

**Letter from the Chairman, no 14
Stockholm October 29th 2015**
Dear members and friends of the World Taxpayers Associations!

The world is becoming a better place to live. The progress is dramatic. Hard to believe with all the hypothesis around the “climate change”. The best news is that for the first time in history the ration of “extreme poverty” has fallen under 10%, according to the World Bank. As recently as 1981 half the people of the world lived under such conditions. And even in real numbers the decline is from 3.8 billion to 700 million. The poorest countries showed the most dramatic improvements and the difference between the countries with the highest vs the lowest standard of “human development” shrank with one third.

The number of nations with regular, democratic elections have tripled since the 1970’s, according to Freedom House. Even the number of wars have fallen by 60 percent. As the living standard increases in the wake of freer trade and better systems for business, governments and regulations, so does education levels and in the end more efficient use of resources and energy.

Still we have over 600,000 dying every year from malaria and over 1 million from TBC. In comparison in the Ebola crises 20,000 died. It is within reach to eradicate these diseases. Bjorn Lomberg, the head of Copenhagen Consensus Center has pointed out that with a fraction of the tax money the UN and others want to spend on uncertain projects to fight “climate change” in the third world we could eradicate these diseases and as a “bonus” get a number of efficiencies including better use of energy. Here is a link to his most recent syndicated articles on energy efficiency and subsidies;
<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/wind-power-wasted-subsidies-by-bj-rn-lomborg-2F15-10>

**In Europe the Flood of Migrants Continue**
I have to comment on this again – it is a dramatic change for everything, and conflicts between the European nations are not far away.

First the majority of migrants are not actually from Syria – the numbers from Afghanistan and Iraq and other nations – even Pakistan – have risen dramatically. Those from “safe countries” should not merit residence unless in special cases, but many go underground immediately after crossing the open borders. And the processing is complicated and takes time – up to a year or more. The cost is sky rocketing. The cost estimation in Sweden has doubled since the summer. The government’s budget is no longer valid. The number of migrants is now ten times those in the Scandinavian neighbouring countries. The politicians have reached a general agreement across the party lines to have less generous terms, but the difference is small.

I went this week to a boarding house in our community taking in new arrivals, mainly from our central station. Those I saw were mainly men probably age 25-35. On the list of items they hoped people would contribute one item stood out – smart phones!

Unfortunately in Sweden there have also been violent reactions – this year 18 boarding houses for refugees have been burnt down and we just had the first, racially based school killing where three were killed and another three badly wounded in a school with primarily immigrant pupils.  In another town a refugee from an African country killed two in an IKEA store in bitterness from not getting permanent residency.

In Slovenia, the Prime Minister just stated that the EU and Europe as we know it are at risk if the EU does not manage to deal with the situation in total. The small country of Slovenia is now the main transit country after Hungary closed its borders.

How long will it keep on? No one knows. The reactions have been of a temporary nature, but foreign policy experts see little change in the background situation in a five year perspective!

**New WTA Contacts and Much Activity!**
We are very pleased that our network continues to expand. The battle for more transparency and less corruption leading to lower taxes is spreading to countries where these kind of efforts previously would not have been possible.

Here are some of the newer members of our network and links to their activities:

**Zambia.** The National Taxpayers Association of Zambia [NTA of Zambia] is run by Muyunda Sibote Sununu and Vince Chipatuka. They have a growing organization with a board of directors. Muyunda used to work for the government and monitored imports and exports into the country, and witnessed first-hand the government corruption. NTA is launching to bring transparency and accountability to the government as it relates to taxation and government spending. You can see their most recent analysis of the 2016 Budget –http:// https://attachment.fbsbx.com/file\_download.php?id=846862552100793&eid=ASuwEXCr3Ccst5gD115Zptz3bas\_xJjjFmL8RzjxQdDt2BHpWtkF-RdTUSV7eKNwKnU&inline=1&ext=1446141434&hash=ASt1nk8TgnPKXgr\_

**Ghana**. Frank Asiedo Bekoe and his team at Taxpayers Alliance Ghana continue the bold criticism of poor follow up on public expenses and excessive undeclared costs within the government itself. Their latest press report deals with the rapidly rising public debt ratio – in spite of a growth in the GNP related partly to new oil discoveries. You can follow their daily activities on their Twitter account
<https://twitter.com/TpaGhana>

**Spain.** A new – and probably the first – Taxpayers group in Spain has been started by Juan Pina. Called Union de Contribuyentes he is eager to learn and get support. He has also launched the free market think tank Foundation for the Advancement of Liberty. Here are links to those home pages:
<http://contribuyentes.es/>  and [http://www.fundalib.org](http://www.fundalib.org/)

**Ireland.** The Hibernia Forum, a free market think tank, is now part of our network as they focus also on tax issues. <http://www.hiberniaforum.ie/>. Eamon Delaney is the leader of the organization, who many of you met at European Resource Bank in Istanbul this year.
Next month I hope to be able to write you more about groups in the **Czech Republic, Slovenia, Kenya, and Nepal.**

**Open the Books – American Transparency**
Adam Andrazejewski of American Transparency has revealed the size and force of the bureaucracy in the US Environment Protection Agency, EPA.
here is a link to his Forbes editorial : <http://www.forbes.com/sites/adamandrzejewski/2015/10/21/the-climate-change-liberation-army-and-u-s-environmental-protection-agency-epa-adventurism/>
In a major report they go into the details of $108 billion EPA contracts, grants, salaries and bonuses etc. An example what can be achieved by pursuing openness and summarizing information.

**The WTA Conference in Berlin, March 2016**
We have a great program coming together with exciting speakers and experts from many countries. We will send you a special report on this with information and links. The time is **March 16-19th 2016**, **in Berlin, Germany**. Just again the reminder for those who may need visas or would like to apply for scholarships to contact us soon, as these processes take time. Send and e-mail to Sarah Elliott at sarah.elliott@worldtaxpayers.org.

**Suggested Reading**
Here is a link with an interesting graph from the site **Human Progress** how life expectancy in the world has gone from 54 years to around 70 years in about 50 years! And how this relates to freer markets.
<http://humanprogress.org/blog/what-washington-post-gets-wrong-about-free-markets>

You might find other interesting background information on this site, focusing on how the world in general is becoming a better place to live! A good site to explore for facts and ideas as background to comments you might write or speeches.

Do write me or Sarah any comments or ideas or how we might help you at the early stages of your efforts or for ideas how other groups have dealt with specific issues. We want you to benefit from our exciting network and its wealth of experience and connections!

Best wishes,
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