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Presentation IPS-Inter Press Service: Turning the World Downside Up.
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Link to 15-minute Video on Ceremony for Presentation of 2014 IPS International Achievement Award for Nuclear Disarmament: <http://vimeo.com/113269496>

IPS Turns 50: Visit <http://ipsnews.net/documents/ipsturns50.pdf>



**Minutes of the IPS Core & Support Group Meeting
Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the UN
New York, 17 November 2014 | 14:00-16:00**

A meeting of the IPS Core & Support Group was held for the first time in New York. It was motivated by the 50th anniversary of Inter Press Service, which was set up the same year (1964) as the Group of 77 now counting 134 countries and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the UN hosted the meeting, reflecting the support Sri Lankan diplomats have extended to IPS over the years in different capacities and international fora within and outside the framework of the UN system.

List of Participants

Governments

Finland

United Nations/Multilateral Organizations

FAO

WFP

Foundations

Sokka Gakai International (SGI)

Observers

Japan

Sri Lanka

Apologies

Governments

Belgium

Brazil

Ireland

Norway

Spain

United Kingdom

United Nations/Multilateral Organizations

G77, IFAD, ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNOPS, UN DPI

Foundations/ Private Sector

Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

GIZ (German Agency for International Cooperation)

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

1. Welcome and introductory remarks

As host of the IPS Core and Support Group meeting, Ambassador Dr. Palitha Kohona, Sri Lanka's permanent representative to the United Nations, welcomed participants, pointing out that Inter Press Service over the years had been functioning as both a catalyst and monitor of international development cooperation. Stressing the importance of being able to change with the time in order to avoid the trap of irrelevance, Ambassador Kohona noted IPS' capability to adapt to the new dynamics in the world of media.



(Left to Right) IPS DG Ramesh Jaura, Ambassador Dr. Palitha Kohona, Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to the UN, IPS Chair Ambassador Walther Lichem

He apologized that he had to leave the meeting to participate in the UN General Assembly, and passed on the chair to Ambassador Walther Lichem, who confirmed participants' agreement to the proposed agenda. Ambassador Lichem, who had been unanimously elected IPS President the previous day by the Board of Directors, thanked Ambassador Kohona and Sri Lanka's permanent mission to the UN for hosting the meeting.

Ambassador Lichem was elected in the aftermath of UNAOC High Representative Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser tendering his resignation on 22 September 2014 as President of the IPS Board of Directors "due to an increasingly busy schedule and numerous commitments", because of which he would "no longer be able to contribute to the development of our institution (IPS)".

While thanking the former DG Mario Lubetkin for his 12-year long leadership of IPS, Ambassador Al-Nasser extended his "best wishes" to the new DG (Ramesh Jaura) "in the difficult and challenging daily task of keeping abreast with the new times".

2. Introduction of participants

Participants introduced themselves. Apologies were taken note of.

3. Approval of minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting, held in Rome on 18 October 2013, were approved.

4. Remarks by Ambassador Lichem, President of the IPS Board of Directors

Ambassador Lichem affirmed that like media organizations around the world, IPS was faced with critical times. And there was no doubt that new visions and values were needed. These, he said, included understanding the new role of IPS in global governance, serving as a platform of information and communication in cooperation with partners who share its values and support the process of change.

The international system today faces new agendas with a new spectrum of actors and bearers of responsibility at national, international and local levels of governance, he said. Particularly in this context, there was no alternative to IPS – a reason why it needed all possible support.



Ambassador Lichem informed that FAO's Deputy Director of Communications, Enrique Yeves, who chaired the meeting last year at FAO headquarters, could not participate in the meeting because of the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) being held in Rome. But Sharon Brennen-Haylock, Director of FAO Liaison Office to the UN, had been tasked by FAO to convey the Food and Agriculture Organization's message that it abided by its commitment to support IPS.

5. DG's report of the current situation, plans and future prospects

Ramesh Jaura started his report by warmly welcoming those who had managed to take part in the first Core & Support Group meeting in New York, and showed understanding that other ardent supporters could not join. Those who joined were:

Hirotsugu Terasaki, Executive Director of Peace Affairs for Soka Gakkai International (SGI), and *Hiro Sakurai*, SGI representative to the UN;

Lasse Keisalo, Minister Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations, and Head of Unit for Development and Human Rights, accompanied by *Aura Lehtonen* (representing Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland's *Erja-Outi Heino*, Head of Development Communication, and *Pia Helin* from the Unit for Development Communications);

Hisao Nishimaki, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations;

Domenica Sabella, Public Information Officer, World Food Program, New York, and *Sudeshna Chowdhury*; FAO Liaison Office to the UN.

The IPS DG availed of a power point presentation to describe the current situation of the organization, which is available online:

http://www.ips.org/documents/IPS_2014_November_DG.pdf

Ramesh Jaura said, his first seven-and-a-half months in office until the middle of November had been devoted internally to intensive communication as well as budget and structural reform of the organization. External outreach focused on meetings with some of the topmost officials of the UN and the UN system in New York, Vienna and Rome as well as contacts through email and telephone calls with project partners in Europe and elsewhere. He had also informed himself of the situation in Africa by visiting IPS Africa in Johannesburg.

He expressed his sincere thanks to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland (with which IPS had a close cooperation for the last nearly 20 years) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway as well as the UN Food and Agriculture Organization for multi-year media projects. Norway, he said, had been a long-term partner of IPS in the previous years.

He also conveyed his gratitude to the Tokyo-based Soka Gakkai International (SGI), which was sponsoring a project for raising awareness of the need to abolish nuclear weapons in the sixth year in succession, and had started a pilot project this year on Education for Global Citizenship and Global Sustainable Development. In a gesture of further support for IPS, SGI had sponsored the first IPS International Achievement Award on Nuclear Disarmament this year and assured their sponsorship for this award in 2015, which would mark the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. For 2016 and 2017, SGI would sponsor additional awards for Sustainable Global Development. He also thanked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan for sending Counsellor Hisao Nishimaki from the Permanent Mission of Japan to the UN:

While media projects funded by Finland, Norway, and SGI among others, strengthened the backbone of IPS news coverage, the sponsorship of award boosted IPS' outreach to the civil society. Ramesh Jaura said the coming months and 2015 will be devoted not only to consolidate IPS' human resources and finances by way of obtaining fresh money both from government and inter-governmental sources but also from corporations that shared its mission of fostering a fair and just world through a culture of peace and sustainable development.

6. Debate & Conclusions

The Chair thanked Ramesh Jaura for his presentation and opened the floor for comments and contributions. These focused, as in the previous year, on strengthening the outreach of IPS through social media and multimedia presentations. The DG assured that, supported by young colleagues, IPS had boosted its social media platform. It had also strengthened multimedia aspect of its news coverage, in spite of the fact that IPS WebTV was no longer in operation because the external funding had been suddenly discontinued.

Recalling discussions at the IPS Core Group meeting on 18 October 2013 in Rome, Jaura said, IPS would, among others:

- 1) Explore not only closer cooperation with the European Commission but also with regional organizations such as the African Union (AU), South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC).
 - 2) Strengthen South-South and South-North cooperation within and beyond the G77 and the G20 respectively as well as several other organizations, including development banks, making their presence felt.
 - 3) Seek closer cooperation with the UNAOC and similar organizations outside the UN system with the aim of promoting a culture of peace.
 - 4) Establish contact with particularly those sections of the academia, which are working on issues such as global governance within and outside the framework of the UN, and create a platform of information and communication for the purpose.
 - 5) Explore cooperation with private corporations, which abided by the Global Compact.
 - 6) Discuss cooperation with media organizations of the countries of the South.
 - 7) Review ways and means of strengthening added value of IPS, among others, through concerted marketing efforts.
 - 8) Explore additional funding sources keeping in view the basic mission of IPS.
 - 9) Discuss the modus vivendi of an independent evaluation as agreed with Finland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Finland's Minister Counsellor Lasse Keisalo said Finland was content with cooperation with IPS and the topics the media project included. It was good that MDGs and SDGs get publicity also in the Finnish media, he added. IPS President Ambassador Lichem described Finland as one of the "good citizen countries", and expressed the hope that it could in that position perhaps gather like-minded countries, regional groups and representatives of the civil society to support IPS on a long-term basis. Keisalo said he would convey the idea to "my colleagues in Helsinki".*
- 10) Bridge the UN headquarters in Nairobi, Geneva and Vienna as well as UN organizations in Rome and The Hague and Secretariats in Bonn with the UN in New York.

7. Election of the IPS Core Group Chair and Venue for the 2015 Meeting

Considering that at last year's meeting, FAO was elected as the Chair for the next three years, IPS Chair Ambassador Lichem did not see any need to review the matter. He however said the choice of the venue for the 2015 meeting should be left open. The participants agreed to both proposals. (November 2014)

While media projects funded by Finland, Norway, and SGI among others, strengthen the backbone of IPS news coverage, sponsorship of the IPS International Achievement Award has boosted IPS' outreach to the civil society.