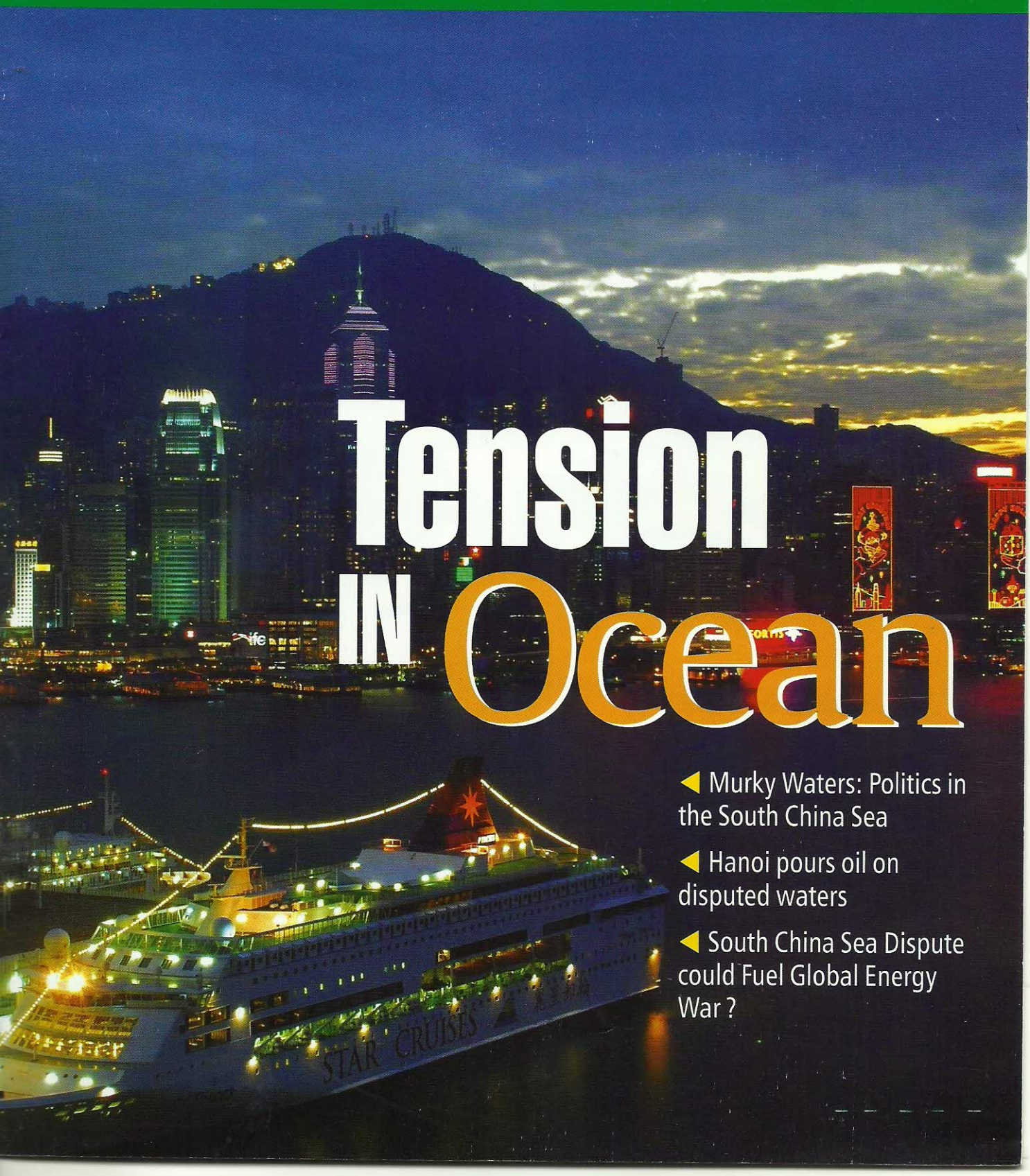




# PEOPLE AND UN

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## Tension IN Ocean

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# A first of its kind photo exhibition on the Holocaust

**T**HE people of Mumbai witnessed for the first time an extremely informative event - an educational exhibition on the history of the holocaust at Heritage hall of St. Xavier's College in Mumbai on 6 November 2012 having displayed 40 pictures panels from 1933-1945. The display was kept open for five days i.e. from 6 to 10 November 2012 for the public, organized by The Maharashtra United Nations Association (MUNA), The Simon Wiesenthal Centre, an NGO at the United Nations, Israel Consulate in Mumbai, and St. Xavier's College. The initiative was encouraged by The United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) for India and Bhutan, New Delhi.

A five day photo-exhibition titled "The Courage to Remember" HOLOCAUST was held in the back drop of the General Assembly resolution (A/RES/60/7) rejecting any denial of the Holocaust as a historical event, either in full or in part, condemning "without reserve" all manifestations of religious intolerance, incitement, harassment or violence against persons or communities based on ethnic origin or religious belief, whenever they occur.

The resolution declared that the United Nations would designate 27 January -- the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp -- as an annual International Day of Commemoration to honour the victims of the Holocaust, and urged Member States to develop educational programmes to instill the memory of the tragedy in future generations to prevent genocide from occurring again. It requested the United Nations Secretary-General to establish an outreach programme on the "Holocaust and the United Nations", as well as institute measures to mobilize civil society for Holocaust remembrance and education, in order to help prevent future acts of genocide.

The exhibition was inaugurated by



Photo Exhibition being inaugurated by the sponsors  
Maharashtra UNA Secretary General A. A. Syed is seen fourth from right

galaxy of luminaries from Israel, USA and people from different part of India in Mumbai like Fr. Mascarchenas (Principal, St. Xavier's College), Ms. Orna Sagiv (Consul General of Israel, Mumbai), Mr. Sumit Mullick IAS (Chief of Protocol, Govt of Maharashtra), Mr. DR Kaarthikeyan (Former-Spl Director, CBI), Mrs. Mohini Mathur (Executive Chairperson Maharashtra United Nations Association), Mr. A. A. Syed, Secretary General, Maharashtra United Nations Association, Mr. Ajay Bagga from (Art of Living Foundation) and Rabbi Abraham Cooper (Associate Dean Simon Wiesenthal Centre Los Angeles, USA) and other dignitaries including Consul Generals from Germany, France, Poland, and Belgium, NGOs, Academia, journalism, etc.

The event was flagged off with an opening ceremony which was led by Dr Alfred Balitzer, Professor Emeritus from Claremont McKenna College in LA, followed by inauguration of photo exhibition and

screening of the documentary "Genocide" The later evening was organized with the tireless efforts of Dr. Rabbi Abraham Cooper (Associate Dean Simon Wiesenthal Centre Los Angeles, USA) Dr. Peter Ted Gover from Simon Wiesenthal Centre, Mr. Maulik D.Mavani from Israel Consulate General and Mr. Ashraf Ahmed Shaikh, Secretary MUNA and President of its Youth Association.

At the welcome remark Fr. Mascarchenas (Principal, St. Xavier's College) said "It is the hope for a safe and bright future for all humanity that keeps us positive. Such tragedies are born out of the idea to use one's might to discriminate against those they dislike" He welcomed the people of Mumbai to see the exhibition and be an aware citizen.

Ms. Orna Sagiv, Consul General of Israel, Mumbai in her speech said that "Hitler's Nazi Regime in Germany murdered 6 million Jews (including 1 million children and 2 million women); it's the first time in human history that a State aimed at



exterminating an entire ethnic group — wherever they were on the face of the earth. For Jewry, it may be something extremely personal, reminding one of traumatic loss among family and loved ones in the community. But the lessons to be learnt are universal — Jews might have been the first ones but we never know who would be the next victims of a potential genocide." She further added that "We often undermine/deny the fears of a reoccurrence, labeling the Nazis as devils, etc. But they too, like the victims were real human beings with families and social affiliations. Yet they perpetrated such inhuman acts. Being in denial of such symptoms will only lead to catastrophes in the future — just like the silence of the majority round the world fuelled the arrogance of the Nazis during the Holocaust." She appealed to all to take the best lessons from the exhibition and the event to enhance intercommunity understanding about the Holocaust and its current relevance.

Event's Chief Guest Mr. Sumit Mullick IAS (Chief of Protocol, Govt. of Maharashtra) in his address said "Holocaust is the first such perpetration of genocide in modern history where death was ascribed (just because one is a Jew or disabled or non-Aryan, etc.); for the 1st time, murder was committed using large-scale industrial means (gas chambers, assembly lines, etc.). There's a very thin line between fascism and "state nationalism". Nations come and go, but the commonality of our 16 million years of evolution is HUMANNESSE." He further stressed that "It's easier to build religion from cults and attach theology to it, but how universally harmonious and accommodating is its philosophy? Drawing room conversations can escalate into catastrophes, just as they can into positive revolutions. We must measure and scrutinize the righteousness of our thoughts and words very carefully. Now, in the nuke age, the prognosis of the future is very worrying. India has lessons to draw from the history of the Holocaust in order to preserve its quintessence of unity in diversity. We have a great responsibility towards our vulnerable social groups and minorities."

Mr DR Kaarthikeyan (Former-Spl Director, CBI) in his remark mentioned the

time in Cambodia, when over 3 million were murdered by Polpot's army. India's idea of harmonious pluralism is founded on the principle of "VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM" a concept of the Upanishadas. India has welcomed and assimilated with grace, every community that was driven out of its motherland — the Parsis for instance. Judaism has had a pre-Christ association with India.

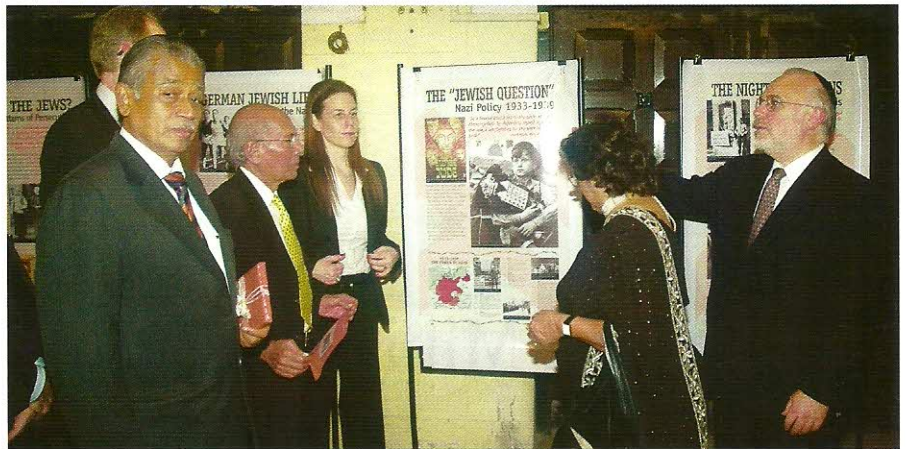
Mrs. Mohini Mathur (Executive Chairperson Maharashtra United Nations Association, MUNA) in her speech said that, "The Holocaust was the darkest chapter in the history of humanity. It was the time when demagoguery of one man betrayed the rationality of the entire nation. It was the turning point in the history which prompted the world to say "Never again". The UN has marked January 27 as an annual

"It is our duty morally, socially and legally to observe and remember again and again the victims of Holocaust to educate the people of every country to not to repeat such heinous crime against the humanity."

Mr. Syed read out a stanza of Urdu poetry which translates as follows,

"History has also seen the tyranny that due to a moment's mistake, the punishment was in centuries."

Mr. Ajay Bagga from Art of Living Foundation narrated 3 events — 1947 partition ("Indian Holocaust"); 1984 Anti-Sikh riots (a test of the Aam Admi (Common man) of his will to protect his fellow men); 2008 26/11 attacks — Sandeep Unnikrishnan's father's words to the survivors - "Your survival has given meaning to my loss". He warned that "today the world is very similar to the state



MS. Mohini Mathur, Executive Chairperson Maharashtra United Nations Association, observing a photograph on Holocaust

International Day of Commemoration to honour the victims of the Holocaust and we in MUNA strive to propagate the efforts of Peace and Human Rights. It does bring out painful memories but has to be brought out to prevent any subsequent such reoccurrences. Unfortunately world now also has a Holocaust in making; unless rationality is exercised the scourge of fundamentalism will engulf the world with dire consequences. The younger generations should imbibe human values and tolerance. Initiatives like this contribute a lot to such understanding."

Mr. AA Syed (Secretary General MUNA) in his address stressed the need of becoming free, bold and frank. He said that,

of the world prior to the Holocaust and the wars, when youth unemployment is at its peak and mental and social unrest is high. We must encourage higher proportion of inter-religious learning to enhance the understanding among religions, and thus spirituality — rather than conserve neutralist secularism. Technology must not mean desensitization. With these efforts, our peace quotient will rise."

Rabbi Abraham Cooper (Associate Dean Simon Wiesenthal Centre, Los Angeles) who was the chief organizer of the event in his concluding remarks, thanked everyone. ▲

Report By Ashraf A. Shaikh  
Secretary MUNA



# WFUNA RIO DECLARATION

40TH WFUNA PLENARY ASSEMBLY  
RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

**T**he World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) and its member associations represented at the 40th WFUNA Plenary Assembly in November 2012 in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, adopt this Declaration and commend it to the Member States of the United Nations and to the peoples of the world.

During this time of rapid global transformation marked by increasing inequality, shifting centers of economic dynamism, and enhanced connectivity through technological advancements and new pressures on the environment, we recognize challenges to multilateralism and threats to the legitimacy of the role of the United Nations at the center of global affairs. To address divisive competition and emphasize the importance of engaging individuals and organizations with the United Nations we will continue conducting creative public outreach that builds support and legitimacy for the organization worldwide.

We emphasize the indispensable role of the United Nations as the facilitator of multilateral action and integrated solutions across interconnected issue areas, such as sustainable development, peace and security, and human rights, and support the measures outlined in the UN Secretary-General's Five-Year Action Agenda.

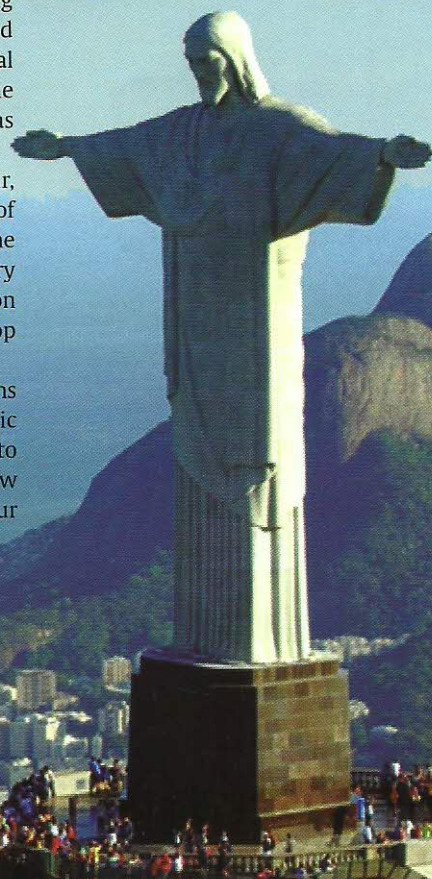
We believe that civil society plays a vital role in meeting global challenges and will work to

increase its role and presence in the United Nations system. Partnerships and functional collaborations across sectors are necessary to address today's complex global challenges, and we aspire to increased openness, connectivity and complementarity with partners from the public and private spheres.

We will remain engaged in the ongoing process to reform the UN to enable it to respond rapidly and effectively to the full range of global challenges and opportunities, including the promotion of the 'One UN' effort to 'deliver as one'.

We continue to look towards a more fair, safe and sustainable future in which the rule of law will prevail. We will seek to empower the next generation of global leaders who will carry on our work. Awareness raising and education about the UN and its efforts remains a top priority.

WFUNA together with all its United Nations Associations will continue with the strategic plan that we have set out while striving to accelerate our impact, continuing to build new relationships, and strengthening our institutional core. ■



Famous Statue of Jesus Christ in Rio