



The Global Network for Strategic Research and Action

## Global Challenges Forum Newsletter – Volume 2

Geneva, Switzerland; 17 September 2012

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**Dear Colleagues,**

We would like first to thank you for all your support as well as for your belief in our initiative; your participation has been and will be indeed vital for the continuous progress of the Global Challenges Forum (GCF).

Since its early start with the 2009 Roundtable and the successful Launch Meeting in 2010, the GCF has focused on developing an array of independent forums within the “Forum of Forums” concept, as well as its incorporation as a Swiss Foundation.

Throughout 2011, many important steps were indeed concluded, including the initiation of dialogue with a wide array of potential partners in Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and North America and the establishment of the Transformative Education Forum as well as the Energy Solutions Forum.

In July 2012 we finalized the legal establishment of the Global Challenges Forum (GCF) Foundation as a unique organization of think tanks, research centers and academic institutions, with the goal of contributing to the much-needed resolution of existing and future global challenges.

On July 9, the inaugural Annual General Meeting of the Foundation was held in New York City with video conference link to Board Members in Geneva. H.E. Dr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh of Jordan and Dr. Walter Christman of the United States are the Founders. Dr. Leonard Ferrari was designated as “Honorary Founder.” The newly appointed GCF Foundation Board in turn invited a group of distinguished scholars, statesmen and thought leaders from North America, Europe, the Middle East, Australia and Asia to serve as Board members and on its Advisory Council.

The Foundation’s activities commenced the same day at the State University of New York (SUNY) Global Center hosted by SUNY Vice Chancellor for Global Affairs, Dr. Mitch Leventhal bringing together representatives from strategy centers, academia, civil society, intergovernmental organizations and business executives throughout the world for a subsequent three-day conference, entitled *“Toward a Global Partnership: How Global Challenges Make Global Solutions.”* They worked to address the complexity, imminent risks and potential impacts of 21st century problems in response to ideas initially proposed by Chinese Ambassador He Yafei, who encouraged the GCF to help develop more integrated, holistic and bottom-up approaches to global partnership.



The Global Network for Strategic Research and Action

Subsequently to the New York conference, from September 12 -15, the 2012 Transformative Education Forum took place in Bangalore, India. The event was co-organized by the ACTS Group of Institutions, the Foundation's main partner in India, and it brought together leaders from academia and the business sectors. Entitled "*Transformative Education for Sustainable Development*" the conference sought to integrate the global concern of sustainability through educational initiatives at all levels. Various issues related to sustainability such as community education, environment, poverty, health, spirituality, family with an emphasis on women/children and other related issues in the wider context of education were addressed.

Established to serve as "*The Global Network for Strategic Research and Action*," the Global Challenges Forum Foundation brings together a diverse membership and worldwide network to propose solutions to global challenges such as economic security, environmental sustainability, and human well-being. It will coordinate activities through liaison offices in China, India, Jordan, Switzerland, and the United States.

We look forward to working with you in the coming months in preparation for the first Annual General Meeting of the GCF Association, which is currently being legally established. The meeting is scheduled to be held in the second quarter of 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland! It will bring together leaders of major think tanks around the globe in order to officially launch the Association for Strategic Research and Action Geneva (ASRAGENEVA). The ASRAGENEVA is being created under the auspices of the GCF Foundation with the goal of establishing an international platform of think tanks and strategic thinking institutions as members of the GCF.

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## Foundation Founders



Dr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, GCF Founder and Chairman

H.E., Dr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh is the founder and Chairman of the TAG Group, the largest private Intellectual Property (IP) firm in the world. His companies are also involved in various services



The Global Network for Strategic Research and Action

activities from accounting and consulting to education and professional training. His distinguished Board positions include having served as Co-Chair of the UN Global Compact together with Kofi Annan, Chair of the Global Alliance for ICT and Development (UN-GAID), and presently as a member of a 12-member World Trade Organization (WTO) Advisory Board, hand-picked by WTO's Director General Pascal Lamy to advise on how best to move forward global trade issues.



Dr. Walter Christman, GCF Founding Director

Dr. Walter Christman is a pioneer in the global adoption of cooperative security initiatives. He was one of the founders of the George C. Marshall European Center for Securities Studies and is currently an Associate Professor of Global Public Policy with the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California and Visiting Fellow of the Center for Technology and National Security Policy at the National Defense University in Washington, DC. Dr. Christman holds degrees from Duke University, Columbia University, Harvard University, and the University of Geneva.



Dr. Leonard Ferrari, Honorary Founder

Dr. Ferrari is the Executive Vice-President and Provost of the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) in Monterey California. Prior to this position Dr. Ferrari was the Executive Director of the Institute for Information Technology at Virginia Tech and the Dean of Research at the NPS respectively.



The Global Network for Strategic Research and Action

### **Foundation Board – Initial Members**



Mr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh – Chairman, TAG Group, Amman Jordan – Chairman of the Board



Ms. Samar Al-Labbad – current Vice-Chair of the Foundation Board, Vice-Chair TAG Group, Amman Jordan



Mr. Joseph Riedweg – Founder and President, AudiConsult SA, Geneva Switzerland

### **Nominated to the Foundation Board**



Dr. Mitch Leventhal - Vice Chancellor of Global Affairs, SUNY, New York City, USA – nominated to serve as Vice-Chair of the Board and Co-Chair of the 2013 Global Partnership Summit Organizing Committee.



The Global Network for Strategic Research and Action



Mr. Hal Jones – President and CEO, Global Hope Network International, Geneva Switzerland



Mr. Hamid Mamdouh – Director of Trade in Services Division, WTO, Geneva Switzerland

#### **Appointed to the Advisory Council as Deputy Co-Chairs**



Mr. Prabhu Guptara – Former Executive Director, Organisation Development, at Wolfsberg - The Platform for Business and Executive Development a subsidiary of UBS, Scholar/Professor



Dr. Bates Gill – Director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute



The Global Network for Strategic Research and Action

### **Nominated to the Advisory Council**



Dr. Ken Gnanakan – Founder and Former President ACTS Groups of Institutions, Educator, Environmentalist, Theologian.



Ambassador Sarbuland Khan – Former Executive Director, UN Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technologies Development (UN-GAID), and Co-Chair of 2012 Global Partnership Summit Organizing Committee.



Ms. Michele Wucker – President World Policy Institute/ Publisher World Policy Journal



Major General PAN Zhenqiang – Senior Advisor China Reform Forum – CRF (Major General People’s Liberation Army - PLA, Ret.)



The Global Network for Strategic Research and Action



Dr. Qin Yaqing, Executive Vice President, China Foreign Affairs University, Beijing, China.

### **GCF Foundation Secretariat and Staff**



**Mr. Pedro Lagonegro, Deputy Director/Project Manager - Secretariat**

With a background in the private sector as a logistics consultant and project developer, and in the UN system respectively, Pedro has joined the GCF as a volunteer in 2010 while studying in the International Organizations MBA (IOMBA) at the University of Geneva/HEC, a program specialized in the management of non-profit and International Organizations. In the Logistics industry he has had the experience of working in three different countries, the United States, Italy, and Brazil. His experience as a consultant includes the involvement in different development projects in poor regions of Brazil for large Government-owned firms, like Usiminas Steel. Before joining the GCF as a full-time employee in January 2012, he worked for six months as an intern with the United Nations World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in a humanitarian project to enhance the access to and production of anti-retroviral medicines against HIV/Aids. He holds Bachelor's degrees in Logistics and Business Marketing, Minors in Political Science and Spanish, and an MBA.



**Dr. Maryalice Mazzara, Coordinating Partner – Director of Academic Affairs, SUNY Global – Joint Staff**

Dr. Mazzara has a doctorate in International Education from Columbia University. She has joined the GCF initiative in 2012 in order to head the NY coordination of the Organizing Committee for the



The Global Network for Strategic Research and Action

2013 Global Partnership Summit, which is being organized in a joint venture between the GCF Foundation and the SUNY Global Center. Prior to her current position, she was the Director of Education of the Global Film Initiative for cross-cultural education as well as an Education Attaché for the Government of Québec in New York City. Dr. Mazzara was also Director of Teacher Training Outreach for The Harriman Institute's at Columbia University, U. S. Department of Education's East European, Eurasian, and Russian National Resource Center, for ten years. Her consulting experience includes seminars for non-profits including the Soros Foundation in Mongolia and The Business Alliance in Vietnam.



**Ms. Alexandra Meierhans – Project Coordinator - Global Fellow/Secretariat**

Ms. Meierhans joined GCF in May 2012 as the first Global Fellowship Recipient. She is currently doing her Masters in Development Studies at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. Before working for GCF she was an intern at the Bakhtar Development Network, a large health NGO's currently working in Afghanistan, as a project development officer. After completing her undergraduate studies at the University of Ottawa in political science and communications she worked in West Africa for five months on a pilot project for the education services of Ghana. She also lived in Southern France for one year to strengthen her language skills. Her experiences include sales, customer relations, and event organizing and planning. As a GCF program coordinator, she will be leading and organizing some of the interns in running the Global Challenges Summit, as well as working with the GCF team to further establish the GCF Foundation.



**Dr. Moses Satralkar – GCF Bangalore Coordinator - Staff**

Dr. Moses joined the Global Challenges Forum in July 2012 to coordinate international projects and forums at Bangalore, India. He is a planning committee member of the Transformative Education Forum (TEF) and is working closely with the ACTS group of Institutions and International Council for Higher Education. Prior to joining the GCF, he worked for five years as Academic Coordinator on





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## **Association for Strategic Research and Action**

**“Established by The Global Challenges Forum Foundation (GCF)”**

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the CEO's staff at the Indus Trust, which managed the largest group of International Baccalaureate (IB) Schools in India. Dr. Moses was also a programme coordinator for the Keele University (U.K.) Post/Professional Graduate Diploma in International Education (PGCE/PGDIE, U.K.) at the Indus Training and Research Institute. He taught Cambridge International Diploma (CIE, Cambridge U.K.) modules and conducted educational workshops for teachers of Rural Community Schools. He is associated with the British Council for organizing educational workshops. Dr. Moses holds a Ph.D. in Biological Sciences from the University of Pune and is the author of twelve scientific research papers published in peer reviewed journals.

### **The ASRAGENEVA**

The GCF Association is currently on the process of being legally established under the Canton of Geneva, Switzerland. The Association will serve as the means for the Foundation to legally establish an international platform of members, including think tanks and strategic thinking institutions.

The Association will be composed of a General Assembly and an Executive Committee, both of which to be created during its first Annual General Meeting in 2013. All members will have equal voting rights and will equally enjoy the benefits of being part of the GCF family.

The President of ASRAGENEVA will be H.E Dr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, the Vice-President will be Ms. Samar Al-Labbad, and the Executive Director will be Dr. Walter Christman.

As stated by our Chairman, we aim at becoming a “Federation of think tanks”.



The Global Network for Strategic Research and Action

### **Inaugural Board Meeting at SUNY Global Center**



On 9 July 2012, the same day in which the GCF Foundation was legally registered under the Canton of Geneva, the Foundation's first Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held at the SUNY Global Center in New York NY, linking by video with Board members and GCF staff in Geneva, Switzerland.

Furthermore, 9 July was also the first day of the China Series Partnership Forum, which was co-organized by the GCF Foundation and the SUNY Global Center. SUNY Vice-Chancellor for Global Affairs, Dr. Mitch Leventhal, nominated to serve as the Foundation's Vice Chair by Dr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, hosted the conference. Among various discussion panels and workshops, the Forum featured a keynote address by Mr. Edward F. Cox, Chairman of the New York Republican State Committee and son-in-law of former President Nixon. Mr. Cox has been a pioneer in the US-China initiative of cooperation.

Besides the Foundation Board members, special guests included Dr. Qin Yaqing, Executive Vice President, China Foreign Affairs University, Major General (PLA, Ret.) Pan Zhenquang, Hon. Harold Jones, President of the Geneva Institute for Leadership and Public Policy (GILPP), Dr. Ken Gnanakan, President of the ACTS Group of Institutions in Bangalore, India, and Ms. Michele Wucker, President World Policy Institute and Publisher of the World Policy Journal.



The Global Network for Strategic Research and Action

Under the leadership of the chairman of the Board, Dr. Abu-Ghazaleh and Founding Director, Dr. Christman, important decisions were made throughout the encounter. New Board members were invited, an Advisory Council was created and its initial members nominated, and the Foundation's official slogan was born; "The Global Network for Strategic Research and Action". Also, important strategic steps were brought into the table including the possibility of opening GCF liaison offices in New York NY and Beijing China. Another key strategic decision was the creation of the so-called Global Partnership Research Centers (GPRC) for the creation and promotion of joint research platforms among global partners and to assist the Foundation with Fundraising activities. The already existing GCF offices, in Geneva Switzerland, Bangalore India and San Luis Obispo CA, will become the first GPRCs.

Finally, in order for the Foundation to become a membership-based institution, it has been decided that an Association will be established under the auspices of the GCF Foundation. Such institution will be called the Association for Strategic Research and Action (SRA) and it will also be based in Geneva, Switzerland. In short, July 9 2012 was indeed a special day for the GCF family.



Left picture- From left to right: Founding Director, Dr. Walter L. Christman, Founding Chairman, Dr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, and Vice Chair, Ms. Samar Al Labbad in NY. Right picture- Mr. Joseph



The Global Network for Strategic Research and Action

Riedweg, member of the GCF Board, signs the official registration of the Foundation in front of a Notary in Geneva, Switzerland.

### **The Global Challenges Forum Foundation Headquarters, Geneva**

Coinciding with Global Challenges Forum (GCF) establishment as a Foundation under the Canton of Geneva, an official office in Geneva has been opened.

The GCF Secretariat's office is located at the World Council of Churches complex, a well-located facility that accommodates various types of NGOs and IOs from health and religion-based institutions to public-private partnerships, similar to the GCF Foundation. The WCC building is situated near to Palais des Nations, the United Nations Office in Geneva, as well as to the famous InterContinental Hotel.



New GCF Office – Headquarters Geneva



WCC complex in Geneva.

Our new office is also located near to the Global Hope Network International (GHNI) Headquarters in Geneva. GHNI is a major GCF partner in Switzerland and the mutual cooperation between the organizations creates valuable opportunities for both parties to get involved and participate in each other's endeavors in the most friendly and cooperative manner.

Furthermore, the WCC complex allows for the expansion of the Foundation's physical presence as office spaces in there are abundantly available throughout the year for there is a high turnover rate among the institutions that rent such spaces.

The GCF Secretariat is indeed excited about the possibilities and opportunities that will allow for the growth of our institution. Such growth is also dependent on the diverse and well-qualified group of people who are behind the GCF initiative.



The Global Network for Strategic Research and Action

### Secretariat's trip to NY and 2012 GPS



SUNY Global Center in New York



UN Headquarters in New York

The GCF Secretariat, including Mr. Pedro Lagonegro and Ms. Alexandra Meierhans, on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of July 2012, have met with a few of GCF counterparts in New York City in order to give start to the Organizing Process of the first Global Partnership Summit, which is to take place in March 2013 in New York. The first day of the conference shall take place at UN Headquarters and the second day at the SUNY Global Center facility.

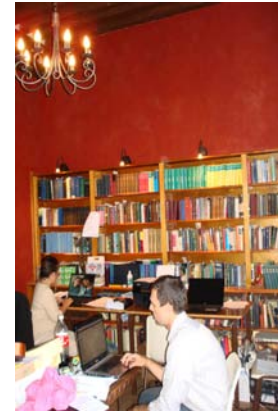
The first day of meetings in New York included the participation of Ambassador Sarbuland Khan, former Executive Coordinator of the UN Global Alliance for ICT and Development, as well as of Dr. Maryalice Mazzara, GCF Partnering Coordinator and Director of Academic Affairs at SUNY Global. On the second day, the GCF Secretariat had a productive meeting with Professor Peter Schlosser, Director of Research at the Earth Institute of Columbia University.

Such meetings have produced encouraging results for our team. We believe that these encounters will indeed help us to achieve the goal of implementing a unique and impacting conference in March 2013.

### UN Conference Room – UN Headquarters New York



## Secretariat's trip to France - GILPP Conference at Château de St. Albain



These magnificent Château and landscape were the scene for the Geneva Institute for Leadership and Public Policy GILPP Conference on “Post Conflict Leadership and Public Policy in a Changing World”. The GILPP is an organ of the Global Hope Network International (GHNI).

The GCF Secretariat had the opportunity of participating in such conference and at the same time of collaborating with our GHNI counterparts in the logistical implementation of the event. An amazing experience indeed.

Throughout the conference our team had the great pleasure of meeting leaders and human rights advocates from all over the world; certainly a unique networking opportunity for us. In addition, we were exposed to a variety of very interesting and essential topics including Western Aid Dependency, Transformational Community Development, and Public Policy Process among many others.

We are grateful for Mr. Hal Jones, GILPP's President, for providing us with such a great learning and inspiring experience.

### Gardens of the Château





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For more information please access: <http://globalchallengesforum.org/>

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We the Global Challenges Forum family sincerely thank you for your support and attention.

With warm regards,

The GCF Team





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