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JUN 26 2014

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Note to Ms. Malcorra

EXECUTIVE OFFICE
OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

University for Peace / The Secretary-General's visit to Costa Rica

26/06/14

1. As you know and we discussed during my call on you on 25 June, I represent the Secretary-General on the Council of the University for Peace (he is the honorary president of the university). UPeace was established as a treaty organization on 5 December 1980 through the adoption of General Assembly resolution 33/55; it also maintains United Nations observer status.

2. UPeace, which is situated on a campus 30 km southwest of the Costa Rican capital of San Jose within a natural reserve encompassing 750 acres, builds on Costa Rica's long-standing democratic and pacifist tradition. The university's mission is "to provide humanity with an international institution of higher education for peace with the aim of promoting among all human beings the spirit of understanding, tolerance and peaceful coexistence, to stimulate cooperation among peoples and to help lessen obstacles and threats to world peace and progress, in keeping with the noble aspirations proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations."

3. Thanks to its connection with the United Nations and given its attractive location, UPeace is a unique institution of higher education that thirty years after its creation should be a well-established, well-run, accredited university. Unfortunately, that is not the case. There have been many issues over the years, the most important of which has been poor leadership and management. In fact, the last Rector (John J. Maresca whose term was shortened to end as of December 2012) did not even reside in Costa Rica but ran the university from Geneva, visiting the campus only occasionally.

4. During the academic year 2013-2014, UPeace had 161 students from 50 countries. The university offers Master's degree programmes revolving around international peace and development, with technical specializations in, *inter alia*, climate change, environmental security, natural resource management, food security, gender, international law, media studies, peace education, and urban governance. In addition, the university provides a doctoral programme, online education, and a number of other programmes. UPeace relies on a "mix of resident and visiting faculty" to teach its courses, bringing to bear a rich diversity of knowledge and experience.

5. Sadly, at the same time, the university has enormous issues, including a serious fiscal deficit that currently stands at \$1 million (against a total annual budget of approximately \$4 million). In order to maintain solvency, UPeace had to dismiss 24 staff members before this past academic year. There is a serious rate of atrophy among faculty, and the level of enrolment is dropping (the number of students is projected to dip below 100 during the forthcoming academic year). The latter is the result of growing discontent among students, made public through social media, over insufficient academic standards and supervision as well as other issues, including allegations of sexual harassment. Ahead of a meeting of the UPeace Council at the end of May, students produced a 64-page report detailing their grievances and specific recommendations.

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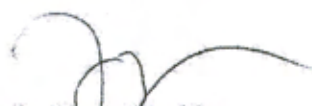
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6. We are fortunate to have, thanks to the appointments the Secretary-General made in the course of 2012 and 2013, a strong and dedicated Council of the university. The Council is presided over by former President of Panama, Aristides Royo, and includes a number of academics of international standing (e.g. Graciana del Castillo, Hal Philip Klepak), political figures (e.g. former Kyrgyz President Roza Otunbayeva, Bineta Diop, Monica Kathina Juma), and senior UN leaders (Jean-Jacques Graisie, Jean Arnault, Bruce Jenks as well as UNU rector David Malone). At the Council's last meeting, I was elected – in a personal capacity so that I can continue this assignment once I retire from the United Nations – as chancellor. President Royo also appointed Graciana del Castillo, the representative of the UNU rector, and myself to a new subcommittee to oversee urgent academic and management reforms. We are in the process of presenting a series of options and measures to enhance the focus of the university and strengthen its management, believing that there now exists a once in lifetime opportunity to put UPeace on the road to recovery and make it realize its full potential.

7. Against this background, I would like to propose that the Secretary-General raise the issue of UPeace in his meeting with the President of Costa Rica during his forthcoming visit. As the host country, Costa Rica has already provided a much-needed injection of cash, but with a new government in place, the country is also in a good position to contribute to stronger oversight (it has two seats on the Council, one of which is held by President Solis' wife, herself a UPeace graduate). One important measure concerns the acceleration of the accreditation process in Costa Rica, but the country could also take advantage of UPeace's location near San Jose and enhance general cooperation with and promotion of the university.

8. I would also be grateful if the Secretary-General considered either visiting the campus of UPeace or meeting with Rector Francisco Rojas Aravena. In a brief conversation, the Secretary-General could express his interest and commitment to the cause of UPeace and urge the rector to take all necessary measures – academically as well as managerially – to ensure the success of the university. Its continued decline implies reputational risks to the United Nations and the Secretary-General personally, and this could be impressed upon the rector to reinforce my messages to him of late.



Judy Cheng-Hopkins
26 June 2014



Fw: A note to the CdC from ASG Judy Cheng-Hopkins re UPeace and the SG's visit to Costa Rica

SGCentral to: Hazel Foster

Sent by: Hazel Foster

26/06/2014 11:43 AM

----- Forwarded by Hazel Foster/NY/UNO on 26/06/2014 11:42 AM -----

From: Rishan Ghebreigziabher/NY/UNO
To: SGCentral/NY/UNO@UNHQ,
Cc: Patrick Carey/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Marianne Haugaard/NY/UNO@UNHQ, John Kamea/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Ugo Solinas/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Lorea Salterain/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Dora Przybylek/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Silva Armani/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Maria Zaroui/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Markus Bouillon/NY/UNO@UNHQ
Date: 26/06/2014 11:37 AM
Subject: A note to the CdC from ASG Judy Cheng-Hopkins re UPeace and the SG's visit to Costa Rica

Dear all,

Please find attached on behalf of ASG Judy Cheng-Hopkins a note to the Chef de Cabinet regarding University for Peace and the Secretary-General's forthcoming visit to Costa Rica for your kind attention.

Best,
Rishan

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