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Local authority initiatives to strengthen Japan’s international contribution:
the Hiroshima Prefectural Government’s “Hiroshima Peace Contribution Plan” and its relationship with the Hiroshima Office of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)

James Daniel Short

This paper discusses the creation of the wide-ranging policy document concerned with the promotion of peace promulgated by the Hiroshima Prefectural Government in March 2003, the “Hiroshima Peace Contribution Plan”, and analyses the relationship between the Hiroshima Prefectural Government and the Hiroshima Office of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

1. Historical Context

Following the momentous events of 1989–1991 which brought about the collapse of the Soviet Union and with it the end of the Cold War, millions of people around the world were looking ahead to a new era in which life on Earth would no longer be threatened by the constant risk of nuclear war. It was hoped that the winding down of the bitter rivalry between the superpowers would serve to instigate a new age in which the benefits of peace and prosperity would finally be felt by people worldwide. However, as a succession of tragic events during the 1990s would soon show, most notably the Rwandan
genocide and the wars in the former Yugoslavia, this hope was not to be fulfilled, and instead humanity found itself facing an increasingly unstable and insecure international climate which was becoming fraught with regional conflicts. During the 1990s and 2000s, smaller scale but by no means less bitter conflicts began to surface in many parts of the world, in regions such as the Balkans, Central Africa and South Asia, based on a combination of ethnic, religious and territorial factors. In terms of grave political and humanitarian crises, these began to take the place of the great intercontinental rivalry — East versus West — that had dominated the international arena since the end of the Second World War.

Within this climate, the tragic events of September 11th 2001 brought home to both policymakers and ordinary citizens alike the fact that a major consequence of the increasingly globalised world was that violent conflicts in one part of the world could no longer be considered as having little or no effect on one's own life in a far-removed country. By means of a protracted but clearly traceable cycle of cause and effect, the investigations launched into the Al-Qaeda attack on the United States revealed that a CIA-supported insurgency instigated against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan towards the end of the Cold War through the use of dedicated Islamic fighters ultimately contributed to causing the deaths of over 3000 people on American soil, and brought great damage to both its largest city and the centre of its defence establishment. September 11th demonstrated how neglect or indifference towards suffering and violence in a foreign land could now contribute towards bringing destruction and death to one's own doorstep.

This was the volatile international climate in which the Hiroshima Prefectural Government's "Hiroshima Peace Contribution Plan" was created.

2. Creation of the "Hiroshima Peace Contribution Plan"

The origins of the Hiroshima Peace Contribution Plan can be traced back to the mid-
1990s when preparations were being made for the commemorations for the 50th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. At that time, discussions were held between senior officials of the Hiroshima City and Hiroshima Prefectural Governments and representatives of the academic and business communities with the intention of formulating a coordinated strategy to carry forward Hiroshima’s message of peace into a new century at the same time as making a clear contribution towards addressing some of the major challenges facing the international community. During these discussions, the responsibility of Japan to make effective use of its capacities at both a national and also at a regional or local level was emphasised in order to address pressing global environmental and development issues. The “Hiroshima International Contribution Plan” promulgated in June 1996 sought to capitalise on the unique features of Hiroshima in order for the city to become a centre for initiatives in these areas in the modern era. Under the plan, international contribution projects were launched which drew upon existing expertise in the fields of medical care and human resource development, and modalities proposed for how Hiroshima might develop itself as an international centre for peace research.

Five years later, following a similar model, a further round of discussions was instigated between Hiroshima Prefecture and the National Institute for Research Advancement (NIRA) with the intention of exploring the specific potential for Japanese local authorities to make concrete contributions towards peace. In the fiscal year 2001, a working group of academic experts named the ‘Peace Policy Research Workshop’ was created in order to consider how a specific locality, such as Hiroshima, could become a centre for peace contribution efforts which would be devised and coordinated at a local level. Hiroshima was considered a suitable location for such an initiative due to its tragic historical legacy since August 1945 and its post-war status as an international city of peace and culture. Over the next eighteen months, this working group held a series of meetings in Hiroshima and Tokyo, and received input from several high-level
officials including the former diplomats Yasushi Akashi and Hisashi Owada, and the Assistant United Nations Secretary-General and Executive Director of the United Nations Institute of Training and Research (UNITAR), Marcel Boisard. NIRA’s involvement in the initiative continued until the start of fiscal 2002, after which, in collaboration with additional partners the Japan Institute for International Affairs (JIIA) and the Chugoku Regional Research Centre, further rounds of discussions were held in order to generate a coherent framework for Hiroshima Prefecture’s future international policy. Towards the end of fiscal 2002, the cycle of discussions came to an end and the working group delivered its findings to the Hiroshima Prefectural Government in the form of a framework document. During the next two months this framework was revised into a formal policy document, which was entitled the “Hiroshima Peace Contribution Plan”, and which was officially promulgated in March 2003.

3. Central thrust, structure and content of the Hiroshima Peace Contribution Plan

Central thrust

Whether by fate or coincidence, the first meeting of the Peace Policy Research Workshop took place in Hiroshima on September 18th 2001, exactly one week after the major terrorist attacks that struck America. Consequently, the highly-charged climate that dominated international affairs in the aftermath of that event came to exercise a significant influence on the development of discussions. The members of the working group quickly recognised that a significant paradigm shift was required to address both the increasingly unstable international climate and the specific peacebuilding measures that would be required to tackle it. The Vice-Chairman of the working group, Professor Kiichi Fujiwara, describes the situation thus:

As the Cold War ended, fundamental conditions that affect how we regard war and peace changed. [Formerly,] the menace of war was a worldwide one.... a
fear of world catastrophe and of nuclear nations destroying each other. The Cold War has ended and the nature of war has changed considerably. Though the threat of world war has been decreasing, the scale of regional conflicts has been expanding.... Regional conflicts.... are no longer someone else’s affair. The terrorist attack on September 11th and the following developments in international politics show that a conflict in a region like Afghanistan, which is far from a military power, may threaten lives in developed, industrialised countries.... [Therefore] in order to break the chain of violence and hatred in the modern world.... what is required is an effort to support reconstruction in regions devastated by armed conflicts and to change an unstable peace into a stable one; an endeavour described as 'building peace with a strong commitment to stability'\(^{(1)}\).

The members of the working group agreed that the range and complexity of problems now facing the international community required the active engagement of additional actors who could make an effective contribution to peacebuilding. Hitherto largely the province of national governments and international organisations such as the United Nations, it was felt that although the peacebuilding efforts of these bodies remained vital, they were no longer sufficient to address the scope of problems in the post-Cold War era due to unavoidable restrictions that arose in terms of resources and expertise. Therefore, with particular regard to developed countries such as Japan, it was felt that other actors such as local authorities also now had an obligation to contribute towards the overall peacebuilding process. Furthermore, with regard to the city of Hiroshima, in order to ensure that the city’s post-1945 message of peace retained genuine relevance in the modern era, it was proposed that the city’s long-established tradition of ‘praying for peace and the abolition of nuclear weapons’ should hereafter be expanded

\(^{(1)}\) Fujiwara, Kiichi, in “Hiroshima Peace Contribution Plan” (2003), Hiroshima Prefecture, p.iii.
to incorporate more concrete activities which could make a tangible contribution to peacebuilding in war-torn parts of the world. This thinking provided the philosophical foundation of the Hiroshima Peace Contribution Plan (hereafter referred to as the HPCP), summarized by Hisashi Owada thus:

[It is emphasised that] not only the traditional actors (agents of action) in international relationships like nations, the UN or other international organisations, but also local governments and NGOs.... should positively participate in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. In Japan, some NGOs have begun to make remarkable initiatives to prevent conflicts or build peace. In contrast, local governments have not played a positive role in the field...except for rather ordinary international exchanges. Hiroshima Prefecture has initiated the "Hiroshima Peace Contribution Plan" and as a local government has demonstrated its positive attitude regarding conflict prevention and peacebuilding. This is extremely significant, not only as a demonstration to other local governments of what can and should be done, but also in the sense that Hiroshima, the first city in the world to experience an atomic bomb attack, is trying to find a new role whereby it can contribute to global peace.\(^{(2)}\)

Structure

With regard to structure, the Hiroshima Peace Contribution Plan consists of five chapters, followed by appendices describing the institutional process that led to its creation. The content of these chapters is as follows:

- Chapter 1 elucidates the HPCP's central philosophy, which presents a new role for the peace contribution of Hiroshima in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century.

\(^{(2)}\) Owada, Hisashi, in ibid, p.ii.
Chapter 2 describes three levels of networking required for the HPCP's effective implementation: networking at the global level, national level and local level.

Chapter 3 describes six specific projects covering a variety of fields by means of which Hiroshima can seek to make tangible contributions towards peacebuilding in the international arena.

Chapter 4 describes a detailed proposal for a specific peace contribution project which is based on ongoing fieldwork being carried out in a post-conflict country (Cambodia).

Chapter 5 presents a graphical representation of means through which the HPCP may be realised in the future.

In reference to the main discussion of this paper, additional explanation will now be provided on Chapters 1 and 2.

Content of Chapter 1

The philosophy outlined in Chapter 1 identifies three areas which should henceforth serve as the foundation for Hiroshima's peace contribution role in the 21st century: remembering, transmitting and supporting peace. Remembering refers to creating a comprehensive archive of all available information relating to the atomic bombing and the reconstruction of Hiroshima, with particular importance being given to the collation of personal testimonies of hibakusha (survivors of the atomic bombing.) Transmitting refers to communicating information about the atomic bombing and reconstruction of Hiroshima to people within Japan and throughout the world through the use of all appropriate means. Supporting refers to making concrete contributions towards peacebuilding efforts in war-torn parts of the world through the provision of direct assistance and through the organisation of specialised training in Hiroshima.(3)

(3) Ibid, pp. 4–5.
The three areas outlined in the philosophy are then expanded into three specific functions which Hiroshima is expected to perform: these are a network function, a forum function and an agent function. In order to facilitate effective, coordinated action, under the network function Hiroshima is henceforth to create an integrated network amongst the many actors involved in the field of peacebuilding in the region, incorporating the governmental, non-governmental and academic sectors. In order to achieve the same objective, under the forum function, Hiroshima is to organise a variety of fora, including working groups, panel discussions and training seminars, which will bring together actors from these various fields. Under the agent function, Hiroshima is to provide appropriate direct assistance to conflict-affected regions and acquire knowledge and experience of means by which the overall effectiveness of its peacebuilding efforts can be increased(4).

Content of Chapter 2

In Chapter 2 it is stated that a central aspect of the network and forum functions relates to the establishment of cooperative relations between the many actors from both within Japan and externally who are involved in the field of peacebuilding. Emphasis is placed upon the importance of taking advantage of skills and expertise already in existence in Hiroshima, including within academic institutions and NGOs, and also of inviting influential figures to the city to facilitate discussions on ways that the city can more effectively communicate its peace message at the same time as contributing to peacebuilding activities. In order to facilitate this, the HPCP describes a series of networks which are to function at the global, national and local levels, and which are to be coordinated by a new umbrella body called the 'Hiroshima Peace Promotion Network'. Within the global network, cooperation is envisaged with bodies such as United Nations agencies, foreign academic institutions and international NGOs; the national network en-
compasses governmental agencies such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), universities within Japan and other national research institutions; the local network encompasses the local authorities of Hiroshima Prefecture and Hiroshima City, academic institutions located within the Prefecture and local NGOs.

It is further stated that one organisation in particular is central to the facilitation of the HPCP’s network and forum functions at both the global and the local levels: this organisation is the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), which opened its Hiroshima Office for Asia and the Pacific in July 2003. (5)

4. Bringing UNITAR to Hiroshima

It is important to make clear at this point that the cycle of events that led to the creation of the Hiroshima Peace Contribution Plan took place to a large extent concurrently with those that led to the opening of an office of UNITAR in Hiroshima. In fact, exploratory discussions about the possibility of opening such an office actually predate the first round of consultations held between Hiroshima Prefecture and NIRA in September 2001. (6) The reason for this was that, in of itself, the opening of an office of a United Nations agency in the world’s first A-bombed city represented a long-cherished wish of a large number of people in Hiroshima, not least among many members of the city’s Prefectural and Municipal administrations. On the basis of several factors it was widely felt that the opening of a UN office in Hiroshima should represent a major priority for the city’s international policy: these factors included the city’s tragic historical legacy in the aftermath of August 6th 1945; its ongoing campaign for worldwide nuclear

(6) In June of 1998 a working group named the ‘UNITAR Related Investigations and Research Group’ was established within The Academy of International Management, Cultures and Transdisciplinary Studies in Tokyo. In October of that year the working group began exploring the possibility of establishing a UNITAR office in one of two possible locations in Japan, either in Hiroshima or in Okinawa.
weapon abolition in partnership with the city of Nagasaki; its post-war identity as an international city of peace and culture; the fact that during the post-war era a number of UN agencies had established offices in Japan, the majority being in Tokyo, but also others in major cities such as Osaka, Kobe and Fukuoka; the fact that hitherto no direct UN representation had been established in Japan's Chugoku and Shikoku regions, of which Hiroshima was the largest city.

As a consequence, sustained efforts to bring a UN agency, and specifically UNITAR, to Hiroshima were instigated in the late 1990s and early 2000s, which received considerable support from a large number of people across the Prefecture. Evidence of this can be found not only in the statements and awareness-raising activities of several academic institutions and NGOs, but also in encouragement received from representatives of the private sector and the administrations of other cities within the Prefecture. Furthermore, the official records of the Hiroshima Prefectural Assembly from around the turn of the millennium reveal significant support for the opening of a UNITAR office in the city from across the political spectrum. The following statements are taken from speeches to the Assembly by representatives of the Liberal Democratic, Koumei and Social Democratic parties during the 2000 (December) and 2001 (June) sessions; the third statement takes the form of a question addressed to the Governor regarding Hiroshima Prefecture’s forthcoming international policy priorities:

「自由民主党の富野井利明でございます…本県を覆いつつある閉塞状況の中、先般、ユニタールと本県の間で、アジア・太平洋地域を中心とした国連加

(7) Statements issued in support of the establishment of a UNITAR office in Hiroshima include those of Takasu Shitomi, Chairman of the Chugoku Electric Power Company; Ikeuchi Koichi, Chairman of the Hiroshima Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Kameda Ryoichi, Mayor of Onomichi City; Ogasawara Shinya, Mayor of Kure City. These statements are reproduced in "Born on this Planet" (2004), Chugoku Shimbun, pp. 77, 123, and pp. 33, 187.
各国の外交官、行政官等に対する研修、能力開発プログラムの実施に関する基本合意がなされました。本年二月定例会において、我が会派の城戸議員が、このユニタールの誘致について質問したところではありますが、国連機関との連携・協力体制の実現のことによって、広島県の特性を生かした形で国際的な人材育成機能の一層の充実が図られるとともに、本県で訓練や研修を終えた人々が帰国し、多方面で活躍することを通じて広島県の情報を世界に発信することが可能となり、今後の展開に対して大いに期待を寄せるものであります。」
[平成12年12月定例会（第2日）]

「公明党の浅野洋二です…ユニタールは、平和と安全保障分野で国連の効果的な活動を促進するために設立された自治運営組織であります。先般、ユニタールのボイサード本部長が来広され、知事との間で共同研修プログラムの基本合意書に調印されたところであります。アジア・太平洋地域の開発途上国に対する研修・訓練を国連機関と共同で行う運びとなったことは、久々に明るいニュースであります。国連機関との共事業者の実現することによって、本県が世界平和の創造に貢献していく積極的な姿勢が、より明確になるとともに、アジア・太平洋地域における本県の拠点性の向上にも寄与するものと高く評価するものであります。」
[平成12年12月定例会（第3日）]

（8） 自由民主党広島県議会議員会、富野井利明、広島県議会平成12年12月定例会（第2日）本文、広島県議会事務局：
http://www.pref.hiroshima.lg.jp/gikai/gijiroku/index.html;
http://asp.db-search.com/hiroshima/dsweb.cgi/document!!1!guest?!!28851!0!0!21,-,1,21!1274!22258!21,-
1,21!1274!22258!162,61,60!43!73!11438!9!2?Template=DocPage#hit1

（9）広島県議会公明党・県民会議、浅野洋二、広島県議会平成12年12月定例会（第3日）本文、広島県議会事務局：
http://www.pref.hiroshima.lg.jp/gikai/gijiroku/index.html;
http://asp.db-search.com/hiroshima/dsweb.cgi/document!!1!guest?!!28851!0!0!21,-,1,21!1274!22258!21,-
1,21!1274!22258!165,64,63!43!73!11480!5!3?Template=DocPage#hit3

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Efforts to establish a UNITAR office in Hiroshima gathered momentum towards the end of the 1990s and beginning of the 2000s, involving a growing number of actors from both within the city itself, governmental circles in Tokyo, and staff at UNITAR headquarters in Geneva and its office in New York. Following on from the discussions held at the Academy of International Management, Cultures and Transdisciplinary

(10) 広島県民連合、石田明、広島県議会平成13年6月定例会（第2日）本文、広島県議会議事録:
http://www.pref.hiroshima.lg.jp/gikai/gijiroku/index.html;
http://asp.db-search.com/hiroshima/dsweb.cgi/document!1!guest1!1!10626!0!1!24,-1,24!1288!22496!24,-1,24!1288!22496!27,26,25!43!73!18645!17!?Template=DocPage#hit4

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Studies in October 1998, during the next two years a series of meetings was held between Hiroshima Prefecture, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UNITAR to pursue the issue further. This process culminated in the signing of an Official Memorandum between Hiroshima Prefecture and UNITAR in November 2000 (referred to by Youji Asano of the Koumeito Party in his statement above) establishing a Pilot Phase which was to consist of three UNITAR training workshops that would be held in Hiroshima with funding from the Prefecture\(^{(11)}\), and which would be evaluated by an external Evaluation Committee. On the strength of this evaluation, a final decision would be taken regarding the appropriateness of establishing a UNITAR office in Hiroshima on a long-term basis. These three training workshops were subsequently held in October 2001, March 2002 and November 2002 and focused on the topics of the “Management and Conservation of World Heritage Sites”, “Sea and Human Security” and “Post-Conflict Reconstruction” respectively\(^{(12)}\).

In deliberations carried out following the completion of the third project, the Evaluation Committee concluded that establishing a UNITAR office in Hiroshima represented an appropriate and desirable endeavour\(^{(13)}\). This conclusion was shortly afterwards submitted to UNITAR’s Board of Trustees, which in March 2003 gave the green light to the opening of a new office in the city. Following the announcement of this decision, on

\(\text{(11) With the assent of the Hiroshima Prefectural Assembly, two 'Special Purpose Contributions Grants' were provided for UNITAR, the first in May 2001 and the second in May 2002.}
\)

\(\text{(12) The three training workshops of the UNITAR Pilot Phase:}
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2. "International Conference on Sea and Security", held from March 6\(^{th}\)-8\(^{th}\) 2002, http://www2.unitar.or/hiroshima/Pilot_Phase/IntConfSHS.htm;

\(\text{(13) 'ユニタル広島事務所実現可能性調査業務報告書', 平成 15 年 3 月、社団法人 中国地方総}
\)

合研究センター。
May 28th 2003 a second Official Memorandum was signed between the Governor of Hiroshima Prefecture, Yuzan Fujita, and the Executive Director of UNITAR, Marcel Boisard, formally establishing the ‘UNITAR Hiroshima Office for Asia and the Pacific’, which commenced formal activities on July 15th of the same year, under the directorship of Nassrine Azimi. At the regular Prefectural Assembly session held three weeks after the signing of the May 28th Memorandum, Governor Fujita expressed his far-reaching hopes for the new UNITAR office in the following statement:

［知事　藤田雄山］「六月定例県議会の開会に当たり、ただいま提出いたしました議案の説明に先立ちまして、当面する県政の課題などについて御報告申し上げます。去る五月二十八日、ユニタールのマルセル・ボイザード本部長を広島にお迎えして、ユニタール広島事務所設置に関する覚書の調印を行いました。ユニタール広島事務所がアジア・太平洋地域の人材育成を進める中で、世界じゅうからすぐれた人材や情報が広島の地に集まりるとともに、国際社会に向けた広島の情報発信機能が一層向上するものと期待しております。今後は、ユニタールと連携して、本県が目指す「つくり出す平和」の理念に基づく「ひろしま平和貢献構想」の具体化を進めてまいります。」

5. UNITAR within the Hiroshima Peace Contribution Plan

It would be fair to say that since 2003 was the year in which the Hiroshima Peace Contribution Plan came into effect as official policy, the opening of the UNITAR Hiroshima Office later that same year represented a significant development in terms of its implementation, and one which attracted considerable public interest. Over and above the success of bringing a United Nations agency to Hiroshima, in terms of the aforesmen-

(14) 広島県知事、藤田雄山、広島県議会平成15年6月定例会（第1日）本文、広島県議会議事録 :
http://www.pref.hiroshima.lg.jp/gikai/gijiroku/index.html;

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tioned priorities stipulated in Chapters 1 and 2, it now seemed reasonable to expect tangible progress on a number of fronts, including an expansion in the city's high-level training functions, a closer integration of its peacebuilding efforts with others underway in the international community, and the utilization of a new avenue through which the city could transmit its message for peace and the abolition of nuclear weapons. With regard to UNITAR’s record of activities since 2003, the list of many completed training workshops and other additional events reveal that important progress has indeed been achieved in some of these areas. However, it is the author’s view that unfortunately the wide-ranging hopes originally invested in UNITAR within the context of the HPCP have not been fully realized. In fact, investigation has brought to light a not insignificant level of disappointment amongst key elements of Hiroshima’s peacebuilding community with regard to some of UNITAR’s activities and its stance vis-à-vis other actors in the city, which has had a detrimental effect on the relationship with its principal partner and sponsor, the Hiroshima Prefectural Government.

Drawing on the critiques of five individuals who were closely involved with the crea-

(15) Between 2003–2009, a total of 27 training workshops have been organised by the UNITAR Hiroshima Office within four Training Series and one Fellowship Programme. The breakdown of these workshops is as follows: Management and Conservation of World Heritage Sites Training Series-7 workshops, 2004–2009; Sea and Human Security Training Series-6 workshops, 2004-2009; Biodiversity and Climate Change Training Series-4 workshops, 2004–2008; International Economics and Finance Training Series-4 workshops, 2004–2006; Post-Conflict Reconstruction and the Fellowship for Afghanistan-6 fellowship cycles, 2004–2009. A total of 4415 people have attended these workshops from more than 30 countries. Data has been drawn from the UNITAR Hiroshima website at:

In 2005 an international peacekeeping conference was organised, entitled “The United Nations as Peacekeeper and Nation-Builder: Continuity and Change-What lies ahead?” During the same period, a total of 50 public sessions-UNITAR Roundtables, have been organized.
http://www.unitar.org/hiroshima/roundtables. Additionally, the Director and other members of UNITAR staff have made presentations within the Office and externally on a total of 43 occasions.
http://www.unitar.org/hiroshima/hiroshima_office_lectures. For a more detailed explanation of the activities of UNITAR in general and the UNITAR Hiroshima Office in particular, see Short (2009).

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tion of the HPCP and/or the opening and subsequent activities of the UNITAR Hiroshima Office, the following section will elucidate factors which have led to this less than perfect situation. Focusing on two specific time periods, that of the final negotiations leading up to the opening of the office from mid-2001 to May 2003, and the subsequent period of the office’s formal activities from July 2003 until the end of 2009, the discussion will also draw upon the personal experiences of members of the staff of the office, of whom the author was himself a member from January – May 2005 and from September 2006 – March 2008.

6. Complicated negotiations prior to opening

The agreement signed by Governor Fujita and Executive Director Boisard on May 28th 2003 brought into effect the mandate for the UNITAR Hiroshima Office which has provided the legal and institutional foundation for its subsequent activities. The mandate stipulates that in exchange for funds to the extent of slightly less than $1,000,000 provided by the Hiroshima Prefectural Government, the UNITAR Hiroshima Office will organise and deliver a total of six training workshops or other large-scale events such as conferences a year on pre-determined themes for high-ranking staff of governments, academic institutions and NGOs from the Asia-Pacific region. In addition, utilizing the organisation’s extensive network of international experts and officials in the diplomatic sphere, it will organise public lectures and other meetings for the benefit of the people of Hiroshima Prefecture on a periodic basis. As its record indicates (see note 15), since May 2003 UNITAR has clearly been fulfilling this mandate, and, barring any serious disturbances, one would assume that it will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. However, as the following discussion reveals, UNITAR’s principal

(16) “Memorandum of Understanding Between The United Nations Institute For Training and Research and The Hiroshima Prefectural Government” and “Special Purpose Grant Agreement Between The United Nations Institute For Training and Research and The Hiroshima Prefectural Government”, both signed by the Governor of Hiroshima Prefecture Yuzan Fujita and the Executive Director of UNITAR Marcel Boisard on May 28th 2003.

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financial supporter has not been entirely satisfied with its activities thus far, especially in relation to the international policy framework set out in the HPCP, in which, as has been stated, UNITAR has been given a major role. With regard to the relationship between the Hiroshima Prefectural Government and UNITAR therefore, it could be argued that there is a fair degree of satisfaction on the part of the former with the manner in which the latter has been fulfilling its mandate, but perhaps less so with the way it has been addressing the broader policy priorities of the HPCP.

Investigation has revealed that difficulties in this regard did not commence with the formal opening of the office in May 2003, but can actually be traced back to negotiations that took place between Hiroshima Prefecture and UNITAR during the period preceding it – from around the middle of 2001. At that time a number of contentious issues emerged which served to complicate relations between the two sides. Subsequently, a lack of progress in resolving these issues led to lines of communication becoming strained, especially from the Prefecture side, and this was to contribute towards a more general lack of coordination between the activities of UNITAR and other actors involved in peacebuilding in Hiroshima.

Contentious issues

Within the Hiroshima Prefectural Government, the administrative section responsible for overseeing both the process leading to the creation of the HPCP and the negotiations preceding the opening of the UNITAR Hiroshima Office was the International Affairs Division. During the key phases leading up to the conclusions of these initiatives (which overlapped to a large extent), the Director of the International Affairs Division was Mr. Noboru Goto. In an interview with the author in April 2009, Goto described three particular issues which caused disagreement between the Prefecture and UNITAR.
The first of these related to international peacebuilding activities which the Prefecture had devised as a central part of the HPCP. In line with a central tenet of the document, that of the need for local authorities to carry out concrete activities to facilitate peacebuilding in war-torn parts of the world, Chapter 4 of the HCPC described specific plans for such activities which were to be carried out in Cambodia\(^{(17)}\). The second issue related to peacebuilding activities being organised by other actors in Hiroshima Prefecture, including those already underway under the leadership of NGOs. The third issue related to opportunities for local staff, in this case staff of the International Affairs Division, to conduct internships within the UNITAR Hiroshima Office. In the interview, Goto recounted how, during the course of negotiations between the two sides prior to the opening of the new office, the Prefecture made requests to UNITAR in respect of these three issues, but in each case the request was rejected. The reasons provided at the time by UNITAR for the rejection of these requests were as follows:

1. Regarding special peacebuilding activities that the Prefecture was organising for Cambodia, the UNITAR side stressed that the mandate of the Hiroshima Office covered the countries of the whole Asia-Pacific region and so the organisation could not focus particular attention on one specific country. Therefore UNITAR would provide assistance to Cambodia within the context of activities carried out in its own mandated geographical area.

2. Regarding peacebuilding activities being carried out by other actors in the Prefecture, UNITAR stated that in accordance with rules governing all UN agencies, it was not able to link itself or its activities with them in any formal manner. Its mandate stipulated the provision of training to high-level officials from the Asia-Pacific region and therefore this would be the central focus of its activities.

\(^{(17)}\) "Hiroshima Peace Contribution Plan" (2003), Hiroshima Prefecture, pp. 45–55.
3. Regarding the provision of training opportunities for local administrative staff, UNITAR stated that UN rules designed to maintain the independence of its agencies and prevent possible conflicts of interest prohibited arrangements through which specific administrative bodies or other organisations could secure such positions for their staff.

In his own words, Goto described these negotiations thus:

In the beginning, we [the Prefecture] thought about lots of possible activities concerning Afghanistan and Iraq that could be carried out. For that reason UN support would be important because these concern security issues. But in the case of Cambodia there are less security concerns and so the local authority could act effectively...... So regarding Cambodia, the Prefecture said to UNITAR “we are assisting it and so please would you help us”, but this was refused. UNITAR said “We will assist Cambodia through our own UN activities but cannot carry out joint projects with the Prefecture. Please do that on your own.” In reality we couldn’t work together with UNITAR for Cambodia, it wasn’t written into the plan [the HPCP] in detail and there wasn’t an appropriate political mechanism to facilitate it either. At the time, we thought even though the Prefecture is providing $1,000,000 for UNITAR, couldn’t some of this money be directed towards Cambodia......? Also we requested that UNITAR link some of its activities with local NGOs, but we were told that this was not possible for a UN agency...... Also in the case of posting local international staff within a UN agency for a limited time (internships), this was also refused. We were told that this is a standard UN policy and therefore impossible. Even though Hiroshima Prefecture is the sponsor......? If this could have been done outside the original agreement........? But probably this was also impossible.(18)
In respect of these three issues, under circumstances in which UNITAR was seeking to establish norms for its forthcoming interactions with the Prefecture, the author is of the opinion that the response of UNITAR to each of these requests can be viewed as the correct one; clearly, references made to specific stipulations in the mandate of the Hiroshima Office and to rules covering all UN agencies were anything but misrepresentations. Later in the interview Goto acknowledged that it would perhaps have been difficult for UNITAR to respond in any other way at the time, and that an element of naivety could be discerned on the part of the Prefecture in making such requests. However, as his words at the end of the extract indicate, over and above the mandate of the Hiroshima Office and general UN rules, the position taken by UNITAR in these negotiations seemed to reveal a degree of inflexibility in the organisation which was subsequently to prove unhelpful in establishing cooperative relations with the Prefecture. During the negotiations, upon hearing UNITAR’s negative responses to its requests, Goto relates that the Prefectural side sought to explore whether any accommodation could be made for them “outside the original agreement,” or in other words to identify some possible avenue which would not contravene UNITAR’s mandate or UN rules, but the reaction received from the UNITAR side was that this was not possible. This response clearly caused a degree of disappointment on the Prefectural side.

With that said, it is important to stress that negotiations over these issues did not serve to undermine relations between the Prefecture and UNITAR in any significant way at the time. Goto stated that with regard to a different goal on the part of the Prefecture, that of UNITAR aligning the content of its training programmes with some of the Prefecture’s long-term policy priorities, negotiations proceeded smoothly, and UNITAR’s subsequent support in respect of this goal had been consistent and highly valued.

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(18) Interview conducted with the former Director of the International Affairs Division of the Hiroshima Prefectural Government, Noboru Goto, on April 16th, 2009; translated from the Japanese by the author.
As the Prefecture was providing finance, one condition that was agreed [during these negotiations] related to three themes which UNITAR would focus on. The first was World Heritage because Hiroshima has Itsukushima Shrine and the A-Bomb dome, and it is trying to have the Seto Inland Sea inscribed as a World Heritage site. There was a request to UNITAR for assistance with this initiative. Additionally, there was a request relating to the theme of 'From A-bomb destruction to reconstruction in Hiroshima', and also in respect of the protection of the Seto Inland Sea. In these cases there has been faithful cooperation from UNITAR on these topics from the start(19).

Nevertheless, an impression of inflexibility on the part of UNITAR had been perceived on the Prefectural side, and subsequent episodes in the run up to May 2003 appeared to indicate that the organisation was rather unwilling to direct significant energy towards identifying innovative and workable solutions to concerns on the part of its principal partners, and thereby address itself in a proactive manner to the conditions of the new environment in which it found itself.

7. Ambiguity and inflexibility: a dysfunctional relationship?

One of the principal architects of the HPCP, Professor Kiichi Fujiwara (quoted in section 3 above), is more forthright in his criticism of the less than perfect relationship that existed between Hiroshima Prefecture and UNITAR in the run up to May 2003, and also in relation to the position that UNITAR has subsequently held vis-à-vis other peacebuilding actors in Hiroshima. In an interview with the author in May 2009 he identified two important structural factors which have worked against a successful integration of UNITAR's activities with those being carried out by other actors in the city, a

(19) Interview with Mr. Noboru Goto, April 16th 2009. The three themes alluded to here are those which began during the Pilot Phase of the UNITAR Hiroshima Office, see note 12 above. These training programmes are continuing to date.
situation which he believes has been further undermined by a lack of willingness on UNITAR's part to engage with these other actors.

A central premise of Fujiwara's critique of the activities of UNITAR within the field of peacebuilding in Hiroshima as a whole and within the framework of the HPCP in particular rests on his contention regarding the conditions that are required for an international organisation to be able to work effectively in a new environment. Fujiwara holds that, by their nature, international organisations always require funding from external sources in order to operate, but that crucially this funding in itself is insufficient. In addition, they also require committed partners on the ground who can act as a support network for the organisation, assisting it with a wide variety of tasks, for frequently little or no payment, who can help with the important challenge of establishing solid links between the organisation and local civil society. Without these links, Fujiwara holds that international organisations are often unable to develop strong foundations within the new environments in which they work, and therefore in many cases their activities have only a limited impact and their long-term presence in those environments cannot be guaranteed. Regarding the case of UNITAR in Hiroshima, Fujiwara's assessment is that its links with civil society have always been tenuous at best and that this phenomenon represents a serious structural weakness which is undermining the overall effectiveness of the organisation's activities in the city. He commented thus:

First of all, international organisations always need donors. Their mission is clear but they are short of manpower, short of funds and short of supporting staff. Whenever an international organisation, a local branch of an international organisation, works well it's because there is a significant amount of volunteers who are eager to support the activities. These people have their own things to do, their own agendas, but then their selfless contribution is essential and that is the connection an international organisation can have with civil society. Without
this it does not have roots..... The connection between UNITAR and local support groups in Hiroshima was always weak.\(^{(20)}\)

Fujiwara identifies a further weakness in relation to the actual activities that constitute the mandate of the Hiroshima Office. The mandate stipulates the provision of training for high-level officials from the Asia-Pacific region, but in Fujiwara's opinion from early on in the negotiation process (from around 2001), a clear blueprint had not been created for precisely how this training would be integrated with other peacebuilding activities being carried out within Hiroshima. In pre-opening planning meetings, members of the Prefectural Assembly and officials of the International Affairs Division expressed hopes that the human resource development training to be provided by UNITAR would complement that being provided by other training institutions in the Prefecture, particularly the JICA Chugoku International Centre and also Hiroshima University, both of which are located some distance away in Higashi-Hiroshima City. However, no definitive mechanisms were established within the HCPC for how this was to be facilitated. The section of the HPCP focusing specifically on UNITAR (Chapter 2) contains merely general proposals for how the organisations' activities could in theory contribute towards supporting its broader goals, but no specific details are provided.\(^{(21)}\) Goto's observation above about the discussions that took place prior to the opening of the office regarding what activities UNITAR would be asked to do reveals a lack of clarity on this issue from the Prefectural side. In relation to this, in cognisance of the great desire that there had been within Hiroshima to realize the opening of an office of a UN agency in the city, Fujiwara holds that to a certain extent the achievement of the opening of such an office actually took precedence over establishing clearly what that office was to do. He stated:

\(^{(20)}\) Interview with Professor Kiichi Fujiwara, May 20\(^{th}\) 2009, conducted in English.

\(^{(21)}\) "Hiroshima Peace Contribution Plan" (2003), Hiroshima Prefecture, pp. 10-11.
Hiroshima's interest in inviting UNITAR was something of a dream for them [the Prefectural Government], because UNITAR is one of the more underfunded agencies in the UN. But then what they wanted to do by inviting UNITAR was always ambiguous from the very beginning. Inviting UNITAR itself was something of a prestigious pet project, without actual links to what the Hiroshima government does, the Prefecture or City.\(^{22}\)

In recognition of the ambiguous situation regarding what precisely UNITAR was to do in Hiroshima, Fujiwara relates that he and other members of the Peace Policy Research Workshop working group sought to establish links between UNITAR and local NGOs in order that the former's forthcoming activities could be more effectively integrated with other peacebuilding activity being carried out in Hiroshima. However, this initiative unfortunately met with little success due to a lack of cooperation on the part of UNITAR and the poor relations which had developed between it and other key actors in the city:

We [the members of the working group] were aware of this ambiguity and so when we were getting in touch with NGOs of the 'Hiroshima Platform', which was a coalition of Hiroshima NGOs, we tried as hard as we could to bring UNITAR and the NGO network together. However, at the time we found out that there was so much bad blood between the Prefectural Government and UNITAR and the Mayor's Office and UNITAR, to the extent that mutual suspicion was so strong, so profound, that no one really wanted to take any initiative in that.\(^{23}\)

This is a significant revelation. Fujiwara is suggesting that during the run up to the

\(^{22}\) Interview with Professor Kiichi Fujiwara, May 20\(^{9}\) 2009.

\(^{23}\) Ibid.
opening of the new UNITAR office, three significant problems existed which were
threatening to have a seriously detrimental effect on UNITAR’s future activities in Hi-
roshima. Firstly, that during the early planning stages for the creation of the office, the
Hiroshima Prefectural Government had not clearly established what precisely the or-
ganisation was going to do in the city. Secondly, within Hiroshima, UNITAR did not
endeavour to coordinate its activities with those of other actors in order to create a sup-
port network which could help establish strong links with local civil society. Thirdly,
during the course of the pre-opening period, relations between UNITAR and both the
Prefecture and the Municipality were in a far from healthy state. Taken together, these
problems point towards a situation where, far from UNITAR commencing its formal
operations in a collaborative climate which would be conducive to the integration of its
activities with others underway in Hiroshima, it was actually moving in the opposite
direction and becoming increasingly isolated from them. As the following section will
reveal, it is an unfortunate reality that since 2003 this condition has, to a large extent,
continued unchanged.

8. UNITAR ‘ploughing its own furrow’

During the time that the author was working at the UNITAR Hiroshima Office,
amongst the staff there was a definite sense of pride that the office was delivering a de-
monstrably valuable and high-quality product. The small team of eight members, of
whom only four held full-time contracts, consistently maintained a desire to deliver ex-
ecutive training of an international standard which was worthy of the UN name.
Stretching back to the formal opening of the office in July 2003, drawing upon the ex-
pertise of a network of Resource Persons, many of whom were international leaders in
their fields, official documentation has shown that the training workshops organised by
the Hiroshima Office have been almost universally well-received by their chief benefi-
ciaries, the workshop participants. In the evaluation questionnaires which all partici-
pants are required to complete on the final day of every workshop, most if not all have
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stated that the training they received was of a high standard, was valuable to them in light of their professional responsibilities and was efficiently organised. The results of these evaluations have been systematically submitted to UNITAR's sponsors and published on its website as an essential part of the formal Executive Summary that is produced following the conclusion of each workshop\(^{(24)}\).

The high quality of training delivered by the UNITAR Hiroshima Office has been recognised by other experts in the city. In the field of human resource development, that being UNITAR's principal area of expertise, the foremost academic partner of the office is Hiroshima University. An additional senior figure who was closely involved in the negotiations relating to its opening is Professor Shuichi Nakayama, the former Dean of the Graduate School for International Development and Cooperation (IDEC) of Hiroshima University\(^{(25)}\). In an interview with the author in April 2009, Nakayama elucidated his analysis of UNITAR's position within the HPCP and his evaluation of the quality of the training it has been providing:

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\(^{(24)}\) Examples of the highly positive evaluations given by participants of the training workshops organised by the UNITAR Hiroshima Office can be found at the following websites:


\(^{(25)}\) Professor Shuichi Nakayama is currently teaching at the Hiroshima University of Economics.
In my opinion, UNITAR’s position in the plan [HPCP] is very clear: human resource development and the promotion of economic growth, and also internationalisation...In the Prefecture there is the JICA Centre in Higashi-Hiroshima, Hiroshima University and IDEC – and so within the context of a training-focused peace contribution, UNITAR matches well with that....... For the training, the activities themselves are of a very high standard, in fact training of a global standard. The activities of UNITAR are very unique. It is a subject of pride amongst the staff of the Hiroshima Prefecture International Affairs Division because there is only one UN organisation in the Chugoku area\(^{(26)}\).

Differing from Fujiwara in his analysis of the position of UNITAR within the HPCP, Nakayama is nonetheless unequivocal in his praise for the quality of the training it has been providing. (The difference between the analyses of these two experts can in part be explained by the fact that Fujiwara focused on the discussions leading up to the creation of the HPCP in which the position and responsibilities of UNITAR had not been clearly established. Nakayama, by contrast, did not participate in these discussions and as a representative of Hiroshima University agreed to become an academic partner of UNITAR by means of a separate process. His analysis draws upon detailed knowledge of UNITAR activities subsequent to 2003, during which period Fujiwara was not closely involved with the organisation.) Despite the difference between the two analyses however, Nakayama is in agreement with Fujiwara in respect of the situation that the activities of UNITAR are not well-integrated with other peacebuilding activities underway in Hiroshima. Furthermore, Nakayama holds that UNITAR is largely isolated from much of the local community in the city and that local citizens have little idea of exactly what UNITAR is and does.

\(^{(26)}\) Interview with Professor Shuichi Nakayama, April 17\(^{th}\) 2009, conducted in English.
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The activities themselves, the training, they are very good. But the problem is that people in the Prefecture give hardly any attention to these activities...... They also have very little access to them. They don’t understand the importance of UNITAR activities here in Hiroshima\(^{(27)}\).

In relation to this issue, Goto also stated that local people in Hiroshima have little knowledge about either the nature or quality of UNITAR activities, and he attributed this situation to a lack of direct relevance between the training and the other policy priorities of the Prefecture.

The reason that the great results produced by the training are not widely known amongst people in Hiroshima Prefecture is that UNITAR’s activities are not closely linked to the ongoing policies of the local authority. If UNITAR’s training could be more closely linked to these policies, then Assembly members and citizens would be able to say that UNITAR is doing very well. In reality, the good reports received from the participants represent the end of the story. This is how it has been from the beginning. There has been no fundamental policy link between the two sides and therefore this problem has continued\(^{(28)}\).

Nakayama agreed with the assertion that there has been a lack of policy integration between the Prefecture and UNITAR, but he was to go further and actually attribute a large measure of blame for the situation whereby local people have very little knowledge about UNITAR to the Prefecture itself, and also individually to the person of the Governor. He holds that the Prefectural side has, collectively, failed to provide sufficient explanation about the organisation to the general public:

\(^{(27)}\) Ibid.
\(^{(28)}\) Interview with Mr. Noboru Goto, April 16\(^{th}\) 2009.
The people don’t really understand about UNITAR and the Governor doesn’t make an effort to explain about this. The Prefectural Government itself is weak in terms of explaining about these activities to people in the Prefecture, the communication from the government office to the people is almost cut! There is almost no information available about UNITAR activities. I am frustrated because the budget to support UNITAR is very large but the Prefectural Government doesn’t explain about the budgetary contribution to the people – no detailed information is provided. Therefore the people don’t know about UNITAR activities and as a result they also don’t understand about their own contributions to these activities through the provision of tax money\(^{(29)}\).

This observation on the part of Nakayama represents another important revelation. His assertion that local people have very little knowledge about UNITAR activities bears out, on the one hand, Fujiwara’s contention that without the creation of a support network drawn from the local community, an international organisation cannot establish meaningful links with civil society. Furthermore, the fact that in Nakayama’s opinion detailed information relating to UNITAR is not being provided by the Prefecture, this represents a failure on the part of the Prefecture to actually deliver value for money to its citizens since they are receiving little or no information about how a large proportion of their own tax money is being spent. His analysis of the activities of UNITAR in Hiroshima can therefore be summarised thus: the organisation is providing training of an international standard to high-level staff from developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region, but unfortunately the people of the region in which the office is actually located know virtually nothing about this.

Additional important points in this discussion relate to whether the lack of policy in-

\[^{(29)}\] Interview with Professor Shuichi Nakayama, April 17th 2009.
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Integration existing between the Prefecture and UNITAR and the lack of information being provided by the former about the latter are in some respects consequences of the less than harmonious relations that have existed between the two sides in the run up to the opening of the office, as observed by Fujiwara. With regard to these and other issues relating to UNITAR’s presence in Hiroshima in general, in May 2009 the author sought the views of a Prefectural Assembly Member, Mr. Naoyuki Ogata, the Liberal Democratic Party representative for Hiroshima City’s east ward (広島市東区).

9. UNITAR in Hiroshima: no plus-alpha

Speaking as a representative of the Prefectural Assembly, in an interview with the author Ogata was keen to state that, in the first instance, UNITAR’s presence in the Prefecture represents an object of pride for Hiroshima since it is the first UN agency to open an office in Japan’s Chugoku region. (This mirrors Nakayama’s statement above regarding a similar sentiment held by the staff of the International Affairs Division.) However, Ogata explained that many members of the Assembly including himself felt disappointment regarding UNITAR’s overall lack of visibility within the Prefecture, and by the situation that the majority of local citizens are not able to draw any tangible benefit from the organisation’s presence in Hiroshima. He was fully aware of the mandate of the Hiroshima Office and was supportive of UNITAR focusing its primary efforts on human resource development through the provision of executive training for beneficiaries in the Asia-Pacific region. Nevertheless, he was also aware that most Hiroshima citizens have very little knowledge about what the organisation actually does. Consequently, he expressed the opinion that he believes there is definite potential for UNITAR to make additional contributions towards certain aspects of life within the Prefecture, especially with regard to activities for young people. He stated that if such activities could be organised, it would be warmly welcomed by both citizens and Prefectural staff alike, and would simultaneously provide tangible justification for the calls to renew the budget allocation for UNITAR within the Prefectural Assembly which oc-
cur at regular intervals at the end of the organisation's three-year financial cycle. He commented thus:

The UNITAR office is located in Hiroshima Prefecture, the only UN agency in the Chugoku region. The fact that the UN flag is flying above the Chamber of Commerce building [in the centre of Hiroshima City] is a real matter of pride for Hiroshima in my opinion....... The UN is actually represented physically, but the fact that this is largely unknown by Hiroshima citizens and especially elementary, junior high and senior high school students in this city, I think this is a real waste..... I think there should be more activities that involve young people in this area. And I know this is not the principal purpose of UNITAR – that is to facilitate human capacity development in the Asia-Pacific region. That's fine, we [Prefectural Assembly members] want UNITAR to work very hard to fulfil this purpose. But if young people were invited to a UNITAR activity for example, an explanation, or an event in which they could participate, if this could be done then it would be something really beneficial for young people in Hiroshima.

In relation to Nakayama's contention that the Prefecture is failing to provide sufficient information about UNITAR's activities to people in Hiroshima, although not addressing the issue directly, Ogata stated that in general the Prefecture has been far from proficient at providing clear explanations of its international contribution activities to the public. To illustrate this, he mentioned a number of activities that are being carried out within the context of the HPCP in Cambodia which have achieved notable results since the inception of the plan in 2003, but about which Hiroshima people know very little.

(30) Interview with Hiroshima Prefectural Assembly member Mr. Naoyuki Ogata, May 29th 2009, translated from the Japanese by the author.
It is true that Hiroshima Prefecture's presentation of its own activities is really poor: "This is what we are doing" – this kind of presentation to the people is very weak. Hiroshima people don't know what the Prefecture is doing...... There are many good activities being done in Cambodia: for example, we are carrying out teacher training, amongst other things...... For mine clearance, Hirobou, the maker of radio-controlled helicopters is helping to seek out landmines. Another is the JPF – Japan Platform's [平和維持活動] peacekeeping efforts, Hiroshima Prefecture was also involved in the activities of this organisation. This way of reflecting what it is doing is very important for Hiroshima – it is about appealing to the people, because many good things are being done\(^{(31)}\).

In spite of this admission however, Ogata's overall opinion regarding UNITAR was that he believed it would be beneficial for the organisation to be seen to be making more efforts to involve itself with other activities being carried out in the Prefecture in order for local citizens to be able to derive more direct benefit from its presence in Hiroshima. His views have much in common with those expressed by the final expert cited in this paper, the Peace Policy Research Workshop working group member Kazumi Mizumoto, Professor at the Hiroshima Peace Institute, and especially with regard to the UNITAR activities which are specifically designed to provide a tangible benefit to the citizens of Hiroshima Prefecture, UNITAR Roundtables.

10. UNITAR Roundtables - round pegs in square holes?

UNITAR Roundtables, or public sessions, have represented an important area of the organisations' activities since the opening of the office. In recognition of the fact that the main beneficiaries of UNITAR's training activities were to be high-ranking staff of governments, academic institutions and NGOs from the Asia-Pacific region, the

\(^{(31)}\) Ibid.

\(^{(359)}\)
Roundtables were designed with the explicit intention of providing a service which would be of direct benefit to ordinary citizens in Hiroshima Prefecture\(^{(32)}\). Utilizing its contacts within the diplomatic sphere, international academia and other international organisations, during the course of its formal operations UNITAR has been inviting leading figures to Hiroshima to deliver lectures and presentations to local people about important political and cultural topics. As recorded in note 15 above, since 2003 a total of 50 Roundtables have been organised at the UNITAR Hiroshima Office, at which a total of 2884 people have attended. The majority of the speakers at these Roundtables have been diplomats or senior academics, of whom many of the latter category have also served as Resource Persons at UNITAR’s training workshops\(^{(33)}\).

With regard to the Roundtables, it would seem logical to assume that they would represent a significant contribution on the part of UNITAR to public life in Hiroshima since they are open to all citizens in the city and represent a new forum through which citizens can interact directly with international policymakers and other senior figures. Indeed it has clearly been the case that since 2003 they have served to broaden the scope of topical debate that is taking place in the city. However, in the opinions of Nakayama, Ogata and Mizumoto, in spite of their merits, UNITAR Roundtables have in reality only been providing tangible benefits to a very small number of people in Hiroshima.

\(^{(32)}\) A formal stipulation referring to the Roundtables was added to the Special Purpose Grant Agreement signed by Governor Fujita and UNITAR Executive Director Boisard on April 1\(^{st}\) 2006 at the beginning of the second three-year financial cycle of the UNITAR Hiroshima Office.

\(^{(33)}\) In addition to two Assistant Secretaries-General of the United Nations and a Judge from the International Court of Justice, since 2003 a number of Ambassadors have spoken at UNITAR Roundtables, including the Ambassadors of Canada, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Turkey, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Rwanda, the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, India, Thailand and Cambodia. Broken down by year, a full list of speakers can be found at the following website:

\[\text{http://www.unitar.org/hiroshima/roundtables}\]
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The main difficulty which has come to light in relation to the Roundtables concerns the number of people who have been attending them. During the author’s tenure within the Hiroshima Office, in the course of preparing for a total of twelve Roundtables over a two-year period, the staff of the office were faced with a constant problem – that of seeking to encourage more people to attend them. In accordance with standard office procedure, on each occasion UNITAR staff carried out the following three steps:

1. Invitations containing information on the speaker and the topic of the presentation written in both Japanese and English were sent out to a large number of organisations and individuals across the Prefecture via e-mail;

2. Assistance was sought from colleagues at the International Affairs Divisions of the Prefectural and the Municipal Governments in order to publicize the event via their own channels;

3. Other media outlets such as the Chugoku Shimbun newspaper in Hiroshima were similarly contacted to publicize the event.

In addition, depending on the particular speaker and topic, UNITAR staff would send out supplementary invitations to particular individuals or groups who might have a special interest in the event by fax, and in the final days prior to the Roundtable, would also contact specific individuals and groups directly by telephone. However, on almost every occasion, despite the best efforts of both UNITAR staff and their Prefectural and Municipal colleagues, the number of attendees would never exceed a total of 60-70 people, and on several occasions the number was far fewer. Moreover, it was frequently the case that the people who attended the Roundtables were almost always the same individuals on each occasion. As a result, UNITAR staff faced the constant challenge of attempting to widen the appeal of the Roundtables in order to increase the number of attendees. Closely related to this difficulty was the corresponding challenge of trying to identify appropriate speakers who could inspire greater interest on the part of people in Hiroshima. Various discussions took place in relation to these issues both
within the office and in consultation with Prefectural colleagues, but to a large extent no successful strategy could be identified.

As the following observations reveal, the aforementioned commentators are quite aware of the fact that UNITAR Roundtables have generated only limited interest amongst people in Hiroshima. Furthermore, Ogata and Mizumoto expressed the view that these events may in reality not be the most appropriate means through which UNITAR can seek to deliver tangible benefits to people in the city.

In their own words, firstly Nakayama:

> Every month UNITAR holds Roundtables, but the audience is very limited, always the same people attend...... Other people don’t understand about the importance of UNITAR. The Roundtables themselves are good as Ambassadors from Tokyo and other high level officials come to speak, but the overall impact is very small\(^{(34)}\).

Mizumoto:

> For the Roundtables, for people who have interest in those issues they are good, but the events are one-offs and don’t lead into other specific activities. Many of the themes are not those that I think I personally must learn about and so due to being busy, I can’t often attend. It would be better if UNITAR carried out more events which responded better to the needs of people in Hiroshima...... More general topics would be better, inviting not only people close to the UN like those in the diplomatic community, but people who speak about actual ‘real’

\(^{(34)}\) Interview with Professor Shuichi Nakayama, April 17\(^{th}\) 2009.
topics – like staff members of agencies or NGOs in Afghanistan or Iraq. Then more concrete explanations would be possible...... There are some people who have interest in international issues who can attend the Roundtables. But due to problems with English and a lack of an appropriate forum for interaction, there is a limit as to how much involvement or understanding most Hiroshima people can have about the activities of UNITAR (35).

Ogata:

For us at the Prefectural Government, we frequently receive invitations to UNITAR Roundtables, but in reality we don’t have many opportunities to attend these meetings. If there were more interesting or easy to understand events then it would be better..... For example, more topics which are close to the Hiroshima Peace Contribution Plan, more things that we would really like to know about! – like talk sessions about what UNITAR itself is doing..... A while ago we received information about the World Heritage Workshop Roundtable (36), but basically we Prefectural Assembly members wouldn’t go to an event like this because it is not directly related to the activities of the Prefecture..... But rather than activities for Assembly members, it would be better if there were easy to understand meetings explaining about UNITAR organised for young people. Until now I haven’t heard about any events like this and so I would like it to happen (37).

These observations are most illuminating. They point towards a situation where the

(35) Interview conducted with Professor Kazumi Mizumoto of the Hiroshima Peace Institute on April 16th, 2009; translated from the Japanese by the author.
(36) http://www.unitar.org/hiroshima/roundtables/2009/whs
(37) Interview with Hiroshima Prefectural Assembly member Mr. Naoyuki Ogata, May 29th 2009, translated from the Japanese by the author.
activities that UNITAR has, in good faith, been organising since 2003 for the purpose of providing a benefit to Hiroshima people, that these activities have been succeeding in doing so for only a small minority of the potential target audience. Furthermore, they indicate that the activities themselves do not actually represent the type of contribution to the local community which the Prefectural authorities would like UNITAR to make. Nakayama’s analysis differs from that of Mizumoto and Ogata with regard to the individuals who have been speaking at the Roundtables, but not with regard to his assessment of their limited overall impact.

The latter commentators list a number of factors which have until now worked against the Roundtables generating wider interest among people in Hiroshima: i) a lack of follow-up activities; ii) topics being not closely related to people’s lives, the activities of the Prefecture or the HPCP; iii) the existence of language barriers; iv) insufficient opportunities for meaningful interaction. In respect of these observations, the author holds that they are significant since they may point towards a blueprint for a more effective forum of interaction between UNITAR and the people of Hiroshima. Moreover, he holds that it is conceivable that the realisation of a new forum could simultaneously serve to address some of the other difficulties which have arisen between the organisation and Hiroshima Prefecture that have been identified earlier in this paper.

11. Conclusion: A possible blueprint for a more mutually-beneficial relationship

A central issue that can be identified in respect of the relationship between Hiroshima Prefecture and UNITAR relates to difficulties in communication, both in terms of communication between the two bodies and communication with the people in their respective surrounding environments. It is the author’s opinion that going back to the negotiations that took place prior to the opening of the Hiroshima Office, lines of communication between the Prefecture and UNITAR have frequently come under strain which has served to undermine the creation of a good working relationship between the
two sides. Furthermore, it can be argued that the specific difficulties that have come to light in respect of the Roundtables can be seen as being symptomatic of the broader communication difficulties that have existed between the Prefecture and UNITAR.

Going back to the pre-opening period, the negotiations that took place in relation to the contentious issues identified by Goto, occurring as they did within an environment that was undermined by the structural weaknesses identified by Fujiwara, represent the beginnings of a relationship which has subsequently failed to develop in a fully frank and open manner. A lack of initial clarity regarding specific policy priorities and a degree of naivety on the Prefectural side in the early 2000s, coupled with a discernible tendency towards inflexibility and bureaucratic rigidity on the part of UNITAR, contributed towards a situation where the latter organisation failed to establish itself in a position where integration with other peacebuilding activities taking place in Hiroshima could be readily facilitated. Subsequently, UNITAR's singular focus on its own training activities, undeniably of a global standard as they are, and its apparent unwillingness to seek involvement with the activities of other peacebuilding actors have hindered the development of solid links between the organisation and local civil society. This situation has been further weakened by what can be seen as a systemic failure on the part of the Prefecture to provide adequate explanations of its own activities in the international sphere to local people, which has been particularly acute in the case of the activities of UNITAR, and this phenomenon is likely not unrelated to the less than perfect relations that have periodically existed between the two sides. Cumulatively, these factors have contributed to an unfortunate state of affairs where a significant percentage of people in Hiroshima are largely unaware of a major area of activity of the Prefectural Government, and especially with regard to the activities of the UN agency that is located in the heart of Hiroshima which is receiving a considerable proportion of the Prefecture's budget for international activities.
Furthermore, with regard to specific activities through which this UN agency can make a tangible contribution towards life in the Prefecture aside from its main focus on facilitating executive training, a reticence on the part of the Prefecture to articulate its desires clearly on this issue coupled with the apparent lack of an effective channel through which to communicate them to UNITAR, has led to a situation where UNITAR Roundtables are almost always attended by no more than 60-70 people, despite the seemingly engaging and charismatic figures invited to speak at them and the best efforts of the staff of the UNITAR Office together with their colleagues at the Prefecture and Municipality.

In recognition of this far from perfect state of affairs, the natural question to ask therefore is how can this situation be improved? With regard to this question, it is the author’s opinion that the observations of the individuals cited in this paper offer potentially incisive strategies for positive change, which principally centre on the necessity for clear and frank dialogue between the Prefecture and UNITAR. The author further holds that the particular issue of the Roundtables could provide a valuable avenue through which such a dialogue could be initiated.

Let us first address the Roundtables. In respect of these events, the principal problem identified on the UNITAR side has been a failure to attract attendees; on the Prefectural side, the problem has been that hitherto many of the topics and the speakers have frequently been largely unrelated to the lives of people in Hiroshima and have therefore failed to capture their interest. Consequently, in relation to this issue, as a first step the author proposes the initiation of a dialogue between the two sides to discuss these problems with a view to identifying more appropriate topics and speakers for the Roundtables, which could possibly draw upon the suggestions put forward above by Mizumoto. Secondly, in order to address the more fundamental issue of the generally limited overall impact of the Roundtables, at a stage where a constructive dialogue has
been established, the Prefecture should take advantage of this forum to suggest alternative activities through which UNITAR can expand its interactions with the local community in order to provide more tangible benefits to it. Considering the position that the Roundtables hold within UNITAR’s mandate and the relative degree of success that they have achieved thus far, it is important to emphasize that these activities would not be put forward with a view to replace the Roundtables, but instead to represent possible alternatives to them which could take place at certain appropriate points in the working calendar.

Regarding the second step therefore, what alternative activities could be considered appropriate? Ogata expressed the view that he wished UNITAR would organise some activities especially for young people, particularly if they could be participatory in nature:

If UNITAR could invite the involvement of young people from Hiroshima Prefecture through some kind of young person’s association, or something simpler like, for example, drawing pictures for peace and these pictures are sent to UN headquarters in New York, then that would be a good idea. That kind of thing UNITAR could definitely do for very little cost, and it would give inspiration to children in Hiroshima\(^{(38)}\).

Mizumoto echoed this emphasis on activities for young people and suggested that if formal links could be established between UNITAR and educational authorities in Hiroshima, then visits on the part of UNITAR staff to schools could be instigated. In this way one could envisage UNITAR staff visiting local schools on a periodic basis to deliver straightforward, factual presentations about the activities of the organisation and

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\(^{(38)}\) Interview with Hiroshima Prefectural Assembly member Naoyuki Ogata, May 29\(^{th}\) 2009.
the UN in general and/or the holding of question and answer sessions on similar topics with groups of students. Alternatively, more in line with Ogata's thinking, students themselves could be invited to produce works of creative writing or art which focus on relevant themes such as international understanding or peacebuilding which are judged by the Director of the Hiroshima Office in order to receive a prize such as a 'UNITAR International Certificate'. It is likely that such activities would not require the allocation of significant time or expenditure on the part of UNITAR, but it is possible that they could potentially prove highly meaningful to young people in the Prefecture.

As a potential third step, should the dialogue between the Prefecture and UNITAR be seen by both sides to be progressing satisfactorily, at a later date it might then be possible to expand the discussion in order to consider additional alternative activities which could take place over a longer time frame. With regard to this thinking, Mizumoto put forward the idea of UNITAR organising training that is specially designed to benefit Hiroshima citizens:

If there was some kind of regular liaison to communicate what is going on at UNITAR or some very basic training about what the UN and UNITAR are doing it would also be good. It's a training institution so can't some effort be directed towards simple training for local citizens? For example, international understanding training: about 20 people could come, it would be carried out in Japanese and English, and then Hiroshima NGO leaders could attend. This would be some type of forum or class directed towards local people, training in a relaxed format, for example a study seminar held once a month which is something separate from the Roundtables. If people came once a month for half a year, they could receive some kind of UNITAR diploma. This would then support network building\(^{(39)}\).
A further idea suggested by both Mizumoto and Fujiwara relates to inviting the participants of UNITAR training workshops to attend community events that are taking place in the Prefecture following the completion of the regular cycle of workshop activities:

What training is actually being done by UNITAR is largely unknown by local people – there is little spill-over effect..... So for the workshop participants who come from many countries, it would be good if there was an opportunity for them to spend a little time with local people. At the end of the workshop if there was an extra day for local events or interactions with local people, this would be very meaningful.(40)

With regard to these suggestions, especially that of UNITAR organising specific training for Hiroshima citizens, it is clear that this could not be facilitated without significant effort on the part of UNITAR which would add to the workload of an office with a very limited staff. In the case of extending the duration of training workshops (which usually run for a period of six days), in addition to the obvious extra planning required, this would also incur supplementary costs for participants' additional accommodation, meals, travel and so on. Therefore if these suggestions were to be formally proposed to UNITAR, the Prefectural side would have to be prepared to bear some of the additional burden in terms of organisation and finance. Furthermore, on the UNITAR side, in all likelihood agreement from Headquarters in Geneva would also be required before such activities could be initiated. However, it is the author's opinion that the mere holding of exploratory discussions over topics such as these could represent a worthwhile exercise for the Prefecture and UNITAR.

(39) Interview conducted with Professor Kazumi Mizumoto of the Hiroshima Peace Institute on April 16th, 2009.
(40) Ibid.
To conclude this paper, the author will offer a response to the following question: if the alternative activities for UNITAR suggested here could be put into effect, what possible positive results could be predicted?

Firstly, with regard to the Roundtables, if frank discussions could be held over the identity of potential speakers and the topics they are to address, which, where appropriate, draw upon the opinions of other interested parties in Hiroshima such as representatives from NGOs and the academic community, it is conceivable that the number of the attendees at the Roundtables would increase, perhaps on a regular basis.

Secondly, with regard to activities through which UNITAR could make a direct contribution towards life in Hiroshima, if the organisation could be encouraged from time to time to carry out activities that are alternatives to and not in place of the Roundtables, a number of potentially meaningful options have been identified for how this could be achieved. In terms of activities specifically for young people, options such as making school visits and/or becoming involved in small-scale educational projects; in terms of activities for adult citizens, in cooperation with the Prefecture, organising simple training in international affairs for local NGO members and/or facilitating international exchange through inviting training workshop participants to attend cultural events that are taking place in the Hiroshima area.

All of these activities would contribute towards raising the profile of UNITAR within Hiroshima which would serve to deepen its ties with the local community. As a consequence, it could be predicted that UNITAR’s training activities could be enhanced through greater interaction and cooperation with local groups who, in turn, could potentially benefit from gaining greater access to UNITAR’s international network and through gaining knowledge of the activities of the organisation itself and those of other agencies in the UN system. This then would represent a mutually-beneficial relation-
ship between UNITAR and the local community, which was the desirable condition initially envisaged in the HPCP prior to the opening of the Hiroshima Office. A further consequence would be a strengthening of UNITAR's position vis-à-vis the Prefectural Government and the Assembly, both institutionally and financially, and hence its own potential long-term operating future in Hiroshima.

Since commencing operations in Hiroshima, the UNITAR Hiroshima Office has been carrying out work of a demonstrably very high standard, but unfortunately due to a number of factors, this fact is largely unknown by the majority of people in the city as its activities are to a large extent unrelated to their everyday lives. However, it is the author's contention that by means of more frank and open lines of communication with its principal partner Hiroshima Prefecture and the adoption of a more generally flexible attitude on its own side, the organisation can not only continue this high quality work in years to come, but can also enhance it through the establishment of a more mutually-beneficial relationship between itself and the people of Hiroshima.

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Naoyuki Ogata, Prefectural Assembly Member for Hiroshima's East Ward（Liberal
Local authority initiatives to strengthen Japan’s international contribution

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