

OUTREACH AT THE SUMMIT

Daily news and critical analysis of the UN Summit proceedings

SCANDAL? WHAT SCANDAL?

By: Ian Williams

The oil-for-food inquiry was the result of a conservative media storm suggesting that Annan had influenced the programme in favour of his son; in the words of Charles Krauthammer on Fox TV, it was the "biggest scandal in the history of the world in money terms". But perhaps the most outstanding evidence of mismanagement by the United Nations is that it was stampeded by the Murdoch media empire into wasting \$35 million on Volcker's massive but anodyne report – one that continually minimised the beam in the US eye while maximising the mote in the UN's.

STAKEHOLDER FORUM



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– nothing to do with the programme – in oil trades to US allies that the US condoned, and a little over \$1 billion dollars in oil revenue that it estimated Baghdad secured in kickbacks (which the UN reported to the Security Council sanctions committee).

Against this backdrop, the funds that Volcker found suspicious – \$147,000 in income over four years that the head of the \$100 billion programme reported to the UN – appears rather trivial; yet that is the evidence for claims that the UN is steeped in waste, mismanagement and corruption.

*(Continued on page 2)*

The report found no evidence of nepotism or corruption by Kofi Annan. It could find no records from the US to account for the \$10 billion or so in oil-for-food surpluses that were handed over to the occupation authorities. It identified \$8 billion of revenue for Saddam



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Oh, and by the way, the programme successfully kept most Iraqis fed, and allowed sanctions to stop Saddam Hussein from developing WMDs.

In effect, the Volcker report held the UN responsible for doing what the permanent members of the Security Council told it to do and for the failure of the US in particular to enforce sanctions on its allies. Inadvertently, it highlighted an indispensable role of the organisation for successive US administrations – that of scapegoat. Set it up to fail – and then blame it.

There were many better uses for \$35 million.

When US Congress members call for reform, their last concern is the welfare of the United Nations, whose efficiency and ethics would certainly bear favourable comparison with the standards of federal administration. They want an organisation that is amenable to US demands, and broadly speaking the US does get what it wants in the UN. It has demanded, and succeeded, in removing personnel as various as Mary Robinson, the High Commissioner for Human Rights; Peter Hansen, the head of the United Nations Relief and works Agency (UNRWA); and Jose Bustani, the head of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

Some of the resistance to “reform” from the general assembly is cover for nepotism and patronage, but much derives from the assembly’s reluctance to allow more managerial discretion for the secretary-general for fear that US pressure on Kofi Annan will reduce its own power. In this, assembly members are simply following in the original breach of the charter made by the “permanent five”.

The lesson is that paying “Danegeld” to Washington only increases its predatory appetites for more. Most secretaries-

This is an extract from a much longer article on openDemocracy where Ian Williams argues that member-states who care about the organisation’s principles need to act together to reach their goals – with or without the United States.

Go to: <http://www.opendemocracy.net/globalization-UN/debate.jsp>

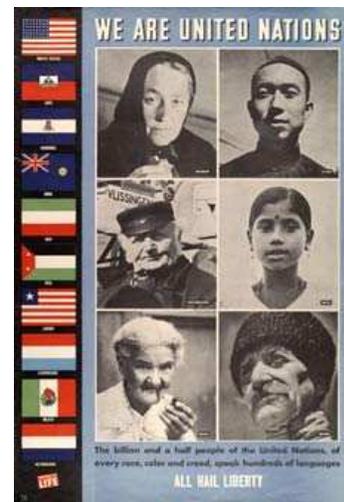
general have had to appease the US, and Kofi Annan has actually been quite good at engaging sections of the American establishment constructively. But sadly, you cannot really pander to people who actually want your destruction or your complete complaisance, except by running up the white flag. Even if Annan wanted to do that (and he certainly doesn’t), the other members would not let him – even if they are hardly on the frontline helping him resist pressure.

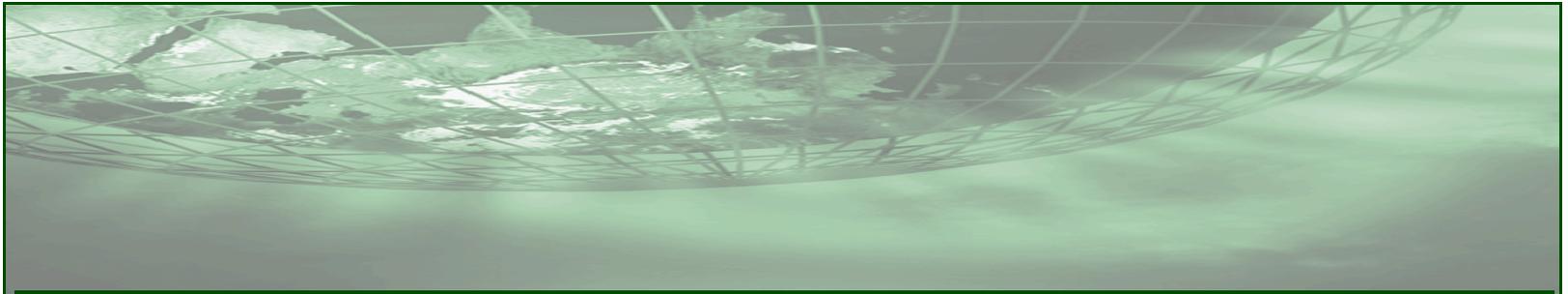
In fact, while the UN could certainly do with reform – which for most observers would begin with radical surgery of the human-resources department – it is easy to forget that the reason most of the world loves the organisation and the American right hates it is not necessarily because of what it “does,” but because of what it stands for, and the global order that has been crystallising around it.

The UN has evolved from a group of military victors into a truly global organisation, under whose auspices there have been tremendous steps forward towards forging a rule-based global society. While the organisation has provided the framework for those developments, it is the member-states with their adherence to the conventions and treaties that have made the difference.

Despite the worst conservative fears, and the naïve hopes of some internationalists, the UN is not, and never will be a world government. Indeed no one who has seen it in operation close up would want it to be. But it is a crucial part of a cooperative world.

Ian Williams is the United Nations correspondent for the Nation and a columnist for Tribune. His books include *The UN for Beginners* (1995) and *Rum: A Social and Sociable History of the Real Spirit of 1776* (Nation Books, 2005).





# The Hidden History of the United Nations

By: Dan Plesch

Read the full timeline of the UN's forgotten history on [openDemocracy.net](http://openDemocracy.net)

We are taught that the UN began with the signing of the Charter in 1945. In fact, that agreement was the culmination of a complex military and political effort that began in 1941. Understanding the UN's wartime origins provides a powerful and much-needed reminder that the UN is not some liberal accessory but was created out of hard, realistic political necessity.

The historical records show how Winston Churchill and Franklin D Roosevelt created the United Nations to win the war both militarily and politically, and to create the foundations for a lasting peace. Their first expression of Anglo-American policy was in the Atlantic Charter of 1941; this included freedom from want, social security, labour rights and disarmament as well as self-determination, free trade and freedom of religion. Churchill himself remarked during the height of the fighting in 1944 that the "United Nations is the only hope of the world".

In the documentary records of the war years, countless references demonstrate the UN's origin as a strategic engine of victory in the second world war. The document that formalised the Nazi defeat in the war includes the words: "This Act of Military Surrender is without prejudice to, and will be superseded by, any general instrument of surrender imposed by, or on behalf of, the United Nations on Germany..." President Truman broadcast on 8 May that: "General Eisenhower informs me that the forces of Germany have surrendered to the United Nations".

These references may seem odd today. But at the time, it was normal to talk about the United Nations fighting the war. Major George B Woods, chaplain to a "band of brothers" in the 82nd Airborne Division, gave an address for the burial of the dead at Wobbelin concentration camp. He explained that "these crimes were never clearly brought to light until the armies of the United Nations overran Germany".

The "United Nations" had been the official name for the coalition fighting the axis powers since January 1942, when Roosevelt and Churchill had led twenty-six nations, including the Soviet Union and China, in a "Declaration by United Nations".

The declaration committed the twenty-six not to cut separate peace deals with the Nazis and to subscribe to the principles of the Atlantic Charter for the post-war world. The Charter

provided the political basis for countering Nazi ideology; it caught the imagination of people around the world, including the young Nelson Mandela and other anti-colonial activists.

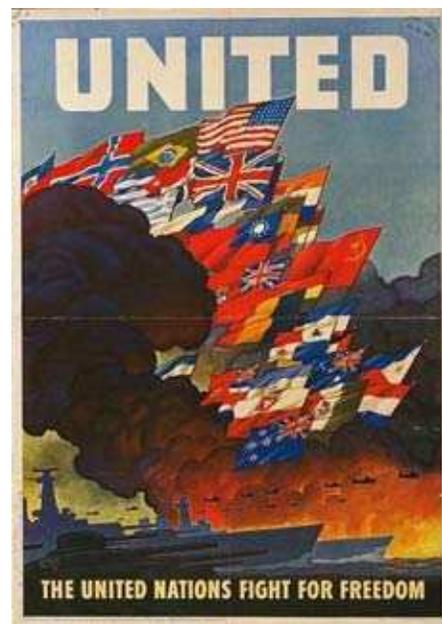
The United Nations was a real entity, not a spin-doctored slogan offering a gullible public the promise of world peace at the end of the war. The allies fought the war as the United Nations and created organisations in its name and on its foundation. The British Library holds scores of wartime publications by or about the United Nations. It was celebrated in music, prayer and exhibitions. Anthologies were published of the exploits of "Heroes of the United Nations".

## A lost history

Today, the United Nations is all too often regarded as an unnecessary bauble attached to the allied victory. At the time, the UN organisation created in San Francisco was regarded as the grand culmination of the war effort.

George W Bush and Tony Blair seek to persuade their citizens that other nations are just too intransigent to deal with in their campaign to make the world free and safe. They would have us believe that Vladimir Putin and Jacques Chirac are tougher customers than Joseph Stalin and Charles De Gaulle.

Roosevelt and Churchill had both experienced the first world war and seen the failure of the League of Nations. They did not respond to fascism with a doctrine of pre-emptive war and totali-



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## A Results Based Process is Seriously Needed at the UN

*By: Rob Wheeler* as both the starting point for the negotiations for the Summit and as an ongoing means through which implementation could be based. The UN needs to move much sooner during its negotiations towards considering and debating specific means and mechanisms of both implementation and funding – such as during the earlier stages of the preparatory process.

While the Summit process and the achievements made over the past year have certainly been worthwhile, much more is needed to ensure that the UN Member States are in fact able and willing to respond adequately to our global problems and challenges. We must ask, “Why, after so much time and energy has been spent, are we still so far from doing what is truly needed to turn things around; to ensure that all peoples’ basic human needs are met; and that we all have a secure, decent and just quality of life?”

First, I would suggest that the UN needs to adopt a Results Based Approach for dealing with our common global problems, in fact it should have been done long ago. The Member States should start every process and proceeding by first establishing fundamental goals and objectives that they want and need to achieve; and then they must ask what it would take to fully achieve them. Then every decision that is made after that must be based on considering what would be needed to achieve the goals. The first and last of these goals and objectives must be to provide well being for all.

The next questions that must be addressed are: What will it take to ensure that the agreement is implemented; how much money (and other resources) will be needed; and where will it come from? If the Chair will insist that the Member States specifically address and agree on a response to these questions early on, then there is a much better chance that we will get serious outcome documents that lead to real changes in the real world.

As we know, a handful of countries were able to override the will and wishes of the majority of Member States and to greatly weaken the outcome document for the Summit. It is time for the UN to begin to make decisions by supra majority votes of at least 2/3 vote rather than by consensus, which would allow it to come up with much more effective agreements. As it is, those that have weakened the outcome documents have typically refused to ratify and act on such agreements anyway. We would be better off without their agreement than to continue to water down our crucially needed international agreements.

The UN Member States have also had a tendency to ignore or not pay enough attention to specific proposals and recommended means of implementation. Specific recommendations as these should have been endorsed early on

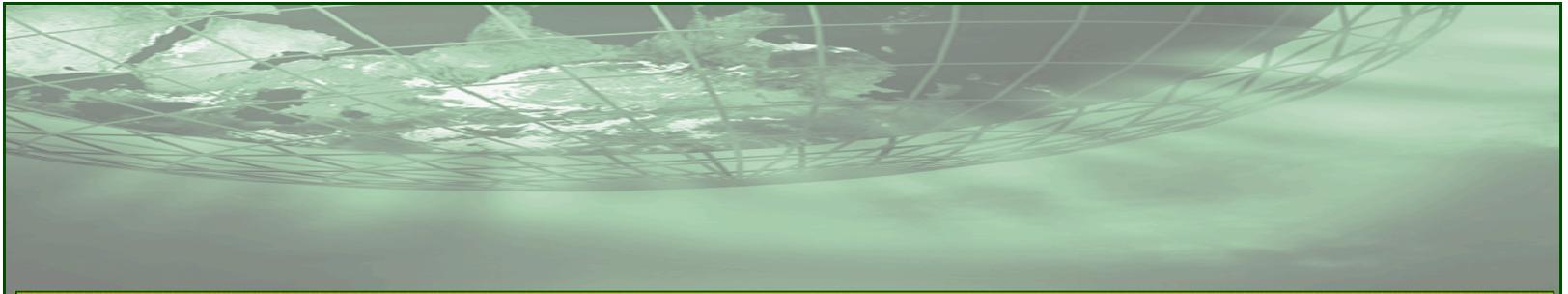
Similarly, the Member States agreed during the Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development to develop National Strategies for Sustainability and to begin to implement them by 2005. However, many governments have still not done so – including as important a country in this regards as the United States. A specific mechanism for following up on this agreement should have been included in the Outcome Document; however given that it was not, it should now be the responsibility of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and its bureau, to ensure that an evaluation and review process for this will be included as a part of CSD.

The Outcome Document should have also included such specifics as the Secretary-General’s recommendation that “countries adopt time-bound environmental targets for such priorities as: forest replanting, water management, ecosystem preservation, and curbing pollution.”

The Environmental Task Force also called for such things as Operational Environmental Targets (including both outcome and process targets), Needs Assessments, Cost and Benefit Economic Analysis, Viable Financing Strategies, Regional and Global Implementation Mechanisms, etc. Such things as this should also be clearly spelled out in all outcome documents and plans of action from now on. Until such specifics as these are included I am afraid that little progress will be made towards really responding to and solving our primary global problems.

Finally, it is essential that the UN Member States agree to specific mechanisms and new and innovative means of financing sufficient to fully fund the Johannesburg Plan of Action and the MDGs. This could include a Tobin Tax, a charge on the use of the Global Commons or on air travel, a surcharge on the use of natural resources, a tax on the sale of armaments, a carbon tax, et.al. No agreement will be worth the paper it is written on until adequate means of funding is made available for its implementation.

*Mr Wheeler is a member of the Association of World Citizens, Global Ecovillage Network, and Chair of the EcoEarth Alliance UN Partnership Initiative*



## World Summit Outcome Document: “something to work with”

Late nights, lots of deals, and the deeds are done. The new World Summit text released Tuesday is “workable” according to WWF International.

“In the lead up to the summit, we met key countries on a number of critical environment issues such as ensuring effective, long-term, sustainable development and asking for meaningful text on key issues such as oceans and seas, biodiversity, climate, forests, toxics, freshwater, and replenishment of the Global Environment Facility. Although the text is not as strong as we had hoped, there are references to all these key issues in the outcome document, so we have something to work with,” said WWF Director of International Policy, Gordon Shepherd.



“In light of the *Millennium Ecosystem Assessment* and *In Larger Freedom* reports, which starkly demonstrated how far and fast countries need to move on environment issues, it is of grave concern that MDG 7 is inadequately recognized as underpinning the other MDGs. Furthermore, the opportunity to inject strong language on capacity building, environmental services and on integrating environmental considerations in poverty reduction strategies was not met, and the Summit failed to mention the need to focus on the Kyoto Protocol as the key instrument for future action on climate change. Also missing were key texts on disarmament, human rights, peace-building, women’s rights, and providing collective and human security”.

“With the Summit concentrating on issues of international concern such as disarmament, terrorism and UN management reform, there was a real danger that sustainable development and the environment would be traded away in the last small hour negotiations. That environmental sustainability is being recognized by Heads of State as an equal priority on the international agenda is significant.”

“We have a long way to go, but as this is the key framework ‘to do’ list for all world leaders, the document provides a cru-



- Highlights in the text include:**
- reference to respect for nature as a common fundamental value that is essential for international relations.
  - reaffirmation that sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental aspects constitutes a key element of the overarching framework of United Nations activities, and of the “commitment to eradicate poverty and promote sustained economic growth, sustainable development and global prosperity for all”.
  - commitment to “promote the integration of the three components of sustainable development” as “interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars”.
  - resolution to “protect our natural resource base in support of development”
  - recognition that the UNFCCC is the appropriate framework for addressing future action on climate change at the global level, and resolution that “all states will fulfill commitments and significantly reduce the rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010 and continue ongoing efforts towards elaborating and negotiating on an international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit sharing”
  - commitment to “assist developing countries’ efforts to prepare integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans as part of their national development strategies and to provide access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation”
  - acknowledgement of “the invaluable role of the GEF in facilitating cooperation with developing countries” and the need for “a successful replenishment this year along with the successful conclusion of all outstanding commitments from the third replenishment”.
- key text on the sustainable management of oceans, seas and forests.

cial hook for environment issues in their integration in development policy. The environment and development communities have a real opportunity to work together to achieve sustainable development”.

# UN Summit Makes Uneven Progress on Human Security

By Angela Edman  
WFM-IGP Program Associate

The World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy (WFM-IGP) believes that endorsement of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is a key step to advancing human security. We are pleased that the General Assembly has unanimously affirmed that both national governments *and* the international community have a responsibility to protect civilians from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

It is a positive development, insofar as we now have a mechanism to hold governments accountable to protecting their citizens. Governments that do wish to take appropriate collective action to protect civilians from genocide and other crimes against humanity also gain political legitimacy through the codification of R2P. The emphasis on prevention as a component of R2P is a critical step forward; and, the inclusion of this language may strengthen conflict prevention mechanisms, both nationally and internationally. We also believe the Declaration's endorsement of the mission of the Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide is a vital step in advancing the UN's capacity to fight genocide.

However, the R2P section could have been stronger. In paragraph 139 of the declaration, the US championed and succeeded in inserting the phrase "we are *prepared* to take collective action" [emphasis added]. We must hold governments to a high standard of consistent reaction to crises and not allow this weakened language to be used by governments to selectively respond to large-scale losses of life.

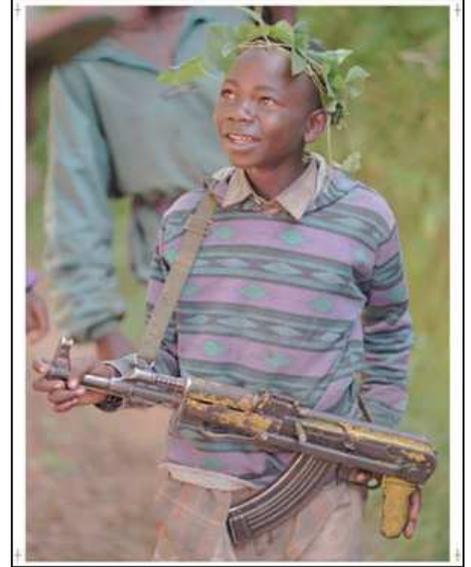
An important paragraph dealing with the Security Council veto was deleted from the final declaration. This paragraph asked the permanent five members of the Security Council to refrain from using the veto in cases of genocide, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and war crimes. While this provision received widespread support from the European Union and Latin America, it was removed as a result of pressure from the United States, Russia and China (who

hold veto power). We are also disappointed that the endorsement of the Secretary-General's Plan of Action on the Prevention of Genocide was deleted. The US insisted on its removal due to the reference to the International Criminal Court.

Although the endorsement of the Responsibility to Protect will undoubtedly strengthen the world's capacity to

stave off genocide, the Declaration failed to endorse several other critical advances that would equip the international community to truly protect populations from genocide. Governments failed to achieve the establishment of a strong Human Rights Council, instead presenting a few weak sentences that refer the issue back to the General Assembly to discuss. Without defined criteria for membership, modalities, functions, size, composition, working methods or a mandate, the proposed Council has not been equipped to help governments and the international community protect civilians. Commitments on the Peacebuilding Commission, ending extreme poverty and halting impunity for the worst human rights violators were also significantly weakened in the final Declaration.

Despite its shortcomings, the endorsement of the Responsibility to Protect is a great achievement for the Summit, and must be implemented. Civil society must work to advance these principles, and emphasize the national and international obligations set forth in the Declaration. WFM-IGP calls on civil society organizations to hold their governments accountable to these commitments that they have made, and work to achieve widespread understanding of the R2P principles and the obligations they entail. WFM-IGP plans to continue advocating for stronger implementation of these principles, at the international, regional and national levels.



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**FOCUS:  
HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY**

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tarian neo-liberalism. Quite the opposite: just three weeks after the surprise attack upon Pearl Harbour, they set about creating an agenda that, in modern terms, is left-wing social democracy. In doing so, they knew that hard bargaining and unpleasant compromise might be necessary. They understood that cooperation was essential to survival: a lesson learnt even before the invention of the atomic bomb. Today, that lesson has almost been forgotten in America and Britain – though not elsewhere.

Reasserting the reality that the United Nations is a realist necessity rather than a liberal accessory becomes much easier once we remember that it was to the United Nations that the Nazis surrendered.

Why has this history been lost? I have no clear answer, but I can offer some suggestions. The new UN organisation wanted a clean start unencumbered by the wartime experience. The many new nations created as the British and French empires collapsed regarded the UN as a new organisation, whose wartime origins seemed of little relevance. Everyone knew the UN had been created out of the ashes of the war; there was no

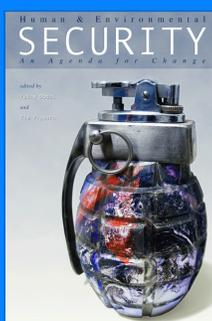
need to labour the point.

More importantly, the creation of images of competing evil empires in the cold war meant that neither right nor left wanted to remember that they fought the axis together. American conservatives in particular, who had opposed US involvement in the second world war and never supported the UN, have been keen to eradicate all reference to the Democrat Roosevelt's work. Nowadays, journalists assigned to prepare anniversary coverage may come across the occasional reference to the United Nations and omit it as an oddity – or even a mistake.

In 2005, as the sixtieth anniversaries of the end of the second world war and the signing of the UN Charter are commemorated, rediscovering the role of the United Nations in war and peace is doubly crucial. It can reinforce the importance of the modern United Nations and strip away the spurious moral authority the present Anglo-American alliance tries to claim from the wartime experience.

*Dan Plesch is the author of The Beauty Queen's Guide to World Peace, which discusses the wartime United Nations.*

## STAKEHOLDER FORUM BOOKS



### **Human and Environmental Security—An Agenda For Change**

This book is edited by **Felix Dodds of Stakeholder Forum** and **Tim Pippard of Jane's Information Group** and came out for the MDG Summit as a contribution from Stakeholder Forum to the debate around the report to the Secretary General – Challenges, Threats and Change.

Stakeholder Forum will be organizing a series of round Tables on the issues in the book with some of the authors in September. If you are interested in being kept informed then email - [fdodds@stakeholderforum.org](mailto:fdodds@stakeholderforum.org)

The contributors to the book are:

**Foreword - Celso Amorim Foreign Minister Brazil - Introduction - Klaus Toepfer Executive Director UNEP**

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1. Peace and Conflict: New Threats and Challenges - **Lord David Hannay**: Member of the Secretary General's Panel on Challenges, Threats and Change; 2. Human Security and the War on Terror - **Oliver Richmond**; 3. Achieving Nuclear Non-Proliferation - **Marian Hobbs** Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control New Zealand; 4. Peace building Commission - **Anders Liden**; 5. Gender and Human Security - **Norleen Heyzer**: Director of UNIFEM.

#### Section 2 Sustainable Human Development

6. Human Security for the Poor - **Jan Pronk**: Former Minister of Environment and Development in the Government of the Netherlands; 7. Trade and Security in an Interconnected World - **Hilary Benn**: Secretary of State for Overseas Development UK; 8. Securing a Healthier World - **Dr Christine Durbak**, **Dr Claudia Strauss**; 9. Migration and Development - **Devyani Gupta**; 10. Protecting our Biodiversity - **Jeff McNeely**: IUCN Chief Scientist; 11. Food Security - **Henrique Cavalcanti**: former Chair of the UNCSD (1995) and Brazilian Minister of the Environment; 12. Water for All - **Patricia Wouters**; 13. Climate Change: Impacts and Security - **Melinda Kimble**: Vice President UN Foundation; 14. Human Security for Human Settlements - **Anna Tibaijuka**: Executive Director UN Habitat.

#### Section 3 Global Governance

15. Changing role of the State and the emergence of Regional Governance - **Sabin Mendibil Intxaurreaga**: Minister of Environment Government of the Basque Country; 16. Human and Environmental Rights: A need for Corporate Accountability - **Hannah Griffiths**: Friends of the Earth; 17. Democracy in Trouble - **Felix Dodds**: Stakeholder Forum; 18. Reforming Environmental Governance - **Serge Lepeltier**: French Minister of the Environment; 19. America as Empire - **Jim Garrison**: President of State of the World Forum.

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As this Summit is concluded, and therefore Outreach as well, we would like to thank all of the contributors to these past three issues—without whom, this would not have been possible.

We would also like to thank the readers. It is for you that we labour.

Lastly, we would like to thank the donors whose generous contributions allowed this to be published.

### THANK YOU



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