

## **Caux 2010, newsletter on the second conference: The Third Caux Forum for Human Security**

### **The Swiss government is proud to support the Caux Forum and Initiatives of Change, 10 July, by Andrew Stallybrass:**

An 'official day' today, with friends from the neighbourhood, local and national authorities, diplomats from Geneva and Bern. Pierre Helg, Deputy State Secretary for Foreign Affairs brought the greetings of the Swiss Federal authorities. 'The Swiss government is proud to support the Caux Forum and Initiatives of Change,' Helg said, a support going back to 2005, in Burundi. 'Since then, our partnership has expanded and deepened,' he went on.

'We particularly welcome the view of human security adopted by the Forum,' he continued, saluting the 'broad perspective' and 'a multidisciplinary approach which encompasses numerous actors at different levels'. There is no security and well-being without freedom from fear and freedom from want for each and everyone, he suggested, adding that more was required than 'just crisis management'. Helg concluded, 'The tasks ahead are daunting, but I am inspired by this Forum.' And so am I.

**A moment of peace and grace this morning, 11 July, by Andrew Stallybrass:** A church service, with a Black American Baptist, and young Methodist woman arriving at the end of her studies to become a minister, and myself, an Anglo-Swiss Reformed lay-preacher. As we come down the hill to breakfast, we see the preparations for the running race from Montreux to the top of the Rochers de Naye: madmen must be born every day! Caux is the half-way mark... the same again to the top... We see our Catholic brothers and sisters coming down from the Catholic chapel, where they've had a mass with an African Bishop officiating. He'd met me on his way up to the chapel, and had wished us all well, given us his blessing. And then there's an Imam to serve us coffee at breakfast... An ecumenical day!

**Some critical thoughts on the Caux Forum discussions so far, 12 July, by Martin Baumann:** I have been attending most plenaries and some of the workstreams and there have been some inspiring thoughts passed around. But still, with most discussions I felt that we just scratched the surface of the core issues, that we haven't really nailed down some critical ideas or points that need to be addressed for some change to come about. Particularly some discussions were merely mapping out the different complexities in a certain human security issue, but we haven't dwelled on them long enough to really achieve a new level of understanding.

To recall what Claire Short said, we need to pay attention to the danger, that we do not lose ourselves in our wonderful little Caux world, exchanging nice words and feeling a little sorry about what is happening in the different parts of the real world.

So far I have not experienced many plenary or workstream discussions, in which people expressed different opinions on one subject and tried through debates to reach a common understanding. Although on a bilateral

level, on the terrace, during the wash-ups, lunch or dinner, I already have had some profound discussions and inspiring thoughts.

But I really wish, that the remaining days of the forum become more controversial, more challenging and more focused. We do not need to find solutions to all the complexities of human security, but to leave the discussion with at least a glimpse of a possible solution would be a bit more rewarding.

**Moment of Joy, 13 July, by Gintare Karalyte (GIGI)** (Posted on the Caux site with photos by the author): Life is short consisting of moments which sometimes pass by unnoticed. Time ticks, and people rush through their life without a moment of reflective peace.

Beauty and answers are found in the quiet things: like petals dropping from the rose looking over the Lake Geneva, watching sunrise on Rocher de Naye, sitting silently during a musical chant. This place... Caux - provides answers but you need to open up, you need to just listen... to the voice within.

Confusion comes when you lose contact with yourself. The rush of life can fall on you like water drops, silent and with great force. At those times we don't have the pleasure to STOP... to think and seek within.

Ignoring the problems won't make it go away. It is your time to be the change you wish to see in the world. This place...Caux... is my moment of joy.

**Where else but in Caux? 14 July, by Mary Lean:** Halfway through the Human Security Forum, and Caux is bursting with past and present ambassadors, politicians, UN officers and representatives of NGOs. For most of them this isn't the first international conference they've been to, nor the first one on Human Security. So what makes Caux different?

Certainly the mix of people is part of it. As the hosts of the opening meeting introduced the different national groups and personalities present, my neighbour, a much-conferenced journalist, muttered, 'You wouldn't find such an eclectic group anywhere else.' I remembered his words a couple of days later, when a young Ukrainian shared the platform with a former militia leader from Lebanon and a Scottish Duke. Where else but in Caux?

The Ukrainian is the leader of a group which spent June travelling around Ukraine, listening to the stories of people affected by the country's painful history. They themselves come from different sectors of Ukraine's diverse population, and for most it has been a revelation to look at their country through the eyes of others. Their contract, says the speaker, is to travel together, bear with each other and listen to the stories - whether they like them or not. That's another thing which makes Caux special - the willingness to listen to other people's realities, however uncomfortable.

For me Caux is an inspiring, uplifting, stimulating, but also difficult environment - because of the numbers of people, conversations, opportunities, choices that crowd in upon me. So it's been a help to garner some truths from a variety of spiritual leaders here: the civil rights veteran from the US who stresses the connection between struggle and strength - you can't have one without the other; the African bishop who points out that while humans see peace as the absence of conflict, God's peace is the absence of evil; the Mexican musician who speaks of the split-second and crucial choice between fear and love.

The musician entrances the conference with an evening in which he plays indigenous instruments, including an ancient Mexican trumpet which looks like a cross between an Alphon and a didgeridoo, and sounds like the didgeridoo. Every person receives its full blast in their heart as he goes round the hall, pointing the huge instrument at one after another. Where else but in Caux?

**The Terrace, 16 July, by Eliana Charlebois Gomez:** I fell in love with Caux the minute I stepped on the little train that goes up to Rocher de Naye. I had imagined this place being beautiful, but it was a lot more beautiful than I ever imagined. However, it is not just the scenery that makes this place magical. There is something special inside the Mountain House. Maybe it is the way everyone smiles at each other, maybe it is because everyone works so hard to do their part for this House to keep functioning properly, or maybe it is the combination of every participant's dream to make a better world. Whatever it may be, I am LOVING every moment of it.

Although all of the palace is constantly vibrant and entertaining, my favorite place to be is on the Terrace. No matter what time of day it is, this place is filled with life. In the morning it is a little chilly and in the background you can hear the pleasant whispers of early morning inspiration. At lunch, the whispers have become loud, heart felt laughter, serious meeting conversations here and there, and Ping-Pong and Frisbee tournaments. At tea time the atmosphere on the Terrace is a lot more relaxed and gives place to new encounters. At supper, in addition to enjoying spectacular sunsets, everyone is telling each other how their day has been, how interesting the conferences have been and how hard they have worked. Late at night, the terrace is illuminated by the beautiful view of Montreux and the starry night. Many insightful discussions take place and many new friendships are born.

It is in this part of the Palace that I have had the great chance of meeting amazing people who, little by little, have left footprints on my heart and who have inspired me to keep my hope and my dreams alive.

**A fire alarm - and space to unwind, 16 July, by Andrew Stallybrass:** I was woken up the other night at 2am. My 'bip' was ringing continuously. A fire alarm! I tried to get up and get dressed – but was forbidden by my wife. I'm retired from the fire and emergency team, after slipping and falling in the stairs last year, running to answer an alarm, and seriously breaking my wrist, which has still not recovered. So the only way that I can re-find peace is to take the battery out of my little electronic device.

In the morning, I discover that it was indeed again a false alarm, so not the disaster that I mentioned in a previous blog. A smoke detector in the laundry. A good practice for the fire team, and only one fireman came up from Montreux to check that all was indeed well. Christoph Keller, the technical manager for the centre, who has also long served as a volunteer fireman in the village team, tells me that his technique for going back to sleep involves taking your time in going back to bed, not hurrying, allowing a space to un-wind.

Christoph spoke to the whole conference a few days ago about all his efforts to save energy and make the centre 'greener'. For this, we need to keep Caux standing – but we may also need to allow ourselves and each other more 'space to un-wind'.

**Sunset over the Lake of Geneva - Forum's end, 17 July, by Andrew Stallybrass:** Last night I was enjoying the final evening of the Caux Forum in the Great Hall, a variety evening. It was a bit of a shock to realize that I've been looking out at sunsets on the Lake of Geneva for forty years... It still moves me with its beauty, stirs me its serenity, amazes me and surprises me with its changes. 'Great things are done when men and mountains meet' used to be on the screen saver of my computer, a phrase from a poem by the English mystic poet and artist William Blake.

One question that has come up these days is 'Can the changes needed in the world be brought about by human effort, or can they only come about when humans collaborate in the plans of the Creator?' We're not all believers here - though I'd place myself in that camp. But I have an intuition that the Creator may need the help of a fair number of atheists and unbelievers to do what he wants done. Is there a unity that we can find that is deeper than labels, related perhaps to shared experiences of change, to common values that all can share?

**John Bond** writes: I took part in a 'changemaker session' led by Catherine Bertini and chaired by Luc Gnacadja. The subject was Catherine's proposal for an improved way of supporting women peasant farmers in Africa. The discussants included Hans Herren, Clare Short, Earl Kellogg, Mary Balikungeri, head of the Rwanda Women's Network, Geoff Lean, Lauren Hatvany (whose Mustard Seed Trust supports farming projects in Africa among others). A remarkable range of people with hands-on experience, including two World Food Prize laureates and the head of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, offering their differing perspectives on this subject.

The King of Bunyoro came again with several senior officials. Since his participation in the first Caux Forum he has worked to overcome the tensions between groups in his region with a long history of hostility. He has invited traditional leaders throughout the region (including into Congo) to his palace, and their meetings have been fruitful. The King has commissioned a book, now in draft form, which expresses the wrongs his Kingdom has done to others in the region, and asks forgiveness. He has invited the Imam and Pastor to Bunyoro to help advance this work of reconciliation, and they plan to go later this year.