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# PEOPLE AND UN

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## Responsibility to protect

THE BASIC PRINCIPLE OF R2P RESTS ON THE UNDERSTANDING  
THAT STATE SOVEREIGNTY IMPLIES RESPONSIBILITY AND THE PROTECTION  
OF ITS PEOPLE LIES WITH THE STATE ITSELF

**Indo-Brazil Relation**

**NAM SUMMIT BECOMING IRRELEVANT?**





(L to R) Rajendra Khandelwal (West Bengal UNA), P.M. Parvatiyar (Bihar UNA), Ashraf Ahmed Sheikh (Maharashtra UNA), Lt. Col R.C. Passi (Delhi), Bharat Babbar (Haryana UNA), Justice(rtd.) S.N. Srivastava (U.P. UNA), Amalesh Dasgupta, (West Bengal UNA), Manoranjan Patanayak (Odisha UNA), P.C. Sinha (West Bengal UNA), Sagar Ahluwalia (V.P. IFUNA), C.P. Mahajan (H.P. UNA), Suresh Srivastava (Secy. Genl. IFUNA), Bonian Golmohammadi (Secretary general WFUNA), Sita Ram Sharma (West Bengal UNA), A.S. Talwar (Addl. Secy. Genl. IFUNA, Delhi) S.P. Kalra, (V.P. IFUNA), Mrs. Mridula Vaidwan (H.P. UNA), Parvesh Khanna (Secretary IFUNA)

# R2P

# RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT

**World Federation of the United Nations Association (WFUNA) and the Indian Federation of the United Nations Association (IFUNA) jointly hold a conference on the very contemporary issue at the United Nation (UN), "Responsibility to Protect" (acronym R2P).**

**A** DAYLONG conference on "Responsibility to Protect (R2P) - What next?" was jointly organized by the WFUNA and the IFUNA on Monday, October 08, 2012, in New Delhi where the highly contemporary issue of R2P was discussed in four sessions.

The Friendship Lounge of the Ashok Hotel, New Delhi on 8th October 2012, was full to its capacity with representatives of various countries, Diplomats and IFUNA

delegates from various States UNA'S

In his eloquent opening address to the distinguished gathering, Mr. Suresh Srivastava, Secretary General, IFUNA, provided an overview of this extremely intriguing issue i.e. Responsibility to Protect that now dominates a substantive part of the ongoing debates at the UN. He said, "IFUNA is holding the Responsibility to Protect Conference in collaboration with World Federation of United Nations Associations

(WFUNA). R2P is still an evolving concept that concerns the future of states that are unable or unwilling to protect their populations from mass atrocities. The horrors of WW- II made the countries of the world resolve never to repeat the misery again, but the events of the latter part of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century have largely belied these expectations, he said. Events in Europe, Africa and now Libya and Syria have only reinforced



and brought these fears to the fore.

Welcoming the delegates from various UNAs world over and from India, Mr. Suresh Srivastava said it is a matter of great honour and privilege for us that Mr. Bonian Golmohammadi, Secretary General WFUNA is present. Ms. Laura Spano, Programme Officer of R2P, who is here, has been instrumental in organizing this programme. In New York, she was constantly in touch with us to organize the speakers, and much credit goes to her. Mr. Bonian Golmohammadi, who is the Secretary General of WFUNA since 2009 has previously served as Secretary General of the United Nations Association (UNA) of Sweden for eight years. Under his leadership, UNA Sweden increased its budget from US \$1 million to US \$5 million. He expanded its staff and managed over 110 local chapters and more than 100 national organizations as members. During his tenure, Mr. Golmohammadi introduced several new programmatic initiatives, ranging from issues on the Millennium Development Goals, conflict prevention, human rights and organizational capacity building. Since 2005, he has served as President of the UNA Europe Network coordinating United Nations Associations all over Europe. He is serving on various advisory boards for Swedish Ministers for Development, international development corporations, UN entities and civil society organizations. Prior to joining UNA Sweden, Mr. Golmohammadi worked with consultancy and private businesses in Sweden and the Czech Republic including developing a national globalization project for high schools, working with publishing as well as project management. In addition to this, we have Ms. Ana Paula Kobe from the Embassy of Brazil. Ambassador Krishna Rana is also amongst us. Ms. Laura Spano has the task of initiating the discussions. We are also privileged to have H E Mr. Prasad Kariyawasam, Ambassador of Sri Lanka High Commission, Mr. Seshadri Chari, Secretary General, Forum of Integrated National Security, Mr. Stenvold Thoralf, Counselor Head of Political Affairs, Norway, Mr. Takeshi Osuga, Embassy of Japan Minister Political, and Ms. Jyoti Malhotra, Indian political commentator. We are fortunate to have Ms. Kiran Mehra Kerpel-



सत्यमेव जयते

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October 5, 2012

*Shri Suresh Srivastava*

Thank you for inviting me to contribute a message at the Seminar on 'Responsibility to Protect', organised by the Indian Federation of United Nations Associations (IFUNA) in association with the World Federation of United Nations Association (WFUNA) in New Delhi on 8 October.

2. The concept of R2P arose from the ashes of the traumas experienced in Rwanda and Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1990s. Genocide and ethnic cleansing in these countries and the failure of the international community to act, inspite of advance information, called for implementation of concepts like R2P, because the national authorities were not in a position to bear their responsibility to protect its own citizens.

3. Enshrined in the Outcome Document of 2005 World Summit, the concept of R2P, is rooted in three pillars. Pillar I recognises the responsibility of each individual state to protect its populations from four crimes: genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Pillar II provides for the international community to encourage and help States to exercise this responsibility and support the UN in establishing an early warning capability. It is in Pillar III, where the problem arises, wherein when peaceful means fail to prevent such crimes, Security Council is authorised recourse to coercive and military means by invoking Chapter VII. While there is general consensus on Pillar I & II, there is an ongoing debate on the likely misuse of Pillar III, as experiences in Libya amply testify.

4. As serving members of the Security Council, we are committed to constructively engaging with the international community in shaping the evolving narrative of R2P, and our responses will be conditioned keeping our national interest and promoting collective action anchored in the United Nations.

5. My felicitations to IFUNA and WFUNA for taking the initiative to convene the discussions on R2P in India, and I wish the one day seminar and its deliberations all success.

Yours sincerely,

*H.S. Puri*  
(H.S. Puri)

Shri Suresh Srivastava  
Secretary General  
Indian Federation of United Nations Associations (IFUNA)  
C-6, Qutub Institutional Area, New Delhi.

man. Director, United Nations information Centre for India and Bhutan who has always been supporting us and we are delighted to have her cooperation. We also have distinguished diplomats, ambassadors, political ministers, political commentators, prominent journalists, and high ranking members of our armed forces, as panellists and former high ranking bureaucrats of the Government of India, research students of international diplomacy, mem-

bers of the Indian Federation of UN Associations in large numbers. In addition to that, the support from IFUNA's branches from all over India is a matter of great satisfaction. We have representation in this meeting from all over India. For example, we have Mr. Sita Ram Sharma & Mr. P. C. Sinha, M.L.A also our Vice-Presidents, Mr. Khandelwal and Mr. Amlesh Dasgupta from the West Bengal UNA. There is Mr. Manoranjan Patnaik from Orissa, Mr. Sanat





**Ito R Suresh Srivastava, Welcoming the members and Guests. Sitting on his left are Bonian Golmohammadi (Secretary general WFUNA), Ms. Laura Spano, WFUNA UN Coordinator(New York), Ms. Ana Paula Kobe from the Embassy of Brazil**

Jain from Chhattisgarh, Honourable Justice Shambhu Nath Srivastava from UP UNA, Mr. C. P. Mahajan and Mrs Madhu Wadhwan from HP UNA, Mr. Ashraf, from Maharashtra UNA, and Mr. P. M. Parvatiyar from Bihar. We are really proud of the fact that in this meeting, we have representatives from all over the country. Haryana and Delhi are also part of the same UNA. Mr. A S Talwar, and Mr. Bharat Babbar our Additional Secretary Generals are present too".

"I welcome you all to this Responsibility to Protect Conference. We will be discussing very important issues. I shall not go deep into the subject as we have many experts here. But nevertheless, all are aware that in 2005, the United Nations prepared a document which envisaged three pillars of the concept of Responsibility to Protect. Pillar 1 is where most countries in the world have an obligation to protect their citizens. Pillar 2, where any nation not in a position to protect its citizens can seek help from other nations. it is Pillar 3 that is the most important and on

which there is maximum thrust. I hope the speakers today will speak on that and bring out many new suggestions wherever there is controversy. It is also very important from the point of view of the present scenario in Syria and Libya where we have seen that history has taken a full circle. In Libya, the forces threw out a hated dictator, Gaddafi from power. But those who were responsible for throwing out Gaddafi were also instrumental in killing US Ambassador Christopher Stevens, along with three other Americans in Libya, a most unfortunate event. We have to see that while we enter into Pillar 3 of R2P, we should not hand over power to another dictator, fundamentalist or jihadi. These are important issues which I hope we will be discussing and we will be enlightened by these important panellists today".

Mr. Srivastava also read the message which he received from the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri. (Message see Box).

Mr. Bonian Golmohammadi, Secretary General, WFUNA, in his address in the interactive Panel Session I informed the audience that WFUNA supports "Responsibility to Protect" in principle, but also accepts the need for further discussions and debate in this regard. Mr. Bonian informed the audience of WFUNA's initiative in spreading awareness and building consensus on R2P, in which empowering

Arvind, programmer of IFUNA )



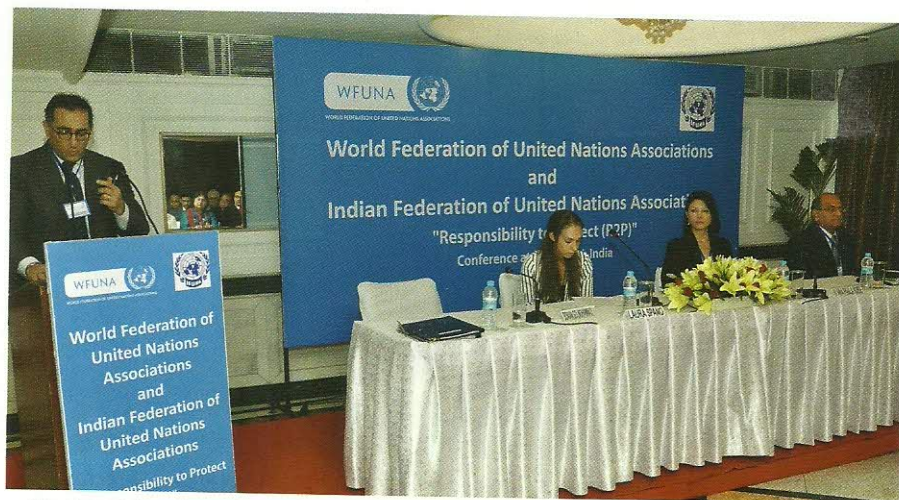
**A view of distinguished audience (On the extreme right standing Arvind, programmer of IFUNA )**



civil society, NGOs, the academia and important stakeholders occupy a key role, who have hitherto been on the margins of debate on this issue. WFUNA has held programmes with these concerned stakeholders in Armenia, Congo and Georgia, which have been hotspots. Meets have also been held in Beijing (China) and Caracas (Venezuela). Mr. Golmohammadi underlined India's importance at the UN and also the stellar role IFUNA has been playing, especially the country's various state UNAs, in integrating the various stakeholders in forging a broad consensus on R2P. Challenges on R2P still lie ahead, especially on the crucial Pillar 3, which has the potential to polarize world opinion.

Mr. Golmohammadi expressed satisfaction with recent interactive session on the subject of R2P held under the auspices of WFUNA, with IFUNA playing the role of an active anchor in gathering public opinion on this issue. He underscored the fact while WFUNA in its support of the principle of R2P, has been active over recent months in building global support, mainly by working in active conjunction with different national UNAs across the globe. Mr. Golmohammadi wanted the various state UNAs to play an enhanced role in this regard, and also ask NGOs to be more active in this regard.

Ms. Laura Spano, Responsibility to Protect Program Officer, WFUNA, gave an insight on the brief backdrop on which the

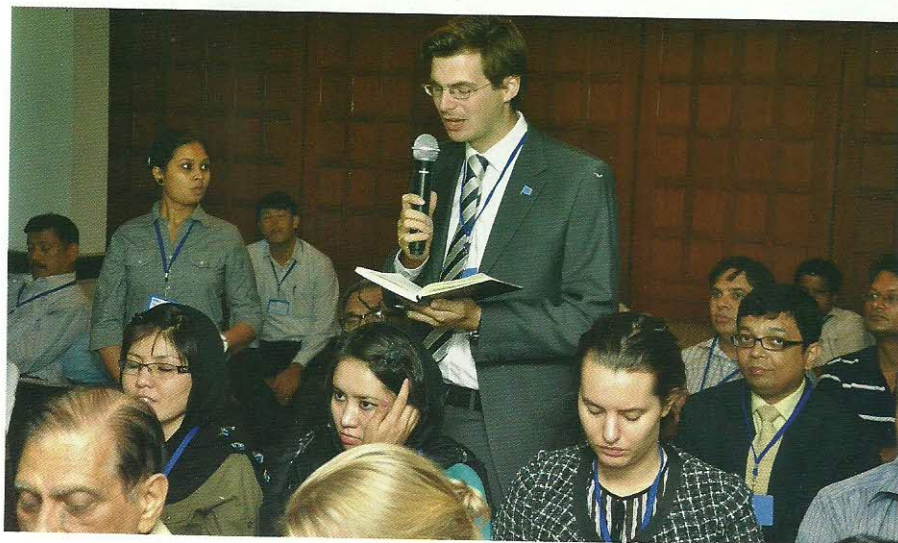


Bonian Golmohammadi (Secretary general WFUNA) inaugurating panel discussion, SESSION I: (l to r) Ms. Laura Spano, Ms. Ana Paula Kobe and Suresh Srivastava

concept R2P has emanated. The post-WWI experience, especially in the Balkans, Kenya, Somalia, Rwanda and now Libya and Syria demonstrates that there are unstable regimes and countries that not only endanger their own populations but also neighbouring countries through their violent and genocidal proclivities. The UN as a world body representing the international community has a right to protect innocent citizens around the world. Ms. Laura also admitted that the premise of individual sovereignty of states was an impediment in the implementation of R2P, as sovereignty is a zealously guarded principle. Many countries, which are commit-

ted to the UN ideals, are also understandably apprehensive of the likely implications of Pillar 3 of R2P. But the UN must find a way out, as state failure in many regions of the world is slowly leading to a situation where the ideals and objectives of a humanitarian world is becoming a major threat to human civilization itself. The Principle of R2P was adopted by the UN in 2005. Since then, the world has seen an unfortunate increase in the number of wars, genocides and other atrocities. The debate and discourse on R2P today centre around the best way to intervene in troubled spots. Ms. Laura was wonderfully candid in stating that such intervention must be through credible civil society initiatives, working in conjunction with all involved stakeholders, with the use of force being resorted to only as a last measure.

However, it is also important for all sovereign states and their peoples too, to understand that the international community cannot possibly rely on sovereign states alone to protect their citizens, or sections of people suffering violence and repressive measures like ethnic cleansing. Often, the failure of individual governments to protect their own citizens leads to grave situations like in Syria, and could also have likely spillover effects in the neighbouring countries too, with implications beyond a country's borders, in which case it may no longer be possible to put off intervention. Ms. Laura said that in case of the failure of a state to discharge its



A delegate from Germany asking questions while Ms Margret of IFUNA is looking on





**PANEL SESSION II: Moderators (l to r.) Mrs. Kiran Mehra-Kerpelman, Director, United Nations Information Centre, India & Bhutan, Ambassador Takeshi Osaga of Japan and Ambassador Kishan S. Rana**

humanitarian responsibilities, the right to protect becomes the responsibility of the international community. The definition of R2P should be based on the principle of protection, and not on the whims of sovereign states to do as they please.

The debate over whether humanitarian missions or the use of military force for effecting intervention under R2P would continue for long. The question would remain regarding the timeframe of action to be taken and its method. The debate on the more controversial Pillar 3 of R2P,

especially in the context of the recent events in Libya and Syria has only brought it to further light. Ms. Laura Spano called for better regional understanding, which is a necessity to expand the acceptability of R2P.

Ms. Ana Paula Kobe, Head of the Political Sector, Embassy of Brazil, based in Delhi, held forth on the positive role Brazil has taken in the matter R2P, an issue that has been on the international agenda for quite some time. She reiterated the fact that the recent turmoil in the Arab world, especial-

ly Libya and Syria have only strengthened the argument for R2P, as states in that region have either been unwilling to protect their own citizens, and in Syria's case are actually committing genocide on their own people. Incidentally, it is Brazil's President Ms. Dilma Rouseff, who mooted the concept of the Responsibility to Protect, and has called for R2P to include RWP, which is "responsibility while protecting".

Ms. Kobe said that in the course of future developments in R2P, a wide debate is highly necessary. Conceptual frameworks have to be developed not only for further administration of R2P, but also for international peace and security. Significant attention has accrued to this principle in the post-1990 period. There is no doubt that states have a primary responsibility to protect their peoples. The international community must also refrain from artificial linkages and the principle of R2P must not be employed for destabilizing countries and nations. She added that this responsibility should be exercised diplomatically and peacefully. This is important as the use of force always carries the risk of collateral damage.

Ms. Ana Kobe called for inclusive political systems to be developed across the world. Brazil has circulated a concept paper on R2P and favors preventive diplo-



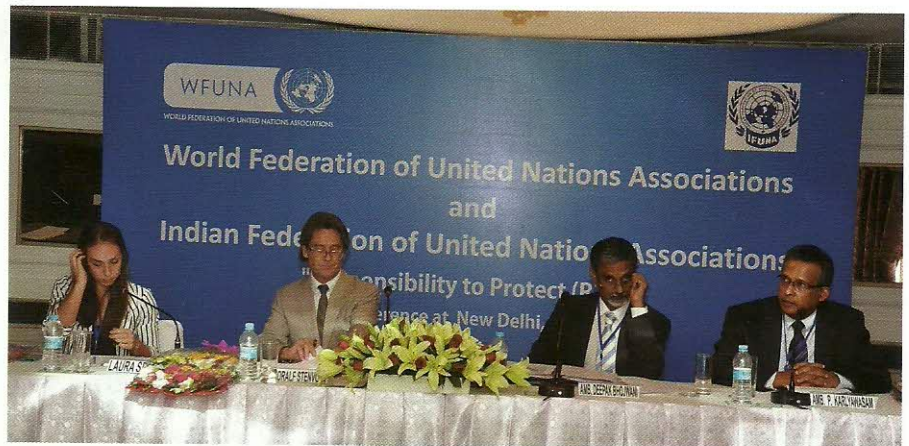
**(l to r.) Bharat Babbar, Suresh Srivastava, Ms. Ana Paula Kobe, Bonian Golmohammadi, P.C. Sinha and S.P. Kalra**



macy rather than active use of force. Ms. Kobe said that 2012 was the year of "prevention, pursuit of peace through diplomacy". The international community has to be vigorous in its efforts, as it has a collective responsibility for attaining peace through dialogue. Ms. Ana Kobe also said that enhanced UN Security Council procedures are needed to ensure effective implementation of R2P. The UN should not impede the process if the use of preventive force becomes necessary.

R2P and RWP should develop together. Any dialogue should not assume a judgmental nature on individual states. International support for the R2P principle has been reaffirmed in the recent UN debates. Ms. Kobe said that the promotion of peace and civilian protection cannot be based on forceful intervention alone, which of course has to be authorized by the UN Security Council. Preventive diplomacy has a better chance of achieving the desired outcomes. She reiterated Brazil's belief in cooperation in security and development for peace, which are necessary for countries to fulfill their potential.

Mrs. Kiran Mehra-Kerpelman, Director, United Nations Information Centre, India & Bhutan, while moderating the Second Panel Session, she dealt with benefits, gaps and challenges to the R2P framework. Ambassador Krishna Rana spoke of how the world has moved forwards in articulating a more humanitarian interpretation and implementation of international law and reiterated that India, with its growing profile in global affairs cannot afford to



**PANEL SESSION III: Moderators (l to r.) Ms. Laura Spano, Thoralf Stenvold, leading political counselor Ambassador Deepak Bhojwani and Ambassadors P. Kariyawasam, of Sri Lankan High Commission**

stand aloof at this juncture in history in the matter of R2P. Although the sometimes selective application of humanitarian principles cannot be glossed over, there can be instances when a proactive role can be more beneficial in building a more equitable world. Understandably, India is more cautious of this principle because of the selective application of UN ideals and libertarian principles and R2P strengthens this perception. However, India should not stay aloof from this for long, but should instead join the world community to strengthen international law. Ms. Kiran Mehra-Kerpelman agreed that Libya was a case where the UN mandate had been exceeded to effect a questionable regime change, and Iraq and Afghanistan also raised valid questions. Myanmar, Cyclone Nargis and its aftermath and the insensi-

tive response of the Burmese administration also generated talk of humanitarian intervention under R2P. Ms. Kiran Mehra-Kerpelman further stated that the twin-track approach of sanctions followed by engagement had produced positive results in Myanmar. Thus, R2P is a substantive evolution in international humanitarian law and India must be a part of the process. IFUNA & WFUNA deserves kudos for bringing up this important issue for discussion.

Ambassador Takeshi Osaga of Japan was of the opinion that the more governments debate R2P, the greater the conceptual gap seems to become. Japan incidentally is not a member of R2P Friends Group and adopts a cautious approach with India on this issue, whereas Philippines and South Korea are its more vocal and active



**Mr. V. Narayanan (R), Secretary General, Tamil Nadu UNA and Ambassador P. Kariyawasam of Sri Lankan High Commission**



**(L to R) Prof. Sandeep Marwah Honorary Cultural Ambassador of Wales in India, and a distinguished film personality, Mr. Kerpelman and Ms. Kiran Mehra-Kerpelman, Director, United Nations Information Centre, India & Bhutan**





**CONCLUDING SESSION IV: Moderators (l to r) Ms. Laura Spano, Bonian Golmohammadi, Suresh Srivastava and Seshadri Chari**

proponents. Ambassador Osaga also noted the fact that UN Security Council workings have become a cause of frustration very often, a view expressed by the UN Secretary General himself. Ambassador Osaga also said that Pillar 3 of R2P isn't entirely about the use of force. He noted the role of the UN in the prevention of tension. Ambassador Takeshi Osaga revealed that Japan is one of the largest donors to the UN cause.

The Third Panel Session, moderated by Ms. Laura Spano, featured a detailed interactive discussion on the nitty-gritty of how to implement Pillar 3 of R2P, and in what circumstances it is to be used. Mr. Thoralf Stenvold, leading political counselor and

Ambassadors P. Kariyawasam, of Sri Lankan High Commission, and Ambassador Deepak Bhojwani were the participants. The session speakers called for measures to avoid war between member-states of the UN, also touching upon the need for effective global governance, keeping in view the intrinsic nature of human beings to go astray in the absence of governance based upon the principles of human equity, justice and dignity. The session participants were of the firm view that no system could function effectively if it were to exclude the privileged or the powerful from the purview of justice.

Panel Session 4 dealt with the very engaging issue of "R2P What Next" and

how this concept would shape up in 2022. Vice President of IFUNA and eminent columnist and political commentator Mr. Seshadri Chari emphasised on the challenges posed by Pillar 3 of the R2P and argued that while the present political consciousness of the world has largely been shaped by the post World War-II era, it would be erroneous to assume state power as the panacea to all the ills plaguing human societies. Indian tradition which is based on "world as one family" (vasudhaiva kutumbakam) is the foremost political thought that accords primacy to the people rather than the rulers. Mr. Chari advocated for an egalitarian approach towards R2P and mentioned how this principle was applied by India to protect the suffering people of East Pakistan in 1971. He also raised the issue of considering extending the principle of R2P to alleviate the sufferings of the people of Tibet who are victims of cultural and ethnic cleansing. There is an urgent need to dispel the general impression that R2P could be used by powerful nations to intimidate weaker states, he said and suggested that R2P has to evolve holistically with the evolving global society and polity. Well known journalist Ms. Jyoti Malhotra, a regular columnist in The Indian Express, forcefully argued in favour of the civil society perspective in the context of responsibility to protect. Ms. Malhotra made the pitch that in today's increasingly interconnected and globalized world, it would no longer be feasible to continue to stick to a strict 'hand-off' approach concerning national



**A memento is being presented to Mr. Bonian Golmohammadi, on behalf of IFUNA by Ms. Ana Paula Kobe**



**Old Pals of IFUNA (l to r), Lt. Col. R.C. Passi, S.P. Kalra, Sagar Ahluwalia and A.S. Talwar**





Round table opportunity to exchange ideas. (L to R) Bharat Babbar, Justice (rtd.) Shambhu Nath, Lt. Col. R.C. Passi, A.S. Talwar, Vinod Srivastava and Ashok Sharma

sovereignty or national boundaries when it came to the promotion of human rights. She also said that India ought to adopt a more proactive role in this regard, rather than clinging on to its apprehensions, which were understandable given its historical experiences. But there are many countries that look up to nations like India

to stand up for them, Maldives and Afghanistan being such examples, whose people expect India to assist them in their hour of need. Iraq, Syria and Libya were cases of civil unrest and genocide by regimes upon their own populations. The NATO forces are set to leave Afghanistan by 2022, leaving the very serious question of

what India would do then, if conditions there continue to steadily deteriorate. Ms. Jyoti Malhotra argued that with the world increasingly becoming a globalized village, it was the paramount duty of countries to protect their people. Therefore, concepts like inviolable national sovereignty ought to be consigned to the Stone Age.



(L to R) Suresh Srivastava, P.M.Parvatiyar, J.P. Chawla



Ms. Laura Spano, and Sundeep Bhutoria (WFUNA Treasurer)





(L to R) Senior office bearers of Rotary Club Mumbai, Rotract Club of Mumbai Shivaji Park (RC-MSP), President (RC- MSP) Mr. Pankaj Bajpai and office bearers of MUNA Ms. Mohini Mathur, Mr. A.A.Syed and Mr. Malhar Chaudhari

# MAHARASTRA UNA ORGANISED MODEL UN ASSEMBLY ON INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY

**M**AHARASHTRA United Nations Youth Association (MUNYA) in association with Rotract Club of Mumbai Shivaji Park (RC-MSP) Under the guidance of Maharashtra United Nations Association (MUNA) organized the Model United Nations Assembly at Amulakh Amichand Bhimji Vividhlakshi Vidyalaya, at Matunga Mumbai on Sunday 26th August 2012.

It was a very lively debate on the subject "Ending NATO Interference in Syrian Conflict".

The programme commenced with the inaugural and welcome note by Mr. Pankaj

Bajpai, the President of Rotract Club, Mumbai Shivaji Park, which was followed by messages of the members of Rotary Club Mumbai Shivaji Park and Maharashtra United Nations Association, Mr. A. A. Syed (Secretary General MUNA), Ms. Mohini Mathur (Executive Chairperson MUNA) and Mr. Ashraf Ahmed Shaikh, Hon. Secretary MUNA, and President Maharashtra United Nations Youth Association MUNYA and Member of Executive Committee, Indian Federation of United Nations Association).

At the outset Mr. A. A. Syed spoke about the Aims and Objectives of Maharashtra

United Nations Association with a special emphasis on its numerous activities planned round the year to promote the aims and ideals of the United Nations. He further added that activities for youth is one of the top priorities in MUNA and explained the audience various initiatives taken by the Youth wing of MUNA.

Ms. Mohini Mathur expressed her views about the role of youth in today's modern society. She also elaborated on the special qualities possessed by the youth, which makes them an "ideal force for change". Ms. Mathur encouraged youth by saying "you are the future". She further

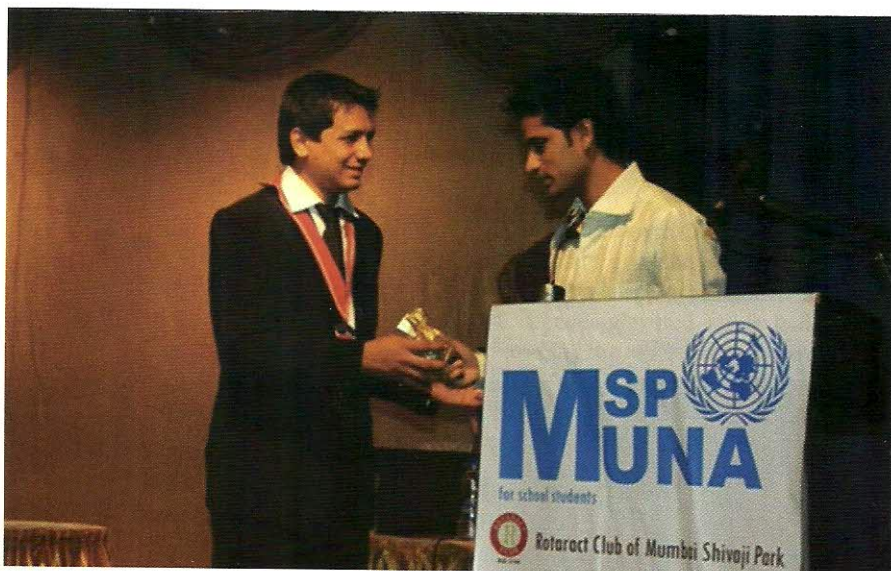


said that " time has come when youth should be given the chance and platform to raise their concerns and the activities like this would definitely bring a positive social change and will bring the innovative, enthusiastic and positive approach in life for the young generations who will be the future agents of peace and harmony." She further emphasised the concern of UN SECRETARY-GENERAL, IN HIS MESSAGE FOR INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY, WHERE HE WARNS AGAINST CREATING "LOST GENERATION OF SQUANDERED TALENT AND DREAMS".

Mr Ashraf Ahmed Shaikh spoke about the role of UN and its programmes in giving the youth a platform to become effective leaders of tomorrow. He spoke about the importance of International Youth Day which falls on 12 August. Mr. Ashraf Ahmed Shaikh also appreciated the partnership of MUNA with Rotary Club in Mumbai for organising Model United Nations . He also highlighted the importance of Youth in the present context by reading the excerpts from message of UN Secretary General .Mr. Ban Ki - Moon, "Working with and for young people is one of my top priorities. Youth are a transformative force; they are creative, resourceful and enthusiastic agents of change, be it in public squares or cyberspace. From their pivotal role in efforts to achieve freedom, democracy and equality, to their global mobilization in support of the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, youth have energetically demonstrated yet again their capacity and desire to turn the tide of history and tackle global challenges.

Young men and women are not passive beneficiaries, but equal and effective partners. Their aspirations extend far beyond jobs; youth also want a seat at the table - a real voice in shaping the policies that shape their lives. We need to listen to and engage with young people. We need to establish more and stronger mechanisms for youth participation. The time has come to integrate youth voices more meaningfully into decision-making processes at all levels."

The Special Guest of Honour DIG Donny Michael from Indian Coast Guard (ICGS) spoke about his experience as a



**Mr. Pankaj Bajpai, the President of Rotract Club, Mumbai Shivaji Park congratulating Mr Ashraf Ahmed Shaikh Hon. Secretary MUNA, President Maharashtra United Nations Youth Association MUNYA and Member of Executive Committee, Indian Federation of United Nations Association**

member of the Indian delegation to IMO (International Maritime Organization). He also motivated the participants to learn and enjoy from the experience at the Model UN Assembly and further take part in many more similar activities.

The members of the Rotary Club Rtn. Pankaj Phatarphod (Director, Rotary - International), Rtn. Satish Hattiangadi (President, Rotary Club of Mumbai Shivaji Park), Rtn. Sanjay Shah (Assistant District Governor of District 3140) and Rtn. Dinesh Shah (Member of Rotary Club) spoke about the role of Model United Nations Assembly in developing proficient diplomats for our country and the role of Rotary in giving the youth such regular platforms to transform themselves into pillars of a sustainable future.

The Model United Nations Session was chaired by Rtn. Pankaj Phatarphod with Ms Pooja Vohra (Immediate Past President of RC-MSP) as the Secretary General. The 1st part of the session saw the young diplomats delivering their foreign policy statements. It was a truly exhilarating experience to see the participants dressed in the traditional attire of the country they were representing. Also the use of phrases from their country's local dialect added a special touch to the event.

The post break session saw a very

heated discussion on the amendments to the resolution presented by the delegates during the lunch break. Towards the end of deliberations, it was a general observation that the non-NATO members were advocating that, the stabilisation of the conflict situation in Syria, would be possible only when the citizens of Syria come up with a solution themselves, while the NATO members tried their best convincing the Assembly that the World cannot wait for natural solution whilst the bloodshed in Syria continued.

The session saw about 100 participants from various schools across Mumbai, with the total count of all the people who attended and organized the Assembly being at around 200.

The session concluded with the prize distribution ceremony preceded by informative and motivational remarks by the judges and the principal of the host school Ms Neena Kalra.

The judges for the session were Adv. Vinay Rathi (Executive Committee Member MUNA) and Mr Malhar Chaudhari (Secretary General MUNYA) . Mr Sunny Gopani, Project Chair for the Model UN Assembly thanks the members and participant .

— A report by Mr. Ashraf Ahmed Shaikh