Report of the Fourth Summit of the Global Alliance for Ministries and Departments of Peace: Building Bridges of Peace

Fourth Summit of the Global Alliance
“Building Bridges of Peace”
Costa Rica
17-21 September 2009
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Summary of the Fourth Summit of the Global Alliance for Ministries and Departments of Peace

The Global Alliance for Ministries and Departments of Peace (GA) is a worldwide movement of grassroots activists and government officials calling for structures in government and civil society in all nations to support cultures of peace around the world. Specific focus is on cabinet-level ministries and departments of peace in government and on national academies of peace in education. Three countries currently have such cabinet-level ministries: the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction in Nepal; the Ministry of Peace, National Unity, and Reconciliation in the Solomon Islands; and the Ministry of Justice and Peace in Costa Rica. Costa Rica's Ministry is the latest to be established, with the legislation passing the National Assembly unanimously in August 2009 and President Oscar Arias signing it into law the following month, just prior to the opening of the Fourth Global Alliance Summit.

The GA began in October 2005 at its First Summit, which was held in London, United Kingdom, and attended by 40 people from 12 countries. The Second Summit took place in June 2006 in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, with 60 people from 18 countries in attendance. The Third Summit was held in September 2007 in Kisorazu, Japan, with 50 people participating from 21 countries.

The GA's Fourth Summit, the subject of this report, took place 17-22 September 2009 in Brasil de Mora, Costa Rica. Notably, this was the first GA Summit to be officially hosted by the government of the host country. Further, it was the largest Summit in the GA's history, being attended by over 100 people from 22 countries. On one of its program days, Learning Day, Summit participation grew to over 200, with 100 students representing 20 additional countries, who attended from area universities and colleges.

Why Costa Rica?

As the fourth international Summit in Global Alliance history, Costa Rica was selected to host the biannual event as a reflection of the country's reputation as a role model for peace, complemented by the recent in-country advocacy work of member organization, the Rasur Foundation. Costa Rica's contemporary peace history boasts over 100 years of democratic government, the enduring abolition of the national armed forces in 1948, no formal international military defense arrangement, and a Nobel Peace Laureate as its former and current president. In August 2009, after six years of lobbying by the Rasur Foundation, Costa Rica passed a bill to establish the national Ministry of Justice and Peace.

Given Costa Rica's dedication to and reputation for peace, former Minister of Justice Laura Chinchilla presented the Rasur Foundation with a letter of intent for the Costa Rican government to officially host the 2009 Global Alliance Summit—the first national government in international peace history to host a Summit of its kind. With the Rasur Foundation as the local facilitating organization in Costa Rica, Summit planners collaborated with an international planning team comprised of current GA members, and in cooperation with Costa Rican civil society and government leaders, most notably the Ministry of Justice and the newly established alliance of non-governmental organizations for peace.
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The Summit Opening Ceremony featured an address by the President of Costa Rica and Nobel Peace Laureate Oscar Arias, followed by a four-day program including two days exploring strategic Next Steps for the maturing GA, a Learning Day, and a full-day plenary dedicated to civil society and government cooperation toward infrastructures for peace. The Summit culminated with a packed-house Closing Ceremony at the National Theatre in San José, where 800 people celebrated peace with spectacular musical performances and speeches by civil society and government leaders, most notably the new Minister of Justice and Peace.

This report details the highlights and outcomes of the Fourth GA Summit, as a memento for Summit participants and a knowledge piece for those interested in joining the GA or reporting on its work for academic, press, and/or other publications. Further information, including papers, program notes, blog comments, photos, and personal reflections is available at www.gasummit.org.

**Summit Communiqué**

21 September 2009

The 4th Global Alliance (GA) Summit was a resounding success with, at various times during the Summit, as many as 200 participants attending from more than 40 countries, enhanced by a live streaming video link to the world. The Summit was inspired by Costa Rica’s declaration, earlier this month, of a Minister of Justice and Peace, making it the third country in the world to have such a Ministry. The President of Costa Rica, Dr. Oscar Arias, addressed the opening of the Summit, and told us that:

"The task is only just starting; the creation of a Ministry for Peace...is not the final achievement, merely the making of a road to achieve sustainable order that would allow resolution of human conflicts without violence."

The mission of the GA is to support the establishment of Ministries and Departments of Peace in all nations. The Summit, in order to prepare itself to work with governments to build national infrastructures for peace, heard from experts in the fields of: Unarmed Civilian Peace Services and Youth Engagement in Peacebuilding; Academies for Peace, Restorative Justice Practices; Peace Economics; Innovation in the Use of Media; Nuclear and General Disarmament; Civil Society and Government Cooperation; and Networking with the UN and Business.

The GA also established strategic direction and an action plan for its next phase and formed a dynamic Interim Leadership Council, with membership from six continents, to carry its mission forward, partner with other international sister organizations, and plan its next Summit.

Rita Marie Johnson of the Rasur Foundation in Costa Rica, Summit convener, summed up the achievement of the Summit, stating, "The GA members embodied peace as they took a quantum leap toward national peace infrastructures by presenting a detailed picture of hope for the world. We know what to do and we will do it – together in the name of peace."

The Summit concluded with a determination to witness the formation of at least two more Ministries or Departments of Peace by the time of the next Summit, to be held in 2011.
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Pre-Summit: 40-hour BePeace Course
13-17 September 2009

Prior to the summit, 38 people from 10 countries came to Costa Rica early to participate in a five-day, 40-hour BePeace Course offered by Rasur Foundation International. This course was tailored specifically for summit participants and aimed to evoke participants’ abilities to develop, integrate, and apply the skills of “feeling peace” and “speaking peace.”

What is BePeace?

BePeace synergistically combines the intelligence of the heart and compassionate communication into a daily practice for creative, peaceful living. This practice evolved from the work of the Institute of HeartMath™ (www.heartmath.org), and the work of Marshall B. Rosenberg at the Center for Nonviolent Communication™ (www.cnvc.org). Founding Director of Rasur Foundation International, Rita Marie Johnson, realized the powerful synergy between these two methods and developed the practice of BePeace to combine coherence through appreciation and connection to universal needs through empathy and honesty.

In this course, participants were instructed in how to “feel peace” and enhance their social-emotional intelligence through the practice of physiological coherence between the heart and brain. Then, by learning the steps of compassionate communication, participants learned how to “speak peace” by connecting more consciously with the feelings and needs of themselves and those around them.

The BePeace practice is spreading rapidly, and in the last three years, BePeace has been taught in eight states in the USA and six countries around the world. As this movement grows, more people are able to consciously and efficiently walk the talk of peace as never before.

What did participants say about the course?

- “I have found this course clearly valuable...and realize it can help me to be more effective as an agent of peace.” – Eryl Court, Canada

- “When you are coherent, how easy to connect with each other and love how beautiful we all are.” – Yumi Kikuchi, Japan

- “I felt coherence in my heart for the first time.” – anonymous

Learn more about BePeace at www.rasurinternational.org
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Summit Opening Ceremony
17 September 2009

On 17 September 2009, the National Auditorium of the Children's Museum in San José welcomed 102 Summit participants from 22 countries, who took their seats beside Costa Rican government officials, business leaders and civil society peace activists at the Opening Ceremony of the Fourth Summit of the Global Alliance for Ministries and Departments of Peace. The diverse background of the 500-strong Auditorium crowd, convoked in the name of peace, mirrored the comprehensive program of speeches, presentations, and performances, distinct in subject matter yet connected in their messages for peace.

It was an evening of celebration and reflection of all that has been accomplished and all that is yet to be fulfilled. Attendees celebrated the creation of Costa Rica’s Ministry of Justice and Peace earlier that week, reviewed the history and highlights of the Global Alliance, and honored the power of inner peace. Ceremony goers were reminded also of the high social costs and destructive nature of war, violence, and insecurity—the shared realities that motivate the work of Global Alliance member campaigns to create and continue advocacy efforts for peace infrastructures in national governments worldwide.

Hope and a sense of purpose permeated the roomful of peacemakers, as Costa Rican President and Nobel Peace Laureate Oscar Arias Sanchez addressed the audience in his closing speech, saying that, “The task is only just beginning; the creation of a Ministry for Peace... is not the final achievement, merely the making of a road to achieve sustainable order that would allow resolution of human conflicts without violence.”

Opening Ceremony Program

Welcome Speech by Rita Marie Johnson, Rasur Foundation, Costa Rica

Heart Coherence

History and Highlights of the Global Alliance by Mike Abkin, National Peace Academy, USA

Musical Performances by youth members of EDIN

Keynote Speech by Roberto Artavia, Former Rector of INCAE, Costa Rica

Hope Video

Closing Speech by Oscar Arias, President of the Republic of Costa Rica
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Global Alliance Next Steps
18-19 September 2009

On the morning after the Opening Ceremony, Summit participants gathered at Swiss Travel's open-air Quinta del Sol conference venue, located in the town of Brasil de Mora, to begin the four-day plenary sessions of the Summit. Rita Marie Johnson, founding director of the Rasur Foundation in Costa Rica, opened the Summit, and Diane Brandenburg of the US read a statement from the Dalai Lama, who expressed his support for the Summit, saying in part:

"Peace in the world thus depends on there being peace in the hearts of individuals. Peace based merely on political considerations or prompted by other compulsions will only be temporary and superficial. . . . I believe we should take every opportunity to create harmony wherever we can and that this Summit can make a significant contribution in this direction."

Also, Saul Arbess of Canada and Corina Simon of Romania provided an historical overview of the Global Alliance to date. With that background, the first two days of the Summit then focused on strategic design and planning for the next steps of the Global Alliance.

The Next Steps process was facilitated by Dr. David Cooperrider of Case Western Reserve University, creator of the visioning process Appreciative Inquiry, and guided by a 28-page Appreciative Inquiry workbook designed specifically for the GA Summit. The four-phase process of Appreciative Inquiry led participants through Discovery of existing strengths and visions for the future, Dreaming of new opportunities to strengthen the vision and objectives, Designing prototypes of what the Global Alliance could look like strategically and organizationally, and, finally, developing action plans for the Destiny of the organization.

Sample Discovery Question:
What is unique and special about the Global Alliance – the collective strengths, assets, and perhaps underestimated capacities – that we have and can lean on to realize the peaceful world we envision for the future?
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David Cooperrider, Ph.D. is Fairmount Minerals Professor of Social Entrepreneurship, Faculty Director of the Fowler Center for Sustainable Value and Professor of Organizational Behavior at Case Western Reserve University in the United States. He is best known for the visioning process he created, Appreciative Inquiry (AI), which emphasizes "strength-based approaches to multi-stakeholder innovation and sustainable design".

Sample Discovery Question:
What is unique and special about the Global Alliance – the collective strengths, assets, and perhaps underestimated capacities – that we have and can lean on to realize the peaceful world we envision for the future?
Discovery
Opening the space for dialogue and creation, twelve roundtable discussion groups shared initial reflections, beginning with individual introspection, building to partner interaction, moving next to small-group roundtable sharing, and culminating in presentations to the entire plenary of Summit attendees. With provocative questions for reflection on personal strengths, thoughtful evaluation of the Global Alliance as an organization, and creative visioning for the future, Summit participants learned from one another and began to develop the mindset that would serve as the foundational framework for the inspiring process unfolding before them.

Deepening the Discovery phase, multi-nationality roundtable groups focused on themes of leadership experiences, evaluating root causes for success and their implications for the work at the Summit; defining the essence of the Global Alliance through brainstorming exemplary stories and the essential elements of the organization; envisioning images of a better future and the ways in which the Global Alliance can contribute to its realization; and hopes for fruitful outcomes of the Summit, highlighting both the small results with wider impacts and bolder outcomes to create a ‘tipping point’ toward peace. Groups presented their reports to the room in the form of flip-chart lists, news headlines, maps, and metaphors.

Finally, regional roundtable groups were given the chance to explore the strengths and unique contributions their region offers to the work of the Global Alliance. After discussing personal and organizational experiences working toward peace in their distinct regions, group members shared inspiring stories that embodied their “Proudest Proudly” and “Strongest Strengths” when working with colleagues, students, partners, networks, and communities. Reporters from each group presented the region’s collective strengths and capacities as the essential drivers behind a new realization of peace through the Global Alliance.

Dream
The next phase of the Appreciative Inquiry urged Summit participants to be bold and creative, dreaming their visions for the year 2020, when many Global Alliance objectives would be realized through organizational development and strategic action. The visioning focused on such issues as engaging stakeholder communities, supporting national campaigns between Summits, youth involvement, embodying the principles of peace, defining national ministries and departments of peace, primary activities of the GA, decision-making and leadership structure, staffing, and the organization’s funding model.

Objective
To develop a strategic direction and organizational model for the Global Alliance for Ministries and Departments of Peace that will set it on a course for enhanced effectiveness, organizational sustainability, and embodiment of a culture of peace.
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Objective
To develop a strategic direction and organizational model for the Global Alliance for Ministries and Departments of Peace that will set it on a course for enhanced effectiveness, organizational sustainability, and embodiment of a culture of peace.
Sample Dream Question: What is the corporate form and decision-making structure of the Global Alliance for Ministries and Departments of Peace? How does it relate to national and regional campaigns and organizations in carrying out its own activities?

While determining inspirational elements of the vision of the Global Alliance and brainstorming opportunities for action initiatives, each group considered limitations and challenges to overcome in order to realize the vision. As the afternoon wound down, groups presented their dream work through drama, dialogue, music, and storytelling, setting the stage for the climactic design phase that would transform dreamers’ ideas into workable realities.

Purpose
To identify possible areas of opportunity for action initiatives and organizational structure for the Global Alliance for Ministries and Departments of Peace that will move it forward strategically and accomplish the Visions of the Dream Phase.

Design
It was time to move from vision to possibilities, as Summit participants embarked upon the second day’s journey into the heart of the Next Steps Design phase, building on the previous day’s Discovery and Dream work. Facilitator David Cooperider encouraged participants to invoke their passion for the Global Alliance, selecting from a list of key opportunity areas, which emerged from the Dream reports. These opportunity areas (described more fully below) related to organizational structure, fundraising, marketing, and Summit planning, to name a few examples. Strategies for designing rapid prototypes in each of these opportunity areas merged wild brainstorming with realistic means of implementation, emphasizing quantity and creativity of suggestions.

Out of this process twelve groups formed to develop rapid prototypes and present their designs to the Summit. The designs and prototypes of the twelve design teams are included in a separate section on the website at http://www.gasummit.org/about/the-summit/the-summit/next-steps-reports/ and summarized below.

1. **Design of Membership, Outreach, and Inclusivity:** recommended membership criteria for new GA members, strategized outreach initiatives to recruit new members and campaigns, including ways to maximize socio-cultural, linguistic, and member inclusiveness within the organization.

2. **Vision, Mission, and Principles – DNA of the GA:** focused on developing the context and content of the organization, including review of the mission statement, vision, and guiding principles at the heart of the Global Alliance.
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Evening Dialogue: Israel-Palestine Conflict
18 September 2009
Panelists: Rami Livni, Israel, and Zoughbi Zoughbi, Palestine

Zoughbi Zoughbi of the Wi'am Palestinian Conflict Resolution Center spoke to the role of nonviolent initiatives in Palestine's strategy of liberation. Despite the media-fed global image of the 'violent Palestinian', Zoughbi pointed out that many Palestinians have devoted their lives to nonviolence in campaigns against the Israeli occupation, including peaceful protests and advocacy work at all levels of society. Zoughbi said, "Only through nonviolence will justice reign," pointing to nonviolence as the means to encourage a tipping point toward peace by connecting with the many Israelis who oppose their government's violence toward Palestine, recognizing that only Israelis themselves are able to change the policy of Israel. Zoughbi's recommendation entails a tri-dimensional process of nonviolence: (1) the continuation of Palestinians' proactive struggle to end the occupation, (2) the strengthening of pro-peace Israelis' advocacy to abandon their role as occupiers, and (3) the need for third-party pro-justice groups to raise awareness and gain leverage within the international community to resolve conflicts through the peaceful channels of government, citizen diplomacy, and UN resolutions.

Rami Livni of Israel's campaign for a Department of Peace opined that the way to push the Israelis and Palestinians towards peace in the Middle East is not by boycotting Israel but by communicating constantly with all sides, particularly with the Israeli public. Recognizing fears and insecurities on both sides of the conflict, Livni believes that the role for the international community and peace activists around the world is to help convince the two peoples of the benefit of peace and to instill the belief that peace is possible among communities who have lost hope. Acknowledging the power of personal interaction coupled with policy changes within the international community, Livni said, "Empathy and listening are crucial, hand in hand with political pressure. Peace lovers, come to Israel, come to Palestine, talk to your national leaders, especially in the US." His call to action is that peace advocates become more involved in trying to put an end to the Israel-Palestine conflict, expressing that peace will reign when the international community takes a strong stand against the violence and when peoples on both sides harbor a true belief that peace is indeed possible.
Evening Dialogue: Israel-Palestine Conflict
18 September 2009
Panelists: Rami Livni, Israel, and Zoughbi Zoughbi, Palestine

Zoughbi Zoughbi of the Wi'am Palestinian Conflict Resolution Center spoke to the role of nonviolent initiatives in Palestine’s strategy of liberation. Despite the media-fed global image of the ‘violent Palestinian’, Zoughbi pointed out that many Palestinians have devoted their lives to nonviolence in campaigns against the Israeli occupation, including peaceful protests and advocacy work at all levels of society. Zoughbi said, “Only through nonviolence will justice reign,” pointing to nonviolence as the means to encourage a tipping point toward peace by connecting with the many Israelis who oppose their government’s violence toward Palestine, recognizing that only Israelis themselves are able to change the policy of Israel. Zoughbi’s recommendation entails a tri-dimensional process of nonviolence: (1) the continuation of Palestinians’ proactive struggle to end the occupation, (2) the strengthening of pro-peace Israelis’ advocacy to abandon their role as occupiers, and (3) the need for third-party pro-justice groups to raise awareness and gain leverage within the international community to resolve conflicts through the peaceful channels of government, citizen diplomacy, and UN resolutions.

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3. **Technology that Connects Us**: strategized powerful means of GA community connection through website interfacing and interactive feedback, effective branding and marketing, strategic development tools, content and resources, and links with non-GA partners to strengthen effectiveness, outreach, and awareness.

4. **Tools and Resources for Action – Ministries and Departments of Peace**

   "Everything you Want to Know": recommended the creation of a resource manual as general source of information, references, and guidelines for those interested in exploring the development of a Ministry of Department of Peace, including background on the GA and Ministries/Departments of Peace, means of community engagement, developing national working groups for peace promotion, and best practices of working with government.

5. **Organizational Design, Decision Making, and Structure**: (recommendations merged with those of group 9)

6. **Tools to Build Peace Academies; Youth Alliance for Global Peace**: designed ways to promote peace education curricula around the world, nurture the creation of a complementary Youth Alliance for Peace, and build community peace mechanisms through the identification of partners and stakeholders, outreach efforts to engage youth and seek out youth leadership, and an emphasis on resource development and fundraising.

7. **GA Resource Raising – “an abundance of resources is flowing in”**: drafted a streamlined fundraising plan for the GA, to be implemented with Interim Leadership Council guidance, engaging strategic partners and celebrity endorsements, structured into a useful fundraising manual incorporating the law of attraction, resource raising vision and strategy, web-based fundraising tool kit, event planning, and acknowledgment of donors.

8. **Communications, Campaigns, and Media – “Peace-A-Media”**: drafted a communication campaign to interface with the media, maximize positive exposure, and generate awareness of the work of the GA through interviews with Summit participants, creation of the video *Peace Now!* with distribution through effective internet marketing, engaging the GA to write 'letters to the editor' of relevant publications, and finalizing a professional version of the video to present at the next Summit.

9. **Interim Structure**: designed a working model for the Interim Leadership Council to guide the future trajectory of the Global Alliance up to the next Summit in the following 13 regional and strategic functional areas: Africa, Asia/Oceania, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, North America; Legislation and Advocacy, Education, Communication and Networking, Multicultural Diversity and Resource Bank, Research and Development, Fundraising, Strategic Alliances, and Organizational Integration and Strategic Intention.

10. **Strategic Plan, Intentions, and Goals for the GA**: specified the intentions and objectives for the future of the Global Alliance, including resources, membership, embodying peace as an organization, expanding the GA’s influence at the global level,
determining ways to overcome roadblocks and limitations, engaging youth, and ensuring sustainability through peace education.

11. **Planning and Designing Future GA Summits**: strategized selection criteria for the next Summit location, developed the foundations for a Summit planning committee, brainstormed a fundraising plan to minimize the burden on the host country, maximize scholarships/sliding-fee funding and enhance youth participation, and highlighted ideas for the Summit program to include trainings, field trips, expert panels, promotion of country campaigns, and free time for networking and exploration.

12. **Building Strategic Alliances and Partnerships**: brainstormed ways of building strategic alliances, including regional representation to liaise with potential partner organizations, GA-United Nations working group to strengthen GA presence at the UN, integrating GA member networks by creating a general database of influential contacts, establishing presence at relevant international conferences, and developing strategic relationships with universities, ambassadors to the UN, in-country government contacts, and leaders in the field of international peace.

*Purpose: To continue moving the work of the Summit forward, building momentum and making commitments for the future.*

**Destiny**

The culmination of the four-phase Appreciative Inquiry experience led Summit attendees into a process of organizational structuring and strategic action planning for the future. Incorporating the design schemes presented earlier, the Next Steps’ Destiny materialized into an Interim Leadership Council (ILC), which emerged from an organic process of heart coherence and self-selection of Council members. This transformation from Design to Destiny led to the creation of the 16-seat ILC, with seats now filled in the following areas:

1. Africa: Jean de Dieu Basabose (Rwanda) and Edward Kamara (Sierra Leone)
2. Asia-Oceania: Gen Morita (Japan) and Biamca Pace (Australia)
3. Europe: Birger Norup (Denmark) and Corina Simon (Romania)
4. Middle East: Zoughbi Zoughbi (Palestine)
5. North America: Saul Arbess (Canada) and Dot Mauer (USA)
6. Strategic Alliances: Irving Rappaport (United Kingdom) and Paul van Tongeren (Netherlands)
7. Organizational Integration and Strategic Intention: Mike Abkin (USA) and Birger Norup (Denmark)
8. Research: Mike Abkin (USA)
9. Summit Planning: Binnie Degli Innocenti Carolina (Italy)
10. Multiculturalism: Liza Morales (Puerto Rico)
11. Communications and Marketing: JP Eason (USA)
12. Peace Education: Rita Marie Johnson (USA) and Oliver Rizzi Carlson (Switzerland)
13. Administration: Kelsey Visser (USA) and Corina Simon (Romania)
14. Legislation and Advocacy: Oliver Rizzi Carlson (Switzerland)
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The following seats remain open until members of the GA community come forward to fill them:

1. Latin America: seat to be supported by Tara Ruttenberg (USA) and Liza Morales (Puerto Rico)
2. Fundraising

Further information on the ILC members and terms of reference can be found on the website at http://www.gasummit.org/about/the-global-alliance/leadership-council/. Action planning in the groups from the Design Phase above will contribute to the work of the members of the ILC such that the strategic positions on the Council are supported by the prototypes and design plans of their respective predecessors from the Summit Design Phase. As the Council progresses and members gain new perspective into the realities of their position on the ILC, these designs will evolve to best serve the needs of the Global Alliance.

Additionally, regional positions will represent their specific region on the Council, working to communicate with current regional members, supporting existing and new country campaigns, and reaching out to potential new members within the region to expand the membership of the Global Alliance.

The new Interim Leadership Council held its first two meetings in the form of international conference calls on 13 October and 2 November 2009.
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Evening Presentation: Academies for Peace and BePeace  
19 September 2009

National Peace Academy, USA:  
*Dot Mauer*

The National Peace Academy is an institution of learning that utilizes a whole systems approach, working with and through government, business, and civil society to nurture cultures of peace by conducting research and facilitating learning toward the full-spectrum development of peace systems and the peacebuilder. National Peace Academy programs comprise four cornerstones of peace learning: peace education, peace research, peace practice, and peace policy. Programs are committed to educating the whole person for full participation in life as a peacebuilder; developing the profession of peacebuilding to become an integrated, recognized, and active part of the fabric of US culture and society at the local, state, and national levels; promoting peacebuilding as an integral and necessary component of every profession; teaching the principles and practices of peace, developing models, and providing technical assistance to redesign systems; and conducting peace research that expands the theoretical foundation of peace while advancing its application toward peace efforts.  
[www.nationalpeaceacademy.us](http://www.nationalpeaceacademy.us).

Academy for Peace of Costa Rica:  
*Rita Marie Johnson and  
Vera Lucia Salas*

The Academy for Peace of Costa Rica aims to pass the practice of BePeace from generation to generation. BePeace is the combination of coherence through appreciation and connection to universal needs through empathy and honesty. These peace skills are a way of developing emotional and social intelligence by feeling and communicating peace. The way in which the Academy accomplishes this is by training peace teachers, called Rasurs, within the public education system. The Rasurs then teach BePeace to other teachers, staff, students, and parents so that they can create a peaceful environment in the entire school community.  

World Peace Academy in Switzerland:  
*Catherine and Pierre Brunner*

The World Peace Academy - Swiss Center for Peace Studies is a university-level academic institution for peace and conflict transformation studies. Helping to fulfill the demand for qualified experts in the field of conflict research and peace work, WPA aims to be a place of research and development for creative means of peace promotion and innovation in private and public institutions. The first academic program, starting in March 2010, is a "Master of Advanced Studies in Peace and Conflict Transformation", certified by the University of Basel. The Masters program combines interdisciplinary peace research, constructive conflict transformation, practical experiences of multicultural coexistence, and development of personal competencies for peace work. The World Peace Academy aims to educate multipliers and experts toward a Culture of Peace.  
Learning Day
20 September 2009

The third day of the Summit plenary sessions showcased an array of practical foundations for peace through a series of expert presentations in fields ranging from media to economics. Presenters highlighted ways in which societies can begin to embody a culture of peace in the areas of civilian peace services, disarmament, restorative justice practices, media engagement, and peace economy. For this day, the Summit crowd grew to over two hundred participants from forty-two countries, eager to connect with peace workers from around the world and share in this unique day of learning for peace.

Civilian Peace Services
Canadian Normand Beaudet, co-founder of the Montreal Center of Non-Violent Resources, began the morning with an engaging discussion on the powerful vision behind the concept of civilian peace services and the parallel progress made in Canada to counter traditional armed forces recruitment and expansion. As an expert in the fields of civilian-based defense and intervention and community resilience capacity-building, Beaudet’s strategy to oppose military recruitment and create a civil peace force emphasizes the strength of youth-led initiatives and building awareness in schools and government of alternative peace structures. Additionally, Beaudet spoke to the need for civil peace services to team up with influential allies in civil society and education to provide opportunities and incentives to youth and weaken the power of military recruiters to enlist students in exchange for high financial benefits. Finally, he highlighted the relationship between a solid peace network of civil society, youth, and professional organizations and the capacity to bridge political support for civilian peace services with the creation of a Department of Peace in Canada, concluding that “We should not ask for peace departments or ministries. We should start building them.”

Non-Violent Peace Force
Simonetta Costanzo Pittaluga, European Representative of the International Governance Council of Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) sparked interest in the topic of unarmed civilian peacekeeping (UCPK) and the international work of the INGO Nonviolent Peaceforce. Contrasting traditional military peacekeeping with UCPK, Costanzo touched on the growing support within international and multilateral organizations for UCPK, highlighting UN Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury’s influential work promoting Nonviolent Peaceforce within the UN system. Building on Gandhian nonviolence, NP envisions “the creation of a large-scale, trained, international civilian nonviolent peace force...to be sent to conflict areas to prevent death and destruction and protect human rights, thus creating the space for local groups to struggle nonviolently, enter into dialogue, and seek peaceful resolution.” Strategically, the mission of NP is to engage international professionals trained in peace practices to work at the grassroots community level, and provide an influential international presence for protective accompaniment of vulnerable persons, effective monitoring, and interpositioning between
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conflictive parties while creating safe spaces for these parties to come together for dialogue and conflict transformation. [www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org]

Alvaro Ramirez Durini, Latin American and Caribbean Coordinator for Nonviolent Peaceforce, shared an overview of the regional presence of NP in Latin America over the past seven years. In Latin America, NP has been involved in research projects related to conflicts in Colombia, the Ecuador-Colombia border region, and Oaxaca, Mexico. In 2007, the region hosted the first Latin American and Caribbean training for the formation of Civilian Peace Teams to be mobilized and dispatched to violent conflict areas in the region. Since then, NP has collaborated with the Organization of American States and the United Nations and is currently planning a protective accompaniment program in Honduras. Ramirez mentioned that since 2003 NP has worked with 150 volunteers who have supported programs in Palestine, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Uganda, and Guatemala.

Disarmament
Carlos Vargas Pizarro, Vice President of the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (IALANA), presented Costa Rica's historical example of abolishing its armed forces and continuing to act as a leader in global disarmament efforts. Stark statistics of military spending, the growing international arms trade and the prevalence of nuclear weapons set the framework for Vargas's juxtaposition of international arms spending versus the need to invest in social welfare, education, human rights, health, and social services. Highlighting the benefits of Costa Rica's disarmament policies, he stated: "The unique perspective stemming from its abolition of armed forces sixty-two years prior inspired Costa Rica's use of other, non-military means to maintain its national sovereignty, empowering the country to spearhead the promotion of peace, the abolition of army forces and nuclear weapons, and the protection of human rights at the regional and universal level." Reminding listeners of the devastating WWII nuclear bomb experiences in Japan, Vargas showcased Costa Rica's contributions to global disarmament, including the Model Nuclear Weapons Convention presented to the UN in 1997, garnering support among 125 nations and strengthening the influence of members to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Finally, Vargas presented a call to action, quoting Barak Obama that, "We are the change we are waiting for."

Restorative Justice Practices
Penny Joy, co-chair of the Victoria chapter of the Canadian Department of Peace Initiative, discussed the link between practices of restorative justice and peace infrastructure, emphasizing the essential
conflictive parties while creating safe spaces for these parties to come together for dialogue and conflict transformation. www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org.

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connection between justice and peace. Joy defined restorative justice as “a generic term for all those approaches to wrongdoing that seek to move beyond condemnation and punishment to address both causes and the consequences - personal, relational, and societal - of offending in ways that promote accountability, healing, justice, and peace.” Contrasting alternative practices of restorative justice against the inherent violence of the traditional punitive justice system, Joy highlighted the adversarial and punishment-seeking nature of the latter compared with the former’s emphasis on forgiveness, community healing, and resolution. In Victoria, Canada, three-person teams orchestrate a community forum to listen deeply to all parties involved and seek restitution based on growth, consensus, and the recognition that all community members are impacted by the conflict at hand. Joy spoke to the power of restorative justice practices on all levels, from communal healing in criminal justice situations to victim-offender mediation and restorative justice coalitions in prisons to civil and interstate conflicts of national and international scale. The presentation ended with a screening of her insightful, moving documentary ‘Spiritual Roots of Restorative Justice’. Viewers were able to appreciate the positive impact of Restorative Justice from the perspective of victims, offenders, and community members that included First Nations, scholars, judges, and representatives of faith groups.

Yumi Kikuchi, author, journalist, and founder of Japan United for a Ministry of Peace (JUMP), shared her personal experience with September 11 as the impetus behind the creation of the Global Peace Campaign (GPC), a multifaceted media campaign to raise awareness for peace and an end to the war on Iraq. GPC peace advertisements appeared in the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Washington Post, and Persian and European newspapers and magazines highlighting the US and larger international addiction to war while calling for peace in the post-9/11 world. In addition to traditional media sources in print and on-screen, Kikuchi emphasized the power of individuals to ‘be’ the media through creative protest posters, peace songs, tabling, exhibiting, translating influential literature into multiple languages, and so on. Stressing the need to attract media attention toward the global peace movement in general and country campaigns for ministries and departments of peace in particular, Kikuchi mentioned celebrity endorsements and holding conferences as powerful ways to engage the media toward peace. Reminding us of the influence of word-of-mouth ‘buzz’ media, Kikuchi called on all Summit participants to ‘BE THE MEDIA’, and to “do what gives you joy and create joy in what you do.”

Economics of Peace and Earth Rights Democracy
Based on the principle that the Earth’s resources belong to everyone, Alanna Hartzok, Co-Director of the Earth Rights Institute, presented a nuanced alternative to the traditional capitalist economy in which the privilege fund, comprised of land rents and interest, enables a war-based system of armaments and foreign investment funding. To transition to a peace economy, Hartzok supports the emerging concept of “True Cost Economics via Green Tax Shift policy” that would
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transform the privilege fund through tax reform and just public finance policy. Through raising taxes on ‘common wealth’, namely land use and environmentally degrading activities, while lowering taxes on ‘private wealth’ and labor items such as income, capital, sales, and homes, public resource collection would target land use as opposed to income and investment. “Solving the land problem,” as Hartzok explained it, would help offset the inequalities of highly concentrated land ownership in the hands of the wealthy few at the expense of the majority of poor and landless, with the benefits of addressing the wealth gap at its source, creating affordable housing, mitigating the boom/bust cycle, improving health, encouraging eco-incentives, resolving land and resource conflicts, and ensuring that military budgets are less significant than the peace dividend of land rents. [www.course.earthrights.net.]

**Evening Activity: Intercultural Youth Exchange for Peace**
**20 September 2009**

More than 50 youth participated in an evening of intercultural interaction, sharing experiences as young people working and learning toward peace. Facilitated by Corina Simon of PATRIR in Romania, Aaron Voldman of the US Peace Alliance and Student Peace Alliance, and Tara Ruttenberg from the Rasur Foundation in Costa Rica, international participants from the United World College, University for Peace, and the Global College of Long Island University kicked off the night “Speed-Dating for Peace”, getting to know each other one-on-one through an energizing series of prompted questions relating to practices of conflict resolution. Next, attendees heard from current GA youth members whose peace work ranged from grassroots organizing and government advocacy to coordinating peace conferences and working with the United Nations. The night came to a close with fun and inspiring Dances for Universal Peace led by Tajali Tolan, livening up the evening and connecting participants through the universal language of song and dance. From the observation of one youth participant: “How funny that until now we have not known of each others’ colleges.” For more information on the youth component of the Global Alliance, please contact Corina Simon at corina.simon@patri.ro.
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Evening Activity: Intercultural Youth Exchange for Peace
20 September 2009

More than 50 youth participated in an evening of intercultural interaction, sharing experiences as young people working and learning toward peace. Facilitated by Corina Simon of PATRIR in Romania, Aaron Voldman of the US Peace Alliance and Student Peace Alliance, and Tara Ruttenberg from the Rasur Foundation in Costa Rica, international participants from the United World College, University for Peace, and the Global College of Long Island University kicked off the night "Speed-Dating for Peace", getting to know each other one-on-one through an energizing series of prompted questions relating to practices of conflict resolution. Next, attendees heard from current GA youth members whose peace work ranged from grassroots organizing and government advocacy to coordinating peace conferences and working with the United Nations. The night came to a close with fun and inspiring Dances for Universal Peace led by Tajali Tolan, livening up the evening and connecting participants through the universal language of song and dance. From the observation of one youth participant: "How funny that until now we have not known of each others' colleges." For more information on the youth component of the Global Alliance, please contact Corina Simon at corina.simon@patrir.ro.
Government Day: Building Bridges of Peace Together
September 21 2009

The fourth and final day of the Summit was devoted to inquiries into national peace infrastructures and cooperation between society and government at local, regional, national, and international levels.

The morning began with an Overview of the Global Alliance and National Campaigns for Ministries and Departments of Peace presented by Dot Maver of the US National Peace Academy. Maver presented an inspiring video message from US Congressman Dennis J. Kucinich, who spoke directly to Summit attendees about the importance of the work they are doing to establish ministries and departments of peace around the world that will work to make peace an organizing principle of society.

Then, Maver read aloud a personal statement to the Summit from Ambassador Anvarul K. Chowdhury, Former Under-Secretary-General and High Representative of the United Nations, in which he celebrated the creation of Costa Rica's Ministry of Justice and Peace and extended his admiration for the work of the Global Alliance, proclaiming:

"I strongly support the call for Ministries and Departments of Peace in countries throughout the world and particularly in countries with large military forces. It is time for our global community to make peace an organizing principle, and in that regard many of us throughout the world are working as a part of the global movement to build and promote the Culture of Peace and fully implement the UN Programme of Action adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1999. This 'Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace' represents the UN's vision of how to achieve peace at all levels through mainly individual efforts."

Thus began a meaningful day dedicated to cooperation between government and civil society toward the creation of national peace infrastructures. Sharing personal and professional experiences working with government, experienced GA members addressed the plenary through panel presentations highlighting existing Ministries for Peace and other national peace infrastructures, creating an exposé of existing structures and active campaigns striving to create ministries and departments of peace in their countries. These presenters then led break-out groups to delve deeper into the inner workings of advocacy, lobbying, drafting legislation, and other means of civil society-government interaction for peacebuilding.

At noon, Dot Maver led a special moment of silence in celebration of this International Day of Peace, connecting Summit participants to the peace
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organizations around the world observing this special day. In the afternoon, informative presentations addressed the relevant issues of Citizen Security and Peaceful Coexistence, Cooperation between NGOs and the United Nations, as well as means of engaging the business sector toward peace through Public-Private Partnerships and Corporate Social Responsibility.

Panel 1: National Infrastructures for Peace
This panel was moderated by Paul van Tongeren of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC); and Dot Mawer of the US National Peace Academy

Infrastructures for Peace and Case Studies Kenya and Ghana:
Paul van Tongeren, GPPAC, Netherlands

To introduce the topic, van Tongeren defined the concept of infrastructures for peace, stating that “the ‘Ministry of Peace’ concept developed in 2003, mainly in the global North, with the aim of creating a practical model to advance a culture of peace. It was later taken up by others in the South, for example, in Africa, where protracted conflicts gave rise to the beginnings of infrastructures for peace.”

In Ghana, between 1980 and 2002, 23 conflicts were recorded in the three northern regions of the country. When another eruption of violence in 2002 in the Dagombas led to the slaying of the King of Dagbon and many of his elders and close advisors, the government feared these events might derail upcoming elections, and decided that a process should be started to address the root causes. The UNDP was asked to advise, and a process towards a Peace Architecture was initiated, leading to the 2006 Parliament adoption of a National Architecture for Peace. This made Ghana the first African government to implement a Resolution of African Leaders at the first Standing Conference on Stability, Security, and Development in Durban in 2002, which called for each country to establish a national framework for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts.

Kenya is beset by a multitude of local conflicts that have the potential to escalate at any moment, as a result of resource crises, land tenure issues, and political machinations. These issues led to the establishment of a National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management, the NSC. The Office of the President, through the NSC, embarked on a process towards the development of a national policy on peacebuilding and conflict management in 2004. A draft National Policy on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management, including the lessons learned from the Post-election Violence of 2008, was published by the Office of the President in December 2008.

Both Kenya and Ghana realized that they could never achieve stability or sustainable peace if the roots of their conflicts were not addressed. Van Tongeren emphasized that the basis for establishing peace infrastructure in Ghana and Kenya was a response to destabilizing structural conflicts that threatened security, development, and peace. Both countries recently held general elections, and in both, the existence of these structures helped minimize violent conflict: civil
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society initiatives and National and Local Peace Councils helped prevent the occurrence of large-scale violence in Ghana during the last general elections of 2008 as did CSOs and District Peace Councils in Kenya during the post-election violence in 2008.

Based on the experiences of Kenya and Ghana, van Tongeren listed a number of components of infrastructures for peace, including: a National Peace Council, District and Local Peace Councils, National Peace Forum, government unit or Department on Peacebuilding, a whole-government approach, a legislative bill for national peace infrastructure, building national capacities for peace, integrating traditional perspectives on conflict resolution, promoting a shared vision of society and a culture of peace, linkages to the regional and international communities, and developing a flexible and adequate budget.

As countries set out on their road to developing infrastructures for peace, van Tongeren warned of potential challenges along the way, namely: discerning entry points to overcome obstacles of government unwillingness to acknowledge electoral violence and/or the need for peace infrastructure, as well as government fear of cooperating with civil society organizations, reaching a balance between government Departments and Peace Councils at all levels, as well as between 'hawks and doves' within Peace Councils themselves, gauging politicians' response to diminishing power of political parties, funding limitations, and managing potential spoilers so as not to undermine cooperation between peace actors and stakeholders within the National Peace Forum.

Despite these challenges, van Tongeren's hope for the success of peace infrastructures lies with the motivating evidence of the positive results experienced in Ghana and Kenya. He expressed this hope as an inspiration to the Global Alliance, saying, "now that these structures really helped in preventing and reducing violent conflict, there is proof that they worked!"

Peace Infrastructures in Nepal and the United States
Aaron Voldman, Peace Alliance and Student Peace Alliance, USA

Speaking from his experiences organizing with the US Peace Alliance and Student Peace Alliance on the campaign toward a US department of peace and visiting Nepal to study the Nepalese Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction, Voldman highlighted the need for countries to thoroughly assess which brand of peace infrastructure will be most effective in mainstreaming peacebuilding in government. Pointing to Nepal's success in holding elections, leading negotiations, and maintaining cantonments to keep ex-rebels at bay, Voldman also noted the Ministry's struggle to garner the attention and resources it needed due to challenges associated with alleged bias, conflict, and polarization at the national level. While the Ministry has aided peacebuilding in Nepal, the fact that one party to the conflict controls the Ministry has impeded its capacity to execute its mission. In light of these challenges, Voldman shared his hope that time may help shift the future of the Nepalese Ministry toward greater neutrality and support for peacebuilding.

Concerning the experience of the US Department of Peace proposal, Voldman noted that while 70 US representatives have co-sponsored the bill, leaders in existing agencies are concerned
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about the possibility of a US Department of Peace "silo-ing" the work of peace, referring to the challenges associated with concentrating peacebuilding efforts in one Department. As a result, the US campaign is currently assessing this concern and others through an intensive research and analysis process. Voidman emphasized that conversations regarding infrastructure for peace are quite divergent in the US as opposed to Nepal and that advocates must understand the nuances involved in their particular context. In closing, Voidman suggested that GA members "cling to the essence of the department and ministry of peace proposals and worry less about form, as form will shift accordingly given historical and cultural realities in each country."

Ministry of Justice and Peace in Costa Rica
Milena Sanabria, Vice Minister of Justice and Peace, Costa Rica

Vice Minister Sanabria outlined the intentions for Costa Rica’s newly established Ministry of Justice and Peace, calling for improved integration with public institutions and NGOs and highlighting the need for these groups to work together as society’s primary peacemakers in maintaining nonviolent means of conflict resolution. The new Ministry aims to promote a culture of peace through formal and informal education, collaboration with the Ministry of Public Security to curtail armed violence, cooperation with other governmental committees to support global disarmament, and working to improve social challenges including economic disparities, treatment of minorities, underdevelopment, organized crime, and drugs. The Ministry’s focus on violence prevention highlights its founding belief in the indispensable connection between justice and peace, emphasizing the dual strategy of law enforcement and preventative attention to the structural causes of violence. The Ministry of Justice and Peace intends to work with community initiatives to provide support for existing grassroots programs that target school, family, and local-level violence while nurturing emotional health, emphasizing nonviolence and mediation within the justice system, and fostering the growth of community support systems.

Panel 2: Civil Society and Government Cooperation
Opening Remarks by Paul van Tongeren, GPPAC, Netherlands

United States Peace Alliance and Student Peace Alliance
Aaron Voidman, Department of Peace Campaign, USA

As staff and board member of the US Peace Alliance and Executive Director of the Student Peace Alliance, Voidman delineated the accomplishments and direction of the US Department of Peace campaign. Over the last five years, the Peace Alliance has organized thousands of constituent meetings with members of Congress to discuss the Department of Peace proposal, acknowledging that, given the overwhelming influence of the US military-industrial complex, it is America’s peace challenge to clearly define what the alternative to war looks like. Voidman emphasized his pride in the election of president Obama, "a peace President", as a direct accomplishment of peace-loving Americans, and as such, called on the US campaign to maximize the potential of this present window of opportunity opening in
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**Peace Infrastructure in Catalunya, Spain**
Simonetta Costanzo Pittaluga, External Relations of the NOVA Center for Social Innovation

Costanzo presented an overview of the ways in which the autonomous Spanish region of Catalunya has embraced the concept of peace with the creation of governmental structures geared toward peace promotion. This process grew out of the work of Catalan civil society, whose advocacy since 1991 has found resonance within regional government, most notably with the approval of the Law for the Promotion of Peace and the work of the Catalan Agency for Cooperation and Development, which guides the policies of the Generalitat. These efforts were instrumental in establishing the Catalan Council for Peace in 2005 with representation from public administration, political parties, universities, organizations, and civilians to inform and implement public policies geared toward peace. The creation in 2006 of the Office for Promotion of Peace and Human Rights of the Autonomous Government of Catalunya as a General Directorate inside the Department of Interior, Institutional Relations, and Participation was the crowning success of “the continuous relationship between local civil society, the listening of the governing powers, and the concrete implementation into public institutions.” Finally, the establishment in 2007 of the Catalan International Institute for Peace, ICIP, seeks to enhance the promotion of a culture of peace in Catalan society and work with the rest of the world on peace issues.

**Campaigning for a Ministry of Peace in Costa Rica**
Alexandra Kissling, Vice President of the Rasur Foundation

Kissling shared her experiences working with the Rasur Foundation toward the opportune passing of the legislative bill to establish Costa Rica’s new national Ministry of Justice and Peace, approved in August 2009 and signed into law by President Oscar Arias in September. As authors of the bill, the Rasur Foundation team worked for six years advocating for the creation of the Ministry, lobbying members of the National Legislative Assembly and in collaboration with the existing Ministry of Justice. As the Summit neared, the bill received enough support to be included in the official agenda of the Assembly. As a result of challenges within the bureaucratic system of Costa Rican lawmaking, the bill passed through four Assembly sessions until finally coming to a vote in mid-August 2009. Kissling’s personal involvement in lobbying and advocacy, in
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conjunction with the efforts of Vice Minister of Justice Milena Sanabria, were instrumental in moving the bill to the top of the legislative agenda, garnering last-minute support in the Assembly, and ensuring the passage of the bill on 20 August 2009, just three weeks prior to the start of the Summit. Costa Rica now celebrates the creation of the Ministry of Justice and Peace as the first country in Latin America and the third country in the world to establish a ministry or department of peace in its national government.

**African Alliance for Peace**
Karen Barensche, South African Peace Alliance, South Africa

As the first regional membership formed within the Global Alliance, Barensche presented the journey and trajectory of the African Alliance for Peace (AAP), formed in 2007 at the third GA Summit in Japan by representatives from Uganda, Rwanda, Senegal and South Africa. With the objectives of connection, support, and regional outreach, Ghana hosted the first annual Summit of the AAP in 2008, attended by 27 civil society delegates from Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Nigeria, Liberia, South Africa, and Ghana. The outcomes of this Summit were the following: the commitment of all present to campaign in their own countries toward the establishment of a ministry or a department of peace and to support other governments in Africa to do the same, reflecting and supporting the emergence of a global culture of peace and nonviolence; affirmation of the “Peace Approach principles” to conflict resolution; development of a Mission and Vision statement for the AAP; drafting a budget and fundraising strategy; the proposal of an African Youth Movement; and the creation of the AAP vision statement: “We envision an Africa of sustainable peace with governmental structures that support the practice of the culture of peace within and among countries.”

Delegates to the 2008 AAP Summit noted their interconnectedness, in the spirit of UBUNTU (the belief that a person becomes a person through other people), making the following statement: “The AAP acknowledges that we live in a world of interconnected relationships, one world, and we take responsibility for the presentation and influence of our work. We do what we can to support one another in our various areas of responsibility. It is our intention that all involved experience success and be supported in their work.”

Bringing the plenary section of the morning to an end, Saul Arbess of the Canadian Department of Peace Initiative presented a Summary of all panel presentations. Next, Summit participants had the opportunity to delve deeper into the subjects presented by the morning’s panelists, engaging in intimate roundtable discussions with the panelists themselves on the experiences of Costa Rica, Catalunya, Nepal, Kenya and Ghana, Africa, and the United States.
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Lara Blanco presented sobering statistics of rising violence and crime in Costa Rica and the Americas. As UNDP targets development as a means to reduce violence in countries throughout the world, ever-increasing human insecurity represents a significant challenge for policymakers and a call to action for peace workers on the local, national, and global levels. Summit participants responded that the numbers on violence and crime speak for themselves as stark justification that peacebuilding initiatives and peace infrastructure in government must become a reality in order to respond to these virulent social challenges.

**Cooperation between NGOs and the United Nations**

Patricia Mische, NGO UN Representative for Global Education Associates (USA), and Anne Creter, Global Alliance Liaison to the UN (USA)

Pat Mische presented an overview of the United Nations, how NGOs have affected global policy development through the UN, and some strategies toward UN endorsement of ministries and departments of peace. First, she emphasized the contemporary challenges that the UN must confront today as an organization enshrined in its founding principle of state sovereignty while functioning in a globalized world demanding international policy flexibility. Although the UN remains a state-centric organization, with only member states able to vote, Mische acknowledged that NGOs have played a significant role in efforts to enhance global peace and security through the UN, including NGO influence toward the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, Treaty Banning Land Mines, International Criminal Court, Security Council Resolution 1325 requiring an increased role of women in peacebuilding, and most significantly in successful advocacy for environmental treaties related to climate change and biodiversity. Mische concluded by recognizing that “NGOs have proven they can be effective global actors within and through the UN, and with well-planned strategies, discipline, and long-term commitment, it is possible for NGOs now to work through the UN to promote the establishment of ministries for peace in countries around the world.”

Anne Creter, as Global Alliance UN Liaison, then discussed the current worldwide NGO movement to pass a UN Resolution in the General Assembly promoting Ministries and Departments of Peace, an initiative conceived out of the second GA Summit in 2006. With support from UN “culture of peace expert” Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury, the draft Resolution is now used to engage UN Ambassadors, calling on the UN Secretary-General to “actively encourage all UN member states to build the culture of peace architecture nationally and in collaboration with the community of nations, by creating structures across national governments to direct peace-building policies and programmes; and that these structures be in the form of ministries or departments of peace to help manifest what is envisioned in the UN..."
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Anne Creter, as Global Alliance UN Liaison, then discussed the current worldwide NGO movement to pass a UN Resolution in the General Assembly promoting Ministries and Departments of Peace, an initiative conceived out of the second GA Summit in 2006. With support from UN “culture of peace expert” Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury, the draft Resolution is now used to engage UN Ambassadors, calling on the UN Secretary-General to “actively encourage all UN member states to build the culture of peace architecture nationally and in collaboration with the community of nations, by creating structures across national governments to direct peace-building policies and programmes; and that these structures be in the form of ministries or departments of peace to help manifest what is envisioned in the UN
Declaration and Programme of Action for a Culture of Peace (1999).” The former Global Alliance UN Working Group has now progressed into a newly re-invigorated UN Strategic Planning Team. Creter said, “Everyone’s help—all over the world and at all levels—is vitally needed NOW to move the Resolution forward at this critical time as the Decade for the Culture of Peace ends in 2010.” If you are interested in joining this effort, email annecrets@aol.com.

Public Private Partnerships and Corporate Social Responsibility
Luis Javier Castro, Association of Businesses for Development (AED), Costa Rica

From a basis that understands the violet breakdown of a given social contract as resulting from inequality and social ruptures that lead to violence, insecurity, and a lack of trust, sense of belonging, and national identity, Castro envisions a society in which the three sectors of state, civil society, and business unite in cooperation toward peace. As these sectors come together, it creates a tridimensional benefit for society, the economy, and the environment such that significant progress in all three of these areas becomes possible. Castro presented the tenets of his organization, the Association of Businesses for Development (AED) and its focus on promoting corporate social responsibility (CSR) throughout Central America in collaboration with United Way and other business associations dedicated to sustainable development. He explained CSR as the combination of business development and social investment, whereby businesses can be successful and profitable while maintaining a positive environmental, economic, and social impact through strategic planning and management models that emphasize responsible competition and sustainability. The challenge for businesses, then, is their capacity to “insert themselves into the social reality in which they are involved through public and private alliances to strengthen public policies in relevant topics and issues toward improved social equity and cohesion, [culminating in] transformative social investment.” Finally, Castro cited education as a vital example of where public-private partnerships can be an essential means of strengthening the positive linkages toward social development.

Summit Wrap Up
Birger Norup, Denmark - Peace Alliance Denmark

Birger Norup wrapped up the Summit with a summary of the highlights of the week’s events from the Opening Ceremony through Government Day, and all inspiring moments in between. Closing with a heartfelt slideshow of imagery and historical messages for peace, the mood was one of celebration for all that had been accomplished for the Global Alliance, gratitude for the new connections made that would strengthen the work of GA country campaigns, and motivation toward the future of global peacebuilding.
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Global Alliance Summit Closing Ceremony

21 September 2009
National Theatre, San José

The conclusion of the Fourth Summit of the Global Alliance for Ministries and Departments of Peace took place at San José's National Theatre and brought together 800 local and international members of civil society and government to celebrate the work of the GA and the creation of Costa Rica's Ministry of Justice and Peace. Declared a cultural event of national interest, the Closing Ceremony highlighted the outcome of the week's work with the reading of the final Summit Communiqué by Saul Arbess of the Canadian Department of Peace Initiative. International students from the United World College of Costa Rica opened the event, interspersing inspirational quotes and personalized intentions for peace from within the crowd. Celebrating the International Day of Peace, keynote speeches by Patricia Mische and Bernardo Toro emphasized the significance of peace promotion to advance a culture of peace while addressing the social ills of inequality, gaps in education, and access to services. Rousing musical performances by the National Symphony Youth Orchestra and Sonicaja, a drum and dance ensemble using recycled objects as instruments, had attendees on their feet, clapping and waving white peace flags to the energetic beat. Costa Rica's new Minister of Justice and Peace closed the evening with inspiring words about the Ministry and the ways in which Costa Rica continues to be a leader for peace around the world.

Closing Ceremony Program

International Day of Peace, presented by students of the United World College of Costa Rica

National Symphony Youth Orchestra, Director Marvin Araya

Official Communiqué of the Fourth Summit of the Global Alliance for Ministries and Departments of Peace by Saul Arbess, Canadian Department for Peace Initiative

Public address on the International Day of Peace and Culture of Peace by Patricia Mische, cofounder and former president of Global Education Associates (GEA).

Intermission

Peace and a New Ethical Order by Bernardo Toro, Advisor to the president of the AVINA Foundation and Member of the Ethos Institute International Council.

Performance by Sonicaja, creative percussion ensemble

Closing address by Hon. Hernando Paris, Minister of Justice and Peace of Costa Rica
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http://www.gasummit.org/about/the-summit/the-summit/2009-summit-report/
COMMUNIQUÉ
September 21, 2009

4th Global Alliance Summit for Ministries and Departments of Peace
San Jose, Costa Rica, Sept. 17-21, 2009

The 4th Global Alliance (GA) Summit was a resounding success with 200 participants attending from more than 40 countries, enhanced by a live streaming video link to the world. The Summit was inspired by Costa Rica’s declaration, earlier this month, of a Minister of Justice and Peace, making it the third country in the world to have such a Ministry. The President of Costa Rica, Dr. Oscar Arias, addressed the opening of the Summit, and told us that:

“The task is only just starting; the creation of a Ministry for Peace...is not the final achievement, merely the making of a road to achieve sustainable order that would allow resolution of human conflicts without violence.”

The mission of the GA is to support the establishment of Ministries and Departments of Peace in all nations. The Summit, in order to prepare itself to work with governments to build national infrastructures for peace, heard from experts in the fields of: Unarmed Civilian Peace Services and Youth Engagement in Peacebuilding; Academies for Peace, Restorative Justice Practices; Peace Economics; Innovation in the Use of Media; Nuclear and General Disarmament; Civil Society and Government Cooperation; and, Networking with the UN and Business.

The GA also established strategic direction and an action plan for its next phase and formed a dynamic Leadership Council, with membership from 6 continents, to carry its mission forward, partner with other international sister organizations and plan its next Summit.

Rita Marie Johnson of the Rasur Foundation in Costa Rica, Summit convener, summed up the achievement of the Summit, stating, “The GA members embodied peace as they took a quantum leap toward national peace infrastructures by presenting a detailed picture of hope for the world. We know what to do and we will do it – together in the name of peace.”

The Summit concluded with a determination to witness the formation of at least 2 more Ministries or Departments of Peace by the time of the next Summit to be held in 2011.

Contact: Milena Sanabria, Vice Minister of Justice and Peace

Email: milesanabria@gmail.com

www.gasummit.org
Create international peace history with 200 Summit participants from around the world

Special day dedicated to Government and Civil Society Cooperation: Building Bridges of Peace Together

Plenary Sessions facilitated by David Cooperider, founder of Appreciative Inquiry

Networking opportunities with invited participants from Parliament, Ministries of Justice and Education, and United Nations

Closing Ceremony on the International Day of Peace with cultural performances and a keynote address by Patricia Mische.

Pre-Summit BePeace Foundations Course led by Rita Marie Johnson, founder of the Academy for Peace of Costa Rica

Learn about Restorative Justice and peace in the media with sessions led by GA members Penny Joy (Canada) and Yumi Kikuchi (Japan).

The IV Summit of the Global Alliance for Ministries and Departments of Peace is hosted by the Government of the Republic of Costa Rica and facilitated by the Rasur Foundation.

Registration information:

Please visit www.GASummit.org to access the application for the Summit.

Upon receipt of your application, we will contact you with payment instructions for the $400 Summit registration fee.

To register for the optional pre-Summit BePeace Course, email Tara Ruttenberg at tara@rasurfoundation.org.

Costa Rica September 13-21 2009

Building Bridges of Peace

To participate contact Tara Ruttenberg
email: tara@rasurfoundation.org
Telephone: 011-506-2252-4041
www.GASummit.org
Patricia Mische, USA
is co-founder of Global Education Associates and an expert UN collaborator. She will present on NGO-UN cooperation for peace-building and offer a keynote address at the Summit Closing Ceremony.

Normand Beaudet, CAN
has played a leading role in Canadian peace organizations and promoting Canadian Civilian Peace Services. He will speak on civilian-based defense and community resilience capacity building.

The Global Alliance Summit
will engage participants in the dynamic international movement to create national peace infrastructures. Forty countries will unite to learn about and promote ministries and departments of peace as essential to a global culture of peace.

David Cooperrider, USA
from Case Western Reserve University will facilitate two days of the Summit using his visioning process, Appreciative Inquiry.

Rita Marie Johnson,
Costa Rica
is the Founding Director of the Rasur Foundation International and will be this year's Global Alliance Summit Facilitator.

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Costa Rica
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Alanna Hartzok, USA
Co-Director of Earth Rights Institute, and Representative to the UN for the International Union for Land Valuation Taxation. She will present on Peace Economy, Land Rights and Public Finance.

Paul van Tongeren,
Netherlands
of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict will facilitate panels on Infrastructures for Peace and Civil Society-Government Cooperation.

Post-Summit Tour of Costa Rica
Reserve your spot today on the 5-day tour of Costa Rica's top attractions: white-sand beaches, waterfalls, coffee plantation, tropical wildlife hot springs and active volcano! Email tara@rasurfoundation.org

Building bridges of peace

To participate contact Tara Ruttenberg
email: tara@rasurfoundation.org
Telephone: 011-506-2282-4041
www.mfp-dop.org
Overall Mandate: To build a culture and architecture of peace at home and abroad by directing policy in the areas of peace and human security across government departments. Model of communication: Collaboration using NVC and related approaches. In relationship to other ministries, the Minister might ask “How can we support the work you do?” and “Help my ministry to improve our way of working with you in achieving our mission.”

- Reviews areas of conflict domestically and between countries searching from the root causes of conflict utilizing the strategy of conflict transformation by peaceful means.
- Serves as an incubator of creative responses to conflict.
- Acts a sensor of potential areas of violence and provides strategies for early non-violent intervention and mitigation of conflict.
- Strengthens and supports CSO initiatives at all levels.
- Trains and deploys unarmed civilian peace services as professional peace workers and trains with defense, military personnel in non-violent strategies in post conflict reconstruction.
- Promotes human rights and the rights of the child.

**WORKING WITH OTHER MINISTRIES/DEPARTMENTS**

**Education**  
Peace education at all levels and university-level peace studies

**Military (Defense)**  
Supporting non-violent intervention and practices

**Environment**  
Mitigation strategies to reduce and respond to impacts of climate change where potential violence exists

**Health**  
Child development (the peaceful child)  
Holistic health care (the whole person)

**Justice**  
Restorative Justice Practices (healing the harm)  
Forgiveness and reconciliation  
Reduction of violence

**Social and Economic Development**  
Meeting basic human needs  
Democracy-building

**Foreign Affairs**  
Peace diplomacy  
Disarmament and arms reduction  
Renunciation of war  
Human rights

**INNOVATIONS**

- Commission on Peace (proposed as in Australia and Canada)
- Elders Council and NGO forum for non-partisan government oversight
- Civilian Peace Services (professionally-trained and accredited)
- National Peace Academy (as in Costa Rica and US Bill)
- All Party Parliamentary Committee on Conflict Issues (as in UK)
1. Introductory remarks
A year ago, the world was shocked at the post-election violence that took place in Kenya— a country perceived to be stable and peaceful. If such sudden violence can happen in Kenya, it can happen anywhere. In the coming three years elections will be held in some twenty other African countries. Furthermore, experts also foresee an increase in violent conflicts due to other causes, such as resource competition, climate change, migration and the fallout of the economic crisis.

It is imperative that we build the capacities of societies to mitigate violence and mediate their own conflicts, an undertaking that requires long-term, systematic efforts to raise awareness, impart skills and strengthen institutions. It develops the capacity to respond to crisis more effectively, to bolster existing peace processes and to create mechanisms and procedures through which conflicts can be solved nonviolently. Several far-sighted governments such as those of Ghana and Kenya are establishing Infrastructures for Peace in their respective countries, in order to build such capacities in their societies. However, we can also build on other experiences, sometimes narrower in scope or less recent, such as South Africa’s National Peace Accord in the 1990s and Nepal’s Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction.

There are many very good and urgent reasons to investigate how nationally owned processes can better resolve conflicts. National Infrastructures for Peace are among the possible strategies to deal with these challenges. Therefore UNDP/BCPR, together with CSO networks, will organize a Seminar on Peaceful transition and Building Infrastructures for Peace in Nairobi in November 2009. The civil society partners are NPI-Africa, WANEP and GPPAC.

The following sections cover a range of possible components for such an infrastructure for peace, and a rationale for creating them.

2. Main components of a National Infrastructure for Peace
The policy objective for an Infrastructure for Peace is to enable and facilitate the development of mechanisms for cooperation among all the relevant stakeholders in peacebuilding by promoting cooperative problem solving to conflicts and by institutionalizing the processes of response to conflicts to produce outcomes that lead to conflict transformation, social, political and religious reconciliation and transformative dialogues.

What follows is a list of possible components, many of which are taken from the policy documents from Ghana and Kenya:

- A National Peace Council (NPC)
The NPC consists of highly respected persons of great integrity who are capable of bridging political divides and with competence, knowledge and experience in matters relating to conflict transformation and peace. The members of the NPC shall be nominated by a broad range of identified stakeholders. Parliament shall vet and endorse Councilors. The President shall make the final appointment based on the recommendations of the Parliament. The mandate of the NPC will be to promote sustainable peace and human security. Its functions will include to promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts and work to build inter-group trust and confidence. The NPC shall establish a Secretariat with an appropriate number of staff.

It is important to include the main protagonists in the composition of the NPC, but also people who enjoy high levels of trust and who have the capacity to hold the centre in the midst of centrifugal forces. How to find a good balance between ‘hawks’ and ‘doves’,?

- **District and Local Peace Councils (DPCs and LPCs)**
  District and Local Peace Councils have similar tasks as the NPC, at the district and local level, and bring together the different stakeholders at the district and local level. The main objectives and strategies that LPCs have pursued in practice were: violence reduction; promoting dialogue; problem solving and community-building; reconciliation.

- **A National Peace Forum (NPF)**
  A Platform for consultation, collaboration, cooperation and coordination of peace issues by all peace actors and stakeholders

- **A Government Unit or Department on Peacebuilding**
  One Unit or Department of the Government will develop the overall Government policy on Peacebuilding together with the National Peace Council and the National Peace Forum and will implement it. It will among others draft the relevant legislation; facilitate the establishment of the National Peace Council and related organs and facilitate the capacity building of staff from the ministries relevant to this policy.

- **A whole of Government approach**
  This Unit or Department, will liaise and cooperate with other Ministries or Departments with related policies on peace, justice, defense, foreign affairs, social cohesion, conflict resolution in schools, environment, social and economic development and health.

- **A bill on the National Peace Infrastructure**
  The National Peace Infrastructure has to be based on a Bill, presented to and approved by the Parliament. Some countries such as Japan, Costa Rica and Ecuador, have even included significant articles in their Constitution.

- **Building national capacities for Peace**
  To increase the capacity of peacebuilding institutions of government departments; of National, District and Local Peace Councils and others, as chiefs, women and youth groups, civil society groups and others. Broad-based skills training will be offered to those functionaries, public servants or members of civil society in peacebuilding and conflict management, including conflict analysis, conflict early warning and response, conflict resolution and supporting dialogue processes.

- **Traditional perspectives on Conflict Resolution**
  Traditional perspectives, understanding and solutions to conflicts will be offered. These traditional mechanisms will be strengthened to provide ownership and cultural relevance to the interventions in each conflict context.
• **Promotion of a shared vision of society**

It is very important to promote common values and a shared vision of society and establish the policies and structures to implement such a vision. Values of reconciliation, tolerance, trust and confidence building, mediation and dialogue as responses to conflict, will be highlighted. The coming decades will see a huge increase in the diversity of citizens within each country of the world. Everywhere states are struggling to manage the tensions which arise from diversity. A concerted effort is required to manage diversity effectively and promote and ensure social inclusion and cohesion.

• **Promotion of a Culture of Peace**

Understanding one’s own conflict context and having the expertise, knowledge and skills to handle any upcoming conflict, is crucial. Effective peacebuilding and conflict management must be underpinned by a well informed population for constructive handling of conflicts. **Peace Education** is vital for people to own peacebuilding processes. Consequently, strategies for Peace Education should be established in all sectors and levels of society both in the formal sector of schools, but also the informal sector and lifelong learning. The **International Day of Peace**, 21 September, can be an excellent rallying point to **raise awareness** on the importance of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Capacity building programs for **Media practitioners** will be organized.

• **Linking to the Regional and International Community**

Adequate communication and cooperation with Regional and International Organisations and the UN has to take place, similar to CSO-and other networks.

• **Establishing and Implementing an Infrastructure for Peace**

Sustainable Peace requires the involvement of all stakeholders. It is crucial in the initial phase of establishing an infrastructure, to consult and involve all stakeholders: government and non-state actors; different sectors of society; and the national, district and local level. When such a policy is decided, it has to be operationalized and regular assessments have to be executed.

• **Budget**

Peacebuilding and conflict management intervention strategies require long-term funding by government, donors, NGOs and communities. Such a strategy needs a flexible budgeting and rapid financial disbursement procedures, including national and district peace contingency funds. There must be decentralized decision-making, giving districts and communities easy access to funds.

These components are not a straitjacket, but possible pillars for a National Infrastructure for Peace. It is essential that each process, structure and mechanism is authentic and designed by the stakeholders themselves or in close collaboration with all stakeholders.

3. **Importance of the concept and added value**

While most people want to live in **peace** and while peace is a pre-condition for development, we lack an overall systems approach to **build peace**: what are the capacities, tools, mechanisms, structures and institutions we need to build sustainable peace in countries? All societies have numerous conflicts —which can
often become violent - but most countries lack the instruments and institutions to address those conflicts systematically.

The governments of Ghana and Kenya are building an **Infrastructure for Peace** in their country, aiming for sustainable peace. Civil society initiatives and national and local Peace Councils helped prevent the occurrence of large scale violence in Ghana during the last general elections as did CSOs and District Peace Councils in Kenya during the post-election violence in 2008. The existence of these structures in both countries helped in preventing and reducing violent conflict.

Building such an Infrastructure, can be done **gradually and planned** in a broad and **participatory process**, realizing ownership at all levels. This is major advantage above interventions that are carried out during a crisis. With the escalation of violence in a country, the **international community** often has limited instruments for intervention with a predominant focus on military intervention, while the international community is often divided and has a great difficulty in reaching common decisions. Both reasons are strong arguments to build national and local capacities and structures **in advance** when there is no escalating conflict.

This is needed now more than ever, as experts expect an **increase in violent conflicts** due to environmental degradation, climate change, resource competition, migration and lack of social cohesion, elections and the fallout from the present global economic downturn. In such a potentially violent context, mechanisms and institutions are needed to deal with growing tensions and conflicts.

If we wait until the conflict escalates, it is **more difficult to intervene and far more costly**: in lives and in all the other disastrous effects of violent conflicts. Peacekeeping troops in a country easily costs billions. Building the infrastructure for Peace in Ghana on the other hand cost only some 2.5 million dollars over the first three years.

A crucial component of such an infrastructure, is to establish a **Platform for all peace actors and stakeholders** for dialogue, consultation, cooperation and coordination. Peace and peacebuilding are complex processes and need urgently such a Platform. This approach acknowledges that sustainable peace needs a collaborative institutional framework between state and non-state actors.

Responses to conflicts are often reactive, law and order based, top-bottom and more aiming for managing the conflict than to solve it. This approach however is **pro-active, participatory, non-violent, transformative and principle-based**. It is **positive** in character and stimulates to work with everything and everyone on behalf of the greater good.

It has the potential to grow over time towards an **International Alliance** of Governments and CSOs that work nationally and internationally for **sustainable peace**.

Some key documents
Rasur's prophecy of peace unfolding in Costa Rica

Over 60 years ago, Costa Rican educator, poet and leader, Roberto Brenes Mesén, wrote an epic poem called *Rasur*. This poem tells the story of a master teacher, Rasur, who comes to Costa Rica and silently calls all the children from a local village into a mountain. There he teaches them about the wisdom that is hidden in the heart of every human being, how to relate peacefully with each other and how to care for all of creation.

When the children return to their parents, they are alive with the joy of these new realizations. As a result, the parents are grateful that their children have had this experience. One of them says, "Before directing the lightning in the sky, we must first harness the storm in our own hearts.” Soon their village has become a culture of peace, thriving with creativity and harmony.

This prophetic poem was written in 1946, two years before the army was abolished. The prophecy has continued to unfold as Costa Ricans have made choice after choice for peace. Although Costa Rica is a small, developing country, it has become a significant power for peace in the world.

**Costa Rica's history contains an unusual thread of decisions for peace:**

- Juan Vásquez de Coronado, who colonized Costa Rica in 1562, brought an attitude distinct from that of most conquistadors: he believed in treating the native inhabitants with respect and using force only as a last resort.

- President Tomás Guardia abolished the death penalty in 1877 at the urging of his wife, on their 25th wedding anniversary. This decision was enshrined in Article 21 of the Constitution.

- The year 1948 was the major turning point toward peace in Costa Rican history. After a 44-day civil war, José ("Pepc") Figueres became the provisional president, and was instrumental in writing Costa Rica's new constitution. In it, he abolished the army, making Costa Rica the first country in the world to do so. The new constitution also established free elections, guaranteed public education, gave women the vote and granted full citizenship to the Afro-Caribbean population. The constitution also provided citizen rights that were ahead of their time including a progressive labor code, a system of social security, and a set of social guarantees.
Today Costa Rica remains the only country in the world with no army and no arrangement for defense. This strong peace-based constitution provided a stable and just foundation for Costa Rican society, which helped the country avoid the violence that has plagued other Central American countries. These factors resulted in Costa Rica becoming one of the most democratic, prosperous countries in Latin America.

In the 1980s when Nicaragua was engaged in civil war, Costa Rica was pressured by the United States to allow it to build military bases for the "Contras," a guerilla group trained by the CIA. To escape this pressure, President Luis Alberto Monge declared that it was the policy of Costa Rica to remain neutral in international conflicts. This policy was formally adopted as Article 7 of the Constitution in November 1983.

In another gesture that demonstrated Costa Rica's devotion to peace, in 1980 President Rodrigo Carazo facilitated the donation of Costa Rican land to found the United Nations University for Peace, which was approved by the 35th UN General Assembly. The mission of UPeace is to "provide humanity with an international institution of higher education for peace with the aims of promoting among all human beings a spirit of understanding, lessening threats to world peace and progress, and in keeping with the noble aspirations proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations."

President Carazo also proposed a UN Resolution for an International Day of Peace, to be celebrated as a global ceasefire on the opening day of the UN session each year. This resolution was passed in 1981. In 2001, a new resolution was proposed by the United Kingdom and Costa Rica, changing the date to September 21 each year. The resolution passed unanimously and this Day of Peace is now celebrated around the world.

In 1986, Oscar Arias became President of Costa Rica at a time marked by intense conflict and civil war in Central America. Under his leadership, the five Central American presidents signed the Esquipulas II Peace Accords in 1987. This agreement provided for national reconciliation, an end to hostilities, democratization, free elections, resettlement of refugees, and negotiations on arm controls in all Central American countries. Arias won the Nobel Peace Prize for this achievement.

In 1997, a law for the Alternative Resolution of Conflicts and Peace Promotion was passed in Costa Rica. This law requires peace education in every school and also establishes the legal basis for alternative methods of conflict resolution, such as mediation.

Also in 1997, the Unity Center of Costa Rica introduced the UN-endorsed Season for Nonviolence to Costa Rica. This educational campaign is held each year between January 30th and April 4th, which are the dates of the assassinations of Mohandas
Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., respectively. Now, government ministries of Costa Rica lead the nation in this campaign every year.

- At the international level, Costa Rica’s main foreign policy objective is to foster human rights and sustainable development as a way to secure stability and growth. Costa Rica has been a leader in establishing international human rights instruments, such as the American Convention on Human Rights, and it is the seat of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

- The concept of peace includes protection of the environment. Costa Rica has taken a strong stance in favor of the environment and is working steadfastly to eliminate environmental abuses. In 2006, Costa Ricans re-elected Oscar Arias as their President. In 2007, President Arias announced a new goal for Costa Rica to become the first carbon-neutral country in the world by 2021.

**New efforts to strengthen Costa Rica’s peace model are having great success:**

- In late 2005, Rita Marie Johnson, founder of the Rasur Foundation, became aware of the Global Alliance of Ministries and Departments for Peace, made up of countries working toward setting up this infrastructure for peace. She began researching the idea of a Ministry for Peace for Costa Rica and, with input from her colleagues, wrote a proposal to establish a Ministry of Justice and Peace in Costa Rica.

- On May 29, 2006, the Vice President of the Rasur Foundation, Alexandra Kissling, and Rita Marie presented this proposal to Rodrigo Arias, Minister of the Presidency. This initiative would add “Peace” to the title of the Ministry for Justice and empower that ministry to lead peace efforts in Costa Rica. It was embraced by both Minister Rodrigo Arias and President Oscar Arias and was then written as a bill. In this process, it evolved into a National System for the Promotion of Peace. The bill was signed by 19 of the 57 congressional representatives and submitted to the Legislative Assembly on November 2, 2006. The bill passed on August 19, 2009.

Then-Vice President Laura Chinchilla appointed Rita Marie to represent Costa Rica at the 2007 Summit of the Global Alliance for Ministries and Departments for Peace held in Japan. At this Summit, the Global Alliance (now made up of 36 countries) acknowledged Costa Rica’s progress in establishing a Ministry for Peace and wrote a letter to Vice President Chinchilla, requesting that Costa Rica serve as the host of their 2009 Summit. Consequently, Costa Rica hosted the Summit in September 2009.
While working on the Ministry for Peace bill, the Rasur Foundation added a clause mandating that the new ministry will work with nonprofit organizations to implement a national plan for peace promotion. On June 17, the Ministry of Justice and the Rasur Foundation held a meeting, attended by 58 representatives of NGOs, to initiate this work. The meeting was held at the headquarters of the Rasur Foundation and was successful in uniting NGOs to collaborate more closely in peace promotion and to engage in the upcoming Summit.

In addition to advocating for the Ministry for Justice and Peace bill, the Rasur Foundation’s other main project is the Academy for Peace of Costa Rica (APCR), which was established in October 2003. The mission of the Academy is to empower every child to pass peace skills to the next generation. This academy is in alignment with the proposed national model that is embraced by many in the Global Alliance; a ministry for peace with an academy for peace as its educational arm, teaching peace to leaders and citizens as well as children and youth.

The Academy teaches the practice of BePeace, a method for “feeling peace” and “speaking peace” that Rita Marie discovered in her personal search for peace. The Academy aims to educate and empower trainers called “Rasurs” to teach BePeace to students, teachers and parents in public and private schools. These trainings are generally held at Quizur, the two-acre headquarters of the Rasur Foundation named after the village in the poem, Rasur. In the future, these classes will also be offered online.

President Arias said, “We are envisioning the Academy for Peace as a lasting force in Costa Rican culture and as an example to other countries of the possibilities for human progress.” Now that the bill for a Ministry of Justice and Peace has passed, the Academy for Peace of Costa Rica has offered to collaborate in supporting its educational efforts.

Because Costa Rica does not support an army, it has more funds for social development. Now, with an Academy for Peace, eventually every citizen will be able to pass peace skills to the next generation. And, finally, with a Ministry of Justice and Peace working closely with the new alliance of NGOs, Costa Rica will have achieved a model of national peace infrastructure that will ensure lasting peace and prosperity.

Although Costa Rica is struggling with many modern-day issues, including escalating violence, its history and current efforts clearly demonstrate an ongoing identity with peace. Step by step, this nation will surely fulfill Rasur’s prophecy that it will model peace to the world.