

WHAT AFTER



COPENHAGEN?

Climate Change



NOT-SO-WONDERFUL COPENHAGEN: The View from Washington

BY ERNEST COREA IDN-InDepthNews Service WASHINGTON DC (IDN) - The concluding moments of COP15 (the fifteenth conference of parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, better known as the Copenhagen Conference) were overshadowed here by, of all things, the local weather.



CLIMATE CHANGE: A History, Of Sorts, Is Made

BY RAMESH JAURA IDN-InDepthNews Service BERLIN (IDN) – Copenhagen will probably go down in the history of climate diplomacy as a synonym for disaster, evoking memories of 'something is rotten in the state of Denmark'. But this is not why a history, of sorts, has been made in Copenhagen. The real reasons are different. International conferences by their very nature are not known to end up in failure, with zero results. But COP15 -- the fifteenth conference of parties to the UN Framework Convention in Climate Change (UNFCCC) -- distinguishes itself from other UN conferences in that its outcome is subject to interpretation.



VIEWPOINT: Deadlock at Copenhagen at Half Way Mark

BY MARTIN KHOR* IDN-InDepthNews Service (IDN) - With only days to go before political leaders arrive, the Copenhagen climate summit is in the grip of a deadlock over the future of the global climate regime. More than half way through the UN Copenhagen Climate Conference, the fate of the meeting lies in the balance between partial success and outright failure. The conference has just completed its first week. The more difficult and tense part will come this second week, when a hundred Presidents and Prime Ministers are expected to attend on Dec. 17 and 18.



CLIMATE CHANGE: Bhutan Pledges Carbon Neutrality

BY NEDUP TSHERING* IDN-InDepthNews Service THIMPHU (IDN) – The under-reported Bhutan's National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) to combat climate change recognizes that the landlocked South Asian nation is highly vulnerable to climate change. With its fragile ecosystem, glacier lake outburst floods in the northern mountains constitute an ever-present threat. Of the 2,674 glacial lakes in Bhutan, 24 are considered to be potentially dangerous, says a new report.



PERSPECTIVES: Nuclear Power 'Yes' – Nuclear Proliferation 'No'

BY CLIVE BANERJEE IDN-InDepthNews Service VIENNA (IDN) - Nuclear power is a dirty word for those who champion the cause of clean energy. It needs some guts, therefore, to take up the cudgels on behalf of the atom as an important source of non-fossil energy. This is precisely what Yukiya Amano, the veteran Japanese diplomat, did on Dec. 9, seven days after taking charge of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).



CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE: 'We All Breathe the Same Air'

BY ERNEST COREA IDN-InDepthNews Service WASHINGTON DC (IDN) - The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently made the legally required determination that will enable it to crackdown on green house gas (GHG) emissions. EPA's positive move is likely to have improved, even slightly, America's credibility as a partner in climate change negotiations. President Barack Obama and EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson have both said that they prefer legislative solutions to the problems of climate change.



COPENHAGEN CONFERENCE: Denmark Bashed For Bias

BY RAMESH JAURA IDN-InDepthNews Service BERLIN (IDN) – The Danish government has achieved the dubious distinction of becoming the first in the history of climate negotiations to be bashed for "bias and secrecy" in its role as president of the conference of parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). As climate negotiations opened in Copenhagen Dec 7, some 25 civil society organisations around the world issued a statement strongly criticising the Danish government "for acting in a biased, manipulative and non-transparent manner".



COPENHAGEN CONFERENCE: \$200 Billion Could Make the Difference

BY RITA SELANDERS IDN-InDepthNews Service COPENHAGEN (IDN) - While the World Future Council is calling upon the delegates of UN climate conference Dec. 7-18 to surpass the "pitifully poor promises to date" and unleash the Zero Carbon Economy, Oxfam International says \$200 billion could mean the difference between success and failure in Copenhagen.



COUNTDOWN TO COPENHAGEN: China Shows the Way

BY JEROME MWANDA IDN-InDepthNews Service NAIROBI (IDN) – China is showing the way to combating climate change both by announcing cuts in CO2 emissions and assisting African countries in development of clean energy. This has evoked praise from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). On Nov. 26 China's State Council announced that the country would reduce the intensity of carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) in 2020 by 40 to 45 percent compared with the level of 2005.

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Japan: Pride and Caution

At the age of 79, Toshiaki Kaifu, former Prime Minister of Japan, continues to enjoy respect at home and abroad for his political acumen and humane approach to life and politics. In an interview with IDN-InDepthNews, he looks back with satisfaction and pride at some of the firsts in his active political life, views with great circumspection the present, and advises caution when policies impacting the future are on the anvil. **More on pages 8-9.**



ICNND Spreads Tainted Joy

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama and his Australian counterpart Kevin Rudd had reason to rejoice when they received and launched the report of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND), calling for a cut of more than 90 percent in the world's nuclear arsenals by 2025. But the two prime ministers' joy was adulterated by a barrage of criticism of the report by civil society organisations from Japan, Australia and other parts of the world. **More on pages 10-11.**



Canada-India: The Nuclear Bonanza

With an eye on more than one million Canadians of Indian ancestry and India's civilian nuclear energy market holding out the promise of enormous business opportunities over the next 20 years, Canada has secured a significant nuclear deal with India. Prime Minister Stephen Harper said that the agreement would "allow Canadian firms to export and import controlled nuclear materials, equipment and technology to and from India". The accord was announced Nov 28 in Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago, where Prime Minister Harper and his Indian counterpart Dr. Manmohan Singh were participating in the 2009 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). **More on pages 12-13.**

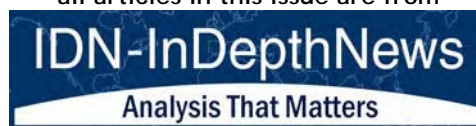


Rights: Confronting Unfinished Agendas

Speaking to a university audience in Washington DC in the shadow of the 61st anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and of the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Secretary of State Hillary Clinton outlined a human rights agenda for the 21st century which was more encapsulation than exhortation. Clinton's agenda made no call for revival, renewal and resurgence locked in to the needs of our times but was content with a focus on what could loosely be described as a three-point slogan -- human rights, democracy and development. The separation of human rights into political rights (democracy), economic and social rights (development) and all other rights would have been baffling if Clinton had not made it clear that this was a linguistic convenience and not an attempt to set up rights in discrete little boxes, writes Ernest Corea. **More on pages 22-23.**



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Wonderland Vision and Painful Reality



Imagine a day when migrant workers and members of their families shall be free to leave any country, including their country of origin. Their right to life shall be protected by law. None of them shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. None of them shall be held in slavery or servitude. None shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour.

This is the vision enshrined in the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 18, 1990. Only 42 countries have ratified the Convention, none of which include a major host country for migrants.

The reality therefore is: Migrants drowning at sea after being turned away from shore. Children detained with adults and at risk of physical and sexual abuse. Workers cheated out of wages and confined to their workplace. Authorities extorting bribes. Governments denying health care benefits to those who might most need it.

In 2009 coming to a close, through field research and ongoing monitoring, Human Rights Watch (HRW) documented human rights violations against migrant women, men, and children in every region of the world, publishing dozens of materials, including 14 reports.

Whether moving from the countryside to urban areas, or across oceans, deserts, and international borders, migration carries the potential for both great reward and great risk. For those who are lucky, migration can mean a better life, greater freedoms, more money, and reuniting with family.

But for others, restrictive and xenophobic immigration policies, inadequate labour protections, and barriers to justice mechanisms translate into human rights abuses with little hope of redress.

The United Nations estimates that by mid-2010 there will be approximately 214 million international migrants worldwide, and this number swells into hundreds of millions when internal migrants are included.

Migrant workers are often touted as modern-day heroes given the importance of their remittances to the economies of their home countries -- an estimated 444 billion USD in 2008. But migrants are also seen as threats -- unfairly blamed for crime or changes in demographics and culture.

Whether as heroes or criminals, government policies have typically failed to provide comprehensive protections to migrants, often discriminating on the basis of immigration status and national origin. Against this backdrop, HRW has called on governments to ratify the Convention and make stronger commitments to migrants' rights in 2010 -- particularly as 2009 has been a "bad year" for migrants around the world,

This is because the policies of many governments toward migrants worldwide have made them victims of human rights abuses including labour exploitation, inadequate access to health care, and prolonged detention in poor, overcrowded conditions, Human Rights Watch said in advance of International Migrants Day, on Dec. 18.

HRW has compiled a 25-page roundup of violations of migrants' rights this year. Titled 'Slow Movement: Protection of Migrants' Rights in 2009', the document includes coverage of China, Cuba, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States.

Human Rights Watch showed how the United States deports large numbers of documented migrants for nonviolent offenses with serious consequences for family unity and fails to provide adequate health care to migrants in detention.

Ramesh Jaisra

Chief Editor

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'If Things Are To Stay As They Are, Things Will Have To Change'

BY FAREED MAHDY | IDN-INDEPTHNEWS SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

"If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change." One can hardly find another sentence that applies best to the past, present and future of the Middle East, let alone the whole world.

The sentence belongs to taciturn and solitary Sicilian writer Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa (1896-1957), author of the famous novel *Il Gattopardo*, which has been translated into English as *The Leopard*.

Otherwise, it is a fact that a year is just a time measuring unit. But in the case of Middle East, such a unit can mean the further implementation of a religious-military-inspired project (Israel), the further collapse of its theoretical opponents (the Arab regimes), and the further terminal agony of a whole nation (the Palestinians). So far, this year's events are expected to be just a prolongation of last year's: plenty of misleading 'news', a handful of illusive surprises, and no substantial change. Formally speaking (beware), many things have 'changed' last year.

UNITED STATES: A new president, Barack Obama, brought hopes to the Middle East. In his inauguration speech in January, he talked about dialogue based on mutual respect. His speech in Cairo in June could not be a better signal. There, Obama talked about peace based on the two-state solution, with Israel and Palestine living alongside. There, Obama assured Arabs and Muslims that the U.S. is not and cannot be at war with them. And there, Obama proclaimed the final death of former White House occupant's "crusade" (who used this term shortly after the 9/11), as well as the disappearance from his vocabulary (mind you) of the "war on terrorism" slogan that he inherited.

A year after taking office, Obama's administration is still fully involved in Iraq; it has kept Guantanamo open while imposing silence on Baghram -- the Afghan Guantanamo, and has increased its troops in Afghanistan. Obama's administration has also further spread bloodsheds in Pakistan; prepared tougher sanctions on Iran, and paved the way for a stronger, direct military involvement in Somalia and Yemen. No road to the two-state solution has been initiated; no decisive pressures on Israel to freeze settlements and accept an independent, sovereign Palestinian state.

No Middle East negotiations have been resumed, and no specific, tangible hopes have been given to the Palestinians. Instead, new, strong commitments to the security of Israel have been announced by Obama himself. No endorsement to the Goldstone report accusing Israel for war crimes during its war on Gaza (Dec. 2008-Jan. 2009) has been made. No words of condemnation for the use by Israeli military of white phosphor have been spelt out. No call for lifting Israeli iron siege on Gaza has been launched, but instead cheers and praises have been heralded for the Egyptian regime's decision to further tighten this collective punishment of 1.5 million civilians by building a 30 meters deep, 14 kilometers long steel wall on Gaza's border.

ISRAEL: A new government was elected; hardliner Benjamin Netanyahu leads it and toughest political parties and most fanatic religious groups have become its pillar. Instead, the declaration of Israel as home to Jewish people only (Palestinian population in Israel amounts to two million) was made, and the full annexation of Jerusalem is

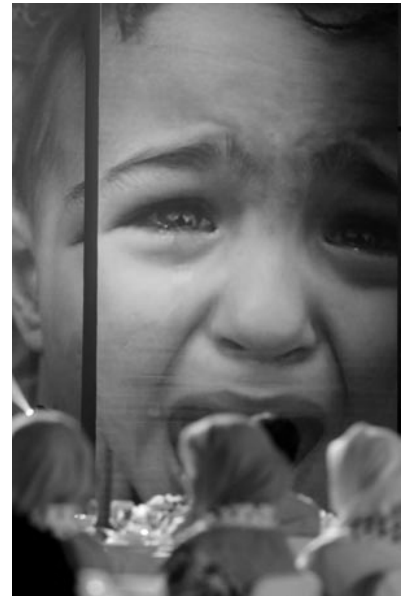
being completed. Categorical rejection of all UN Security Council resolutions was heralded, and new wars on Gaza and Lebanon are under preparation, as well as military strikes on Syria and Iran.

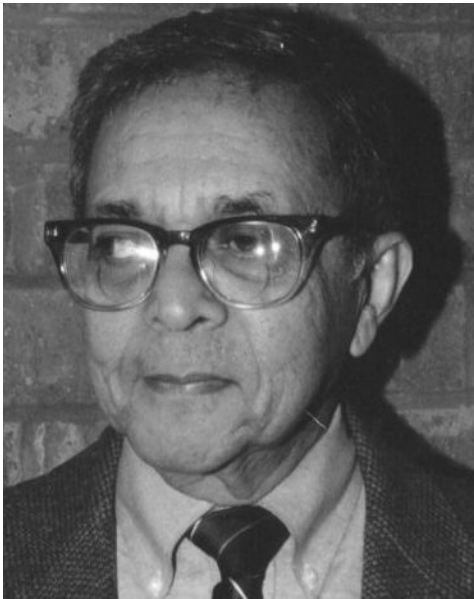
PALESTINIANS: Mahmoud Abbas, chairman of the so-called Palestinian Authority has been steadily strengthening his strategic plot with Israel, the U.S. and Europe to blow up Hamas. In exchange, Abbas has been hoping to get any reward, which might help him make reality his obsessive dream of passing into History as the first-ever president of whatever Palestinian state. Abbas has tightened his control over Palestinian citizens in the West Bank and nearly completed his plan to fully dismantle their attempts to protest even peacefully. He has celebrated Egyptian regime's decision to further strangulate Gaza, and has been begging for resuming negotiations and, at last, has 'threatened' with his no intention no run in Palestinian general elections.

EGYPT: Hosni Mubarak's regime, ruling over the last 29 years thanks to its rigorous implementation of the "emergency" laws, which suspend all citizens' constitutional rights, has been further weakened. It is nearly fully devoted to the process of sitting Mubarak's son, Gamal, in the presidential throne, and has lost weight in the region due to its failure in mediating between Abbas and Hamas, among many other reasons.

THE ARABS: Relegating their responsibilities in the region, the Gulf Arab regimes have been busy with economic crisis and the loss of their opulent incomes thanks to the previous year's record oil prices, while solving financial debacles in Dubai. Fearful of the death for their thrones, they have been fighting against Yemeni groups and praying for the U.S. and/or Israel to erase Iran for world's map.

Others have been busy either rejoicing with Europe rewarding with stronger ties its systematic human rights abuses and brutal occupation of West Sahara (Morocco); or fighting for opening new windows to the external world (Syria). Otherwise, they have been trying either to give satisfaction to Washington and Paris to allow it elect a president and form a government (Lebanon); or just designing new clothing and royal slogans for the "king" of Africa (Libya). These have been some of last year's major 'changes' in the Middle East. There have been others, but there were equally formal and therefore non-substantive. It is on this very stage that this year's 'changes' will be played. - GLOBALPERSPECTIVES ■





Coping With a Mix of Joy and Grief

BY ERNEST COREA *

The outpouring of joy and goodwill that dominated the early hours of Christmas Eve here was all too swiftly reduced to a trickle, as tragedy and potential disaster raised their heads.

The adoption by the U.S. Senate of health care legislation at the unusually early hour (7 a.m.) for Senators on Dec. 24 caused a reaction bordering on euphoria among the uninsured, the under-insured, and who care deeply about them. Opponents of reform mumbled and grumbled, but they seemed out of place.

Two murders and a near mass-killing, all taking place in different circumstances, in different ways, and with different consequences, disrupted that situation. Grief and fear upstaged joy and hope. In place of life and laughter, the U.S. confronted the stark reminder that "in the midst of life, we are in death."

DAUGHTERS

First, on Dec. 24 in Little Rock, Arkansas, 40-year-old Philip Wise, a major in the Salvation Army, was shot dead in the presence of his daughters aged 4, 6, and 8 when they were entering a community center where the local Salvation Army office is located to deposit the red "kettles" in which the public deposits charitable donations in varying amounts to support the poor.

Although the Salvation Army itself is of British origin, the red kettles -- actually, closed red cauldrons with a slit for donations, hanging on a tripod at public places where bell ringers draw public attention to them -- are an American "invention." They were first used over 100 years ago in San Francisco by a Salvation Army officer who collected donations to pay for the wharf workers' Christmas dinner.

They are now used all over the country from November through Dec. 24. "Kettle money" is used to support the distribution of clothes and toys (all new) to children from indigent homes at Christmas, and to support those in need with food, vouchers for buying other essentials, and in numerous more ways, throughout the year.

News reports said one of the two assailants, both of whom reportedly appeared to be in their teens or early 20s, pulled a gun, demanded money and then shot Wise who died right there.

Wise was known, liked and respected in the community for which he worked. His assailants were perhaps from the same social and economic background as the hundreds who are helped year round from "kettle money."

Why would they murder Wise, thus eliminating a friend of their community while at the same time harming programs that might have helped their own families and friends? Desperation? Greed? Fear of being identified? Or a fondness for violence in a gun-toting society?

KIDNAPPED

The next day -- Dec. 25, Christmas to many -- in Salisbury, Maryland, about 75 miles from Washington DC,

three days after thousands of concerned people from homeowners to hunters began searching for a missing 11-year-old, Sarah Foxwell, hoping that they could find her alive; detectives discovered her body near the Maryland-Delaware state line.

Sarah had lived with her aunt, and was last seen on the night of Dec. 22 (Tuesday) at her home, when a "juvenile witness" awoke and saw Sarah leave the bedroom with "Tommy," a friend of Sarah's aunt. The search for Sarah began in a matter of hours and ended only when her remains were identified.

The violence that took little Sarah Foxwell's life was of a different kind to that which killed Wise. The murder snuffed out a child's life before she could fully understand and enjoy the prospects and possibilities of the future.

"This is not the way we wanted to find our young lady on Christmas, but at the very least we've given closure to the family," the local State's Attorney Davis R. Ruark told a news conference.

Preliminary findings from an autopsy showed multiple injuries. The cause of her death was determined to be homicide. More facts will become known as the details of the autopsy are made public. At the very least, however, it can be said that she suffered physically before she died.

The "Tommy" in whose company she was last seen is 30-year-old Thomas Leggs of Salisbury, a registered sex offender in both Maryland and Delaware. He is in custody and has been denied bail on charges of burglary and kidnapping. Additional charges are expected.

If Leggs turns out to be Sarah's killer, many questions will be debated down the years. What makes a sex offender a sex offender? Why do they attack children? Why do they harm the innocents by whom they are attracted? Can society be protected against sex offenders without an infringement of their civil liberties? Are they such a menace that society needs to be insulated against each one of them for all time?

* The writer has served as Sri Lanka's ambassador to Canada, Cuba, Mexico, and the USA. He was Chairman of the Commonwealth's 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 on the editorial board of IDN-InDepthNews.

BOTCHED

The third event caused the least havoc and caught the most attention. The botched attempt by Umar Farouk Abdulmutalab, a 22-year-old Nigerian student, to bring down Northwest Airlines Flight 253 by exploding himself on the aircraft as it neared Detroit, has been widely reported.

For context, a few facts bear repetition: Abdulmutalab was on a non-stop flight from Amsterdam to Detroit. He is said to have boarded the aircraft with a sufficient quantity of a lethal explosive (pentaerythritol tetranitrate or PETN) to blow a hole in the aircraft sewn into his underwear. He attempted to blow himself up as the flight neared Detroit but was thwarted by a Dutch passenger and others. An Al Qaeda franchise in Yemen has claimed responsibility for planning the failed attack.

Abdulmutallab is the son of a prominent Nigerian banker, and has lived a comfortable life both at home and abroad. He possessed a multiple entry visa issued by the U.S. Embassy in the UK.

He had recently cut himself off from his family, and his father had duly informed the U.S. Embassy in Abuja, Nigeria, of this circumstance, also providing information of the son's increasingly "extreme" views.

Abdulmutallab's web entries portray a complex and angst-ridden young man who was harried by the conflict between his physical cravings and the dictates of spiritual discipline.

Which of these compulsions turned him into a potential mass murderer is not known.

What is clear, and does not even need to await the review of security arrangements ordered by President Obama, is the hopeless disarray of the "gang that could not shoot straight" - the U.S. bureaucracy.

Very early indications are that clues to a possible attack were missed as a result of dysfunction, inertia, and interagency gridlock. This was demonstrated at the State Department's daily press briefing of Dec. 28, 2009 conducted by Department Spokesman Ian Kelly.

NEST OF VIPERS

The exchange below is only a segment of a fatuous display of incompetence, evasiveness, and defensiveness that would be comic if it were not so tragic:

"QUESTION: was there not like a State Department system in place that's designed to track active visa holders and sort of this failed twice? Has that come up in all of this? I mean, there is a system in place that should track it, that there's an active visa holder and that . . .

MR. KELLY: Right.

QUESTION: -- didn't it fail, and why?

MR. KELLY: Once we issue the visa, and there comes . . . there is information subsequent to that issuance, the

State Department role is to pass that information on, which is what we did after this November 19 visit. So we sent in what's called a VISAS VIPER cable. This is a system that was set up after November . . . September 11, 2001, and under this system, when we receive information



that could cause the . . . cause us concern, we send it in to the counterterrorism community for their review. There was also set up, as you all know, the National Counterterrorism Center. And this is the interagency process that reviews the information as this information comes in.

QUESTION: Can I stop you . . .

MR. KELLY: And the information in this VISAS VIPER cable was insufficient for this interagency review process to make a determination that this individual's visa should be revoked. It wasn't - it's not - it's insufficient, and it is not a State Department determination per se in these kinds of issues under - let me give you the name of the act of Congress - under the Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act of 2002, the State Department is mandated to utilize this VISAS VIPER system when we get information, like we did on November 19.

QUESTION: But did the system fail that you had in place?

MR. KELLY: I can't address the entire system that is . . . this entire interagency system. It's not my role to do that . . ."

RULE OF LAW

The averted tragedy on Flight 253 has caused an eruption of criticism directed at Obama by his far right opponents, on the basis that he is "soft" on security. Among those who have been braying at him for some time is Senator DeMint of South Carolina. The Senator has, meanwhile, blocked confirmation of Obama's nominee for the leadership of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). And why? because -- drum roll, please -- DeMint wants to be assured that TSA employees will not be allowed to form a union.

So now, consider this: With mid-term elections due in 2010, will Obama seek to deflect rightwing criticism by resorting to the kind of oppressive and unusual measures that lost the U.S. global respect over the past eight years? Or can he stand firm by his principles, ensuring that national security and the rule of law are both protected? - GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ■

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Japan: Pride and Caution

RAMESH JAURA TALKS TO FORMER PRIME MINISTER TOSHIKI KAIFU

At the age of 79, Toshiaki Kaifu, former Prime Minister of Japan, continues to enjoy respect at home and abroad for his political acumen and humane approach to life and politics.

In an interview with IDN-InDepthNews, he looks back with satisfaction and pride at some of the firsts in his active political life, views with great circumspection the present, and advises caution when policies impacting the future are on the anvil.

Kaifu started his political career in 1960, when he successfully ran for the Lower House of the Japanese bicameral legislature (Diet) as the youngest candidate. Five years later he founded the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV). Since its inception, 33,541 volunteers have been dispatched to 83 countries in Asia, Africa, Middle East, Latin America, Pacific regions, East Europe.



Speaking to IDN after attending an international conference end of November in Rome on women's role in development in the developing world, Kaifu said: "I recognised anew that Japan's approach which put recipient needs first and was designed to support recipient country's self-help efforts through financial and technical assistance through JOCV has been right. In fact today it is needed even more considering the current acute situation surrounding women in African countries against the backdrop of the global economic crisis."

Japan has dispatched volunteers to Tanzania, Ghana, Egypt and Congo -- though JOCV activities had to be suspended in Congo due to a deteriorating domestic situation -- during last 45 years. The founder of JOCV is "proud of the fact that Japan has never had any political ambition behind this goodwill cooperation with African countries".

BUT WHY NO 'POLITICAL AMBITION'?

Kaifu explained that because of "historical experiences" that cast their shadows on relations with its neighbouring East and South East Asian countries, Japan had extended enormous support since 1956. But the memories of Japan's invasion and occupation during the Second World War (which Japan entered 1941) remain alive in the minds of a section of the society in those countries. As a result, Japan's support to those countries was subject to several interpretations.

"But there is no such complexity with regard to the African continent. Therefore, Japan could start extending goodwill support to the African continent without getting embroiled in the cobweb of those complexities and I believe that Japan's assistance has been well received by African countries with our good will free from political intentions," said former Prime Minister Kaifu.

Giving an example, he said, due to painful memories deriving from WWII in both countries, Japan initially refrained from offering to dispatch JOCV volunteers to China -- until the point when the Chinese government conveyed that it would very much welcome JOCV once principles on mutual cooperation are agreed and requested for JOCV dispatch. Thus the first JOCV dispatch was realised some twenty years ago.

Excerpts from a one-hour long interview:

IDN: Is Japan doing enough for Africa?

Kaifu: I think so. Over the years, Japan's assistance to Africa has expanded. I presume that African countries have appreciated Japan's contributions. Japan enjoys good relations with African countries on the whole.

IDN: Africa has some of the largest, and richest, mineral deposits in the world. I suppose Japan is as much interested in these as China. Isn't there a rivalry, of sorts, between Japan and China to secure those minerals in Africa?

Kaifu: Many countries may be watching Japan and China and may have their own interpretations or speculations of Japan's and China's activities in Africa. They can interpret whatever way they like. It is up to them. However, I am of the view that it is wrong to take advantage of economic assistance to gain access to natural resources in competition with other nations. As far as Japan is concerned, we have nurtured mutual relationships with African countries based on development assistance without any political implications. In other words, our accumulated effort through economic assistance to Africa has been based on Japanese people's goodwill and our wish that recipient countries would recognize our goodwill through our assistance geared towards their needs. I firmly believe that Japan's sincere approach to African countries through development cooperation to this day has been duly appreciated by those African countries.

IDN: How are the Japan-China relations now that Japan has a new administration?

Kaifu: Since the new administration in Japan is headed by a party other than mine, I may not be able to get to a point. Having said that what concerns me is that the new administration led by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) has announced a so-called "East Asia oriented policy". Yukio Hatoyama in his inaugural speech gave the impression that Japan has been too close to the U.S. in the past and that his administration would attach more importance to the relationship with Asia.

This has not caused much concern in Japan but the problem is that it has been received by the U.S. with great concern. It caused some U.S. policy analysts wonder whether the new Prime Minister is intending to restructure traditional relationship with the U.S. In fact, my friends in the U.S. State Department and other information sources in the U.S. contacted me to share those concerns. Subsequently, I advised the Prime Minister through a third person to take into consideration those concerns arising in the U.S. Since then I have seen Prime Minister Hatoyama making some adjustments.

NO INTENTION TO EXCLUDE THE U.S.

This reminds me of my own experience 20 years ago, how sensitive the U.S. is when it comes to Japan's proximity with Asia without the U.S. It was when I was going to meet with then Prime Minister of Malaysia Mahathir bin Mohamad. Mahathir had just announced the EAEC. Interestingly enough, it was not China which responded to this announcement but it was the U.S. which dispatched James Danforth Quayle, the then vice president to Japan and requested me not to agree to EAEC when I would have a summit meeting with Mahathir. I told Mr. Quayle not to worry and that I had no intention to exclude the U.S. and that I would handle this with utmost care so that it would not be EAEG (East Asia Economic Group excluding the U.S.) but it would be just EAEC (East Asia Economic Caucus). I asked him to tell President Bush senior to let me handle the matter in our own way. I also reminded him that Japan has been often criticised for lack of diplomacy in view of the presence of the U.S. in our country. If the U.S. government makes such noises about the EAEC, all my independent diplomatic effort based on trusted relationship with the U.S. would be projected as another example of Japan lacking its own diplomacy.

It is in this context that the concern shared by the U.S. on Prime Minister Hatoyama's remarks about putting Asia-first reminded me of my own experience 20 years ago.

IDN: You dealt with Bush senior 20 years ago as Prime Minister of Japan (from August 1989 to November 1991). Now what do you think of the Obama administration?

Kaifu: President Obama has been advocating changes. In my view, he is good at not only rhetoric: he has also been successfully bringing about a paradigm shift away from his predecessor, Gorge W. Bush Jr., who was characterised as a neo-conservative focussed on unilateralism and as a staunch advocate of pre-emptive strikes in foreign policy. In my view, the Obama administration has been trying to restrain itself in whatever the predecessor did.

IDN: Do you think that Barack Obama deserves Nobel peace prize?

Kaifu: I think that it was not given as an expectation for what he might really do in the future but for what he has stated in his eloquent speeches. In this regard, the decision was not profound. I hope that the U.S. President would exert himself to deserve the prize in retrospect. Certainly, Obama is very good at his speeches. When he spoke to the Japanese Diet, he talked about his past visit to the ancient city of Kamakura which is famous for great Buddha as a symbol of peace. He said that he did not remember well about the great Buddha but remembered well a tasty green-tea flavoured ice cream he had there. While many Japanese Diet members clapped hands praising that Obama has deep understanding of Japanese culture, being a Buddhist myself, I wished that he had remarked about the great Buddha instead of green-flavoured ice cream. After all this is much to do with our inner spirituality closely intertwined with our culture. Having said that I really wish that Obama would live up to what he has said.

IDN: It is known that you have been in close contact with every Chinese ambassador to Tokyo. What did you talk about when he visited you last time?

Kaifu: Every time the Chinese government dispatches a new ambassador, they make sure that those ambassadors are fluent in Japanese. Successive ambassadors have visited me on many occasions, particularly Ambassador Wang Yi (2004-2007) frequently visited me and we discussed many issues. Regarding the Obama administration, the (current Chinese) ambassador told me that the Chinese government has been carefully observing newly evolving situation under Obama's leadership and that they welcome the overall direction. - GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ■

This interview was transcribed by IDN Asia-Pacific Bureau in Tokyo and translated from Japanese by IPS Japan, IDN's cooperation partner. Pictures (taken in Rome): IDN Asia-Pacific Bureau.





Professor The Hon. Gareth Evans, AO QC (Co-Chair International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament), The Hon. Kevin Rudd MP (Prime Minister of Australia), HE Dr Yukio Hatoyama (Prime Minister of Japan and President of the Democratic Party of Japan), Ms Yoriko Kawaguchi (Co-Chair International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament). Credit: ICNND

ICNND Spreads Tainted Joy

BY TARO ICHIKAWA

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama and his Australian counterpart Kevin Rudd had reason to rejoice when they received and launched the report of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND), calling for a cut of more than 90 percent in the world's nuclear arsenals by 2025.

Sponsored by both governments, the Commission -- co-chaired by Gareth Evans and Yoriko Kawaguchi, former Australian and Japanese foreign ministers -- had finished its much awaited report five months ahead of the landmark conference on review of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) next May in New York.

But the two prime ministers' joy was adulterated by a barrage of criticism of the report by civil society organisations from Japan, Australia and other parts of the world. The report was written by a 15-member panel headed by Evans and Kawaguchi, and represents consensus achieved in the Commission.

The significance of the 332-page document titled 'Eliminating Nuclear Threats - A Practical Agenda for Global Policymakers' lies in the fact that twenty years after the end of the Cold War there are at least 23,000 nuclear warheads with a combined blast capacity equivalent to 150,000 Hiroshima bombs. U.S. and Russia together have over 22,000, and France, Britain, China, India, Pakistan and Israel around 1,000 between them.

Nearly half of all warheads are still operationally deployed, and the U.S. and Russia each have over 2,000 weapons on dangerously high alert, ready to be launched immediately -- within a decision window of just 4-8 minutes for each president -- in the event of perceived attack.

The command and control systems of the Cold War years were repeatedly strained by mistakes and false alarms. With this in view, Hatoyama said the report -- released Dec 15 in Tokyo -- was "a guidebook that will lead the world to peace is now complete, and this is really wonderful". Rudd called it "an important framework for discussions and debate on non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament in what will be a critical year in 2010."

The 1970 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, reviewed every five years, has been severely strained, the report says. The last review conference in 2005 was an "unrelieved disaster" with backsliding on disarmament commitments by key players such as the U.S. then president George W Bush, it adds. At the same time, nuclear states India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea have not ratified the non-proliferation treaty. While welcoming the report, in a joint statement, Japanese, Australian and other NGOs say it "falls well short of our expectations" because "the pace of the action plan for nuclear disarmament laid out in the report is far too slow". Rather than adding to the global momentum for nuclear abolition, there is a danger that it could in fact act as a brake, they warn.

The signatories of statement include Tadatoshiki Akiba, Mayor of Hiroshima, who presides over the 'Mayors for Peace', and his counterpart from Nagasaki, Tomihisa Taue. The two cities are the only in the world to have suffered from nuclear holocaust. Other signatories include Nobel laureate International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and ICAN (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons) Australia Chair, Associate Professor Tilman Ruff.

AIMING FOR ZERO - WHEN?

The biggest reason for their disappointment is that the report fails to draw a practical path to nuclear abolition as an urgent and achievable goal. The report aims for a "minimization point" by 2025, when there should be fewer than 2,000 nuclear weapons in the world. Beyond that, no process or timetable for moving to zero is presented.

"There is a risk that such an agenda might have the effect not of advancing the goal shared by the Commission of a world free of nuclear weapons, but of being used to perpetuate a world where fewer nuclear weapons are maintained indefinitely."

The statement points out that the Hibakusha (atomic bomb survivors) have in their testimony and in personal witness to the ICNND last October in Hiroshima, appealed that such a tragedy must never be repeated anywhere on earth. They proclaim that the use of nuclear weapons is a crime against humanity and that the human race cannot co-exist with nuclear weapons.

Scientists warn of the global environmental destruction and consequences if even a tiny fraction of existing nuclear weapons are ever used again. Recent international developments demonstrate that as long as some countries possess nuclear weapons, or endorse their value, other countries will seek to acquire them.

For this reason, civil society has been demanding a comprehensive approach towards the abolition of nuclear

weapons. Mayors throughout the world have proposed that nuclear weapons be eliminated by 2020. The Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are calling for the consecration of a world without nuclear weapons in that year.

"Anyone who seriously listens to these voices can only conclude that the action plan laid out in this report lacks an awareness of the urgency, or a sense of the crisis we face," says the joint statement.

The ICNND report suggests that a comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC) will be necessary in order to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. The civil society organisations give the Commission credit for this recognition. However, the report relegates the drafting of such a NWC to sometime around 2025.

"Such a timetable is far too slow and complacent. The fact is that a model NWC drafted by NGOs over a decade ago has already been submitted to the United Nations by the governments of Malaysia and Costa Rica and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has repeatedly called for UN Member States to seriously consider such a convention.

This year a multiparty committee of the Australian Parliament unanimously recommended that the Australian Government support a NWC. What is required is for governments of every country, in cooperation with civil society, to begin working for a NWC now," the joint statement says.

DELEGITIMIZING NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The signatories warmly welcome that the report calls for the de-legitimization of nuclear weapons and recommends that the role of nuclear weapons in security policies be limited. ICNND recommends that, while aiming for a "no first use" nuclear posture, all nuclear-armed states should declare that the sole purpose of their nuclear weapons is the deterrence of nuclear attack.

The civil society organisations find it "significant" that a commission led by Australia and Japan, both of which rely on extended nuclear deterrence (the so-called nuclear umbrella), made such a recommendation. In particular, it was reported that during the Commission's deliberations, the Japanese participants resisted such a limitation on the role of nuclear weapons.

They will therefore be "carefully watching the actions taken by the Japanese government on this issue". In their view it is "totally unacceptable for government officials in non-nuclear weapon parties to the NPT to resist disarmament by the nuclear weapons states and threaten or imply that they might acquire nuclear weapons if the nuclear umbrella is dismantled in favour of non-nuclear deterrence and defence.

In a separate six-page response, ICAN Australia gets tougher. Although ICNND is intended to be independent, a well-connected enterprise sponsored by the Australian and Japanese governments, both U.S. allies, should really be more explicit on their role, it says.

Says ICAN: In recent months it has been confirmed that the foreign affairs establishment in Japan for decades had a secret agreement to turn a blind eye to US nuclear weapons entering Japan, contrary to Japan's stated policy. More recently Japanese officials have been actively opposing President Obama's nuclear disarmament agenda. It has become public that the Commission has also struggled with similarly recalcitrant Japanese influences

opposing the U.S. moving to a policy of nuclear no first use. "This is deeply regrettable and troubling from the country which has suffered nuclear attacks on two of its cities."

"In Australia this year's Defence White Paper runs completely counter to our government's stated commitment to nuclear disarmament by affirming Australia's reliance on U.S. nuclear deterrence out to 2030 and beyond. And Australia's exports of uranium continue to nuclear armed states, with inadequate safeguards on its enrichment and no restrictions on reprocessing of spent reactor fuel derived from it," notes ICAN.

It adds: Extended deterrence does not need to be nuclear. A new Japanese government, with Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada supporting nuclear no first use, and Prime Minister Hatoyama speaking in support of the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, provides an excellent opportunity for a joint Australian-Japanese initiative actively supporting President Obama's disarmament agenda and a U.S. no first use commitment.

ICAN Australia says: "Both (Australia and Japan) countries should walk the talk by making it clear that they want to transform their alliance relationship with the U.S. to one that excludes use of nuclear weapons. This would be the most powerful action our two governments could take towards supporting President Obama and a world free of nuclear weapons. It would be influential globally, including for NATO."

The ICNND report refers to the threat of nuclear terrorism and the risks associated with peaceful uses of nuclear energy. However, the civil society organisations find the specific measures proposed for controlling materials and technology that can be diverted to nuclear weapons, including uranium and plutonium, "inadequate".

- GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ■

Canada-India: The Nuclear Bonanza

BY SURESH JAURA IN TORONTO



With an eye on more than one million Canadians of Indian ancestry and India's civilian nuclear energy market holding out the promise of enormous business opportunities over the next 20 years, Canada has secured a significant nuclear deal with India.

The text of the agreement has yet to be revealed, but Prime Minister Stephen Harper said that the agreement would "allow Canadian firms to export and import controlled nuclear materials, equipment and technology to and from India".

The accord was announced Nov 28 in Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago, where Prime Minister Harper and his Indian counterpart Dr. Manmohan Singh were participating in the 2009 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM).

Harper, who had been criticised by a section of the Canadian press for failing to close a deal on his Indian visit two weeks earlier, said: "This agreement is a testimony to the undeniable potential that Canada and India can offer each other and the world. Increased collaboration with India's civilian nuclear energy market will allow Canadian companies to benefit from greater access to one of the world's largest and fastest expanding economies."

Prime Minister Singh noted that talks had been intense after Harper's visit, adding that the Canadian prime minister and his officials had "expedited this process beyond my expectations".

"The civil nuclear agreement is a very important step forward, a milestone for the development of our relationship," Singh said. "We will do all that is within our power to ensure safety and security of our nuclear installations," he said. "There should be no doubt about that." He was referring to the concerns over the safety of India's nuclear facilities because of potential terrorist threats.

Canada had imposed a ban on nuclear trade with India after the latter conducted its first nuclear test in 1974. India was accused of misusing its nuclear technology and material to conduct the test. But Ottawa changed its stance after India and the United States decided negotiate a civilian nuclear agreement. It supported India at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and during the crucial vote at the Nuclear Suppliers Group, of which Canada is a member.

Since September 2008, India had signed nuclear deal with seven countries: USA, France, Russia, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Argentina and Namibia. Canada, the world's largest producer of uranium, has become the eighth.

'STABLE AND RELIABLE FRIEND'

During a visit to India mid November, Harper called India "a stable and reliable friend" and defended the deal under discussion: "We are not living in the 1970s. We are living in 2009," he said. Canada had cut nuclear trade in 1974 after India used Canadian materials to manufacture its first nuclear weapon.

The Harper government has been keen to re-establish the relationship because they estimate the energy market in the world's largest democracy will be worth between \$25 billion and \$50 billion during the next 20 years.

Ottawa's Crown corporation, Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd., has been eager to expand into the Indian market. The nuclear energy industry currently generates about \$6.6 billion in revenue.

A major exporter of uranium, Canada can offer Candu pressurized heavy-water reactors through crown corporation AECL. India imported early Candus in the 1970s and went on to develop the design itself. Some 15 of the reactors are now in operation, with another achieving first criticality early December.

Ala Alizadeh of AECL said: "The fact that we share the infrastructure gives us great optimism that we can work together." He said he was looking forward to technology exchanges and cooperative work on reactor life extension and new builds.

He argued that past concerns about non-proliferation and technology leaking into weapons programs were taken care of by India's commitments under its safeguards deal with the IAEA, a related deal with the Nuclear Suppliers Group as well as a cooperation agreement with the USA.

However, it is not yet known how these concerns have been written into the Canadian agreement. Trade relations spokesperson Me'shel Gulliver Bélanger confined herself to pointing out that "Canada and India have legally bound themselves to develop full civil nuclear cooperation solely to promote the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes".

Also noting India's IAEA agreements, she stressed: "The agreement pertains only to cooperation between Canada and civilian nuclear installations in India for as long as they are safeguarded by the IAEA."

The London-based World Nuclear News (WNN) reported that also a senior official of the central government Department of Atomic Energy in New Delhi was reluctant to give details. "It is a very happy moment that the agreement has been finalised," he said, "The prime minister has said that we have reached an understanding on the elements of the agreement, so we should not go beyond that

and try hair splitting. It is to the satisfaction of the both countries."

However, a former Indian diplomat Arundhati Ghose was more candid. WNN quoted her saying: "The political importance of the deal is much more than the issue of trade. Our current reactor designs are our own but the basic design were the Candus, which were the Canadian ones."

While India was isolated from international nuclear trade it had no access to Canadian equipment or maintenance services and so was forced to devise its own methods, she stressed, a market which Canada is interested in securing. "India would like to access large uranium reserves of Canada, and they would like to have our technologies on Candu reactors."

The political signal of striking a deal with Canada internationally was also important stressed Ghose, because "it the major country among 'non-nuclear' [weapon] nation states" backing international non-proliferation. She saw this as important ahead of the 2010 review of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. "It is a win-win situation on nuclear trade and commerce," she said.

Manoj Pundit, spokesperson of Canada India Foundation (CIF) said, "The deal signifies the end of a 35 year impasse between two natural allies and ushers in a new era of economic cooperation for mutual prosperity. It also demonstrates that India recognizes Canada as a willing and able partner to devise and implement strategies to address India's vast energy requirements."

The sale of civilian nuclear technology and hardware to India is expected to have a significant positive impact on Canada's economy, noted Pundit. Exporting Canadian uranium to India would benefit the sagging sales of the radioactive material whose value has slumped in recent years and should aid the Canadian mining industry to recover from the impact of the global meltdown," he said.

Canada India Foundation is a national, non-profit, non-partisan, non-governmental organization established in 2007 to foster support for stronger bilateral relations between Canada and India.

"We urge all opposition parties in (the Canadian) Parliament to steadfastly support the government with respect to this bilateral agreement in the recognition of India as a responsible user of nuclear materials and technologies for peaceful civilian purposes," said CIF chair Ramesh Chotai.

"We especially implore those Parliamentarians who recently questioned the integrity of India's nuclear aspirations by comparing India to Iran to re-examine their positions and take a responsible and principled approach to the deal," Chotai said. - GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ■

Initiative for Small Fast Reactors

A new joint venture aims to commercialize Russian technology for small lead-cooled fast reactors.

The 50/50 venture was established on 25 December 2009 by state nuclear corporation Rosatom and En+, the energy arm of the Basic Element Group set up to manage its companies in aluminium, electric power, oil and ore processing. It will be named AKME Engineering.

A joint statement said they will "design and produce a prototype 100 MWe lead-bismuth fast reactor with a view to commercialize the technology." The SVBR-100 design favoured by the joint venture has been under slow development for many years, based on a reactor already used to power seven military submarines. A prototype is required to prove design improvements since marine use and this should be ready by 2019.

Small reactors are seen as a major gap in nuclear technology, which generally can now only be deployed at a large scale - and usually by major power companies only. Small reactors with long operational periods between refuelling could support remote communities or be sited to directly provide heat and power to industrial facilities. They can also be used in groups of up to 16 to create a larger power plant step by step. Russia is already building two 'floating nuclear power plants' each featuring two reactors based on icebreaker models. - Source: world nuclear news

Inter-religious Forum Calls for Nuclear Abolition

BY NEENA BHANDARI IN MELBOURNE



Dr Sue Wareham



Ibrahim Ramey

For the global religious community, the use of nuclear arms is an overwhelmingly important ethical issue for the human family. Thus, nothing less than the immediate abolition of such weapons is needed from the highest levels, said speakers at the Parliament of the World's Religions early December in this Australian city.

The Parliament, considered the world's biggest inter-religious gathering, brought together people of various faiths to tackle issues relating to peace, diversity and sustainability. It opened on Dec. 3 and ran until Dec. 9 at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Its theme, 'Make a World of Difference: Hearing each other, Healing the earth', reflected the urgent need for religious and civil society groups to act on crucial issues threatening the world's survival, nuclear arms being one of them.

Considered the most significant human-made destructive force on the planet, nuclear devices pose a spiritual as well as existential threat to humanity, participants said.

"The time for us to act decisively is now," said *Dr Sue Wareham, immediate past president of the Medical Association for Prevention of War in Australia, and Australian Board Member of the international campaign to abolish Nuclear weapons (ICAN).*

Noting that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) will have its five- yearly review in May 2010, Wareham said, "Progress towards nuclear disarmament will be critical at this meeting if we are to prevent further spread of the weapons, which should no longer be seen as status symbols or legitimate military weapons, but rather they should be seen for what they are -- illegal and inhumane instruments of terror."

ICAN's goal is the adoption of a Nuclear Weapons Convention, a treaty to prohibit the development, testing, production, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons.

"Such a treaty is feasible and necessary," Wareham said during the session on 'The necessity of nuclear disarmament and steps toward its achievement'. "It is about reclaiming the right of every person to live free from fear of nuclear holocaust. This is a human rights, environmental, economic, health, political and security issue and above all it is an ethical issue."

In June, the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon stressed that nuclear disarmament is "the most urgent political problem" that the world faces. In September, the first ever U.N. Security Council Summit on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament resolved to "create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons in accordance with the goals of the Non-Proliferation Treaty".

NPT REVIEW

Many civil society organisations around the world have galvanised to ensure that the 2010 NPT review sees real progress.

"We need a massive global uprising against nuclear weapons as was done to abolish slavery, to save humanity from annihilation," said *Ibrahim Ramey, director of the Human and Civil Rights Division at Muslim American Society (MAS) Freedom Foundation in Washington, D.C.*

MAS Freedom has adopted the support of global nuclear abolition as one of the 12 points of its national (United States) legislative agenda for 2008-2012. "In light of the revelation of the Quran and the need to affirm the most positive of Muslim social values, we must demand the abolition of nuclear weapons, and the conversion of massive nuclear (and conventional) military spending into resources for social uplift and the sustaining of human life," Ramey said.

In 2008, the United States spent some 52.4 billion U.S. dollars for the maintenance of its nuclear arsenal while more than 37 million Americans live in poverty and nearly 50 million live without health insurance.

"Relatively new nuclear weapons states like India and Pakistan are both immersed in great levels of persistent poverty and insecurity while they devote scarce resources to building dangerous and unsustainable nuclear arsenals that can never be used without the certainty of inevitable mutual annihilation," Ramey pointed out.

Ramey called on the global community to get involved in networks pushing for nuclear abolition and put pressure on national governments to support the NPT. He said Article 6 of the treaty specifically compels the nuclear weapons signatory states to enter into negotiation for the eventual abolition of nuclear weapons. He likewise urged nations to encourage bilateral declarations of "no first use" by states parties to global conflicts, especially in the ongoing hostilities and disagreements between Israel and Iran, and India and Pakistan.

In the U.S., Ramey said, "We are calling for an executive order by President Barack Obama to de-alert U.S. nuclear forces by separating nuclear warheads from strategic missile delivery systems, thus reducing the danger of an accidental nuclear launch against potential adversaries."

'PEOPLE'S DECADE FOR NUCLEAR ABOLITION'

He said people of all faiths and non-faith must support organisations like Soka Gakkai International (SGI) in their efforts to intensify the campaign against nuclear arms. In 2007 SGI launched its 'People's Decade for Nuclear Abolition' initiative to rouse public opinion and help create a global grassroots network of people dedicated to abolishing nuclear weapons.

The Tokyo-based SGI, a Buddhist association with over 12 million members in 192 countries and one of the world's longstanding advocates of nuclear disarmament, has intensified its global campaign for the abolition of nuclear weapons. The campaign, which began in 1957, has picked up steam following President Obama's public declaration that the "United States (the only country to launch a military strike with nuclear weapons) will take concrete steps towards a world without nuclear weapons." "While we need states and governments to take responsible action to reduce the nuclear threat, civil society clearly has an important role to play," said *Hirotsugu Terasaki, SGI's executive director of the office of peace affairs in Tokyo.*

"In an ultimate sense, nuclear arms are product of and made possible by a particular form of human egotism—the self-centredness that is ready to sacrifice others in order to protect our own interests or society. Unless we uncover and disarm this aspect of the human heart, a genuine and enduring solution to this threat of nuclear arms will not be possible," Terasaki added.

At the heart of the SGI's nuclear abolition efforts is the desire to appeal to people's better nature and to restore confidence in the power of dialogue. Terasaki argued that "the logic of states and their competing interests would lead to the conclusion that the possession of such weapons enhances a state's security position." Yet civil society "refuted this logic, stressing the injustice of weapons that harm non-combatants more than soldiers and continue to do so long after a conflict has officially ended."

Various religious communities, like SGI, have engaged in an extensive range of grassroots activities, petition drives, and developed educational tools, including volumes of nuclear survivors' testimonies, DVDs and publications showing what individuals can do to mobilise public opinion for global nuclear disarmament.

Speaking on 'Nuclear Weapons Abolition: Response and Advocacy by Religious Communities', Kimiaki Kawai, program director for Peace Affairs at SGI, expressed belief that "the initiatives for nuclear abolition should not be driven by passive, negative emotions such as fear or guilt." Instead, they should become "a positive endeavour to build a culture of peace motivated by human conscience and high moral concerns." - Copyright IPS ■



Hirotsugu Terasaki, SGI's Executive Director of the Office of Peace Affairs in Tokyo, addressing a panel.



Christopher Weeramantry (second from right)
Judge at International Court of Justice (ICJ) from 1991 to 2000



Kimiaki Kawai, Program Director for Peace Affairs at SGI



A History, Of Sorts, Is Made

BY RAMESH JAURA

Copenhagen will probably go down in the history of climate diplomacy as a synonym for disaster, evoking memories of 'something is rotten in the state of Denmark'.

But this is not why a history, of sorts, has been made in Copenhagen. The real reasons are different.

International conferences by their very nature are not known to end up in failure, with zero results. But COP15 -- the fifteenth conference of parties to the UN Framework Convention in Climate Change (UNFCCC) -- distinguishes itself from other UN conferences in that its outcome is subject to interpretation.

The fact is that COP15 concluded Dec. 19 with an agreement to "take note" of the so-called Copenhagen Accord. Considering that many countries not only expressed deep disappointment with the outcome but also "determination to use it as a stepping stone to more rigorous action" senior UN officials have come up with an ingenious interpretation.

The agreement to "take note" was "formal acknowledgement" of the Accord "by consensus", they insist. And this, in spite of the outright rejection by Venezuela, Sudan, Cuba, Nicaragua and Bolivia -- countries not on best terms with the U.S. even under the Obama Administration.

This perceived consensus would create a procedure for individual countries to associate themselves with the "agreement". UN Assistant Secretary-General Robert Orr has gone one step further and predicted that the Copenhagen Accord would "advance the climate change negotiations".

The creative minds of the UN bureaucracy remain undeterred by objections being raised by civil society organisations such as the Friends of the Earth International (FoEI). It is warning against the "false conclusion" that the UN climate conference has "adopted" the 'Copenhagen Accord'.

"The Copenhagen Accord announced on Dec. 18 by U.S. President Barack Obama was not adopted by delegates to the United Nations climate conference. Instead, delegates merely 'noted' the agreement's existence, giving it no force whatsoever," maintains the FoEI.

Civil society organisations say that rich countries led by the United States are pressuring poorer nations to ditch the UN process and sign onto the Copenhagen Accord. They are threatening poor nations that refuse to sign on with the loss of their share of the 100 billion US dollars

that rich countries have pledged to compensate for climate impacts the rich countries themselves have caused.

"UN officials are struggling to figure out what the Accord even means and how it is related to the UN process, but what is clear is that it was not approved by the 192 countries that are members of the UNFCCC. By signing onto the Accord, poor countries risk displacing the legitimate negotiation process taking place under the auspices of the UN," cautions FoEI.

With 194 Parties, UNFCCC has near universal membership and is the parent treaty of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. The Kyoto Protocol has been ratified by 190 of the UNFCCC Parties. Under the Protocol, 37 States, consisting of highly industrialised countries and countries undergoing the process of transition to a market economy, have legally binding emission limitation and reduction commitments.

The ultimate objective of both treaties is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that will prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system.

FoEI chair Nnimmo Bassey said: "First the U.S. came to Copenhagen with nothing new to offer, and now it's trying to package the weak, flawed, unjust Copenhagen Accord as a replacement for the UN process -- and arm-twist poor countries into signing on."

Bassey says that whereas President Bush ignored the UN process, now President Obama risks to torpedo it.

"Countries seeking a just and effective solution to climate change should not sign this illegitimate and distracting Copenhagen Accord. They should instead ensure a rapid return to the formal UN process to achieve a fair, strong and legally binding agreement as soon as possible within the next year."

The next annual UN Climate Change Conference will take place towards the end of 2010 in Mexico City, preceded by a major two-week negotiating session in Bonn, Germany, scheduled May 31 to June 11.

Also the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) said: "The Copenhagen Accord was presented as 'meaningful' by some world leaders but was condemned by many for its lack of ambition and the process in which it was agreed. The UN climate conference agreed to 'take note' of the Accord on Dec. 19 morning, but it was not formally adopted."

CONCEPTUAL JUGGLING

While conceptual juggling was at work, strong doubts persisted whether and what COP15 had achieved. There is talk of a real deal having been sealed, foundation of a truly global agreement having been laid, of the launch of a new era of green growth, and an essential beginning. The conference hype continued unabated with all its contradictions and paradoxes.

Expectedly, some senior UN officials were at pains to clarify that though the conference was "perhaps not the big breakthrough some had hoped for, but neither was it a breakdown, which at times seemed a possibility".

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon explained to journalists: "Finally we sealed the deal. And it is a real deal. Bringing world leaders to the table paid off... We have the foundation for the first truly global agreement that will limit and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, support adaptation for the most vulnerable and launch a new era of green growth."

"The Copenhagen Accord may not be everything that everyone hoped for, but this decision of the Conference of Parties (COP) is a beginning, an essential beginning."

To back up his claim, Ban said results had been made on all four of the benchmarks for success that he laid out during the special leaders' summit on climate change held in New York last September.

"All countries have agreed to work towards a common long-term goal to limit the global temperature rise to below 2 degrees Celsius; many governments have made important commitments to reduce or limit emissions; countries have achieved significant progress on preserving forests; and countries have agreed to provide comprehensive support to the most vulnerable to cope with climate change."

Ban said these commitments had been backed up by 30 billion US dollars of pledges for short-term adaptation and mitigation measures for poorer countries, and further commitments to raise 100 billion US dollars by 2020 to achieve those goals.

Achim Steiner, executive director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) chose to be cautious: "The litmus test of developed countries' ambitions will, in a sense, come immediately. If the funds promised in the Accord start flowing swiftly and to the levels announced, then a new international climate change policy may have been born."

Steiner stressed that the Copenhagen Accord represented a compromise of differing national and economic interests among States large and small, rich and poor.

"Trying to take over 190 countries through the same door towards a more cooperative global warming policy has proved challenging but ultimately possible and doable. Time will be the true judge as to whether 19 December 2009 was indeed an historic date for accelerating a response to combating dangerous climate change and for more sustainable management of economically important ecosystems, such as forests," argued Steiner.

LETTER OF INTENT

"We must be honest about what we have got," said UNFCCC Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer. "The world walks away from Copenhagen with a deal. But clearly ambitions to reduce emissions must be raised significantly if we are to hold the world to 2 degrees," he added.

"We now have a package to work with and begin immediate action," said Yvo de Boer. "However, we need to be clear that it is a letter of intent and is not precise about what needs to be done in legal terms. So the challenge is now to turn what we have agreed politically in Copenhagen into something real, measurable and verifiable," he added.

Bonn-based UNFCCC secretariat argued in a statement Dec. 19: Because the pledges listed by developed and developing countries may, according to science, be found insufficient to keep the global temperature rise below 2 degrees or less, leaders called for a review of the accord, to be completed by 2015.

The review would include a consideration of the long-term goal to limit the global average temperature rise to 1.5 degrees.

Heads of state and government also intend to unleash prompt action on mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology, reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries and capacity-building, the statement said.

To this effect, they intend to establish the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund, to support immediate action on climate change. The collective commitment towards the fund by developed countries over the next three years will approach 30 billion US dollars.

For long-term finance, developed countries agreed to support a goal of jointly mobilizing 100 billion dollars a year by 2020 to address the needs of developing countries.

"In order to step up action on the development and transfer of technology, governments intend to establish a new technology mechanism to accelerate development and transfer in support of action on adaptation and mitigation," the UNFCCC statement informed.

COP15 distinguished itself for another reason: The Danish presidency -- that shifted midstream from Environment Minister Connie Hedegaard to Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen -- was confronted with a situation unknown in the history of climate negotiations since 1995 when the first climate conference took place in Berlin.

Not to speak of the problems of its own making, the Danish presidency had to deal with the wide spectrum of a multipolar world represented by a large diversity of prime ministers and presidents. And it could not -- just as probably no other presidency of an unprecedented summit like the one in Copenhagen could have.

With this in view, UN Assistant Secretary-General Orr said the Copenhagen conference may have "topped the list" for complexity. It was also the largest gathering of heads of state and government in the history of the UN: 119 world leaders attended the meeting. It was joined by delegates representing 194 countries attended the conference.

The two-week-long climate negotiations in the Danish capital -- preceded by two years of preparatory conferences since the Bali Roadmap was agreed in Indonesia in December 2007 -- were crowned by emotional debate and direct diplomacy in which heads of state and governments were personally engaged.

COP15 also set itself apart in that less powerful states in economic and political terms refused to line up behind an agreement the U.S. President Barack Obama had hammered out with Prime Minister Wen Jiabao of China, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India, President Lula de Silva of Brazil and President Jacob Zuma of South Africa. - GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ■



The View from Washington

BY ERNEST COREA

The concluding moments of COP15 (the fifteenth conference of parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, better known as the Copenhagen Conference) were overshadowed here by, of all things, the local weather.

In this federal capital, where 2 inches of snow are a problem, and anything beyond that spells catastrophe, who could concentrate their minds on negotiations with important potential consequences in distant Denmark, when the skies opened, snow accumulations of up to 20 inches were recorded, roads were blocked by abandoned vehicles, and the three major airports were temporarily closed? The good people of the greater Washington area, fascinated and at times frustrated, were preoccupied with their own dilemmas. Climate change? Later perhaps.

President Barack Obama who had flown into Copenhagen for the final rounds of negotiation, left the conference early because of the predicted snow storm back home - leaving "sherpas" to attend to the conference clean-up.

The "clean up" consisted of seeking endorsement of the "Copenhagen Accord" (Doc. FCCC/CP/2009/L.7 of Dec. 18), a statement of intent crafted by Brazil, China, India, South Africa, and the U.S. The accord was reached after several strenuous and sometimes contentious negotiating sessions in which Obama held his ground against a push back by China's Premier Wen Jiabao on issues including verification and transparency.

The agreement was not endorsed. The official decision on the Copenhagen Accord Decision-/CP.15) reads only as follows: "The Conference of the Parties, Takes note of the Copenhagen Accord of 18 December 2009." A cascade of reactions from America's right, left and center followed.

RECOGNITION

They were reacting to what was not a formal agreement, but a basis for possible future action. For the present, what exists, as described by the UN, is an accord that "recognizes the scientific view that an increase in global temperatures below 2 degrees is required to stave off the worst effects of climate change".

Information on actions taken by the countries concerned will be shared every two years, and "nationally appropriate mitigation actions seeking international support are to be recorded in a registry with relevant technology, finance and capacity building support from industrialized nations".

These countries are expected to "support a goal of jointly mobilizing 100 billion dollars a year by 2020 to address the needs of developing countries". Pledges of up to \$30 billion have already been received from the European Community, Japan, and the U.S.

The Copenhagen Accord is to be reviewed in 2015.

REACTIONS

Climate change nay-sayers had dismissed the Copenhagen Conference long before it held its first session. The science of climate change was, they implied, a lot of hocus pocus, and anybody who refused to go along was pro-

fessionally discredited and not allowed to make the "truth" known.

The nay-sayers not only deride the idea of man-made climate change but, in many cases, simply reject the notion of resource management, whether they are talking about energy, flora or fauna. "There is plenty of room for moose -- next to the mashed potatoes," reflects their approach. They will no doubt launch the good fight against the Copenhagen Accord when they have read it.

Meanwhile, a riposte from the Republican Party is already on record. Senate Minority Whip Jon Kyl (Arizona) did the talking on a Sunday television program where he predicted that Obama would not be able to muster a majority from his own party to support the proposed assistance to developing countries. Obama, in this assessment, has over-reached.

Taking a different approach, the unpredictable Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham (South Carolina) who is working with colleagues to craft a bipartisan climate change Bill, also told "talking heads" on television that some of his colleagues will consider the Copenhagen Accord "ineffective," although it adds "some transparency that we don't have today".

INCENSED

The angriest, most disappointed comments were from civil society representatives, who were incensed. They have been at the heart of the environmental movement and had assumed that Copenhagen was going to be truly wonderful in producing binding arrangements to counter climate change obligations. They derided the accord as a "sham."

Environmentalist Bill McKibben dismissed the accord as "a declaration that small and poor countries don't matter, that international civil society doesn't matter, and that serious limits on carbon don't matter. The president has wrecked the UN and he's wrecked the possibility of a tough plan to control global warming. It may get Obama a reputation as a tough American leader, but it's at the expense of everything progressives have held dear. 189 countries have been left powerless, and the foxes now guard the carbon henhouse without any oversight".

Rickey Patel, Executive Director of Avaaz.org, described the "so-called Copenhagen Accord" as a "historic failure, representing the collapse of international efforts to sign a binding global treaty that can stop catastrophic climate change. Perhaps most telling, while leaders themselves recognize that this agreement is insufficient, they have set no deadline or even date to complete it".

Erich Pica, president of Friends of the Earth U.S. said: "The failure to produce anything meaningful in Copenhagen must serve as a wake up call to all who care about the future. It is a call to action. Corporate polluters and other special interests have such overwhelming influence that rich country governments are willing to agree only to fig leaf solutions. This is unacceptable, and it must change.

"Fortunately, while the cost of solving the climate crisis rises each day we fail to act, the crisis remains one that can largely be averted. It is up to the citizens of the world -- especially citizens of the U.S., which has so impeded progress -- to mobilize and ensure that true solutions carry the day. I firmly believe that together, we can still achieve a politics in which climate justice prevails."

A different and perhaps more "centrist" response came from Carl Pope, Executive Director of the Sierra Club, who said that the accord "has all the ingredients necessary to construct a final treaty. President Obama has made much progress in the past 11 months and it now appears that the U.S. -- and the world -- is ready to do the hard work necessary to finish what was started here in Copenhagen. "A chilly two weeks in Copenhagen have given humanity its best chance of preventing the ravages of a warming world. Today's deal is neither perfect nor complete, but we must not let this chance slip away."



WEAKNESS

The great imperfection of the Copenhagen Accord is that it is what it is: an informal document without the legal mechanisms required to transform its intentions into verifiable obligations.

While this is true, it is also a fact that the Kyoto targets have not been met, either. There is nothing in an accord, agreement, treaty, or convention that automatically makes it work. That has to come from true commitment, as well as from actionable measures against non-compliance.

Obama told his final press briefing in Copenhagen that "three components -- transparency, mitigation and finance -- form the basis of the common approach that the U.S. and our partners embraced here in Copenhagen. Throughout the day we worked with many countries to establish a new consensus around these three points, a consensus that will serve as a foundation for global action to confront the threat of climate change for years to come".

He outlined some ideas as to how these three components would work and be tested, pointing out that a basis had already been laid for mutual trust and understanding.

But, he added, "it is still going to require more work and more confidence-building and greater trust between emerging countries, the least developed countries, and the developed countries before I think you are going to see another legally binding treaty signed.

"I actually think that it's necessary for us ultimately to get to such a treaty, and I am supportive of such efforts. But this is a classic example of a situation where if we just waited for that, then we would not make any progress.

And in fact I think there might be such frustration and cynicism that rather than taking one step forward, we ended up taking two steps back."

UNPREPARED

In Copenhagen, Obama had several advantages on his side. First, he had shown by his domestic energy goals as well as by his engagement in the COP15 process that after eight years of dubious sulking, the U.S. had decided to rejoin the world.

Second, his engagement was not on the basis of politics but of policy.

Third, his personal involvement even before the conference itself paved the way for momentum in negotiations that might otherwise have been intractable.

Fourth, based on his constant exhortation that it is possible to disagree without being disagreeable, he was able to push back on issues that divided him and his colleagues without staging a "Gunfight at the OK Corral."

On one occasion, say official U.S. sources, Obama barged into a room where Wen was engaged in a private, unannounced negotiation with the other principals when actually the American and Chinese leaders were scheduled to meet. He insisted that Wen and he should have their scheduled meeting, where they would iron out some of the wrinkles that had hindered momentum towards a five-nation accord.

Obama's willingness to deal directly with his four partners (Brazil, China, India, and South Africa) reaffirmed his commitment to political realities, and not just to accepted practice. All four are "emerging economies" who have more heft than many others with longer international political backgrounds. Without their agreement and active support it will be almost impossible to take the next steps required.

This same willingness enabled him to seek the collaboration, directly and through intermediaries, of the African Union whose opposition to the accord would have brought about its collapse and demise.

Why then was he not able to produce more out of the Copenhagen conference than he did? The main reason is that on both sides of the North-South divide there are fears that anti-climate-change measures will constrain growth. This is a myth, however, as the mass of evidence tabled by hard-headed business representatives at the Rio Earth Summit demonstrated.

Besides, given the agenda of unresolved problems Obama has inherited, plus his need to push ahead with the domestic agenda on which he campaigned, he might well have concluded that at present he needs to reserve most of political capital for health care and urgently needed job generation.

END OR BEGINNING?

UN spokesmen have been quick to argue that the process and outcome of the Copenhagen Conference amount to a new beginning. Are they? Or do they suggest, to "borrow" Churchill's famous World War II words, that "this is the end of the beginning?" Has the mega-conference approach to climate change negotiations - the beginning - reached its end, and does it now need to be replaced by other mechanisms that are likely to produce more action and less posturing? - GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ■

Copenhagen Accord – The Official Version

Following is the "Advance unedited version / Decision -/CP.15" of the Copenhagen Accord" posted on unfccc.int. It says: *The Conference of the Parties takes note of the Copenhagen Accord of 18 December 2009.*

The Heads of State, Heads of Government, Ministers, and other heads of the following delegations present at the United Nations Climate Change Conference 2009 in Copenhagen: [List of Parties]

In pursuit of the ultimate objective of the Convention as stated in its Article 2,

Being guided by the principles and provisions of the Convention,

Noting the results of work done by the two Ad hoc Working Groups,

Endorsing decision x/CP.15 on the Ad hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action and decision x/CMP.5 that requests the Ad hoc Working Group on Further Commitments of Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol to continue its work,

Have agreed on this Copenhagen Accord which is operational immediately.

1. We underline that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time. We emphasise our strong political will to urgently combat climate change in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. To achieve the ultimate objective of the Convention to stabilize greenhouse gas concentration in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system, we shall, recognizing the scientific view that the increase in global temperature should be below 2 degrees Celsius, on the basis of equity and in the context of sustainable development, enhance our long-term cooperative action to combat climate change. We recognize the critical impacts of climate change and the potential impacts of response measures on countries particularly vulnerable to its adverse effects and stress the need to establish a comprehensive adaptation programme including international support.

2. We agree that deep cuts in global emissions are required according to science, and as documented by the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report with a view to reduce global emissions so as to hold the increase in global temperature below 2 degrees Celsius, and take action to meet this objective consistent with science and on the basis of equity. We should cooperate in achieving the peaking of global and national emis-

sions as soon as possible, recognizing that the time frame for peaking will be longer in developing countries and bearing in mind that social and economic development and poverty eradication are the first and overriding priorities of developing countries and that a low-emission development strategy is indispensable to sustainable development.

3. Adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change and the potential impacts of response measures is a challenge faced by all countries. Enhanced action and international cooperation on adaptation is urgently required to ensure the implementation of the Convention by enabling and supporting the implementation of adaptation actions aimed at reducing vulnerability and building resilience in developing countries, especially in those that are particularly vulnerable, especially least developed countries, small island developing States and Africa. We agree that developed countries shall provide adequate, predictable and sustainable financial resources, technology and capacity-building to support the implementation of adaptation action in developing countries.

4. Annex I Parties commit to implement individually or jointly the quantified economy-wide emissions targets for 2020, to be submitted in the format given in Appendix I by Annex I Parties to the secretariat by 31 January 2010 for compilation in

an INF document. Annex I Parties that are Party to the Kyoto Protocol will thereby further strengthen the emissions reductions initiated by the Kyoto Protocol. Delivery of reductions and financing by developed countries will be measured, reported and verified in accordance with existing and any further guidelines adopted by the Conference of the Parties, and will ensure that accounting of such targets and finance is rigorous, robust and transparent.

5. Non-Annex I Parties to the Convention will implement mitigation actions, including those to be submitted to the secretariat by non-Annex I Parties in the format given in Appendix II by 31 January 2010, for compilation in an INF document, consistent with Article 4.1 and Article 4.7 and in the context of sustainable development. Least developed countries and small island developing States may undertake actions voluntarily and on the basis of support. Mitigation actions subsequently taken and envisaged by Non-Annex I Parties, including national inventory reports, shall be communicated through national communications consistent with Article 12.1(b) every two years on the basis of guidelines to be adopted by the Conference of the Parties. Those mitigation actions in national communications or otherwise communicated to the Secretariat will be added to the list in appendix II.



Mitigation actions taken by Non-Annex I Parties will be subject to their domestic measurement, reporting and verification the result of which will be reported through their national communications every two years. Non-Annex I Parties will communicate information on the implementation of their actions through National Communications, with provisions for international consultations and analysis under clearly defined guidelines that will ensure that national sovereignty is respected. Nationally appropriate mitigation actions seeking international support will be recorded in a registry along with relevant technology, finance and capacity building support. Those actions supported will be added to the list in appendix II. These supported nationally appropriate mitigation actions will be subject to international measurement, reporting and verification in accordance with guidelines adopted by the Conference of the Parties.

6. We recognize the crucial role of reducing emission from deforestation and forest degradation and the need to enhance removals of greenhouse gas emission by forests and agree on the need to provide positive incentives to such actions through the immediate establishment of a mechanism including REDD-plus, to enable the mobilization of financial resources from developed countries.

7. We decide to pursue various approaches, including opportunities to use markets, to enhance the cost-effectiveness of, and to promote mitigation actions. Developing countries, especially those with low emitting economies should be provided incentives to continue to develop on a low emission pathway.

8. Scaled up, new and additional, predictable and adequate funding as well as improved access shall be provided to developing countries, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention, to enable and support enhanced action on mitigation, including substantial finance to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD-plus), adaptation, technology development and transfer and capacity-building, for enhanced implementation of the Convention. The collective commitment by developed countries is to provide new and additional resources, including forestry and investments through international institutions, approaching USD 30 billion for the

period 2010-2012 with balanced allocation between adaptation and mitigation.

Funding for adaptation will be prioritized for the most vulnerable developing countries, such as the least developed countries, small island developing States and Africa. In the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation, developed countries commit to a goal of mobilizing jointly USD 100 billion dollars a year by 2020 to address the needs of developing countries. This funding will come from a wide variety of sources, public and private, bilateral and multilateral, including alternative sources of finance. New multilateral funding for adaptation will be delivered through effective and efficient fund arrangements, with a governance structure providing for equal representation of developed and developing countries. A significant portion of such funding should flow through the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund.

9. To this end, a High Level Panel will be established under the guidance of and accountable to the Conference of the Parties to study the contribution of the potential sources of revenue, including alternative sources of finance, towards meeting this goal.

10. We decide that the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund shall be established as an operating entity of the financial mechanism of the Convention to support projects, programme, policies and other activities in developing countries related to mitigation including REDD-plus, adaptation, capacity-building, technology development and transfer.

11. In order to enhance action on development and transfer of technology we decide to establish a Technology Mechanism to accelerate technology development and transfer in support of action on adaptation and mitigation that will be guided by a country-driven approach and be based on national circumstances and priorities.

12. We call for an assessment of the implementation of this Accord to be completed by 2015, including in light of the Convention's ultimate objective. This would include consideration of strengthening the long-term goal referencing various matters presented by the science, including in relation to temperature rises of 1.5 degrees Celsius. - UNFCCC ■

Note: For annexes mentioned in this document, please go to: http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/cop_15/application/pdf/cop15_cph_auv.pdf

Visit IDN-InDepthNews webpage
<http://www.indepthnews.net/area2.php?key=CC>
 for intelligent news analysis on climate change.

Confronting Unfinished Agendas

BY ERNEST COREA

Speaking to a university audience in Washington DC in the shadow of the 61st anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and of the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Secretary of State Hillary Clinton outlined a human rights agenda for the 21st century which was more encapsulation than exhortation.

Clinton's agenda made no call for revival, renewal and resurgence locked in to the needs of our times but was content with a focus on what could loosely be described as a three-point slogan -- human rights, democracy and development.

The separation of human rights into political rights (democracy), economic and social rights (development) and all other rights would have been baffling if Clinton had not made it clear that this was a linguistic convenience and not an attempt to set up rights in discrete little boxes.

"Human rights, democracy, and development are not three separate goals with three separate agendas," she said. "That view doesn't reflect the reality we face. To make a real and long-term difference in people's lives, we have to tackle all three simultaneously...." Few can quarrel with that approach.



Eleanor Roosevelt | White House Portrait



U.S. Secy of State Hillary Clinton



Members of Nepal's Madheshi community of Biratnagar attend a political rally to demand autonomous federal regions and greater representation in parliament, 19 January 2008. (Photo: UN Photo/Agnieszka Mikulska.)

OBJECTIONS

Delegates considering the final draft of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights did not accept it without initial dissension, raising objections to various provisions, on such matters as equality within a marriage, the rights of private ownership of property (which complicates agrarian reform), the implied right to religious conversion, and the emphasis on economic and social rights.

A recurring criticism of the Declaration has been that it is Western-oriented. Eleanor Roosevelt, who led the eight-member group that drafted the Declaration, contributed to the propagation of this view by comparing the Declaration to the Magna Carta which was a British document (June 15, 1215) restricting the authority of the king and recognizing the rights of Britain's landowning "nobility."

Even Clinton gave the Declaration a Western tilt when she placed it in the context of the post-Second-World War cry "never again," thus making it a document of European expiation, not of universality.

Perhaps if the Declaration had been drafted today, it might have a somewhat different flavour. On the other hand, the current 192 members of the UN seeking to draft a declaration would possibly produce the human rights version of the Copenhagen Accord on climate change.

UNANIMOUS

The UN General Assembly voted several times on different aspects of the Declaration, and finally adopted the text unanimously, but with some abstentions. The Declaration has been translated into over 200 languages, and its emergence as a universal standard is commemorated across the world, even in countries whose leaders have shaky human rights records.

South Africa's respected jurist Navi Pillay, who is the current UN Human Rights Commissioner, spoke of the Declaration with fervour on Human Rights Day (Dec. 10, 2009), saying that "the towering human achievement of the Universal Declaration humbles me and makes me feel profoundly grateful for the great privilege that I have to contribute to the UN human rights goals."

She was delivering the keynote address at the University of Pretoria when she accepted the award of an honorary doctorate. She did what few UN officials do on such occasions, commending activists who fight for human rights and urging graduating students to "take up human rights advocacy."

Activists know, Pillay said, that "human rights underpin the aspiration to a world in which every man, woman, and child lives free from hunger and protected from oppression, violence, and discrimination, with the benefits of housing, health care, education, and opportunity."

Her sentiments were similar to those of President Obama who said in his Nobel Prize speech on the same day that "a just peace includes not only civil and political rights -- it must encompass economic security and opportunity. For true peace is not just freedom from fear, but freedom from want."

This congruence of ideas, coupled with Clinton's effort to push a human rights agenda for the 21st century, offer the possibility that Navi Pillay's efforts will be supported by the U.S. and its allies. How different from the recent past.

FUNDAMENTALS

Clinton's decision to emphasize the economic and social aspects of human freedom and dignity is especially noteworthy because these are so often treated as "add ons" to any human rights agenda and not the absolute fundamentals that they are. A third of the Declaration deals with economic and social issues, and they dare not be ignored.

As Canada's Pierre Trudeau pointed out many years ago, the "freedoms of" (assembly, speech, worship) would not make a difference in human life if they were not accompanied by the "freedoms from" -- freedom from poverty, hunger, malnutrition, and overall, misery.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu has focused on the real life results of economic disparities on many occasions, from many platforms, and in many contexts. The conversation between him and a little South African girl whom he met outside her village hut portrays it all.

Noting the state of her battered home, her tattered clothes, and her obviously malnourished self, he asked her: "What do you eat?" She replied: "We borrow food." Tutu followed up by inquiring: "Have you ever given back what you borrowed?" "No," she said. "And what do you do," Tutu asked, "if you cannot borrow?" Without missing a beat she responded: "We try to drink enough water to fill our stomachs."

What happened to her human rights? And will she grow up to be one among numerous women across the world who are prisoners of circumstances totally beyond their control? Senator Ted Kennedy would often describe "minimum wage issues" as "women's issues" because, he argued, women are the first and hardest hit victims of economic inequalities.

Can the global human rights agenda be completed while gender-based inequalities remain intact?



UN Human Rights Commissioner Navi Pillay

IMPACT

CEDAW, enacted 30 years ago (Dec. 18, 1979) is directed at eliminating legal acceptance of gender-based inequalities. Jessica Neuwirth, Director, New York office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, told a press conference on the eve of the convention's 30th anniversary that it is a "watershed treaty that helped pioneer the concept of gender equality."

Neuwirth considers the convention "an international bill of women's rights." Its terms require that "states must modify customary practices based on stereotyped roles for women, and those founded on notions of inferiority or superiority of either sex."

Despite initial misgiving by some UN member states, CEDAW currently "enjoys wide acceptance by countries around the world with seven holdouts: Iran, Nauru, Palau, Somalia, Sudan, Tonga and the U.S."

UN staff have compiled an useful list of the practical impact that CEDAW has had on women's lives and their roles in society. For example:

India gave the lead, and both India and Bangladesh have since used provisions of CEDAW to fill gaps in domestic law so as to make sexual harassment explicitly illegal, and to set up complaints procedures for the benefit of women who complain that they have been harassed/victimized.

In Hungary, the Public Health Act was amended in 2008 to improve the provision of information and procedures to ensure that sterilization of women was carried out only with their consent.

The introduction of Morocco's new Family Code in 2004 gave women greater equality and protection of their human rights within marriage and divorce, as mandated by CEDAW's Article 16. The new law embodies the principle of shared family responsibilities between spouses.

Mexico launched a major transformation of its response to violence against women, with the passage in 2007 of the Mexican General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence. The law provides a comprehensive vision of government responsibility for preventing and eradicating violence against women, recognizing it as an extreme form of discrimination and violation of women's human rights.

The Philippines enacted the Magna Carta of Women which stipulates that structures and practices that perpetuate discrimination and inequality should be abolished. A notable feature of the law is its attention to the rights of marginalized women, such as rural and indigenous women, informal women workers and migrant workers, and women with disabilities.



Archbishop Desmond Tutu

CONTRIBUTION

The elimination of gender-based discrimination destroys stereotypes, entrenches equality, secures the rights of women and girls in society, and protects their dignity; it also ensures that the contributions women can make to societal development are not lost through exclusion.

Eleanor Roosevelt made this argument indirectly when she said: "a woman is like a tea bag -- you never know how strong she is until she gets in hot water." Purists will argue that a good cup of tea should be brewed not bagged but Roosevelt's point is well taken.

More directly, Isobel Coleman writes in 'Foreign Affairs' (January/February 2010) that "more women have been killed by male violence in the last 50 years than men have by all the wars of the twentieth century. The cost to the world is staggering -- not only in human terms but also in economic terms: lost IQ, lost GDP, cyclical poverty."

What an outrageous waste of human potential. - GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ■

'Israel Poisons Palestinian Soil, Newborns'

BY FAREED MAHDY IN ISTANBUL*



"The 2006 and 2009 Israeli bombings on Gaza left a high concentration of toxic metals in soil, which can cause tumours, fertility problems, and serious effects on newborns, like deformities and genetic pathologies."

These are some of the key findings of a recent study by New Weapons Research Committee (NWRC), an Italy-based group of academics, physicians and researchers specialised in elaborating risk assessment surveys on the effects of the newest "non-conventional weapons and their mid-term effects on residents of areas afflicted by conflicts".

The metals found are mainly tungsten, mercury, molybdenum, cadmium and cobalt.

NWRC researchers investigated four craters: two of them formed during the Jul. 2006 bombings on Beit Hanoun and Jabalia Camp, and another two emerged as a consequence of the Jan. 2009 bombings on Gaza City suburb Tufah.

They analysed "the powder remaining inside a shell of the White Phosphorus bomb THS89D112-003 155MM M825E11 exploded near the Al Wafa hospital in Jan. 2009".

The scientists compared the levels of concentration of metals in the craters with those identified in a report on the presence of metals in the Gaza soil, based on samples collected from 170 locations in 2005.

"The analyses have shown anomalous concentrations of these metals inside the craters, indicating soil contamination," says NWRC. "This, given the precarious living conditions, especially in refugee camps, increases the risk of exposure to toxic substances, through the skin, through the lungs and through ingestion."

Paola Manduca, professor of genetics and researcher at the University of Genoa, Italy, explained: "Our study indicates an anomalous presence of toxic elements in the soil."

"It is essential to intervene at once to limit the effects of the contamination on people, animals and cultivations", she stressed.

"We need strategies to help contaminated people. We hope that the research performed so far by the Goldstone Commission will not only analyse the abuses of human rights, but also focus on the long-term effects that the various types of weapons have on the environment and on population. A rapid collection of data should be carried out."

ISRAEL EXPERIMENTING NEW NON-CONVENTIONAL ARMS

In a previous study released on Jan. 9, during the Israeli three-week war on Gaza, which killed over 1,400 people and injured more than 5,000, NWRC reported: "Mounting evidence is emerging that Israel is experimenting new non-conventional weapons on civilian population in Gaza."

"It is happening again what we saw in Lebanon two years ago," said Manduca. There, "Israel used white phosphorus, Dense Inert Metal Explosive (DIME), thermo-baric bombs, cluster bombs and uranium ammunitions, and experimented new weapons. Still today there are unexploded bombs and radioactivity on the ground," NWRC spokesperson reported.

Manduca added that the images of dead and wounded people, and testimonies by witnesses, "show significant resemblance with those gathered and verified during the July-August war in 2006 in Lebanon".

Mads Gilbert, Norwegian doctor and member of a non-governmental organization Norwac, who worked at the Gaza's largest hospital, Shifa, denounced also in January

that "many (people) arrive with amputations, with both legs crushed", and "with wounds which I suspect are produced by Dime weapons".

"The images arriving from Gaza seem to confirm these suppositions as well. The burns suffered by some children in Gaza are very similar to those documented in 2006 by Doctor Hibrain Faraj, a surgeon at the Hiram hospital in Tyre and by Doctor Bachir Cham at the Hospital du Sur, Sidon," he said.

"At the moment," Manduca commented, "we have reports from doctors and informed witnesses that make us believe that new types of weapons are being tested today in Gaza, apart from those used in 2006. This makes it necessary for further technical and scientific researches to be undertaken."

MORE EVIDENCE

In the last two years, NWRC, together with Lebanese and Palestinian doctors, produced scientific data using techniques of histology, scanning electron microscopy and chemical analysis on bioptic samples from victims of the 2006 Israeli attacks.

The specialists collected "clinical evidence and documentation that proves the use of thermo-baric bombs in open spaces, DIME and sub-lethal targeted weapons in 2006 in Lebanon, and DIME and sub-lethal targeted weapons in Gaza".

NWRC submitted in 2007 a related report to the UN Human Rights Council, and in 2008 to the International Citizens Tribunal on War Crimes in Lebanon and the Italian Parliament's committee on depleted uranium.

* Fareed Mahdy is special correspondent of IDN-InDepthNews Service

NWRC has also worked with international scientists who documented the use of uranium ammunitions in Lebanon.

RAIN OF FIRE, WAR CRIMES -- HUMAN RIGHT WATCH

Only weeks after, Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported from Jerusalem on "Israel's repeated firing of white phosphorus shells over densely populated areas of Gaza during its recent military campaign was indiscriminate and is evidence of war crimes".

In fact, HRW released on March 25 its 71-page report "Rain of Fire: Israel's Unlawful Use of White Phosphorus in Gaza", which provides witness accounts of the devastating effects that white phosphorus munitions had on civilians and civilian property in Gaza.

"Human Rights Watch researchers in Gaza immediately after hostilities ended found spent shells, canister liners, and dozens of burnt felt wedges containing white phosphorus on city streets, apartment roofs, residential courtyards, and at a United Nations school," it informs.

The report also presents "ballistics evidence, photographs, and satellite imagery, as well as documents from the Israeli military and government".

Militaries use white phosphorus primarily to obscure their operations on the ground by creating thick smoke. It can also be used as an incendiary weapon, according to HRW.

"In Gaza, the Israeli military didn't just use white phosphorus in open areas as a screen for its troops," said Fred Abrahams, senior emergencies researcher at HRW and co-author of the report.

WHITE POSPHORUS ON DENSELY POPULATED AREAS

"It fired white phosphorus repeatedly over densely populated areas, even when its troops weren't in the area and safer smoke shells were available. As a result, civilians needlessly suffered and died."

The report documents a pattern or policy of white phosphorus use that Human Rights Watch says must have required the approval of senior military officers.

"On February 1, HRW submitted detailed questions to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) about its white phosphorus use in Gaza. The IDF did not provide responses, citing an internal inquiry being conducted by the Southern Command."

In the recent Gaza operations, it adds, "Israeli forces frequently air-burst white phosphorus in 155mm artillery shells in and near populated areas".

"Each air-burst shell spreads 116 burning white phosphorus wedges in a radius extending up to 125 meters from the blast point."

White phosphorus ignites and burns on contact with oxygen, and continues burning at up to 1500 degrees Fahrenheit (816 degrees Celsius) until nothing is left or the oxygen supply is cut. When white phosphorus comes into contact with skin it creates intense and persistent burns, according to HRW.

ISRAELI DEFENCE MINISTRY KNEW

The Human Rights Watch report concludes "the IDF repeatedly exploded it unlawfully over populated neighbour-

hoods, killing and wounding civilians and damaging civilian structures, including a school, a market, a humanitarian aid warehouse, and a hospital".

"Israel at first denied it was using white phosphorus in Gaza but, facing mounting evidence to the contrary, said that it was using all weapons in compliance with international law. Later it announced an internal investigation into possible improper white phosphorus use."

HRW stressed "The IDF knew that white phosphorus poses life-threatening dangers to civilians".

A medical report prepared during the recent hostilities by the Israeli ministry of health said that white phosphorus "can cause serious injury and death when it comes into contact with the skin, is inhaled or is swallowed", it reports.

"Burns on less than 10 percent of the body can be fatal because of damage to the liver, kidneys, and heart, the ministry report says. Infection is common and the body's absorption of the chemical can cause serious damage to internal organs, as well as death."

All of the white phosphorus shells that Human Rights Watch found were manufactured in the United States in 1989 by Thiokol Aerospace, which was running the Louisiana Army Ammunition Plant at the time.

"On January 4, Reuters photographed IDF artillery units handling projectiles whose markings indicate that they were produced in the United States at the Pine Bluff Arsenal in September 1991," the reports informs.

DELIBERATELY OR RECKLESSLY, BUT USED

To explain the high number of civilian casualties in Gaza, Israeli officials have repeatedly blamed Hamas for using civilians as "human shields" and for fighting from civilian sites.

In the cases documented in the report, Human Rights Watch found no evidence of Hamas using human shields in the vicinity at the time of the attacks. In some areas Palestinian fighters appear to have been present, but this does not justify the indiscriminate use of white phosphorus in a populated area.

HRW said that for multiple reasons it concluded that the IDF had deliberately or recklessly used white phosphorus munitions in violation of the laws of war.

"First, the repeated use of air-burst white phosphorus in populated areas until the last days of the operation reveals a pattern or policy of conduct rather than incidental or accidental usage. Second, the IDF was well aware of the effects of white phosphorus and the dangers it poses to civilians. Third, the IDF failed to use safer available alternatives for smokescreens."

The laws of war obligate states to investigate impartially allegations of war crimes. The evidence available demands that Israel investigate and prosecute as appropriate those who ordered or carried out unlawful attacks using white phosphorus munitions, Human Rights Watch said.

The United States government, which supplied Israel with its white phosphorus munitions, should also conduct an investigation to determine whether Israel used it in violation of the laws of war, Human Rights Watch concluded. - GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ■

Egyptian Regime 'The Most Repressive To Internet Users'

BY KAREEM EZZAT*



"Egypt has become the most repressive country to internet users in the Arab world," the Cairo-based Arabic Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI) has reported.

The Egyptian regime "has stopped the policy of blocking websites five years ago and now directs its repression with full force against bloggers and internet users", informs ANHRI.

In its third report on the freedom of internet use in 20 Arab countries, released on Dec. 23, ANHRI states that countries like Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and most of all Syria, continue to block websites.

Internet has a snowball effect on the process of democracy in the Arab countries, it says. "This new force cannot be stopped by government's actions of censorship, blocking the internet and arresting and even torturing internet users."

The report, titled 'One social Network, with a Rebellious Message', emphasises that in the Arab region "where the most repressive regimes lie", internet is used to bring democracy and free expression to the region.

ANHRI's report examines four tools (Blogs, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) that the Arab internet users, especially the young ones, "use to fight for their right to free expression and expose corruption and repression in the Arab world."

The report reveals "the government-sponsored repression against internet users in the Arab world."

KIDNAPPING, TORTURING INTERNET USERS

"Many violations have been committed against internet users; this includes kidnapping, arresting, torturing internet users using the Emergency Law like in Egypt and Syria," it reports.

In some countries, like Saudi Arabia, "religious authorities have issued statements banning some websites that the governments were not able to block".

Out of current 58 million users in all Arab countries, whose population amounts to around 330 millions inhabitants, "only internet users in Lebanon, Algeria and Somalia have freedom in using the internet".

But ANHRI explains that this relative freedom in these two countries is mainly due to the widespread of the tapping phenomenon in Lebanon, and the government being too occupied in what seems to be a civil war in Somalia.

In general, in the last three years, "the level of repression and harassment against internet users has increased with the increase in the number of users."

Even countries like Morocco and the United Arab Emirates, who were known to allow freedom of internet usage, have started to show a repressive attitude towards internet users, according to the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information.

"Countries, like Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and most of all Syria, continue to block websites."

The 235-page report includes statistics and information about telecommunication and internet sector in the Arab countries, conducted by ANHRI's team of researchers.

THE UNSTOPPABLE SNOWBALL

Emphasising what it calls snowball effect of using internet in Arab countries, the report says, "Now that the snowball is rolling, it can no longer be stopped. Getting bigger and stronger, it is bound to crush down all obstacles."

In addition to the stress caused by the Arab bloggers, Arab activists have been using Facebook in the utmost creative way to support the democracy movement in the Arab region, which "has one of the highest rates of repression in the world".

The number of Arabic blogs is estimated in about 600,000, of which 150,000 are active, according to the report, which also estimates the number of Facebook users in Arab countries in about 12 million.

Unlike other regions where oppressive countries (like China, Iran and Burma) represent the exception, 'oppression can be found everywhere' in the Arab region, says ANHRI.

The number of Arab internet users interested in political affairs does not exceed a few thousands, mainly represented by internet activists and bloggers.

Even though, "they have succeeded in shedding some light on the corruption and repression of the Arab governments and dictatorships".

ANHRI reports that Arab regimes and their security agencies "have been censoring and cracking down on traditional mass media" such as newspapers TV stations and satellite channels, "seizing newspapers' issues and stopping the emissions of TV channels.

However, it is hard to have the same control over the internet, the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information concludes. - GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ■

Image: IKHWANWEB

*Kareem Ezzat is a Middle East political analyst.

‘Well Done, India – But There is More To Do’

BY PRAKASH JOSHI



India has received a basket full of kudos and is being promised more if it agrees to deepen and widen “cooperation” with the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), also known as the “rich man’s club”.

A new report, titled ‘OECD Investment Policy Reviews: India 2009’, says that India has become a major global player with high economic growth rates and its performance in the past year has been particularly impressive in view of the global collapse in FDI (foreign direct investment) flows.

The Review launched by OECD Secretary General Angel Gurría on Dec. 4 in New Delhi, states that India is today both a major destination for FDI, and a major source of FDI. “This is a vote of confidence in India,” particularly in view of the fact that FDI flows on the whole have contracted significantly. The first OECD Investment Policy Review of India shows the country’s “great progress in building a successful policy environment

to encourage investment and the resulting acceleration in FDI inflows and economic growth”.

PROGRESS

In fact, with economies reviving from the global melt-down, India is targeting annual FDI worth 50 billion US dollars by 2012. It would double the inflows by 2017. In the period between 1991 and March 2009, FDI worth 158 billion US dollars has come in to India. Even during 2008-09, when the global financial crisis squeezed availability of capital, FDI inflows in to India stood at 35.16 billion US dollars, a near flat growth.

Nevertheless, says the OECD Review: “Investment remains insufficient to meet India’s needs, particularly in infrastructure. Current efforts to strengthen and liberalise the regulatory framework for investment need to be intensified and India’s well-developed economic legislation implemented at an accelerated pace both at national level and right across India’s states and union territories.”

The report also highlights progress in three areas: First, the regulatory framework: India has made huge steps in improving its regulatory investment environment: the “license raj”, which shackled industry with numerous unnecessary permits, has been largely dismantled. Crucial issues for investors have started to be tackled by the Indian Government, such as IPR (intellectual property rights) protection which has been strengthened. The Competition Commission has just started work this summer and the corporate governance framework has been improved.

A more open trade regime is replacing import substitution and protectionism. Much of the economy has been opened to foreign investment. Sectoral FDI restrictions have been eased and foreign ownership caps lifted. Since 2000, the FDI regime has been an OECD-type “negative list” approach in which all sectors not on the list are open to foreign investment. In most manufacturing sectors 100 percent foreign ownership is now possible and much FDI

now comes through the “automatic route”. Foreign exchange restrictions relating to investment have been relaxed.

Second, public ownership of industries was substantially reduced as many sectors which were previously reserved for the public sector have been opened to private enterprises, including foreign investment.

Third, experimental economic zones have been set up to test further investment liberalisation measures. The government has concluded many bilateral investment promotion agreements and double taxation avoidance agreements since the mid-1990s. Foreign-owned companies are now taxed the same as domestic enterprises.

“In short, the overall framework for investment, both domestic and foreign, is becoming more supportive in order to reap the full benefits of FDI for India’s growth perspectives,” Gurría said presenting the review in New Delhi.

CHALLENGES

But many challenges remain. “As Prime Minister Manmohan Singh pointed out in his speech at the Indian Economic Summit last November, the development of high-quality infrastructure is an essential requirement for India’s rapid growth,” Gurría recalled. India has an ambitious programme of investment to remedy deficiencies in all key infrastructure sectors: power, roads, ports, airports, telecommunications, irrigation and urban infrastructure. While some of these investments will be undertaken through the public sector, the Government of India has called for private investment, including foreign direct investment, to play a large and growing role in achieving these targets.

Picture above: Angel Gurría, OECD Secretary-General, addressing participants at the presentation of the India Investment Policy Review. New Delhi, India.

OECD Investment Policy Review discusses policy options that may help India achieve its full potential, Gurria pointed out. It suggests a further easing of remaining FDI curbs to support the government's important social and development goals. Many of the remaining FDI restrictions apply to sectors where productivity and growth need to be enhanced, such as banking, insurance and retail distribution.

Another major challenge in India, according to the Review, is to realign economic growth with equality perspectives: While national economic growth has been impressive since 1991, the gap between the richer and poorer Indian states has widened. "This trend needs to be reversed if the government is to reduce inequalities. Poorer, slow-growth states may start catching up if they accelerate implementation of central government policies to promote investment."

While the central government has reduced the number of approvals needed for new investment, administrative procedures need to be streamlined at state level. India's plan to set up a panel of state industrial ministers to encourage state level reforms can help do this, the OECD Review suggests. "The Indian government could also set up an inter-state forum to evaluate the costs and benefits of states' investment incentives, including their impact on other states. The OECD has developed a Checklist for FDI Incentive Policies which can be used to evaluate foreign investment incentives."

Comparing states' FDI performance requires reliable FDI statistics. OECD countries are also grappling with this thorny problem and will be happy to share their experience with India.

Gurria noted that India was rightly proud of its long tradition of rule of law. "But for investors -- both domestic and foreign -- significant delays in justice can mean bankruptcy -- and hence a risk too big to take. Strengthening the capacity of the judicial system could make a big difference to investment."

COOPERATION

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development considers this Review "a landmark in the growing cooperation and enhanced engagement between India and the OECD". India has participated wholeheartedly in the preparatory work at many levels of government and over the whole period from gestation to completion, it adds.

"For our future cooperation we would like to propose four areas of work, which have been highlighted in the report and have featured in our discussions with the Government of India," said Gurria.

- Joint future work on green growth, an important driver for India's sustainable development.
- Promoting infrastructure development through public-private partnerships.
- Developing nationally consistent regional FDI statistics.
- The launch of a review of the regulatory policies of India, just like OECD has done with other countries like Brazil, China and Russia.

The OECD reports regularly to the G20 on crisis-related measures taken by governments that may have implications for international investment. "Keeping international investments flowing freely is a vital element in global

recovery, said Gurria, adding: "This is part of the overall co-operation between the OECD and India in support of fostering a stronger, cleaner and fairer world economy. This is an objective we will achieve only if we work together."

\$2-TRILLION ECONOMY

Meanwhile Enam Securities, a leading capital market intermediary in India, says: India will be a two trillion US dollar economy in the next five years as its GDP growth is likely to average at 12 per cent in nominal terms powered by a huge consumption demand.

"India's GDP is likely to grow at (an) average 12 per cent in nominal terms. Hence, India will be a 2-trillion US dollar economy by 2014-15," Enam Securities Head-Research, Nandan Chakraborty, and economist Sachchidanand Shukla said in a report titled 'India Strategy' released Dec. 18.

This growth will be led by the huge consumption demand in sectors like FMCG (fast moving consumer goods), power, auto (small car hub), IT and pharma, it added.

The brokerage firm said insurance companies, financial services and equity markets will flourish as the country's annual savings pool grows to 700 billion from 400 billion US dollars at present.

"More than half of this (700 billion US dollars) could flow into financial savings. With favourable demographics and average seven per cent real growth, India can sustain more than 30 per cent savings rate akin to the Asian tigers, or China and Japan. This will transform the domestic financial services space," Enam said.

Life insurance penetration in India, which is already a one-trillion US dollar economy, is estimated to reach a level of 4.4 per cent over the next two years as insurance companies focus on expanding into rural India, the report said.

Life insurance penetration in India stands at about 4 per cent at present. Only 26 per cent of rural and 60 per cent of urban population have life insurance cover.

"There is a huge scope for premium expansion. Life insurance penetration is relatively low in India with premiums/GDP at 4 per cent versus 6 per cent for developed nations. India is the fourth largest life insurance market in Asia ex-Japan and has recorded high 31 per cent CAGR (compound annual growth rate) over the past six years in total premiums," Enam said.

Underlining India's "greater integration with the world economy", the Finance Ministry has said that the country's global trade engagement has risen to account for 54 per cent of its GDP (Gross Domestic Product) in 2008-09, from 30.9 per cent in 2003-04.

India's merchandise trade rose from 23.7 per cent of the GDP in 2003-04 to 41 per cent in 2008-09. The paper said, "If the services trade is included, the indicator is higher at 54.2 per cent in 2008-09, reflecting greater degree of openness."

The principal economist of Credit Rating and Information Services of India (CRISIL), D K Joshi, said: "In the last 4-5 years our exports and imports are growing phenomenally...Increasing external trade reflects India's greater openness. However, the ongoing global economic crisis has briefly interrupted the integration of India with the world economy." - GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ■

India will be a 2-trillion US dollar economy by 2014-15.

'Wars, Guns and Votes'

BETTINA GUTIÉRREZ INTERVIEWS EMINENT WRITER AND DEVELOPMENT ECONOMIST PAUL COLLIER

Paul Collier is a Professor of Economics, Director for the Centre for the Study of African Economies at The University of Oxford and Fellow of St Antony's College. He was Director of the Development Research group at the World Bank from April 1998 to April 2003. His most recent book, entitled 'Wars, Guns and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places', was published in March 2009.

His previous book, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can Be Done About It* (ISBN 0195311450), has been compared to Jeffrey Sachs's *The End of Poverty* and William Easterly's *The White Man's Burden*, two influential books, which like Collier's book, discuss the pros and cons of developmental aid to developing countries.

Question: In 'Wars, Guns and Votes. Democracy in Dangerous Places' you say that the institution of so-called democratic elections in the 'bottom billion' -- the world's 58 most impoverished countries -- has encouraged the incidence of violence. What kind of a link do you see between democratisation and political violence?



Paul Collier: Part of the problem is that the conduct of elections is often deeply flawed because of the weakness of the institutions that normally support democracy. Where election results are widely regarded as fraudulent, those who lose may be provoked into violence. A further problem is that in societies that are polarized by distinct identities, such as ethnicity, winner-take-all democracy is probably inappropriate. It is better to have more inclusive governance. A related problem is that for minorities to feel secure in a democracy, they need to be protected by robust institutionalized rights, and this is simply infeasible unless supported by strong institutions. Such institutions take time to get established whereas elections can be held virtually anywhere.

Q: You are addressing among others the elections and electoral strategies in Congo in 2006, in Nigeria in 2007 and in the recent elections in Zimbabwe. What impact have elections had on those countries?

PC: In the Congo and Zimbabwe elections directly led to large scale violence. In Zimbabwe, once President Mugabe realized that he could not win an honest election he systematically tore up the country's institutions and in the process destroyed its economy. In Nigeria the polity is now best understood as a long-term deal between the major ethnic groups to share power by rotation rather than as an electoral democracy.

Q: You describe the election of President Raila Odinga in Kenya as some sort of an 'identity poll' because he obtained most of the votes from Luo, the ethnic group to which he belongs. Does ethnic allegiance play an important role in elections in some countries? How far?

PC: First, let me note that Raila Odinga is the Prime Minister of Kenya, not the President. Yes, in Africa ethnicity is usually the strongest single influence on voting, although people usually deny it.

Q: The so-called rich liberal democrats, you assert, wish to reconfigure the 'bottom billion' using themselves as

role models? How would the imposition of a European or an American role model look like in the impoverished countries?

PC: For fifty years Europe has encouraged the countries of the bottom billion to imitate the Europe of the 1950s. It is not just a matter of elections. Monopoly ministries of this and that are responsible for the delivery of public services. Law courts are responsible for settling disputes. In many of these countries such an approach to government is inappropriate. For example, at the present rate of resolution of land disputes in the courts in one Southern African country it will take five hundred years to clear the backlog

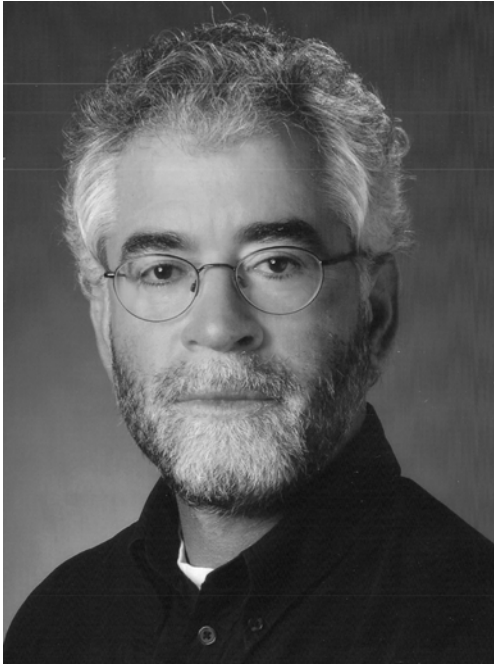
Q: You point out in your book that in many former conflict areas too much money is spent on arms build-up and military. The funds originate in part from development assistance budgets. What conclusions could we draw from that?

PC: Aid donors have a responsibility to ensure that budget systems are sufficiently transparent and watertight that money cannot be diverted into armaments. This is not an infringement of national sovereignty, but rather a necessary struggle to make governments more accountable to their own citizens.

Q: Which alternatives do you envisage to commonly accepted democratisation efforts?

PC: I think that efforts need to adopt a different sequence. National elections are the final stage in a long process of democratization, not the first. The prior steps are gradually building robust institutions that people come to trust, and also building societies that are better informed about economic and political choices so that electorates are less susceptible to populism. In the meantime, power sharing with as much transparency as possible would be better than absolute power wielded by the victors of fraudulent elections. - GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ■

Paul Collier, Wars, Guns and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places, pp 272, The Bodley Head, London 2009, 18,00 GBP
German Edition: Gefährliche Wahl. Wie Demokratisierung in den ärmsten Ländern der Erde gelingen kann, 272 S., Siedler Verlag, München 2009, 19,95 €



Afghan Anxieties

BY JULIO GODOY

The one thing the U.S. military claimed to have learnt from its debacle in Vietnam was that it was imperative to draft an "exit strategy" before starting a war. Though exit strategy was but a euphemism: When the body count swells, and the prospect of winning the war shrinks, it is time to get out of it without losing one's face.

In the 1980s, the exit strategy took several forms: *On the one hand*, the U.S. abolished the compulsory military service, and moved to an all voluntary army. That way, the middle class youth, the main actor of the peace movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, could stay at home, and watch the wars to come on television. Its place was taken by what you may call the U.S. 'lumpen proletariat' -- the poverty-ridden black youth with no hopes in civil society, and later, the immigrant youth from Latin America. This way, if the body count was to be too high again, very few would care.

Who was the first U.S. soldier killed in Iraq in 2003? A Guatemalan-born, almost illiterate illegal immigrant orphan boy, who had seen in the U.S. military the easiest way to obtain the coveted green card.

SPLENDID LITTLE WARS

On the other hand, the bulk of the exit strategy the U.S. military had called for three other varieties: *First*, to rescue the "splendid little war" of Teddy Roosevelt's times -- he was the guy who famously said: "Speak softly and carry a big stick; you will go far." Roosevelt used his big stick to battle a faint Spanish military and gain control over Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines in a swift war in the late 19th century. When Spain sued for peace, Roosevelt's secretary of state John Hay praised the "splendid little war". Splendid and little was it indeed. For the U.S. anyway: The enemy was weak, the war short, and the booty enormous.

In the 1980s, the U.S. government under Ronald Reagan spoke loudly again and carried a big military stick. But, for all the government's tough talks and investments in the army, the U.S. under Reagan did not go far: It took pride in invading such terrifying enemies as Grenada and bombing Libya's capital Tripoli.

The *second strategy* was to create or arm surrogate armies to fight the foes Washington wanted to eliminate: The Contras against the Sandinista revolutionary government in Nicaragua, Saddam Hussein's military to combat Iran, and the Afghan war lords against Russia. That was also a splendid idea: To pay corrupt, ruthless fools to fight your enemies. Whether the body count was high, or the war was lost, did not have to interest you: The cannon fodder was not yours. And strictly speaking, neither was the war.

The *third strategy* was the airborne attack without almost any use of infantry, to precisely avoid the body count. After having bombed Panama City -- another awesome enemy -- George Bush Sr. used the airborne attack to force Saddam out of Kuwait in the early 1990s. Later in the decade, William Clinton also used the no-infantry strategy in the "splendid little wars" of the Balkans, ostensible to bomb Belgrade.

LIMITS

But the strategy showed its limits when it came down to attack enemies hidden in places where there was nothing to bomb, as in Somalia. There, foot soldiers had to do the job -- but they faced an enemy that was even more ruthless than the hardest-nosed GI. When your boys kill enemies, no matter what means they use, you take pride of their success, and even might praise them as brave defenders of your values.

But when it is the enemy who butchers your soldiers, you wonder about the wildness of war. In Somalia, Clinton did not care about an exit strategy or about losing his face -- it was worse to see bleeding GIs being dragged to death across the dirty roads of Mogadishu.

Along came George Bush Jr, the 2000, and the eternal "war on terror". Bush's advisors obviously believed the U.S. military was invincible and accordingly were not concerned about exit strategies or body count.

So they marched into Afghanistan and Iraq. Especially in Afghanistan, they ignored history and the local idiosyncrasy. If only they had read Winston Churchill's memories or Rudyard Kipling's war ballads -- or at least asked their new friends in Moscow about their recent war experiences in Hindu Kush -- they would have avoided rushing into a quagmire without a thought-out, face-saving exit. They would also have avoided talking about development, state building, and democracy.

Instead, they tried to bomb their way to controlling Kabul and surroundings. Other than killing thousands of civilians, they have had little success. Almost ten years later, the U.S. and its allies -- though they form "the most powerful military alliance of all times" -- are rushing for a way out of the Afghan imbroglio. That they might leave behind a corrupt-ruled, drugs-ridden, shattered country, controlled by the very same war lords they once despised is not important anymore. What counts now is not to be buried in the graveyard of empires. - GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ■

Enabling Poor Rural People to Overcome Poverty

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), a specialized agency of the United Nations, was established as an international financial institution in 1977 as one of the major outcomes of the 1974 World Food Conference. The Conference was organized in response to the food crises of the early 1970s that primarily affected the Sahelian countries of Africa. The conference resolved that "an International Fund for Agricultural Development should be established immediately to finance agricultural development projects primarily for food production in the developing countries". One of the most important insights emerging from the conference was that the causes of food insecurity and famine were not so much failures in food production, but structural problems relating to poverty and to the fact that the majority of the developing world's poor populations were concentrated in rural areas.



IFAD is dedicated to eradicating rural poverty in **developing countries**. Seventy-five per cent of the world's poorest people - 1.05 billion women, children and men - live in rural areas and depend on agriculture and related activities for their livelihoods.

Working with rural poor people, governments, donors, **non-governmental organizations** and many other **partners**, IFAD focuses on country-specific solutions, which can involve increasing rural poor peoples' access to financial services, markets, technology, land and other natural resources.

IFAD's activities are guided by the **Strategic Framework for IFAD 2007-2010: Enabling the rural poor to overcome poverty**.

IFAD's goal is to empower poor rural women and men in developing countries to achieve higher incomes and improved food security.

Objectives

IFAD will ensure that poor rural people have better access to, and the skills and organization they need to take advantage of:

Natural resources, especially secure access to land and water, and improved natural resource management and conservation practices

Improved agricultural technologies and effective production services

A broad range of financial services

Transparent and competitive markets for agricultural inputs and produce

Opportunities for rural off-farm employment and enterprise development

Local and national policy and programming processes

All of IFAD's decisions - on **regional, country and thematic strategies**, poverty reduction strategies, **policy dialogue** and development partners - are made with these **principles** and objectives in mind. As reflected in the strategic framework, IFAD is committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, in particular the target to halve the proportion of hungry and extremely poor people by 2015.

Working in partnership to eradicate rural poverty

Through low-interest **loans and grants**, IFAD works with governments to develop and finance programmes and projects that enable rural poor people to overcome poverty themselves.

Since starting operations in 1978, IFAD has invested US\$10.8 billion in 805 projects and programmes that have reached more than 340 million poor rural people.

Governments and other financing sources in recipient countries, including project participants, contributed US\$15.3 billion, and multilateral, bilateral and other donors provided approximately another US\$9.5 billion in **cofinancing**.

This represents a total investment of about US\$24.8 billion, and means that for every dollar IFAD invested, it was able to mobilize almost two dollars in additional resources.

IFAD tackles poverty not only as a lender, but also as an advocate for rural poor people. Its multilateral base provides a natural global platform to discuss important policy issues that influence the lives of rural poor people, as well as to draw attention to the centrality of rural development to meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

IFAD Membership IFAD is open to any state that is a member of the United Nations or its specialized agencies or the International Atomic Energy Agency. The **Governing Council** is IFAD's highest decision-making authority, with 165 Member States represented by a Governor and Alternate Governor and any other designated advisers. The Council meets annually. The **Executive Board**, responsible for overseeing the general operations of IFAD and approving loans and grants, is composed of 18 members and 18 alternate members. The President, who serves for a four-year term (renewable once), is IFAD's chief executive officer and chair of the Executive Board. The current President of IFAD is **Mr Kanayo Nwanze**, who was elected for a four-year term in 2009.

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Confronting Climate Ch...



GLOBAL EVENTS

Policy Dialogue on Development Cooperation

Members of the DAC met with a range of other providers of development co-operation for a South-South-Policy Dialogue in Mexico City September 28-29. At the event, which was hosted by the Mexican Foreign Ministry, participants from several Latin American countries exchanged views on the common goals of their international co-operation, compared lessons drawn from their diverse approaches to co-operation and discussed the potential of more joint work.

Demand for such dialogue is stronger than ever. At last year's United Nations Development Co-operation Forum (New York), participants expressed the need for all providers of development co-operation to arrive at more widely agreed development co-operation practices and objectives. Recognising the important contribution to development by middle-income countries and providers of South-South co-operation, the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action encourages all providers of co-operation to work together to improve the effectiveness of their efforts.

Discussions in Mexico revealed common ground about the goals of development co-operation. Promoting poverty reduction and economic growth – and supporting partner countries in times of crisis – remain the highest of priorities. And new goals, such as the provision of global public goods and addressing climate change, are of increasing concern to all.

Participants also agreed broadly on the principles that would be needed to achieve these shared goals. First and foremost, they stressed the importance of partnership. Latin American countries, for example, emphasised that their co-operation was horizontal, based on mutual benefits and shared learning with their partners. DAC members told of their efforts in developing true partnerships with aid recipients, spurred by the recognition that aid could only be effective if its recipients had real ownership of their development policies and processes. In line with the principles of partnership and ownership, participants agreed that supporting partner countries in developing their capacities to manage the development process was a

NEWS - FEATURES - ANALYSES



FORMER PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN GC COUNCIL ADVISOR
Mr. Toshiki Kaifu, who served as Prime Minister of Japan from August 1989 to November 1991, has accepted our invitation to join the Advisory Board of Global Cooperation Council. Other members of the Board include Dr. Roberto Savio, Chair World Social Forum's Commission for Communication, President Emeritus of Inter Press Service - Italy, and Dr. Inge Kaul who served at the UNDP from 1981 to 2005 in different capacities.



A BAD START TO THE NEW CENTURY BY ROBERTO SAVIO *

Sadly one would have to agree that the first decade of the new century is not a cause for optimism. Not only have we not solved the problems that we had, other even more difficult ones have been added to the list.

THE NEXT FINANCIAL CRISIS IS JUST A MATTER OF TIME BY ROBERTO SAVIO

U.S. Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner's rejection of the European request for regulation of bank executives' bonuses has given rise to various interpretations: some cite President Barack Obama's need to avoid more confrontations with the American right wing, others point to the influence of the historical bond between the U.S. and the UK, the only European country to defend financial corporations.

PROMOTE CULTURE OF PEACE - MAKE WARS DETESTABLE BY ROBERTO SAVIO

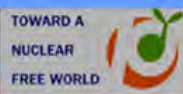
While the war in Iraq triggered massive demonstrations across the globe, the ratcheting up of the number of troops in Afghanistan has generated no more than brief debates in parliaments. Obviously the intervention in Afghanistan if far more "legitimate" than the invasion of Iraq based as it was on false assumptions about the existence of weapons of mass destruction.

'JAPAN HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BE A CONSTRUCTIVE GLOBAL PLAYER'

TARO ICHIKAWA INTERVIEWS NEW KOMEI PARTY CHIEF NATSUO YAMAGUCHI – Japan should play an active role in supporting efforts toward a nuclear weapons free world, without jeopardizing its close and trusted relations with the United States, says Natsuo Yamaguchi, president of the New Komei Party, the country's third largest political party that has promoted and pursued initiatives to enhance peace and protect the vulnerable in Japanese society since 1964. Against the backdrop of its close and "vital" relations with the U.S. and growing understanding with China, dating back to more than three decades, Japan has the potential to act as a bridge between the United States and China as the two countries move towards confidence-building, avers the 57-year old Yamaguchi.

WHO IS AFRAID OF 'HUNGER REPORTS'?

Hunger is far from 'sexy' – and yet it is the central theme of two new reports published two days ahead of the World Food Day Oct. 16 when conforming to the 'same procedure as every year' the well-fed of planet earth juggle statistics as if these were crystal balls predicting ways toward a hunger-free world.



'LET US MAKE NUCLEAR ABOLITION A REALITY'



A world free of nuclear weapons is no longer a utopia. There is more than one reason to believe that it is a concrete possibility, says Daisaku Ikeda, president of the Buddhist association, Soka Gokai International (SGI). "In recent years, we have seen important, groundbreaking examples of humanitarian ideals surmounting military logic and narrowly defined national interests to bring new disarmament accords into existence," says Ikeda explaining the rationale behind his optimism. [READ MORE](#) | [READ MORE-1](#) | [ARABIC](#) | [GERMAN](#) | [SPANISH](#)

OBAMA SEEKS UN BACKING FOR NUKE-FREE WORLD

When Barack Obama chaired a summit meeting of the Security Council Sept. 24 – a historic first for a U.S. president – his primary motive was to push for his ambitious, long-term agenda for "a world without nuclear weapons". A resolution adopted unanimously by the 15 members of the U.N.'s most powerful political body expressed grave concern about the threat of nuclear proliferation and the need for international action to prevent it. [READ MORE](#) | [SPANISH](#)



INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION



'AGRICULTURE KEY TO FOOD SECURITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE'

IFAD President Kanayo F. Nwanze. "Agriculture is the vital link between the two burning issues of feeding a growing population and preserving the planet we live on," says IFAD president Kanayo F. Nwanze. It is crucial, therefore, that the deal expected to emerge from the landmark climate change conference in Copenhagen recognises that connect, Nwanze says in an e-mail interview with [IDN-InDepthNews](#) and [Global Perspectives](#) – a journal for international cooperation.

PARLIAMENTARIANS URGE GREATER EFFORTS ON LAND DEGRADATION BY UWE HOLTZ - [IDN-InDepthNews](#) | [Global Perspectives](#)



TOWARDS A GREEN ECONOMY

Several initiatives are under way to move toward a global green economy, most of these associated with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and supported, among others, by Germany and the EU Commission. But private investors from industrialized and emerging economies are also actively involved. [Read more](#)

SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

Developing nations are faced with huge economic and financial problems and need funds and technical cooperation from Europe and the United States. But this is only one aspect of reality. They have meanwhile acquired a high profile in world economy and in global decision-making – thanks due to increasing South-South cooperation. [Read more](#)

WALK THE DEVELOPMENT TALK

A new report finds that Germany's overall commitment to development is fair to middling. Europe's economic powerhouse ranks 12th among the 22 'donor nations' in the Commitment to Development Index (CDI) 2009, authored by the Washington-based 'Center for Global Development'. The Index is designed to encourage donor countries to adopt policies that are more likely to promote development across a broad range of issues, which define their relationships with poor countries. [Read more](#)

CLOSER TO NUCLEAR ABOLITION

Since U.S. President Barack Obama pledged to usher in a nuclear free world this April in Prague, the movement for abolishing atomic weapons has gathered momentum. The UN Security Council's special session on Sep. 24 is not only historic but also a milestone on the long road toward the ambitious goal. [Read more](#)

COUNTDOWN TO COPENHAGEN

Whether Europe and the United States like it or not, negotiations in run up to the UN climate change conference this December in Copenhagen leave no doubt that the only global deal developing countries are prepared to consider must include commitments from developed nations to immediate emissions mitigation, more financial assistance, and to giving developing nations greater control of global climate institutions. [Read more](#)

GOOD BYE, U.S. DOLLAR?

Brazil, China, India and Russia – backed by France – have all questioned the dollar's future as a global reserve currency, a status it has enjoyed since inheriting it from sterling last century.