



This newsletter and more at our website: <http://www.globalsolutionsmn.org>

MARCH, 2015

OUR VISION: We envision a future in which countries work together to abolish war, protect universal human rights and freedoms, foster sustainable development, and solve related problems facing humanity that no country can solve alone. This vision requires the involvement of informed world citizens to create and maintain effective democratic global institutions that will supplant the law of force with the rule of law while respecting the diversity and autonomy of national and local communities.

OUR MISSION: We are a membership organization working to build political will, promoting global citizenship and a new spirit of sharing, and devising initiatives to promote our vision. We undertake our mission by organizing educational events, communicating global concerns to public officials, collaborating with globally engaged organizations, and disseminating proposals to reform and strengthen the United Nations and other international institutions, including the creation of new agencies when necessary.

2015, the 70th Anniversary of the United Nations A Year to Affirm the Community of Nations

For your calendar:

Oct 9-10, major conference planned on the theme "Creating a Workable World." The conference will take place at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. (See Joe Schwartzberg article, below.) Further details of the conference will be forthcoming in a later issue of this newsletter, and will be listed at <http://workableworld.weebly.com/> as they become available.

Ongoing events update: See Community of Nations Calendar, updated the first of each month, at <http://www.outsidethewalls.org/blog/2015/01/01/> (link in 3rd paragraph).

Is the UN a Force for Peace, or a Tool of Neo-Colonialism?

Gail Hughes, Chapter President

Below is a summary of a talk I gave on February 3 in Minneapolis at a meeting of Grandmothers for Peace. I thought it might be of broader interest.

I don't really like the title. As with most dichotomies, the answer is "both/and". However, it is 'catchy', and it does identify contrasting perceptions in a clear though exaggerated way.

The United Nations was established in 1945, at the end of World War II, to prevent World War III. Its mission is to be a force for peace; and in that we have not had World War III, we may say that it has succeeded to date. Almost all countries in the world are represented in the General Assembly, where members can raise issues and hear the perspectives of others around the world. Numerous affiliated NGOs address human needs in education, health care, refugees, and many other areas. The Millennium Goals include benchmarks and timelines to achieve quality-of-life targets necessary for a peaceful and prosperous global society; and the UN excels in providing global research and statistics to monitor progress and track the 'state of the world'.

However, we cannot claim that we have achieved world peace. There have been all too many wars – though not world-engulfing, and most undeclared. President George W. Bush said in essence that the U.S. is in an endless 'war on terrorism'. In addition, other global challenges have arisen – e.g. climate change, environmental destruction, potential global pandemics – that could destroy life on earth as we know it. The UN as presently constituted has not been effective in addressing these problems.

In addition, some in the Global South (countries that have been colonized) believe that the UN acts on behalf of Global North countries (roughly, ex-colonizer countries plus the U.S., Canada, and Australia). The perception of 'neo-colonialism' derives in part from the granting of veto power to each of the five permanent members of the Security Council – the victors in World War II. Veto power ensures that the UN will favor Big Power interests to maintain control over the Third World, resulting in "neo-colonialism" – a new form of colonialism.

Charges of neo-colonialism are leveled especially at the global financial and trade organizations that exist under the umbrella of the UN, but that operate independently. The World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and GATT, the precursor to the present World Trade Organization (WTO) – were established in 1944, a year before the UN. The World Bank was founded to provide long-term loans, first to Europe through the Marshall Plan, and later to developing countries. The role of the IMF is to provide short-term loans to maintain currency stability; and the trade organizations were created to coordinate international trade. These organizations are dominated by Global North countries, with the rationale that since the money for loans comes from the rich countries, "He that pays the piper calls the tune". At times, however, countries are pressured to take out loans that they will not be able to repay*, or to agree to "structural adjustments" which entail severe cuts in education, health care, and other social services, in order to qualify for loans.** Similarly, critics claim that the WTO pressures countries to agree to "free trade" policies that favor the Global North. The WTO enforces "free trade" through imposing economic sanctions against those who do not join, and against members who violate agreements. Many in the Global South call for "fair trade" as an alternative; and regional economic organizations such as BRICS (comprised of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) are emerging in an attempt to better serve their members.

The irony is that the most democratic global organization – the General Assembly – has no power to implement its decisions, other than voluntary compliance; but the least democratic organizations – the IMF, WB, WTO, and the Security Council – do have real power, through economic sanctions.

For a detailed analysis of structural problems which undermine the effectiveness of the UN, as well as suggested remedies, see Joe Schwartzberg's recent (2013) book, *Transforming the United Nations System: Designs for a Workable World*.

*See John Perkins' fascinating description of his role to encourage debt entrapment in his book, *Confessions of an Economic Hitman* (2004). Perkins worked for the NSA undercover in his role as an economist for the Charles Main Corporation.

**See Joseph Stiglitz' criticisms when he served as Chief Economist at the World Bank in his book, *Globalization and Its Discontents* (2002). Stiglitz received a Nobel Prize for Economics in 2001.

INITIATIVES OF THE WORKABLE WORLD TRUST (WWT)

Joe Schwartzberg, Director, WWT

Readers of this Newsletter are already aware of the formation last December of the Workable World Trust, the main purpose of which is to disseminate and promote proposals for creating a more workable world through transformation of the United Nations system and other global agencies. With the help of an Advisory Board consisting mainly of members of CGSMN; with the super-efficient work of Nancy Dunlavy, the Trust's Administrative Assistant; and with the willingness of Mark Ritchie to serve as the Trust's Honorary Director, the Trust is off to a good start.

Here are some of the initiatives already taken:

a) We have signed contracts to have my book, *Transforming the United Nations System: Designs for a Workable World*, translated into Chinese, Japanese, Spanish and Russian. We are seeking willing and able translators for French, German and Arabic translations. We anticipate inexpensive E-editions of the book in all seven languages.

b) Copies of the book have been sent to 21 women who have held, or who presently hold, high positions within the UN system. Thus far, we have had grateful acknowledgements of receipt from: Helen Clark, former prime minister of New Zealand and present director of the UN Development Program; Irina Bokava, Director-General of UNESCO; Margaret Chan, Director-General of the WHO; and Michelle Bachelet, former head of "UN Women," and now President of Chile. Two of these leaders, Ms. Clark and Ms. Bokava, are front-runners to be chosen as the next UN

Secretary-General. (Prior to the formation of the Trust, one, two or three copies were sent to all 193 UN member missions and individual copies were delivered to all members of the US Senate and House Foreign Relations Committees.)

c) We have had a successful inaugural meeting of the Advisory Board and a few invited friends on February 13-14. Out-of-state participants included in this meeting were Professor Emeritus John Trent, of the University of Ottawa, a past President of the International Political Science Association; and our old friend, Professor Emeritus (of philosophy) Ron Glossop, long-time head of the Greater St. Louis Chapter of WFA/CGS. Most of our deliberations were focused on a major conference planned for October 9-10, on the theme "Creating a Workable World." The conference will take place at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota.

Stay tuned for further word on the actions noted above and on others still on the drawing board. If you have ideas for additional Trust initiatives, please send them to me at schwa004@umn.edu.

Some Learnings from a Book Club:

The Minnesota chapter of Citizens for Global Solutions hosted a monthly book club from June 2014 through January 2015, covering the entirety of **Dr. Joe Schwartzberg's** book, "**Transforming the United Nations System**". Here are a few comments from three who attended most or all of the sessions.

Maryam Yusefzadeh: A group of 10+ gathered to discuss the book. We had the luxury of having Dr. Schwartzberg's attendance, offering a deeper understanding of his approach and reasoning for the solutions proposed. The group was able to use their personal experiences and historical knowledge to better understand why change is necessary. Added value gained is that **Nancy Dunlavy**, inspired by the success of the book club, produced a summary of the book to make the essence of the proposed solutions reachable to a larger audience and initiate interest, engaging others in promoting change at the UN (see <http://workableworld.weebly.com/book-summaries.html>). Our world will only improve when WE the World Citizens' initiate change.

The book's Premises as summarized by Nancy: (p.1.) Global problems require global solutions. (p. 2): The design of decision-making institutions has an important bearing on the quality and legitimacy of the decisions they make. Obstacles (p. 4): vested interest, inertia, ignorance.

Key Strength of Proposals: Promote a "workable world," not a utopia, with a greater mission coherence, more reliable funding and wiser use of human capital.

Nancy Dunlavy: Most memorable quote from the book (p.xxxii, Jeffrey Laurenti): "The United Nations is notoriously the place where, in defiance of the laws of physics, inertia can develop momentum."

Favorite word in the book: "Workable." The difficult part is creating collective political will. As world consciousness continues to evolve in the direction of world citizenship and interdependency, Joe's book lays out innumerable methods to transform the UN into a body that can significantly impact global issues.

Aha moments for me came when hopeful proposals such as creating a World Parliamentary Assembly and Civil Society Coordinating Council were discussed. Empowering the voices of "we the people" at the UN table is actually something that can be implemented.

Dick Bernard: Dr. Schwartzberg's book is a wealth of information about the United Nations (and its related organizations), full of data and ideas for how to transform this most crucial institution for the betterment of all (not only "humanity"). Everyone, including those (like me) who have a limited idea of what the United Nations is, can learn a great deal, just by reading the book. The data about the nations of the United Nations is a rich resource in itself. For me, richness was added through the diverse perspectives shared within the group during our discussions.

Citizens for Global Solutions Board 2015: Dr. Gail Hughes, President; Dick Bernard, Vice-President; Nancy Dunlavy, Secretary; Dennis Dillon, Treasurer; Miraz Abdullah, N. John Borgen, Margaret Esslinger, Jason Johnson, Kristi Rudelius-Palmer, Dr. Bharat Parekh, Dr. Joseph Schwartzberg, Maryam Yusefzadeh

Your financial support is needed: Suggested donations: \$10 students, \$30 individuals, \$40 couples.

Checks to "Citizens for Global Solutions" mailed to Dennis Dillon, 210 W. Grant St #414, Minneapolis 55403.

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All issues archived at

<http://www.globalsolutionsmn.org/>

Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day I can hear her breathing.

Arundhati Roy

THIRD THURSDAY GLOBAL ISSUES FORUM

Free and open to the public

Plymouth Congregational Church (Jackman room, lower level), 1900 Nicollet Ave S, Minneapolis. Abundant free parking in lot on Franklin Avenue adjacent to Church, enter building from lot on LaSalle Ave side.

More detailed bios of all speakers can be seen at <http://www.globalsolutionsmn.org/>

Thursday, March 19, 2015

Title: Overpopulation is Solvable

Presenter: David Paxson of <http://www.worldpopulationbalance.org/>

According to David Paxson, “The great news is that overpopulation is solvable.” Paxson is a national leader on the issue of sustainable population, participating in international meetings - including the United Nations Population Conference in Egypt – and he has spoken to groups across the United States.

He graduated from the University of Michigan and worked at the Center for Population Studies at the University of Minnesota. In 1991, David retired from the financial field and founded World Population Balance (see website). Members include some who are pro-life and others pro-choice, working together to find common ground.

“Overpopulation is a driving cause of many problems in the world. Three of the greatest are: overconsumption and depletion of vital resources and resulting conflicts over these dwindling resources; rising levels of dire poverty, suffering and early death; and increasing rates of killing off species/biodiversity loss.”

April 19 Third Thursday speaker and topic to be announced. Watch our website for details.