



University for Peace

UPEACE Centre The Hague



## **The importance of Visions on Peace**

**Closing remarks by Marius Enthoven, Chairman UPEACE The Hague<sup>i</sup>**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to applaud all the applicants to the Thesis Prize Visions on Peace for their submission, to pay tribute to the four nominees who have so convincingly presented their thesis and to congratulate Eveline Wong with her winning Thesis: Too Much to Govern.

We are living in a very turbulent world these days. Although there is no large scale war going on, violence and conflict affect the lives of millions of people in many parts of the planet. There are a number of long lasting crises going on (financial and ecological to name a few) and in many established democracies instability is on the rise. Old regimes stagger under the pressure of bottom-up movements or return to rigid practices. Globalisation and information technology are overwhelming vulnerable governments and established societal architecture. The younger generations have to live a different life from that of their parents, sometimes a better one, sometimes not. Change, uncertainty, opportunity and greed are key ingredients of the new world. Development has many faces, but it is increasingly creating conflicts between newcomers and vested interests.

In this turbulent world which will not stabilise in the near future by the classical approach of treaties, agreements and military supremacy, peace is no longer the absence of war, but a set of conditions which allow communities and people to develop in a positive and harmonious way towards health, prosperity, security and happiness. And which will make society more resilient against the whirlwinds of turbulence in the outer world.

Although some of these conditions are generic, like rule of law and justice, others will be more specific, depending on the typical characteristics of the community, country or region in case. The

great challenge for getting to peace and maintaining peace is thus to create the appropriate set of conditions in each specific situation.

This implies that peace building and peace education can no longer suffice with generic solutions and recipes, but have to include local and specific elements equally well. The UN University for Peace in Costa Rica<sup>ii</sup> is applying this broader approach in its programmes to provide humanity with education on peace.

Here in The Netherlands the Thesis Prize Visions on Peace is meant to stimulate Master students to express their views and experiences on the basic ingredients of peace conditions, in particular in close connection to situations where peace is fragile or not yet achieved.

In this context it is heart-warming that this year a record number of 46 students submitted their thesis, each presenting a typical and particular situation where people struggle to create peaceful conditions for their development.

There can only be one prize winner, but they all deserve our admiration and gratitude.

The UN University for Peace wants to acknowledge these contributions and it is my pleasure to invite all applicants to come to UPEACE in Costa Rica to follow one of its eleven one year Master Programmes in peace education. Those who enrol will receive a 30% reduction on the tuition fee. We at UPEACE The Hague will be pleased to give you more information.

Visions on Peace is an inspiring and valuable initiative which helps to create new awareness, innovative approaches and power for peace. I want to thank the organizers and sponsor of the Thesis Prize for their contributions and I wish the applicants wisdom, creativity and perseverance in their endeavours to contribute to a more peaceful world.

*Free University Amsterdam*

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<sup>ii</sup> University for Peace, San José, Costa Rica – [www.upeace.org](http://www.upeace.org)