

Fellowship and Wishes for Peace—Condolence Message

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I express my sincere condolence on the passing of Mrs Lupita Turner, the dedicated Secretary General of the WEF, sharing some memories of my time with her. The first time I attended an international conference outside Japan was the 43rd WEF Bulgaria International Conference at Sofia University in August 2006. As I was feeling uneasy in a foreign country, it was Mrs Turner who kindly approached me. She was a warm and lovely person who spoke to and welcomed each participant and truly embodied the fellowship spirit of the WEF. She had a strong sense of mission to protect the fellowship and I believe she carried out that spirit herself.

Mrs Turner and Professor David Turner, her husband, continued to attend the annual conference of the Japan Section, almost every year. It was as if they were members of the Japan Section, so much so that it seemed natural for us to meet them in Japan. They valued the fellowship of the WEF, which was born as an international link.

During a two-month research stay from 1 August to 30 September 2018, I had the opportunity to undertake research stays in Germany and the UK with the support of Tamagawa University. In Germany, Professor Ralf Koerrenz, who later became an influential member of the Germany Section of the WEF, provided me with a research environment. In the UK, I was based at Cambridge University and UCL, where I researched valuable materials from the NEF period. The research at UCL in particular was supported by Mr and Mrs Turner, with whom I still remember our friendly tours around London.

I would like to present here one photograph (Fig. 1). This is 6 September 2018, when I had a meeting with Ms Christine Wykes, Chair of WEF UK Headquarters, Mr and Mrs Turner near London Bridge. Over an authentic afternoon tea, I reported on the preparations for the WEF Tokyo International Conference to be held in 2021 and shared various topics, including the conference theme, schedule and management.

In retrospect, it was a day when we still had no idea that the Corona disaster was about to happen. As you know, the year 2021 marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the NEF, the predecessor of the WEF. This photograph is a memory of that day when we were surrounded by such bright hopes of holding an international conference to review the footsteps of the NEF and WEF over the past century and to look to the future. The pandemic that then struck us cruelly shattered our hopes. But we did not give up.



Fig. 1, L-R: In a group photo with Mr and Mrs Turner, and Ms Christine Wykes, Chair of WEF International in 2018, London, UK

Although the Corona disaster was still ongoing, from 11-13 September 2021, the WEF Japan Section took the lead in organising a fully online international conference, ‘The WEF 100th Anniversary: The 45th World Education Fellowship Tokyo International Conference’. The theme was ‘100 Years of *New Education*: Towards the Future of the Children of the World’. This conference was made possible with the help of the UK HQ, the India Section and the Germany Section.

On 13 September, the last day of the Congress, Mrs Lupita Turner spoke about the founder of the NEF, Beatrice Ensor (Fig. 2). Describing Ensor as ‘an extraordinary woman of her time’, Mrs Turner said that the NEF by Ensor had a major influence on the creation of UNESCO; that since 1966, the NEF has been a UNESCO NGO, renamed WEF and continues to this day; and that on 15 September 1987, the WEF was appointed a ‘UN Peace Messenger’ in recognition of its significant contribution to the 1986 International Year of Peace, which was declared by the UN General Assembly.

Like a light shining through dark times, the NEF (the WEF afterward) born from the thoughts of one woman, has been making progress for 100 years. On the occasion of its centenary, Mrs Turner returned to the origins of the NEF and reminded us that our association is a peace-loving organisation overlapping with UNESCO, which has developed peace activities in many fields, including education, science and culture. Perhaps she saw herself in Ensor 100 years ago and wanted to vigorously move our association towards a peaceful future. I am now deeply mindful of the message she left us.



Figure 2: Mr & Mrs Turner—Mrs Turner spoke via zoom about WEF’s predecessor, NEF on the 13 September 2021, the last day of WEF Japan’s –organised 100 centenary WEF Conference.

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