International Day of Peace & the UN70th Anniversary

Co-Chairs and Moderators, Margo LaZaro and Yvonne O’Neal opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and thanked H.E. Mr. Federico Gonzalez, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Paraguay to the United Nations and his staff for their support. Margo mentioned that we officially launched our Partnership Alliance for Peace Education: Building Cultures of Peace for Sustainable Communities Globally. They also thanked the NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values & Global Concerns; United Nations to Change a Life; Global Family; International Council of Women; World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations; UNDP Policy & Strategy Group; The World We Want Platform; Global Family for Love & Peace; Peace Boat US; Parliamentarians for Nuclear Nonproliferation & Disarmament and UNFOLD ZERO. Moreover, the co-chairs spoke of the important role NGOs played in producing the final draft of the draft of the Development Goals They specifically elucidated that SDG 16, which states, “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels” is an important aspect of the SDGs.

Margo introduced H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the UN70th General Assembly. On 15 June 2015, the United Nations General Assembly elected Mogens Lykketoft of Denmark to serve as the President of its seventieth session, which runs from September 2015 to September 2016. At the time of his election, Mr. Lykketoft was the Speaker of the Danish Parliament, a position he had held since 2011. H.E. Mr. Lykketoft thanked the co-chairs and the committee for inviting him to our meeting in observing the International Day of Peace. We must honor this day of peace, as the 2030 agenda says, “there will be no peace without Sustainable Development and there will be no Sustainable Development without peace”. In his statement, he elucidated that one of his key priorities is to focus on rapid implementation by partners and actors because the hallmarks of the agenda is multi stakeholders’ partnerships. Furthermore, he explained that member states do not always live up to their responsibilities and it is up to civil society to hold them accountable. It is critical that governments understand the urgency to act now before it’s too late. Civil Society must play their roles to ensure that leaders play their role.

Margo introduced H.E. Mr. Ib Petersen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations. Ambassador Petersen has been the Co-Chair of the Group of Friends of SE4ALL and Co-Facilitator for the intergovernmental consultations on the organizational modalities for the Post-2015 Summit. They explained that Ambassador Ib Peterson has been a wonderful supporter of the NGOCSD and they gracefully thanked him for his continuous support. Ambassador Petersen began his remarks by echoing Presidents Lykketoft’s remarks “the world needs civil society for the success of the Sustainable Development Agenda”. Furthermore, he explained that after more than 2 years of negotiations, we came up with an agreement. That Sunday evening when we agreed on the text, it was a very special evening. This new agenda is an objective agenda. It underlies the need for peace and stability which is Goal 16, if you remember from the open working group, the goals and targets encompass a variety of topics and it is universal. All countries contributed and all countries will benefit. We are moving on and now we have to start implementing, civil society will play an important role in the implementation process. Civil Society also has a role in communicating the goal. This is an agenda for all, that is: private sector, government and civil society. He completed by saying that we are all here to work together.

Margo and Yvonne welcomed H.E. Mr. Hahn Choong-hee, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations, the NGOCSD newest Honorary Advisor. He was elected as Chairperson of the 47th Session of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) for a 1-year term from July 2014 to July 2015. Ambassador Hahn began his remarks by explaining that there can be no Sustainable Development without peace and peace is more than an absent of war. People deserve to live a life of dignity. He further explained that we need to strengthen the culture of peace, as we all know the famous phrase in UNESCO, “since war begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men than defenses of peace must be constructed”. He further emphasized the importance of education, global citizenships, human dignity and tolerance. He spoke of the importance of tackling inequalities and social inclusion. “We have to work on inequalities, what it means in countries and between countries. It can lead to violence, and with Korea as the President of ECOSOC, we will like to have a special conference on inequalities in March 2016 to find solutions”. He ended his statements by thanking the co-chairs and committee for planning this important meeting, “it is important that we have all the stakeholders on the table as we all responsible for promoting the culture of peace.”

Yvonne and Margo introduced Ms. Marie Paule Roudil, Director of UNESCO Liaison Office New York. She previously was Head of the UNESCO Liaison Office in Brussels and the UNESCO Representative to the European Union having been appointed to that position in October 2010. In her remarks, she explained that UNESCO is a specialized agency that needs civil society. Further, she explained that we have to working together, to build peace in the minds of people around the work, through the cooperation in the areas of education, culture, communication and science. Mutual understating between the people around the world is a must. Without peace no Sustainable Development is possible, human rights and dignity must be our starting point, education remains a key to how we communication. Tolerance is not enough, we also have to understand people, and education has always been the response of UNESCO in violence extremism. Promoting learning to live together.

Margo and Yvonne introduced Mr. William Yotive, Project Manager of the United Nations Global Teaching and Learning Project within the Outreach Division of the UN Department of Public Information. Mr. Yotive is one of the focal points on youth for the UN Department of Public Information including the UN Cyberschoolbus Program. Mr. Yotive explained that the initiative, partnership for peace and dignity for all has two parts, the parts are important to recognize individually but its important to notice that they are intertwined with each other. Partnership for peace is something that the Secretary General has put great emphasis on and in his synthesis report on the Post-2015 agenda, he wrote “The road to dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet, achieving that depends on partnerships, which are an essential element in charting the world map to achieve dignity over the next 15 years and building peace around the world”. Further, dignity for all aims to highlight the fundamental principle that is articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the principle is the dignity and worth of the human person which is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. This is what drives the work of the UN. One of our main components is to keep the public at large, civil society, informed about the work of the United Nations. That responsibility has transformed to engaging the public on the work of the organization and young people is an enormous component of that. About 200,000 to 400,000 students engage in the model UN program yearly and it is important because it is the first step that introduces many young people to the UN, this also includes the Secretary General of the UN as well as many ambassadors and UN employees. An important aspect of the outreach program is to teach young people how the UN goes about making its decisions, understanding that the UN is an institution and about 80% of the decisions made at the UN are by consensus. *After Mr. Yotive's remarks, the Co-Chairs Margo & Yvonne and together with Secretary Modou Cham presented Mr. Yotive with the NGO Committee on Sustainable Development-NY Declaration of Appreciation and he is now an Honorary Lifetime member of the NGOCSD.

Margo and Yvonne introduced Mr. Ravi Karkara, Strategic Adviser, Partnership to the Assistant Secretary-General & Deputy Executive Director of UN-Women & Co-Chair of the Policy Strategy Group, for the World We Want Platform. Mr. Karkara explained that the World We Want 2015 is an online platform aimed at finding out peoples’ views on sustainable development and visualizing proposed solutions to development related issues.
The Co-Chairs adjourned the meeting at 6PM.

Margo invited Ms. Kehkashan Basu with her guitar to the front of the room to sing: *Kehkashan's Song for a Culture of Peace*.

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Margo acknowledged the 2006 UN International Day of Peace poster that appeared on the monitors in throughout the meeting.

Margo & Yvonne: welcomed a number of reflections from those attending the meeting.

Education and he expressed his interest in working with the NGOCSD initiative: Partnership Alliance for Peace Education: Building Cultures of Peace and reflect on the situation of his own home countries of Colombia and Venezuela. Mr. Vega presented the programs that Peace Boat has for Peace Education around the world as a volunteer interpreter helped him connect underlying issues threatening peace and security in local communities, was actively involved in environmental education and social justice advocacy with local and international organizations in Japan. Traveling with the Peace Boat, Mr. Vega has spoken at over 100 events around the world. Earth Guardians, is a International youth based environmental non-profit organization that is committed to protecting the water, air, earth, and atmosphere. He stressed the importance of building a culture of peace for our Sustainable Future.

Yvonne and Margo introduced Mr. Juan Carlos Uribe Vega, International Coordinator for Peace Boat. Before joining Peace Boat in 2010, Mr. Vega was actively involved in environmental education and social justice advocacy with local and international organizations in Japan. Traveling with the Peace Boat around the world as a volunteer interpreter helped him connect underlying issues threatening peace and security in local communities, and reflect on the situation of his own home countries of Colombia and Venezuela. Mr. Vega presented the programs that Peace Boat has for Peace Education and he expressed his interest in working with the NGOCSD initiative: Partnership Alliance for Peace Education: Building Cultures of Peace for Sustainable Communities Globally.

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There was a Q&A session following all of the presentations.

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