



Women – creators of peace

From the moment people started arriving at the Collaroy Centre, on Sydney's stunning north coast, there was a buzz in the air – the kind of energy that is generated when 235 women from over 30 countries come together to share their hearts and lives. The fifth Creators of Peace international conference took place in Australia 30 September – 4 October on the theme 'Creating a culture of peace – what will it take?'. A programme of *Initiatives of Change*, Creators of Peace is a women's initiative which challenges and empowers women to become active peace-makers.

The conference opened at dusk with an Aboriginal 'smoking ceremony' and a 'welcome to country' that spoke volumes for the generosity of spirit of the First Australians. Later, Linda Burney, New South Wales Minister for Community Services and the first Aboriginal to be elected to the NSW State Parliament, urged 'truth telling' as a key ingredient of peace creation.

Forgiveness was 'a golden thread weaving through every session', in stories of conflict from homes to countries. Rwandan woman, Didacienne Mukahabeshimana, told the astounding story of how she moved from bitterness and hatred towards those who killed members of her family, to caring for them and even creating 'Umuhuza', a non-governmental organization (NGO) which helps rehabilitate prisoners and the families of all those affected by the genocide.

Filomena Dos Reis, a poet and women's advocate from



Dr Lily Munir from Indonesia speaks with other panellists from South Africa, Afghanistan, Solomon Islands and Australia

Mike Brown

Timor-Leste, told how she had struggled for five years 'to overcome my feelings' after the disappearance of her husband during the conflict in her country. 'If you live with your hatred and anger, you block yourself off from others,' she tells her daughters. After she had spoken, a moving reconciliation took place with the Indonesian women present, bringing tears and embraces. In the following days, as regional groups met, Indonesians and Timorese combined their efforts in planning to carry forward the process of Creators of Peace.

The conference closed with participants sharing the experience that had been most transformational for them. One woman expressed: 'Often in our everyday lives we don't see each other or know one another, but during this conference we've really looked into each other's eyes – into each other's hearts... I see God in each one of you and I hope you see God in me.'

IofC Ethiopia officially launched

Carole Khakula



Initiatives of Change Ethiopia was officially launched in Addis Ababa on 16 October 2009 in the historic hall of the African Union attended by His Excellency Dr Girma Wolde-Giorgis, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of

Ethiopia. Among the 150 guests were Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun, Chair of the Caux Forum for Human Security, diplomats, government officials and representatives from the International Council of *Initiatives of Change* and other NGOs.

The launch paid tribute to years of steady IofC work in the country, going back to the 1960s. Ato Mammo Wudneh, one of the founders of this work, now passing on the baton to a new generation, said that 'his long-sought dream had come true'. His Excellency the President and Ambassador Sahnoun both spoke of the need to 'mould ethical citizens' in order to face the challenges posed by conflict, corruption, climate-change and injustice.

Dawit Dejene, Chairman of IofC Ethiopia, expressed IofC's commitment to developing future leaders who are equipped with integrity. He acknowledged the presence of IofC's Harambee Leadership Training participants and wished them success. Harambee is a Swahili word meaning 'working together for a common purpose'. This, the fifth such programme, began on 17 October, aiming to equip young people to give ethical leadership in Africa.

News in Brief

Imam and pastor awarded prize

Nigerians Imam Muhammad Ashafa and Pastor James Wuye have won the prestigious Fondation Chirac Prize for Conflict Prevention. In the 1990s the two men led rival armed militias in communal clashes which killed thousands. Now reconciled, they are co-directors of the Muslim-Christian Interfaith Mediation Centre in their city, leading task-forces to resolve conflicts across Nigeria. Their story is told in the award-winning documentary *The Imam and the Pastor* by IofC's FLT films. Ashafa and Wuye will attend the prize-giving ceremony in Paris on 6 November along with former French President Jacques Chirac, Kofi Annan and members of the jury. Pictures of Ashafa and Wuye will be placed on placards on the Avenue des Champs Elysées.

Migrants contribution to peace

A meeting on 'Migration – an opportunity' organized by CAUX-Initiatives of Change in the Lucerne Town Hall, Switzerland, at the end of September brought together more than 70 people, including the Mayor and the President of the Cantonal Parliament. Panelists from Somalia, Burundi, Sri Lanka and Kosovo revealed how migrants from conflict regions can be part of a peace process in the countries that they came from – something that is often overlooked. One had received threats because of his work to bring together Tamils and Sinhalese. Another concluded there was so much to learn from 'how you [Swiss] live together with difference. We need to take this back to our countries.' The meeting was a contribution towards the United Nations 'Year of Reconciliation'. CAUX-Initiatives of Change, along with 10 other NGOs ran a series of events on this theme between 21 September (the International Day of Peace) and 2 October (the International Day for Non-Violence).

Foundations for Freedom registered in Ukraine

IofC's Foundations for Freedom (F4F) programme was officially registered as an independent international NGO based in Ukraine on 9 September, 2009. It was the culmination of a process over several years to transfer ownership of F4F from its origins in 1993, as a programme of IofC-UK, to a new generation of leaders based in Central and

Eastern Europe. The mission of the newly created organization is, 'to promote development of truly free, democratic and fair societies where citizens understand and practise the values on which freedom thrives, in particular honesty, integrity, personal responsibility and servant leadership'. F4F works mainly through training courses, workshops and team-building. To comply with Ukrainian law, 14 branches of F4F were created throughout Ukraine, expanding the strong fellowship already established in Moldova, Russia, Romania, Latvia, Serbia, and elsewhere in the region.

Asia Pacific Youth Conference



To the rhythm of Tai Drums performed by Taiwanese school students, the 15th Asia Pacific Youth Conference was launched in the harbour city of Kaohsiung, Taiwan. Coming from 15 countries and a variety of cultural and faith backgrounds, 86 young and enthusiastic participants gathered from 1–8 August, 2009, under the theme 'Challenge, Choice, Change – Creating a culture of trust and integrity'. The programme included morning times of inner reflection, plenaries on the link between personal and global change and case studies of citizen-led campaigns for Clean Elections, Australia's Sorry Day campaign for indigenous-non indigenous reconciliation, and other initiatives.

An Open Space meeting gave participants an opportunity to raise issues of concern and begin to take responsibility for them. Some of these involved honest conversation between neighbouring countries leading to the start of a shared vision.

The final session took place as typhoon Morakot, Taiwan's most serious in 50 years, raged outside, causing floods, evacuations and uprooting trees. In an outpouring of pain, joy

and freedom from past burdens, the participants expressed the decisions and commitments they were taking away with them. One Malaysian delegate apologized for the mistreatment of Indonesian labourers working in her country, an issue that has contributed to the current tension between both countries. They left, empowered by 'the sense of the unique contribution each could offer' and the importance, as Albert Chang, Chairperson of IofC Taiwan put it, of 'making the right choice' for the sake of tomorrow.

2009 Caux conference report

This year's series of eight conferences during July–August, drawing 1246 people from 71 countries to Caux, the international centre for *Initiatives of Change* in Switzerland, has been captured in a 16-page colour report available from IofC centres, or on-line at www.iofc.org

CALENDAR

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

17 October – 30 November

Harambee Leadership Training

LIVERPOOL, UK

13 – 14 November

Building Trust for our Future conference

PANCHGANI, INDIA

20 – 24 November

From Financial Crisis to a New Economic Order international conference

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

5 – 14 February 2010

Life Matters Course

QUEBEC, CANADA

March – April 2010

Caravan of Dialogues for Peace

CAUX, SWITZERLAND

2 July – 17 August 2010

Caux Conferences

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Geoffrey Lean speaking at the Caux Forum for Human Security

PEOPLE BUILDING TRUST

A new deal to tackle global warming

A global deal on climate change depends on building trust, says Geoffrey Lean, veteran environmental journalist and editor of the UN Environment Programme's magazine Our Planet. He talks to Michael Smith.

Just how fast global warming is changing the world can be measured by the northern polar ice cap, says Geoffrey Lean. 'In 1997 I wrote a story about a leading scientist predicting that it would melt entirely during the summer months by the end of this century. It caused quite a stir at the time. But the same scientist, a gentle and most un-alarmist man, has now just concluded it will be mostly gone by 2020 and all by 2030.'

A new global deal to limit the greenhouse gas emissions that cause global warming is urgently needed. Without it the world will see increasing famines, floods, and mass migrations. But Lean says whether or not a new treaty can be signed at December's UN summit on climate change in Copenhagen largely hinges on just one word—'trust'.

'The negotiations are hopelessly bogged down, and much of this is due to lack of trust'

'Unusually for UN negotiations virtually every country wants to strike a deal,' he explains. 'There is even general agreement on what its main provisions should be. The developed countries would agree to cut their emissions heavily, the rapidly industrializing ones would agree strongly to cut the rate at which they are growing, and both would contribute to a fund to help the poorest and most vulnerable nations of all take their own action to control the pollution and adapt to the devastating effects

of climate change.'

'Indeed some of this is already happening. Rich country commitments to make cuts are inching up and countries like China, India, Mexico, Brazil and other poor countries are now promising to reduce the growth of their emissions far further than anyone predicted.'

'But nevertheless the negotiations are hopelessly bogged down, and much of this is due to lack of trust. The problems round the table are at least as big as those on the table.'

One example arose at the last negotiating session in Bangkok in October, adds Lean, who with over 40 years of reporting on green issues is one of the world's most experienced environmental commentators. 'Developing countries walked out of a meeting, accusing the rich of trying to kill the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, the existing treaty on climate change, which the US has never signed, because it never committed developing countries to reducing their carbon emissions. They are attached to it, and want it extended and revised, because it recognizes their right to develop. But in America, the words Kyoto Protocol are toxic. Nobody supports it.'

'If there is trust between the negotiators then this is resolvable,' Lean continues. 'You could take the best of Kyoto, add it to a different treaty and call it something else.' But, as it is, the poor say, 'They are trying to stab us in the back.' And the rich countries counter, 'Can't they see that we can't do this? Why are they being so stupid?' These are very human factors on a national scale. But it is these kinds of bombs that blow up if you don't have trust.'



Lean warns about 'the huge legacy of human reactions that have built up over the years of negotiations, not just on climate but on rich-poor negotiations. People tend to think the worst of each other rather than the best. So though everyone wants a deal [at Copenhagen], they leap, like in a marriage going wrong, on the worst interpretation of each others' behaviour.'

Moreover, many politicians vote, not in the world's interest, or even their national interest, but in the interests of their own constituencies or lobbyists representing coal, oil or cars. 'So there are huge moral challenges out there. Unless they are resolved we won't get agreement.'

'There are huge moral challenges out there. Unless they are resolved we won't get agreement'

Lean sees hope in 'the most successful environmental treaty of all times': the Montreal Protocol on the depletion of the protective ozone layer in the upper atmosphere caused by chemical pollutants. It was put together by the 'rumbustious' Egyptian Mostafa Tolba, then the Executive Director of the UN's Environment Programme. 'One of his negotiating tactics was to put the 15 or so key negotiators in the worst room in the conference centre and keep them there till they reached agreement. He was tough. But he also realized very early on that without trust nothing happened, and put enormous effort to building it.'

The wording of the final treaty was so delicate it could not be translated from the English into the other five UN languages, because the changing nuances would have bust the deal. But once it was signed industries saw the world had changed and moved very fast to introduce new substances. 'It was really tight: without that trust you could never have got it.'

A leader could yet pull off a similar miracle in Copenhagen. UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown is putting a huge amount of work into it. And Lean hopes that President Obama will make the 301 mile journey from Oslo, where he will accept the Nobel Peace Prize,

during the conference. 'Could the American President, by heading straight to Denmark after collecting his prize, actually demonstrate why he was the right pick for the honour?' he wrote recently.

Geoffrey Lean wanted to be a journalist from his early teenage years. Joining the *Yorkshire Post* as a young reporter in 1969, he was put on the environment beat which he regarded at first as a backwater. But the issue was just reaching prominence and he was much influenced by 'giants' like Barbara Ward and EF Schumacher. 'Within a few months I was hooked.'

At that time it was illegal to name and shame British industries, water companies or local authorities that polluted rivers. But a loophole in the law allowed him to expose Britain's 20 top river polluters. His report led to a change in the law.

After the *Yorkshire Post* he was in charge of covering the environment for first *The Observer* and then *The Independent on Sunday*—serving 16 years on both papers—and is now Contributing Editor, Environment, at *The Daily Telegraph*. He has won a string of awards, including the prestigious Martha Gellhorn Prize for investigative journalism in 2002 and the Scoop of the Year Award in the 2001 British Press Awards (the UK equivalent of the Pulitzers) and the London Press Awards, for exposing the Labour Government's secret genetically modified crop experiments. Ironically Tony Blair, then Prime Minister, presented him with the London award.

Last year, calamity struck when Lean's home burned down. Lucky he and his wife Judy were away on holiday at the time. Their son would have been asleep in the burning building but at the last minute decided to stay the night with a friend. As they drove back home, not knowing what they would find, they decided to rebuild the house as green as they could afford. It has proved much more than they thought: when we spoke the foundations were down, but Lean still did not know how it would be heated or what the walls would be made of!

Lean insists that going green does not mean a hair shirt existence, but is the best way to stimulate economic growth. He himself is trying to put this into practice, by walking the reporting.



NASA

Arctic ice melting faster than expected