



# PEOPLE AND UN

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# United Nations (UN) Day 2013 celebrated in Mumbai

**T**HE Indian Federation of United Nations Associations (IFUNA), New Delhi, Maharashtra United Nations Association (MUNA) and United Nations Information centre (UNIC) for India and Bhutan joined hands to celebrate the UN Day 2013 at Mumbai.

October 23, 2013 afternoon in Mumbai witnessed a unique and magnanimous gathering of UNAs, Diplomats, Social Activists, Journalists, Media Personnel, Academicians, and professionals from various walks of life at the US Consulate General to celebrate and commemorate the 68th Birth Anniversary of United Nations at the United State Consulate General, BKC, Mumbai.

On this occasion a galaxy of guest speakers were invited to speak and share their views on United Nations and on the importance of this commemoration.

H.E. Mr. Michael Pelletier, Deputy Chief of Mission at U.S. Embassy, New Delhi, H.E. Mr. Peter Haas, U.S. Consul General in Mumbai, Mrs. Kiran Mehra-Kerpelman, Director, United Nations Information Centre for India and Bhutan, New Delhi, H.E. Mr. Mark Pierce, Australian Consul General in Mumbai, India, H.E. Mrs. Ceylan Ozen Erisen, Consul General, Consulate General of the Republic of Turkey in Mumbai, H.E. Mr. Jaroslaw Mikus,

Head of Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Mumbai, Mr. Suresh Srivastava, Secretary General, IFUNA, Dr. Seshadri Chari, Vice President IFUNA and Former United Nations Consultant addressed the gathering with their enlightened speeches.

At the outset Mr. Ashraf Ahmed Shaikh, Hon. Secretary MUNA & President of Youth Wing compeered the formal function and introduced the guest speakers. He thanked Mr. Suresh Srivastava and all the members of Executive Committee of IFUNA for giving the responsibility and choosing MUNA



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to jointly organize the UN Day 2013 in Mumbai, which is a city of dreams and he also expressed his sincere thanks to UNIC Director, Mrs. Kiran Mehra-Kerpelman for collaborating for this joint celebration and explained the kind gesture rendered by the US Consulate General at Mumbai and the whole hearted tireless efforts and guidance by the staff of the US Consulate in organizing and this programme at their Auditorium in the Consulate premises.

The function began with the Indian National Anthem followed by a warm welcome to all by Ms. Mohini Mathur, Executive Chairperson MUNA. In her welcome address Mrs. Mathur said that, "68th Anniversary of the UN is a major instrument for realization of a just and peaceful world is no doubt a very significant occasion for the whole human race as it has pledged solemnly to save succeeding generations from scourge of wars which twice in our lifetime has brought untold miseries of mankind." She further added that, "The

questions are often asked, Has UN succeeded? Is it still relevant today? Does it have a future? Or is it only a talk shop? She concluded by saying that since there were many eminent speakers she would further not dwell on the achievements of UN.

H.E. Mr. Peter Haas, U.S. Consul General in Mumbai in his welcoming remark on behalf of the US Consulate explained the significance of UN Day observance and thanked all the partners for organizing this event. He said were extremely happy to host UN Day 2013 in the US Consulate to celebrate the various work done by the United Nations and the work done by the partner organizers to make the work of United Nations known to others. He further added that were happy to have the expert panel of speakers who would be discussing on this subject. Mr. Haas then introduced H.E. Mr. Michael Pelletier.

H.E. Mr. Michael Pelletier, Deputy Chief of Mission at U.S. Embassy, New Delhi in his special address welcomed everyone





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and shared his happiness to celebrate the UN Day 2013 and the values of United Nations at the US Consulate in Mumbai. Mr. Pelletier appreciated the work done by MUNA, IFUNA and UNIC to make the work on United Nations known to the people. Mr. Pelletier specially mentioned the work of United Nations Associations in India and all over the world in the areas of Peace, Democracy, Human Rights, Economic Opportunities and Sustainable Development etc., which is incredibly important at this point of history in India as India is deepening its engagement in international affairs and United States supports it. Mr. Pelletier also mentioned and appreciated the voluntary work of the each individual members working for UNAs as by doing so they help India becoming global leader.

Mr. Pelletier quoted a few excerpts from the speech delivered by US President Mr. Obama last years on the occasion of UN Day Celebration at the US, "We commemorate the United Nations Day by celebrating the founding ideals laid down in its charter and reaffirming the remembrance of Peace building, Human Rights and Social Progress that will guide us for the years to come."

Mr. Pelletier concluded by saying as Mr. Obama celebrated with those words last year we celebrate today together here with different countries representing different parts of world, ethnicities, cultures, faiths, gender and communities to celebrate those shared values which brings all of us together today and he thanks MUNA, IFUNA and UNIC for the partnership and support.

Mr. A. A. Syed, Secretary General, MUNA briefly explained the activities of MUNA the rich historical background of it. He informed the audience that the first women president of United Nations General Assembly and the then Governor of Maharashtra H.E. Mrs. Vijaya Laxmi Pandit was the first Patron of MUNA. He further said that, "Under the guidance and support of IFUNA, New Delhi, MUNA strives to focus its programs and activities around the vital concerns of the United Nations, like, Peace, International Understanding, Environment and Human Rights. In conducting all these activities and programs, effort is made to involve the leadership from all sections of society so as to make them broadbased and effective."

Dr. Mukul Sangama, Hon'ble Chairman of

### US Consulate General American Library, Mumbai. Start a UN Information corner At the initiative of Maharashtra United Nations Association (MUNA)

On 23 October 2013, A UN information Corner was unveiled at the American Library situated at US Consulate General, Mumbai on the occasion of celebration and observance of UN Day 2013 at Mumbai.

Ms. Anamika Chakravorty, Cultural Affairs Officer, U.S. Consulate General Mumbai inaugurated the UN Information Corner in the august presence of Mr. Suresh Srivastava, Secretary General, IFUNA, Dr. Seshadri Chari, Vice President, IFUNA Ms. Mohini Mathur, Executive Chairperson MUNA, Mr. A. A. Syed, Secretary General, MUNA, UNIC Director Kiran Mehra-Kerpelman, together with Mr. Philip Roskamp, Public Affairs Officer at the Consulate and Mr. Ashraf Ahmed Shaikh, Hon. Secretary MUNA & President of Youth Wing. The reading materials were sent by UNIC for UN Information Centre corner with UN publications at the Consulate Library, enabling the numerous students who visit the Library to avail of this added information. This initiative was taken by Mr. Ashraf Ahmed Shaikh, Hon. Secretary MUNA & President of Youth Wing who negotiated and coordinated with American Library and UNIC and the was very warmly accepted by Ms. Anamika Chakravorty, Cultural Affairs Officer, U.S. Consulate General who is also Incharge of the said Library and has served in the UN during her previous assignment. Mr. Philip



L to r, Dr. Seshadri Chari, Mr. A.A.Syed, Ms. Anamika Chakravorty, Ms. Mohini Mathur, Ms. Kiran Mehra-Kerpelman, Mr. Suresh Srivastava and Mr. Ashraf Ahmed Shaikh

Roskamp, Public Affairs Officer at the US Consulate extended his support and acknowledged the efforts. "When I visited this beautiful library a couple of years ago", said UNIC Director, "I dreamt of how we could have some UN publications in there. Thank you Maharashtra United Nations Association (MUNA) who have helped to make it a reality." Deputy Chief of Mission of the US Embassy in Delhi H.E. Michael Pelletier thanked UNIC for the donation, and said that he appreciated the opportunity to make the UN better known among Library's visitors. H.E.Mr. Pelletier and H.E. Mr. Peter Haas, U.S. Consul General in Mumbai also appreciated and applauded the work done by Indian Federation of United Nations Association (IFUNA) and Maharashtra United Nations Association (MUNA) in making awareness and building the people's movement in India by their continuous efforts and endeavours and thanked for the

IFUNA and Chief Minister of Meghalaya has sent a special message on this occasion which he congratulated IFUNA, MUNA and UNIC for organizing and celebrating UN Day 2013 at Mumbai and also he emphasized the role played by UN since its formation. The message was read out by Dr. Seshadri Chari, Vice President, IFUNA.

Mr. Suresh Srivastava — Secretary General, IFUNA in his address explained the relevance of UN Day observance. Since it's the birth anniversary of United Nations, Every year IFUNA observes and celebrates it. This is the time to introspect the work done and to assess the success, achievements, commitments, dedications and failures of the organization in order to make future action

plan and road map ahead. Mr. Srivastava further said that there are many instances and issues on which people talk about United Nations and its achievements and failures such as Rwanda, Darfur, Sri Lanka, Iraq, Libya, nuclear perforation and Veto Power. Mr. Srivastava stressed the need of reforms in the United Nations in order to bring the democratic voice of the world into it. He very aptly explained the new concept of Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and the three pillars of it. Mr. Srivastava has also informed that IFUNA has recently organized a conference on R2P alongwith WFUNA in New Delhi

Mr. Srivastava also explained the formation of United Nations Associations





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(UNAs) and the people's moments which are required for strengthening the UN, which UNAs are striving to build throughout the world. The Importance of people's moment for the United Nations and the support through UNAs which has gained momentum soon after the formation of UN has played a significant role in bringing United Nations closer to the people and nations. He thanked MUNA for organising the grand observance in Mumbai and appreciated the efficient role played by MUNA.

Mrs. Kiran Mehra-Kerpelman, Director, United Nations Information Centre for India and Bhutan, New Delhi delivered the keynote address and UNSG's message on for this day. "UN Day is an occasion to celebrate the UN's achievements. Equally, it is a time to look ahead and assess the way forward", said UNIC Director Kiran Mehra-Kerpelman. "Because our task will never be done until the manifold challenges facing the world are addressed. Peace, development and human rights – these are not abstract concepts but practical tasks that the UN sets out to do on a daily basis around the world". She thanked MUNA and the US Consulate for hosting the occasion. "At the UN Information Centre, we undertake campaigns that highlight the work of the UN and also promote its various messaged and interlinked themes", she added. Quoting from UN Secretary-General's message for the day, she said: "We continue to show what collective action can do. We can do even more. In a world that is more connected, we must be more united".

H.E. Mark Pierce, Consul General of Australia in Mumbai gave an extremely interesting overview of Australia and the United Nations and their role in the Security Council. H.E. Ceylan Ozen Erisen, Consul



A view of audienc

General, Consulate General of the Republic of Turkey in Mumbai, talked about the UN and the girl child and the significant progress Turkey has made in this respect.

H.E. Jaroslaw Mikus, Head of Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Mumbai provided an emotional account of Poland's struggle over the years to actually presiding the UN Human Rights Council in 2013. He recounted the poignant story of how more than 50,000 Polish refugees were given asylum by the Maharaja of Nawanagar in India, between 1942 and 1948 and how welcoming the Indian people were. Dr. Seshadri Chari, Vice President, IFUNA and Former UN Consultant proposed the vote of thanks followed by a grand High Tea where audience interacted with each other and exchanged their views. ▲

*Report by Mr. Ashraf Ahmed Shaikh –Hon. Secretary  
MUNA and President of its Youth Wing*

### Mr.J Mikus, counsel general of Poland UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

**P**OLAND was one of the original 1942 group of 'United Nations' that came together to defeat Nazism. For reasons of Cold War intrigue, Poland did not take part in the UN's founding deliberations in San Francisco in 1945. From then it took a full 45 years for Poland's citizens to achieve the basic human right of freely electing their own leaders.

You all know how that happened. It was a triumph of national determination. More importantly it was a moral triumph, of non-violent political means bringing about a peaceful political outcome. And just imagine how Europe would look now with the terrible violence now seen in many countries. Even in modern Europe a full two decades after the end of the Cold War, the battle for basic human rights is not yet fully won.

Poland knows that this distinguished Council is the forum for fierce battles of principle on what human rights are, and how they are applied and upheld (or not) in practice. The UN Charter and the UN Universal Declaration are our definitive texts. Poland won this right the hard way. During the martial law period thousands of Poles were arrested, imprisoned, beaten. Striking mineworkers were gunned down. So we approach human rights in the Council armed with these painful experiences. We have learned that the best results sometimes require healthy pragmatism, even under extreme provocation. We all know too well that life round the world throws up tough policy questions. That it is impossible to be invariably consistent. Compromise, pragmatism and inconsistency for noble reasons are not ignoble hypocrisy, or 'double standards'. Of course the Council can't wave a magic wand to solve the world's human rights problems.

But each Council member, including Poland and every other UN member state, constantly has to live up to its human rights obligations. To set the world an example of tolerance. To watch its own performance. To be open to – and indeed ready to welcome – honest criticism.

Second, The impact of technological change on human rights issues. Once upon a time the UN loftily debated HR principles far from the sites of HR abuses. The victims could testify months or years later. Now those victims have mobile phones and computers. They can send us pictures and video of atrocities as they happen, straight to the Council. Citizens round the world every day are getting more powerful. They have new ways to keep an eye on what their leaders are doing, and express their views. Whether we like it or not, whether we find it easy to accept or not, these changes create a new sense of global community and shared global responsibility.

oland knows from its own long and bitter but ultimately triumphant experience that it is possible – and in fact vital – to pursue and achieve rightful outcomes by rightful methods.