

Toda Institute Annual Report 2009

Background: Overview of the World Situation

Numerous events of great magnitude have affected humanity in 2009, and only a few are mentioned here. There have been many positive developments: such as an increase in global efforts towards more sustainable or “green” technology and energy efficiency; The United States decided not to build anti-missile shields in either Poland or the Czech Republic, which led to Russia backing down from plans to deploy medium-range missiles in Kaliningrad; South Korean and North-Korean families separated for nearly 50 years were able to meet in 2009 for the first time in two years; and the EU and Nigeria entered a \$1 billion dollar pact to fight corruption and promote peace in the Niger Delta region.

However, despite these positive steps, I would like to focus on some of the obstacles and disappointments that have prevented humanity from moving forward, in order to highlight the crucial importance of the work of peace research institutes.

The event that caught most of the world’s attention was probably the swearing in of Barack Obama as the 44th President of the United States (January). After offering hope about positive changes to millions of people, giving remarkable speeches (for instance about nuclear disarmament and friendship with the millions of people of Muslim faith), and meeting the President of Russia among other world leaders, Obama was honored with the Nobel Peace Prize for 2009. However, despite the hope offered by this new leadership, people the world over started to feel disappointed by a feeling that not much has changed at a fundamental level due to the lack of implementation of the ideas found in those speeches and the continued war in Afghanistan, among other signs.

Adding unwelcome pressures to humanity in 2009, the world economy was still trying to recover from the financial crisis which began in September 2008; leading General Motors to file for bankruptcy (June) and Dubai suddenly requesting debt deferment, triggering a global stock market crash (November).

National governments and heads of states from all over the world made international headlines: An arrest warrant was issued by the International Criminal Court against the president of Sudan for war crimes; the president of Madagascar was overthrown in a coup; the former president of South Korea committed suicide; the Honduran president

was toppled in a military coup; and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was re-elected as president of Iran, triggering unrest and costing the lives of numerous demonstrators.

Other dramatic events follow: At the beginning of the new year, the Israeli military withdrew from the Gaza Strip after killing more than 1000 people, mostly non-combatants. The Sri Lankan army defeated the LTTE after 25 years of fierce fighting, triggering the massacre of around 20,000 innocent civilians during the final battles. As China witnessed deadly riots costing the lives of about 150 people as local Han Chinese clashed with ethnic Uyghurs.

Finally, the United Nations Climate Change Conference held in December in Copenhagen ended without any significant agreements, even though Mother Nature had given ample expression to her discontent. There were deadly bushfires in Australia; earthquakes in Italy and Indonesia; cyclones in India and Bangladesh; typhoons in Taiwan, the Philippines and Vietnam; and the Swine Flu (H1N1) was officially declared as a global pandemic.

Conferences

Against this backdrop, the Toda Institute took steps in order to continue fulfilling our mission. We organized an international conference entitled “**The Power of Dialogue in a Time of Global Crisis**” in Tokyo on November 22-23, in collaboration with the Soka University Peace Research Institute (SUPRI). The keynote speaker was Sarah Wider, Professor of English and Women’s Studies at Colgate University in Hamilton, New York. The conference sought to further explore the role and power of dialogue in conflict transformation, peacebuilding, South-North relations, and sustainable development.

The Toda Institute also jointly organized with SUPRI, and Toda staff presented papers, at two symposia entitled “**The Alliance of Civilizations: Possible Pathways for Asia-Pacific**” (March 23) and “**Peace and Reconciliation**” with guests from Queen’s University Belfast, Ireland (May 19).

In addition, Toda Institute staff presented papers in Nabeul, Tunisia during the conference **“Justice and Peace in the Holy Scriptures and the Philosophical Thought,”** organized by the President Ben Ali Center for Dialogue of Civilizations and Religions (April 20-23), and participated in the **Western Economic Association International (WEAI) Pacific Rim Conference** (Kyoto, Japan, March 24-27) as well as the Preparatory Committee (**PrepCom**) for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (**NPT**) (New York, USA, May 4-15).

Plans for 2010

The Toda Institute will co-organize a conference entitled **“Music for a Universal Consciousness of Solidarity”** in Tunis, Tunisia, with the President Ben Ali Center for the Dialogue of Civilizations and Religions slated for February 6 to 8.

The Conference **“Humanitarian Competition and Global Visioning”** will be held in Sydney from July 11 to 13, following the International Peace Research Association (IPRA) conference, also in Sydney from July 6 to 10, during which staff of the Toda Institute will present several papers. The next meeting of the Toda International Advisory Council (TIAC) is scheduled to be on the last day of the IPRA conference, July 10, in the afternoon.

Publications

Book Series

The Toda Institute facilitated the publication of two books in 2009. *The Challenge of Abolishing Nuclear Weapons*, edited by David Krieger, by Transaction Publishers.

This publication is the outcome of the 2007 Toda Institute international conference on nuclear abolition held in San Francisco in commemoration of Josei Toda’s declaration against nuclear weapons in Yokohama on September 7, 1957.

Conflict, Religion and Culture: Domestic and International Implications for Southeast Asia and Australia (Philippines-Australia Studies Network and Ateneo de Manila) co-edited by Joseph Camilleri, director of the Centre for Dialogue, La Trobe University, Australia (with Luca Anceschi and Benjamin T. Tolosa Jr.). It is partially the result of

the Human Security, Regional Conflict and Global Governance (HUGG2) conference series organized by the Toda Institute.

***Peace & Policy* Vol. 14, 2009**

The fourteenth issue of our annual journal, *Peace & Policy*, devoted to “Ethical Transformations for a Sustainable Future” and edited by Olivier Urbain and Deva Temple was published.

New Appointments: Secretary General and Research Director

On October 1, Kevin Clements was appointed Secretary General of the Toda Institute. He is the Director of the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Otago, New Zealand, and the Secretary General of the International Peace Research Association (IPRA). Professor Clements has been a strong supporter of all our activities and was the keynote speaker at the Inaugural Lecture of our Institute in 1996 at the United Nations University in Tokyo. He will contribute to the expansion of a worldwide network of peace researchers specializing in fields such as conflict transformation, peacebuilding, human rights, sustainable development, UN reform, and dialogue of civilizations.

Also, on October 1 of this year, Dr. Satoko Takahashi was appointed as Research Director. She has served as Program Manager for the Toda Institute since its formation in 1996. In her new role as Research Director she will be responsible for the management of all research programs and for the coordination of the activities of the Secretary General and other senior research fellows.

Acknowledgements

On behalf of the entire staff of the Toda Institute, I would like to express my appreciation to the founder of our institute, Daisaku Ikeda, for his continued support. I would also like to thank the more than 500 members of the Toda Institute Advisory Council, and the numerous friends and colleagues who have supported us throughout

2009. Finally I would like to express my gratitude to the staff of the Honolulu and Tokyo offices for their outstanding work, as well as to our Secretary General.

I look forward to continuing the promotion of research that is conducive to a better understanding and fosters the implementation of the concept of “Dialogue of Civilizations for Global Citizenship” with all of you.

Respectfully submitted,

Olivier Urbain, Director,
Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research,
March 21, 2010