

Rome Model United Nations 2010 Edition

GENERAL ASSEMBLY BACKGROUND GUIDE



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Dear Delegates,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the General Assembly Plenary at the 2010 Rome Model United Nations.

My name is **Daniela Conte** and it is my pleasure and honor to be your Secretary General.

Let me present myself: I am from and live in Rome, I graduated in Political Science at Luiss Guido Carli University in 2004, I finished my PhD in Political System and Institutional Change at IMT school of advanced studies, Lucca, last December. Now I'm a fellowship post-doctoral researcher at Political Science Department at Luiss Guido Carli, on international political communication issues.

I have vast experience with Model United Nations, as I have been involved extensively as a staff member on both high school and collegiate conferences throughout North America including over three years at NMUN – New York. Last year I served as Faculty Advisor for some of the Italian delegations which participated to the conference in New York at the Marriott Venue.

As you already know Rome Model United Nations 2010 is the first edition of an international MUN held in Rome, that is why all the organizing staff decided to focus this edition entirely to the work of the UN General Assembly. The peculiarity of the General Assembly Plenary is to let delegations discuss and work on a wide variety of topics, in fact you are going to negotiate on issues very different from each other, but all of them are actual and important subjects which involve most of the Earth's population.

The topics before the 2010 General Assembly Plenary are:

- I. MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**
- II. Protecting the Earth, How to fight climate change?**
- III. The role of Youth in fostering intercultural dialogue**

Our goal as staff members is to provide the best experience possible for the delegates. However, for this to occur, we need your help!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact myself or the other staff members at the email address you find on the Delegate Guide. Good luck with your research and we look forward to seeing you in Rome in March!

Best Regards,
Dr. Daniela Conte
Secretary General
presidente@romemun.org

HISTORY OF UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Introduction

The creation and development of the General Assembly had been conditioned not only by the terrible events of World War II but also by the experience of the previous inter-wars years, particularly the failure of the League of Nations and the 1930s crisis. Established in 1945 under article 7 of the Charter of the United Nations, the General Assembly occupies a central position as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. It provides a unique forum for multilateral discussion of the full spectrum of international issues covered by the Charter. It also plays a significant role in the process of standard-setting and the codification of international law.¹

The importance of the political aspect of the Assembly's responsibilities was indicated by the first words uttered by the temporary President, Dr. Eduardo Zuleta Angel of Colombia, the Chairman of the Preparatory Commission in the first General Assembly session held in London on January 10, 1946: "determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war (...) we have come to this British capital (...) to constitute the General Assembly (...)" How effective the Assembly's contribution in this respect would be, he went on to say, would "depend less on the terms of the Charter, on the functions and duties of the Assembly than on the wisdom, the judgment, the spirit of co-operation and sense of justice by which it is guided (...)"² On January 24, the General Assembly adopts its first resolution. Its main focus was the peaceful uses of atomic energy and the elimination of atomic and other weapons of mass destruction. Since then, the Assembly meets in regular session intensively from September to December each year, and thereafter as required.

Composition

In 1945, the Assembly was composed of the fifty-one original Member States of the UN. Only after the process of decolonization in the 1960s and 1970s the number of General Assembly Member States increased rapidly. Then, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the 1980's and 1990's further contributed to the enlargement.³ Entities that do not fulfil the requirements to be defined as 'States' are often granted the status of 'Observer' by the General Assembly.⁴ Currently, there are a total of 71 entities and organizations that may attend General Assembly meetings. They are allowed the right to speak before the Assembly but they have no voting rights. As the former UN General-Secretary said they are "essential partners (...) in the execution of policies."⁵

¹ United Nations General Assembly website <http://www.un.org/ga/about/background.shtml>

² H. Field Jr. Haviland, (By), *The political role of the General Assembly*, 1951, Department of Political Science Haverford College

³ <http://www0.un.org/en/members/>

⁴ Simma, *The Charter of the United Nations. A Commentary*, 2002

⁵ Global Policy Forum, Secretary-General Opening Address to Fiftieth DPI/NGO Conference, 1997

Voting system

General Assembly is the “most representative forum” as it is the only of the six principle organs in which every of its 192 Members are represented and has one vote.⁶ According to article 18 of the UN Charter, decisions of the General Assembly on important questions shall be made by a two-thirds majority of the Members present and voting. These questions shall include: recommendations with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security, the election of the non-permanent members of the Security Council, the election of the members of the Economic and Social Council, the election of members of the Trusteeship Council, the admission of new Members to the United Nations, the suspension of the rights and privileges of membership, the expulsion of Members, questions relating to the operation of the trusteeship system, and budgetary questions. Decisions on other questions, including the determination of additional categories of questions to be decided by a two-thirds majority, shall be made by a majority of the members present and voting.⁷ In recent years, a special effort has been made to achieve consensus on issues, rather than deciding by a formal vote, thus strengthening support for the Assembly’s decisions. The President, after having consulted and reached agreement with delegations, can propose that a resolution be adopted without a vote⁸.

Powers and Functions

Chapter IV of the UN Charter discipline General Assembly’s powers and functions. The organ may: consider and make recommendations on the general principles of cooperation for maintaining international peace and security, including disarmament; discuss any question relating to international peace and security and, except where a dispute or situation is currently being discussed by the Security Council, make recommendations on it; discuss, with the same exception, and make recommendations on any questions within the scope of the Charter or affecting the powers and functions of any organ of the United Nations; initiate studies and make recommendations to promote international political cooperation, the development and codification of international law, the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and international collaboration in the economic, social, humanitarian, cultural, educational and health fields; make recommendations for the peaceful settlement of any situation that might impair friendly relations among nations; receive and consider reports from the Security Council and other United Nations organs; consider and approve the United Nations budget and establish the financial assessments of Member States; elect the non-permanent members of the Security Council and the members of other United Nations councils and organs and, on the recommendation of the Security Council, appoint the Secretary-General.⁹

The Assembly may also take action if the Security Council fails to act due to a veto of a permanent Member. In case of threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression the General Assembly can consider the matter immediately and recommend collective measures to Member States to maintain or restore international peace and security.¹⁰ If required, special sessions can take place during the year to highlight important subjects such as the environment, HIV/AIDS, or disarmament.¹¹ In order to avoid interference between the two organs the General Assembly cannot

⁶ United Nations, General Assembly, 61st Session, Background Information, 2006.

⁷ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, art. 18

⁸ United Nations General Assembly website <http://www.un.org/ga/about/background.shtml>

⁹ *Charter of United Nations*, 1945, art. 10-17

¹⁰ United Nations General Assembly Resolution 377 (V) *Uniting for Peace*, November 1950

¹¹ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, art 20

make recommendations with regards to a subject that is currently discussed by the Security Council, unless the Security Council so requests.¹²

While the Assembly is empowered to make only non-binding recommendations to States on international issues within its competence, it has, nonetheless, initiated actions—political, economic, humanitarian, social and legal—which have affected the lives of millions of people throughout the world.¹³

Committees

Because of the great number of questions to be considered, the Assembly works through its six main Committees. They seek where possible to harmonize the various approaches of States, and then present to a plenary meeting of the Assembly draft resolutions and decisions for its consideration. The six main committees are: First Committee (Disarmament and International Security Committee) is concerned with disarmament and related international security questions; Second Committee (Economic and Financial Committee) is concerned with economic questions; Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee) deals with social and humanitarian issues; Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization Committee) deals with a variety of political subjects not dealt with by the First Committee, as well as with decolonization; Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary Committee) deals with the administration and budget of the United Nations; and Sixth Committee (Legal Committee) deals with international legal matters. On a number of agenda items, however, such as the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East, the Assembly acts directly in its plenary meetings. Other two Committees deal with inner procedural matters: the Credentials Committee is mandated to examine the credentials of representatives of Member States and to report to the General Assembly, while the General Committee meets periodically throughout each session to review the progress of the General Assembly and its committees and to make recommendations for furthering such progress.

The need to reform the General Assembly

Among 192 Member States, two-third are developing countries. According to the principle “one country one vote”, developing nations, also known as G77, are in majority so they are often able to determine the agenda of the Assembly, the character of its debates, and the nature of its decisions. In the last two decades the General Assembly has become a forum for the North-South dialogue and for many developing countries the UN represents the only possibility to exercise their diplomatic influence. But the political divide between developed and developing States has often impeded progress towards a revitalization of the organization’s structure.

The need for a stronger and more effective General Assembly was proposed by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 2005 in his report *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All*.¹⁴

The proposals for strengthening the General Assembly included reforms regarding the topics discussed in the agenda to improve the deliberative process, changes within its committees and debates, as well as strengthening the role of the President of the General Assembly, setting up a

¹² *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, art 12

¹³ United Nations General Assembly website <http://www.un.org/ga/about/background.shtml>

¹⁴ United Nations, General Assembly, 59th Session, *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All, Report of the Secretary-General*, 2005

more efficient committee system and involving NGOs directly in consultation to its work.¹⁵ Annan also suggests changes for the topics of the Agenda and stressed the need to make the UN “more useful to its members” and to forge partnerships in many areas with “civil society and the private sector.”¹⁶

Conclusion

Today the Assembly is called to face an exceptional moment due to the many crises of food, energy, recession and pandemic flu the world is suffering from. As the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon said to the 64th session of the United Nations General Assembly held on September 15, 2009 “if ever there were a time to act in a spirit of renewed multilateralism - a moment to create a United Nations of genuine collective action - it is now”. It was time to put the “united” back into the United Nations. He asked world leaders to make this year one in which the Organization rose to the greatest challenge facing the human family: the threat of catastrophic climate change. He urged that this year see a world free of nuclear weapons. In the fight against poverty, he hoped this year would bring a focus on those left behind, as a new crisis was at hand. The near-poor were becoming the new poor and an estimated 100 million people risked falling below the poverty line this year. A special summit on the Millennium Development Goals also would be convened at this time next year. “With only five years to go, we must mount a final push towards 2015,” he stressed. Rightly, women and children had been placed at the forefront. The prevention of sexual violence against women also must be a priority. “Let us agree: these acts are an abomination,” he stressed. Leaders of every nation were personally accountable when such crimes were committed within their borders. When women died in childbirth or were raped as a weapon of war, the United Nations could not look the other way, and he reminded delegates they had recently agreed to create a single agency to address women’s issues. Turning to the United Nations’ work in the field, he said none of those noble goals could be achieved without peace, security and justice. “No nation can solve these alone”, he said.

On a final note, Mr. Ban reminded delegates that their common ambition should be to make the United Nations’ outward renovation work a symbol of the Organization’s inward renewal. The United Nations had made progress in “Delivering as One” and in “getting peace-building right” so that societies emerging from war did not slide back into conflict. “We need the strong support of Member States, just as we do to secure the safety of our brave staff serving in dangerous places,” he said. “If we are to offer genuine hope to the hopeless, if we are to truly turn the corner to economic recovery, then we must do so for all nations and all people,” he said. “We are here to take risks, to assume the burden of responsibility, to rise to an exceptional moment, to make history.” This year, of all years, asked no less.¹⁷

¹⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁶ *Ibid*. For more information and key documents see UN website <http://www.globalpolicy.org/un-reform/un-reform-topics/reform-of-the-general-assembly.html>

¹⁷ <http://www.un.org/ga/64/generaldebate/sgopen.shtml>

MDG 1: ERADICATE EXTREME HUNGER AND POVERTY

The silent hunger crisis — affecting one sixth of all of humanity — poses a serious risk for world peace and security. We urgently need to forge a broad consensus on the total and rapid eradication of hunger in the world.”

(FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf, 19th June 2009)

Introduction

The unacceptable conditions in which 1.02 billion hungry people live, especially in developing countries, where there is not enough food to meet basic nutritional needs, is at heart of the debate of the whole International Community.¹⁸ Food security is one of the main global issue the UN system, including the Food Agricultural Organization (FAO)¹⁹ and other agencies and bodies, such as the World Food Program (WFP)²⁰ and the International Found for Agricultural Development (IFAD)²¹, are dealing with.

“Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. The four pillars of food security are availability, access, utilization and stability. The nutritional dimension is integral to the concept of food security.”²²

The first World Food Conference was held in Rome in 1974 under the auspices of the UN’s Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)²³. The Conference was felt as urgent after the terrible famine in Bangladesh in 1971-72 and the fuel global crisis of 1973-74. At the Conference, governments examined the global problem of food production and consumption, and adopted the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition which solemnly proclaimed that “every man, woman and child has the inalienable right to be free from hunger and malnutrition in order to develop their physical and mental faculties”²⁴.

In December 1992, 159 countries and the European Economic Community, together with 16 United Nations organizations, 11 intergovernmental organizations, and 144 non-governmental organizations, met at FAO’s Headquarter in Rome for the first International Conference on Nutrition (ICN), jointly sponsored by FAO and WHO, discussed ways to eradicate hunger and malnutrition. In the final Declaration adopted by the Conference, all participants affirmed that hunger and malnutrition were unacceptable in a world that has both the knowledge and the resources to end such a human catastrophe; recognized that globally there was enough food for all; pledged to act in solidarity to ensure that freedom from hunger became a reality and adopted a Plan

¹⁸ FAO, The State of Food Insecurity 2009

¹⁹ FAO website <http://www.fao.org/>

²⁰ WFP website <http://www.wfp.org/>

²¹ IFAD website <http://www.ifad.org/>

²² FAO, *Rome Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action*, Rome – 13-17 November 1996. Documents are available on website http://www.fao.org/wfs/index_en.htm

²³ *United Nations General Assembly Plenary. 28th Session (1973, December 17). World Food Conference(A/RES/28/3180)*

²⁴ *United Nations, Report of the World Food Conference - The Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition* Rome – 5-16 November 1974. The document is available on the website: <http://www.un.org/en/development/devagenda/food.shtml>. The Declaration was consequently adopted by the General Assembly in A/RES/29/3348 on December 17,1974

of Action on Nutrition to address the world's nutrition problems.²⁵

Hunger targets

Hunger targets have been outlined in two main agreements: the World Food Summit Target and the Millennium Development Goals. In 1996, the Food Agricultural Organization organized, always in Rome, the World Food Summit where representatives of 185 countries and the European Community, reaffirming the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, adopted the Rome Declaration and committed themselves to achieve the ambitious goal to grant food security for all within 2015. To joint this target, they set up a Plan of Action envisaging an ongoing effort to eradicate hunger in all countries and to reduce the number of undernourished people to half their 1996 level. The event had a strong impact on the public opinion, raised awareness among decision-makers in the public and private sector and provided a framework to address changes in policies and programmes to achieve sustainable food security for all people.²⁶ The FAO Committee on World Food Security (CFS), which is now working to reorganise itself into a stronger inter-agency instrument²⁷, have the responsibility to monitor the implementation of the Plan of Action²⁸. In 2000, at the beginning of the new millennium 189 world's leaders, as representatives of their citizens, signed the Millennium Declaration, the final document adopted at the 2000 UN Millennium Summit.²⁹ The sense of urgency was palpable and an ambitious agenda for reducing poverty and its causes and manifestations was set up.

The Millennium Development Goal 1, "Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger", includes targets to halve, not later than 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day as well as the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.³⁰ With this Declaration, Head of States and Governments, by developing an open, equitable and rule-based multilateral trading and financial system, committed themselves to "free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty, to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected".³¹ The Millennium Declaration recognizes both the efforts that must be undertaken by developing countries and the contribution that developed countries can make through trade, development assistance, debt relief, access to essential medicines and technology transfer. It is the major long term commitment which likely requires statistical capacity building in many countries. To help more vulnerable countries to collect data and information and to monitor the situation, UNDP in collaboration with national governments, UN Development Group and other UN partners, the IMF, the World's Bank and OECD, is coordinating reporting by countries on progress towards the Millennium Developed Goals.³²

To check on progress being made, nations met again in 2002 at the World Food Summit: five years

²⁵ FAO, *World Declaration on Nutrition*, Rome – 1-3 December 1992. The document is available on the website <http://www.fao.org/docrep/u9920t/u9920t0a.htm>

²⁶ FAO, *Rome Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action*, Rome – 13-17 November 1996. Documents are available on website http://www.fao.org/wfs/index_en.htm

²⁷ Report of the Thirty-fifth Session of The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) – Rome – 14-17 October 2009.

²⁸ Committee on Foods Security and the International Alliance Against Hunger, 31st Session of CFS, Rome – 23-26 May 2005, http://www.fao.org/monitoringprogress/index_en.html

²⁹ A/RES/55/2, *United Nations Millennium Declaration*, General Assembly, 2000. The document is available on website <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm>

³⁰ Other seven Goals are: Achieve universal primary education; Promote gender equality and empower women; Reduce child mortality; Improve maternal health; Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; Ensure environmental sustainability; Develop a Global Partnership for Development (with targets for aid, trade and debt relief)

³¹ A/RES/55/2, *United Nation Millennium Declaration*, General Assembly, 2000

³² United Nations, *The Millennium Developments Goals Report 2009*, New York 2009. Also see the UNDP website <http://www.undp.org/mdg/>

later (World Food Summit+5)³³. The final Declaration of the Summit called for the creation of an International Alliance Against Hunger to join forces in efforts to eradicate hunger by promoting national alliances.³⁴

Hunger and the economic crisis

Despite the above and many other attempts to strengthen the international cooperation in the fight to reduce the number of undernourished people by half to no more than 420 million by 2015, the global food security is registering a worsening of the unsatisfactory trends that were presents even before the economic and financial crisis of 2007-2008.³⁵ FAO estimate that there are now more hungry people than at any time since 1970. As also reported by the WFP, “worldwide, there were 848 million undernourished people in 2003–2005. The undernourished population in developing countries increased from 824 million in 1990–1992 to 832 million in 2003–2005. Although this was a relatively small increase, the long-term trend is worrying, as high food prices increased the number by 75 million in 2007 and 40 million in 2008, when it reached 963 million”.³⁶ In the first half of this decade, some progress in poverty reduction and food security rise has been concentrated in Asia, and especially, East Asia, with the major improvement occurring in China, but they are risking to become vain as consequence of the crisis. In sub-Saharan Africa, the number of people in extreme poverty has increased.³⁷ This scenarios suggests that actions, policies and programmes adopted so far are inadequate and insufficient to develop a right-to-food approach valid worldwide.

The global crisis has highlighted the vulnerability of households, governments and international system and represents an additional threat to poor people, in terms of access to food. It is abundantly accepted that if negative trends will prevail and substantial and sustained remedial at local and regional level will not be taken immediately, the World Food Summit targets and MDGs will not be reached.³⁸ Concrete and urgent actions, with both immediate and medium-long term effect have been envisaged by the Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) of the High Level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis (HLTF) established by the Chief Executives Board (CEB) of the United Nations under the leadership of the Secretary-General.³⁹ The CFA set out critical actions to meet immediate needs of vulnerable population, by enhancing nutrition support and making the food more accessible and by boosting smallholder farmer food production to increase food availability in poor countries. The improvement of trade and tax policies and a better management of macroeconomic implications are fundamental to the task. To provide long-term solutions, the CFS focuses the attention on the need to address key factors driving the food crisis by expanding social protection systems, sustaining smallholder farmer-led food availability growth, improving the international food markets and by developing an international biofuel consensus⁴⁰. The HLTF emphasizes the importance of country-led strategy responses to the crisis and supports them.

³³ *The World Food Summit – five years later. Mobilizing the political will and resources to banish world hunger.* Technical background papers. Available on website <http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/004/Y1780E/Y1780E00.HTM>

³⁴ For further information on the IAAH, see the document *Working together for an International Alliance Against Hunger* from FAO website, http://www.fao.org/wfd/docs/Issues_leaflet_2003_en.pdf

³⁵ Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2009. Economic crisis: impacts and lessons learned – Rome, October 2009*

³⁶ *United Nations World Food Programme, World Hunger Series: Hunger and Markets, 2009, p. 17*

³⁷ Mamun Rashid, *Food Fight*, published on the Daily Star website, September 2008

³⁸ Food Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, *More people than ever are victims of hunger*, Rome, June 2009 from FAO website http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/newsroom/docs/Press%20release%20june-en.pdf

³⁹ United Nations. High Level Task Force on Global Food Security Crisis. *Comprehensive Framework for Action*, October 29, 2008. The Director-General of the FAO is the Vice Chair of the HLTF and the Secretariat of the HLTF is at the IFAD Heartquarter in Rome

⁴⁰ United Nations. High Level Task Force on Global Food Security Crisis. *Comprehensive Framework for Action*, October 29, 2008, p.36

So far, country-led responses to food and fuel crisis has been addressed to scale up coverage or benefits, or to initiate new transfer programmes targeted to the chronically poor and food-insecure (school, maternal and child feeding programmes; public work programmes, unemployment insurance, active labour market programmes; selective food subsidies targeted to poor consumers; cash transfer programs, job skills' training and building programmes; etc.).⁴¹ In Asian and Pacific countries, were the largest number of hungry people live (642 million), and in the Sub-Saharan Africa, which has the largest prevalence of undernourishment relative to its population size (32%), informal safety nets and charity are important elements of responses.⁴² Developing countries have been hit by the global economic crisis through both commercial and financial channels. This means a decline of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) by 32% in 2009, a drop of migrant's transfers (remittances) of around 5% to 8%, a reduction of the Official Development Assistance (ODA) from donor countries by about 25%, higher costs for external credit, both from private and public sources, and a falls of trade volume exchanges and of export value, which are the main sources of capital inflows for many poor countries which, unfortunately, will suffer for negative implications of the global economic slowdown even when it will be back and the prolonged period of high prices will stop.⁴³

Soaring of food prices

It is abundantly clear that hunger has increased not as a result of poor global harvests of food availability, climate shocks or emergencies but because of high prices of domestic food, lower incomes and increasing unemployment due to the global economic crisis.⁴⁴ Has Amartya Sen affirmed in its 1981 work, during famines in Bengal in 1943, and in Ethiopia and Bangladesh in the first half of 1970s, food availability did not decline significantly and sometimes it even increased. These famines were caused by rising food prices, loss of employment and declining livestock prices, all factors related to the food access dimension and to markets. Lack of food availability is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for famines or hunger.⁴⁵ Since 2001, financial markets have been characterized by the rise of global food prices. Unfortunately, they drastically soared at the end of 2007, with a dramatic peak in the early 2008.⁴⁶ High food prices have had a significant negative impact in many developing countries, with long-term consequences on hunger and malnutrition.

FAO identified the possible cause of the price rising in 2007 in an unprecedented interconnection of low levels of world cereal stocks, crop failures in major exporting countries, rapidly growing demand for agricultural commodities for biofuels and rising oil prices.⁴⁷ In addition to these causes, a slower demand growth, government export restrictions, a weakening US dollar and a growing speculation from investors in commodity markets made food price volatility and inflation exceptional.⁴⁸

Usually, food prices tend to be less affected by business cycle fluctuations than other commodity

⁴¹ Joint Meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP, *Recovering from Economic and Financial Crisis: Food Security and Safety Nets*, 15 and 18 January 2010, p.3, note 1

⁴² FAO Press Conference on new hunger figures, *More people than ever are victims of hunger*, June 2009

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2009. Economic crisis: impacts and lessons learned* – Rome, October 2009

⁴⁵ Sen, A. 1981, *Poverty and Famines. An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*. Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press.

⁴⁶ United Nations World Food Programme, *World Hunger Series: Hunger and Markets*, 2009

⁴⁷ FAO Media Centre, *Food Prices up again Grain stocks buffer against 2008 crisis reply*, December 9, 2009, from FAO website <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/38040/icode/>

⁴⁸ *Ibid*

prices, but the present food price cycle seems to be longer than the usual 2-3 years, as structural measures to deal with the food crisis will take time to have effect.⁴⁹ High fuel prices have contributed directly to soaring food prices. They further undermined the livelihoods of the poor through overall inflation. Actually, while grain prices have almost doubled over the past year and a half, oil prices have almost tripled over the same period. This has had a direct impact on farm production costs including fertilizer, which has increased by 200 to 300%, diesel and transport, with negative consequences also on the costs of transporting food assistance.⁵⁰ Food price increases have differently impacted world's regions.⁵¹ They also have contributed in a different percentage to the total inflation across countries and regions: about 67% in Asia, 40% in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and the CIS, less than 20% in advanced countries.⁵²

During 2009, food prices have come down a lot but they unfortunately remain above historical level, placing the issue of poverty, hunger and malnutrition at the centre of an international decision-making process aiming to take concrete emergency measures. Moreover, domestic prices of staple foods remain high in many developing countries, and the purchasing power of poor consumers, who spend a substantial share of their income on staple foods (60%), remains severely curtailed. The higher inflation acts like a regressive tax on their income and thereby reduces their standard of living. This means starvation.⁵³ To support poor countries in the fight against inflation, the FAO Initiative on Soaring Food Prices (ISFP) must be expanded to assist developing countries in the monitoring and analysis of domestic food price trends. A credible commitment to maintaining price stability will be the key. Central banks must carefully monitor price developments, and respond quickly and credibly to counter rising inflation expectations⁵⁴. In 2008, the WFP announced an additional \$1.2 billion worth of food assistance, which would benefit 62 countries wracked by high food prices to alleviate growing hunger, while IFAD financed food production related activities in 65 countries.⁵⁵

Investments in agriculture

The 2009 World Food Summit focused on the urgency to boost public and private investment in agricultural development in poor countries and to reverse the decline in domestic and international funding for the sector, as well as the importance to improve the governance of global food issues in partnership with relevant stakeholders from the public and private sector. Poor countries need economic and policy tools to boost their agricultural production and productivity. Investment in agriculture must be increased because for the majority of poor countries a healthy agricultural sector is essential to overcome hunger and poverty and is a pre-requisite for overall economic growth.⁵⁶

The gravity of the current food crisis is the result of 20 years of under-investment in agriculture and neglect of the sector. Directly or indirectly, agriculture provides the livelihood for 70 percent of the world's poor. For millions of people living in Africa, Asia and Central America and the Caribbean sub-region, "the food price crisis is not over yet," said FAO Assistant Director General Hafez Ghanem. "It is now a global priority to increase investment in developing country agriculture in

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Mamun Rashid, *Food Fight*, September 2008

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² United Nations. High Level Task Force on Global Food Security Crisis. *Comprehensive Framework for Action*, October 29, 2008

⁵³ FAO Press Conference on new hunger figures, *More people than ever are victims of hunger*, June 2009

⁵⁴ United Nations. High Level Task Force on Global Food Security Crisis. *Comprehensive Framework for Action*, October 29, 2008.

⁵⁵ Statement by Josette Sheeran Executive Director UN World Food Programme, High Level Meeting On World Food Security, June 3, 2008

⁵⁶ FAO, World Summit on Food Security, *Feeding the World, Eradicate Hunger*, WSFS/2009/INF/2

order to fight poverty and hunger". The international community must reconsider factors that drive long-term global agricultural trade.⁵⁷

In *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2009*, presented by the Economic and Social Development Department of the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization at the end of the year, the latest statistics on global undernourishment show that structural problems of underinvestment have impeded progress toward the World Food Summit goal and the first Millennium Development Goal hunger reduction targets.⁵⁸

In order to reverse present negative trends, FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf at the opening conference of the World Food Summit stressed the need to produce food where the poor and hungry live and to boost agricultural investments in their regions. He also pointed out the fact that in some developed countries, 2 to 4% of the population are able to produce enough food to feed the entire nation and even to export, while in the majority of developing countries, 60 to 80% of the population are not able to meet country food needs. Commitments to increase ODA, investments and domestic and international funding for agriculture were agreed also before Summit at the G8 Summit L'Aquila where Heads of States, Government and the International and Regional Organizations adopted the L'Aquila Joint Statement on Global Food Security⁵⁹ There is an urgent need for a new wave of investment in agricultural and rural areas of developing countries to increase food production⁶⁰, to rehabilitate rural and agricultural infrastructure, to reduce post-harvest crop losses and improve household and community based food stocks and remove artificial constraints to domestic trade throughout the food chain in order to link smallholder farmers to markets.⁶¹ An important commitment has been taken by African leaders in the Maputo Declaration to raise the share of agriculture and rural development in their budget expenditures to at least 10 percent, and encourage other geographical regions to adopt similar quantitative time-bound involvements.⁶²

Focus on Haiti food emergency

On January 2010, Haiti has been hit by a massive earthquake, killing thousands of people, wounding many more and leaving a large number of population homeless and hungry.

Food insecurity was significant and widespread in Haiti, even before this tragic event. It is esteemed that 2.4 million people are food insecure⁶³. The significant increase of food prices since October 2006 represents the main shock experienced by households which has been forced to reduce the already low quantity of food they consume, as strategy to cope the crisis.

The Government has been unable to provide support and assistance to fight price rises and to protect private sector assets and investment. The price of rice, the main import product, has doubled during the first six months of 2008 and price of transport has increased by 50% as well as

⁵⁷ <http://www.fao.org/wsfs/world-summit/it/>

⁵⁸ Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2009. Economic crisis: impacts and lessons learned* – Rome, October 2009. FAO has also launched a new website on world hunger that includes an interactive map showing trends in the percentage of the world's population experiencing hunger in recent decades and providing country-specific data: www.fao.org/hunger/en/

⁵⁹ L'Aquila Joint Statement on Global Food Security L'Aquila Food Security Initiative (AFSI), July 10, 2009 from G8 website http://www.g8italia2009.it/G8/Home/Summit/G8-G8_Layout_locale-1199882116809_Atti.htm

⁶⁰ World Summit on Food Security, *Feeding the World, Eradicate Hunger*, WSFS/2009/INF/2

⁶¹ High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, *Outcomes and Action for Global Food Security*, July 2008

⁶² FAO, World Summit on Food Security, *Declaration of the World Summit on Food Security*, Rome, 16-19 November 2009

⁶³ WFP website <http://www.wfp.org/node/3478>

consequence of fuel crisis⁶⁴, throwing people into desperation and civil riots and making humanitarian aids more expensive and more difficult to be managed.

The general instability also keeps investors away from the country which, on the contrary, needs investment in agriculture to boost production and productivity to feed millions hungry people.

Chronic malnutrition is also significant widespread among the most vulnerable with stunting affecting 24% of children under five.⁶⁵

Several factors contribute to the rise of food insecurity in this poor country. The limited national food production capacity that allow to cover only 47% of the national food needs, the consequently dependency on food imports (48% of national consumed food) and international market, the lack of basic social services, the vulnerability to natural disasters, the socio-political instability, violence and insecurity in poor urban areas drastically reduced the availability of food even if two-thirds of all Haitians depend on the agricultural sector.⁶⁶ WFP together with the Government of Haiti conducted a Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA), in collaboration with FEWS NET and other partners in late 2007 to provide information on the incidence of food insecurity in rural Haiti and on its causes and nature⁶⁷.

WFP, whose mission is to fight hunger worldwide, is present in Haiti since 1969, tripling the number of people receiving food, especially school children and 100,000 mothers and young children.⁶⁸

After the massive earthquake, the whole international community has been called for a streaming humanitarian assistance.

In a week, more than 1.5 million food rations to more than 250,000 people in and around Port-au-Prince have been distributed by WFP and the U.S. military to Haitians. At the time of writing, more than 10 million ready-to-eat meals are being provided to people whose homes have been destroyed and who have no access to cooking facilities while this paper is writing.⁶⁹ Government, NGO's and relief organizations, together with Haitian authorities and under UN coordination have been called to provide support to immediate priorities, such as medical assistance, water, sanitation, food and shelter, as well as fuel and transportation equipment to rehabilitate a completely destroyed country as soon as possible.⁷⁰

Remarks for considerations

Unfortunately, International Community is moving too slowly in meeting hunger targets and we are far from fulfilling commitments undertaken a decade ago. Some progress towards the global fight to eradicate hunger have been done, but they are few and strongly threatened by a new cost of living threshold and increasing food prices.

⁶⁴ Amélie Gauthier, *Food crisis in Haiti: exposing key problems in the process of stabilization*, FRIDE Comment, April 2008

⁶⁵ *Executive Brief: Haiti Comprehensive Food security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA)* – December 2008

⁶⁶ Haiti, The World Factbook from CIA website <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>

⁶⁷ *Executive Brief: Haiti Comprehensive Food security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA)* – December 2008. After the CFSVA, other studies were conducted in Haiti in 2008 following the sharp increase of food prices and the cyclones that hit the country. The findings of these other studies are not included in the present brief, but are accessible via WFP Country Office (contact below)

⁶⁸ <http://www.wfp.org/node/177>

⁶⁹ Statement by WFP Executive Director Josette Sheeran on scale up on relief operation in Haiti January 2010

⁷⁰ United Nations. Secretary-General, *Remarks to the General Assembly on Haiti*, New York, 22 January 2010

The whole Community must to speed up efforts and actions on both international and regional level for doubling world food production by 2050, to secure sufficient and nutritious food supplies for a world population estimated to reach 9.2 billion, by that time.⁷¹

In the final five years before the 2015 deadline, is time for Governments to demonstrate to food-insecure nations and communities that it is possible to develop a roadmap for action and achieve secure tangible results.⁷²

It is unacceptable that in 2009 105 million of people more than 2008 are hungry and that five children died every 30 seconds. Food riots broke out in 22 countries across all continents during 2007-2008, with death and injuries threatening national government stability and global peace and security, as FAO Director General, Jacques Diouf pointed out in its opening statement to the World Summit on Food Security. The planet is now facing several emerging challenges, particularly climate change and rapid urbanization which are strictly interconnected with the problem of food security.⁷³

It is not enough to recognize that a problem exists. The real challenge is to understand what can be done to progressively counter it. It is not enough to affirm that the food is a universal right. It is fundamental to find practical solutions to grant food to everyone. Governments must constantly work to re-build a political and economic international system based on rules, responsibilities, rights and duties to meet hunger targets. As seen, several factors and more complex issues are strictly linked to the problem of food scarcity and malnutrition. So, any approach to the issue must be comprehensive and inclusive of different tools and programmes. It is not a simple fight to win, and the UN system must address and support governments' efforts in helping people, all around the world, to meet their natural nutritional needs.

Delegates must rethink their policies and programmes under the light of the above information and find common solutions in the General Assembly to achieve following strategic objectives:

- *Ensure urgent national, regional and global action to fully realize hunger targets, namely to reduce respectively the proportion and the number of people who suffer from hunger and malnutrition by half by 2015;*
- *Join efforts and expertise to work in the Global Partnership for Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition – building on existing structures to enhance governance and cooperation – promote better coordination at global, regional and national levels and ensure that national and regional interests are duly voiced and considered.*
- *(..) fully Implement the reform of the CFS, which, as the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for a broad range of committed stakeholders to work together, is a central component of our efforts to further advance the Global Partnership for Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition.*
- *Reverse the decline in domestic and international funding for agriculture, food security and rural development in developing countries, and promote new investment to increase sustainable agricultural production and productivity, reduce poverty and work towards achieving food security and access to food for all.*
- *Proactively face the challenges of climate change to food security and the need for adaptation of,*

⁷¹ See: The High-Level Expert Forum on “How to Feed the World in 2050”, organized by FAO on 12 and 13 October 2009,

⁷² <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2008/ga10752.doc.htm>

⁷³ World Summit on Food Security, Opening Statement of FAO General-Director, Dr Jacques Diouf, Rome, 16-18 November 2009

*and mitigation in, agriculture, and increase the resilience of agricultural producers to climate change, with particular attention to small agricultural producers and vulnerable populations.*⁷⁴

⁷⁴ FAO, World Summit on Food Security, *Declaration of the World Summit on Food Security*, Rome, 16-19 November 2009.

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PROTECTING THE EARTH, HOW TO FACE CLIMATE CHANGE?

“Climate change is the pre-eminent geopolitical and economic issue of the 21st century. It rewrites the global equation for development, peace and prosperity. It will increase pressure on water, food and land (...) reverse years of development gains (...) exacerbate poverty (...) destabilize fragile states and topple governments. Some say tackling climate change is too expensive. They are wrong. The opposite is true. We will pay an unacceptable price if we do not act now. (...) The climate negotiations are proceeding too slow. The world’s glaciers are now melting faster than human progress to protect them – and us.”

(Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Opening remarks to the United Nations Climate Change Summit Plenary, 22 September 2009)

Climate Change, a scientific point of view

The first alarm on global warming was launched in 1979 by the first World Climate Conference sponsored by the World Meteorological Organization⁷⁵. It was essentially a scientific conference focusing mostly on how climate change might impact human activities and highlighted the international community's emerging perception of the climate as a vital natural resource. Since then the UN agenda has been dealing with climate change as one of the greatest environmental, social and economic threats facing the planet.

In 1988, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) established the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a scientific body which aims were to provide the world with a clear scientific view on the current state of climate change and its potential environmental and socio-economic consequences. Nowadays thousand of scientist from all over the world agree on the fact that the phenomenon of global warming is unequivocal and confirmed that the balance of climate system has been negatively impacted by human action⁷⁶. It has been scientific proved by the IPCC that the leading cause of global warming is identified in the increasing atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide (CO₂) which primarily result from the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, and land use change.⁷⁷ The other two 'greenhouse' gases responsible for climate change are methane and nitrous oxide whose global increases are primarily due to agriculture. Such gases occur naturally, they are critical for life on Earth, but they have increased markedly as a result of human activities since 1750 and now they are pushing the global temperature to artificial high levels and altering the climate.⁷⁸

The Earth's surface temperature has risen by 0.74 degrees C since the late 1800s and it is expected to increase by another 1.8° C to 4° C by 2100. This trend is expected to cause extinction of animal

⁷⁵World Meteorological Organisation, *World Climate Programme*. Website http://www.wmo.int/pages/index_en.html

⁷⁶ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Summary for Policymakers.*, 2007, p.9. IPCC. Also see Solomon, S., Qin, D., Manning, M., Chen, Z., Marquis, M., Averyt, K.B., Tignor, M. and Miller, H.L. [eds.], *Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis*. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2007 on the IPCC website http://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/publications_ipcc_fourth_assessment_report_wg1_report_the_physical_science_basis.htm

⁷⁷ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Summary for Policymakers.*, 2007, p.2

⁷⁸ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, *Essential Background – Feeling the Heat*, 2008

and vegetal species as well as disruptions in land use and food supply. Moreover, the average sea level rose by 10 to 20 cm during the 20th century, and an additional increase of 18 to 59 cm is expected by the same year. The heavily populated coastlines of such countries as Bangladesh, risk to be overflowed by the sea and some nations entirely, such as the island state of the Maldives, will disappear⁷⁹.

Impact and consequences of changes in Climate

Climate change will impact several sectors. In the agriculture field, climatic changes and consequently extreme weather events will affect crop yields and impact on soil fertility; forest health and productivity risk to be threatened as well as coast and marine ecosystems. Changing weather conditions will also have profound effects on human health and on animal wellbeing and plant health. Significant changes in the quality and availability of water resources risk to affect many sectors including food production, where water plays a crucial role. Food security for both rural and urban populations is threatened and this consequently causes increasing diseases and malnutrition⁸⁰. Indebtedness, outmigration and dependency on food relief could also be natural consequences of global warming⁸¹.

Rural-to-urban migration has been implicated as a driver of HIV and malaria transmission and unplanned urbanization⁸². Extreme climate events cause huge economic impacts. Infrastructure (buildings, transport, energy and water supply) is affected, posing a specific threat to densely populated areas. The situation could be exacerbated by the rise in sea level. Tourism is likely to suffer from changes in climate and unsustainable forms of tourism can exacerbate the negative effects of climate change.⁸³ In the energy sector, climate change will have a direct effect on both the supply and demand of energy. It will cause the erosion of energy security, already threaten by the finiteness of fossil fuels and the growing energy needs of the developing world.⁸⁴ By 2100 close to 75% of the world's population is likely to be urbanized, that is why the promotion of alternate sources of energy is now a major challenge for the international community.⁸⁵ Conflict could emerge as a result of climate change environmentally. Causal link between ecological stress and social conflict: conflict may cause environmental degradation but the latter may also trigger conflict⁸⁶.

According to UNEP, the conflict in Darfur has been driven in part by climate change and environmental degradation, which threaten to trigger a succession of new wars across Africa. A UNEP post-conflict environmental assessment indicates that there is a very strong link between land degradation, desertification and the conflict in Darfur. At the same time the Darfur conflict has

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Confalonieri, U. Menne, B. Akhtar R., Ebi, K., Hauengue, M., Kovats, R.S. Revich, B. and Woodward, A. (2007), Chapter 8: Human Health, in Parry, Martin, Osvaldo Canziani, Jean Palutikof, Paul van der Linden and Clair Hanson (editors) *Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, Contribution of Working Group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Cambridge University Press. Cambridge

⁸¹ Easterling, W. E., P.K. Aggarwal, et al. 2007, *Food, Fibre and Forest Products*, In *Climate change 2007: impacts, adaptation and vulnerability*. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. M. L. Parry, O.F. Canziani, J.P. Palutikof, P.J. van der Linden and C. E. Hanson (ed). Cambridge, Cambridge University Press

⁸² Confalonieri, cited, 2007

⁸³ White Paper – *Adapting to Climate Change: towards a European framework for action*, 1st April 2009

⁸⁴ United Nations. UN Chronicle, *Green our World!*, 2007

⁸⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. 60th Session. Report of the Secretary-General. *Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy*, including the culmination of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005, (A /60/154), 2005

⁸⁶ *World, Food, Insecurity and Malnutrition: Scope, Trends, Causes*, box 4: *Climate Change and Conflict in Sudan* (UNEP 2007) <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/010/ai799e/ai799e02.pdf>

exacerbated Sudan's environmental degradation, forcing more than two million people into refugee camps. Currently, Sudan has the world's largest population of displaced persons, with over five million internally displaced persons and international refugees. This massive population displacement has led to human rights abuses, conflicts over resources, food insecurity and a high prevalence of severe malnutrition.⁸⁷ It is abundantly clear that all aspects of human life are involved by the problem of climate change which is clearly a multiple dimensions phenomenon. Rapid and profound changes caused by the enormous amount of greenhouse gases omitted into the atmosphere have a direct and strong impact on human and economic development. It is a common concern of humankind which requires an urgent global action.

UN efforts to combat Climate Change

The UN has always taken the lead in tackling the issue of climate change. In 1992, global leaders and member of civil society came together in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for the largest environment conference ever assembled⁸⁸. Also known as the Earth Summit, this UN Conference on Environment and Development established linkages among economic and social development and environmental protection and aimed to help governments to find ways to halt the destruction of irreplaceable natural resources and pollution of the planet.

The Summit had a strong eco all over the world and produced several documents, including Agenda 21 whose chapter nine deals with the protection of the atmosphere⁸⁹. In this occasion, government representatives understood the importance to rethink their national and international plans and policies in order to ensure that all political decisions should be taken into account any environmental impact; but meanwhile they decided to manage the climate change separately because of the relevance and of the subject. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was drafted, opened for signature and entered into force on 21st March 1994 after received 166 signatures⁹⁰. This Convention on Climate Change is seen as the framework for intergovernmental efforts to tackle the challenge posed by climate change, to gather and share information on greenhouse gas emission, national policies and best practices. The definition of climate change adopted by the Convention refers to "a change of climate that is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and that is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods".⁹¹ This usage differs from that of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change according to which climate change is "any change in climate over time, whether due to natural variability or as a result of human activity (...)"⁹²

The ultimate objective of the Convention, as well as any legal instrument adopted on its base, is to achieve the "stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ United Nation, *Earth Summit*, 1987

⁸⁹ United Nation, Division for Sustainable Development, *Agenda 21*, 2009. The Agenda 21 was adopted by the 178 governments that attended the Summit. The UN General Assembly created the Commission on Sustainable Development to ensure effective follow up to the UNCED and provide effective best practices between governments and societies. See: United Nations, General Assembly 47th Session, *Institutional Arrangements to follow up the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (A/RES/47/19)*, 1993

⁹⁰ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, *Status of Ratification*, 2007

⁹¹ *United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 1992, article 1

⁹² Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Summary for Policymakers*, 2007, p.2

ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner”.⁹³ Practically, the UNFCCC’s goal is to limit global warming below 2°C.

The climate system, whose stability can be affected by industrial and greenhouse gases emissions, is now felt as a shared resource which needs to be protected and preserved also through a financial and technological support to developing countries whose economies are the most vulnerable to the adverse effects of the implementation of measures to respond to climate change⁹⁴.

The process of defining action to combat the climate change is lead by the Conference of the Parties (COP), the higher representative body of the UNFCCC which involves all Member States and meets once per year. The Kyoto Protocol, adopted after long negotiations by 184 Parties at the COP 3 in 1997 as annex to the UNFCCC, is the first international binding agreement on climate. Whilst the Convention “encourages” the stabilization of greenhouse gas emissions, the Protocol, entered into force only in 2005 (COP 11, Montreal), “commits” industrialized countries (Annex I Parties) that ratified it to reduce their collective greenhouses gas emissions by 5.2% compared to the year 1990 and covers the five year period of 2008-2012.⁹⁵ By the end of this first commitment period established by Kyoto Protocol, a new international framework needed to be negotiated and ratified by Parties. The Protocol, implemented by “Marrakesh Accords” in 2001 (COP 7)⁹⁶, offers to countries a three market-based mechanisms in addiction to national measures to reduce GHG emissions⁹⁷. Working under the guideline of UNFCCC, the Protocol applies the principle of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities according to which the largest share of historical and current global emissions of greenhouse gases has originated in developed countries as a result of more that 150 years of industrial activity⁹⁸. Obviously developing nations must work to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, but they are far less responsible for the high levels of emissions currently in our atmosphere as well as for the effects that global warming has already inflicted to the planet⁹⁹. Considering that developing countries’ per capita emissions are still relatively low and probably will grow to meet their social and development needs¹⁰⁰, they are allowed to continue with qualitative mitigation measures¹⁰¹ without quantifying the outcome since their priority still remain poverty reduction and development. “Global warming is primarily a result of the industrialisation and motorisation levels in the OECD countries, on whom the main onus for quantitative mitigation presently lies”¹⁰². For instance, the United States contributed an estimated 30 percent of the atmospheric greenhouse gases emitted between 1850 and 2003.¹⁰³

⁹³ *United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 1992, article 2

⁹⁴ *United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 1992

⁹⁵ Six greenhouse gases: carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, sulfur hexafluoride, HFCs, and PFCs. The maximum amount of emissions (measured as the equivalent in carbon dioxide) that a Party may emit over the commitment period in order to comply with its emissions target is known as a Party’s assigned amount. The individual targets for Annex I Parties are listed in the *Kyoto Protocol’s Annex B*

⁹⁶ UNFCCC, 2001, *Marrakech Accords*, FCCC/CP/2001/13/

⁹⁷ The Kyoto mechanisms are: Emissions trading – known as “the carbon market”; Clean development mechanism (CDM); Joint implementation (JI). The mechanisms help stimulate green investment and help Parties meet their emission targets in a cost-effective way. For further information consult http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/items/2830.php

⁹⁸ *United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 1992

⁹⁹ Kit Batten, *The Lessons of Bali: The U.S. Needs to Lead on Global Warming*, Center for American Progress. December 18, 2007

¹⁰⁰ *United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 1992

¹⁰¹ *United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change, Article 4.1b mitigation programs for all Parties*

¹⁰² World Bank, *Transport Economics and Sector Policy* briefing, quoted from *Collision Course, Free trade’s free ride on the global climate*, New Economics Foundation, 2000

¹⁰³ Kit Batten, *The Lessons of Bali: The U.S. Needs to Lead on Global Warming*, Center for American Progress, December 18, 2007

Notwithstanding the U.S. has always tried to fulfil its obligations by simply buying allowances from other countries without actually reducing domestic emissions since they have never ratified the Kyoto Protocol. United States apart, many analysts have immediately recognized that the absence from the Kyoto Protocol “of the involvement in truly meaningful ways of the key, rapidly-growing developing countries, a small set of important nations that are now better termed emerging economies – China, India, Brazil, South Africa, Mexico, and Korea, is a primary deficiency of the of the Protocol “. ¹⁰⁴

“What is abundantly clear is the enormous divide between the rich and poor countries. Poor countries want deep cuts in emissions by the industrialized world, and the latter continue to resist significant cuts and legally binding targets.”¹⁰⁵ However, as the UNEP affirmed, developed nations face the biggest moral responsibility and burden for action to make deep cuts in their emissions and assist developing nations into a low-carbon trajectory.¹⁰⁶

In 2007 in order to bring climate change to a halt and to achieve a secure climate future by significantly reducing global greenhouse gas emissions, Parties adopted the Bali Road Map (COP-13, Bali) consisting of several decisions aimed to guide negotiations up to COP-15 in Copenhagen, where a post-Kyoto agreement should have been taken.

CoP-13 reached an historic agreement on the fight against global warming launching a comprehensive process to enable the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention through long-term cooperative action, now, up to and beyond 2012.¹⁰⁷ The “Bali Action Plan”, adopted by the Conference, is centred on four main “building blocks”, adaptation, mitigation, technology transfer and deployment, and financing.¹⁰⁸

Mitigation which must be at the heart of the climate negotiations means reducing emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG), while responding to the impacts of climate change is called adaptation.

The IPCC Fourth Assessment Report made clear that “accumulated historical emissions have already committed the Earth to some level of warming and that the impacts of this warming are already being felt”.¹⁰⁹ This assumption put the attention on climate change’s adaptation. In Bali all efforts have been addressed to retain a balance of mitigation commitments between developed countries and developing countries as well as to increase the sense of urgency on both sides. Developed nations, including the U.S., accepted to put under a measurable, reportable and verifiable control their national appropriate mitigation commitments or actions. Their support to developing nations through technology transfer and financial resources must pass the test of being verifiable as well.¹¹⁰ It means that developing countries, also committed in emission reductions, are now willing to negotiate ‘quantifiable’ mitigation actions. The mitigation strategy designed in Bali also includes policies relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing

¹⁰⁴ Robert Starvins, *What Hath Copenhagen Wrought? A Preliminary Assessment of the Copenhagen Accord*, December 20th 2009. Robert Starvins is the Albert Pratt Professor of Business and Government, Director of the Harvard Environmental Economics Program, and Chairman of the Environment and Natural Resources Faculty Group

¹⁰⁵ Stephen Leahy, *Climate Change: History Was Not Made*, Inter Press Service, December 19, 2009

¹⁰⁶ Achim Steiner, “Foreword” in UNEP, *Catalysing low carbon growth in developing economies*, 2009

¹⁰⁷ UNEP, *Climate Change Strategy for the UNEP programme of work 2010-2011*, 2008

¹⁰⁸ UNDP Environment & Energy Group, *The Bali Road Map: Key Issues Under Negotiation*, 2007

¹⁰⁹ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Summary for Policymakers*, 2007

¹¹⁰ *The Bali Action Plan*, Paragraphs b(i) and b(ii)

countries (REDD).¹¹¹ A global forest monitoring system was launched in 2009 in support of carbon accounting and payments under REDD.¹¹²

The role of EU in the fight to Climate Change

EU-States have always played a key role in the international fight against climate change. Like Japan they were the ones who pushed for deeper cuts in GHG emissions and stronger domestic actions to achieve UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol's goals. According to the Kyoto Protocol, EU-States (15 Member at the moment of ratification in 2002) share a collective 8% reduction goal ('bubble'), while individual member states have diverging national commitments ranging from reductions of 21% for Denmark and Germany, to a commitment to increase national GHG emissions by no more than 27%, as is the case for Portugal¹¹³. This is an example of the differences in "burden sharing" under the protocol. In 2000 the Commission launched the European Climate Change Programme (ECCP) to identify new policies and measures to implement and meet the Kyoto Protocol's targets. These include the EU Emissions Trading System, the largest multi-country, multi-sector Greenhouse Gas Emission Trading System world-wide, entered into force on 25 October 2003 and become the cornerstone of EU efforts to reduce emissions cost-effectively, and the legislation to tackle emissions of fluorinated GHS (Hydrofluorocarbons, Perfluorocarbons, Sulphur hexafluoride), a legislative framework adopted by the European Parliament and the Council on May 2006 aimed at reducing projected emissions of fluorinated gases by around 23 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent by 2010.

In January 2007, as part of an integrated climate change and energy policy, the European Commission set out proposals and options for an ambitious global agreement in its Communication "Limiting Global Climate Change to 2 degrees Celsius: The way ahead for 2020 and beyond". This document endorsed in March 2007 committed the EU to cut its greenhouse gas emissions by 30% of 1990 levels by 2020 and to provide other developed countries commit to making comparable reductions under a global agreement. Moreover, to start transforming Europe into a highly energy-efficient, low-carbon economy, they committed to cut emissions by at least 20% independently of what other countries decide to do. EU leaders set three key targets to be met by 2020: a 20% reduction in energy consumption compared with projected trends; an increase to 20% in renewable energies' share of total energy consumption; and an increase to 10% in the share of petrol and diesel consumption from sustainably-produced bio fuels.¹¹⁴

2009 - The Copenhagen Accord, an essential beginning

After Bali, all relevant bodies and agencies of the UN system have made efforts to fostering existing synergies among Member State, to raise awareness of climate change mitigation in both social and private sector (UNEP, climate change strategy), to make the entire world sensible on the different impacts of changes in climate especially for the most vulnerable economies of developing countries and to address the issue of climate change to a concrete and common solution to achieve at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December 2009.

¹¹¹ *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, Report of the Conference of the Parties on its thirteenth session, held in Bali from 3 to 15 December 2007. Addendum. Part Two: Action taken by the Conference of the Parties at its thirteenth session, 2007

¹¹² World Summit on Food Security, *Opening Statement of FAO General-Director*, Dr Jacques Diouf, Rome, 16-18 November 2009

¹¹³ Klepper and Peterson, *The European Emissions Trading Regime and the Future of Kyoto*, 2008, p. 102

¹¹⁴ IP/06/1434, *Saving 20% by 2020: European Commission unveils its Action Plan on Energy Efficiency*, Brussels, 19 October 2006

In July 2009 the G8 set a goal of cutting emissions of greenhouse gasses by 80% by 2050.¹¹⁵

The World Climate Conference – 3, held in Geneva from 31st August to 3rd September 2009, aimed to establish an international framework to guide the development of climate services which will link science-based predictions and information with climate-risk management and adaptation to climate variability and change throughout the world.¹¹⁶

On 22 September, in a Summit on Climate Change held at the UN Headquarter, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon encouraged all Heads of State and Government to take an urgent action to reach a fair, effective, and scientifically ambitious global climate deal.¹¹⁷ The UN Climate Change Conference held in Copenhagen from 7 to 18 December 2009 represents the arrival point for a series of [UNFCCC](#) meetings that took place throughout the year. It should have been the ambitious and effective response to climate change, an event that whole International Community was waiting for. Actually, it is a new point of departure. The Conference (COP-15) has produced the Copenhagen Accord as final document.¹¹⁸ Unfortunately, Parties' commitments expressed in this Accord have not been considered adequate by a large number of analysts and experts and it is evident that the world's leaders have failed their task to produce a legally binding agreement able to replace the Kyoto Protocol after 2012¹¹⁹.

Actually, as the Professor Carlo Carraro¹²⁰ affirms, “hopes for a more ambitious result were not based on the reality on the ground”. The outcome of the Summit reflects the difficulties of previous negotiations which have always seen developing countries, whose first priority still remains the eradication of poverty and hunger, asking for a first step by developed nations so requiring the participation in reduction emission targets especially from the fast-growing developing countries (China, India, Brazil, Korea, South-Africa and Mexico).

Moreover an eventual commitment from these countries in reducing emission not immediately but after a more realistic period of “grace” would have nullified all efforts from developed nations to control temperature increases.¹²¹

Even if the Copenhagen Accord seems to be more a political declaration of 3 pages, it is an important step “expanding the coalition of the willing and extending the time-frame of action”.¹²² The Accord has reached two important outcomes: a politically relevant declaration of national emissions reduction targets for 2020 to hold the increase in global temperature below 2 degrees

¹¹⁵ Valeria Bosetti, Alessandra Sgobbi, Policy Brief, *Post 2012 Climate Architectures: A comparative Assessment*, published by Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei, 2009

¹¹⁶ For more information see the website http://www.wmo.int/wcc3/documents/WCC3_FAQ_Public_EN.pdf

¹¹⁷ http://www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/climatechange/shared/Documents/Chair_summary_Finall_E.pdf

¹¹⁸ UNFCCC, *Copenhagen Accord*, 18th December 2009, available on website <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/cop15/eng/107.pdf>

¹¹⁹ Robert Starvins, *What Hath Copenhagen Wrought? A Preliminary Assessment of the Copenhagen Accord*, December 20th 2009

¹²⁰ Carlo Carraro is Professor of Environmental Economics and Econometrics at the University of Venice and Vice Provost for Research Management and Policy. He is also member of the Scientific Committee of the Potsdam Institute of Climate (PIK) in Potsdam and of the Steering Committee of the EEE Programme at the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP), a joint initiative with the Beijer Institute of Stockholm. He has been Lead Author of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and one of the founders of the European Climate Forum (ECF) of which he is currently in the Board of Directors

¹²¹ Carraro, Massetti, *Two good new from Copenhagen*, January 15, 2010, available on website <http://www.voxeu.org/index.php?q=node/4490>

¹²² Robert Starvins, *What Hath Copenhagen Wrought? A Preliminary Assessment of the Copenhagen Accord*, December 20th 2009

Celsius; the definition of resources that must be transferred from developed nations to developing ones for mitigation and adaptation actions through the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund.¹²³

Most importantly the Copenhagen Accord signaled that a concerted global effort to address climate change is possible. The U.S., the world's biggest economy and second largest emitter, is working actively to rebuild trust and confirms its commitment in the action to reduce GHG emissions. Secondly, for the first time major developing countries – China, India, Brazil, South Africa, and others – acknowledged a responsibility to take mitigating action. Without their active engage, the fight is lost.¹²⁴

Considerations

In its work “Imperfections in the Economics of Public Policy, Imperfections in Markets, and Climate Change”, Nicholas Stern¹²⁵, using the example of climate change to illustrate some of the consequences of the “collective amnesia” the economics of public policy has suffered from in the last twenty years as well as of the political influence, highlights how fundamental is, to the whole argument, to understand the scale of possible damage of climate change. Failing to recognize it means the failure of any economics of climate change. With probability of around 50%, business-as-usual would take us to temperature increases to 5°C or higher by the earlier part of the next century. A similar temperature has never been reached for 30 million years. Such a change would re-write the physical geography as well as the human geography of the planet. Probably billions of people will be forced to move causing inevitable and severe global conflict.¹²⁶

The Copenhagen Conference has left the debate on climate change completely open. An important step has been accomplished towards a global consensus on the importance to fight climate change through both mitigation and adaptation actions and by financing most vulnerable and poor countries, but no legally binding agreement will follow the Kyoto Protocol by 2012. The issues presented in this guide paper are just a brief introduction of the climate change causes and impacts, agreements undertaken by UN Member States, opinion expressed by experts on the argument.

It would address delegates through the argument, help them to understand the importance of a collective actions, on both regional and international level, to face one of the greatest challenge of our time. Delegates must be aware of negative consequences on security, development and migration policies that a failure in climate change mitigation and adaptation common strategies risk to have. They are expected to have an adequate knowledge of the policy instruments in their countries, as well as the impact climate change will have on various aspects of their daily lives in addition to an excellent understanding of the international legal framework and recent developments in the pathway to combat climate change.

Delegates must over pass the difficulty of finding a shared understanding of the implications of the principle of equity, common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, reconcile differing positions in the attempt to find a common solution to the climate change.¹²⁷ As the

¹²³ *Copenhagen Accord*, article 1

¹²⁴ <http://www.copenhagenclimatecouncil.com/get-informed/news/cop15-daily-brief-the-copenhagenaccord/printview.html>

¹²⁵ Nicholas Stern, *Imperfections in the Economics of Public Policy, Imperfections in Markets, and Climate Change*, Sustainable Development Series, Editor Carlo Carraro, published by Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei, 2009. Nicholas Stern is IG Patel Professor of Economics and Government of the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment

¹²⁶ Nicholas Stern, *Imperfections in the Economics of Public Policy, Imperfections in Markets, and Climate Change*, 2009

¹²⁷ Valeria Bosetti, Alessandra Sgobbi, Policy Brief, *Post 2012 Climate Architectures: A comparative Assessment*, published by Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei, 2009

UNFCCC Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer said after the Copenhagen Conference, “The challenge is now to turn what we have agreed politically in Copenhagen into something real, measurable and verifiable.”¹²⁸

Following questions can help delegate during their preparation:

- Has your Member State signed and ratified the UNFCCC?
- Has your Member State signed and ratified the Kyoto Protocol?
- Were the 2012 goals of the Kyoto Protocol for your Member State met?
- Has your Member State signed the Copenhagen Accord?
- Is the Accord adequate to meet your Member State needs or not?
- What must be done to reach a binding agreement?
- How much are your country willing to reduce its emissions of greenhouse gases?
- How is the help your country needs to engage in reducing their emissions and adapting to the impacts of climate change going to be financed?
- How much responsibility can developing countries share in mitigation efforts and adaptation needs?
- Are the resources sufficient to fund the investments which are necessary to close the gap between the announced emissions reductions and the optimal trajectories towards a safe greenhouse gas concentrations stabilisation pathway?
- Is the collective commitment of 30 billion for the period 2010-2012 and the additional 100 billion dollars a year by 2020 adequate to address adaptation and mitigation in developing countries?
- How can be this amount balanced among all priorities?
- Are the proposed target years too difficult to achieve considering population and economic growth? Should the global community find alternative targets?
- How your Member State can act to make the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund able to operate as financial entity?
- What about the G8 target to halve global emissions by 2050?
- What urgently must be done to reduce or avoid climate change?
- Are the cost of action higher than those of inaction?
- Are the promised emissions reductions sufficient to control global warming?

¹²⁸ <http://unfccc.int>

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- *http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/items/2830.php*
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- *<http://www.copenhagenclimatecouncil.com/get-informed/news/cop15-daily-brief-the-copenhagenaccord/printview.html>*

- <http://www.globalissues.org/>: this website presents numerous global issues, aiming to show how they are inter-related

http://www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/climatechange/shared/Documents/Chair_summary_Final.pdf

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THE ROLE OF YOUTH in FOSTERING INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Intercultural dialogue is a process that comprises an open and respectful exchange or interaction between individuals, groups and organizations with different cultural backgrounds or world views. Among its aims are: to develop a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives and practices; to increase participation and the freedom and ability to make choices; to foster equality; and to enhance creative processes. ¹²⁹

Introduction

S. Huntington, in his Clash of Civilizations affirms that “the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.” ¹³⁰ Starting from this hypothesis and after an analysis of Western and Non-Western civilizations and of roots of clash, he suggests that efforts to identify commonality between civilizations are strongly required since “there will be no universal civilization, but instead a world of different civilizations, each of which will have to learn to coexist with the others.”¹³¹

Intercultural dialogue has been identified as a remedy for the “clash of civilizations”, as an “antitode to culture clashes and terror wars” by Fred Dallmayr.¹³² A big issue of today is to “develop a counterweight to the dominant culture of violence, of terrorism and counter-terrorism”. We can “fight with weapons of openness and acceptance and seeking to increase the dialogue between peoples rather than decrease it”.¹³³

The role of the dialogue among civilizations has been described by United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 56/6 of 21st November 2001 as “a process between and within civilizations, founded on inclusion, and a collective desire to learn, uncover and examine assumptions, unfold shared meaning and core values and integrate multiple perspectives through dialogue”.¹³⁴

“Intercultural Dialogue is about positive approaches to living together”.¹³⁵ It is also about communicative processes in which equality play a key role in ensuring that people can talk to each other on the same level. “As inequality is often present in contexts where people with different

¹²⁹ This definition has been developed by the European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research (ERICarts) by combining elements of different approaches since there is no universal definition in use by private or public actors.

¹³⁰ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations?*, Foreign Affairs Summer 1993

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Fred Dallmayr is a Professor at the University of Notre Dame (Indiana USA) and member of Reset-Doc committee.

¹³³ Fred Dallmayr, *Civilizational dialogue versus war talk*, published on September 2006 on website <http://resetdoc.org/EN/dallmayr-clashes-and-dialogue.php>

¹³⁴ United Nations General Assembly, *Global Agenda of Dialogue among Civilizations*, 56/6, 21 November 2001.

¹³⁵ Discussion Paper based on the Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, organised by the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe in co-operation with the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe in partnership with the Youth Express Network and with the support of the Council of Europe

cultural backgrounds and affiliations meet”, it is up to local organisations, international organisations and institutions, to reinforce the basis for intercultural dialogue by fighting racism and social inequality.¹³⁶

UN commitment in intercultural understanding and youth policies

In 1965 UN General Assembly adopted a resolution promoting the development among youth of the ideals of peace, mutual respect and understanding between peoples¹³⁷. Following this path, two decades later, the General Assembly observed 1985 as the *International Youth Year: Participation, Development and Peace*. It drew international attention to the important role young people play in the world, and, in particular, their potential contribution to development¹³⁸. In its Fiftieth session in 1995, the General Assembly, invited by the Economic and Social Council¹³⁹, adopted the “World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond” in which recognised that “young people in all countries are both a major human resource for development and key agents for social change, economic development and technological innovation”, and “invites, once again, Member States to include, whenever possible, youth representatives in their delegations to the General Assembly and other meetings of relevant United Nations bodies, with a view to stimulating the participation of young women and men in the implementation of the Programme of Action”.¹⁴⁰

The World Programme of Action for Youth provides a policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people.¹⁴¹

Moving simultaneously on both dimensions, youth sector and intercultural dialogue, strictly interrelated each other, on December 2006 the General Assembly decided “to convene in 2007 a high-level dialogue on interreligious and intercultural cooperation for the promotion of tolerance, understanding and universal respect on matters of freedom of religion or belief and cultural diversity, in coordination with other similar initiatives in this area”¹⁴². Two years later, in a resolution on policies and programmes involving youth, the General Assembly encouraged the promotion of youth in the global economy, emphasizing youth capabilities to booster social and economic development¹⁴³

On November 2009 it decided to proclaim the *International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding* commencing on 12 August 2010.¹⁴⁴ “The International Year is about advancing the

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ United Nations General Assembly, *Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples*, Resolution 2037 (XX) of 7 December 1965

¹³⁸ United Nations General Assembly Resolution 40/14, *International Youth Year: Participation, Development and Peace*, 18 November 1985, available on website <http://www.un-documents.net/a40r14.htm>

¹³⁹ *United Nations Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/64 of 2 November 1995*

¹⁴⁰ *United Nations General Assembly Resolution 50/81*, “World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond”, 13 March 1996, available on website <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N96/771/43/PDF/N9677143.pdf?OpenElement>. Also see the Consultative Meeting on the 10-Year Review of the World Programme of Action for Youth, Coimbra, Portugal, 31 January to 3 February 2005 on website <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/coimbrareport.pdf>

¹⁴¹ *World Programme of Action for Youth* on website

http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/wpay_text_final.pdf

¹⁴² United Nations. General Assembly Resolution 61/221 of 20 December 2006. For more information: <http://www.un.org/ga/president/61/follow-up/hld-interreligious.shtml>

¹⁴³ United Nations. General Assembly Resolution 62/126, *Policies and programmes involving youth: youth in the global economy – promoting youth participation in social and economic development*, 18 December 2007

¹⁴⁴ United Nations. General Assembly Resolution on *Proclamation of 2010 as International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding*, A/RES/64/134*, 18 November 2009

full and effective participation of youth in all aspects of society. We encourage all sectors of society to work in partnership with youth and youth organizations to better understand their needs and concerns and to recognize the contributions that they can make to society”.¹⁴⁵

The GA resolution calls on governments, civil society, individuals and communities worldwide to support activities at local and international levels to encourage dialogue and understanding across generations and promote the ideals of peace, respect for human rights and freedoms, and solidarity. It also encourages young people to dedicate themselves to fostering progress, also in the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015¹⁴⁶. Moreover, a World Youth Conference under the auspices of the United Nations is encouraged as the highlight of the Year.

The linkage between culture diversity and youth is also emphasize by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In 1999-2000, the specialized UN agency adopted a “Declaration on the Culture of Peace” and launches the International Year for the Culture of Peace.¹⁴⁷ On 2005, the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions adopted by UNESCO aimed to encourage dialogue among cultures with a view to ensuring wider and balanced cultural exchanges in the world in favour of intercultural respect and a culture of peace.¹⁴⁸ UNESCO works closely with a variety of partners to ensure that young people become empowered and their contributions are taken into account and to supports youth participation with regards to governance, programming, policy development, advocacy and monitoring.¹⁴⁹

Alliance of Civilizations

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (AoC) was established in 2005, at the initiative of Spain and Turkey, under the aegis of the United Nations. Supported by a community of about 85 member countries, international and regional organisations and bodies, and working in partnership with civil society groups, foundations and the private sector, the Alliance aims to improve understanding and cooperation among people from diverse cultures and religions. The long-term objective is to eradicate polarization and extremism and produce the conditions in which security, stability and development can thrive. The essential point of departure to face and surmount these challenges is represented by youth people engaged by the Alliance in a constructive activism.¹⁵⁰

A High Level Group, formed by the former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and composed by experts, proposes educational approaches and methods for supporting the mobilization of young people in promoting the values of moderation, cooperation, and the appreciation of diversity.¹⁵¹

The Alliance’s tools to improve relations between diverse cultures groups are the National Plans and Regional Strategies. In the Conference held last 14th December 2009 in Sarajevo an Alliance of

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.* For more information: <http://social.un.org/youthyear/>

¹⁴⁶ A/RES/55/2, *United Nation Millennium Declaration*, General Assembly, 2000. The document is available on website <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm>.

¹⁴⁷ <http://www3.unesco.org/iycp/>

¹⁴⁸ http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=31038&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

¹⁴⁹ http://portal.unesco.org/shs/en/ev.php-URL_ID=11075&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

¹⁵⁰ United Nation Alliance of Civilizations, *Research Base for the High Level Group Report Youth Summary of research based on commissioned papers*, available on website http://www.unaoc.org/repository/thematic_youth.pdf

¹⁵¹ United Nations Secretary-General announces composition of High Level Group for Alliance of Civilizations, SG/SM/10073/Rev.1*, September 2, 2005, available on website <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2005/sgsm10073.doc.htm>

Civilization's Regional Strategy on Intercultural Dialogue and Cooperation in South East Europe has been agreed, also involving international and regional organizations such as UNESCO, IOM, the OSCE and the Council of Europe.¹⁵² This Regional Strategy emphasizes the need to prioritize action in the fields of education and youth. An Action Plan 2010-2012 is, at the time of writing, under preparation and will be presented in May at the 3rd Forum of the Alliance in Rio de Janeiro.¹⁵³

Youth has been identified as one of the key priorities for the work of the Alliance of Civilizations as their contribution to improving the intercultural dialogue is considered crucial, at the present moment more than ever.

Alliance of Civilization's youth programmes focused on:

- raising the awareness of decision-makers regarding the importance of the contribution of youth in fostering understanding between people of various backgrounds;
- strengthening capacity of youth to effectively implement initiatives aiming to advance cross-cultural understanding;
- sharing information by developing mechanisms and networks facilitate coordination, partnership development, access to opportunities, dissemination of key documents and success stories, etc.¹⁵⁴

A Youth Solidarity Fund, recommended by the High Level Group, has been established to answer calls from youth international organizations worldwide involved in fostering dialogue and cooperation to build long-term positive relationships between different cultures and religions.¹⁵⁵

The Council of Europe, Intercultural dialogue and Young people

The Council of Europe is one of the major international institutions engaged in the promotion of intercultural dialogue.¹⁵⁶ Actually the notions of "dialogue of civilizations" and "intercultural dialogue" have only recently begun to appear on the political agenda of international institutions which for a long time have been dealt only with themes like intercultural education, communication and understanding. Intercultural dialogue is now a political priority of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and the diversity of European cultures is felt as a source of enrichment.¹⁵⁷ The policy of the Council of Europe in the area of intercultural dialogue has evolved through a series of meetings and conferences which produced important documents, such as the Declaration on Cultural Diversity¹⁵⁸, the Opatija Declaration of Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict prevention¹⁵⁹, the Athens Declaration on intercultural education¹⁶⁰, the Wroclaw Declaration on 50

¹⁵² United Nation Alliance of Civilizations, *Alliance of Civilizations' Regional Strategy on Intercultural Dialogue and Cooperation in South Eastern Europe*, December 2009 <http://www.unaoc.org/docs/Sarajevo-Strategy-13december09.pdf>

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ <http://www.unaoc.org/content/view/92/127/lang,english/>

¹⁵⁵ <http://www.unaoc.org/content/view/93/128/lang,english/>

¹⁵⁶ The Council of Europe website <http://www.coe.int>

¹⁵⁷ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/policy_EN.asp

¹⁵⁸ Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (adopted by), *Declaration on Cultural Diversity*, 7 December 2000, available on website <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=Decl-07.12.2000&Sector=secCM&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75>

¹⁵⁹ European ministers responsible for cultural affairs, Opatija (Croatia) (adopted by) *Declaration of Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict prevention*, 22 October 2003, available on website <http://www.ericarts.org/web/files/131/en/OpatijaDeclaration.pdf>

years of cultural cooperation in Europe emphasizing youth participation and mobility in public life¹⁶¹. At the third Summit held in Warsaw on May 2005¹⁶², Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe adopted an Action Plan encouraging intercultural, political and inter-religious dialogue “as a means of promoting awareness, understanding, reconciliation and tolerance, as well as preventing conflicts and ensuring integration and the cohesion of society”¹⁶³. The active involvement of civil society and local authorities in this dialogue is considered crucial. The Summit also engaged member states in a new dialogue between Europe and its neighbouring regions such as the southern Mediterranean, the Middle East and Central Asia. The milestone for the implementation of this policy is the Faro Declaration containing the Council of Europe strategy for developing intercultural dialogue.¹⁶⁴ The Declaration prepares the ground for the “mainstreaming” of intercultural dialogue in all working areas of the Council of Europe.

On May 2008, the Committee of Ministers published the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue “Living together as Equals in Dignity”, a coherent and long-term policy for the promotion and the implementation of intercultural dialogue within Europe and between Europe and its neighbouring regions.¹⁶⁵ Example of good practices, guidelines, tools of action for managing cultural diversity at both regional and local levels are provided. According to the White Paper to advance intercultural dialogue, “the democratic governance of cultural diversity should be adapted in many aspects; democratic citizenship and participation should be strengthened; intercultural competences should be taught and learned; spaces for intercultural dialogue should be created and widened; and intercultural dialogue should be taken to the international level”.¹⁶⁶

The Council of Europe faces the challenge of strengthen intercultural dialogue in partnership with other international organizations, foundations and associations. The main expressions of this international partnership are: the Faro Open Platform, created with UNESCO¹⁶⁷, the bilateral agreements signed by the Secretary General and the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures¹⁶⁸ and the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO)¹⁶⁹, which provide the Council of Europe with the possibility to engage in a

¹⁶⁰ *Declaration by the European Ministers of Education on intercultural education in the new European context*, Athens (Greece), 10-12 November 2003 available on website http://www.coe.int/t/e/cultural_cooperation/education/standing_conferences/e.21stsessionathens2003.asp#TopOfPage

¹⁶¹ *Declaration on 50 years of cultural cooperation in Europe*, adopted by the ministers responsible for culture, education, youth and sport of the signatory states of the European Cultural Convention, gathered at Wroclaw (Poland), 10 December 2004 available on website http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/culturalconvention/Declaration_en.asp

¹⁶² http://www.coe.int/t/dcr/summit/20050517_decl_varsovie_en.asp

¹⁶³ *Action Plan of the Third Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe*, Warsaw, 16-17 May 2005 http://www.coe.int/t/dcr/summit/20050517_plan_action_en.asp

¹⁶⁴ *Declaration on the Council of Europe's Strategy for Developing Intercultural Dialogue*, adopted by the ministers responsible for cultural affairs in the States Party to the European Cultural Convention gathered in Faro (Portugal), 27-28 October 2005 available on website <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=927109&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75>

¹⁶⁵ Council of Europe. Committee of Ministers, *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue “Living together as Equals in Dignity*, Strasbourg, 7 May 2008, available on website http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/Source/Pub_White_Paper/White%20Paper_final_revised_EN.pdf

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ Declaration of Intent on the setting up of an open platform of inter-institutional cooperation for intercultural dialogue (The Faro Platform), available on website http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/culturalconvention/source/faro_platform_en.pdf

¹⁶⁸ <http://www.euromedalex.org/>

¹⁶⁹ ALESCO website

http://www.alecso.org.tn/lng/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=67&Itemid=117&lang=en

closer cooperation with the countries on the Southern shores of the Mediterranean and in other regions.

The Council of Europe is strongly committed in encouraging youth to get actively involved in country's civil and political life and the system of *co-management* testifies this commitment.¹⁷⁰ It also wants to promote and develop youth policies by putting special emphasis on the participation of young people and encourages the development of youth associations, networks and initiatives, and promotes international co-operation. The Council of Europe has identified human rights education and intercultural dialogue as priorities in the youth sector¹⁷¹. Activities such as training courses, study sessions, seminars on intercultural dialogue and youth policy development are crucial and they are realized in cooperation with the European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest and the European Youth Foundation. The Joint Council on Youth of the Council of Europe has included in its programme 2010-2012 for the youth sector the project Living together in diverse societies: youth policy and youth work promoting intercultural dialogue to realise a multicultural environment through the intercultural youth work; to promote responses to racism, intolerance and discrimination; to develop youth work for peace-building, conflict prevention and transformation and to enhance global solidarity and cooperation.¹⁷² Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland agreed that youth work has an important pro-active role to play in the implementation of Council of Europe core values: human rights, democracy, rule of law.¹⁷³ At the time of writing, (from the 25th to the 28th of January 2010) the meeting 'Euro-Med Youth Policies on Intercultural Dialogue' is taking place in Strasbourg as part of the preparation for the Anna Lindh Forum 2010. The partnership among the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the Anna Lindh Foundation want to be the key to strengthen the role of young people in fostering intercultural dialogue among people from different cultures living together in a globalised world.¹⁷⁴

European Union's programmes

Why should we fear change and growing diversity? Come to think of it, Europe has never been a uniform cultural and religious place in its long history. We have always had to cope with each other; we have learned from each other; often we have fought each other because of conflicting interests and worldviews. We should never forget this. Our diversity is part of our genetic makeup(...) Dialogue is not a sign of weakness: it's a sign of maturity and strength.

(Ján Figel— EU Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture, and Youth, The opportunities of multicultural Europe, 2007)

In its study *Sharing Diversity National Approaches to Intercultural Dialogue in Europe* conducted for the European Commission and published on March 2008, the European Institute for Comparative Culture Research analyses the concept of intercultural dialogue, its dimensions and its challenges and gives recommendations to European and national actors on the issue. Despite different approaches observed through European countries, the study underlined the more prominent place of intercultural dialogue on political agenda since the beginning of new millennium.

¹⁷⁰ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Coe_youth/co_management_en.asp#TopOfPage

¹⁷¹ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Coe_youth/Priorities_2006_2008_prog_1_en.asp#TopOfPage

¹⁷² http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Coe_youth/Priorities_2010_en.asp

¹⁷³ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/News/News/017_Youth_Leader_meets_SG_en.asp

¹⁷⁴ <http://www.euromedalex.org/events/meeting-euro-med-youth-policies-and-intercultural-dialogue>

The rise of migration flows, the EU enlargement, globalisation and geopolitical changes, new tools of communication, several disputes and debates on value systems, a reported rise of incidents of discrimination, racism, and populism brought European citizens to think about diversity and intercultural dialogue as something enriching their country's cultural life.¹⁷⁵ In this study, youth are defined as a "new generation to target". The European Commission promotes intercultural dialogue in different fields of European youth policy¹⁷⁶ and through different tools such as the EU's Youth In Action Programme¹⁷⁷ and the EuroMed Youth¹⁷⁸. In particular, the EuroMed Youth Programme, laid down by the Barcelona Declaration adopted in 1995, is based on the concept that 'youth exchanges should be the means to prepare future generations for a closer co-operation between the Euro-Mediterranean partners'. The main purpose of the Regional EuroMed Youth Programme is to promote mobility of young people, non formal education and understanding between nations. Obviously the youth partnership agreement between the European Commission and the Council of Europe has intercultural dialogue at its centre. In this framework the European Commission supports the campaign "All Different – All Equal", research seminars and trainings for youth workers and young people from the EU and CoE countries as well as from third countries and in particular from the Euromed region, the Balkans, and Eastern and Central Europe.

2008 has been the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. With a budget of €10 million, it aimed to increase interaction and facilitate communications among cultures into the EU and between Europeans and the rest of the world.¹⁷⁹

Another initiative that must be mentioned is the European Youth Forum. It is an independent, democratic, youth-led platform, expressing the voice of young people in Europe. Among its aims, youth are involved in upholding intercultural understanding, democracy, respect, diversity, human rights, active citizenship and solidarity.

The Youth Forum works to empower young people to participate actively in society and contribute to the development of youth work in other regions of the world.¹⁸⁰ "Youth living in European and Arab countries play an important role in this process, given their contribution to social change and their commitment to achieving equality, justice and peace. Young people and youth organisations are indeed key actors in promoting migration and integration policies embedding human rights and fundamental freedoms".¹⁸¹

The role of youth and the international migration

Young people represent an important percentage of migrant community. Today more than ever the globalization encouraged young people to move from their own countries in search of a good education, a decent job, a personal security under the rule of law. Usually they move from a developing country to a developed one. According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), young people historically make up a large share of the migrant population. If the definition of youth includes young people up to the age of 29, young people represent half of global

¹⁷⁵ European Institute for Comparative Culture Research (ERIC), *Sharing Diversity: National Approaches to Intercultural Dialogue in Europe*, March 2008 available on website <http://www.interculturaldialogue.eu/web/index.php>

¹⁷⁶ For more information: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-policies/doc23_en.htm

¹⁷⁷ For more information: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc74_en.htm

¹⁷⁸ For more information: <http://www.euromedp.org/default.asp>

¹⁷⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc415_en.htm

¹⁸⁰ European Youth Forum website <http://www.youthforum.org/en/about>

¹⁸¹ *An appeal from Assilah Addressing Youth Migration through a Human Rights Perspective available on website* http://www.youthforum.org/en/system/files/yfj_public/strategic_priorities/en/20091118_Assilah_Appeal_final.pdf

migrant flows.¹⁸² Even if projected growth rates are a disputed area, forecasts show that European population will slightly increase until 2050 due to net immigration flows. Without immigration, it would have already started to decline.¹⁸³ For this reason, the role of youth migrants is crucial in Europe as well as in all countries suffering from a slow demographic growth.

Despite this statement of fact, the youth perspective is rarely considered in national and international debate on migration. The important role played by young migrants must be acknowledged. Youth migrants are “useful” not only in terms of economic growth but in terms of intercultural dialogue awareness. The integration of young migrants should ideally contribute to breaking down cultural barriers and ultimately to changing the very predominance of the existing cultural discourse which considers cultural differences as the most difficult differences to cope with. Youth groups formed by young residents and migrants can be pillars of social cohesion. By sharing same experiences at school, at work, in sports activities young people are able to prepare the field of integration among people of different cultures. National as well as international policies must recognize the strategic role of youth by granting all necessary conditions. Actually young migrants integration largely depends on the host countries’ policies to help them learn the language, find employment, housing, education and health care, and protect them from racism, xenophobia and discrimination. It also depends on migrants’ ability to adapt.¹⁸⁴

The Council of Europe has encouraged member states to promote non-formal education and to encourage young people’s commitment. Youth and sport organisations, together with religious communities, are particularly well placed to advance intercultural dialogue in a non-formal education –contest. Civil-society organisations, and in particular youth organizations are used to respond to cultural diversity in a positive and creative way.

The European Youth Forum believes that youth organisations must play an important role in integrating migrants and building a trans-cultural society. The structure of democratic youth organisations gives young people the possibility to experience and learn about the principles of participative democracy and active citizenship. The inclusion of migrant organisations in existing youth organisation networks, and the exchange of both experiences and resources, can benefit the development and empowerment of migrant organisations – empowering individual migrant youth.¹⁸⁵

The International Organization for Migration (IOM), whose “primary goal is to facilitate the orderly and humane management of international migration”¹⁸⁶, recognises the crucial role of young people as agents of social change in a world often characterized by intolerance, and ethnic and religious divisions. As Luca Dall’Oglio, IOM’s Permanent Observer to the United Nations said “the practical contributions of young people - whether they are migrants, second-generation immigrants or indeed non-migrants – in not just identifying constraints but also in promoting a climate of respect and

¹⁸² UNFPA (2006). *Moving young: State of the world population 2006 - youth supplement*. New York: United Nations Population Fund, from website http://www.unfpa.org/upload/lib_pub_file/655_filename_yswp-en.pdf

¹⁸³ European Commission (2005). *Confronting demographic change: A new solidarity between generations*. Green paper. Employment & Social Affairs. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

¹⁸⁴ UNFPA (2006). *Moving young: State of the world population 2006 - youth supplement*. New York: United Nations Population Fund

¹⁸⁵ Council of Europe, *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue “Living together As Equals in Dignity”*, Strasbourg, 7 May 2008 from CoE website http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/Source/White%20Paper_final_revised_en.pdf

¹⁸⁶ IOM Strategy, 9 November 2007 from website

http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/about_iom/docs/res1150_en.pdf

appreciation for one other can help show the way forward in creating a more enlightened world. (...) Let's not forget it is the youth of today that will have to deal with the world of tomorrow."¹⁸⁷

Remark for considerations

«Dialogues between cultures and peoples has never been needed more urgently than it is today.»

(Romano Prodi)

Delegates must recognise the importance of the intercultural dialogue and place it at the heart of their citizenship and integration strategies; must re-think their national and neighboured policies and programmes considering that diversity is a source of enrichment and not a cause of conflict. They must encourage the active participation of youth in the political and social life of the country. Youth are a resource of development, innovation and social change and have the power to booster intercultural dialogue and lead the fight against the “clash of civilizations”.

Racism, xenophobia, terrorism, illegal immigration are all of them difficult challenges this globalized world has to deal with. Only through dialogue, mutual exchange of views, shared spaces, intercultural competences and skills, youth policies and adequate institutional structures it could be possible to rectify existing abuses, horrendous form of oppression and persecution, and religious clashes.

“Today we have a huge surplus of war talk and mission talk in the world, and a huge deficit of civilization dialogue”¹⁸⁸. Delegate must work to create conditions to overpass this lack.

Is your state member of a regional organization particularly active in the promotion of dialogue among different cultures and/or religious? Which United Nations resolutions your member states has proposed and/or adopted? Is your country and its citizens particularly sensitive to those issues? How active are youth in the political and social life of your member state? Those and much more questions could help delegates during their preparation.

¹⁸⁷ PLURAL + Program, launched at AoC 2nd Forum in Istanbul, www.unaoc.org. or to www.iom.int

¹⁸⁸ Fred Dallmayr, *Civilizational dialogue versus war talk*, published on September 2006 on website <http://.resetdoc.org/EN/dallmayr-clashes-and-dialogue.php>

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- Anna Lind Euro.Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between cultures website <http://www.euromedalex.org/>
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