

# DKG@UN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF  
THE DELTA KAPPA GAMMA SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION AND  
THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

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As in our previous issue, the focus in this one is on peace, education for peace, and the involvement of young people in activities related to peace and global understanding. Our lead article is the announcement of the next CTAUN Conference at the United Nations: "Promoting Peace Through Education." The article is a reproduction of the Conference Statement.

## CTAUN CONFERENCE AT THE UNITED NATIONS, FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 2014

### Promoting Peace Through Education

*It is not enough to teach children how to read, write and count. Education has to cultivate mutual respect for others and the world in which we live, and help people forge more just, inclusive and peaceful societies.*

*~~ UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon 12 June 2013*

Ever since the Charter of the United Nations was ratified on 24 October 1945, member states, NGOs, and civil society have worked together to solve international conflicts through diplomacy instead of through violence. Determined to save humankind from the horror of war, to reaffirm faith in human rights, to establish justice and respect for international law, and to promote social progress and better standards of life, they have promised to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors for the economic and social advancement of all peoples. Over the past six decades they have succeeded on many counts, but conflict and violence persist with increasing ferocity.

CTAUN invites educators, students, and concerned citizens to join with distinguished speakers as we explore how the UN and the international community promote disarmament and confront current threats to peace, such as climate change, gender and economic inequality, hunger, and terrorism. Especially crucial is the number of children worldwide deprived of even a primary education.

We will also consider programs counteracting barriers to peace. We will highlight the need for education in nonviolent conflict management in the belief that every person, especially educators, can be builders of peace on individual, local, national and international levels. With the adoption of new Common Core Standards in the US, it is more important than ever that students learn to use research and critical thinking skills for real-life applications. By teaching about the power and potential of global peace, we empower our young people to navigate the 21<sup>st</sup> century world.

In July, on her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, Malala Yousafzai, shot in the head last year by the Taliban on her way to school in Pakistan, electrified the world with her stirring words to a UN Youth Conference

in New York City. “Let us pick up our books and pens,” she said. “They are our most powerful weapons. One teacher, one book, one pen can change the world.” Let us follow her lead.

For additional information and to register, visit the CTAUN website: [www.teachun.org](http://www.teachun.org).

## **REVIEW OF THE UN HIGH LEVEL FORUM ON THE CULTURE OF PEACE** **By Lochie Musso, NGO Representative (NY)**

In the visitor section of the UN there is a digital display of the amount of money being spent *daily* on *warfare* around the world. On September 6, while attending the day-long event described here, I was able to view this display. At about 3 p.m. it read \$2,789,635,986.97 and was rising fast as those digits continued to turn. It would surely reach 3 billion before the end of the day!

His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremic, President of the 67<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, convened this meeting by stating that “the culture of peace is the agenda for a new global civilization. Where are we now?” He opened the discussions with reference to the beginning words of the UN’s 1945 Charter, “We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save the succeeding generations from the scourge of war. . .” and the 1999 UN resolution 53/243 on the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, which the UN General Assembly has repeatedly adopted every year since. He said, “To build a society of justice, we must be just.” H. E. Mr. Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General of the UN, reminded all that “numbers of casualties [in war] represent human individuals.” He challenged authority and power figures “to reorient budgets away from war and towards humanitarian needs” and declared that the “absence of war” is not enough; we have a responsibility to the next generation to develop a “culture of peace.”

Three religious leaders followed: His Holiness Patriarch Irinej of Serbia; Dr. Sayyid M. Syeed, National Director, Office for Interfaith and Community Alliances, Islamic Society of North America; Elie Abadie, M.D., Rabbi, The Edmond J. Safra Synagogue. Each promoted peace and harmony, and also encouraged peoples to look for similarities rather than differences among religions and cultures. Dr. Syeed stated, “The Koran says do not return evil with evil.” The Syrian Patriarch noted that a “culture of peace is incompatible with selfishness” and counseled that a “mask of altruism may cover self interests.” As this event occurred on the Jewish holiday of Rosh Hashanah, Dr. Abadie spoke via video. He expounded on the idea that our “differences must be used to connect, not be a means of division and conflict.” We must teach respect and tolerance; religious powers must be equally regarded.

Both a High Level Segment and three Interactive Panel Discussions were also on the day-long agenda. Representatives from the UN, Foreign Ministers, college administrators, professors, and leading peace advocates from civil society around the world (some 22 in all) spoke on three themes: “The Role of Interfaith Cooperation in Promoting a Global Culture of Peace”; “The Culture of Peace as the Agenda for a New Global Civilization: Where are We Now?”; “Strategy for Advancing the Implementation of the UN Programme of Action on Culture of Peace: What are Needed?”

All speakers talked about the need for education as a tool in promoting a culture of peace; it is the “key” in creating “citizens of the world.” Many voiced the opinion that “where and when women are marginalized, there is no chance for a culture of peace.” Ms. Abigail Disney, filmmaker and philanthropist, spoke of the “mythology of violence” being exported from the United States. She warned of the prolific brutality exhibited in the “Entertainment/Industrial Complex” and the representation of peace as “weak and dorky.”

As you might guess, it was a thought-provoking day! What can DKG educators do? First, perhaps, evaluate our own position. As Patriarch Irinej noted, “Individual inner peace is needed for universal peace.” As educators we are in an ideal position to define and encourage what Georgetown Professor John O. Voll called “a mind-set of peace.” And be sure to check out the CTAUN website (teachun.org) for teacher resources on peace.

Shalom. Salaam. Peace be with you.

**A REVIEW OF “EDUCATING AND EMPLOYING YOUTH: THE INFLUENCE OF  
PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS IN A TECHNOLOGICAL ERA  
By Grace Murphy, NGO Representative (NY)**

This youth-led briefing on 7 November 2013 was very well-organized and presented. The panel discussion, moderated by Olga Mun, a graduate student at Lehigh University, began with a statement by Alex Wirth, a junior at Harvard, that although in the very near future a changing work force will require a post-secondary education, 30% of college students do not graduate, 47% of them believing education is not relevant. Jamira Birley, a recent graduate of Temple, concurred that both secondary and higher education are necessary and that the largest population of young people that the world has ever known is faced with an uncertain future. Gretel Trunong, a graduate of the University of Virginia, stated that corporate giving to global health is 16 times what it is to education. To strengthen the curriculum, she called for the use of technology, and for advocacy by corporations and groups associated with the United Nations.

Ms. Mun then posed questions to the panelists and the audience:

- ❑ How can we reach out to youth who lack access to ICT (Information Communications Technology)?
- ❑ How can we maximize advocacy and opportunities for youth?
- ❑ What role will technology play in the future of education? How will it vary by region?
- ❑ How can youth educate themselves and each other?

Some ideas that surfaced were that governments are responsible for providing quality education; there must be education for older people, too; and creative collaboration is critical.

Ahmad Alhendawi, the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, concluded the session with these thoughts: many millions of jobs must be created because there is little use for a good education if one cannot find a job; and in the future, one will probably not have the same job for 40 or 60 years, so everyone must know how to learn, unlearn and relearn. Partnerships are necessary to encourage entrepreneurs, offer financial support to new businesses and coach their owners—in essence, to give youth an opportunity.

**RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS**

**United Nations Academic Impact Essay Contest.** In celebration of the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United Nations, The United Nations Academic Impact, in collaboration with ELS Educational Services, Inc., invites students, 18 years and older, who are enrolled in a course of study at a college or university, to participate in an essay contest on the theme “Many Languages, One World.” The essay should relate to ideas of global citizenship and understanding and to the role that linguistic abilities and felicity play in fostering these. Entries of up to 2,000 words in length should be in an official language of the United Nations that is not the mother tongue of the entrant

or the principal medium of educational instruction. The official languages of the UN are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. Entries should be uploaded to the website <http://manylanguagesoneworld.els.edu> by 21 February 2014.

An institutional representative will have to attest that the entrant is a student of the institution in good standing and that the essay is written in a language that is not the institution's primary language of instruction and is the original, unaided work of the entrant. A panel of judges will decide upon a total of sixty student winners of the competition—ten in each of the six languages. ELS Educational Services Inc. will award each winner with a five day, all expenses paid, trip to New York to participate in a series of events between June 25 and June 29, 2014. Competition details can be found on a dedicated website <http://manylanguagesoneworld.els.edu>.

**Teachforall.org.** In his column in *The New York Times* on October 30, 2013, Thomas Friedman invited his readers to “Meet the Makers.” In this column he tells about traveling to a village near the China-Myanmar border to meet teacher leaders from 32 different countries who work to bring education to less-advantaged areas. Teach for All is based on the model of Teach for America, founded by Wendy Kopp, who is now also the CEO of Teach for All. Friedman commented that “I’ve spent so much time writing about people who are breaking things and so little covering people who are making things. This was a week with the makers.”

He further stated that “Groups like Teach for China, which hosted the Teach for All network at village schools here, are too new to determine whether they can make a difference....But if raw idealism and willingness to take up the hardest challenges count for anything, you have to be hopeful.... [It] was like spending four days with 32 Malala Yousafzais from 32 different nations.”

The inspiring [www.teachforall.org](http://www.teachforall.org) website states that “Educational inequity is a systemic problem in rich and poor countries alike,” and describes some of the ways in which members of this international network interact and work to address such inequity in all parts of the world.

**Yousafzai, Malala. *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban*, by Malala Yousafzai with Christina Lamb. New York: Little, Brown & Company, 2013.**

(A personal note from your newsletter editor: My teenage granddaughters had heard about Malala and were fascinated by this new best seller when they discovered it in a book store.)

## **YOUR UN REPRESENTATIVES**

The members of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International listed below are your official representatives at the United Nations Department of Public Information and the Economic and Social Council. Most of them also work with CTAUN. You can email us for further information.

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