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Between



United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS)
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UN UPDATE

DEPUTY S-G MEETS WITH NGOS

UN Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro held a discussion with representatives of non-governmental and civil society organizations on 2 May 2007 at UN headquarters on system-wide coherence in development, humanitarian assistance and the environment.

The luncheon discussion was an opportunity for the attendees to share their thoughts on the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report of the High-Level Panel (A/61/836).

The 20 participants, including 16 experts and high-level officials of NGOs, closely followed the work of the High-Level Panel throughout 2006.

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GA ELECTS PRESIDENT 62nd SESSION

On 24 May 2007, the General Assembly elected Srgjan Kerim of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as its President for the upcoming 62nd Session of the General Assembly, which will begin on 18 September 2007.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called Mr. Kerim "a seasoned diplomat, a prolific scholar and a successful businessman."

Following his election, Mr. Kerim said he would discharge his duties in a balanced, considered and forthright manner, with utmost respect for the dignity of every single Member State.

Stressing the importance of effective multilateralism, he said the Assembly must deal as much as possible with substance and that revitalization was much more than procedural improvements. Climate change, globalization, terrorism, immigration and sustainable development could not be entirely solved within national borders or at the regional level, he stressed. The Organization had also experienced failures, but the main causes of that should not always be sought in the deficiencies inherent in the UN system, but, at times, in the lack of political will of individual Member States to cooperate within the multilateral framework, he said.

WFP: NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Josette Sheeran (United States) became the eleventh Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) in April 2007.

Before joining WFP, Ms. Sheeran served as Under Secretary for Economic, Energy and Agricultural Affairs at the United States Department of State.

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HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE FOR PEACE

On 25 May, the General Assembly adopted, without a vote, a resolution to convene in October a high-level dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace.

By the terms of the text on the high-level dialogue (A/61/L.60), the Assembly decides to hold the gathering during three plenary meetings from 4-5 October 2007, at the ministerial or highest possible level. It also decides to hold an informal

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Co-chairs on Coherence

General Assembly President Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa has appointed Ambassador Hackett (Permanent Representative of Barbados) and Ambassador Hoscheit (Permanent Ambassador of Luxembourg) to Co-Chair, on her behalf, the consultations on the Report of the Secretary-General entitled Recommendations contained in the Report of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment, as well as the report of the High-level Panel itself.

interactive hearing on 4 October, chaired by the General Assembly President, with representatives of civil society and the private sector.

The text requests the Assembly President to determine the informal interactive hearing's list of invited participants and, in consultation with Member States, its format and organization, as well as the preparation of an informational note on the hearing's organization of work.

DEPUTY S-G MEETS WITH NGOS (CONT. FROM P.1)

Attendees shared concerns with the DSG that the Secretary-General's report reflects a narrow view of development limited to aid effectiveness and warned against a "one size fits all" approach. Participants also underlined the importance of strengthening the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in order to put the UN back in the centre of development work.

Participants agreed that the environmental pillar, one of three elements outlined in the High-Level Panel's terms of reference, is underrepresented in terms of political status and needs to be strengthened.

They welcomed the report's recommendations in the area of gender and expressed their support for the establishment of a new UN unit on gender equality and women's empowerment.

Ms. Migiro announced that there will be a detailed review of the Secretary-General's report by the President of the General Assembly and the GA membership to discuss and carry forward the different recommendations. How the Member States will react and organize themselves will be very important in guiding the Organization in the details of the individual recommendations, she said.

The luncheon was organized by the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS) and co-hosted by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

The attendees represented large organizations from the North and South, as well as NGOs with a local or grassroots focus.

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WFP: NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (CONT. FROM P.1)

In 2006, she was appointed by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to the High-level UN Panel on System-wide Coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment. As part of the UN Panel, Ms. Sheeran conducted hundreds of interviews with development and humanitarian experts, NGOs and national leaders throughout the world.

Ms. Sheeran was appointed to the post of WFP Executive Director at the end of 2006 by Mr. Annan and FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf and her appointment was unanimously approved by the WFP Executive Board. Ms. Sheeran succeeds James T. Morris, also of the United States, who served a term of five years.

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UNHCR/UNAIDS: IDPs AND AIDS

The first global consultation on HIV and internally displaced people took place in Geneva from 24-25 April, bringing together some 45 experts from governments, UN agencies, NGOs and the academic world.

The consultation, convened by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), was the first of its kind to be held specifically to address the effects of HIV on internally displaced populations (IDPs).

"This is a neglected area where the needs are great but we frankly don't know enough about the various situations," Paul Spiegel, head of UNHCR's HIV unit, said. "This is only the beginning of a process which, hopefully, will help us identify gaps, plan joint programmes and improve services for IDPs."

Like refugees, internally displaced persons are civilians who have been victims of violence, persecution or human rights violations, or who have been forced out of their homes by conflict. But, unlike refugees, IDPs remain in their own country.

"Even in the absence of large amounts of data, there is no doubt that internally displaced people are a unique group with special HIV needs," said Elhadj As Sy, Director of Communications and External Relations at the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). "Many will have suffered from trauma and violence, including sexual violence, during conflict. Some remain anonymous for various reasons, including security concerns, making their access to HIV services difficult."

Displaced people, however, are not necessarily more vulnerable to HIV infection, Mr. Spiegel indicated. "In the case of refugees, people at first believed that they had higher HIV prevalence than host communities, but this proved not to be the case. We need to do more research on the effects of displacement on HIV infection.

"It is not possible to have a single approach to all these situations. The situation in each country, and sometimes even in each region within a country, is completely different," Mr. Spiegel said. "We hope that we will learn from the different experiences of those attending the consultations. We need everybody to become involved."

The consultation was held to raise awareness and result in more effective joint advocacy and programming, as well as in more research on HIV and IDP issues. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre of the Norwegian Refugee Council, there are some 24.5 million conflict-related IDPs in at least 52 countries around the world. Between 70% and 80% of them are women and children. The countries with the largest internally displaced populations are Sudan, Colombia, Iraq, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Under the general umbrella of the Office of the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, UNHCR has been given the lead role in overseeing the protection and shelter needs of IDPs as well as the coordination and management of camps. Other UN agencies have adopted similar roles in the areas of water, nutrition, health, logistics and telecommunications.

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Preparations for Doha

Ambassador Maged A. Abdelaziz Abdelaziz (Egypt) and Ambassador Johan Ludvik Løvvald (Norway) have been requested by UN General Assembly President Sheikh Haya Rashed Al Khalifa to lead the consultation process to prepare a "Follow-up Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus" to be held in Qatar in the second half of 2008.

Member States of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) elected Hamadoun I. Touré of Mali as Secretary-General of ITU for a four-year term during the 17th ITU Plenipotentiary Conference.

Addressing the Conference after the results of the vote, Mr Touré told the 1,500 delegates from around the world that he would work with transparency, objectivity and vigour to realize the two main objectives that were central to his campaign: to eliminate the digital divide and to ensure that cyberspace would become more secure. He said, "The Millennium Development Goals that were endorsed by all the world's leaders as well as the WSIS [World Summit on the Information Society] resolutions are the ingredients we need to get down to work."

Montenegro Joins UNESCO
On 2 March 2007, Montenegro became the 192nd Member State of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Before Montenegro, Brunei Darussalam became a Member State of UNESCO in 2005. In 2003, Timor-Leste joined the Organization and the United States of America returned. Montenegro joined the United Nations Organization in June 2006.

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ILO, UNDP: PROMOTING DECENT WORK

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) have agreed to strengthen their collaboration and partnership in a new effort to bolster UN actions designed to reduce poverty and create more decent work.

ILO Director-General Juan Somavia and UNDP Administrator Kemal Dervis signed the joint agreement on 9 February 2007, which is designed to promote inclusive economic growth with social development to benefit the bottom 20%-40% of the population, and bolster UN efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

"We urgently need much more inclusive growth," the joint letter signed by the two agency heads said. "Although we live at a time of unprecedented prosperity; it is also one of exploding inequalities that hamper poverty reduction. Alongside democratic participation, we need economic empowerment, which means decent work for all."

The agreement is a direct follow-up to the 2006 UN Economic and Social Council Ministerial Declaration on decent work and full employment and a practical step towards the implementation of UN system efforts to "deliver as one," (see *Go Between 110 & 111*).

The two agencies have already identified a number of countries which offer the greatest opportunities for combined support from UNDP and the ILO to work together towards making decent work a central element in UN country programmes. The agreement is open to other UN agencies and funds and programmes and will contribute to ongoing UN reform efforts.

The new partnership will give concrete expression to the requirements of UN Resident Coordinators leading UN country teams in more than 130 countries, to be strong and effective advocates of the entire UN agenda. It could also serve as a model for expanded interagency work, in particular

for the role and participation of specialized agencies in the framework of the new Resident Coordinator system.

Given UNDP's coordination role, the agreement will be instrumental in advancing the Decent Work Agenda in UN Member States and will provide a boost to the current level of participation by the ILO in UN country programmes. ILO will conduct a training programme for UN Resident Coordinators in selected countries and their ILO counterparts at its Turin Centre to broaden understanding of the Decent Work Agenda and map strategies to link decent work country programmes with UN country programmes and national frameworks for coordination and programming.

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ILO: DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORLD OF WORK

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has launched a report on the state of discrimination in the world of work, its most comprehensive report on discrimination to date. It examines the status of traditional and new forms of discrimination and analyses progress in combating them at the national and global levels.

Entitled *Equality at work: Tackling the challenges*, the report highlights newly emerging forms of discrimination, such as unfair treatment in hiring of younger and older workers, people with disabilities, those living with HIV/AIDS, on the basis of sexual orientation, and others. The report also explores the new challenges stemming from the emergence of practices that penalize people with a genetic predisposition to developing certain diseases or who have lifestyle issues considered unhealthy, such as tobacco use and obesity.

The traditional forms of discrimination based on gender, age, race and social origin, caste or indigenouness affecting

millions of people, remain stubbornly resistant to all efforts, including legal ones. Law enforcement remains weak while in many countries offices that have been created to deal with discrimination aren't properly staffed or funded. While anti-discrimination efforts are increasing in the formal economy, a growing informal economy represents a vast and moving target for public policies seeking to remove obstacles preventing hundreds of millions of people from enjoying equal opportunities at work.

A major theme is the persistence of gender gaps in employment and pay and the need for integrated policies addressing sex discrimination in remuneration and occupational segregation by sex, while reconciling work and family responsibilities. For example, the report states that throughout the European Union, the difference in average gross hourly earnings between women and men across the economy throughout all establishments has remained high at 15%.

The report recommends a series of steps to combat discrimination and achieve the ILO's proposed action plan. These include promoting gender equality through more integrated and better-coordinated global action; mainstreaming non-discrimination and equality into ILO Decent Work Country Programmes taking into account specific needs of different groups; enacting better laws and promoting better enforcement; more effective non-regulatory initiatives such as government purchasing, and lending and investment policies; and helping workers and employers make equality a reality at the workplace through mechanisms such as collective bargaining agreements and codes of conduct.

Equality at work: Tackling the challenges is available on the ILO website.

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ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has appointed the former Portuguese president

Jorge Sampaio as the first United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, the international initiative set up in 2005 to promote reconciliation between religions, cultures and nations (see *Go Between 111*).

Mr. Ban designated Mr. Sampaio in the post after consulting with Spain and Turkey, the co-sponsors of the Alliance, which was created to try to tackle fear and suspicion, bridge divides and overcome prejudices and polarizations between Islam and the West.

"The High Representative will provide the vision and leadership required, especially to promote the Alliance of Civilizations as a credible and viable attempt to diminish the dangerous tensions between diverse societies and their threat to international stability," Mr. Ban's spokesperson told reporters.

In November 2006, the Alliance's High-Level Group issued a report calling for a series of measures in education, media, youth and migration to build bridges between different communities and promote a culture of respect. It also recommended the creation of a High Representative post to assist the Secretary-General to try to defuse crises that arise at the intersection of culture and politics, along with measures aimed at restarting the Middle East peace process and encouraging political pluralism in Muslim countries. The report is available online.

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ENVOYS ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Boosting the UN's commitment to fighting global warming, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has appointed three Special Envoys on Climate Change. The envoys—former Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, former South Korean Foreign Minister Han Seung soo and former Chilean President Ricardo Lagos—will work with Mr. Ban and political leaders around the world on fostering new climate change negotiations.

Speaking at a press conference on 8 May at UN headquarters, the Special Envoys said

Int'l Day of UN Peacekeepers

To commemorate the International Day of UN Peacekeepers, observed on 29 May, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon paid tribute to the memory of the more than 100 United Nations personnel who lost their lives in the cause of peace during 2006 and pledged to safeguard the security of those now working in operations across the world.

At a solemn wreath-laying ceremony at UN headquarters in New York, Mr. Ban pointed out that UN operations are a model of burden-sharing among countries "but we must never forget that the brunt of this burden is borne by individuals."

After observing a moment of silence along with dozens of UN uniformed and civilian personnel who have worked on missions in some of the most dangerous parts of the world, Mr. Ban noted that a number of those present had lost colleagues and friends.

"For those who survived, we are thankful," he said. "For those who lost their lives, we are that much more determined to honour their selfless dedication and courage, by continuing to work for peace and security in the world's most troubled regions."

Last year marked the fourth in a row when more than 100 men and women died in the service of UN peacekeeping, Mr. Ban noted. "Now, with our deployment at a record high, more soldiers, police and civilian staff face danger in places like Sudan, the Middle East and Haiti," he said, citing the recent killing of Lieutenant-Colonel Ehab Nazih, a UN peacekeeper from Egypt working in Darfur, as but the latest example of this.

"I cannot accept the risks as the 'cost of doing business,'" Mr. Ban said, pledging to "do everything possible to safeguard the security and safety of our UN personnel in the field, from advocating robust mandates to ensuring they have the equipment they need to carry them out."

Peacekeeping missions across the world also commemorated the day.

International Polar Year Launched

The International Polar Year (IPY) 2007-2008 officially began on 1 March 2007. IPY is a programme of the International Council for Science (ICSU) and the UN World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

The IPY projects will focus on learning about the past, present and future environmental status of the polar regions, while advancing understanding about the interactions between those regions and the rest of the globe. They will also investigate the frontiers of science in the polar regions, and use the unique vantage point of the polar regions and develop observatories from the interior of the Earth to the Sun and the cosmos beyond. In addition, the projects will investigate the cultural, historical and social processes that shape the sustainability of circumpolar human societies.

To assure full and equal coverage of the Arctic and the Antarctic, IPY 2007-2008 will actually cover two full annual cycles, from March 2007 to March 2009. It represents the largest polar research programme in 50 years, with a major focus on global warming, and will involve over 200 projects with scientists from over 60 nations examining physical, biological and social research topics.

Further information is available online: (www.ipy.org).

that at a time of unprecedented awareness of the dangers of climate change, nations must adopt a common front to balance economic growth with responsible energy consumption and environmental protection.

They pledged to assist the Secretary-General in convincing Heads of State and Government, as well as other major stakeholders, to reach consensus on stemming the growth of greenhouse gas emissions, in accordance with the Kyoto Protocol, before a proposed high-level meeting in September or the climate change conference scheduled for December in Bali.

IPCC: MITIGATION OF CLIMATE CHANGE

According to a new report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)—the scientific body examining global climate research—measures to mitigate global warming can be undertaken at reasonable cost. The report was released on 4 May in Bangkok following international consultations. Addressing the short, medium (until 2030) and long term (after 2030), the report states that growth in greenhouse gas emissions can be curbed through a series of measures ranging from efforts to boost renewable energy use and increase energy efficiency to curbing deforestation.

Stressing the urgency of taking action, the report lists mitigation practices and technologies by sector, examining both those commercially available at present and those projected to be commercialized by 2030. While “no one sector or technology can address the entire mitigation challenge,” the technologies with the greatest potential include energy supply, transport, buildings, industry, agriculture, forestry and waste. The report stresses that energy efficiency “plays a key role across many scenarios for most regions and timescales.”

Entitled *Mitigation of Climate Change*, the report is the third in a series of four comprehensive assessment reports that examine the effects of global climate change, to be completed by the end of 2007. The first report—an overview of the science of global warming—was issued in February and concluded that it is “very likely,” or at least 90% certain, that mankind is to blame for most of the warming in the

last half century (see *Go Between 112*). A second report, released in April, highlighted the global impacts of climate change, noting that the most vulnerable populations will be hardest hit.

The new report underlines the urgency of implementing mitigation measures. At the launch of the report, IPCC Chair Rajendra Pachauri stressed that “we don’t have the luxury of time.” Many researchers believe that keeping concentrations below 450 parts per million (ppm) of atmospheric carbon dioxide is necessary to keep the average global temperature increase below two degrees centigrade, avoiding major climate change disruption. However, the lower the stabilisation level aimed for, the sooner greenhouse gas emissions would have to peak and then start to decline. Efforts over the next two to three decades will have a large impact on what can be achieved in the longer term.

The IPCC singles out the building sector as a major potential contributor to climate change mitigation. Measures to be taken include installing efficient lighting, heating, cooling and insulation systems. Potential barriers in the sector include limited availability of technology and financing, limitations inherent in building design, and the lack of appropriate portfolios of policies and programmes. Such barriers are higher in developing than developed countries.

Energy production and consumption are key contributors to climate change, and mitigation measures in the sector include improving efficiency and fuel-switching to alternate energy sources such as nuclear, hydro, solar and bio-energy. The IPCC also highlights the potential for developing combined heat and power generation and carbon dioxide capture and storage.

The report also highlights the importance of biomass from agriculture and dedicated energy crops as bioenergy feedstock, but cautions that widespread use of agricultural land for biomass production for energy may compete with other land uses and could have either positive or negative impacts on environment, and implications for food security.

The IPCC further stressed that forest-related mitigation activities could have a considerable impact. Sixty-five percent of total mitigation potential is located in the tropics and about 50% of the total could be

achieved by reducing emissions from deforestation. The report also notes that sustainable development benefits, such as employment, biodiversity conservation, and poverty alleviation, can be derived from mitigation projects.

The IPCC report lists a number of policies and instruments targeting producers and consumers that countries could choose from based on the criteria of environmental effectiveness, cost effectiveness, distributional effects (including equity) and institutional feasibility. These policy instruments include, among other things, regulations and standards, taxes and charges, tradable permits, financial incentives, and voluntary agreements. The report notes that climate change policies should be integrated into broader development policies.

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HEALTH WORKER MIGRATION POLICY INITIATIVE

The Health Worker Migration Policy Initiative held its first meeting on 15 May at World Health Organization (WHO) headquarters in Geneva. The initiative, led by Mary Robinson, President of Realizing Rights: the Ethical Globalization Initiative, and Francis Omaswa, Executive Director of the Global Health Workforce Alliance (GHWA), aims at finding practical solutions to the worsening problem of health worker migration from developing to developed countries.

The Policy Initiative is made up of two groups that will work closely together over the coming months to develop recommendations. The Migration Technical Working Group, which is being coordinated by WHO, brings together the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Labour Organization (ILO), professional associations, experts and academics. The Health Worker Global Policy Advisory Council, under the leadership of Ms. Robinson and Mr. Omaswa and with Realizing Rights serving as its Secretariat, is made up of senior figures from developed and developing countries, who will develop a roadmap and a framework for a global code of practice for health worker migration and

seek high-level political backing for its recommendations.

A recent study, entitled *Sub-Saharan Africa: Beyond the health worker migration crisis*, has shown that the number of foreign-trained doctors has tripled in several Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries over the past three decades. The number of foreign-trained doctors from countries with chronic shortages of health workers is relatively small (less than 10% of the workforce) in developed countries. However, for some African countries, the migration of a few dozen doctors can mean losing more than 30% of their workforce, even as basic health needs remain unmet.

Other health professions are also affected by this phenomenon. The study showed that in Swaziland, 60 to 80 nurses migrate to the United Kingdom each year, while fewer than 90 graduate from Swazi schools. GHWA partner and member Save the Children UK estimates that the United Kingdom saved £65 million in training costs between 1998 and 2005 by recruiting Ghanaian health workers.

One of the initiative's first priorities will be to support WHO in drafting a framework for an International Code of Practice on Health Worker Migration, as called for by a resolution of the World Health Assembly in 2004. This framework will promote ethical recruitment, the protection of migrant health workers' rights and remedies for addressing the economic and social impact of health worker migration in developing countries. The Code of Practice will be the first of its kind on a global scale for migration.

The initiative will also promote good practices and strategies to enable countries to increase supply and retain their health workers more effectively. The new tools and policy recommendations developed by the initiative will support better management of migration through North-South collaboration.

Mr. Omaswa emphasized the importance of addressing both the "push" and "pull" factors simultaneously. "Health workers are a valued and scarce resource. Demand is increasing worldwide, but not enough are being trained – in the developed or the developing world. Developing countries must prioritize health and health workers, with better working conditions and incentives so its workforce can stay and be more efficient,

Int'l Year of Languages

GA resolution A/61/L.5 6 proclaims 2008 the International Year of Languages, pursuant to the resolution adopted by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at its 33rd session on 20 October 2005. The GA resolution invites UNESCO to serve as the lead agency for the Year.

It also invites Member States, the UN system and all other relevant stakeholders to develop, support and intensify activities aimed at fostering respect for and the promotion and protection of all languages (in particular endangered languages) and linguistic diversity and multilingualism.

The resolution also reaffirms the need to achieve full parity among the six official languages on the UN websites, and encourages the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to develop multilingual UN websites. It reaffirms that the UN website is an essential tool for the media, NGOs, educational institutions, Member States and the general public, and reiterates the continued need for efforts by the Department of Public Information to maintain and improve it.

World Language Documentation Centre

The World Language Documentation Centre (WLDC), which comprises world-renowned experts in language technologies, linguistics, terminology standardization, and localization, was officially launched on 9 May 2007 at the offices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris.

The aims and objectives of the WLDC include the promotion of multilingualism in cyberspace and the maintenance and sustainability of the wealth of information about the languages of the world.

The launch of a World Centre is due, in part, to a significant expansion to a series of international standards that are fundamental to a number of information systems and the need to encapsulate a broad range of linguistic and technical expertise.

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) publishes the standards that result in identifiers, referred to by some as metadata such as "en" and "fr" being used in computer systems to stand for "English" and "French," respectively.

Until this year, there were about 400 such identifiers in ISO standards; early in 2007 this number was expanded to over 7,500, and 2008 is expected to see this number expand way beyond 30,000.

More information is available online: (www.the.wldc.org).

while developed countries must train more of their youth and try to be self-sufficient."

The Health Worker Migration Policy Initiative is due to make initial policy recommendations by the end of 2008. Its operations are co-funded and coordinated by Realizing Rights, the Global Health Workforce Alliance, and the MacArthur Foundation.

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GLOBAL COMPACT: ETHICAL TEAS

A Sri Lankan company has introduced two new "ethical" teas of the Ceylon variety, the first products ever to be jointly branded with the United Nations Global Compact to promote responsible corporate citizenship around the world by including information on the initiative's ten principles in packs sold to millions of consumers each year.

The launch of the products coincides with the start of the "A Home for Every Plantation Worker" project, in which Mabroc Teas will work to improve the lives of 10,000 families involved in the production of the tea in Sri Lanka's Kelani Valley.

"For every pack of Mabroc Single Garden and Valley teas sold, we pledge a minimum of 1.5 US cents to this programme," the company's Chairman Bandula Jayasekera said at UN headquarters in New York. He also noted that through the programme, "we make a difference to better the lives of our workers by improving their living conditions, their environment, supporting health and nutrition, creating capacity-building initiatives and empowering communities."

Every box of the teas will include a leaflet explaining the principles of the Global Compact, an initiative bringing together businesses, governments, UN agencies, labour and civil society organizations to promote ten universal principles in the areas of human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption. The information is provided in five languages and the teas are shipped to some 40 countries each year.

"We believe that this story is of great importance and we hope that it will inspire many others," said Georg Kell, Executive Director of the Global Compact. The new brand of teas not only promotes the Global Compact, but "also at the same time implements the principles and gives practical meaning to it for the many, many people who are working on plantations," he noted.

Since its launch in 2000, the Global Compact has 3,800 participants, including almost 3,000 businesses from around the world.

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UNFPA: INT'L DAY OF THE MIDWIFE

According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), one woman dies every minute from complications in pregnancy or childbirth somewhere in the world which adds up to 14,000 women each day. They die from lack of family planning, skilled birth attendance or emergency obstetric care. Each minute, 110 women experience complications from their pregnancy. In Africa, 1 in 16 women risk dying from these complications. In a developed country, the risk drops dramatically to 1 in 2,800. Despite many efforts, an unacceptable number of women continue to die in childbirth, for a variety of reasons.

Increasingly, maternal health is interlinked with a number of other issues that exacerbate reproductive health, including women's poverty, deeply rooted gender inequities, poor education, conflicts, natural disaster, lack of empowerment and social exclusion. The AIDS epidemic has complicated pregnancy outcomes, strained public health budgets and overwhelmed health care systems. Tuberculosis and parasitic diseases, such as malaria, continue to exact a high toll on health and health care. In some countries, maternal mortality rates have risen.

Many of the women who die in childbirth could have been saved if a skilled birth attendant, such as a nurse or midwife, had

been present. To help increase awareness around the shortage of midwives and other factors impacting maternal and infant health, International Day of Midwives is celebrated each year on 5 May. This year's theme is "Midwives reach out to women – wherever they live."

UNFPA Executive Director Thoraya Obaid, in her message commemorating the day, paid tribute to midwives around the world. "In every country, women and families count on midwives to ensure a safe delivery and healthy newborn. Midwives make a tremendous contribution to the health of mothers and babies worldwide.

"Yet, one half of the world's pregnant women still lack access to skilled care at childbirth and the consequences are devastating. Every year, an estimated 529,000 women die from complications of pregnancy and childbirth, 4 million newborn die, and another 4 million babies are stillborn. This is more than the combined total of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria deaths. In addition, 10 million more women suffer debilitating injuries such as infertility, uterine prolapse or obstetric fistula. Skilled assistance is critical to lowering the number of women killed or injured while giving birth. It is estimated that ensuring skilled attendance in delivery, backed up by emergency obstetric care, could reduce maternal deaths by about 75%," Ms. Obaid stressed.

UNFPA is calling for greater investment in the training, recruitment, pay and working conditions of midwives as some 700,000 more midwives are needed to provide universal access to skilled care at birth.

Calling on governments and their partners to increase investment in reproductive health as an urgent priority, Ms. Obaid noted the 20th anniversary of the Safe Motherhood Initiative, a global network of governments, donors, and women's health advocates working to protect the health and lives of women during pregnancy and childbirth. "With this year marking the 20th anniversary of the Safe Motherhood Initiative, there is no better time than now to strengthen health systems and health workforces to protect the health of mothers, children and families," she stressed.

In addition to midwives, what saves mothers' lives includes family planning and emergency obstetric care. UNFPA's work to

prevent fistula (www.endfistula.org) is also making pregnancy safer by calling attention to health systems that are failing to meet the needs of women during the very critical time of childbirth.

More information on these and other strategies for saving mothers' lives can be found as follows:

- Emergency obstetric care: (www.unfpa.org/mothers/obstetric.htm)
- Skilled attendance at birth: (www.unfpa.org/mothers/skilled_att.htm)
- Injuries at birth: (www.unfpa.org/mothers/fistula.htm)

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IRIN: THE SHAME OF WAR

The Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) has launched *The Shame of War: Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls in Conflict*—a reference book and photo essay of portraits and testimonies of the sexual violence women suffer when men go to war. It examines the scope and nature of this violence and looks at the different ways the international community is addressing sexual violence against women and girls during and after conflict.

"The brutality and viciousness of the sexual attacks that are reported from the current conflicts in Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar [formerly Burma], Iraq, and Sudan, and the testimonies from past conflicts in Timor-Leste, Liberia, the Balkans, and Sierra Leone are heartbreaking. Girls and women, old and young, are preyed upon by soldiers, militia, police, and armed thugs wherever conflict rages and the parties to the conflict fail to protect civilian populations," said Yakin Ertürk, professor of sociology and United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, in the preface of the book.

"We need to wage a different war, one against violence against women and girls and against the culture of impunity that protects the perpetrators and their

CEDAW Optional Protocol

Montenegro succeeded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), on 23 October 2006 and the Cook Islands acceded to the Convention on 11 August 2006 - bringing the total number of State Parties to 185.

Argentina ratified the Optional Protocol on 20 March 2007 and Vanuatu acceded to the Optional Protocol on 17 May 2007—bringing the total number of States Parties to 87.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is often described as an international bill of rights for women. Consisting of a preamble and 30 articles, it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination.

By ratifying the Optional Protocol, a State recognizes the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women—the body that monitors States Parties' compliance with the Convention—to receive and consider complaints from individuals or groups within its jurisdiction.

Further information is available online: (www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/index.html).

Framework for Action

Women, Ageing and Health: A Framework for Action: Focus on Gender, jointly produced by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), addresses the health status and factors that influence women's health at midlife and older ages with a focus on gender.

Available online (www.unfpa.org/upload/lib_pub_file/684_filename_ageing.pdf), it provides guidance on how policy-makers, practitioners, non-governmental organizations and civil society can improve the health and wellbeing of ageing women by simultaneously applying both a gender and an ageing lens in their policies, programmes and practices, as well as in research.

A full review of the evidence is available in a longer complementary document entitled Women, Ageing and Health: A Review, which is available in hard copy and online: (www.who.int/ageing/en).

accomplices. To some extent, this battle is already underway, but it is in its very early days. People around the world, shocked at the revelations from conflict zones, are becoming motivated and engaged to look for ways to end impunity and create effective legal mechanisms that protect women and deny perpetrators sanctuary from prosecution and punishment," she added.

The 137-page book's primary focus is on sexual crimes in war, their impact on women's lives, and includes harrowing personal testimonies from raped and abused women who have had the courage to speak out about their experiences.

The *Shame of War* is IRIN's second publication on gender-based violence. *Broken Bodies, Broken Dreams: Violence Against Women Exposed* was released in 2005 and through 15 chapters of text and more than 170 photos tracks different aspects of violence that women and girls face in their lives (see *Go Between 108*). The issue of sexual violence in war is one chapter of this book that has been reproduced and expanded in the new publication *The Shame of War*.

The report is available online: (<http://www.irinnews.org/pdf/sow/IRIN-TheShameofWar-fullreport-Mar07.pdf>).

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U.N. ACTION AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE

On International Women's Day, celebrated on 8 March, ten United Nations agencies came together to form the joint initiative, U.N. Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Food

Programme (WFP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) have joined forces to improve the quality of programming to address sexual violence, to increase the coordination of efforts for comprehensive prevention and response services, and to improve accountability.

Despite the efforts of the United Nations system and its partners to stop sexual violence during and after conflicts, the problem continues to grow. The U.N. Action initiative is designed to highlight and create awareness of these abuses and, ultimately, end sexual violence to make the world safer for women and girls.

The UN entities involved in this initiative will challenge international and regional security institutions to prevent sexual violence in current and emerging conflicts; increase resources for the prevention of sexual violence and services for survivors; monitor justice responses and support efforts to end impunity for rape; replicate successful prevention strategies in other conflict zones; and improve international accountability for the protection of women's rights and the prevention of sexual violence. Above all, the initiative aims to build and sustain a global public and political commitment to prevent and to respond to sexual violence in conflict.

"Violence against women and girls continues unabated in every continent, country, and culture. It takes a devastating toll on women's lives, on their families, and on society as a whole. Most societies prohibit such violence—yet the reality is that too often, it is covered up or tacitly condoned," said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on 6 March during the informal General Assembly debate on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

More information on the U.N. Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict is available online: (www.stoprapenow.org).

UN & EC: GENDER EQUALITY IN DEVELOPMENT

The European Commission (EC) and the United Nations have launched a programme to support action and advocacy to step up investments in gender equality as fundamental to the effectiveness of development assistance.

The programme, EC/UN Partnership for Gender Equality in Development and Peace, will hold consultations in twelve focus countries to explore how the commitment by developing and donor countries to the Paris Declaration—including its strong focus on national ownership and mutual accountability—is influencing support for gender equality and women's empowerment.

The Paris Declaration also calls for better coordination of donor activities and increased overseas development assistance (ODA) to support achievement of the eight globally-agreed Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Gender equality is a goal in its own right, and central to the achievement of all the eight MDGs.

The Paris Declaration, endorsed on 2 March 2005, is an international agreement to which over one hundred Ministers, Heads of Agencies and other Senior Officials adhered and committed their countries and organizations to continue to increase efforts in harmonisation, alignment and managing aid for results with a set of monitorable actions and indicators.

To advance the programme's purposes, the EC is strengthening its cooperation with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ILO). UNIFEM and ILO will work in partnership with EC delegations in developing countries to identify practical approaches to incorporating gender equality and women's human rights into aid programmes supported by the EC. Through this effort, the partners hope to strengthen implementation of gender equality commitments in national budgets and in national development strategies. Efforts will also include strengthening implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security by ensuring that at least four of the 12 countries chosen for pilot activities will be crisis or post-conflict countries.

The programme will launch a website that offers updates, tools and inter-active features related to gender equality and aid effectiveness. It hopes to stimulate an increasingly broad range of multilateral, bilateral, national and NGO partners to become adept at making the case for stronger gender equality programming

support. The upcoming Ghana High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in September 2008 will be key venue for groups that are promoting the need for a stronger gender equality dimension in the aid effectiveness agenda.

Further information is available online: (<http://gender.itcilo.org/cms>).

CRC ELECTS NEW MEMBERS

In four rounds of voting, the States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) filled half of the seats on its 18-member Committee charged with monitoring implementation of the treaty and its two optional protocols. Five of the panel's independent child rights experts were re-elected, and four new members were added, all to serve from 1 March 2007 to 28 February 2011.

The re-elected members, whose terms of office on the Geneva-based Committee on the Rights of the Child had been set to expire 28 February, were: Kamel Filali (Algeria); Moushira Khattab (Egypt); Hatem Kotrane (Tunisia); Lothar Friedrich Krappmann (Germany); and Rosa Maria Ortiz (Paraguay).

The new members elected to replace outgoing Committee members were: Agnes Akosua Aidoo (Ghana); Luigi Citarella (Italy); Maria Herczog (Hungary); and Dainius Puras (Lithuania).

The other nine members of the Committee, whose terms continue through February 2009, are: Ghalia Mohd Bin Hamad Al-Thani (Qatar); Joyce Aluoch (Kenya); Yanghee Lee (Republic Of Korea); David Parfitt (Canada); Awich Pollar (Uganda); Kamal Siddiqui (Bangladesh); Lucy Smith (Norway); Nevena Vuckovic-Sahovic (Serbia); and Jean Zermatten (Switzerland).

The Geneva-based Committee was formed in 1991 as a ten-member panel monitoring implementation of the Convention, which gives a comprehensive collection of children's rights the force of international law. It also monitors worldwide efforts to implement two optional protocols to the Convention, on involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. In 2003, the Committee expanded its membership to 18.

The Ramsar Standing Committee has unanimously selected Anada Tiéga (Niger) as the new Ramsar Secretary-General, to succeed Peter Bridgewater in August 2007. Mr. Tiéga served as Regional Coordinator for Africa for the Ramsar Convention for nearly six years.

IOM Handbook on Trafficking

With some 13 years of experience in implementing counter-trafficking activities and providing assistance to over 14,000 victims of trafficking in all regions of the world, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has produced a Handbook in order to share its experience and lessons learned.

With a growing number of organizations, especially local NGOs, now providing or intending to provide assistance to victims of trafficking, the IOM Handbook on Direct Assistance for Victims of Trafficking aims to summarize and systematize IOM's experience. IOM recognizes that each victim is unique and requires and desires different assistance. As well, the nature of trafficking is different around the world and is ever evolving, requiring changing responses. Therefore, this Handbook is not meant to provide a single methodology for the provision of assistance to victims of trafficking, but to offer suggestions and guidance, based on IOM's many years of experience.

IOM hopes that it will be helpful to all organizations providing such assistance to victims, but especially for organizations that are just beginning to develop victim assistance programmes and can benefit from IOM's experiences. This Handbook provides guidance and advice necessary to effectively deliver a full range of assistance to victims of trafficking from the point of initial contact and screening up to the effective social reintegration of the individuals concerned.

It includes chapters on Security and Personal Safety; Screening of Victims of Trafficking; Referral and Reintegration Assistance; Shelter Guidelines; Health and Trafficking; and Cooperation with Law Enforcement Agencies. The 356-page Handbook is available on the IOM website (www.iom.int).

The treaty is the most widely accepted international human rights instrument, with 140 signatures and 193 ratifications. Only Somalia and the United States have not ratified it. All States Parties are obliged to submit regular reports to the Committee on how the rights are being implemented. States must report initially two years after acceding to the Convention and then every five years. The Committee examines each report and addresses its concerns and recommendations to the State Party in the form of "concluding observations."

Further information is available online: (www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/index.htm).

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7th SESSION OF THE UN FORUM ON FORESTS

The 7th Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) took place in New York from 16-27 April 2007, where governments and major groups met to negotiate an international agreement on sustainable management of the world's forests that aims to strengthen and coordinate global forest policies. The Forum, the only global body for comprehensive intergovernmental deliberations on international forest policy, also included several side events addressing issues ranging from forest governance and economic development, to impacts of deforestation on climate change.

Nearly 600 participants attended the two-week session, which negotiated both a non-legally binding instrument (NLBI) for sustainable forest management (SFM) for all types of forests and a Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPow) for the period 2007-2015. Negotiations centred on the Chair's composite NLBI draft text, forwarded from the ad hoc expert group meeting in December 2006, and a suggested draft text on the MYPow. After two weeks of intense negotiations, culminating in an all-night session, both documents were adopted on 28 April. Delegates also adopted the draft resolution to which the NLBI will be

annexed, and along with the MYPow, will be forwarded to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for consideration.

During the meeting, delegates also participated in two multi-stakeholder dialogues—the first on SFM and a range of other issues and a second dialogue that had three themes: participation by indigenous peoples and local communities; the private sector in sustainable forest management; and major group involvement in the implementation of the multi-year programme of work. A panel discussion with member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and the launching of preparations for the International Year of Forests 2011 (A/61/193), which aims to serve as a major international stimulus for enhancing awareness and mobilizing action for the successful promotion of sustainable forest management, were also part of the 7th session.

Opening the meeting on 16 April, Pekka Patosaari, Director of the UNFF Secretariat, said that the Forum signals "a new era in international forest policy" that will greatly help secure strong international commitment and accountability on forest issues. On 18 April, the Forum held a panel discussion with the chairpersons of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and a multi-stakeholder dialogue. The Collaborative Partnership is made up of 14 major forest-related organizations, institutions and convention secretariats, including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Bank, the Global Environment Facility and the World Conservation Union. Established in 2001, it supports the work of the Forum and enhances cooperation and coordination on forest issues through technical assistance to countries, mobilizing resources and strengthening political support for SFM.

Concluding the Forum's 7th session, Mr. Patosaari told delegates that the NLBI was a major step toward the creation of a new "people-centred" forest policy. "You have sent a clear message to the global community on the critical role of forests in international development." The agreement adopted on 28 April aims to promote on the ground implementation of sustainable forest management through a new, more holistic approach that brings all stakeholders together. In addition, the agreement is expected to reinforce practical measures at

the country-level to integrate forests more closely with other government policies.

The eighth session of the UN Forum on Forests will be held from 20 April - 1 May 2009, at UN headquarters in New York. The session will consider with a view for adoption a voluntary global financing mechanism/portfolio approach/forest financing framework, as well as discuss the theme "Forests in a Changing Environment."

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FAO: THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S FORESTS

The biennial report of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), *The State of the World's Forests*, offers a global perspective on the forest sector, including its environmental, economic and social dimensions. This seventh edition examines progress towards sustainable forestry management revealing that some countries and some regions are making more progress than others.

"Many countries have shown the political will to improve forest management by revising policies and legislation and strengthening forestry institutions," FAO Deputy Director-General David Harcharik said. "Increasing attention is being paid to the conservation of soil, water, biological diversity and other environmental values."

He also pointed out that countries facing the most serious challenges in achieving sustainable forest management are those with the highest rates of poverty and civil conflict.

Forests cover roughly 4 billion hectares, or 30%, of the earth's land, and FAO states that in the period between 1990 and 2005, the world lost 3% of its forests, average 0.2% each year. Between 2000 and 2005, 57 countries reported an increase in forest area while 83 claimed a decrease. Forests disappear at a rate of 7.3 hectares per year or 20,000 hectares, approximately twice the size of Paris, daily.

In Asia and the Pacific, forest area increased from 2000 and 2005, unlike in previous decades. Although deforestation accelerated in South-East Asia, this was offset by new large forest plantations in China. Europe and North America also demonstrated gains in forest area.

Also in this period, of the ten countries which collectively house 80% of the world's primary forests, four—Indonesia, Mexico, Papua New Guinea and Brazil—saw the largest losses in forest area.

Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean faced the highest losses in forest area. African forests, accounting for 16% of the world's total, lost 9% between 1990 and 2005, while Latin America and the Caribbean, with 47% of the world's forests, also lost forest area.

Economic growth contributes to curbing deforestation by improving conditions for sustainable forest management, the report says. Strengthened forest institutions and increased participatory decision making will also help to protect forests. However, illegal logging is growing in some areas, and forests are also threatened by insects and diseases. The spread of pests, to which forests are vulnerable, is facilitated by transport, travel and trade. Further, climate change could also endanger forests, as a warmer climate may increase the severity of forest fires, pests and diseases, FAO reports.

Part I of *The State of the World's Forests* examines progress towards sustainable forest management while Part II looks at selected issues in the forest sector, such as climate change, desertification, forest landscape restoration, mountain development, invasive species, and other issues. The report is available online: (www.fao.org/docrep/009/a0773e/a0773e00.htm).

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WIPO: CYBERSQUATTING ON THE RISE

The number of cybersquatting disputes filed with the World Intellectual Property

Demobilizing Child Soldiers

Chad pledged on 9 May 2007 to work to demobilize hundreds of child soldiers fighting in the ranks of the government army and rebel groups across the conflict-torn central African country.

President Idriss Deby's government made the commitment in an agreement signed with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). During the "Free Children from War" conference organized by UNICEF and the Government of France in February 2007 (see Go Between 112), African governments including Chad said they would try to rid their countries of underage fighters.

A recent investigation by UNICEF found 300 children, many as young as 8 and 11, serving in government military forces in the central Chadian town of Mongo alone.

Relief workers saw this as just the "tip of the iceberg" in a country which has experienced waves of violence in recent months, the result both of domestic rebellion and of spillover from the war in neighbouring Sudan's Darfur region.

"There are clearly a considerable number of children" under arms in Chad, said Steve Adkisson, head of UNICEF in Chad. He said the fund would work with the Chadian authorities to try to conduct a census across the landlocked country of children fighting, not only on the government side but also for Chadian and Sudanese rebel groups.

Mr. Adkisson said the demobilization process would be complicated: "This isn't simply a question of identifying individual children and liberating them from the armed forces. It will require a continual effort to provide them with an opportunity to re-enter the communities from which they came, and re-establish their lives," he said.

UNEP Launches Major Groups Directory

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has launched an online directory for major groups organizations.

The directory will provide the profiles of major groups organizations that are engaged in the work of UNEP, including their main fields of expertise in regard to the Bali Strategic Plan.

The organizations that are expected to register are either accredited to the UNEP Governing Council, are engaged at governance level or work with one or several UNEP divisions, regional offices or out-posted offices.

The major groups include: women; children and youth; indigenous people; NGOs; local authorities; workers and trade unions; business and industry; the scientific and technological community; and farmers.

More information is available online: (www.unep.org/civil_society/Registration/index5.asp).

Organization (WIPO) in 2006 increased by 25% as compared to 2005. In a related development, the evolution of the domain name registration system is causing growing concern for trademark owners, in particular some of the effects of the use of computer software to automatically register expired domain names and their “parking” on pay-per-click portal sites, the option to register names free-of-charge for a five-day “tasting” period, the proliferation of new registrars, and the establishment of new generic Top Level Domains (gTLDs). The combined result of these developments is to create greater opportunities for the mass, often anonymous, registration of domain names without specific consideration of third-party intellectual property rights.

“While electronic commerce has flourished with the expansion of the Internet, recent developments in the domain name registration system have fostered practices which threaten the interests of trademark owners and cause consumer confusion. Practices such as ‘domain name tasting’ risk turning the domain name system into a mostly speculative market. Domain names used to be primarily specific identifiers of businesses and other Internet users, but many names nowadays are mere commodities for speculative gain,” WIPO Deputy Director General Francis Gurry noted, who oversees WIPO’s dispute resolution work.

“The rate at which domain names change hands and the difficulty to track such mass automated registrations challenge trademark owners in their pursuit of cybersquatters,” he said. “With domain names becoming moving targets for rights holders, due consideration should be given to concrete policy responses,” he added.

In 2006, a total of 1,823 (gTLDs and country code Top Level Domains (ccTLDs)) complaints alleging cybersquatting—the abusive registration as domain names of trademarks—were filed with WIPO’s Arbitration and Mediation Center (Center), representing the highest number of cybersquatting cases handled by WIPO since the year 2000.

Since commencement in December 1999 of the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP)—a quick and cost effective dispute resolution procedure—through December 2006, 10,177 UDRP or

UDRP-based cases (gTLD and ccTLD) have been filed with the Center, covering 18,760 separate domain names.

A total of 9,389 (97% of total cases) UDRP cases received by the Center have so far been resolved. Of the gTLD cases resolved, decisions have been rendered in 7,328 cases with some 84% of those cases ending with the transfer of the domain name to the complainant and approximately 16% being denied. 2,061 cases have terminated on other grounds, primarily on the basis of settlement agreements between parties transferring the domain name to the complainant.

The WIPO dispute resolution procedure served a wide range of users, ranging from well-known brands, to smaller enterprises and organizations, as well as individuals. They covered categories including luxury items, famous persons, entertainment, hospitality, sports, gambling, and pharmaceuticals. In addition, charitable organizations and educational institutions were involved.

A number of disputes relating to newly merged or collaborating corporations were also filed. Such merger cases suggest that cybersquatters tend to follow newsworthy events.

Though the geographical spread of named parties to WIPO UDRP cases (gTLD and ccTLD) reached 137 countries at the end of December 2006, the most frequently named party country both for complainants and for respondents continued to be the United States.

The most frequently named complainant countries in gTLD cases after the US were France, United Kingdom, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, Italy, Canada, Australia, and Netherlands. A full overview of all countries involved is available online: (www.wipo.int/amc/en/domains/statistics/cumulative/countries.html).

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SIDE EVENT ON EPAs

During the 66th session of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Committee on Commodity Problems, a side event was held on 24 April in Rome, co-sponsored by the farmer organization networks of five Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) regions (Network of Peasant and Agricultural Producers' Organizations of West Africa (ROPPA), Eastern Africa Farmers' Federation, Sub-regional Platform of Peasant Organizations of Central Africa, Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions, and the Winward Island Farmers' Association), the EuropAfrica Campaign (a North-South campaign bringing together Italian NGOs and farmer organization members of the Italian Support Group for the Farmers' Movements in Africa coordinated by Terra Nuova and Crocevia, the Belgian NGO Collectif Stratégies Alimentaires, and ROPPA), the International Civil Society Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC), FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The theme was "Economic Partnership Agreements: working together for regional integration and food sovereignty."

The purpose of the side event was to present and seek reaction to the autonomous assessments undertaken by the farmer organization networks as their contribution to the official midterm review of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) negotiations and to explore the next steps that need to be taken for the EPAs to meet their stated objective of promoting regional integration and development. The event, which brought together 200 participants, was also intended to highlight collaboration between multilateral institutions (IFAD and FAO), farmers' organizations in the ACP regions and European NGOs and to suggest opportunities for, and ways in which, such collaboration can be strengthened in the future.

The programme was divided into two panels: the first took stock of the EPA negotiations, with interventions by the ACP farmer networks, the European Commission, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and FAO. The second sought to identify the way forward, with interventions by the ACP farmer networks, IFAD, the Italian Vice minister for Foreign Affairs, the ACP Secretariat and the IPC. Closing remarks were made by senior

representatives of IFAD and FAO and by a spokesperson for the ACP farmer networks.

A number of major points emerged from the presentations and discussion. On stock taking of the EPA negotiations, a number of points of consensus were identified regarding: the context of the negotiations (which included the importance of agriculture and family farming for ACP countries; the significant differences in the levels of development of the negotiating partners; the insufficient involvement of civil society actors, and farmers' organizations in particular); what EPAs should be (a tool for regional integration and development; a real partnership between Europe and the ACP countries; an asymmetric agreement adapted to the situation of developing countries); and how EPAs should be prepared (identifying the issues that create problems for ACP economies, and small producers in particular, and addressing them through determination of sensitive products and safeguards; and ensuring the direct involvement of the stakeholders at risk so that their concerns are taken into account and their needs addressed).

At the same time, participants noted that divergences persist which risk hampering the possibility of building consensual agreements. The most important of these regard: what steps are necessary to achieve regional integration in ACP countries and the amount of time it will take; under what conditions can trade be an instrument for ACP development; and whether the deadline of 31 December 2007 should be met.

On the topic of next steps, a number of proposals emerged for action to be taken to address some of the issues identified during the first panel, including:

Conduct technical work with the farmers' organizations, on issues such as: indicators of regional integration to use as benchmarks for liberalization; sensitive products; supply management to ensure that consumer needs are met in the optic of regional integration; methodologies for impact studies that take impact on producers into account.

Provide capacity building for farmers' organizations including: making technical information available in accessible form; large-scale information to and consultation with the

A group of international marine scientists have appealed to World Trade Organization (WTO) Director-General Pascal Lamy, asking him to push for deep cuts to the fisheries subsidies that they blame for declining marine fish stocks worldwide.

Signed by a group of 125 fisheries experts from 27 countries, the declaration was delivered to the WTO head on 24 May in Geneva. It calls on Mr. Lamy to use his "skill and leadership" to encourage a successful outcome to the fisheries subsidies talks. As part of the Doha Round, member governments are negotiating new disciplines on fisheries spending.

Not only is fish a heavily traded commodity, it also plays a vital role in sustaining the welfare and livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people worldwide, mainly in developing countries. Yet, scientists have reported that fish stocks are dramatically decreasing—in significant measure due to government subsidies that provide incentives for too many boats to catch too many fish. It is estimated that if overharvesting is not halted soon, the world's fish stocks face irrevocable collapse within 50 years.

Signatories to the letter addressed to Mr. Lamy assert that the WTO has the opportunity to reverse this cycle through implementing stronger fisheries disciplines globally. Their letter notes that 90% of all the "big fish"—large-bodied sharks, tuna, marlin and swordfish—have disappeared as the result of industrialized fishing; the decline of many ocean species is increasingly impairing the ocean's capacity to provide food, maintain water quality, and recover from perturbations; and despite massive technological advances and increased effort, global catches of food fish have been declining for more than a decade.

The 10-page letter to Mr. Lamy is available online: (http://oceana.org/fileadm/in/oceana/uploads/reports/Scientists_Letter_FINAL_5_24_07.pdf).

Shipwreck Removal

A Wreck Removal Convention has been adopted under the auspices of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The IMO, with the support of the UN Office in Nairobi and the government of Kenya, organized a diplomatic conference from 14-18 May 2007, in Nairobi, Kenya, to approve the Convention. Shipwrecks can pose hazards to navigation or, because of the nature of their cargo, to the marine and coastal environments, or to both.

The Convention, which was prepared by the IMO Legal Committee, will make ship owners financially liable for wrecks and requires them to take out insurance or provide other financial security to cover the costs of wreck removal. It will also provide States with a right of direct action against insurers. In addition, the Convention includes provisions on: the report of and location of wrecks; determination of hazards when a wreck is beyond territorial waters; rights and obligations to remove hazardous ships and wrecks; financial liability; and settlement of disputes. The Convention will be open for signature until 18 November 2008, and thereafter will be open for ratification, accession or acceptance. It will enter into force twelve months following ratification by the tenth State.

Further information is available online: (www.imo.org/Newsroom/mainframe.asp?topic_id=1472&doc_id=8070).

base; training to improve capacity to analyse challenges and propose alternatives; building strong farmers' organizations; south-south exchange and cooperation among farmer networks.

Reinforce farmer organization participation in negotiation and implementation of policies; ensure meaningful participation of farmers' organizations in the next steps of the EPA negotiations, such as establishing the lists of sensitive products, and in the implementation and monitoring of the agreements once they are signed; extend such participation to other policy forums held under the auspices of ACP, FAO, IFAD and work towards institutionalizing it, applying fundamental principles of partnership.

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SECURING BIODIVERSITY

The Global Crop Diversity Trust—a foundation seeking to promote food security through, among other, seed bank systems—announced in April 2007 that it had received additional funding to help conserve the seeds of key crops from developing countries. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is funding the initiative with a US\$37.5 million grant, the largest crop biodiversity preservation grant ever made, which includes US\$7.5 million in matching funds from the Government of Norway.

“This initiative will rescue the most globally important developing-country collections of the world’s 21 most important food crops,” said Cary Fowler, director of the Global Crop Diversity

Trust. The crops include cassava, yams, bananas and rice. Many crops grown in developing countries are referred to as orphan crops, as they have been neglected by companies that use modern approaches to crop breeding. This genetic material, used by the poor, is particularly threatened.

The new funding would “secure over 95% of the endangered crop diversity held in developing country gene banks, many of which are underfunded and in disrepair.” The information would also be linked to a global network.

The genetic diversity found within each crop is the raw material that enables plant breeders and farmers to develop higher yielding, more nutritious, and stress-resistant varieties. But much of this diversity, held in developing country gene banks, is threatened by decades of underfunding and neglect, as well as by wars and natural disasters.

Climate change is expected to put new demands on agriculture, and seed banks provide “insurance” by preserving a variety of genetic traits that may be useful for future breeding. Currently, agriculture is becoming increasingly homogeneous, and seed supply at a commercial scale is dominated by a few multinational companies. There are 1500 gene banks in the world, which freeze and store seeds.

The Global Crop Diversity Trust, whose mission is to ensure the conservation and availability of crop diversity for food security worldwide, is an independent international organization, established through a partnership between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Bioversity International, on behalf of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

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OTHER NEWS

IPU: WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT IN 2006

According to a report by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), entitled *Women in Parliament in*

2006: The Year in Perspective, the world average of women in all chambers of Parliament reached an all time high, with almost 17%. This is a gain of 50% over 1995 figures when women held 11.3% of all parliamentary seats.

In January 2007, there were more women Presiding Officers of Parliament than ever before. Of the world's 262 Presiding Officer posts, 35 were held by women. Women Speakers were elected for the first time in Gambia, Israel, Swaziland, Turkmenistan, and the United States of America.

Increases in the number of women were registered in more than 60% of the chambers that were renewed. Women won 16.7% of all parliamentary seats up for renewal in 2006 in 61 chambers in 51 countries.

Electoral gender quotas were used in 23 countries to bolster women's participation. In those countries with gender quotas women took 21.7% percent of seats as opposed to 11.8% for countries without.

Women held almost 17% of all parliamentary seats—50 percent more than they held a decade ago. During 2006, 9,335 parliamentary seats were up for renewal. Women won 1,557, or 16.7%, of those seats. Of the women who won seats, 1,459 were directly elected, 63 were indirectly elected, and 35 were appointed. While the outcome was positive, it compared unfavourably with results from the previous

year, when nearly 20% of parliamentarians who won seats were women.

In January 2007, women held 13.4% of the 262 Presiding Officer posts in Parliaments around the world. In all, 35 women held the top position in parliament, the highest number ever reached. Whilst they were once concentrated in the Caribbean, women Presiding Officers are making inroads into all regions.

Eleven women hold the highest parliamentary position in Europe, followed by nine in the Caribbean, six in Africa, four in Asia. There are now five female Presiding Officers in the Americas, including Nancy Pelosi whose election to the third highest political office in the United States sparked much interest in the international media.

Women in Parliament in 2006: The Year in Perspective is available online: (www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/wmn06-e.pdf).

Contact: Inter-Parliamentary Union, Chemin du Pommier 5, P.O. Box 330, 1218 Grand-Saconnex, Geneva, Switzerland, e-mail <postbox@mail.ipu.org>, website (www.ipu.org).

FMO Launches Blog on Forced Migration

Forced Migration Online (FMO), a comprehensive website that provides access to a diverse range of information resources on forced migration, has launched a Blog so that FMO can better inform its users and flag current issues. FMO thinks interesting, important and perhaps worthy of wider discussion.

The FMO Blog provides an opportunity for users to comment upon content and technical aspects of the FMO portal. FMO welcomes suggestions about resources viewers think should be included and any other comments on how FMO might be improved.

Members of the FMO team will regularly post messages on specific issues. The Blog is available online: (<http://blog.forcedmigration.org/category/blogs>).

The FMO website provides instant access to a wide variety of online resources dealing with the situation of forced migrants worldwide. It is designed to help users locate reliable information efficiently in the Internet environment. It differs from a search engine in that it targets a specific audience and focuses on a particular subject area.

Designed for use by practitioners, policy makers, researchers, students or anyone interested in the field, FMO aims to give comprehensive information in an impartial environment and to promote increased awareness of human displacement issues to an international community of users. FMO has prepared an introductory guide (www.forcedmigration.org/whatisfm.htm) to forced migration for visitors who are new to the subject.

NGO UPDATE

AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

In cooperation with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Union (AU), the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO) and the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) organized the African Civil Society Forum "Democratizing Governance at Regional and Global Level to Achieve the MDGs," held from 22-24 March 2007 in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia).

The African Civil Society Forum 2007 (AfCSF 2007), which brought together more than 250 civil society leaders from 32 African countries, sought to raise NGOs' awareness of the issues on the UN agenda, most notably the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

It brought together representatives of national, regional and international NGOs from Africa to explore the most effective ways to partner with and impact on African institutions: the

African Union, the UN Economic Commission for Africa and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD).

Speaking at the opening ceremony, the Presidents of CONGO and FEMNET, Renate Bloem and Mama Koité Doumbia, stressed the need to increase the participation of African NGOs and CSOs whose contributions they considered essential for the emergence of a truly global civil society. They also underlined the urgency to get African civil society more intimately involved in meaningful partnerships with their governments and regional institutions to accelerate progress towards achievement of the MDGs.

Many eminent speakers notably from the Millennium Campaign, ActionAid, CIVICUS, MWENGO and other organizations, sparked a debate on current challenges to peace and security in Africa, on human rights violations in many countries, including Zimbabwe and Sudan. The Forum also addressed institution-building of the UN Human Rights Council, governance challenges as well as trade and

American actress Drew Barrymore has been named Ambassador Against Hunger for the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).

Ms. Barrymore, who recently returned from a second trip to Kenya to visit WFP-supported school feeding projects, joins world marathon record-holder Paul Tergat, from Kenya, as Ambassador Against Hunger.

Ms. Barrymore and Mr. Tergat, a former school feeding recipient, will focus their advocacy efforts on school feeding programmes.

"I am honoured and humbled to accept this challenging and rewarding assignment," Ms. Barrymore said. "I can't think of any issue that is more important than working to see that no schoolchild in this world goes hungry.

"Feeding a child at school is such a simple thing – but it works miracles. I've seen it with my own eyes," she added. "School feeding not only fills stomachs, but has a proven track record of boosting enrollment, attendance and academic performance. For just pennies a day per child, this programme changes lives – and ultimately can impact the futures of poor countries around the world in a profound way," she concluded.

development issues. Gender equality and information and communication technologies (ICT) for development were cross-cutting issues.

The African Civil Society Forum 2007 closed on 24 March with the adoption of a final declaration containing specific recommendations. It also highlighted the need to develop a practical framework for African civil society to formulate and advance their advocacy strategies at national, regional and global levels.

The declaration outlines a number of issues to be dealt with, including developing a coherent policy of gender mainstreaming that is inter-generational into all advocacy policies and strategies; encouraging and supporting the active participation of children and youth at all levels; inclusion of disability groups in all advocacy initiatives and providing basic provisions for the protection and promotion of fundamental human rights and freedoms for people with disabilities; and working towards legitimacy, accountability, and transparency among civil society, both at the collective as well as the individual level.

Specifically, the declaration outlines recommendations for the African Union, civil society and the United Nations in a number of areas, including peace and human security for achieving the MDGs; governance and human rights based approach to the development agenda; development, trade, finance, debt relief and investment; gender perspectives in the MDGs; ICT for development; and HIV/AIDS. The full text of the declaration is available online: (www.ngocongo.org/files/afcsf_2007_final_declaration_english.doc).

In concurrence with the Forum, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) ICT launched the African chapter of the Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID), an initiative approved by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2006. The Alliance seeks to provide an inclusive global forum and platform for cross-sectoral policy dialogue on the use of ICT for enhancing the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, notably the reduction of poverty.

Responding to the call from ECA to institutionalize the AfCSF, the Forum expressed its strong endorsement of that proposal and, as a first step, resolved to meet

again next year.

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STATE OF THE WORLD'S MOTHERS REPORT

Save the Children is calling attention to the health and wellbeing of mothers and young children under the age of five around the world as this year's *State of the World's Mothers Report* examines the latest data and trends in the field of child survival and presents a compelling case for why the world must do more to prevent death among children under age five.

The report includes the first-ever *Child Survival Progress Rankings* that look at 60 developing countries, which together account for 94% of all child deaths, showing which countries are succeeding and which are failing to save the lives of children under the age of five.

The report also presents *5 Ways to Save Lives Under Age 5* report card that looks at five low-cost interventions that have the potential of saving young lives among the 60 priority countries where children are dying in the greatest numbers or are at the greatest risk of dying before their fifth birthday.

Among the report's major findings on child survival:

- The three biggest killers of children under five worldwide are newborn disorders, pneumonia and diarrhoea. By using existing interventions, the report notes, more than 6 million of the 10.1 million children who die every year from easily preventable or treatable causes can be saved.
- Child and maternal death rates are highest in the poorest, most disadvantaged places. According to the report, nearly all under-five and maternal deaths (99%) occur in developing countries in settings of poverty, where children are most vulnerable to diseases and malnutrition. The highest rates are in Africa and South Asia.
- The majority of child deaths occur in just ten countries, many with large populations (such

as China and India) and others with very high child mortality rates (such as Afghanistan, Angola and Democratic Republic of the Congo). AIDS remains one of the underlying causes affecting child mortality trends, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Other key factors behind spiking child mortality rates, as in the case of Iraq and Afghanistan, are the effects of armed conflict and social instability. To succeed in saving the lives of children, Save the Children recommends that countries:

- Ensure the wellbeing of mothers. Three key interventions that help both mothers and children to survive and thrive are nutrition, skilled care during childbirth and access to voluntary contraception.
- Invest in basic, low-cost solutions to save children's lives. The most dangerous threats to children's survival can be fought with relatively simple and inexpensive solutions, including breastfeeding, immunizations; oral rehydration therapy, antibiotics to treat pneumonia and insecticide-treated mosquito nets to help prevent malaria.
- Make health care available to the poorest and most vulnerable mothers and children. Childbirth can be made much safer if mothers and newborns receive care from trained health workers before, during and after delivery. In remote, hard-to-reach communities, diarrhoea and many cases of pneumonia can be treated by training community-based health workers close to where children live.

The report is available online: (www.savethechildren.net/alliance/what_we_do/newsdesk/2007-05-08.html).

Contact: International Save the Children Alliance, Second Floor, Cambridge House, 100 Cambridge Grove, London W6 0LE, UK, telephone +44-20/8748 2554, fax +44-20/8237 8000, website (www.savethechildren.net/alliance).

3RD WORLDWIDE RECONCILIATION WEEK

The third worldwide Reconciliation Week, an initiative of the Foundation for Subjective Experience and Research, S.E.R., was held from 21-29 April 2007. The Reconciliation-Week celebration aims to support the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to foster a spirit of human dignity.

During Reconciliation Week a wide range of

activities were held in many areas all over the world, with people working on reconciliation in different ways, including drumming, chanting, dancing, singing, walking tours, building bridges, etc.

In the North West Province of Cameroon, where 74% of women are involved in violence resulting from conflict, an ongoing project of the Peace Makers Society aims at the training of female group leaders in conflict zones. Recognizing that women have an important role to play as peacemakers, their role in creating a culture of peace and reconciliation to promote sustainable development can help reconcile villages involved in intertribal conflicts. Reconciliation Week activities included panel discussions, radio debates, church services, film showings and sport activities, as well as women's groups advocating for women's rights. Other events include cultural activities and educational talks advocating for women's rights and equality. A series of trainings will be held for 32 women group leaders on non-violence techniques, national legislation and the Convention on the Elimination of Violence against Women (CEDAW).

In Switzerland, a two-day seminar was held at the Lassalle-Institute, Bad Schönbrunn, on the "Future Leaders' Forum: WoMen's Qualities for Global Change." Twenty-five youth from Ecuador, Kenya, South Africa, Palestine, Israel, France, Germany and Switzerland debated a number of questions, including the kind of leadership needed in today's world and in the year 2020.

In Bujumbura (Burundi), the chorus of the "Holy Family Gikungu," which includes nearly one hundred boys and girls, provided concerts for peace and reconciliation. Thousands of young people, adults and representatives of religious confessions attended these events. In addition Archbishop Simon Ntamwana Gitega led a forum for young people for peace and reconciliation, as well a walk for peace, where hundreds of school children participated.

The 4th world wide Annual Reconciliation-Week will take place from 19-27 April 2008. Further information is available online: (www.global-balance.org).

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Cacao to Improve Lives

A new project from Bioversity International will use high-quality chocolate to link poor farmers in Nicaragua to gourmets in Europe and North America. The farmers will gain income, independence and improved lives, the chocolate eaters will enjoy complex-flavoured chocolates based on single varieties of cacao, and the environment will benefit from organic and sustainable farming at the same time as the diversity of cacao is preserved for future generations. The 500,000 Euros project is funded by the Austrian Development Agency, with additional contributions from local and international partners.

Working with local partners and foreign chocolate companies and scientists, Bioversity will improve the yields of older trees, called criollo, that produce much better cocoa. These trees are vanishing rapidly as a result of neglect. Trade links will be strengthened, with organic standards and farmers getting a fair price for their produce. Women, especially, will be trained and empowered, because they are vital in the processing of cocoa beans.

"With our partners we will work at all steps in the chain from cacao farmer to chocolate eater to give everyone a taste of the riches of cacao diversity," Bioversity International scientist Michael Hermann said, who will manage the project.

About 1,200 farm families make a poor living in the community of Waslala, in the buffer zone of the Bosawas Biosphere Reserve in Nicaragua. Further information is available online: (<http://news.bioversityinternational.org>).

45th Session of the Commission for Social Development

The forty-fifth session of the UN Commission for Social Development met from 7-16 February 2007 at UN headquarters in New York, where it adopted, by consensus, key resolutions urging greater attention to the needs of youth and elderly persons for the achievement of national social policy and wider development goals.

This year's session focused on employment, ageing, disability and youth. With the United Nations estimating that some 195 million men and women had been unable to find work in 2006, and that 1.4 billion—half the global workforce—held jobs that did not pay enough to lift them above the US\$2-a-day poverty line, the Commission devoted the first in a series of two-year action-oriented implementation cycles, which would include a review and a policy segment, to “promoting full employment and decent work for all.”

Along with its consideration of the growing conditions of job insecurity and instability that workers were experiencing worldwide, the growing ranks of self-employed and the rapid growth of the service sector, the 46-member Commission discussed trends in youth employment and continued its follow-up to the implementation of Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted at the 1995 World Summit for Social Development.

“Social development is not merely a desirable option—it is a necessity,” Commission Chairman Mehdi Danesh-Yazdi (Iran) said in his opening statement. Development was considered critical to ensure that people, not economic interests, remained the central focus of overall development efforts. But concern continued to emerge about the costs to society when links between poverty eradication, promotion of full employment and fostering of social integration were ignored. Failed efforts to advance those mutually dependant goals led to inequality of opportunity and made one generation after another fall into poverty, he stressed.

In his speech, keynote speaker Les Kettleidas, Deputy Director-General in South Africa's Department of Labour, said that the world was facing a myriad of decent-work “deficits,” characterized by high and exploding numbers of unemployment and underemployment, poor quality and unproductive jobs, unsafe work and insecure income, rights that were denied, and gender inequality. Economic growth was failing to translate into new and better jobs that would lead to a reduction in poverty, he said, arguing that, in the current jobless growth environment, questions like what was meant by “decent work,” and if such a thing was even achievable in an era of globalization characterized by liberalization and deregulation, needed to be addressed.

Youth

Recognizing that young people formed an active part of society and were an important actor for social development, the Commission—by the terms of its resolution on youth

(E/CN.5/2007/L.5) co-sponsored by Senegal and Portugal—encouraged Member States to involve young people and their organizations in all aspects of youth development, particularly through consultations with youth-led organizations and inclusion of youth representatives in national delegations to relevant UN forums. The Commission also asked for the development of a broad set of indicators related to youth.

The draft resolution also invites the Regional Commissions, relevant agencies, funds and programmes and other relevant intergovernmental forums to ensure effective implementation of all the priority areas of the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY). It invites all governments and NGOs to contribute to the United Nations Youth Trust Fund to accelerate the implementation of the WPAY in countries with limited resources and requests the Secretary-General to encourage contributions and identify goals and targets regarding the cluster “youth and the global economy,” in consultation with UN organizations, programmes and specialized agencies. The development of a broad set of indicators related to youth is also requested.

Ageing

Ageing was another of the focuses of the 45th Commission as 2007 will see the first review and appraisal of the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA). In the open debate on ageing, representatives from Germany, Japan, Jamaica, Bangladesh, the UK and El Salvador expressed their views on the issue of ageing. Their concerns related mainly to the economic implications of ageing, the efficiency of insurance and public health pension, the participation of the private sector in the MIPAA, the inclusion of ageing in cross-cutting policies and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), as well as the economic consequences of large informal sector on financing social policy.

By the terms of the resolution adopted on the first review and appraisal of the MIPAA (E/CN.5/2007/L.4), the Commission addressed the modalities of national and regional review and appraisal and welcomed governments' offers to host regional review meetings this year. All major stakeholders, including civil society and academia, are invited to contribute to that process. It also invites stakeholders to organize panel discussions, seminars and roundtables during the forty-sixth session (2008), to explore the findings of the review and promote future priorities, while also asking the Secretary-General to prepare an analysis of preliminary conclusions, identifying prevalent and emerging issues and policy options. The text also addresses the modalities of national and regional review and appraisal exercises, calling upon the governments to

promote a bottom-up participatory approach and encouraging them to include both ageing-specific policies and mainstreaming efforts in the appraisal and in their national strategies, bearing in mind the importance of mainstreaming ageing and gender into global agendas.

NEPAD

The final text taken up by the Commission was on the social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (E/CN.5/2007/L.3/Rev.1), sponsored by Pakistan on behalf of the "Group of 77" developing countries and China (G-77/China), which would have the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) recognize the importance and progress made in implementing the African Peer Review Mechanism and urges other African States to join the Peer Review. At the same time, the text would have the Council emphasize that the rising poverty levels and social exclusion faced by most African countries require comprehensive social policies to reduce poverty and promote economic activity, growth and sustainable development; to ensure employment creation and decent work for all; to enhance social inclusion, political stability democracy and good governance; to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms; and to achieve Africa's social and economic objectives.

Civil Society Participation at the Commission

Over 400 NGO representatives participated at this year's Commission. There were twenty-six side events—many of which were organized or co-organized by NGOs—on topics ranging from youth employment to decent work to the implementation of the MIPAA. Also included in the side events was a special orientation for new NGOs participating in the Commission organized by the CONGO Committee for Social Development, the DESA Division for Social Policy and Development and UN-NGLS.

Of special note was the Civil Society Forum that took place the day before the Commission commenced, organized by the NGO Committee for Social Development, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the DESA Division for Social Policy and Development. The Forum was addressed by Ambassador Danesh-Yazdi, Mr. Ocampo and Johan Schölvinc, Director, Division for Social Policy and Development. At the event participants were briefed on the issues that were taken up at the Commission and given opportunities to meet and to come up with common positions both by issue and by region. Out of these discussions came the statement that was delivered by Sister Joan Burke at the opening of the Commission itself. In her address she stressed the participants' deep concern about the increasing pattern of jobless growth and poverty. "This is a situation in every part of the globe which cries out to be addressed," she declared. "It is due time to integrate full and productive employment and decent work throughout the international agenda," she said, adding that civic actors working daily with the jobless poor wanted to join the United Nations' efforts to alleviate poverty by promoting decent work.

Youth

There were about ten representatives of young people on the

delegations of various governments for the Commission. They networked with youth representing civil society at the Commission to come up with common talking points and agree on language to lobby for inclusion in the relevant resolutions. Youth participants generally agreed that, for youth issues specifically, this year's Commission—despite being a "review year"—was more important than next year as the supplement to the WPAY was negotiated. Specifically, the Chairman's Summary, the supplement and the resolution placed emphasis on youth participation and recognized youth employment as an emerging issue. While youth at the Commission hailed this recognition as a success, many expressed their disappointment that, in the Chairman's Summary, youth are not fully recognized as partners in development. Youth also expressed their disappointment that more might have been included in the supplement to the WPAY on indicators of progress of the implementation of the WPAY. These indicators were included in earlier drafts, but were later removed due to the concerns of some Member States in the WPAY.

Ageing

Civil society organizations working on ageing shared common concerns with the practical implementation of the participatory framework of the first 5-year review of the MIPAA. NGOs are now looking forward to the 46th session of the Commission to review best practices, to exchange experiences of implementation in different countries and to promote further participatory approaches. Together with the Government of Spain and the UN Programme on Ageing of DESA, UN-NGLS organized a side event during the Commission to help explain the participatory process of review of the MIPAA and the guidelines that DESA has produced to aid the process.

The CONGO Committee on Ageing decided to examine progress from the perspective of the empowerment of older persons, giving attention to the protection of their rights, their participation in society and the promotion of a positive image of ageing.

NGOs also spoke about and advocated for a number of other issues at the Commission including the eradication of poverty, the particular plight of those living in rural areas and ensuring that economic development is seen in the context of social development. In light of the recent Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, many NGOs—led by members of the CONGO Committee on the UN International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples—advocated for the mainstreaming of indigenous concerns throughout the work of the Commission.

NGO statements to the Commission are available online: (www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/csod2007/Statements/other_s07.htm).

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51st Commission on the Status of Women

The 51st session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) took place from 26 February to 9 March 2007 at UN headquarters in New York, bringing together some 91 Member States, over 2,500 representatives NGOs and 130 girls—a new feature this year—to focus on the elimination of violence and discrimination against the girl child.

In accordance with its new working methods adopted last year, the Commission considered the implementation of commitments in relation to one priority theme, “the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child.” It also took up one emerging issue, “the elimination of all forms of violence against women,” thereby examining trends and new approaches. Another new feature in its work was to evaluate progress in the implementation of agreed conclusions on a critical area of concern already considered by the Commission at a previous session – and, this year, the review was on “the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality.”

In the session’s opening meeting on 26 February, Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro pledged to work for collective action to eliminate violence against women and girls and to support Member States’ efforts to close the gender gap. She said the UN had set clear guidelines to erase unfair treatment of women and girls but, despite those good intentions, gender discrimination was pervasive in all areas of public and private life and during times of war and peace. Sufficient resources and the full involvement of men and boys were critical to fully implementing the UN norms and policies for female empowerment. Ms. Migiro supported the suggestion of the High-Level Panel (HLP) of United Nations System-Wide Coherence to create an entity focused on gender equality and women’s empowerment, and said she would work in earnest with the Secretary-General to meet the goal of a 50-50 gender balance in all spheres of life.

Ann M. Veneman, Executive Director of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) said that rape and other forms of sexual violence during war, honour crimes, female genital cutting and early marriage needed urgent attention. Millions of women were victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation, especially in developing countries, but such cases were often off of society’s radar, and its victims devalued and treated as second-class citizens. To better understand these and other issues of women and girls, the world needed better data, she said, stressing that such work must be conducted in collaboration with NGOs, faith-based groups and other community organizations.

For the first time, young women’s voices were included at the opening of the CSW. An address given by a 17-year-old South African girl, Quilinta Nepaulas, reminded listeners that discrimination and violence waged against girls continues to undermine their rights, as well as

having harmful effects on societies overall.

Strengthening the gender architecture of the UN

One vital issue that was addressed at the CSW was the recommendation to strengthen the gender equality architecture of the UN contained within the HLP’s report *Delivering as One*. The Panel’s report also put forth a number of recommendations for structural changes to the current UN system to build a more unified and stronger UN. The proposal made by the HLP includes the consolidation of three existing UN entities—the UN Development Fund for Women, the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the UN Division for the Advancement of Women—under a single new UN agency to be headed by an Under-Secretary-General. The key characteristics for a women-specific entity at the UN include: agency autonomy, high-level leadership, universal country presence, and adequate resources.

Main events of the CSW

The high-level roundtable on “the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child,” held on 26 February, provided an opportunity for senior representatives of Member States to share experiences, lessons learned and good practices in relation to eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child. Speakers highlighted the need to harmonize laws to combat violence against women and girls, protect girls during periods of armed conflict and encourage girls’ education and women’s empowerment in the UN labor force. They also discussed the continued sexual exploitation of women and girls, the relationship between early marriage and girls’ vulnerability to domestic violence, the need to end cultural practices that impeded girls’ wellbeing, such as female genital mutilation and honour killings, and the importance of data disaggregated by sex and age for effective policymaking. In addition to the governments and representatives of UN agencies, funds and programmes that participated in the discussion, five representatives of NGOs, and two girl children also provided oral interventions.

On 1 March an interactive expert panel debated the issue “Elimination of all forms of violence against women: Follow up to the Secretary-General’s in-depth study at national and international levels.” The Secretary-General’s report analyses the current situation of the girl child (E/CN.6/2007/2) and concludes that discrimination and violence against the girl child is

persistent around the world despite progress in raising awareness about girls' rights, as well as the recognition of the unacceptability of violations of those rights, and their detrimental impact on society as a whole. Participants in the expert panel agreed that violence against women was rooted in gender inequality and discrimination against women, continued unequal power relations between women and men, the persistence of patriarchal attitudes, as well as values included in institutional structures, at all levels.

Agreed conclusions and draft resolutions

The Commission adopted its Agreed Conclusions on discrimination and violence against the girl child, which were envisioned as a comprehensive package addressing many issues, including poverty, education and gender stereotypes. The text of the Conclusions provides practical measures to eliminate discrimination against the girl child.

The 51st session also approved four draft resolutions. One of the resolutions was on the situation of and assistance of Palestinian women (E/CN.6/2007/L.2), which was approved by a recorded vote of 40 in favor and 2 against (US and Canada). The resolution reaffirms that the Israeli occupation remains a major obstacle for Palestinian women with regard to their advancement, self-reliance and integration into the development planning of their society.

The Commission approved draft resolutions on the need to increase HIV/AIDS protection for women and girls (E/CN.6/2007/L.1), ending female genital mutilation (E/CN.6/2007/L.3/Rev.1) and curbing the practice of forced and early marriages of the girl child (E/CN.6/2007/L.4/Rev.1).

At the conclusion of the 51st session, Chairperson Gallardo Hernández of El Salvador said the Commission's important role is clear: it must insert its voice into the UN reform process. She highlighted the strengthened ties between the Commission and the Economic and Social Council, emphasizing that, in the future, the two bodies must ensure even greater harmony in order to maintain momentum on gender-related issues. "The Commission would be 'present and active' when the restructuring of the Economic and Social Council started in Geneva next July," she said. "The CSW has proved it can establish new alliances and strong dialogue with all UN organs. The Commission has also stressed the importance of civil society and NGOs and must now maintain its catalytic role," she emphasized.

Civil society participation

The 51st session of the Commission on the Status of Women—always one of the largest NGO events on the UN calendar—again saw an enormous amount of participation by non-governmental actors; this year, over 2,500 NGO representatives participated as well as 130

girls. More than 200 side events took place during the session. NGOs submitted 41 written statements relating to the thematic issues of the CSW. NGOs also provided input into the session by presenting oral interventions. The CSW Bureau also agreed to allow interested NGO representatives to sit in on many of the informal negotiation sessions.

The Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO) Committee on the Status of Women organized a morning briefing each day to provide space for caucuses to report on their internal discussions, calls to action and requests for support on various NGO-led initiatives. In a show of cooperation with civil society, members of the CSW Bureau also agreed to brief NGOs at most of these morning meetings on what the progress of negotiations was and to take questions from the NGOs. During one of these meetings, UN-NGLS released its latest Development Dossier, *The Unfinished Story of Women and the United Nations*.

On 28 February, several panel sessions were held, including "The campaign to end legal discrimination against women and girls in Iran" and "Female Infanticide." On 2 March the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, together with the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) and the Women's UN Report Network (WUNRN) organized a side event entitled "UN Reform, UN Special Rapporteurs, the Human Rights Council, NGO Networking and Gender," which brought together a number of eminent speakers to discuss several issues.

Regarding the new working methods of the Commission, NGOs found them to be a "work in progress." While liking the idea in principle, they found the idea of holding a session on next year's theme – "financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women" – a bit unworkable as it didn't seem to fit with the rest of the Commission's proceedings, they suggested. NGOs indicated that they continued to find the CSW to be the most important place for the advocacy of international women's issues. However, this year the Commission itself saw very little media coverage – only ten journalists were accredited. One of the more innovative methods of coverage was a blog launched by openDemocracy.net entitled *Women Unlimited*.

In 2008 the CSW theme will be "financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women," and the agreed conclusions to be evaluated encompass women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peacebuilding.

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WHO: 60th Session of the World Health Assembly

The 60th World Health Assembly (WHA) was held from 14-23 May 2007 in Geneva, bringing together experts to discuss a number of issues, including avian and pandemic influenza and the application of the International Health Regulations; Smallpox eradication; Malaria, including proposal for the establishment of Malaria Day; Tuberculosis control: progress and long-term planning; Prevention and Control of noncommunicable diseases: implementation of the global strategy; Better medicines for children; and Progress in the rational use of medicines.

More than 2,400 people from the World Health Organization's 193 Member States, NGOs and other observers attended the 60th session of the World Health Assembly.

Referring to the six issues that she spoke about last November when she took office (see *Go Between 111*), Margaret Chan, WHO Director-General, in her opening speech said the framework of the six issues, which include health development, security, capacity, information and knowledge, partnership, and performance, fit well against the objectives set out in WHO's Medium-term Strategic Plan. She said the first two items address fundamental health needs: for health development and health security. The second two items are strategic: strengthening health systems and using evidence to define strategies and measure results. The remaining two items are operational: managing partnerships to get the best results in countries, and improving the performance of the organization.

Stressing that the landscape in which health programmes operate has become far more complex than it was just a decade ago, she said that more international actors are working in health than in any other sector. In many cases, efforts overlap, results are fragmented, and activities do not align with country priorities and capacities, she warned. The globalization of the labour market has contributed to the mass exodus of health workers from the countries that invested in their training, while in many places, rapid urbanization outpaces the ability of governments to provide essential services. The health of people in areas of conflict presents a different challenge, she said, noting that WHO's activities include emergency preparedness, the provision of essential services, the prevention of outbreaks, and rehabilitation.

She also pointed out that on 15 June of this year, the revised International Health Regulations will come into force (see *Go Between 107 & 110*). "Pro-active risk management is the strategy behind these Regulations. They aim to stop an event at source, before it has a chance to become an international threat," she emphasized.

Speaking in a keynote address on 15 May, Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg of Norway addressed the Assembly on issues related to the Millennium Development Goals

(MDGs) and also spoke about UN reform as he recently co-chaired the Secretary General's High-level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence (see *Go Between 112*). "The state of global health has a profound impact on all nations. No national asset has greater value than a healthy, educated population.

"Few other investment yields higher rates of return than investment in health and education for all. And such policies will help lead countries where poverty and ill health is endemic out of the vicious circle and into a virtuous one.

"We know that prosperity can bring better health. But we also now know that a healthy population is fundamental to economic growth," he stressed.

He noted that it was a moral imperative to take corrective action as prescribed in the MDGs and mentioned the development of a "Global Business Plan" that would help accelerate progress towards Millennium Goals 4 and 5 by mobilizing additional resources. It also aims to strengthen coordination and reinforce core functions of international agencies in line with the UN reform agenda and provide a balance between flexibility of resources at the local level, where the needs are best understood, and accountability by strengthening the reporting of outcomes. He said he hoped the Plan could be launched in New York in September 2007.

The Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Thoraya Obaid, addressed the Assembly on 15 May. Noting that the MDGs most closely related to reproductive health—to improve maternal health and prevent HIV infection—show the least progress, Ms. Obaid stressed, "No nation can be developed when women are denied the right to health. And no nation can progress when large numbers of women die while giving life.

Pointing out that over the past two decades, more than ten million women have died from complications of pregnancy and childbirth and some 300 million women have suffered complication or long-term disabilities, such as obstetric fistula, she said, "By any measure, this situation is deplorable when we consider the fact that most of these deaths and disabilities could be prevented if every woman had access to reproductive healthcare."

In order to make greater progress, Ms. Obaid called for strengthening alliances between institutions that provide services to communities—national institutions, non-governmental, civil society, religious and faith-based organizations—and supporting national efforts to move ahead.

The World Health Assembly closed its sixtieth session on 23 May, reaching last-minute agreement on two key resolutions on pandemic influenza preparedness and public health, innovation and intellectual property. It approved the largest-ever budget for the organization, US\$4.2 billion for 2008-2009, an increase of nearly US\$1 billion from the US\$3.3 billion approved for 2006-2007, and adopted a record number of resolutions on public health issues and on the technical and administrative work of WHO.

Member States agreed a resolution which will help all countries better prepare for the global public health threat which an influenza pandemic presents. The resolution, “Sharing of Influenza viruses and access to vaccines and other benefits,” restates the general principles of the necessity of sharing both in the preparations for an influenza pandemic and the benefits that will flow from improved international cooperation and preparation, such as greater quantities of and equitable access to H5N1 and pandemic vaccines.

The resolution requests WHO to establish an international stockpile of vaccines for H5N1 or other influenza viruses of pandemic potential, and to formulate mechanisms and guidelines aimed at ensuring fair and equitable distribution of pandemic-influenza vaccines at affordable prices in the event of a pandemic.

In her closing remarks, Dr. Chan told delegates, “All countries need to be aware of their obligations under the revised International Health Regulations. When collective security is at stake, public opinion can carry great weight. After very considerable discussion, you have adopted a resolution on the sharing of influenza viruses and access to pandemic vaccines and other benefits. I want to underscore the importance of this decision. My responsibilities in implementing the IHR depend on this sharing.”

The Assembly passed a resolution to intensify access to affordable, safe and effective antimalarial combination treatments, to intermittent preventive treatment in pregnancies, to insecticide treated mosquito nets, and indoor residual spraying for malaria control with suitable and safe insecticide. Member States requested that donors adjust their policies so as to progressively cease to fund the provision and distribution of oral artemisinin monotherapies, and to join in campaigns to prohibit the marketing, distribution and use of counterfeit antimalarial medicines. Malaria continues to cause more than one million preventable deaths every year.

All Member States were urged to develop and implement long-term plans for tuberculosis (TB) prevention and control, in line with the WHO Stop TB Strategy. The actions the resolution are aimed at accelerating progress towards halving TB deaths and prevalence by 2015, through the full implementation of the Global Plan to Stop TB, 2006-2015. WHO is requested to strengthen its support to countries affected by TB, in particular those heavily affected by Multidrug-resistant and Extensively Drug-Resistant TB (MD/XDR-TB) as well as TB/HIV.

The Assembly adopted a resolution on integrating gender analysis and actions into the work of WHO, demonstrating the importance Member States place on including gender perspectives such as disaggregation of data based on sex in all publications and reports.

The WHA adopted a resolution expressing concern over the continuous deterioration of the health and economic conditions of the populations in the occupied Palestinian territory. The need for universal coverage of health services was reaffirmed while recognizing that the acute shortage of financial and medical resources is jeopardizing access of the population to curative and preventive services. The Assembly requested the WHO Director-General to report on the health and economic situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and to continue to provide the necessary technical assistance to meet the health needs of the Palestinians.

The Assembly passed a resolution on better medicines for children, requesting the Director-General to undertake a program of work to improve access to essential medicines for children. This year, WHO will develop a Model List of Essential Medicines for Children, as well as evidence-based medicines information for prescribers and carers, and identify key research and development requirements for producing better medicines for children.

Member States approved a resolution and reiterated the importance of a coherent research strategy for WHO which will help to disseminate the outcomes of research and its utilization in decision and policy making for more effective health policies.

The Assembly also endorsed the Global Plan of Action on Workers’ Health, which aims to devise policy instruments on workers health; protect and promote health at the workplace; improve the performance of and access to occupational health services; provide and communicate evidence for preventive action; and incorporate workers health into other policies.

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CSD-15: Policy Year Closes Without Adopted Text

The fifteenth session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-15) was held from 30 April-11 May 2007 at UN headquarters in New York. Building on the outcome of CSD-14 (a "Review Year", see Go Between 110), CSD-15 (a "Policy Year") focused on identifying policies and options to expedite the implementation of commitments in the areas of energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere and climate change.

During CSD-15, delegates convened for interactive discussions, heard regional perspectives and input from representatives of UN agencies and other intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), Major Groups and others, and listened to statements from ministers and senior officials during a high-level segment. A Partnerships Fair, Learning Center and numerous side events were also held throughout the two-week session.

Negotiations at CSD-15 proved painstaking as delegates attempted to negotiate an outcome document intended to identify policy options to further the thematic issues under discussion. Following numerous formal and informal meetings, closed "Friends of the Chair" sessions and extensive discussions, several issues remained unresolved regarding the energy for sustainable development and climate change sections of the draft document.

Chair Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy and Industry of Qatar) presented a compromise document at the session's final plenary, but after regional consultations, the European Union (EU) and Switzerland rejected it on the basis that it did not address the challenges in the thematic areas, meet world expectations or add value. The meeting closed without an adopted outcome document.

On 30 April 2007, the CSD-15 Chair opened the 15th session of the Commission and reviewed the outcome of CSD-14 and of the CSD-15 intergovernmental preparatory meeting, and suggested that CSD-15 focus on areas where it could add value.

The representative from Pakistan, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (G-77/China), called for the full implementation of commitments made at recent summits and the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, emphasizing that progress in the environmental field should be matched by progress in other areas. He indicated continuing obstacles, including lack of financial, human and technical resources in developing countries.

The representative from Germany, speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU), proposed monitoring implementation, introducing time-bound targets, initiating an international agreement on energy efficiency, and reviewing energy in the CSD's sessions in 2010/2011 and 2014/2015. He also highlighted the impact of climate change on security. Switzerland said the CSD has not lived up to expectations, and

needs to add value to, not just repeat, what has been done in the past.

High-level Segment

CSD-15's high-level segment, held from 9-11 May, brought together 98 ministers of environment, finance, economy, development and energy and other high-level officials, and included a number of interactive discussions. Several sessions focused on the theme of "Turning commitments into action: working together in partnership," with keynote speakers, ministers and government officials, as well as UN agencies, other intergovernmental organizations and Major Groups, all participating in the discussions.

Official statements highlighted a wide range of issues, including: regional partnerships; cross-sectoral approaches; developed countries taking the lead based on the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities; research and development in clean technology and biofuels; special needs of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan and the Mauritius Strategy; integrating gender into all areas of energy policy; the proposition that oil super-profits be redistributed to compensate losses incurred by non-oil producing countries; the imperative of reliable and affordable energy supply to development; and the importance of financial mechanisms and the carbon market.

Speakers raised further issues, including: the role of science in energy innovation; increasing public awareness programmes, education and capacity development initiatives; technology transfer; new and additional finance; and a review of the balance between rewarding innovators and facilitating access to clean technology. In addition to official statements, there were roundtables on the thematic issues, and ministerial dialogues with UN agencies and Major Groups.

Ministerial Dialogue with Major Groups

The Ministerial Dialogue with Major Groups, moderated by Chair Al-Attiyah, was held on 10 May. During the interactive discussion, the Scientific and Technological Community urged countries to explore the options for energy innovation across the entire energy portfolio. On climate change laws, Business and Industry expressed a preference for regulation over uncertainty. Workers and Trade Unions emphasized the opportunity for "green jobs" in the renewable energy sector, and the need for "safe work, decent work and sustainable work."

Local Authorities explained that leadership is being taken at the local level to fill the “responsibility void.” NGOs described the response to climate change as a “moral imperative” and—along with Children and Youth—rejected carbon-based and nuclear energy sources as long-term options. Indigenous Peoples cautioned against ignoring the Earth’s message to move away from unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, and highlighted the potential liabilities arising from “dumping carbon” into the atmosphere. Children and Youth also expressed disappointment with the Chair’s text, urged micro-financing for young entrepreneurs, and called for holistic education. Women promoted gender mainstreaming, in particular for taking into account women’s concerns in energy policies, poverty reduction strategies and decision-making processes.

Outcome

On 2 May, Chair Al-Attiah distributed the *Chair’s Revised Draft Negotiating Document*. The draft was intended to identify policy options and possible actions to expedite implementation of commitments on the four themes. The sixteen-page text was intended to build on discussions and recommendations from CSD-14, the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting (IPM) and the interactive dialogues that had taken place during the first two days of CSD-15. The draft contained a preamble and sections on energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere, climate change and inter-linkages and cross-cutting issues.

After spending the afternoon of 2 May considering the text and consulting informally in regional groupings, delegations began formal discussions on 3 May in parallel sessions of two ad hoc working groups. Ad hoc Working Group 1 dealt with energy for sustainable development and air pollution/atmosphere, while Ad hoc Working Group 2 dealt with industrial development, climate change and inter-linkages and cross-cutting issues.

While many delegates welcomed the text as a useful starting point for negotiations, and noted that it was better structured than the earlier draft, a considerable number sought to insert further details, or to elaborate on various issues in the text. In particular, the G-77/China and the EU proposed additional text, while the US, Australia, Canada and a number of other developed countries preferred to keep the text concise. Negotiations on this text, and on the numerous amendments proposed, continued throughout CSD-15’s second week, with a number of revised versions of the text, and the different sections within it, being produced. Late in the day on 11 May, as negotiations could not produce agreed text in the energy for sustainable development and climate change sections, Chair Al-Attiah circulated a compromise text on a “take it or leave it” basis. The EU and Switzerland rejected this text, and CSD-15 concluded with no negotiated outcome document. Instead, the Chair later released a “Chair’s Summary” which includes the rejected text as an annex (www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd15/documents/chair_summary.pdf).

Major Groups

Over 800 representatives of Major Groups participated in CSD-15. Major Groups include Women; Children and Youth; Indigenous People; Local Authorities; Workers and Trade Unions; Business and Industry; the Scientific and Technological Community; and Farmers. Attendees participated during the Session as panel experts, assisting and contributing to the high-level segment and actively participating in the thematic discussions. At CSD-15 decisions were made to include at least two Major Groups’ interventions per thematic session.

Additionally, civil society groups held caucuses under the banner of their respective Major Groups or relevant subject themes such as education or energy. These caucuses served as organizational sessions where participants discussed pressing issues and prepared collective statements. In their strategy sessions, NGOs remained adamant that nuclear should not be an energy option; and, along with Youth, were adamant that the text should have included clear time-bound targets. Farmers discussed the benefits of appropriate biofuel production.

Many civil society participants were frustrated not only with the outcome of CSD-15, but also the CSD itself, pointing to the inability of the Commission to come to an agreement on a text. The negotiations were disheartening for many as well because they felt that what was agreed upon was very weak and did little to advance commitments beyond previously agreed texts such as Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Action (JPOI, see *Roundup 96*) if at all.

UN-NGLS, along with Stakeholder Forum, The Northern Alliance for Sustainability (ANPED) and the Brazilian Forum of NGOs and Social Movements for Environment and Development (FBOMS), held several events during the Commission relating to CSD reform and International Environmental Governance. Information about these events and their follow-up can be found on the UN-NGLS website (www.un-ngls.org).

CSD-16 will take place from 5-20 May 2008 and will include a two-day session for the review of outcomes of the water cycle (CSD-13 and 14). The session will focus on agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa.

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4th Session of the Human Rights Council

The fourth session of the Human Rights Council, which met from 12-30 March 2007, considered reports from its Special Procedures and the high-level missions mandated during earlier special sessions as well as its future work. It also considered reports on a wide range of other issues, including racism and racial discrimination, freedom of religion or belief, indigenous peoples, violence against women, human rights defenders, and follow-up to earlier resolutions on Darfur and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

At the opening session, in a video statement, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said he hoped that the Council's members would work together to promote an objective and universal approach to human rights and that he hoped by the first anniversary of the Council in June, the wheels of the Council would be in full motion, including the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). Decisions were expected to be reached on this and other of the institution-building issues by 18 June.

During the three-week session, the Council heard the Special Procedures of the Council present their reports on the situation of human rights in Burundi, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Reports were also presented on: minority issues, effects of economic reform policies and foreign debt on human rights, extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, human rights of migrants, protection of human rights while countering terrorism, freedom of opinion and expression, physical and mental health, education, sale of children and child prostitution, torture, human rights and transnational corporations, internally displaced persons, people of African descent, arbitrary detention, and enforced or involuntary disappearances.

The Council continued the review work of its mechanisms and heard progress reports from its two intergovernmental working groups on the UPR, and on the Review of Mandates, which included segments on the Complaints Procedure, the Expert Advice Body and the Special Procedures. During discussions on expert advice, NGOs, through a joint statement, highlighted that the Sub-Commission's Working Group on Indigenous Populations, Working Group on Minorities, Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery and its Social Forum had provided valuable spaces for the participation of NGOs without ECOSOC status, indigenous groups, and other communities. They urged the Council to ensure that such flexible and innovative modalities are included in the future system of expert advice.

Meetings of the 1503 procedure, during which the Council considers the situation of human rights violations in certain countries behind closed doors, were also held. The Council decided to discontinue consideration of the human rights situation in Iran and Uzbekistan.

Two special events were also held during the session, one on violence against children and the other on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The special event on violence against children was the first panel event held in a plenary session of the Council. It was devoted to the UN Study on Violence against Children carried out by Sérgio Paulo Pinheiro, the Independent Expert appointed to conduct the study. The special event offered opportunities for substantive input from NGOs but also demonstrated the pressures of time-management that continue to pose a challenge to the work of the Council as a number of NGOs exceeded the two minutes allowed, which meant that not all NGOs wishing to speak could be given the floor.

On 20 March, the Council held interactive dialogues with: Gay McDougall, the Independent Expert on Minorities; Jorge Bustamante, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants; Rodolfo Stravenhagen, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of Indigenous people; Walter Kälin, the Representative of the Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced persons; Yakin Ertürk, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences; and Juan Miguel Petit, the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

Ms. McDougall identified the high levels of discrimination and marginalization of minorities by analysing references made to minorities in progress reports of 50 countries in relation to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Mr. Bustamante noted that 200 million migrants in the world are vulnerable to human rights violations as they search for scarce common resources, especially women and children living away from their families. He made special mention of the upcoming Global Forum on Migration and Development to be hosted by Belgium. Mr. Stavenhagen focused on the increasingly negative impact of destruction of natural habitats and environment, corruption in granting indigenous land for commercial purposes, and forced displacement and dispossession of land on indigenous peoples. He called for the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. A number of NGOs participated in the interactive dialogue with these special procedures.

During its fourth regular session, the Council adopted seven resolutions and two decisions, including a text on Darfur. In the resolution adopted on Darfur, the Council took note with

regret that the high-level mission could not visit Darfur. It expressed deep concern regarding the seriousness of the ongoing violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Darfur and decided to convene a group to be presided over by the Special Rapporteur on Sudan to work with the Government of Sudan and the appropriate human rights mechanisms of the African Union to ensure the effective follow-up of the implementation of resolutions and recommendations on Darfur and to contribute to monitoring the human rights situation on the ground.

In the resolution adopted on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the Council noted with regret that Israel, the occupying power, had not implemented resolutions S-1/1 and S-3/1 and had hindered the dispatching of the urgent fact-finding missions. It called for the implementation of its resolutions and the dispatch of the two missions to the territory and for the President of the Council and the High Commissioner for Human Rights to report to the Council at its fifth session on their efforts for the implementation of the resolutions and on the compliance of Israel.

In a resolution on rectification of the legal status of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Council decided to initiate a process to rectify the legal status of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, with the aim of placing the Committee on a par with all other treaty monitoring bodies.

In a resolution on the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Review of Mandates, the Council requested the Coordinating Committee of the Special Procedures to extend the deadline for the submission of comments on and inputs to the draft manual of Special Procedures, and to present to the fifth session of the Human Rights Council the outcome of its deliberations on the code of conduct regulating the work of the Special Procedures.

In a resolution on the right to development, the Council decided to act to ensure that its agenda promotes and advances sustainable development and the achievements of the MDGs and to agree on a programme of work that would lead to raising the right to development to the same level and on a par with all other human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the core human rights instruments.

In his closing statement to the Council, Luis Alfonso de Alba, President of the Council, said the level of participation and commitment shown during the fourth session was encouraging and showed the priority that should be attached to the institution building process, convergence and follow-up, seeking consensus, the need to clearly identify outstanding issues and focus on these issues.

The fifth regular session of the Council will be held from 11 to 18 June.

Information on the fourth session is available online (www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/4session/index.htm).

On 10 May a petition signed by more than 12,000 individuals was delivered to the President of the Human Rights Council in Geneva while negotiations were still underway in the Council to review—and potentially reduce the effectiveness of—the system of Special Procedures, the term used to refer to the UN's independent human rights experts that monitor human rights situations around the world. The review was due to be completed by 18 June 2007. The global petition, sponsored by 17 international and regional NGOs including OMCT, was formally delivered by the Secretary General of Amnesty International's Canadian Section, Alex Neve.

The signatories of the petition include victims of human rights violations, human rights defenders, human rights experts, parliamentarians, national human rights commissioners, and NGOs from every region in the world. The petition calls on the Council to maintain and strengthen its system of independent human rights experts known as the Special Procedures.

The review of the Special Procedures has the potential to strengthen the system so that it is better equipped to support the Council in protecting human rights. However, some Member States are supporting proposals that would weaken the Special Procedures by undermining their ability to work effectively, independently and without interference from States. Such proposals include a draft code of conduct that contains provisions to regulate the Special Procedures' activities and render them less effective. There are also proposals for the election of mandate-holders by governments which could politicize the process. Currently UN Special Procedure mandate-holders are independent from governments both operationally and through their selection process. Their coverage includes: freedom from torture, arbitrary or extrajudicial executions, racism, sale of children, violence against women, right to health, to food and to adequate housing, and protection of groups such as human rights defenders and migrants.

To coincide with the presentation of the petition, a collection of testimonies has been published from victims, their family members and human rights defenders detailing the enormous impact that the Special Procedures have had on their lives. The testimonies are a reminder to governments that the negotiations taking place in Geneva have a very direct bearing on the enjoyment of human rights by individuals across the world. The petition is currently available online: (www.actforspecialprocedures.org).

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Elimination of Racial Discrimination: High Level Panel

To help commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, observed on 21 March, a High Level Panel was held bringing together experts to focus on the effects of racism and discrimination and how they impede development.

A High Level Panel was held on 21 March under the theme of this year's International Day—"Racism and Discrimination: Obstacles to Development." The Panel brought together the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour; the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, Sergei A. Ordzhonikidze; the President of the Human Rights Council, Luis Alfonso de Alba; the Chairperson of the Working Group on the Right to Development, Ibrahim Salama; Chairperson of the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures, Vitit Muntarbhorn; the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, Doudou Diène; and the Independent Expert on Minority Issues, Gay McDougall.

In her remarks, Ms. Arbour stated that the ongoing challenge was to translate stated commitment into concrete actions that change lives for the better. She stressed the crucial importance of addressing in a holistic manner the complex interface between racism, discrimination and poverty, as well as to understand how all of these factors both stem from and engender a denial of political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights.

The President of the Human Rights Council made reference to the 2009 review conference on the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action to be conducted within the framework of the General Assembly and the preparatory work that would be undertaken by the Council beginning in May 2007. He stressed that NGOs would be crucial to the review process, which would require major additional efforts as well as more human and financial resources.

Mr. Salama pointed out that tremendous work remains to be done and that fighting racism and other forms of discrimination was a "frustrating uphill battle." He suggested that its proportions were increasing due to a number of factors including globalization, migration, technology and extreme poverty, among others. He noted that paragraph 158 of the 2001 Durban Declaration endorses a holistic vision and confirms the Right to Development as a prerequisite to fighting discrimination.

He suggested that de-politicization was the most urgent and feasible way forward. "What I mean by de-politicization is to constantly decrease the level of political considerations in the human rights debates and decision-making processes at the international level. This could only be achieved by reforming and strengthening the treaty body system, the Special Procedures and the Sub-Commission as well, as its subsidiary bodies and working groups, which constituted the

closest thing to reality and civil society ever reached by the UN human rights system. And all this is feasible," Mr. Salama stressed. He noted also that follow up to the Durban Conference is a clear example of how "sound, fair and representative expertise could depoliticize issues, generate ideas and bridge gaps."

Mr. Muntarbhorn stressed the importance of strengthening the Special Procedures as a system and highlighted the need for a more proactive agenda with more actions and features. He listed a number of groups that were discriminated against, including migrant workers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), Indigenous Populations, minorities, religious groups, people under foreign occupation, among others. He called for more development aid, debt reduction and freer and fairer trade for those in the margins. He asked whether States could accept the idea of multiculturalism and emphasized the need to promote interculturalism in today's pluralistic society. In closing he mentioned five key words—equity, plurality, visibility, inclusivity and connectivity—necessary in the fight against racism and discrimination.

Mr. Diène spoke on the banalization of racism and the increasing use of violence around the world, noting that the International Day should not be a punctual act forgotten for the rest of the year. He warned that racism has become so profound and ingrained that racists are no longer aware that they are racist. He stressed that a major cause of racism was the denial of multiculturalism and highlighted the need for recognition and acceptance of ethnic, racial and cultural differences.

Ms. McDougall stressed that racism and discrimination was a waste of human potential, robs societies of necessary social cohesion and could stagnate economic development. She noted that in every region of the globe minorities face higher levels of disproportionate poverty. She pointed to growth in the inequality gap because of political, economic and social disparities. The Independent Expert stressed that 832 million people face political exclusion which translates into families living in extreme poverty, illiterate children, communities marked with social exclusion and constant fear of violent attack. She emphasized the need to dispel the myth that diversity is the cause of conflict and called for respect for equality and non-discrimination of minority rights.

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State of the World's Minorities 2007

A global survey by Minority Rights Group International (MRG) finds that now more than ever, world leaders must insist that the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples be respected and that participation of minorities is essential if conflict is to be prevented and lasting peace to be built. MRG urges that international bodies such as the United Nations and regional organizations need to approach ethnicreligious conflict in a systematic way.

The second annual edition of the *State of the World's Minorities 2007* looks at the key developments over 2006 affecting the human rights and security of ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities and indigenous peoples. It includes a preface by the UN's Independent Expert on Minority Issues, Gay McDougall; a statistical analysis entitled *Peoples under Threat 2007*; and a special focus on the participation of minorities.

The survey finds that Somalia is the world's most dangerous country for minority communities and has overtaken Iraq to top a global ranking of countries where minorities are most under threat. Fierce fighting and the threat of State repression have seen Somalia, Iraq and Sudan lead this year's ranking of Peoples under Threat. Last year Iraq led the list and Somalia was in third place.

"A new government in Somalia has raised hopes for democracy, but it is also a uniquely dangerous time. There is the spectre of a return of large-scale clan violence—and groups that supported the old order are now under tremendous threat," Mark Lattimer, Director of MRG, said at the launch of the report.

Key allies of the US in its "war on terror," including the Governments of Pakistan, Turkey and Israel, intensified repression of particular ethnic communities in 2006. Pakistan is in the top 20 list and Turkey and Israel/Occupied Territories have both shown major rises in the rankings. "The debate continues to rage about whether the 'war on terror' has made the world a safer place for the West, but it has certainly made it a much more dangerous place for minorities," Mr. Lattimer stressed.

African States make up more than half of the top 20 list. Sudan is third in the list—a consequence of the continuing appalling levels of violence in Darfur, targeted at farmers such as Zaghawa, Masalit and Fur tribes, by government forces and Arab militia (Janjaweed), and the continuing failure of the international community to find ways of stopping the violence.

"In three-quarters of the world's conflicts, the killing is now targeted at particular ethnic or religious groups. Because they are usually minorities their suffering is largely ignored," Mr. Lattimer said. "International leaders must wake up to the fact that many of today's conflicts, particularly in Africa, are the result of decades of economic marginalization of minorities and indigenous peoples."

The principal normative development during 2006 was the finalization of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which had occupied the UN Commission on Human Rights for over a decade. At its first meeting in June, the Human Rights Council approved a text of the Declaration. However, in November 2006 the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly passed a procedural motion blocking approval of the Declaration, at least until later in 2007. According to MRG the failure to approve the Declaration is illustrative of a widespread refusal by States to recognize the special, and often very dangerous, position in which indigenous peoples and minorities more generally find themselves, and their urgent need for better international protection.

In her preface, Ms. McDougall pointed out: "[W]e must promote the understanding that diverse societies can be among the healthiest, the most stable and prosperous. Respect for minority rights is crucial to this understanding. Minority rights are based on the principle of an integrated society, where each can use their own language, enjoy their culture and practise their religion while still embracing a broader, inclusive national identity...."

"Today, in almost every corner of our world it seems that that there is a growing suspicion of 'otherness' or difference, whether it be ethnic, religious or based on other grounds. This climate of fear is also open to abuse by those who might seek to exploit divisions between different religious faiths, or those who might justify oppression in the name of security. In this worrying climate, the principles enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities are as relevant today as ever, and as needed for healthy, diverse societies. In adopting this Declaration in 1992, States have pledged to protect the existence—and identity—of minorities within their territory, to establish conditions of equality and non-discrimination, and to ensure effective participation of minorities in public life," the Independent Expert concluded.

State of the World's Minorities 2007 is available online: (www.minorityrights.org/admin/Download/pdf/SWM2007.pdf).

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6th Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

More than 1,000 indigenous representatives from all regions of the world gathered at UN headquarters for the sixth session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) that focused this year on territories, lands and natural resources. It also focused on the implementation of recommendations on the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum and on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): economic and social development; environment; health; education; culture; human rights; and the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

Meeting from 14-25 May, the session included a dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, a half-day discussion on Asia, a half-day discussion on urban indigenous peoples and migration, ongoing priorities and themes, and follow-up: data collection and disaggregation (2004). It also looked at future work of the Forum, including emerging issues, and the draft agenda for the seventh session.

Victoria Tauli-Corpuz (Philippines) served as the Chairperson of the Permanent Forum. Opening the session, she noted that the majority of the world's remaining natural resources—minerals, freshwater, potential energy sources and more—are found within indigenous peoples' territories. Access to and ownership and development of these resources remain contentious. Although recent decades have seen some progress in the area of legal recognition of indigenous peoples' rights to the protection and control of their lands, territories and natural resources, in practical terms, this has not always translated into action, she warned.

The 6th session of the Forum provided the setting for renewed efforts to encourage the General Assembly to adopt the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples that was not adopted at the 60th session of the GA. During the session, the Declaration consistently featured as a topic of concern in the ongoing dialogue between representatives from governments, UN agencies, indigenous communities, and civil society. Participating governments who support the Declaration, primarily Latin American and European States, often included appeals for its prompt adoption in their statements, and indigenous representatives repeatedly emphasized the importance of Article 26, which guarantees the right of indigenous peoples to the lands, territories, and resources they have traditionally occupied and used.

On the session devoted to one of the Forum's ongoing priorities: enhancing data collection and disaggregation on indigenous people and issues, speakers noted that challenges to the development of indicators for indigenous peoples' wellbeing were closely connected to challenges involved in data collection, research and analysis, and interpretation and dissemination of such data. Some, concerned that governments might purposely distort information about native communities to adjust resource allocations, emphasized the importance of developing multiple criteria with active participation of local indigenous peoples to

accurately capture the identity of, and socio-economic conditions in, their communities. Others stressed that data collection concerning indigenous peoples must follow the principle of free, prior and informed consent at all levels, and promote the human rights of indigenous peoples.

John Scott, representing the Secretariat on the Convention for Biological Diversity, said a process of developing indicators for traditional knowledge was underway. He noted that the findings of a recent regional consultation process and an expert meeting would be presented in October. He stressed that indigenous peoples must be actively engaged in establishing adequate indicators that captured their realities, and he urged that they be brought into all decision-making processes.

Speaking on 18 May, Rodolfo Stavenhagen, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples addressed the Forum. "One of the new trends that has been reinforced in recent years is [...]the continuous loss of indigenous lands and territories, including their loss of control over natural resources [...]intensified as a result of economic globalization, especially with increased exploitation of [energy and water] resources," he warned.

Mr. Stavenhagen highlighted trends that had a tremendous impact on indigenous peoples, including the encroachment of extractive and logging industries, such as those in North America and Liberia; the extension of plantation economies, particularly in some regions of South-East Asia and the Amazon; and the ongoing destruction of the last original forests due to indiscriminate logging, in various countries in Equatorial Africa and Latin America.

The Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Yakin Ertürk, said that the failure of States to create inclusive societies had undermined the recent global push to promote indigenous peoples' rights, leaving them only a "romanticized manufacture of indigenous identity." Further, progress lagged in the recognition of gender-specific discrimination encountered by indigenous women within and outside their communities, she said, stressing that indigenous women faced a dual task of defending their rights as members of an excluded group within a dominant society, and resisting the static patriarchal perceptions of culture and tradition within their own communities. Women frequently turned to national laws to overcome marginalization within their communities. However,

both State law and custom demanded that indigenous women conform to “traditionally” ascribed behaviour. The insufficient protection in State justice systems also made indigenous women vulnerable to violence perpetuated by State agents. The indigenous peoples’ struggle for social justice and human rights would be successful only if such problems as violence and discrimination against women were addressed, she stressed.

The 6th session of the Forum saw the adoption of eight sets of draft recommendations and three draft decisions approved by consensus. Expressing the strong belief that indigenous peoples’ right to access and manage communal lands and natural resources was central to their collective survival, the Permanent Forum recommended that governments adopt, in relevant national legislation, the principle of “free, prior and informed consent” of indigenous peoples regarding potential development projects or other activities carried out on their lands.

In the text focusing on the session’s theme, “territories, lands and natural resources” (E/C.19/2007/L.2), the Forum strongly urged the General Assembly adopt during its 61st session the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the fate of which remains unclear some six months after it was approved by the Geneva-based Human Rights Council (see *Go Between 110*).

Reiterating relevant articles of the Declaration, the Forum recognized the fundamental importance of indigenous peoples’ security of land use and access, and the importance of land rights for broader processes of poverty reduction, good governance and conflict prevention and resolution, stressing that indigenous peoples are entitled to effectively participate in drafting policies and laws related to resources management and development processes (article 14). Further, indigenous peoples have a central role in decision-making and implementation of lands and resources-related projects, [and] such projects shall not be implemented without [their] free, prior and informed consent (article 28).

By its text on the status of implementation of the MDGs and other targets for economic and social development, environment, health, education, culture and human rights (E/C.19/2007/L.3 and Add.1), the Permanent Forum expressed its concern that relevant reports presented during the session by many States, as well as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers still did not adequately include and address indigenous peoples, nor did they include the participation of native and tribal peoples. The experts called on States “to rectify this weakness and on United Nations agencies to support their efforts.”

The text also recognized the “deep spiritual relationship indigenous peoples have with water and the great respect they have for the natural laws governing the health and sanctity of water,” and recommended that States review, with the direct participation of indigenous people, their laws on water regulation and the treaties, land claims and self-government agreements they have with indigenous peoples, and present

those reviews to the Forum in 2009.

In a text on recommendations that emerged from its half-day discussion on Asia (E/C.19.2007/L.5), the Permanent Forum stressed that, irrespective of their legal status or the different terminologies used for them, Asian indigenous peoples experienced non-recognition of their cultural identity, exclusion and marginalization. The Forum recommended that Asian States recognize indigenous peoples constitutionally and legally as peoples, and promote legal reform, particularly regarding their land rights and recognition of their customary laws and institutions, which promoted diversity and plurality.

The Forum, in its text on its half-day session on urban indigenous peoples and migration (E/C.19/2007/L.6), recommended, among other things, that relevant States provide mechanisms for forcibly, legally or involuntary displaced indigenous people to be able to return to their original communities, including appropriate forms of compensation and restitution and provision for sustainable livelihoods of displaced indigenous people.

The Permanent Forum also noted that 2008 had been designated the International Year of Languages and, among the draft decisions approved and forwarded to the Economic and Social Council for adoption, was a text by which the Council would decide to convene a three-day international expert group meeting on indigenous languages and request the results of that meeting be submitted to the Forum at its next session (E/C.19/2007/L.8), tentatively scheduled from 21 April - 2 May 2008.

The Permanent Forum also approved the draft provisional agenda for next year’s session, deciding that its special theme would be on “climate change, bio-cultural diversity and livelihoods; the stewardship role of indigenous peoples and new challenges.” It also decided that its traditional half-day session would next year be devoted to respective discussion on the Pacific region and on indigenous languages (E/C.19/2007/L.11).

Summing up the Permanent Forum’s work this year, Johan Schölvinck, Director of the Division for Social Policy in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs called the Forum a “celebration of the world’s cultural diversity,” in that it had seen extremely rich participation from some 1,500 representatives from indigenous peoples’ organizations, NGOs and academia, some 30 UN system and other intergovernmental organizations, about 70 Member States and some 30 indigenous parliaments. The Permanent Forum was not just an event; rather “a tribute to our human efforts of partnership” that offered the opportunity for inspiration, he said.

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Security Council Debates Security Sector Reform

With an increasing number of United Nations organs, funds, programmes and agencies engaged in security sector reform support activities in post-conflict countries, the Security Council, meeting on 20 February, acknowledged the need for UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to compile a comprehensive report with "concrete recommendations" on how to improve the effectiveness and coordination of all United Nations system entities that supported security sector reform.

Speaking before the Security Council on 20 February during the day-long debate on the subject, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said security sector reform aimed to achieve effective, accountable and sustainable security institutions that operate under a framework of the rule of law and respect for human rights. Citing lessons learned during the nearly six decades of the Organization's peacekeeping experience in post-conflict environments, he said that national ownership in post-conflict environments was not a static entity, but evolved as leaders and communities were brought into the peacebuilding process.

Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa (Bahrain), President of the General Assembly, said that collective efforts at the international level, and across the UN system, needed to be better coordinated to ensure that assistance to countries emerging from conflict had a greater impact. There was a need for a common policy within the framework of the Assembly to define such concepts and coordinate the efforts across the Organization. The Peacebuilding Commission could play a very important role in that regard. She also emphasized the important contribution the General Assembly could make to the emerging debate.

Slovakia's Foreign Minister, Ján Kubis, told the Council that, while reformed and restructured security sectors were crucial for post-conflict peacebuilding, the ultimate objective should be the improvement of the everyday lives of people.

Ismael A. Gaspar Martins (Angola), Chairman of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, said that the newly established Commission had worked with the governments concerned to address security sector reform in the first two countries on its agenda. In Sierra Leone, the Commission had agreed on the need to pursue ongoing national efforts in the fields of justice and security sector reform, strengthen the administration of justice and promote further reform of the police and army. As for Burundi, it had agreed that national efforts were needed to strengthen the rule of law, as well as completing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. He said that implementing successful security sector reform in post-conflict countries was

possible, provided there was adequate international support in the presence of responsible national ownership.

While acknowledging that military and police forces played a crucial role in the long-term success of political, economic and cultural rebuilding efforts in post-conflict societies, most speakers during the debate that followed agreed that such forces must be held to the same standards of efficiency, equity and accountability as the other service delivery systems with which they shared characteristics. Moreover, they must be placed under democratic control and restructured and retrained to become an asset, not a liability, in the long-term peacebuilding process.

Reading out a statement (S/PRST/2007/3) at the end of a day-long debate, Council President Peter Burian (Slovakia) said that members of the 15-nation body stressed that reforming the security sector in post-conflict environments was critical to the consolidation of peace and stability, promoting poverty reduction, rule of law and good governance, expanding legitimate State authority and preventing countries from relapsing into conflict.

"The Security Council also underlines that the United Nations has a crucial role to play in promoting comprehensive, coherent and coordinated international support to nationally owned security sector reform programmes, implemented with the consent of the countries concerned," he said, adding that the Council also recognized the links between security sector reform and other key stabilization and reconstruction factors, like transitional justice, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, small arms and light weapons control, as well as gender equality, children and armed conflict and human rights issues.

The presidential statement (S/PRST/2007/3), through which the Security Council encourages States to formulate their security sector reform programmes in a holistic way that encompasses strategic planning, institutional structures, resource management, operational capacity, civilian oversight and good governance, is available online: (www.un.org/Docs/sc/unsc_pres_statements07.htm).

GA Thematic Debate: Civilizations and the Challenge for Peace

On 11 May, The General Assembly concluded its two-day thematic debate on “Civilizations and the challenge for peace: obstacles and opportunities,” with the General Assembly President, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, saying in closing remarks that “dialogue was the gateway to change” and the two-day event, the third of its kind—the others had dealt with development and gender equality—had been a unique opportunity for States to reach a common understanding on the challenges facing the UN.

The main objective of the third thematic debate was to explore the reasons behind the growing level of mistrust between people of different religions and cultures; and to examine how and why cultural and religious differences increasingly fuel, and are used to justify conflicts. A number of prominent commentators, academics and political figures participated in the four separate panel discussions that made up the debate. These included: Respect for Cultural Diversity as a Prerequisite for Dialogue; Religion in Contemporary Society; The Responsibility of the Media; and Civilizations and the Challenge for Global Peace and Security.

Launching the two-day exchange, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed the urgent need to rebuild bridges and enter a sustained and constructive intercultural dialogue. Events of recent years—from terrorism and the means used to fight it, to offending words or publications—had exposed a widening gulf between communities and nations, he said. If unaddressed, that divide could undermine broader peace and stability in the world.

Ms. Sheikha Haya explained that what had compelled the Assembly to hold the debate—the third in a series of four thematic debates and panel discussions—was the desire to understand the realities of the day and analyse more fully the reasons behind the increasing levels of conflict, alienation, extremism and fear in the world. In doing so, she hoped it would be possible to lay a solid foundation for a genuine dialogue between cultures and religions, and “bridge the rift that is on the verge of deepening.”

During the 10 May panel on “Respect for cultural diversity is a prerequisite for dialogue,” the Deputy Prime Minister of Bahrain, Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak al-Khalifa, focused on the responsibility of the media in promoting an accurate perception of reality. The media could both foster understanding among different cultures and exacerbate conflict. Public opinion played a more salient role in shaping foreign policy today than ever before, and it had a direct bearing on informal relations through selective reporting and ideological favouritism, he stressed.

Held on 11 May, the panel on the responsibility of the media was moderated by Warren Hoge, UN Bureau Chief

of *The New York Times*. Referring to the cartoon crisis in which the whole Muslim world had become equated with effigies being burned, Mona Siddiqui, Professor of Islamic Studies and Public Understanding, University of Glasgow, said that those images and their aftermath had sparked off a deeper debate—could Islam and the Muslim world really understand, accept and respect the notion of diverse societies, with competing moralities and divergent discourses, where everything was up to critique?

“Let us not forget that, for many people all over the world, the media in all its forms is their biggest source of knowledge about the world,” she said. Journalists had a responsibility to reflect what they saw and heard.

The debate on “Civilizations and the challenge for global peace and security” saw participants discussing the means of promoting tolerance and pluralism in today’s globalized world, which one of the panellists—Souleyman Bachir Diagne of Northwestern University—described as a “continuous openness from within to otherness” and the opposite of the “clash of cultures” view. The Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Amre Moussa, observed that there was no consensus on whether or not there was a clash of civilizations. Political misunderstandings, ushered along by the double standards held by the world’s large powers and a circle of conservative Muslims, had led to a conflict between the West and Islam, referred to euphemistically as the “clash of civilizations.”

But, he said, there was no true clash of civilizations; rather the conflict was a product of certain western circles and their opinion of Islam. The world was seeing a wave of Islamophobia, which had a hand in destroying human relations all over the world. That conflict was a throwback to the days of the Crusades and must be dealt with openly.

He proposed that the meeting recommend to the Security Council that it deal with the clash of civilizations, which he saw as a struggle between the West and Islam. He said it was his belief that the conflict had its roots in politics.

Further information is available online: (www.un.org/ga/61).

On 29 May 2007, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced the appointment of Francis Deng of Sudan as the new Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities, succeeding Juan Mendez.

On 21 May 2007, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed Elizabeth Mataka, a national of Botswana and a resident of Zambia, as his Special Envoy for AIDS in Africa. He also renewed until the end of 2008 the appointments of Nafis Sadik, Special Envoy for AIDS in Asia and the Pacific; Lars Kallings, Special Envoy for AIDS in Eastern Europe and Central Asia; and George Alleyne, Special Envoy for AIDS in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In the months prior to that, the Secretary-General has also announced appointments and reappointments of several high-level positions within the United Nations:

B. Lynn Pascoe of the United States has been appointed as Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

Kiyotaka Akasaka of Japan has been appointed as Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information. He replaces Shashi Tharoor.

Muhammad Shaaban of Egypt has been appointed as Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management.

Sha Zukang of China has been appointed as Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. Mr. Sha previously served as the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva.

David Veness of the United Kingdom has been reappointed as Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security. Mr. Veness was appointed to that position by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 2005.

Inga-Britt Ahlenius of Sweden has been reappointed as Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services. She was originally appointed by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 2005.

Jean-Marie Guéhenno of France has been reappointed as Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. Mr. Guéhenno was originally appointed by

former Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and has served since 1 October 2000.

Nicolas Michel of Switzerland has been reappointed as the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel.

Sergei Ordzhonikidze, a Russian national, has been reappointed to the post of Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva.

Ad Melkert has been reappointed to serve as Under-Secretary-General and Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Mr. Melkert, a Dutch national, was originally appointed by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

Antonio Maria Costa of Italy has been reappointed as the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna and Executive Director of the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention.

Radhika Coomaraswamy of Sri Lanka has been reappointed as the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict. She was originally appointed by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan in February 2006.

José Luis Machinea of Argentina has been reappointed as Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). He was originally appointed to this position by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan in October 2003.

Marek Belka of Poland has been reappointed as the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). Mr. Belka, who assumed his functions in 2006, was originally appointed by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

Abdoulie Janneh of the Gambia has been reappointed as Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) at the level of Under-Secretary-General. He has served in this position since his appointment by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan in September 2005.

Michael R. Meyer, a US journalist who worked previously in support of United Nations activities in Kosovo, has been named as Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's Director of Communications and Speechwriting.

NGLS is an inter-agency programme of the United Nations system that facilitates dialogue, cooperation and constructive engagement between NGOs and the UN system. The NGLS mission statement, endorsed by its then governing body, the Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC), states: "The Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS) promotes dynamic partnerships between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations. By providing information, advice, expertise and support services, NGLS is part of the UN's efforts to strengthen dialogue and win public support for economic and social development."

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