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Corporate Plan Output: Public Accountability	

The purpose of this report is to advise Councillors of a request from the New Zealand Forum for United Nations Renewal. The report is based on information which the forum has supplied.

### **BACKGROUND**

From the early 1980s, non-governmental organisations and interested individuals have been joining a worldwide people's movement to help make the United Nations more democratic and proposals for the establishment of a UN Second (peoples) Assembly, have slowly been gathering momentum. These proposals stem from the vision of several UN founding members who, in 1945, saw the need for a "UN world assembly, elected directly from the people of the world as a whole, to whom governments who form the United Nations are responsible" as a "completion of the development of the United Nations" (both quotes by Ernest Bevin, former UK Foreign Secretary).

### **PROPOSAL**

The United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in his report to the General Assembly on "Renewing the UN: A Programme for Reform", recommended that the General Assembly Session in the Year 2000 "be a Millennium Assembly focusing on preparing the UN to meet the major challenges and needs of the world community in the 21st century, and be accompanied by a companion 'People's Assembly'". The proposal provides an opportunity for people everywhere to join in the preparations for such a Millennium People's Assembly.

The New Zealand Forum for United Nations Renewal is part of the reform movement and is supportive of this initiative.

### **LOCAL INITIATIVES**

Councillor Close chaired a meeting of the NZ Forum held at the Civic offices on 10 March this year. At the meeting, a progress report was presented on the preparations for the Millennium People's Forum which will be held in the Year 2000 at the United Nations.

The people of Christchurch were also asked to further the work of the Forum for UN Renewal and to organise a steering committee to plan for citizens', or "town hall" meetings, possibly on a twice-yearly basis, such meetings to be chaired by the Mayor or a Councillor. Councillor Close has agreed to serve on the steering committee. The President of UNANZ had already sent out an introductory letter to all New Zealand mayors, and it is hoped that a major meeting of UNANZ to be held in conjunction with the Local Government Association Conference in July would embrace the launch of these nation-wide citizens' meetings. The Mayor may be asked to chair one of these meetings.

The constituents of New Zealand city and district councils will have the opportunity to make their concerns known, and the answers to the questions will be collated and grouped together under the general headings of what is being proposed for the agenda of the Millennium People's Forum, or Assembly - e.g. security and disarmament, humanitarian issues, environmental concerns, economic justice, democratic governance, access to international law instruments.

**Chairman's**

**Recommendation:** That the information be received.