

Fostering Global Citizenship

Newsletter with October-November 2015 Articles

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

CONTENTS

Costa Rica Aims at Being the World's First De-carbonized Economy

The Central American country of Costa Rica is a model state that embodies the concept of global citizenship by pursuing a culture of peace and aspiring to achieve complete carbon-neutrality. >> Pages 2-3

Education Can Promote Global Citizenship and Help the SDGs Succeed

Since its inception, the United Nations has highlighted people-centred development. This is echoed in the newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim to leave no one behind. But how can this be achieved? This question was posed at an event on November 10 to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the UN Academic Impact (UNAI) that focused on 'The Next Generation of Global Citizens'. >> Pages 4-5

Kazakh President Urges One Percent of Arms Budget for Development Agenda

The UN's post-2015 development agenda, which includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is desperately in need of funds for its successful implementation. The goals include an ambitious target: the elimination of hunger and poverty worldwide by 2030. But that elusive goal can be reached only if the United Nations can help garner – both from the public and private sector – a staggering 3.5 to 5.0 trillion dollars per year. >> Pages 6-7

Using Global Citizenship Education for Sustainable Development

Since the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in September, global citizenship education has been receiving increased attention for the role it can play in both sustainable development and in keeping youth from joining the ranks of "violent extremists". >> Pages 8-9

UN Report Highlights Women's Role in Countering Terrorism

Two landmark studies are contributing to fostering global citizenship, by pleading not only for gender equality as such but also stressing the crucial role women can play and are playing in resolving conflict, overcoming violence, countering terrorism and bringing about peace and security. >> Pages 10-12

Global Citizenship Education Underpins Efforts of Youth to Build Peaceful Societies

By mid-2015, the number of young people between the ages of 10 and 24 stood at 1.8 billion, representing the largest youth population the world has ever seen. A large portion of this demographic is based in the global South, according to the United Nations, with children and adolescents making up a majority of the combined populations of the world's 48 least developed countries (LDCs). >> Pages 13-14

UN Secretary-General Explains Significance of 2030 Global Goals

NEW YORK - The United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is keen that member countries make Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) an integral part of their national policies so as to ensure that these are achieved by 2030. In an interview with IDN, he also stressed the need for the civil society to play a critical role in pushing forward this new set of global targets. >> Pages 15-17

Pacific Islanders Debating 'Oceanian' and Global Citizenship

Discussions about the concept of 'Global Citizenship' are gaining momentum in various international forums, but remain largely unexplored in the Pacific Islands. According to Ron Israel, co-founder of The Global Citizens' Initiative, Global Citizens think beyond communities based on shared group identities, and see themselves as part of a larger, emerging world community. >> Pages 18-19

France Pumps Up Climate Change Volume to Avert Failure

Never before has a UN climate change conference drawn such worldwide attention as COP21 is doing since the beginning of the year. This is an incontrovertible evidence that climate change is bringing together people from around the world, fostering a kind of global citizenship that is unique. >> Pages 20-22

Fostering Global Citizenship

Newsletter with October-November 2015 Articles

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

Costa Rica Aims at Being the World's First Decarbonised Economy

By Fabíola Ortiz

The Central American country of Costa Rica is a model state that embodies the concept of global citizenship by pursuing a culture of peace and aspiring to achieve complete carbon-neutrality.



SAN JOSE - With less than five million inhabitants, Costa Rica became famous for abolishing its army in the late 1940's, when its Central American neighbours were involved in armed conflicts. After becoming a model of peace in the region, the country now wants to be known as a laboratory for a deep de-carbonisation process of the world economy.

This tropical nation is committed to become carbon-neutral by 2021 – the first country worldwide to achieve the goal by the second decade of the 21st century. Such a political ambitious announcement made in 2007 by the Costa Rican government will have to count on the support of society and private sector to become a reality. The year of 2021 marks the bicentennial anniversary of its independence and this goal seems to be strongly supported by Costa Ricans.

In order to accomplish the target, the country is implementing a series of environmental policies to reduce use of fossil fuels, certify companies in regard to carbon emissions and increase percentage of protected areas throughout its national territory.

“We are taking this challenge very seriously and we want to bet in the use of renewable energies. There is an increasing number of companies that are measuring their carbon footprint and are reducing their emissions. We are engaging not only private businesses, but also social movements, cooperatives and the educational sector,” the Costa Rica vice-president, Ana Helena Chacón, told IDN.

Becoming carbon-neutral will help the country to combat and adapt to climate change impacts. Central America is very vulnerable to the effects of global warming, not only due to sea level rising, but also to hurricanes and extreme droughts like the El Niño phenomenon.

Chacón will be the head of the country's delegation in the COP21 Climate Change Conference in Paris November 30 to December 11 – the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC).

“We are preparing as a nation to take the message global and show what we have achieved so far in respect of sustainability, the payment of environmental services and connecting biological corridors. We have more than 25% of the territory with public natural reserves,” Chacón said.

The vice-president spoke to IDN during the XI Latin American Congress of Private Natural Reserves, held in the country's capital San Jose from November 9 to 13 in a protected area on the Pacific coast of Costa Rica. The five-day conference discussed issues on sustainable tourism, biodiversity and environmental conservation in Latin America.

Participants from 13 Latin American countries stretching from Mexico to Chile were in attendance, along with visitors from North America and Europe, some of whom manage private reserves.

The Costa Rican National Parks System run by the public sector has been a model to improve upon sustainable efforts. The National Conservation Areas System (SINAC) now protects 32 national parks, 51 wildlife refuges, 13 forest reserves and 8 biological reserves. ➔

Fostering Global Citizenship

Newsletter with October-November 2015 Articles

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

“Nowadays Costa Rica has 52% of the total landmass protected, nearly half of it belongs to national parks, but a portion of more than 10% belongs to private areas. The country has a combined conservation model that is unique, joining public and private areas, and works perfectly well,” Rafael Gallo, president of the Costa Rican Network of Natural Reserves told IDN.

Founded in 1997, this network gathers 220 private protected landowners within an area of 82,000 hectares. Around 60% of the private reserves affiliated to the network are exclusively dedicated to conservation; others address ecotourism, research and education.

“From the 50’s until the 70’s, Costa Rica suffered a lot from deforestation due to coffee cultivation, rice, sugarcane, cattle raising and livestock. People would think in a short term and were not concerned about environment. The shift in mentality came after the 80’s,” explained Gallo.

According to him, the key is to include communities in the conservation activities. “We have to educate and show the new generation that is good to preserve the environment. Communities should know that they can get benefits out of the conservation,” Gallo stressed.

Gallo is thoroughly engaged in the country’s carbon-neutrality target towards 2021. “Our forests produce oxygen and can offset what others emit.”

Edmundo Castro, an agricultural economist specialized in natural resources, has developed a pioneer program in Costa Rica to support the country’s movement to carbon-neutrality. Over the last sixteen years, the expert has been lecturing classes in the EARTH University – an international non-profit school of sustainable agriculture based in Costa Rica. In 2008, Castro founded a program addressing carbon emissions reduction.

“We are creating a culture of carbon-neutrality and diminishing greenhouse gas emissions. We aim that our more than 1,000 graduated students become leaders and agents of change that could work in their communities bringing local based solutions”, Castro told IDN.

Castro said the academia and companies are “deeply concerned” to help Costa Rica to meet its pledges. Becoming carbon-neutral, in his opinion, means that corporate responsibility should internalize the environmental costs in their productive activities.

“It is a new concept that can generate opportunities for businesses and for the society. When we deteriorate environment, people might be affected negatively, especially the poorest ones who are the most impacted.”

Castro dreams of converting Costa Rica’s economy into a huge protected area in which not only the State should drive the change in the economic development but also the society should be engaged in this paradigm shift.

Environmental conservation is closely related to social indicators. If natural resources are poorly managed, local communities will also lose jobs and income.

“My dream is to transform Costa Rica into an enormous natural reserve. We ought to understand that we can generate wealth from preserving nature, engaging in carbon markets and having a positive social impact within the families.”

A sense of optimism is spread throughout the public sector, such as the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAET) that is leading the change, and the academy that took the forefront in developing ground breaking research methods to certify companies in order to achieve zero carbon emissions.

One of the contributions came from Castro who developed a certification process through EARTH to verify and assess greenhouse gas emissions. Costa Rica has certified 50 enterprises so far, but it is still far from achieving the goal: having all the country’s businesses – over 50,000 certified. [IDN-InDepthNews – 23 November 2015] ◆

Photo: The natural reserve Finca Rosa Blanca in Heredia Province, Costa Rica. Credit: Fabiola Ortiz

Translations:

<http://www.fostering-globalcitizenship.net/index.php/european-languages/german/336-costa-rica-mit-aufforstung-und-artenschutz-zum-ersten-klimaneutralen-staat>

<http://www.fostering-globalcitizenship.net/index.php/asian-languages/japanese/341-co>

Fostering Global Citizenship

Newsletter with October-November 2015 Articles

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

Education Can Promote Global Citizenship and Help the SDGs Succeed

By Tharanga Yakupitiyage



UNITED NATIONS - Since its inception, the United Nations has highlighted people-centred development. This is echoed in the newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim to leave no one behind. But how can this be achieved? This question was posed at an event on November 10 to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the UN Academic Impact (UNAI) that focused on ‘The Next Generation of Global Citizens’.

UNAI, a global partnership between academia and the UN, underscores the model of global citizenship in not only creating an inclusive, unified community, but a community that is committed to achieving the well being of all.

“What started as just an idea has now become a well-established network of more than 1,000 institutions in more than 120 countries. Collectively, their field of study covers every issue on the international agenda,” said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his address delivered by Chef de Cabinet, Susana Malcorra.

While discussing the theme of the event, President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of ELS Educational Services, Mark Harris stated: “Global citizenship is a way of thinking about oneself as part of a global community...a way of thinking that has been described...as shared intellectual and social responsibility.”

Harris and his fellow participants particularly highlighted the critical role of education in fostering global citizenship. Education helps build cross-cultural understanding, create dialogue, and provide essential humanistic values and problem-solving skills to address global challenges, participants noted.

“Educating more people and educating them better is simply the best bet a society can make,” said State University of New York Chancellor Nancy Zimpher in her keynote address.

This view was shared by Ban at the opening of the Academic Impact Forum on May 21, 2015 during which the Korean Association in Support of UNAI was launched. Ban emphasized the importance of education to encourage youth to become global citizens.

“There is a very important role for educators to teach [youth] what would be significant to become a global citizen, to become a leader in the future,” Ban remarked. “Educated young people are our greatest hope to defeat global threats,” he added.

Just before the Academic Impact Forum, 160 countries attending the World Education Forum in the Republic of Korea adopted the Incheon Declaration titled Education 2030: Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all. ☺

Fostering Global Citizenship

Newsletter with October-November 2015 Articles

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

The SDGs, endorsed later in September 2015, included the strong commitments on education reflected in the Incheon Declaration.

During UNAI's Fifth Anniversary event, Principal Assistant to the Director of the Rockefeller Institute Robert Bullock also highlighted the role of youth in the SDGs. "The UN cannot achieve the global goals if only policymakers know about them," he said.

According to the final Millennium Development Goals Report, there have been significant achievements in education around the world, including increases in primary school enrollment and decreases in the gender gap in schools.

However, the most recent UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) estimates show that the international community continues to struggle with the provision of universal education.

UNESCO found that almost 60 million children of primary school age are not in school, more than half are girls and 43 percent may never enter school again.

The UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) also found that access to secondary and tertiary education also remains limited, especially for girls and women, hindering the ability to participate in the global community.

Education is even more inaccessible due to conflict and displacement, UNESCO noted.

Approximately 34 million children and adolescents in conflict-affected countries are out of school. In Nigeria alone, 10.5 million children do not attend schools, the highest rate in the world. Most of them are from the Northern war-afflicted region of the country.

Almost half of the world's forcibly displaced people are also children, making the idea of sitting in a classroom a dream for many.

The lack of education opportunities for refugee and displaced children is not simply due to the complexity of the situation, but also the result of neglect and underfunding. In 2014, less than 1.7 percent of humanitarian funding went to education.

Pakistani education activist Malala Yousafzai exposed the issue during the Oslo Summit on Education for Development in July 2015, stating: "Thirty-nine billion dollars is spent on [the world's] militaries in only eight days."

"If the world leaders decide to take one week and a day off from war and military work, we can put every child in school," she continued.

Ban also urged for more attention to education and noted its greater societal role at the Oslo Summit by recalling his personal experience fleeing from the Korean War and receiving textbooks from UNESCO.

"They taught us more than math and reading. They taught us the meaning of global solidarity," Ban told world leaders. "When we put every child in school, provide them with quality learning, and foster global citizenship, we will transform our future," he said.

There has been growing awareness of the importance of education and the creation of global citizens.

The Global Citizen Festival, which not only brought celebrities such as Beyoncé and their thousands of fans together in New York this year, also raises awareness and promotes action among youth on key global issues.

"Don't stand by. Don't stand back. Stand up. Stand up for justice. Stand up for dignity. Stand up for a better world," Ban told the 60,000 attendees in Central Park in September 2015.

These sentiments were echoed during UNAI's event as Director for Education Initiatives at the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Chandrika Bahadur told participants: "It is you students that are either going to make the SDGs succeed, or make the goals fail."

Though education alone cannot solve all of the world's development challenges, participants in the UNAI's fifth anniversary event agreed that a humanistic and holistic approach to education can contribute to a sustainable, inclusive, and accountable global community as put forth by the SDGs. [IDN-InDepthNews – 13 November 2015] ♦

Fostering Global Citizenship

Newsletter with October-November 2015 Articles

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

Kazakh President Urges One Percent of Arms Budget for Development Agenda

By Rodney Reynolds



Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev addressing the UN General Assembly in September 2015 | Credit: almaty.sites.unicnetwork.org

NEW YORK - The UN's post-2015 development agenda, which includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is desperately in need of funds for its successful implementation. The goals include an ambitious target: the elimination of hunger and poverty worldwide by 2030.

But that elusive goal can be reached only if the United Nations can help garner – both from the public and private sector – a staggering 3.5 to 5.0 trillion dollars per year.

Addressing the 193-member General Assembly in September, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon asked: “Why is it easier to find money to destroy people and planet than it is to protect them?” He rightly pointed out that the world continues to squander trillions in wasteful military spending.

Last year (2014) the world's total military expenditure amounted to a hefty 1.8 trillion dollars – roughly about 2.5 percent of world Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

When President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan addressed the General Assembly and the SDG summit in September, he focused specifically on a new political and economic order.

Speaking of SDGs, he urged every country to contribute 1.0 per cent of its military budget towards the funding of Sustainable Development Goals.

Perhaps the United Nations should take the lead – and follow up on it.

Among the other suggestions he made, the President called for *the transformation of the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) into a Global Development Council.*

Along with UN member states elected by the General Assembly, it could consist of the heads of all UN Specialized agencies, including the International Monetary Fund. ➔

Fostering Global Citizenship

Newsletter with October-November 2015 Articles

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

The Council should be tasked to become a global economic regulator involving projects carried out by this Council to promote economic growth worldwide.

This, he pointed out, will help decrease considerably the risks of global crises and ensure responsible behaviour by the states in maintaining their national economic and social policies.

Thirdly, he proposed a *Global Strategic Initiative Plan* whose core idea was to launch a new trend in global development based on fair conditions “where all nations would have equal access to world infrastructure, resources and markets as well as to maintain comprehensive accountability for human development.”

And equally important, he proposed *the adoption of a Universal Declaration of the United Nations to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons*.

“Kazakhstan was the first ever country to close a nuclear test site, renounced the world’s fourth largest nuclear arsenal and has contributed to the creation of a nuclear weapon free zone in Central Asia,” he said.

There is an acute need to establish nuclear-free zones in other regions of the world, particularly the Middle East. The nuclear powers must provide guarantees of the non-use of force for all countries that renounce possession of nuclear weapons, he insisted.

He also said the most pressing and serious global challenges – terrorism, demolition of the states, migration and other negative issues – are the result of the economic crisis, poverty, illiteracy and unemployment.

To tackle this global crisis, he said, “we need to start with clear rules for the emission and trade of the world reserve currencies as they do not now meet the criteria of justice, democracy, competitiveness, effectiveness and international control.”

Towards this end, he proposed the idea of a *World Anti-crisis Plan*, the draft of which was actively discussed on the margins of Astana Economic Forum last May.

He said he is also planning to convene *in 2016 the United Nations International conference at the highest level, designed to reaffirm the basic principles of international law*.

The threat of terrorism and religious extremism has become global in its scale.

“I propose establishing under the auspices of the UN a unified global network to counter international terrorism and extremism. To achieve this objective it is necessary to first develop and adopt a comprehensive document of the United Nations to combat terrorism.”

Additionally, in support of the UN initiative ‘*Sustainable Energy for All*’, an international EXPO on the theme Future Energy will be held in Astana in 2017.

“We invite all states to participate fully in the exhibition. Looking to the future and using the infrastructure put in place for EXPO 2017, I suggest *opening in Astana an International Centre for the development of green technologies and investment projects under the auspices of the UN*,” he said. [IDN-InDepthNews – 29 October 2015] ◆

Fostering Global Citizenship

Newsletter with October-November 2015 Articles

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

Using Global Citizenship Education for Sustainable Development

By A.D. McKenzie



Shufiyya Akter with 12 years old Laboni in class two at Unique Child learning Center | Credit: GMR Akash © UNESCO

PARIS - Since the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in September, global citizenship education has been receiving increased attention for the role it can play in both sustainable development and in keeping youth from joining the ranks of “violent extremists”.

“Many countries are increasingly aware of and concerned about violent extremism, and (UNESCO’s) approach is to provide support to member states through global citizenship education because it puts an emphasis on values,” said Christopher Castle, chief of UNESCO’s section for Health and Global Citizenship Education.

He told IDN in an interview that it was important for children who are in school to learn about respect for all and to have the opportunity to think about values such as “solidarity and cooperation”.

With the SDGs – which maintained universal education as a key objective – many governments emphasized that young people’s voices must be taken into consideration for the implementation of the goals, and one way for this to be achieved is to strengthen global citizenship education.

Concerns about violent extremism came up “very strongly on the agenda” of various countries, Castle told IDN, as governments examined ways to prevent this movement through education.

“Through GCED, we can improve critical thinking skills so that learners see the benefits of respect for (one) another,” Castle said. “We were delighted that the final version of the SDGs ... retained the target about education for sustainable development education and GCED.

“But I think what the SDGs have really done is to underscore a growing interest in and consensus among member states that access to education, which had been a rallying cry under the Millennium Development Goals, is no longer enough,” he added. ☺

Fostering Global Citizenship

Newsletter with October-November 2015 Articles

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

“That continues to be important – and obviously we’re very concerned about the 57 million children who’re still not in school and should be – but we’re also aware that once children do have an opportunity to exercise their right to education, we need to start thinking more about the type of education that they can achieve while they’re at school.”

According to UNESCO, the aim of global citizen education is to “equip learners of all ages with those values, knowledge and skills that are based on and instill respect for human rights, social justice, diversity, gender equality and environmental sustainability and that empower learners to be responsible global citizens.”

GCED also gives learners “the competencies and opportunity to realise their rights and obligations to promote a better world and future for all”, and it is aimed at all ages: children, youth and adults.

Although global citizenship education can be delivered in a variety of ways, the main method in most states will be through the formal education system, UNESCO says. As such, governments can integrate the concept either as part of existing programmes or as a separate subject.

The values of “global citizenship” have been in consideration for some time, but it gained momentum with the launch of the UN Secretary-General’s Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) in 2012, which has identified ‘fostering global citizenship’ as one of its three priority areas of work, along with access to and quality of education”.

Castle said that UNESCO’s next forum on global citizenship education, scheduled for 2017 in Canada, would focus on both GCED and education for sustainable development.

The organization is working as well with tertiary institutions, such as UCLA in the United States, where it has established a chair. UCLA plans to offer a summer-school programme in global citizenship education, bringing different sectors of society together, Castle said.

In the area of learning about health and sexuality, universities have a key role to play too. UNESCO experts say that “universities are critical because they hold the next generation of leaders”.

Teaching about certain issues needs to be international because diseases such as HIV and ebola “don’t pay attention to borders”, Castle told IDN.

For female students meanwhile, it is “vitaly important that they receive sexuality education to avoid early and unintended pregnancy”, he said, as becoming pregnant can disrupt their schooling, affecting their future.

UNESCO has created a clearinghouse on GCED, in cooperation with the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding and, in addition, the public has access to a health and HIV clearing house that is organized through the Paris-based International Institute of Educational Planning.

This is an extensive repository of information, policy documents, curricula activities, action plans and government documents.

UNESCO’s Director General Irina Bokova says that the world needs to “harness the energy of young people” as countries make the transition from the MDGs to a sustainable development agenda.

“By the time we reach the deadline for the SDGs in 2030, the population of young people will have increased by 7 percent. It is therefore vital that we engage them now if we are to stand a chance of achieving these goals,” she stated.

Stressing the “humanist” aspects of learning, Bokova has argued that education is not just about transmitting information and knowledge, but also about providing the values, capabilities and attitudes that can contribute to a more “peaceful, just, inclusive and sustainable” world.

She said that education could help foster greater respect and understanding between cultures, give learners “tools to make the most of diversity” and also “harness the energy of young women and men for the benefit of all”.

But UNESCO experts concede that education alone is not a “magic bullet”. Countries need to work on reducing youth unemployment, eradicating inequality and fostering inclusion. [IDN-InDepthNews – 28 October 2015] ◆

Fostering Global Citizenship

Newsletter with October-November 2015 Articles

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

UN Report Highlights Women’s Role in Countering Terrorism

By Fabíola Ortiz



An all-female Formed Police Unit from Bangladesh, serving with the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti, arrives in Port-au-Prince to assist with post-earthquake reconstruction. UN Photo/Marco Dormino

NEW YORK - Two landmark studies are contributing to fostering global citizenship, by pleading not only for gender equality as such but also stressing the crucial role women can play and are playing in resolving conflict, overcoming violence, countering terrorism and bringing about peace and security.

According to data from the Institute for Economics and Peace in its 2015 Global Peace Index, conflict and violence are costing the planet 14.3 trillion dollars, or 13.4 percent of global Gross Domestic Product (Gross Domestic Product) equivalent to the combined economies of Canada, France, Germany, Spain and Britain.

“The world is less peaceful today than it was in 2008,” says the study. The indicators that have deteriorated the most, it adds, are the number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), the number of deaths from internal conflict and the impact of terrorism. In 2014 alone, it is estimated, 20,000 people were killed in terrorist attacks up from an average of 2,000 a year only 10 years ago.

How much of over 14 trillion dollar costs have to be borne by women, when they are subordinated and become the targets of extremist ideologies, is not known. Nor does the 2015 Global Peace Index mention the number of women that fell prey to extremist ideologies.

But a global study released by the United Nations to mark the 15th anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325 on October 13, highlights the important gains to be made by the greater empowerment of women in peace-building efforts. ➔

Fostering Global Citizenship

Newsletter with October-November 2015 Articles

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

The Resolution on Women, Peace and Security is the first declaration to link women's experiences of conflict to international peace and security.

Radhika Coomaraswamy, the independent lead author of the comprehensive new report commissioned by the UN Secretary-General in preparation for the 15th anniversary review on the implementation of Resolution 1325, said that the study proves "beyond any doubt" that women's "participation in peace processes sustains [those] processes for a much longer time" than efforts that exclude them.

Coomaraswamy said: "We recognize the world has changed a lot since 2000 and we need to revive and move this agenda forward with more proactive dialogues." But there is an ambivalent situation in which the world and the UN have not understood how to deal with this situation.

She cited the report's focus on prevention, the nature of early warning systems, armed and unarmed presences, and the need for dialogue. "Levels of military spending are high and the cycle of escalation must stop," she noted, adding that force should only be used as a last resort; when dialogue is impossible.

"It is clear: the current models of making peace are not working," stated UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka.

Between 1990 and 2000, just 11 percent of peace agreements signed included a reference to women. When the Security Council adopted Resolution 1325, this figure reached 27 percent of peace agreements that made reference to women. Of the six agreements resulting from peace talks or national dialogue processes supported by the UN in 2014, 67 percent contained references relevant to women, peace and security.

Nonetheless, only 9 percent of negotiators were women out of 31 major peace processes between 1992 and 2011. Just 3 percent of the military in UN missions are women, and the majority of these are employed as support staff. "This is unacceptable," declared Mlambo-Ngcuka.

When women are at the peace tables, their participation increases the probability to achieve peace by 35 percent in the following 15 years.

The UN Women representative and the lead author of the 100-page global report agree that empowering women contributes not only to peace, but also accelerates economic growth and improves humanitarian assistance. "The progress from the last 15 years remains far too slow," said Mlambo-Ngcuka emphasizing that at least half of 50 percent of leaders dealing with peace processes must be women.

Women are still at the bottom of the agenda, criticized Muna Rihani Al-Nasser, chair of the UN Women for Peace Association. Founded in 2008. The association is committed to the prevention of violence against women and girls, and strengthening the implementation of laws and policies against violence. It also fundraises for the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women.

"We need to push governments to place issues of women on top of the agenda. We believe women have to be involved in discussions about the peace process. They are more into peace than men; we are 55 percent of the whole population," she told IDN

Al-Nasser believes that there are currently so few women involved in working as police officials and judges or ranking among decision-makers against terror. "If we open the door, women will be engaged. They need to receive proper training and be treated as men in the sense of equal opportunities. We don't want to sit and wait until the situation gets worse and worse. Terror is against humanity and we have to fight together, not only through governments; civil society should play a proactive role," Al-Nasser said.

Women in conflict zones

When there is a conflict accompanied by terrorist attacks, women and children are often the most vulnerable ones and they suffer most, stressed Al-Nasser. This is evidenced in the global study with a special section about reality on women and girls who live in conflict zones, she said.

Half of the children of primary school age, who are not in school, live in conflict-affected areas. Girls, whose adjusted net enrolment rate in primary education is only 77.5 percent in conflict and post-conflict countries, are particularly affected. ➔

Fostering Global Citizenship

Newsletter with October-November 2015 Articles

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

In conflict and post-conflict countries, maternal mortality is on average 2.5 times higher. More than half of the world's maternal deaths occur in conflict-affected and fragile states, with the 10 worst-performing countries on maternal mortality all either conflict or post-conflict countries.

The study also urges that funding should address projects that affect women on the ground. Al-Nasser is very emphatic against the terror committed against minorities by the self-proclaimed caliphate ISIS, particularly targeting the Yezidi communities.

It is estimated that there are around 3,000 women and children under captivity since ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) militants attacked and seized the Sinjar Mountains in the northern region of Iraq on August 3, 2014 – where this Iraqi ethnic and religious minority resides.

The Yezidis are predominantly ethnically Kurdish and are mostly living in the Iraqi Kurdistan (the provinces of Dohuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah). ISIS troops are violently attacking people who do not convert to Islam and are also promoting massacres to the non-Muslim Yezidis.

Pari Ibrahim is a young 26 year-old Law student belonging to a Yezidi traditional family who fled Khanke, province of Dohuk, in the 90's. After the ISIS attacks against her community, she started the Free Yezidi Foundation based in the Netherlands, where she currently lives.

“At that moment, nothing was being done for the Yezidis. Many men were killed and girls were forced to become sex slaves. Their testimonies are horrible. Yezidi are either being killed or forced to convert to Islam. We don't know how many were killed but there are a lot of mass graves in Sinjar within the area Isis is controlling”, she told IDN.

Inaccurate data estimates that between 5,000 and 6,000 women and girls were kidnapped by Isis. Since then, more than 2,000 were rescued, but there is a great proportion of victims there are still under this extremist group control.

“When girls come back out of ISIS captivity they are traumatized, and most doctors don't know how to treat them. Girls come back and don't receive any help. The worlds' reaction until now is far from enough; there is no real attempt to stop this,” said Pari striving to draw focus on the need for global action. [IDN-InDepthNews – 24 October 2015] ◆

Global Citizenship Education Underpins Efforts of Youth to Build Peaceful Societies

By Kanya D'Almeida

UNITED NATIONS - By mid-2015, the number of young people between the ages of 10 and 24 stood at 1.8 billion, representing the largest youth population the world has ever seen.

A large portion of this demographic is based in the global South, according to the United Nations, with children and adolescents making up a majority of the combined populations of the world's 48 least developed countries (LDCs).

But as various youth leaders pointed out at a recent UN summit convened by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), young people today are confronted with a multitude of difficulties.

Conflicts, corruption and climate change represent just some of the challenges that young people face on a daily basis, said participants in the two-day conference on the role of Global Citizenship Education (GCED) in fostering youth peace builders, which took place on September 10-11.

Displacement, violence, unemployment and illiteracy also pose challenges to the younger generation, participants added, pointing to a need for a “radical” transformation of local, national and international structures to engage and involve youth at the highest levels of decision making and policy planning.

Using GCED, a framework based on inclusivity, mutual respect and tolerance for all cultures, faiths and peoples developed to support the UN Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative (GEFI), a new generation of youth leaders hopes to make in-roads in the arenas of development, human rights, peace and security.

Given that young people around the world are disproportionately impacted by violence and conflict, they feel that youth participation is most urgently required in the latter field, which is also one of the three pillars of the United Nations. ➔

Fostering Global Citizenship

Newsletter with October-November 2015 Articles

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



Up for School (www.aworldatschool.org)

[Data](#) from the Office of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Youth suggests that youth comprise 40 percent of the roughly 1.5 billion people living in fragile and war-torn areas around the globe, while the most recent UN [report](#) on children in armed conflicts showed that kids are increasingly becoming casualties of war.

Ongoing political, economic and environmental crises, including protracted conflicts such as the ones in Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq, are also pushing hundreds of thousands of young people out of their homes; in 2011, 14 million youth had been forcibly displaced due to war and natural disasters.

A [global study](#) on homicide rates published by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) found males between the ages of 15 and 19 years to be most vulnerable to death by firearms, while young women and girls living in societies plagued by epidemics of armed violence are at “high risk” of being killed by their partners.

A full 43 percent of homicide victims globally are 15-29 years of age, while young males in the Americas account for one in every seven homicide victims worldwide.

Despite these realities, young people say they are seldom offered a seat at the table.

Addressing the gathering at the UN headquarters last month, Ahmad Alhendawi, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's first-ever Envoy on Youth, deplored the fact that the realm of ‘peace and security’ has traditionally been an exclusive club open only to experts, diplomats and politicians.

“There are many fires burning around the world and young people are being burned in those fires,” he said, adding that people affected by war should be part of discussions to bring about peace. ➡

Fostering Global Citizenship

Newsletter with October-November 2015 Articles

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

Recalling the recent [Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security](#) in Jordan, Alhendawi called attention to the action points set out in the [Amman Youth Declaration](#) – an ambitious document that incorporated the views of some 11,000 young people around the world.

Establishing a global policy framework

Chief among its recommendations to the international community is the establishment of a global policy framework addressing the specific “needs, assets, potential and diverse identities of youth in conflict and post-conflict scenarios by 2017”.

The declaration also calls on the Security Council to urgently pass a resolution on Youth, Peace and Security, while highlighting other areas of particular concern to young people including gender equality and socio-economic empowerment.

Indeed, young women face almost double the burden as their male counterparts, since they are also more prone to gender-based violence and risks relating to reproductive health.

According to the Women’s Refugee Commission, all 51 countries experiencing some form of conflict since 1986 also reported high levels of sexual violence against adolescent girls.

The UN says that complications arising during pregnancy and childbirth represent the “second leading killer of adolescent girls in developing countries”, amounting to tens of thousands of deaths annually.

Each year, 200,000 girls under the age of 18 give birth every day in developing countries.

And if current trends continue, a staggering 15 million girls in the 15-19 age bracket will endure female genital mutilation between now and the year 2030.

Young people also continue to be disproportionately excluded from the workforce, a [survey](#) released on October 13 found.

The report, ‘Toward Solutions for Youth Employment’, revealed that youth comprise 40 percent of unemployed people worldwide, and are four times more likely than their adult counterparts to be out of work.

But youth leaders at the summit warned against seeing young people only as victims of their circumstances.

“There is no lack of ordinary young people doing extraordinary things,” said Chernor Bah, Chairman of GEFI’s Youth Advocacy Group (YAG) – from Sierra Leone – during a panel discussion. “The [problem] is social and institutional structures including [the United Nations] that are created almost deliberately to exclude young people and keep our stories out.”

Up for School

Reiterating the ripple effect that Malala Yousafzai’s courageous stand had on the world, Bah pointed out the success of such initiatives as [#UpForSchool](#), a movement that currently boasts 500 youth ambassadors in over 86 countries and has garnered over six million signatures for its petition aimed at getting the world’s 56 million out-of-school children back into their classrooms.

“We need a radical paradigm shift, so that we embrace young people and collectively celebrate acts of courage,” he stressed, adding that every single day millions of young people like Malala are standing up for their rights, though their actions often go unnoticed.

Underpinning every effort to bring young people into the nexus of policy-making is the concept of Global Citizenship Education (GCED), which aims to foster a new kind of literacy for the 21st century.

Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea Ambassador Hahn Choong Hee said GCED, currently [enshrined](#) in the new Sustainable Development Agenda, should be viewed as a vehicle for thinking about our relationships with one another and with the planet.

For young people today living through political, economic and technological revolutions, the likes of which the world has never seen before, to say nothing of the impending threat of catastrophic climate change, GCED is not an option but an imperative. [IDN-InDepthNews – 15 October 2015] ◆

Fostering Global Citizenship

Newsletter with October-November 2015 Articles

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

UN Secretary-General Explains Significance of 2030 Global Goals

By Fabíola Ortiz



NEW YORK - The United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is keen that member countries make Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) an integral part of their national policies so as to ensure that these are achieved by 2030. In an interview with IDN, he also stressed the need for the civil society to play a critical role in pushing forward this new set of global targets.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets assign global citizenship a significant role in promoting sustainable development, in line with the fact that Ban launched in September 2012 the five-year Global Education First Initiative (GEFI). “I have been urging all leaders in the process of meeting them on a bilateral or multilateral basis that each and every member state should take a very strong ownership of these SDGs to make these goals their goals, change and reflect the goals into their national domestic economic social and environmental policies,” Ban told IDN in an interview.

The Secretary-General talked to IDN on the 38th floor of the Secretariat building at the UN Headquarters in New York after coming back from the 2015 Annual Meetings of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund (October 9-11) in Lima, Peru.

The annual gathering of finance ministers and central bank governors from 188 countries took place two weeks after a historic vote at the United Nations to adopt the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. ➔

Fostering Global Citizenship

Newsletter with October-November 2015 Articles

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

Ban Ki-moon joined the discussion on October 10 at the Development Committee of the World Bank Group and IMF. The so-called Development Committee was established in 1974 and works as a ministerial-level forum for intergovernmental consensus building on development issues.

The 2030 Agenda is “centred on people”. In his remarks to the Development Committee meeting in Lima, Ban highlighted that the development path for the next fifteen years addresses the “structural factors” that have hindered poverty eradication, inclusive growth and sustainable development. Its motto is “Leave no one behind”.

“Success will rely on a renewed partnership for development among all actors, including governments, parliaments, local authorities, international institutions, civil society, academia and the private sector,” the UN Secretary-General said in Lima emphasizing: “The World Bank can step up capacity building and the mobilization of resources for sustainable development by drawing on its rich technical expertise.”

Ban Ki-Moon reiterated in IDN interview that the 17 goals with 169 targets aim to promote prosperity and well-being for everyone, everywhere, on a healthy planet.

“It is crucial and very important that these SDGs are implemented with everybody’s participation, not only with governments, but also with civil communities and philanthropists,” he declared.

The motto for the post 2000 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), “leave no one behind”, seeks to strengthen the sense of ownership societies should embrace.

Asked if he regrets that sexual diversity and LGBTI (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex) rights were not included in any specific goal, Ban said that this issue is permeated in a “transversal way” all items in the new development agenda.

“It is already implicit that the SDGs are leaving no one behind. Everybody should be on board. The values of ethnicity, sexual orientation, regardless of sex or where you are coming from, whether is poor or rich. There is no discrimination, it is a people centred vision,” Ban told IDN.

For the UN Secretary-General, the next fifteen years are a “moment of hope” particularly for the people in Africa, where the SDGs shall work converging with the Agenda 2063 adopted in the African Union (AU) 24th Ordinary Assembly on January 31, 2015 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

SDGs and Agenda 2063

African countries listed eight aspirations they want to achieve in the next five decades. These will serve as pillars for the continent to develop its economies. In operational terms, the Agenda 2063 will have a rolling plan of twenty-five, ten and five years with short term action plans.

The aspirations for the “Africa We Want” provide a framework for addressing past injustices and realization of the 21st century on the African continent by way of eradicating poverty in one generation and building a shared prosperity through social and economic transformation of the continent.

We aspire that by 2063, Africa shall be a prosperous continent, with the means and resources to drive its own development,” with sustainable and long-term stewardship of its resources, reaffirms the document.

Among the ideals, in fifty years, Africa shall be free from armed conflict, terrorism, extremism, intolerance and gender-based violence. Those are major threats to human security, peace and development.

The continent will also be drugs-free, with no human trafficking, with no organized crimes and other forms of criminal networks, such as the arms trade and piracy.

Before that, by 2020, all remnants of colonialism will have ended and all African territories under occupation fully liberated.

Added to this, the continent’s population will enjoy affordable access to independent courts and judiciary that deliver justice without fear or favour.

In Ban Ki-moon’s words, the UN is seeing with “great priority” African peace and development, with good rule of law and good institutions. ➔

Fostering Global Citizenship

Newsletter with October-November 2015 Articles

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

“The production of the 17 SDGs covers all the spectrums of human lives as well as planet and Earth. Particularly when it comes to African development, the SDGs are alive with Africa Agenda 2063,” stressed the UN Secretary-General in a group meeting with four journalists.

And this is why the UN is “very much engaged with African Union and each of the African countries through development projects, through peace and security agendas,” he said.

Ban described the African development aspirations as a “visionary agenda” with which the UN is working very closely.

“I believe Agenda 2063 and SDGs should go hand in hand and their basic programs be aligned with each other,” he added.

According to Ban, the global development agreement was an inclusive process adopted by leaders around the globe in which “millions of people have participated”.

Financial and technical cooperation play a key role in the full implementation of the SDGs in the next years, he pointed out. But it is also going to be costly. Heads of State or Government, relevant ministers – ministers for finance, foreign affairs and development cooperation – and other special representatives gathered in Ethiopia from July 13-16 to explore ways on how to fund the ambitious set of goals that include ending poverty, hunger and achieving food security.

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda was the outcome of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development that discussed mechanisms to finance development. According to UN estimates, to comply with the new goals the world will need \$11.5 trillion a year or a total of \$172.5 trillion over a 15-year period.

“After three long years of negotiation, the world has adopted this framework which lays down the ground rock of providing financial and technological support for the developing world”, said Ban to a selected group of journalists.

The final document in Ethiopia affirms the “strong political commitment” to address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity.

“This agenda must be underpinned by equally ambitious and credible means of implementation. (...) to further strengthen the framework to finance sustainable development and the means of implementation for the universal post-2015 development agenda; and to reinvigorate and strengthen the financing for development”, says the document.

The final document recognizes that many countries, particularly developing nations, still face considerable challenges and “some have fallen further behind”. Inequalities within many countries have “increased dramatically”, informed the paper.

The Secretary-General took office in January 1, 2007 and is due to finish his post as the chief administrative officer of the organisation by December 31, 2016. Ban welcomed the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, founded in 1945 that is currently made up of 193 Member States.

In his opinion, one of the largest contributions of the UN was participating in the decolonization process in African and Asian countries. Between the 1950’s and 1960’s, more than forty nations became independent on those two continents.

“A huge contribution for humanity is the decolonization process of many countries from the colonial systems. It was the UN who really promoted the rapid decolonization process. This has been the basis of African development on developing states,” he told journalists.

In the course of the last decades of the independence of many African countries, some have undergone through a “smooth transition to democracy”, while most of the countries had to go through a “very turbulent tragic path towards democratic transition”. There are still some states facing this challenge nowadays.

“Looking back at the 70 years of the UN, I am conscious of certain concerns about effectiveness and efficiency and what kind of legacy UN has left. I am very proud what UN has been doing in the last seven decades. All the important agreements for human rights, good governance and democracy have been done at the UN,” Ban declared.

The sustainable development agenda will guide the world towards a better security, more prosperous and more sustainable path, he added. [IDN-InDepthNews – 14 October 2015] ◆

Fostering Global Citizenship

Newsletter with October-November 2015 Articles

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

Pacific Islanders Debating ‘Oceanian’ and Global Citizenship

By Shailendra Singh*

SUVA, Fiji - Discussions about the concept of ‘Global Citizenship’ are gaining momentum in various international forums, but remain largely unexplored in the Pacific Islands.

According to Ron Israel, co-founder of The Global Citizens’ Initiative, Global Citizens think beyond communities based on shared group identities, and see themselves as part of a larger, emerging world community.

In the Pacific, the late Tongan academic and philosopher, Professor Epeli Hau’ofa, had gone as far as proposing a common regional identity he called the “new Oceania”, comprising of people with a common Pacific heritage and commitment, rather than as members of diverse nationalities and races.

In Hau’ofa’s conceptualization, an Oceanian was anyone who lived in the Pacific, and was committed to the region, regardless of ethnicity or religion. His framework also accounted for the “astounding mobility” of Pacific Islanders over the last half-century or more. This expanded version of Oceania covered larger areas than was “possible under the term Pacific Islands region,” forming a “world of social networks that criss-cross the ocean, all the way from Australia and New Zealand in the southwest, to the United States and Canada in the northeast.”

Hau’ofa felt that a common, enlarged Pacific identity was crucial for the advancement of collective regional interests, including the protection of the vital Pacific Ocean.

Connecting and mobilizing people to gain strength in numbers in order to agitate for common interests, is the thread that binds the Oceanian and the Global Citizen concepts. Global Citizen is just more expansive. Its proponents link it to the universal values of justice, democratic participation, diversity, and global solidarity as the building blocks for peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and sustainable societies.

Pacific Island commentators laud the concept, but feel that certain cultural, economic, geographical and historical obstacles could stand in the way of its implementation. Former University of the South Pacific (USP) academic in literature, Dr Som Prakash, feels that some Global Citizen values are incompatible with the cultural beliefs, philosophies and life-styles of Pacific Island societies. For instance, egalitarianism is seen as inimical to the hierarchical nature of some Pacific societies, such as chiefly power in Fiji, the aristocracy in Tonga, and matai (chiefly) system in Western Samoa.

“Democracy, for example, is not always welcomed by traditional chiefs who are given much more power and authority than the ordinary folks,” says Prakash. “It takes a while for the ordinary Pacific cultures to get accustomed to the questioning of elders and chiefs. Often peace (one of the pillars of Global Citizenship) is argued to be better attained under a benevolent dictator,” adds Prakash.

There are some other apparent contradictions. As pointed out by Fiji’s former vice-president, Ratu Jone Madriwiwi, in collective Pacific societies like Fiji, group interests supersede individual interests. Global citizenry, on the other hand, centers on individuals as the agents of change through instilling in them “awareness of the interconnected nature of the world and the need for a global focus for development.”

However, the likes of Fiji-based university student, Duane Mar, do not see the above paradoxes as obstacles. Mar points out that the Pacific is equally affected, if not more, by some common world problems, which transcend geographical, cultural, and philosophical differences.

“Global citizen is a person whose ideals and thought processes are based around those of the general global issues, such as poverty, climate change and human rights,” says Mar. “In many rural Pacific communities, the people are very much aware of issues like climate change, and the need to combat poverty. These issues are discussed at the community level and from there, villages often work with NGO groups to address them,” adds Mar.

Moreover, collectivism, based on group solidarity, has some clear parallels with the Global Citizen concept of “interdependency”, even though the Global Citizen model encompasses an “interdependent world” rather than just the village, or clan. Global Citizen, as espoused by UNESCO and other institutions, promotes the idea that people’s “individual and collective actions have a global impact – and it is their responsibility to engage in positive actions for their communities and the planet.” ☺

Fostering Global Citizenship

Newsletter with October-November 2015 Articles

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

The idea of collective responsibility to address global problems is likely to resonate with Pacific peoples, especially in relation to global warming and sea-level rise, seen as a severe threat to the region. For more than a decade, one Pacific leader after another has stood up at various international forums to urge the industrialized nations to take responsibility for global warming and implement meaningful policies to reduce carbon emissions.

As Kiribati President Anote Tong has often pointed out, the Pacific region contributes the least, just three per cent, to global warming, but many islands are on the “frontline” of sea level rise.” Speaking at a recent meeting of Pacific Island leaders, Fiji Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama blamed the industrialized nations for “our slide into disaster.” He added that, “the industrialized world needs to reorganize its economies and its priorities to stop pumping excessive carbon emissions that are warming the planet. To let us sink beneath the waves is totally immoral. The world must not betray us.”

Another recent Pacific leaders' meeting in the Papua New Guinean capital, Port Moresby, ended in a stalemate after Australia and New Zealand blocked a bid from low-lying island nations for a tougher global target. This stance has led to increased polarization, with one commentator stating that the “lacklustre response by Australia and New Zealand to the plight of Pacific nations has finally reached boiling point.”

Mar describes the Pacific’s global warming predicament as the “tragedy of the commons”, which in this case refers to the actions of some nations having an adverse impact on others, including those nations that did not contribute to the situation.

On his part, USP academic Prakash sees Australia and New Zealand's intransigency over the global warming issues as perhaps the most recent example of the many ways in which the greater powers have treated the Pacific with "carelessness, if not contempt." Prakash feels that such treatment lead to skepticism in the region about what inevitably comes to be seen as “fancy notions of globalization, often emanating from well-to-do nations.” He adds that “the most visible and tangible effects of globalization is the crass TV, mobile phones and social media that inundate our Pacific societies.”

However, as Mar points out, the Pacific has, in some ways, benefited from globalization. Furthermore, globalization and Global Citizenry are two distinct ideas. In fact, Global Citizen principles aim to address situations such as “tragedy of the commons”, a by-product of globalization, although it is easy to see how the two terms could be confused.

The reality is that despite their smallness and isolation, the Pacific region’s destiny is tied up with that of the rest of the world, something which Hau’ofa was keenly aware of. Surely Hau’ofa was thinking along Global Citizen lines when he wrote that “we cannot confront the issues of the Pacific Century as individual, tiny countries created by colonial powers and acting alone. We could indeed ‘fall off the map’ or disappear into the black hole of a gigantic Pan-Pacific doughnut.”

*Shailendra Singh is Coordinator and Senior Lecturer in Journalism at the School of Language, Arts & Media, Faculty of Arts, Law & Education at the University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji. The views in the story are not necessarily shared by the USP, where the writer is employed. [IDN-InDepthNews – 05 October 2015] ◆



Fostering Global Citizenship

Newsletter with October-November 2015 Articles

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

France Pumps Up Climate Change Volume to Avert Failure

By A.D. McKenzie

Never before has a UN climate change conference drawn such worldwide attention as COP21 is doing since the beginning of the year. This is an incontrovertible evidence that climate change is bringing together people from around the world, fostering a kind of global citizenship that is unique.



Paris on a car-free day | Photo credit: A.D. McKenzie

PARIS - Tourists and locals walking along the River Seine, near the famed Musée d'Orsay, are currently able to charge their mobile phones at three unlikely installations: solar-powered street lamps.

The tall posts, topped by photovoltaic panels, have been set up by French NGO [Electriciens sans frontières \(ESF\)](#) in an attempt to heighten public awareness about climate change issues, ahead of COP 21, the next United Nations climate talks that will be held in the French capital.

“We’re also trying to show the public that there are solutions to the fight against climate change and to the lack of electricity in some parts of the world,” said Laura Cornu, ESF’s communications manager.

Over the past two decades the group has installed panels in rural areas in Africa, in refugee camps in Jordan, and in tent cities after earthquakes in both Haiti and Nepal. The Seine street lamps were among 170 projects submitted to the Paris Mayor’s office in a call for innovative climate action. ☺

Fostering Global Citizenship

Newsletter with October-November 2015 Articles

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

Not far from the lamps, meanwhile, is an embarkation area where tourists can board a solar-energy-powered boat for a cruise on the Seine. On rainy days, the boat sails on energy stored in its batteries, even as passengers shiver in the bracing wind.

But on sunny days, the vessel draws from power captured by the solar panels on its roof, with the crew explaining both the “wonders” of solar technology and that of the city to travellers.

Solar lamps and boats are just some of the high-profile initiatives being pushed as France pumps up the volume to make world leaders and the international community aware of the stakes in the run-up to the climate talks set for November 30 to December 11.

With his top ministers in attendance, French President François Hollande launched an ambitious drive in September to ensure success, though he warned that the possibility of failure was real.

“There is no miracle ... there is a chance we’ll succeed but also a great risk we might fail,” said Hollande, speaking at a half-day meeting that gathered political leaders, artists, scientists, CEOs, non-governmental organizations, students and others – at the imposing Elysee Palace, the president’s official residence.

Alongside NGOs, the government has supported numerous conferences and projects, and the French capital even declared a car-free day on September 27, following in the footsteps of Brussels, which has had such programmes for several years.

But the volume is now being pumped up in unprecedented fashion, through song and dance, artistic projects, citizen marches, a COP 21 postage stamp, and the highlighting of innovative ventures such as using a stationary bike to generate energy for a sound system.

On Oct. 3, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius will also open a forum called “Make it work: civil society commits itself in support of climate”. Organized jointly by a local university and a newspaper, the forum will bring some 500 participants together to discuss climate change issues.

One can also take part in off-beat, civil-society actions that include “24 hours of meditation for the earth” – scheduled for November 1 – and a “fast for the climate” project – in which citizens have been asked to fast the first day of each month until COP 21, the 21st Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Among the “artistic movers” is a group called ArtCop21, which plans to “stage city-wide cultural events that address climate as a people’s challenge and work to create a cultural blueprint of positive and sustainable change”.

The group’s director, Lauranne Germond, said that sometimes artists can reach those that politicians can’t. But it’s anyone’s guess how much of an effect all this will have on reaching an agreement in December.

For a desired outcome, Hollande reiterated that one of the “keys to success” would be resolving the issue of financing for developing countries – an amount that has been set at \$100 billion annually from 2020.

This funding is considered crucial for vulnerable states to adapt to climate change, and ways of raising the finances will be discussed at a European Council summit in mid-October, among other meetings. Some of the means will include taxes on financial transactions, Hollande said, outlining France’s own commitment to contributions.

He indicated that funding may also help to ease the migration crisis in the world, as climate change has also created refugees, along with conflict, “dictators ... and terrorism”. ➔



Fostering Global Citizenship

Newsletter with October-November 2015 Articles

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

French Prime Minister Manuel Valls has additionally stressed that the people mainly affected by global warming are the “most vulnerable, the poorest” and said that France has a “determining role to play” in taking action.



Describing some of the effects of global warming on small island states, one of the participants at the Elysee [Victorin Lurel of Guadeloupe | Photo credit: A.D. McKenzie] conference, Victorin Lurel of Guadeloupe, told IDN that Caribbean islands, for instance, have been suffering the loss of coastal areas, more intense hurricanes and other phenomena, even though they are not among the major emitters of greenhouse gases.

“It’s about survival for us,” said Lurel, President of the Regional Council of Guadeloupe, a French overseas territory.

He said that Caribbean islands are also mobilizing to raise awareness, as global warming is a universal problem, no matter who the main culprits might be.

Ségolène Royal, the French Minister for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy, said she was pleased to see the “formidable rise” in action among civil society. She said this needed to continue up to the climate change conference and beyond.

Royal outlined the “challenges” in simple terms: halting the destruction of the environment including forests; reducing pollution, including of oceans; reducing emissions; and ending the over-exploitation of resources.

According to the French government, COP 21 will be the most important conference France has ever hosted, not only because of the great challenges to the world but because of the “tens of thousands” of people who will be physically participating as well as watching.

For some NGOs, it will be important for another reason: perhaps French citizens will start listening to them, as France has lagged behind other countries such as Germany and Switzerland in national environmental awareness.

In informal surveys done during previous climate change conferences, people on the streets of Paris, for example, showed a near-complete lack of interest in climate change issues and in the outcome of the talks. Many expressed ignorance about the negotiations to reduce carbon emissions or the international goal to keep global temperatures below an increase of 2 degrees Celsius.

“We still don’t think that we have been fully heard,” said Diane Simiu, director of conservation programmes at WWF in France and representative of an NGO network .

Will all the artistic input – including more films about the environment from renowned French directors – be effective?

“It’s late and maybe even too late,” Hollande emphasized in September. “Therefore action is urgent ... we can’t say that we didn’t know.”

Follow the writer on Twitter: [@mckenzie_ale](https://twitter.com/mckenzie_ale) [IDN-InDepthNews – 02 October 2015] ◆

Fostering Global Citizenship

Newsletter with October-November 2015 Articles

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



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

Fostering Global Citizenship

Newsletter with October-November 2015 Articles

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

<http://www.fostering-globalcitizenship.net/documents/globalcitizenshipforum.pdf>



Publisher: Global Cooperation Council
- umbrella organisation of IPS-Inter Press Service Deutschland -
SGI-IPS Project Director: Katsuhiko Asagiri | President IPS Japan
Global Project Coordinator & Editor: Ramesh Jaura