, opportunities missed and what is needed today to move forward in eliminating nuclear weapons.

"In the current political climate, which is still clouded by nuclear threats, revisiting Reykjavik is a reminder that strong leadership, with political will and vision, can act to make nuclear disarmament breakthroughs," said Tóth. "It is time for the world's leaders to heed Reykjavik's message. In particular, from the eight remaining countries needed to bring the treaty into force."

As far as India is concerned, it has expressed its "regret that the (CTBT) text, as has finally emerged, does not do justice to the negotiating mandate. It is not a comprehensive ban but merely a ban on nuclear explosive testing. It also lacks a definitive commitment to nuclear disarmament".

However, according to the CTBTO, Keith Hansen, part of the United States' CTBT negotiating team, believed that India's refusal to sign the CTBT reflected not only dissatisfaction with the treaty, but also a desire to join the 'Nuclear Club' of nuclear armed countries. □

## African Economies Resilient But Vulnerable

By J C Suresh

TORNOTO - A new report by the World Bank highlights the resilience of African economies despite global slowdown caused by the Euro-zone crisis and decline in growth in emerging economies, particularly China – an important market for the continent's mineral exports.

In fact, new oil, gas and mineral wealth offer an opportunity for inclusive development. But strong growth rates could yet be vulnerable to deteriorating market conditions in the Euro-zone, the report warns.

So far, consistently high commodity prices and strong export growth in those countries which have made mineral discoveries in recent years, have powered economic activity and are expected to buttress Africa's economic growth for the rest of 2012, according to the World Bank's new Africa's Pulse, a twice-yearly analysis of the issues shaping Africa's economic prospects. African countries' share in global reserves and annual production of some minerals is sizeable.

"A third of African countries will grow at or above 6 percent with some of the fastest growing ones buoyed by new mineral exports and by factors such as the return to peace in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as strong growth in countries such as Ethiopia," said World Bank Vice-President for Africa, Makhtar Diop.

"An important indicator of how Africa is on the move is that investor interest in the region remains strong, with \$31 billion in foreign direct investment flows expected this year, despite difficult global conditions," Diop added.

According to the report, Sub-Saharan Africa is poised to grow at 4.8 percent in 2012, largely unchanged from the 4.9 percent growth rate in 2011 and mainly on track despite setbacks in the global economy. Excluding South Africa, the continent's largest economy, growth in Sub-Saharan Africa is forecast to rise to 6 percent. African exports picked up particularly in the first quarter of 2012, growing at an annual pace of 32 percent, up from the -11 percent recorded in the last quarter of 2011.

The report expects new discoveries of oil, gas, and other minerals in African countries to generate a wave of significant mineral wealth in the region.

Because of minerals beginning to earn hundreds of millions of dollars in windfall revenues for countries across Africa, Diop envisages an opportunity for "strengthening economic transparency and financial controls around the new discoveries, to leverage their full potential through development policies that increase economic growth, create jobs, reduce poverty, and improve health and education especially for young people and future generations, while balancing the immediate needs."

According to Africa's Pulse, the economic importance of natural resources is likely to continue in the medium term in several established oil and mineral producers, thanks to

the sizeable stock of resource wealth and the prospects of continued, high commodity prices.

African countries' share in global reserves and annual production of some minerals is considerable. In 2010, Guinea alone represented over 8 percent of total world bauxite production; Zambia and the Democratic Republic Congo have a combined share of 6.7 percent of the total world copper production; and Ghana and Mali together account for 5.8 percent of the total world gold production.

"Resource-rich African countries have to make the conscious choice to invest in better health, education, and jobs, and less poverty for their people," says Shantayanan Deva- rajan, the World Bank's Chief Economist for Africa, and lead author of Africa's Pulse.

In its wide-ranging analysis of new developments in Africa, the report notes that after ten years of high growth, an increasing number of countries are moving into 'middle-income' status, defined by the World Bank as those countries achieving more than \$1,000 per capita income.

Of Africa's 48 countries, 22 states with a combined population of 400 million people have officially achieved middle-income status; while another 10 countries representing another 200 million people today would reach middle-income status by 2025 if current growth trends continue or with some modest growth and stabilization, says the report.

Africa's Pulse adds: Another seven countries which are home to 70 million people could reach this milestone if they created economic growth of seven percent growth over the coming years. For example, Sierra Leone could grow at this rate because of its recent expansion in mining. Ten African countries, which are 'fragile' and conflict-affected states, and with a combined population of 230 million people, have almost no chance to reach middle-income status by 2025.

The report also notes that with rapid population growth Africa is urbanizing rapidly, with profound implications for social and economic opportunities. Today, 41 percent of Africans live in cities, with an additional one percent every two years. By 2033, Africa – like the rest of the world – will be a majority urban continent. Urbanization and development go together, avers the report.

It points out that poverty rates on the continent have been falling faster than one percentage point a year and for the first time, between 2005 and 2008, the absolute number of people living on \$1.25 a day has declined. Child mortality has also been decreasing. □



# Africa Can Avoid Food Crises and Earn Billions

By Jerome Mwanda

NAIROBI - Some 19 million people in West Africa's Sahel region are living with the threat of hunger and malnutrition, though the potential to increase agricultural production in Africa is enormous. Poor people in the slums of Nairobi pay more for their maize, rice, and other staple food than wealthy people pay for the same products in local supermarkets.

Such asymmetries are surmountable – if only African leaders would agree to improve inter-regional trade so that food can move more freely between countries and from fertile areas to those where communities are suffering food shortages, says the World Bank in a new report.

The 106-page report titled 'Africa Can Help Feed Africa: Removing barriers to regional trade in food staples' says the dismantling of trade barriers would not only create a competitive food market that will help poor people most, but would also generate an extra US\$20 billion in yearly earnings for the continent.

The report was released on October 24 ahead of an African Union (AU) ministerial conference on agriculture and trade, scheduled to be held in Addis Ababa from October 29 to November 2, 2012, but was postponed because of "the low response/confirmation of attendance by Member States". The African Press Organisation (APO) reported that "it was difficult for the (AU) Commission to attain the mandatory quorum for convening a Ministerial Conference".

The World Bank expects demand for food in Africa to double by the year 2020 as people increasingly leave the countryside and move to the continent's cities. Rapid urbanization will challenge the ability of farmers to ship their cereals and other foods to consumers when the nearest trade market is just across a national border, says the report.

Countries south of the Sahara, for example, could significantly boost their food trade over the next several years to manage the deadly impact of worsening drought, rising food prices, rapid population growth, and volatile weather patterns. The report underlines the importance of food distribution networks which in many countries fail to benefit poor farmers and poor consumers.

With many African farmers effectively cut off from the high-yield seeds, and the affordable fertilizers and pesticides needed to expand their crop production, the continent has turned to foreign imports to meet its growing needs in staple foods, informs the report. Though, given removal of restrictions in trade, it does not have to.

Because, as World Bank Vice President for Africa Makhtar Diop said: "Africa has the ability to grow and deliver good quality food to put on the dinner tables of the continent's families. However, this potential is not being realized because farmers face more trade barriers in getting their food to market than anywhere else in the world. Too

often borders get in the way of getting food to homes and communities which are struggling with too little to eat."

The new report suggests that if the continent's leaders can embrace more dynamic inter-regional trade, Africa's farmers, the majority of whom are women, could potentially meet the continent's rising demand and benefit from a major growth opportunity. It would also create more jobs in services such as distribution, while reducing poverty and cutting back on expensive food imports. Africa's production of staple foods is worth at least US\$50 billion a year.

The report further notes that only five percent of all cereals imported by African countries come from other African countries while huge tracts of fertile land, around 400 million hectares, remain uncultivated and yields remain a fraction of those obtained by farmers elsewhere in the world.

Transport cartels are still common across Africa, and the incentives to invest in modern trucks and logistics are weak. The World Bank report suggests that countries in West Africa in particular could halve their transport costs within 10 years if they adopted policy reforms that spurred more competition within the region.

Other obstacles to greater African trade in food staples include export and import bans, variable import tariffs and quotas, restrictive rules of origin, and price controls. Often devised with little public scrutiny, these policies are then poorly communicated to traders and officials. This process in turn promotes confusion at border crossings, limits greater regional trade, creates uncertain market conditions, and contributes to food price volatility.

"The key challenge for the continent is how to create a competitive environment in which governments embrace credible and stable policies that encourage private investors and businesses to boost food production across the region, so that farmers get the capital, the seeds, and the machinery they need to become more efficient, and families get enough good food at the right price," said Paul Brenton, World Bank's Lead Economist for Africa and principal author of the report.

The World Bank is a key source of knowledge on trade policy issues, analysis and investments for trade-related infrastructure at the country level. The institution's agriculture support for Africa has grown significantly over the past decade, according to the Bank. Concessional lending totalled US\$1.07 billion in fiscal year 12 (July 11-June 12): a fourfold increase from financial year 2003.

The share of trade-related lending in total Bank lending has also grown from an average of two percent in 2003 to five percent in 2012. New trade-related commitments in 2013 are expected to increase to US\$3 billion, 70 percent of which will go to Africa. Since 2008, World Bank Group lending for agriculture and related sectors in sub-Saharan Africa total approximately US\$5.4 billion. □

# Plea for Reducing Foreign Aid Dependency

By Jerome Mwanda

NAIROBI - Whether and how African countries could reduce their dependency on foreign aid - if not do without it altogether - was a major subject of debate at the African Economic Conference in Rwanda's capital Kigali. It was the first time since the 2011 Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, South Korea, that the issue was discussed.

Convened by the Economic Commission for Africa, (ECA), the African Development Bank, (AfDB) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the four-day conference from October 30 to November 2, 2012 focussed on the theme 'Inclusive and Sustainable Development in an Age of Economic Uncertainty'.

"In an era when economic volatility seems to have become the norm, achieving inclusive growth is a big challenge," UNDP Administrator Helen Clark said, and called for greater and sustained transformational leadership, targeted actions to generate policy solutions that can drive growth economic growth in Africa.

AfDB President Dr. Donald Kaberuka argued that inclusive growth is both possible and indeed a good investment for Africa but insisted on the need for its leaders to believe in the future of the Continent. Contending that for real development to occur, Africa must chart its course, Kaberuka pointed out that Africa as a continent actually has more money than India, but nevertheless continues to seek assistance from the Asian country.

The debate on foreign aid was triggered by a paper presented to the conference by UNDP's Degol Hailu and Admasu Shiferaw of the College of William and Mary (USA). Discussions shed new light on how much work remains to be done in terms of defining a viable aid-exit strategy for the Continent. Far from toeing the fatalistic line, the authors of the paper refer to empirical evidence that shows that a complete and sudden break from foreign aid is neither possible in the foreseeable future nor likely to be accepted by some countries at any time.

Yet, a consensus seemed to emerge suggesting that "Africa could follow the example of some developing countries that significantly reduced their initial high degree of reliance on international aid".

The paper investigates the attributes of a group of countries (/such as South Korea and Mexico) which initially were heavily aid-dependent but managed to exit from it as compared to countries with persistent aid-dependence. These are countries that initially had similar and very high degrees of dependence on international aid but followed dramatically different trajectories of aid-dependence afterwards.

The paper cites proponents of aid who argue that "while aid may not significantly promote economic growth in a typical recipient country, it has a positive effect under 'good

policy' conditions". According to authors of the paper, "analysis shows that the likelihood of exiting from heavy reliance on aid increases with the rate of investment".

It suggests that strengthening policies and institutions that promote public and private investment seems to be a reliable path towards exiting from aid-dependence. It notes that "a declining share of aid is being allocated to infrastructure development", a practice that the authors regret.

It contends that "increasing the flow of aid alone does not in itself lead countries out of aid-dependence if it is not accompanied by aggressive capital accumulation".

Participants agreed with the authors that a functional and well-developed financial system that could support high levels of investment is one of the best ways of reducing aid-dependency.

"...a widening saving-investment gap is more than likely to delay graduation from aid-dependence", hence, "donors and recipient countries should watch out for aid flows not to inadvertently stifle domestic savings even when levels of investment are high", the paper stipulates.

Local manufacturing is also another path that can lead African countries out of aid-dependency, the paper explains, adding that "even a small increase in the share of manufacturing in GDP has a potential to facilitate an exit from aid-dependence".

Participants agreed that the exact nature of policies would differ across countries but were certain that a clear industrial policy is a key prerequisite for an aid exit strategy from aid-dependency.

If donors and recipients were to coordinate their aid efforts to support the above-mentioned policy objectives, aid could still be a development tool with diminishing importance.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa has spearheaded several studies and initiatives that prepared African countries for the two first Conference on Aid Effectiveness (Paris 2005) and Accra, Ghana (2008).

These laid the groundwork for the formulation of the African Common Position that was tabled at the Busan Conference in 2011.

Participants urged African leaders to put in place bold economic reforms, aimed at sustaining growth and boosting human development. They highlighted the need for policymakers to create diversified economies capable of generating employment, implementing better social policies and inclusive growth.

They agreed that good governance and fair competition will help Africa meet its sustainable development agenda. Carefully calibrated government support can help fulfill Africa's economic potential, reducing political risks and bolstering financial accountability to open new markets. □

# Japan Braving the Quake and Tsunami Debris

By Ramesh Jaura and Katsuhiko Asagiri



Signboard 'Let's keep going, Ishinomaki!' | Credit: SGI

SENDAI - While the Fukushima nuclear disaster marks yet another wake-up call to re-think energy policy, the massive earthquake and tsunami that hit Tohoku, the north-eastern region of Japan, has not only left behind a trail of pain and suffering but also an indefatigable resolve of survivors to abandon despair and transform their agony into strength.

In the last days of September, IDN and IPS Japan were witness to determination of young and elderly women and men not to get bogged down in mourning the loss of near and dear ones and their homes and businesses that were swept off by titanic tidal waves, but devote themselves to rebuilding activities.

Some two weeks later, finance and development ministers from around the world gathered for the Sendai Dialogue on October 9-10, which was co-organised by the Japanese government and the World Bank ahead of the IMF-World Bank Annual Meetings in Tokyo.

Considering that it was the costliest earthquake in world history – the direct economic cost estimated at 16.9 trillion Yen or \$210 billion, and 650 kilometres of Japan's northeast coastline devastated, several towns and villages along the shore washed away, and 20,000 people left dead or missing – the Sendai Dialogue was held in the largest city of the worst hit region.

Together with global policymakers the Dialogue organisers called for greater efforts to integrate disaster risk management into national development planning and international development assistance. A joint statement urges national governments and development partners to accelerate efforts to pro-actively manage growing disaster risks by incorporating disaster risk management in all development policy and investment programs.

"We need a culture of prevention," said World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim. "No country can fully insulate itself from disaster risk, but every country can reduce its vulnerability. Better planning can help reduce damage – and loss of life – from disasters, and prevention can be far less costly than disaster relief and response."

Japan's Finance Minister Koriki Jojima expressed the hope that "lessons derived from Japan's long-established disaster management culture, as well as the Great East Japan Earthquake and its reconstruction process, will be globally shared," and that the Sendai Dialogue would help reach "a consensus on the need to mainstream disaster risk management in all aspects of development processes".

Governments should indeed be obliged to set the rescue and reconstruction machinery into motion with the least bureaucracy. However, reconstruction work under way some 46 kilometres northeast of Sendai emphasises the importance of citizens being proactive in the face of heavy odds.

One of them, IDN and IPS Japan talk to during a tour organised by the lay Buddhist organisation Soka Gakkai (SG), is Kenichi Kurosawa. The story of his ordeal – shared by about 164,000 inhabitants of the city, approximately 46% of which was inundated by the tsunami – strikes deep into bones.

He was driving back to his hometown Ishinomaki, when tsunami struck right after the earthquake on March 11, 2011. Gigantic tidal waves of up to ten meters high that pounded the inland as far as five kilometres away from the Pacific coast, nearly overpowered him.

"The tsunami waves came with such a terrific speed and thrust that I could not drive any further. Fortunately there was a pine tree nearby to which I clung on and thus managed to survive," Kenichi says.

"The snow fell continuously on that dark moonless night, and I endured the freezing cold throughout the night. At the break of day, the waters started to recede. I began searching for my wife, Kayoko. I kept slipping and falling in the black sludge. The ground was covered with debris. Smoke from the fires that had broken out after the tsunami blinded me. My eyes filled with tears of frustration as I searched. At last I found her. She was alive!"

Ten days later, Kenichi went to search for his belongings where his house-cum-showroom once stood. He could see a familiar black handle under the debris. "I found my handheld drill which I had been using for a long time in my work as a plumber, its case cracked and the drill inside covered with mud. I held it in my hand with deep emotion and wiped off the mud. I felt as if hope had begun to rise from beneath the mountain of debris."

Declining to be crushed by the feeling of helplessness, he decided to make a large signboard as proof of his determination to get back on his feet. "Two friends joined me in assembling scrap wood with some screws we found in the rubble. With a sincere prayer for reconstruction, we began painting the words, 'Ganbaro! Ishinomaki' (Let's keep going, Ishinomaki!). ☺"

On April 11, 2011, exactly a month after that fateful day, the 10-meter long signboard could be seen in the devastated city, standing in the ruins of his home.

Several newspapers around the country have meanwhile printed photos of the 'Ganbaro! Ishinomaki' signboard, notes Kenichi [See picture on right] with obvious satisfaction – a signboard that has come to symbolise the indomitable spirit that permeates the survivors of the earthquake and tsunami, who started to rebuild their city and homes, providing succour to their co-citizens still in a state of stupor as their eyes wander over eerie desolate landscapes.

Kenichi, like hundreds among survivors is determined not to continue to reel under the debris of pain and suffering left by the killer tidal waves. "I will definitely transform suffering into strength. That is my mission," he says.

### 'Rebuilding lives'

A widely circulated daily Seikyo Shimbun has been reporting on 'rebuilding lives' initiatives of several SG members in the Tohoku and earthquake and tsunami areas. The organisation itself has mobilised enormous financial and manpower resources in post-disaster recovery support activities immediately in the aftermath of March 11, 2011 by providing accommodation to evacuees, distributing food and other relief goods, search and rescue to ensure the safety of members, neighbours and friends.

Many volunteer task forces were spontaneously formed in the affected areas by local SG members, primarily led by those of the Youth Division.

SG student members in Tohoku displayed innovativeness some three months after the earthquake and tsunami, as they organised on July 31, 2011 a music festival titled 'Rock the Heart' in Sendai City. The festival sent a message

of courage and hope to the many evacuees living in shelters and to those who were still struggling in the aftermath of the massive earthquake and tsunami.

Messages to participants at the event were sent by jazz legend Herbie Hancock and famed Brazilian pianist José Carlos Amaral Vieira. Hancock offered his heartfelt sympathy and support to all those who lost loved ones and whose lives have been affected by the disaster. He also lauded the power of music to inspire people to courageously move forward and overcome any situation.

An outstanding example of the commitment of civil engineers employed by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) is the Ishinomaki District disaster debris disposal project which began on September 17, 2011, and is not expected to be complete until March 25, 2014. By then, approximately 2 million cubic meters of tsunami sediment along with 2 million tons of debris will have been sorted, cleaned, and disposed of in the most thorough and expeditious manner possible.

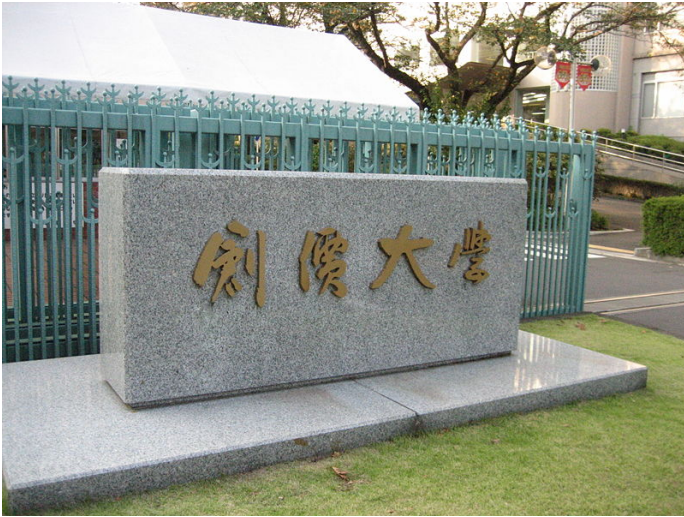
The anticipated cost for the project – just one of several in the vicinity of Sendai – is 183 trillion Japanese yen (\$244 billion). "As staggering as these figures are, and as exhaustive the level of effort in addressing the debris, they don't begin to approach the cost in human misery where more than 7,000 of Ishinomaki's residents died, and where lives of the survivors will never be the same," John Trotti, the Editor of U.S. 'Grading and Excavation Contractor magazine' rightly points out as every visitor to the site would confirm.

□



# Japan Treading New Horizons in Education

By Ramesh Jaura



Bronze inscription of the name of the university in Chinese characters in the calligraphy of Makiguchi, which stands at the main gate of Soka University in Tokyo.

BERLIN | TOKYO - When I visited Japan five years ago and met senior representatives of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI) in Tokyo, I learnt about the educational activities of this faith organization and the underlying concept spelt out by its President Daisaku Ikeda: "Education that lacks an ethical or spiritual underpinning can warp our attitudes toward knowledge, allowing scientific research to run dangerously out of control."

Nothing demonstrates this more horrifically than the development of nuclear weapons, he said in an interview. "This is why I have put my energies into dialogues aimed at bridging differences of nationality, religious affiliation and ideology, and into promoting educational exchanges that foster people-to-people connections," stressed the President of SGI, a worldwide Buddhist network spanning the globe and promoting peace, culture and education through personal transformation and social contribution.

In 2010, I had an opportunity to visit the Soka University in Tokyo and speak to some 300 students on the significance of Ikeda's unflinching commitment to the abolition of nuclear weapons, his peace proposals as viewed by me and my colleagues as foreign journalists, and the inspiring response we receive from readers to our reports and analyses dealing with those proposals. I was delighted at the deep interest young women and men from several countries studying at the Soka University showed in my talk.

In September 2012 I had yet another opportunity to meet Soka University students in Tokyo, who attended a talk given by a civil society leader and media specialist,

Roberto Savio, on globalization – its origins, evolution, impact and ways and means of facing the challenges it is posing. We were captured by the enthusiasm for learning some 100 university students showed in the topic and related it to their daily lives.

We found a similar overwhelming passion for learning during a memorable visit to the Tokyo Soka Junior and Senior High Schools. Savio, who is also President Emeritus of Inter Press Service (IPS) – an eminent international communication institution – answered questions from students, and said: "Soka Gakuen has a value-based vision of society, people and the relationship between them. As Soka students, this style of education places you in a very advantageous position. . . . The creation of new society depends on your efforts."

For me too it was impossible to escape the impression that, nearly unnoticed by the global mainstream media, a system of school and university education hosted in two verdant suburbs of Tokyo has emerged as cradle of a new global culture aiming at humanistic education to foster genuine peace.

The core of the system is value-creating, abbreviated as 'soka' in Japanese. It has its origin in the thinking and concerns of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871-1944), an elementary school principal. In fact, his crucial role as the father of Soka education is symbolized by a bronze inscription of the name of the university in Chinese characters in the calligraphy of Makiguchi, which stands at the main gate of Soka University in Tokyo.

Makiguchi's value-creation philosophy was inherited by Josei Toda (1900-1958), the second president of Soka Gakkai and, in turn, by Ikeda, Soka Gakkai's third president. In 1971, Ikeda founded the Soka University, based the ideals of Soka education. He put forth the following founding principles: (1) Be the highest seat of learning for humanistic education; (2) Be the cradle of a new culture; and (3) Be a fortress for the peace of humankind. ☺



[From left to right: The writer, Roberto Savio, and Katsuhiro Asagiri at the Tokyo Soka Junior and Senior High Schools.]



The importance of these principles is underlined by the fact that because of their uncompromising opposition to the militarist government of Japan during World War II, both Makiguchi and Toda were harshly persecuted and imprisoned. Makiguchi died in prison. Toda inherited Makiguchi's ideals, leaving prison with a fierce resolve to create a peaceful society.

This determination was captured in an historic public declaration, in 1957, calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons. In order to pursue his predecessor's vision for peace, Daisaku Ikeda has engaged in wide-ranging dialogues with intellectuals and eminent leaders from around the world and has been active in developing grassroots exchanges for peace among people of different nationalities and cultures. The pursuit of peace is the soul of Soka education.

The philosophy of humanistic, life-affirming education is practiced from kindergarten to university and is gaining global recognition. While Soka University since its inception in April 1971 has continued to grow and expand rapidly, Ikeda has also taken Soka education abroad, opening Soka University of Los Angeles in 1987 and later, in 2001, Soka University of America, a liberal arts college in Orange County, California. Besides, Soka kindergartens have been established in Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Brazil and South Korea.

**Exchange agreements**

Concurrent with this development of the educational environment, the Soka University has signed exchange agreements with 141 universities in 46 countries the world over as of November 2012. In 2006, the Soka University Beijing Center was opened, bringing a new dimension to Soka University's efforts to strengthen exchange with China.

Since the university is committed to student-centered education, it invests considerable enthusiasm and ingenuity in developing educational content. It is not surprising therefore that many of the university's educational models have been cited and recognized by Japan's Education Ministry as unique and innovative approaches in contemporary education. The Ministry has also given due recognition to advanced research conducted in the university's Faculty of Engineering.



Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871-1944)



Josei Toda (1900-1958)



"Education that lacks an ethical or spiritual underpinning can warp our attitudes toward knowledge, allowing scientific research to run dangerously out of control." - SGI President Daisaku Ikeda

The university's academic achievements are underlined by the comparatively high proportion of successful candidates for the national bar examination, the examination for certified public accountants, the teacher employment examination and other state and municipal examinations, which are among the most difficult qualifications to secure in Japan.

More than 50,000 students have graduated from Soka University since its founding and are now making their own contributions to Japanese and global society based on the founding principles of their alma mater.

On April 1, 2010, Soka University announced the Grand Design, an overarching series of concepts, strategies and initiatives to enable students to lead lives that are both creative and contributive, while at the same time ensuring that the university will continue its development towards 2020, when it celebrates the 50th anniversary of its establishment.

Soka's Grand Design allows the institution to fully assess the institutional traditions and academic successes it has achieved over the first half-century. It will also establish a broader, better framework with which diverse and evolving needs of its students, along with the burgeoning challenges of the 21st century both at home and abroad, may be fully met.

The plan consists of three key objectives: 1) to foster individuals who will lead creative and contributive lives based on Soka's three founding principles 2) to create specific educational and research programs to facilitate the development of such students; and 3) to prepare a broad and robust framework with which to support such educational and research programs.

Under the Grand Design aegis, a special agency will be set up to evaluate

and upgrade existing curricula and extracurricular programs, while introducing new courses and programs. The overall goal is to enhance each student's scholastic aptitude and capacity for creative and critical thinking. The process will be supported by a new learning center and calls for a phased reorganization of the university's respective faculties and departments, according to the Soka University. ☺



## Grand Design

What distinguishes Soka's Grand Design from plans adopted elsewhere is its simultaneous focus on enriching the humanity of students. It includes programs to improve skills in communications, debate and leadership as well as to enhance awareness of global issues and perspectives, training students to think and act as global citizens in accordance with Soka's founding principles.

These and similar initiatives will be further advanced by providing Japanese students greater opportunities to study abroad, while actively expanding the university's foreign student enrolment and its academic exchange programs with foreign universities.

Over the next decade, seven committees and other agencies will be set up to develop specific strategies and solutions in the realms of education, research, international outreach, student support services and distance learning.

These committees and agencies will be tasked to develop initiatives to upgrade Soka's campus facilities, finances, administration and public relations.

## Cornerstone-laying ceremony

November 27, 2012 marked an important date. On that day, the cornerstone-laying ceremony for the new General Education Complex (GEC) was held at the Soka University campus. The complex is comprised of four wings and features a broad range of facilities, including classrooms, student counselling and multimedia rooms, health centre, café lounge and 1,000-seat Main Hall.

In addition to having three basement floors, the complex's West Wing will stand twelve floors high, with the East and Central wings reaching nine floors and seven floors respectively. As part of the ceremony, badges representing the 62 foreign institutes and universities that have entered into academic exchange agreements with Soka University were buried with the cornerstone structure. The GEC will be formally completed in May 2013. □



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### JAPAN TREADING NEW HORIZONS IN EDUCATION

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By Ramesh Jaura | IDN-InDepth NewsFeature

BERLIN (IDN) - When I visited Japan five years ago and met senior representatives of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI) in Tokyo, I learnt about the educational activities of this faith organization and the underlying concept spelt out by its President Daisaku Ikeda: "Education that lacks an ethical or spiritual underpinning can warp our attitudes toward knowledge, allowing scientific research to run dangerously out of control."

Nothing demonstrates this more horrifically than the development of nuclear weapons, he said in an interview. "This is why I have put my energies into dialogues aimed at bridging differences of nationality, religious affiliation and ideology, and into promoting educational exchanges that foster people-to-people connections," stressed the President of SGI, a worldwide Buddhist network spanning the globe and promoting peace, culture and education through personal transformation and social contribution.

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### OBAMA URGES MIDDLE CLASS-BASED PROSPERITY

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By Ernest Corea\* | IDN-InDepth NewsAnalysis

WASHINGTON DC (IDN) – A 19-year-old single mother captured the spirit of hope and change that animated candidate Barack Hussein Obama's first presidential election campaign with this text message: "Rosa sat, so Martin could walk; Martin walked so Obama could run; Obama is running so our children can fly." Khari Mosley, a leader of the Democratic Party in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania cited the comment in a newspaper article and it re-surfaced in 2013, reaffirming the sentiments of "hope and change" that helped to propel Obama to the pinnacle of political power in the US.

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### WORLD BANK HELPS TACKLE RAPID URBANIZATION

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By J C Suresh | IDN-InDepth NewsReport

TORONTO (IDN) - Developing countries are urbanizing so fast that their populations will tilt from less than 20 percent urban today to more than 60 percent in just 30 years. This is in stark contrast to the mostly gradual transformation today's developed countries experienced as their cities expanded over a period of 100 years or more with jobs shifting from farms to factories.

Developing countries cannot afford today's developed countries' luxury of trial and error in growth patterns and policies. To meet the challenges that rapid migration is creating, city leaders must move quickly to plan, connect, and finance resilient and sustainable growth. A new World Bank report, Planning, Connecting and Financing Now: What City Leaders Need to Know, provides a framework to assist in this huge task.

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 Forward To The Future In Quest Of Global Security. Europeans are finding it hard to keep their heads above water as tidal waves of an overwhelming desire for participation in governance pound at the Arab shores of the Mediterranean Sea. The challenge thrown down by Arab uprisings is however only one front in the uphill battle for achieving "security for the global world". Is there a European answer to that challenge?

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**Strengthening Public Awareness For Nuclear Abolition**  
The Global Cooperation Council has launched a special website as part of a media project of Inter Press Service news agency and Soka Gakkai International (SGI), a Buddhist association based in Tokyo.

**TOWARD A NUCLEAR FREE WORLD**  
  
**B E Y O N D Nuclear Non-Proliferation**  


Some personalities who have been interviewed, have contributed their views or whose views have been incorporated in articles as part of this project are:

 Daisaku Ikeda	 Sergio Duarte	 Tibor Tóth	 J. Dhanapala
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**People's Decade for Nuclear Abolition**  
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**Japan Responding Creatively to Crisis**  
The human spirit has a truly remarkable capacity -the ability to generate hope from the most devastating of crises. This ability to create value can be seen in the response to the earthquake that struck Japan on March 11, writes Daisaku Ikeda, a Japanese Buddhist philosopher and peacebuilder and president of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI), in a column for IPS.

**'Abolish Nukes in the Middle East and Beyond'**  
As 'people power' topples one Arab regime after another, confronting the international community with an unprecedented volatile situation, an eminent Buddhist leader is urging the

Global Cooperation Council has set up a **Media Task Force** in order to strengthen its media network, with veteran journalist and Sri Lanka diplomat, **Ernest Corea** as president.

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