

Forum 2000 Conference: Freedom & Responsibility

Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, former UN Under-Secretary-General of Disarmament and former Secretary General of the Government Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process in Sri Lanka, has been invited by the former President of the Czech Republic, Vaclav Havel, to participate in the upcoming Forum 2000 Conference on the theme '**Freedom and Responsibility**' to be held in Prague in October this year. Dhanapala is among about 60 invitees including former Presidents, Prime Ministers, writers, journalists, actors, Nobel laureates and leading businessmen.

In 1997, Vaclav Havel and the 1986 Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel invited to Prague, a variety of current and former politicians, Nobel Prize Laureates, Sociologists, business executives, writers and representatives of major religions, people whose common denominator was experience with bearing responsibility.

The founders' aim was to analyse hopes, challenges and threats facing humankind on the threshold of the new millennium. They called this three day meeting at the Prague Castle, the 'Forum 2000 Conference'.

What was originally meant to be a single one off event, developed into a highly successful series, and in October 2006, the tenth anniversary of the Forum 2000 Conference was celebrated. The series of conferences held over a period of ten years, evolved into a platform to identify key issues facing civilisation, and to explore ways in which to prevent, escalation of conflicts, that have religion, culture or ethnicity as the primary components.

As claimed by President Vaclav Havel many times in the past, he has no illusion that the Forum 2000 initiative will *directly* influence the course of events in this world. However, he believes, that it is the duty of all those involved, to do everything within their power to articulate anew, all the threats facing our civilisation, while being guided by a fundamental hope, which gives our life meaning, and to look for ways of averting those dangers, by engaging in an open, honest and direct dialogue.

The eleventh Forum 2000 Conference to take place from the 7th to the 9th of October 2007, will attempt to explore the theme '**Freedom and Responsibility**' in its political, media, religious, spiritual, rule of law and business contexts. Dhanapala, who is currently Chairman of the UN University Council and a member of numerous international boards such as the Governing Board of SIPRI, is based in Sri Lanka.
