

GO

Between



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

S-G : MAKING 2004 THE YEAR OF KEPT PROMISES

In December and January, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan gave a number of speeches giving an overview of 2003, which he noted had been a "rather hard year," and the work ahead for 2004. Through his speeches, he urged the world to focus on the fight against HIV/AIDS, calling the epidemic a "real weapon of mass destruction." Extracts from his 18 December press conference at UN headquarters in New York, as well as his acceptance speech for the 2003 Deutscher Medienpreis (German Media Award) in Baden-Baden (Germany) on 21 January follow.

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UN BUDGET 2004-2005

The United Nations will operate on a budget of US\$3.16 billion during the next two years, slightly less than Secretary-General Kofi Annan's requested US\$3.21 billion. Mr. Annan had earlier proposed a US\$3.06 billion budget, but with adjustments for inflation and the weak US dollar, the final budget figure amounted to US\$3.21 billion—a 0.5% increase over the last biennium (see *Go Between 100*).

Two of the most notable features in the approved budget were the granting of only 62 new posts, whereas the Secretary-General had requested 117, and a freeze on hiring general services staff, meaning that posts would remain vacant once the current employees left their jobs. General service employees include secretaries, translators and security guards, although the latter are exempt from the freeze.

According to UN Programme Planning and Budget Director Warren Sach, the new budget includes strengthened efforts for human rights, crime prevention and criminal justice, and humanitarian,

economic and social activities, with extra funds going to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

UN'S ROLE IN POST-WAR IRAQ

On 3 February 2004, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and US President George W. Bush met in Washington DC to discuss Iraq's political transition, and a possible role for the United Nations in overseeing the transfer of authority to the Iraqis. Mr. Annan voiced hope that the electoral team he is sending to Iraq would persuade the country's people to decide on a process by which to choose their government and break the present impasse.

(Continued on Page 3)

UN LAUNCHES INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF RICE

In a major effort to spotlight a commodity whose production is failing to keep up with population growth, the International Year of Rice 2004 (IYR) was launched by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The Year's main objective is to guide the efficient and sustainable development of rice and rice-based production systems, to reduce hunger and poverty by increasing production and access to rice, and to contribute to environmental conservation.

According to the FAO Commodities and Trade Division, over half of the world's population depend on rice as their staple food. In Asia alone, over 2 billion people get nearly 70% of their calorific intake from rice and its products. However, FAO figures show that by 2030 total demand for rice will be 3% higher than the annual amounts produced between 1997 and 1999.



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By the end of the 1990s, global rice production had reached 400 million tonnes in milled equivalent. Developing countries accounted for 95% of this total, and China and India alone for more than 50%. Global trade in rice grew at 7% a year throughout the 1990s, to reach 25 million tonnes. Developing countries accounted for most of this figure, with 83% of total exports and 85% of total imports.

FAO says that as rice has a key role in food security, it is subject to much government intervention aimed at supporting domestic rice producers. Countries tend to rely on self-sufficient processes rather than trade in rice to avoid the high volatility in world prices. Trade measures are also widely used to protect domestic rice markets. According to Concepción Calpe of FAO's Commodities and Trade Division, countries should adopt trade policies that are less distorting, while taking into account non-economic factors such as the environment, food security and rural poverty. FAO suggests that trade barriers should be minimized and markets of countries with extremely high tariffs liberalized.

"Almost a billion households in Asia, Africa and the Americas depend on rice systems as their main source of employment and livelihood," FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf said. "About four-fifths of the world's rice is produced by small-scale farmers and is consumed locally. Rice systems support a wide variety of plants and animals, which also help supplement rural diets and incomes. Rice is, therefore, on the frontline in the fight against world hunger and poverty."

Mr. Diouf added that rice production and consumption is a pivot of many cultures around the world. Calling rice "a symbol of cultural identity and global unity," he pointed out that it shapes religious observances, festivals, customs, cuisine and celebrations. FAO Assistant Director-General Michel Savini said rice provided 20% of

the world's dietary supply, as opposed to 19% for wheat and 5% for maize. However, he pointed out that as the world's population continued to increase, rice production was competing for land and water with other uses, such as urban development.

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S-G: MAKING 2004 THE YEAR OF KEPT PROMISES (CONT. FROM P1)

"To qualify for your award, one is supposed to have made 'a major contribution to world peace, and achieved press coverage of unusual significance.' In 2003, it was easier to do the latter than the former.

"Indeed, we at the United Nations found ourselves receiving more intense media attention than ever before. But alas, we cannot claim to have preserved world peace. We certainly tried, but peace is not in our gift. If only it were!

"I see three major tasks confronting us in the year ahead. The first is, precisely, to remind ourselves of the enormous needs that there are in the rest of the world, and of the fear, pain and misery that dominate so many people's lives, far from the headlines and the TV cameras.

"In the daily lives of most people in the world today, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction are remote and hypothetical threats. The fears that stalk most people are those of poverty, starvation,

unemployment, and deadly disease. When they are threatened with weapons, it is most often with those that we might call weapons of individual destruction—Kalashnikovs, machetes, landmines and the like—in societies where law and order have broken down.

“Little more than three years ago, at the Millennium Summit, all States agreed on the importance of dealing with those threats. They adopted the Millennium Declaration, which includes the eight Millennium Development Goals—precise pledges to achieve measurable results by 2015.

“Those pledges should be engraved on the heart, or at least the desk, of every political leader in every country. Indeed, they should be known throughout every society, so that in each country the people can monitor performance, and hold their leaders to account.

“Many poor countries cannot hope to reach the targets unless rich countries help them—with official aid, with investment, with advice, with debt relief, and perhaps above all with a reform of the international trading system, so that producers in poor countries no longer face barriers to their exports, or unfair competition from subsidized imports.

“Last year we let ourselves be distracted from these vital tasks. We were concerned—and rightly so—with issues of peace and security. But there will be no peace and no security, even for the most privileged amongst us, in a world that remains divided between extremes of wealth and poverty, health and disease, knowledge and ignorance, freedom and oppression. Surely we should have learnt that by now.

“We simply must make progress in bringing peace to the Middle East. The job in Afghanistan is only half done and will be no easier in the year ahead. Latin America needs more attention and more support. And in Africa, 2003 was an important year, but 2004 will be even more crucial.”

“So our first great task for 2004 is to re-focus the world’s attention on development. The second is to start re-building our system of collective security.

“The Charter of the United Nations is very clear. States have the right to defend themselves—and each other—if attacked. But the first purpose of the United Nations itself, laid down in Article 1, is ‘to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace.’

“We must show that the United Nations is capable of fulfilling that purpose, so that States do not feel obliged or entitled to take the law into their own hands.

“Finally, the third task I believe we should all focus on this year is that of rebuilding trust and confidence between people of different faiths and cultures.

“Many recent events—including notably the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the war in Iraq, and the continuing tragic conflict between Israelis and Palestinians—have pushed us dangerously close to the ‘clash of civilizations,’ which an American scholar predicted after the end of the cold war.

“We must resist this. We must deal with all our fellow human beings fairly and objectively, judging them by their own individual words and actions, and not on the basis of generalizations or preconceptions about the group to which we think they belong.

“Let all of us make it a priority, in 2004, to discover what we have in common with people of other faiths and cultures. Let us value, rather than despise or fear, what makes them different from us,” the Secretary-General urged.

UN’S ROLE IN POST-WAR IRAQ (CONT. FROM P1)

Under a 15 November agreement drawn up by the US-led Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and the Iraqi Governing Council, regional caucuses would take place in May that would elect a transitional council to assume control of Iraq on 1 July. The drafting of a constitution and elections under that constitution leading to a new government would be completed by the end of 2005. Currently, Iraq lacks an up-to-date census, voting rules and an election law. A major impediment to the proposed timetable is the opposition of a leading figure in the majority Shiite community who is demanding that direct elections be held before 1 July.

According to the Secretary-General, the UN team that will leave shortly for Iraq (as this *Go Between* goes to press) will determine whether elections are possible between now and the end of May, and will explore what options the Iraqis can agree on.

Mr. Annan recalled that during meetings in New York in January the CPA and the Iraqi Governing Council indicated that they would accept the conclusions of a UN team. “So we do have a chance to help break the impasse which exists at the moment and move forward,” he said.

Speaking on 4 February, Mr. Annan said that the United Nations was “not going to go back permanently just yet,” but it has always assumed it would have a role in working with a provisional Iraqi government on a constitution and on national elections, perhaps later next year. The question of security also remains an issue.

On 16 December, the United States distributed a draft UN resolution to the permanent members of the UN Security Council that sought to prohibit the transfer of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) to individuals and organizations.

The resolution, first proposed by US President George W. Bush during a 23 September 2003 speech at the UN, calls on UN Member States to criminalize WMD proliferation and to “refrain” from providing support to organizations and individuals seeking to develop such weapons. The resolution would also require UN Member States to establish “domestic controls” for strengthening border and export controls. The draft US resolution does not include the authority for the Security Council to sanction UN Member States that fail to comply.

Marjatta Rasi, Finland’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations, has been elected president of the United Nations’s Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), becoming the first woman ever to head the 54-member development coordinating body. She succeeds Gert Rosenthal, the Permanent Representative of Guatemala.

Outlining the Council’s work for 2004, Ms. Rasi said strengthening and enhancing UN follow-up to conferences in the economic and social sectors was crucial. ECOSOC coordinates the development work of the 14 UN specialized agencies, ten functional commissions and five regional commissions. It receives reports from 11 UN funds and programmes and issues policy recommendations to the UN system and to Member States.

The Commission on Human Rights has elected Michael Peter Floyd Smith of Australia as Chairperson of the 60th session of the Commission, being held from 15 March - 23 April 2004.

The Commission also elected Saeed Mohamed Al-Faihani (Bahrain), Manuel Antonio Gonzalez Sanz (Costa Rica), and Gordan Markotic (Croatia) to the Bureau. Mike Gbadebo Omosho (Nigeria) was elected as Rapporteur.

"I welcome the launch of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission chaired by Dr. Hans Blix. The Commission faces a task of the utmost importance—providing proposals on how to make progress in non-proliferation and disarmament of weapons of mass destruction, and on how to minimize the risk of these weapons falling into the hands of terrorists. I commend this timely initiative taken by the late Foreign Minister of Sweden, Anna Lindh, and look forward to fruitful cooperation between the Commission and the United Nations."

—Message of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan on the launch of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission in Stockholm on 16 December

Former United Nations chief weapons inspector Hans Blix was awarded the US\$50,000 Olof Palme Prize in late December for his work in trying to stem the spread of weapons of mass destruction around the world.

"He had under circumstances of strong external pressure demonstrated an independence and a commitment to principle which have inspired respect and admiration throughout the world," the Olof Palme Memorial Fund for International Understanding and Common Security said. The Fund seeks to provide opportunities for international exchange and for studies of peace and disarmament; to support work against racism and against hostility towards foreigners; and work for international understanding and common security.

Mr. Blix, a former Swedish foreign minister who led the International Atomic Energy Agency from 1981-1997, retired from the United Nations in June 2003.

Mr. Annan recently appointed Lakhdar Brahimi, the former Special Representative for Afghanistan as a Senior Adviser to Iraq. Mr. Brahimi will deal with crises across the Middle East and Islamic world. In December, the Secretary-General named Ross Mountain—head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Crisis Task Team for Iraq—as his Acting Special Representative for Iraq.

S-G : PROGRESS MADE IN COMBATTING SMALL ARMS

According to a report by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, there has been "significant progress" in the global response to the unregulated flow of illicit small arms, especially in strengthening national legislation and international law enforcement in tackling the spread of small arms.

The report (S/2003/1217) examines the progress achieved in implementing the recommendations that Mr. Annan made in 2002 on how the Security Council can better address small arms problems in countries on the Council's agenda. Sanctions, in particular arms embargoes against governments and insurgents, continue to be the most frequent measures imposed by the Council, the Secretary-General said, but the enforcement of embargoes "presents a mixed picture" because they "have proved to be extremely difficult to enforce." The Security Council has imposed embargoes on Iraq, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and al-Qaeda and the Taliban.

To improve the effectiveness of embargoes, Mr. Annan recommends the Council consider "coercive measures" against States that "deliberately violate" the sanctions and consider giving greater attention to blocking the flow of ammunition to areas of conflict. Other studies have shown that while weapons may still get to warring parties, when ammunition can be blocked, the conflicts slacken. "Progress...depends almost entirely on the political will and technical capacity [of States]," he wrote.

There has also been progress in establishing an international regime for marking and tracing small arms. An expert panel reported last year that an international treaty on tracing arms was feasible, and in December the General Assembly established a working group to negotiate such a treaty. While a treaty on tracing will have no effect on weapons already in the field, it should help make future weapons flows easier to follow, thus making it easier to hold responsible those who violate embargoes and other controls.

The report recommended that the Council should pay greater attention to links between the illicit arms

trade and other criminal activities such as drug trafficking and exploitation of natural resources.

The report is available online (www.un.org/Docs/sc).

10 DECEMBER HUMAN RIGHTS DAY OBSERVED

In his message on 10 December commemorating Human Rights Day, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan spoke of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and how it has served as a beacon of hope for the past 55 years. He also noted that the men and women who defend human rights around the world also serve in such a way.

"Human rights defenders stand in the front lines of protection, casting the bright light of human rights into the darkest corners of tyranny and abuse. They work to safeguard the rule of law, to reduce violence, poverty and discrimination, and to build structures for freer, more equitable and more democratic societies. It is to them that many victims of human rights violations turn in their hour of need," the Secretary-General's message said.

Also on 10 December, the United Nations awarded its 2003 Human Rights Prize to five recipients. The winners included Barnes de Carlotto, an Argentine advocate for children who disappeared following the country's 1976 military coup; the Family Protection Project Management Team, a Jordanian group that has worked to lift taboos in the country; Shulamith Koenig, an American global rights activist; the Mano River Women's Peace Network, a West African women's peace-building network; and Deng Pufang, a Chinese disability defender. A special posthumous award was given to Sergio Vieira de Mello, the late United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The United Nations Human Rights prize is awarded every five years for outstanding promotion and protection of civil liberties and fundamental freedoms.

The year 2003 also saw the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Acting High Commissioner Bertrand Ramcharan, in his Human Rights Day message, outlined a number of abuses that led to human rights violations and pleaded for stronger human rights protection. Below are extracts from his speech.

"We must all be deeply distressed and anguished on this Human Rights Day that, ten years after the solemn commitments of the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights (1993), human rights are grossly violated throughout the world because of poverty, conflicts, terrorism, violence, prejudice and bad governance.

“Notwithstanding the lofty commitments in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, and the more recent commitment to human rights values in the Millennium Declaration (2000), the universality of human rights remains formal rather than real in the contemporary world. Inequalities and injustices against women and children are commonplace, and racism and racial discrimination have far from receded.

“Poverty has not declined. On the contrary, for nearly a billion people the economic, social and cultural rights of the Universal Declaration, whose fifty-fifth anniversary we commemorate this year, will remain illusory. They will hardly be able to survive and many will not live to the age of fifty-five. Democracy, the rule of law, and respect for civil and political rights are distant from the wretched poor of the earth. The struggle against poverty must remain at the forefront of the human rights movement.

“Violence, deliberately perpetrated by authorities on their subjects, afflicts millions of the world’s people. Torture, arbitrary and summary executions, enforced and involuntary disappearances, arbitrary detention, and the ill-treatment of minorities, indigenous populations and migrants are widespread. Thousands of young women are trafficked into prostitution and slavery. The sexual exploitation of children is a blight on our civilization. We continue to experience a crisis of values among humankind.

“On this Human Rights Day, my heart goes out to the victims of human rights violations the world over. I plead for the cessation of these pervasive violations of human rights. I plead for the world of the Universal Declaration to become reality for all the world’s peoples on the ground. I plead for democracy, for the rule of law, and for justice.”

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UNRWA APPEALS FOR FUNDS FOR SHELTERS IN GAZA

A series of Israeli military incursions into the Palestinian-controlled areas of Gaza since 16 January has left 584 people homeless in the town and refugee camp of Rafah in the south of the strip. The fresh demolitions, carried out by Israeli military bulldozers, have added to the severe humanitarian crisis in Rafah, where a total of 9,970 people have now lost their homes since October 2000. In the Gaza Strip as a whole, 14,852 people have been made homeless by Israeli actions since the start of the strife.

The demolitions have hit both refugees registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and non-

refugee Palestinians. UNRWA relief teams, in conjunction with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other organizations, are providing assistance with shelter, blankets, food and water to all of the homeless.

UNRWA has issued an appeal to the international donor community for funds to allow it to build new shelters for homeless refugees in Gaza. Before the latest round of demolitions, UNRWA estimated that it would cost US\$30 million to rehouse all the refugees who have lost their homes. UNRWA has built 228 replacement shelters in Gaza and has a further 300 under construction.

Contact: UNRWA Liaison Office New York, Maher Nasser, Chief, One United Nations Plaza, Room DC1-1265, New York NY 10017, USA, telephone +1-212/963 2255, fax +1-212/935 7899, website (www.un.org/unrwa).

EXPERTS CONDEMN CONTROL OVER MEDIA

Three international experts on freedom of expression and the media have condemned limitations on freedom of expression and attempts to control the media through non-independent regulatory mechanisms.

In a joint declaration adopted on 18 December, Ambeyi Ligabo, Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression of the United Nations High Commission on Human Rights; Freimut Duve, the Representative on Freedom of the Media of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); and Eduardo Bertoni, the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression of the Organization of American States (OAS) speak out against “attempts by some governments to limit freedom of expression and to control the media and/or journalists through regulatory mechanisms which lack independence or otherwise pose a threat to freedom of expression.”

Their declaration covers a range of issues on the regulation of the media, restrictions on journalists, and investigating corruption. It states that there should not be any legal restriction on who may practise journalism; accreditation schemes for journalists are appropriate only where necessary to provide them with privileged access to certain places and/or events; and media workers who investigate corruption or wrongdoing should not be targeted for legal or other harassment in retaliation for their work. Media owners are encouraged to provide appropriate support to journalists engaged in investigative journalism.

Some suggested that the events of 11 September 2001 and its aftermath, would spark an increase in military spending through higher outlays on security, and thus reverse the fall in military spending since the mid-1980s. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) says that recent data confirm that this has happened.

According to the IMF's World Economic Outlook (WEO); Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI); and International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), world military spending, as a share of gross domestic product (GDP), increased to between 2.4% - 2.6% in 2002 depending on the data source from between 2.3% - 2.4% in 2000 largely because of rising outlays in advanced economies. As a share of government expenditure, worldwide military spending increased to between 6.7 - 7.3% percent in 2002 from between 6.5 - 7.0% in 2000. While the overall increase is small as a share of GDP, it is sizable in absolute terms—approximately US\$32 billion to US\$64 billion. This compares with estimates of additional resources required to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) ranging between US\$40 billion and US\$60 billion annually.

Most of the recent increase in military spending is attributable to major industrial countries, which account for more than 60% of world military spending. They increased their military outlays by an average of 0.2 - 0.3 percentage points of GDP between 2000 and 2002, representing more than 80% of the total increase in world military spending in absolute terms. Developing countries and transition economies also increased their military spending somewhat during the two-year period. More information is available online (www.imf.org/survey) in the 15 December issue of the IMF Survey.

Two new UN health centres have opened in Jordan to serve Palestinian refugees, bringing to 23 the number of clinics operating in the country under the aegis of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Located in Kraymeh and Mashare in the Jordan Valley, the two centres will offer preventive and curative health care and family planning services for 35,000 Palestinian refugees living in the area.

The United Nations Energy Security Forum, which has held two ad hoc meetings in the last two years and was created to bring governments, energy companies and financial institutions together to create policies to avoid instability in world energy markets, is being turned into a permanent body.

The UN Economic Commission for Europe will host the Forum's secretariat. Threats to energy security include terrorist attacks, the war in Iraq, energy corporation scandals and power grid failures.

The forum will advise the UN Secretary-General, the Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council on energy security policies.

High Commissioner of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) Ruud Lubbers and the Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) Anna Tibajuka signed an operational Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 17 December to improve collaboration in delivering durable shelter solutions for refugees and returnees. In the first half of 2003 alone, 60 million civilians were affected in some 30 conflicts.

The MoU seeks to enable closer linkages between the emergency and humanitarian work of UNHCR, and the developmental and longer-term activities of UN-HABITAT in order to bridge the gap between emergency relief and reconstruction. The agencies plan to collaborate on providing shelter solutions for refugees and returnees, settlement planning and management; land and property rights; infrastructure planning and development; and building the capacity of local and national authorities, particularly in post-conflict areas.

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WORLD ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SURVEY 2003

Economic policies geared to generating sustainable growth can serve as powerful mechanisms for fighting poverty, especially when ancillary economic and social policies are linked to the needs of the poor, according to Part Two of the United Nations *World Economic and Social Survey 2003*.

The survey brings together evidence indicating a long-term positive correlation between growth and poverty reduction, yet points out that some mixes of economic policies are better than others in attacking poverty, even given the same resulting rates of growth. The survey notes that “macro-economic policies should be infused with an awareness of the likely effects on poverty and, where necessary, complementary policies should be pursued to ensure that they result in even greater gains in terms of poverty reduction.”

“We are learning more about which policies in the economic and social spheres serve to alleviate the harsh effects of poverty and to reduce its extent,” said United Nations Under-Secretary-General José Antonio Ocampo. “But the current era of low economic growth and difficulties in maintaining an open trade regime pose a threat to universally agreed goals on reducing world poverty.” While noting that “social policy can achieve social objectives, but cannot always make progress toward economic targets such as income poverty,” he added that “very good economic policies are needed if we are to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of cutting extreme poverty in half by 2015.”

In terms of trade policy, the survey finds that the main threat to the poor stems from protectionism in rich country markets, especially targeting agricultural goods and textiles from the South. The survey recommends greater openness between the developing countries themselves, with South-South trade accounting for roughly 40% of all developing country trade.

The experience of recent years has demonstrated that large excesses of government spending over revenues or unrestrained monetary expansion are

likely to result in an economic setback that not only eliminates previous gains, but often results in undue hardship for the poor. The survey therefore recommends counter-cyclical fiscal and monetary policies, including a fiscal policy that allocates funds to social services and development.

However, in Latin America, where there have been recurring crises since the early 1990s, social expenditure has tended to mirror the growth of the economy, with governments increasing it during upturns but being required to cut it when economies cool off or plunge due to financial shocks. This “pro-cyclical” outcome means that governments have found it difficult to take special measures to protect the poor during the part of the economic cycle when they are most vulnerable, or to reverse downturns through stimulative spending.

On agricultural reform, the survey highlights land redistribution and agricultural market liberalization, given their potential for reducing poverty in rural areas, home to 75% of those living in absolute poverty. Small landholdings or lack of legally recognized ownership rights or access to land are major impediments to economic advancement in rural areas.

Part One of the *World Economic and Social Survey 2003* was issued in June 2003 (see *Go Between 98*). Part Two, on *Economic Policy and Poverty*, completes the 2003 survey.

Contact: Development Policy Analysis Division, DESA, Room DC2-2170, United Nations, New York NY 10017, USA, telephone +1-212/963 4838, fax +1-212/963 1061, website (www.un.org/esa/analysis/ddpa.htm).

ILO: BENEFITS OF ELIMINATING CHILD LABOUR

A study by the International Labour Organization (ILO) says the benefits of eliminating child labour will be nearly seven times greater than the costs, or an estimated US\$5.1 trillion in the developing and transitional economies, where most child labourers are found. The study, conducted by the ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), says child labour—which involves one in every six children in the world—can be eliminated and replaced by universal education by the year 2020 at an estimated total cost of US\$760 billion. ILO estimates that some 246 million children are

currently involved in child labour worldwide. Of these, 179 million—or one in every eight children worldwide—are exposed to the worst forms of child labour, which endanger their physical, mental or moral wellbeing.

“What’s good social policy is also good economic policy. Eliminating child labour will yield an enormous return on investment—and a priceless impact on the lives of children and families,” says ILO Director-General Juan Somavia.

Investing in Every Child, An Economic Study of the Costs and Benefits of Eliminating Child Labour compares costs and benefits, not with a view to justifying action to eliminate child labour, which is already called for by the ILO in its Conventions Nos. 138 and 182, but with the aim of understanding the economic implications of these international commitments.

The ILO/IPEC study applies a model to developing and transitional economies worldwide and says that globally, the economic benefits of the fight against child labour exceed costs by a ratio of 6.7 to 1. All regions of the world would experience large net gains from the elimination of child labour, although some would benefit more than others. In North Africa and the Middle East, for example, the benefits would be the highest relative to the costs (8.4 to 1), whereas in sub-Saharan Africa they would be the lowest (5.2 to 1). In Asia, the ratio would be 7.2 to 1, in transitional countries 5.9 to 1, while in Latin America it would be 5.3 to 1. The global net economic benefits of the hypothetical programme would amount to 22.2% of aggregate annual gross national income.

Eliminating child labour would be a “generational investment” and a sustained commitment to children, both today and tomorrow. The study indicates that in the first years, the costs would almost certainly exceed returns, however, net economic flows would turn positive as the effects of improved education and health take hold. By 2020, costs would be far outweighed by the returns, leaving annual benefits of around US\$60 billion.

In comparison to other social costs, the average annual cost of eliminating child labour would be far less than the cost of financing debt service or the military, the study says. For example, the average annual cost of US\$95 billion would amount to about 20% of current military spending in developing and transitional countries, or 9.5% of

developing countries’ US\$1 trillion debt service. The study argues that the costs are a “wise investment” as each extra year of schooling stemming from universal education to the age of 14 results in an additional 11% of future earnings per year, yielding global benefits of just over US\$5 trillion. On the cost side, the supply of education accounts for nearly two-thirds of the total costs.

Reaping the economic value of expanded education depends on countries’ ability to create new jobs, take advantage of higher levels of human capital and develop economic policies to stimulate growth, the study points out. Yet even if the effect of education on future earnings was halved to 5%, the study estimates that global benefits would still exceed US\$2 trillion.

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ILO: GLOBAL EMPLOYMENT TRENDS 2004

According to a report by the International Labour Organization (ILO), overall global unemployment rose in 2003 to 185.9 million (about 6.2% of the total labour force), remaining at record levels for men and women while increasing more sharply among young people despite a pickup in economic growth after a two-year slump.

ILO’s *Global Employment Trends 2004* finds that the economic recovery that took hold in the second half of 2003 appeared to be slowing the deterioration of the global employment situation and, if sustained, could continue to do so through 2004.

“It’s too early to say the worst is over,” ILO Director-General Juan Somavia said. “However, if current estimates of global growth and domestic demand hold steady or improve over the coming year, the global employment picture may brighten somewhat in 2004.”

“Our greatest concern is that if the recovery falters and our hopes for more and better jobs are further delayed, many countries will fail to cut poverty by half as targeted by the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) for 2015,” Mr. Somavia said. “But we can reverse this trend and reduce poverty if policy makers stop treating employment as an afterthought and place decent work

More than 15 million Nigerian children under the age of 14 are working, and more than a third—six million—do not receive any schooling, according to a survey conducted by the country’s Federal Office of Statistics with support from the International Labour Organization. Most must earn money to pay for school fees and books, often missing classes in order to go to work.

The survey found that children working in rural regions are employed mostly in agricultural and hunting activities, while those in the city are engaged as artisan apprentices or street traders. The number working includes 7.8 million boys and 7.2 million girls.

In 2000, Nigeria signed a memorandum of understanding with ILO on the implementation of the International Protocol for Elimination of Child Labour. The ILO recommends that children should be in school until the age of 14.

Efthimios Mitropoulos of Greece took over on 1 January 2004 as the new Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization, which addresses marine safety and preventing pollution from ships. William O’Neil held the post for the previous 14 years.

Mr. Mitropoulos says he hopes to improve the image of shipping and says he believes the IMO can help promulgate the message that shipping is essential, efficient, clean and safe.

Mr. Mitropoulos also said he gives high priority to implementing existing conventions and protocols before developing new ones, and intends to build more bridges between the industry and the United Nations.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has reached an agreement with the Swiss pharmaceuticals company Novartis to provide free drugs to half a million of the world's poorest tuberculosis sufferers.

The company plans to donate US\$7 million to the Global Drugs Facility, which will work with support from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to provide drugs over a five-year period to countries scaling up tuberculosis efforts.

Nearly two million people die from tuberculosis annually because of inadequate access to good quality treatment, despite the existence of relatively cheap and well-established drugs. Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe are among the worst affected regions.

Novartis Chief Executive Daniel Vasella said the donation is intended "to help some of the poorest patients in the world."

As part of a revised curriculum designed with the help of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Jordanian students will receive new textbooks for the 2004-2005 school year that distinguish between "terrorism and legitimate resistance," Jordanian Education Minister Khaled Tuqan said on 31 December.

The project, started more than two years ago, is one element of a "comprehensive human rights programme" aimed to "spread reconciliation focusing on values, Islamic teaching as well as Arab and Islamic heritage and international law ... in order to increase awareness among students," Mr. Tuqan said.

Jordan's King Abdullah II has been openly pushing for democracy and human rights promotion in his country since the September 2001 terror attacks in the United States, which brought pressure on Arab leaders to condemn the appropriation of Islam for terrorist purposes.

at the heart of macro-economic and social policies." The report traces the various factors contributing to the global employment decline—such as the increase in employment in the informal economy, the decrease in employment in information and communication technology, as well as extensive job losses in the export and labour-intensive manufacturing sectors.

Rising unemployment and underemployment during the first half of 2003 was due to a slow upturn in the industrialized world's economic situation, the impact of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) on employment in Asia and the effects of armed conflicts, the latter largely on travel and tourism employment, the report finds. With the curtailment of SARS and solid gross domestic product (GDP) growth in the second half of 2003, employment growth picked up somewhat.

"Predicted growth rates in Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa and the transition economies (over 4%), in all sub-regions in Asia (7.1% in East Asia, 4.5% in South-East Asia and 5.8% in South Asia) and in sub-Saharan Africa (just below 5%) should be high enough to enable these regions to create new employment possibilities," the report says.

The industrialized regions saw a recovery from the economic slowdown over the past two years, especially in the second half of 2003. Despite a pick up in GDP growth in the United States, job creation remained sluggish, with unemployment rates at around 6%. The European Union, however, witnessed positive developments in the labour markets in some countries, despite a low GDP growth rate of 1.5%. Japan seems to have picked up from its long-lasting crisis, but may take some time to reach the low unemployment levels of the early 1990s of below 3%, the report says.

To meet the MDG of reducing poverty by half, *Global Employment Trends 2004* is urging policy makers to adopt "pro-poor" policies that create employment opportunities to help women and men secure productive and remunerative work in conditions of freedom, security and human dignity; reduce youth unemployment rates; and increase international assistance aimed at improving access to developed-country markets and reducing external debts and debt servicing, thus freeing resources for reform programmes targeted on improved governance, job creation and poverty reduction.

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According to the World Health Organization (WHO), about one billion adults worldwide are overweight and at least 300 million are obese. Obesity affects virtually all age and socio-economic groups and threatens to overwhelm both developed and developing countries. In developing countries, it is estimated that over 115 million people suffer from obesity-related problems, including diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular disease, hypertension and stroke, and certain forms of cancer. In the United States, more than two-thirds of adults are overweight, and nearly one in three is obese. Researchers have blamed the alarming rates on the combination of people getting less exercise and consuming more high-calorie junk foods.

In May 2002, the WHO's governing body, the World Health Assembly (WHA), voted to develop a strategy for combating obesity along with other chronic health problems influenced by lifestyle, such as heart disease. WHO issued a scientific report in June 2002 that provided the basis for the 18-page strategic plan, which will come before the WHA for final approval in May 2004, pending the Executive Board's endorsement in January 2004.

Opening the WHO's 113th Executive Board in Geneva on 19 January, WHO Director-General Jongwook Lee said that the questions of diet and physical activity "have been of concern to some in the food industry and in agriculture." Speaking of the WHO strategy on diet he said, "Unlike tobacco, food is a fundamental requirement for health. The aim is to have in place a Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health, which sets out policy options for governments to support good food and healthier living. As a public health community, we have for too long neglected preventive measures for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, cancer and other chronic diseases. It is time to act decisively, and in a spirit of positive interaction, with all the parties concerned. These include the food industry, as well as consumer groups and the health services."

On 20 January the United States demanded significant changes to the global strategy to tackle obesity, saying the plan is based on faulty scientific evidence and exceeds the agency's purview. US and international health experts criticized the Bush administration's move, saying that US objections are an attempt to placate the food and sugar industries. The Grocery Manufacturers of America (GMA) and the Sugar Association have acknowledged that they oppose parts of the plan, but deny influencing the US position. The WHO plan outlines strategies that nations can use to fight

obesity, such as restricting advertising aimed at children and increasing junk food prices through taxes and adjustments in farm subsidies.

William R. Steiger, special assistant for international affairs at the US Department of Health and Human Services, said that the United States does not consider some of the approaches taken by the WHO “to be based on the best practices and the best science.” Rather, the US wanted a strategy that was “the product of the best possible scientific evidence,” and which would also place much greater emphasis on the role of “personal responsibility” instead of government regulation.

On 22 January, the WHO Executive Board agreed to forward the global strategy to its WHA. The United States supported a one-month extension during which WHO Member States can consider the draft strategy and suggest revisions to the document. At the end of the consultation period, comments will be consolidated by the WHO, and the final draft strategy will be made publicly available to WHO Member States in mid-March 2004.

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GA TO CONSIDER HUMAN CLONING BAN IN 2004

On 9 December, the General Assembly reversed a recommendation of its Legal Committee to postpone any consideration of negotiating a treaty banning human cloning for two years. Instead, GA President Julian Hunte presented a new decision that said the issue “will be included” on the agenda of the next General Assembly in 2004.

The question of therapeutic cloning—cloning embryos for scientific and medical research including stem cell research—has been the focus of the debate. There is unanimity that reproductive cloning—the cloning of a human to produce another human—should be unequivocally prohibited. One side, led by the United States and Costa Rica, wants a total ban on human cloning, while the other side, led by France and Germany, would permit therapeutic cloning.

The Legal Committee, in a divided vote on 6

November [80-79, with 15 abstentions], had decided not to consider either of the two draft resolutions reflecting the competing positions, and instead approved a motion to postpone the debate for one year and resume consideration in 2005.

2005: INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MICROCREDIT

In December 2003, the General Assembly passed a resolution that supports the Programme of Action for the International Year of Microcredit 2005, which seeks to raise awareness of the importance of microcredit and microfinance in the eradication of poverty and to enhance financial sector development that supports sustainable pro-poor services in all countries. Recent studies show that the number of poor people worldwide who benefited from microcredit more than quadrupled between 1997 and 2001. With demand for financial services growing rapidly, the Year of Microcredit aims to highlight ways to expand the reach of financial services on a sustainable basis.

“The International Year of Microcredit 2005 underscores the importance of microfinance as an integral part of our collective effort to meet the Millennium Development Goals,” said UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. “Sustainable access to microfinance helps alleviate poverty by generating income, creating jobs, allowing children to go to school, enabling families to obtain health care, and empowering people to make the choices that best serve their needs. The stark reality is that most poor people in the world still lack access to sustainable financial services, whether it is savings, credit or insurance. The great challenge before us is to address the constraints that exclude people from full participation in the financial sector. The International Year of Microcredit offers a pivotal opportunity for the international community to engage in a shared commitment to meet this challenge. Together, we can and must build inclusive financial sectors that help people improve their lives.”

The resolution designates the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) as focal points to coordinate the activities of the UN system during preparations for and observance of the International Year.

According to UNCDF, microcredit and microfinance programmes can go beyond the individual household level to help strengthen the fabric of local economies, stimulating consumer activity and creating new jobs.

Benin has been assigned sovereign credit ratings by one of the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) partners, Standard & Poor's, joining Ghana and Cameroon which were recently also rated for the first time.

“Through this project, UNDP intends to support countries in their efforts to mobilize resources from private capital markets, which are required to secure accelerated rates of economic growth and reduce poverty,” said UNDP Associate Administrator Zéphirin Diabré.

Sovereign credit ratings place countries on the investor map and allow them access to international capital markets.

“We hope that better access to financing would help Benin and other developing countries to tackle a broad range of poverty alleviation issues and provide an incentive to achieve the Millennium Development Goals,” Mr. Diabré said.

The World Bank estimated that Benin, with a population of 6.6 million, had debts of US\$840 million in 2001. Its per-capita gross domestic product is estimated at US\$539 and its economy is reliant on the export of a single commodity—cotton.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has released its Handbook of Statistics 2003. The annual publication of the volume, now in its fourth decade, is available in print, on CD-ROM or as an online database.

Researchers can access statistics to analyse trends since 1950 on economic categories such as trade levels, commodity price indices, balance of payments, foreign direct investment and external debt. For this year's edition, UNCTAD has added a table containing data on the average applied import tariff rates on non-agricultural and non fuel products.

According to UNCTAD, examination of the statistics reveals the disparity in distribution in the world economy. While US\$1 billion is the share of gross domestic product split by 27,000 Norwegians, in Ethiopia, 10 million people split that amount. Brazil's coffee exports dropped by that same US\$1 billion, while the figure represents all income Slovenia earned from tourism.

United Nations Under-Secretary-General Anwarul Chowdhury will serve as Secretary-General of the ten-year review of the 1994 Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), to take place in Mauritius from 30 August to 4 September. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan named Mr. Chowdhury, who also serves as High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

Mr. Chowdhury said the ten-year review should focus on the economic, social and environmental vulnerabilities of SIDS, including the issues of poverty eradication, reducing the threat of HIV/AIDS, increasing trade and coping with climate change.

On 1 January 2004 reforms to the World Intellectual Property Organization's (WIPO) Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) came into force, simplifying the process of obtaining international patent protection in more than 120 countries with a single "international" application.

The PCT reform process began in mid-2001 and sought to improve the efficiency of the treaty. Applicants will now have access to an enhanced search and examination system with information on international patentability criteria.

The new measures also reduce the duplication of work in processing PCT applications during both the international and national phases. Third parties will also have access to a centralized pool of past, present and future preliminary examination reports through a request to WIPO.

WIPO says the rapid increase in the demand for patent applications globally and the growing technological complexity of patent applications have tested the capacity of patent offices throughout the world to deal with the rising number of applications in a timely and efficient manner.

Further information on the PCT is available online (www.wipo.int/pct/en/index.html).

The Programme of Action takes into account the conclusions and recommendations from recent major United Nations conferences and summits related to the financial sector and development. Activities for the Year will be undertaken at the national, regional and international levels.

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CONVENTION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Ninety-four countries attending the United Nations Convention Against Corruption in Merida (Mexico) from 9-11 December have signed the first legally binding international agreement to attack corruption. After signing the Convention, governments will begin the process of bringing their practices into accord with the terms of the Convention and obtaining national ratification.

Thirty ratifications are needed for the Convention to enter into force, and ratification depends on countries developing legislative and administrative measures in accord with the provisions of the Convention. Once the Convention enters into force, a Conference of the States Parties will be established to monitor compliance.

The provisions of the Convention require countries to make criminal a range of corrupt activities, take action to promote integrity and to prevent corruption; and to cooperate with other States Parties. It also establishes, for the first time, legal mechanisms for the return of looted assets that have been transferred to other countries.

At a press conference held by experts and corruption fighters attending the Merida conference, participants attempted to establish a benchmark figure for the dollar value of worldwide corruption. By very rough but conservative estimates, income derived from illicit transactions is 5% of the volume of total global output, World Bank Director for Global Governance Daniel Kaufmann said. Bribes and graft make up at least half of that amount, he said. Given a gross world product of US\$33 trillion, a low figure for the dollar amount paid out each year in corrupt transactions would be nearly one trillion dollars.

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CSD-12: ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The Secretariat of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development has issued information regarding preparations and the organization of work for its 12th session (CSD-12), which is to take place at UN headquarters in New York from 14-30 April 2004.

According to organizers, the first three days of CSD-12 will serve as a preparatory meeting for the ten-year review of the Barbados Plan of Action for the Small Island Developing States (SIDS +10, see *Go Between* 99) that will take place in Mauritius later in 2004.

The following two weeks will serve as the CSD-12 review session. As agreed at CSD-11, the review session will undertake an evaluation of progress in implementing Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI, see *NGLS Roundup* 96), while focusing on identifying constraints, obstacles, successes and lessons learned with regard to the thematic cluster of issues for the session: water, sanitation and human settlements. The high-level segment will be held from 28-30 April.

The review session will be held in a variety of formats including panel discussions; interactive debates; and regional sessions, with one for each of the UN regions. A wide range of experts from governments, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and the Major Groups is expected to attend the review session to ensure that the debate is informed by a rich mixture of experience and knowledge.

The principal inputs for the review session will be a series of reports from the Secretary-General, reports from the regional implementation meetings taking place in the months leading up to CSD-12 (see *Go Between* 100), the results of other meetings organized in support of the work of the CSD, discussion papers and inputs from Major Groups, and other documents, such as more comprehensive regional analyses.

The main written outputs from the CSD-12 review

session will be a report—including the chairman's summary—that is aimed at identifying constraints, obstacles and possible approaches for implementation; the inputs from Major Groups; records of the regional discussions; and activities held as part of the Partnerships Fair and Learning Centre—parallel events organized by the CSD Secretariat.

The Partnerships Fair will provide a venue for showcasing progress made in existing partnerships for sustainable development, launching new partnerships and networking among existing and potential partners. CSD-12 will also continue the tradition of side events to allow stakeholders from governments, IGOs and Major Groups to present their initiatives, hold debates, and/or facilitate discussions on any theme related to sustainable development.

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FAO REPORTS ON SIDS

According to a report by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the situation of small island developing States (SIDS) continues to be one of exposure and growing vulnerability due to new challenges and emerging economic, social and ecological issues. The report coincided with an FAO meeting on SIDS, held on 2 December in Rome, that sought to provide agriculture ministers and other officials with the latest developments regarding the implementation of the Barbados Plan of Action (BPoA) on Sustainable Development of SIDS, adopted in 1994.

The ten-year review of the Barbados Plan of Action for SIDS will take place in Mauritius from 30 August - 3 September 2004 (see *Go Between* 99). According to FAO, most SIDS rely heavily on agriculture, forestry and fisheries exports, which leaves them vulnerable to fluctuations in commodity prices and trade regulations. Many are increasingly dependent on food imports, and the rates of nutrition-related health problems are on the rise. Climate change, including a rising sea level, and vulnerability to natural disasters such as hurricanes are of particular concern, according to the report.

Experts from FAO's Sustainable Development Department say that FAO is working with SIDS to help make their agricultural use of land and water more efficient, and to address the constraints of land fragmentation, the impact of tourism and urbanization on agriculture, and water over-extraction and salt water intrusion, as well as the negative effects of imported convenience foods on health and agriculture.

In 2002, FAO launched an initiative to help SIDS review and update their national policies and strategies for food security and agricultural development, and is currently working on improving capabilities of national Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems (FIVIMS). "Both initiatives are aimed at addressing the relative poverty and food insecurity in SIDS," FAO expert Nadia Scialabba said.

The FAO report suggests that there are "synergic linkages" between tourism, agriculture, forestry and fisheries, and invites the international community "to better respond to the increased vulnerability of SIDS" by enhancing traditional production systems and fostering existing initiatives to diversify SIDS production for local consumption and export of organic commodities. "SIDS' tourism sector, which presently imports 50-95% of foods and beverages, offers potential outlets for such quality products."

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COP-9 CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE MEETS

The ninth Conference of the Parties (COP-9) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 19th sessions of the COP's Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) were held in Milan (Italy) from 1-12 December 2003.

The conference, which brought together over 5,000 participants, including 95 ministers, sought to further action by national governments, civil society and the private sector and to prepare for the Kyoto Protocol's entry into force. Three informal ministerial roundtables focusing on adaptation, mitigation, and sustainable development; technology, including

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) governing conference passed a budget of US\$749 million for 2004-2005, an increase of nearly US\$100 million over the previous fiscal year's budget.

The increase marks the first substantial one since 1994, when FAO's budget was frozen at US\$650 million.

FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf had originally requested a budget of US\$845.1 million. The budget is based on an exchange rate of US\$1.19 to 1 euro.

According to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), 2003 was the third hottest in nearly 150 years. WMO said that although the warmer weather could not be attributed to a single cause, it was part of a global warming trend.

"The rhythm of temperature increases is accelerating," WMO Deputy Secretary General Michel Jarraud said. "You cannot attribute this to any single cause. It's about a very complex interaction between all the elements that make up the very complex machine that is the Earth."

According to WMO figures, the global surface temperature this year is expected to be 0.45 degrees Celsius above the 1961-90 annual average, making 2003 the third-warmest year since global climatic recordkeeping began in 1861.

The warmest year was 1998 (0.55 degrees Celsius above average), followed by 2002 (0.48 degrees Celsius above average). The world had a temperature increase of more than 0.6 degrees Celsius during the 20th century.

According to a World Bank report, entitled *State and Trends of the Carbon Market 2003*, global trading in greenhouse gas emissions surged in 2003 to more than 70 million tons—more than twice the number in 2002 and more than five times the amount traded in 2001.

Power sector projects accounted for half of the traded emission reductions, the study said, while reductions from renewable resources represented about 37% of traded volumes and trading in carbon dioxide more than doubled. The more than 70 million tons of carbon traded in 2003, however, was tiny compared with worldwide energy-related emissions, which are projected to reach 8.3 billion tons by 2010, up from 6.6 billion in 1996, according to US Government figures.

Ratification of the Kyoto Protocol would likely lead to a surge in carbon trading, as many countries would have to buy credits in order to comply with mandated emissions levels.

A study by the World Health Organization (WHO), entitled *Climate Change and Human Health—Risks and Responses*, finds that climate change is likely to increase the incidence of diseases such as malaria, diarrhea and malnutrition around the world.

According to the report, climate change is responsible for 2.4% of all cases of diarrhea worldwide and for 2% of all cases of malaria. In 2000 alone it was responsible for 150,000 deaths overall, according to WHO figures.

Moreover, the study says that if global temperatures increase by up to 3 degrees Celsius, several hundred million more people will be exposed to malaria yearly. Scientists also estimate that if greenhouse gas emissions continue to grow, by 2030 the risk of diarrhea will be up to 10% higher than it now is.

In addition, the study says that India, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Vietnam face a "significant increase" of malnutrition cases because the predictable monsoons those countries depend on to grow rice are at risk because of constant climate change.

The report was co-authored by the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Meteorological Organization and the US Environmental Protection Agency.

development and transfer of technologies; and assessment of progress at the national, regional and international levels were also held. COP-9 concluded on 12 December after having adopted over twenty legal decisions.

"The fact that 2003 is on track to be one of the warmest years on record should be a warning that we must all take seriously. We can see growing evidence that many governments have been inspired by the Climate Change Convention and its Kyoto Protocol to strengthen action at the national level, but more needs to be done to stop the increase in greenhouse gas concentrations," said Joke Waller-Hunter, the Convention's Executive Secretary.

At COP-9, States Parties adopted decisions and conclusions on various issues, including: afforestation and reforestation projects under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM, which promotes sustainable development in developing countries by channelling private sector investment into emission reduction projects while offering industrialized countries credits against their Kyoto Protocol targets); good practice guidance on land use, land-use change and forestry; the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF); and the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Fund.

The Protocol now allows genetically modified trees in forests to help offset global warming, and will allow rich nations to store up to 1% of their annual emissions in trees, which absorb carbon dioxide as they grow.

Participants emphasized that the Kyoto Protocol, adopted six years ago on 11 December, represents a significant first step towards realizing the Convention's goal of stabilizing atmospheric levels of greenhouse gases at safe levels. A number of countries said every effort should be made to implement its provisions even though it is not yet legally in force.

Many States Parties said that they were already using energy-efficient technologies and increasing their use of renewable sources of energy. Participants highlighted good governance and infrastructure as well as opportunities for private-sector investment as contributing to technology use, development and transfer. However, some countries said that technology transfer, development and cooperation should not be left only to the private sector. Business and industry NGOs urged governments to provide enabling frameworks, and

said that non-commercial investments are needed for long-term commitment.

The European Union, Canada, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway and Switzerland renewed an earlier pledge to contribute US\$410 million annually to developing countries. The EU will provide US\$369 million, and Canada, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway and Switzerland will contribute the remaining money.

A number of statements were made by NGOs during COP-9. The Research and Independent NGOs (RINGOs) constituency, first created in COP-8 and which was given official recognition during COP-9, called for global collaboration, political will, creative thinking, and avoidance of political rhetoric in the climate process.

During COP-9, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Venezuela said they would soon ratify the Protocol, which has already been ratified by 120 States Parties. Its entry into force hinges on ratification by the Russian Federation.

COP-10 will be held from 29 November-10 December 2004, in Buenos Aires (Argentina).

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PAN-AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON WATER

More than 1,000 participants, including 45 African water and environment ministers, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and other stakeholders attended the first-ever Pan African Implementation and Partnership Conference on Water (PANAFCON), held in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) from 8-13 December 2003. The conference ended with an agreed action plan to meet Africa's World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD, see *NGLS Roundup 96*) targets, the African Water Vision, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, see *NGLS Roundups 98, 105 & 106*) on safe drinking water and sanitation.

In opening remarks, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and co-chair of the conference, K.Y. Amoako, reminded participants that access to water—a basic human need—still eludes a large proportion of Africans. "Poor management of this precious gift of nature continues to hinder our progress and is a major constraining

factor in food production, health and industrial development," he said. "The average annual investment between 1990-2000 for water supply and sanitation in Africa was only US\$4.6 billion, or 40% of the requirement for meeting basic needs."

Delegates met in an open plenary, followed by thematic sessions to discuss water, including sanitation and human settlements; water and food security; financing water infrastructure; integrated water resources management (IWRM); water allocation; and water governance, among others. Multi-stakeholder sessions were then held to discuss achieving the MDGs and targets agreed upon at the WSSD; the Africa-European Union (EU) Water Partnership; the Third World Water Forum (see *NGLS Roundup 101*); and water and gender issues.

A high-level ministerial segment, convened near the end of the conference, allowed African ministers and policy makers to dialogue with development partners and consider outcomes from the earlier sessions. Ministerial commitments focused on achievements regarding the implementation and funding requirements for regional initiatives and international targets for Africa's water sector. Delegates also formulated follow-up activities for 2004, including: establishing national task forces on water and sanitation; conducting negotiations with development cooperation partners and UN agencies; and using the Conference's recommendations as a basis for developing a common African approach before and after the 12th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-12, see article page 10) taking place from 14-30 April 2004 in New York.

The ministerial session's recommendations for the CSD-12 included, among others:

- b Increasing budget allocations to water, sanitation and human settlements for the poor;
- b Empowering local governments and enhancing their capacity;
- b Mainstreaming gender and youth in the provision of water, sanitation and human settlements;
- b Enforcing corporate responsibility for environmental protection;
- b Calling on the international community to fully implement debt swaps to support water, sanitation and housing projects; and
- b Mainstreaming disaster management into water, sanitation and human settlements management.

Ministers also outlined links between water, sanitation and human settlements, including: rapid urbanization, and the prevalence of slums; associated infrastructure development;

decentralization in basic services provision; capacity building to support decentralization; and the need for integrated country teams involving key ministries such as finance and economic planning, housing, local government and water. A summary of the proceedings is available online, see *Earth Negotiations Bulletin, Volume 05, No. 200* (www.iisd.ca/csd/rim/eca).

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UNDP STUDY EXPLORES AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

The African Futures Project of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has released a study entitled *Africa 2025*, which represents the culmination of a research and consultation exercise that started in late 1999. The study brought together over 1,000 experts and thinkers from across the continent to explore potential long-term development scenarios and prospects for the continent in the era of economic globalization. The book was launched by African Futures in Cape Town (South Africa) in late October as part of a high-level conference that brought together scholars and policymakers to discuss the policy implications of the relevant issues raised by the study.

As part of the study's effort to facilitate policy dialogue on the continent's long-term development prospects, contributors first charted the existing status quo in Africa at the dawn of the twenty-first century. This initial "status report," which provides a common baseline from which the study departs, explores a number of critical economic and social trends that are emerging to define the continent's future development prospects, including Africa's changing demographics, the structure of its economies, and the quality of its governance institutions.

Three trends were identified as key factors shaping the continent's future developmental trajectory: Africa's population boom and rapidly growing under thirty population; its rapid pace of urbanization and growing informal economy; and its chronic indebtedness and structural marginalization in international trade and investment flows.

Departing from these trends and developmental constraints, the study attempts to project four potential development scenarios for the continent over the next twenty-five years. The scenarios attempt to capture the entire range of

Jaime de Pinies, a long time Spanish diplomat who served as President of the UN General Assembly in 1985, died on 29 December 2003. Mr. de Pinies represented his country at 28 GA sessions, as well as serving as Spain's Permanent Representative to the United Nations for a total of 16 years.

"Throughout his career, he displayed exceptional devotion to the work and principles of the United Nations," a spokesman for UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said.

During his diplomatic career, Mr. de Pinies also served as Spain's ambassador to Britain, Havana, Manila and Washington.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has announced that it has established the Health Academy, a virtual school aimed at promoting public health initiatives through the Internet. The academy is co-sponsored by Cisco Systems, Inc.

According to the WHO, the object of the Health Academy is "to demystify medical and public health practices and to make the knowledge of health specialists available to all citizens of the world through Internet-based technology."

The academy has already launched a pilot project comprising 20 schools in Egypt and 21 schools in Jordan. The schools are testing an Internet-based e-learning curriculum on four health-related subjects: safe blood, smoking, substance abuse and road safety.

The United Nations General Assembly has designated 7 April as the International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Rwandan genocide, in which an estimated 800,000 people were killed in 100 days.

The resolution, tabled by Mozambique on behalf of the African Union and adopted on 23 December, calls on Member States and international organizations to conduct "special observances and activities in memory of the victims of the genocide." It also asks States to adhere to the United Nations Convention for the Prevention and Suppression of the Crime of Genocide.

According to Rwanda's mission to the United Nations, the day of commemoration also aims to encourage the implementation of recommendations made by the Independent Inquiry into the Actions of the United Nations during the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda.

development possibilities ranging from stagnation to rapid modernization and are described by report coordinator Alioune Sall in the following metaphorical terms: 1) The lions are trapped; 2) The lions are hungry; 3) The lions come out of their den; and 4) The lions mark their territory.

The first two scenarios explore potential negative development outlooks ranging from continued marginalization and static equilibrium to a "doomsday" development scenario caused by external shocks from the system with the potential to spread violence and chaos throughout the region. The latter two scenarios represent optimistic development scenarios for the continent in which a new generation of political leadership and entrepreneurs emerge to drive economic growth and sustainable development. To realize this development potential, the study highlights the importance of more activist African governments capable of nurturing their fledgling industries, developing their infrastructure and providing citizens with universal education and health services.

President of South Africa Thabo Mbeki said in the study's foreword, "The truth is that the social, economic and political forces that are portrayed in these scenarios are already present today in sub-Saharan Africa—how they manifest themselves in various countries differs widely depending on their histories...Africa does not have a divine right to succeed in her endeavours...nor is there a supernatural force that can will us to fail. How events unfold over the next 20 years or so depends in large measure on what we as Africans do."

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WB: HIV/AIDS IN MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA

Although the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the Middle East and North African (MENA) regions remains relatively low compared with those of sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and the Caribbean regions, a report issued by the World Bank warns of the significant potential human development and economic costs of the potential spread of the virus in the region. *HIV/AIDS in the Middle East and North Africa: The Costs of Inaction* reports that over the past decade the total number of AIDS-related deaths has increased six-fold, with 83,000 new cases of infection reported in the region in 2002 alone.

Moreover, the report warns that, if left unchecked, the epidemic could cost the MENA region approximately one-third of its current gross domestic product by 2025 due to rising mortality and declining productivity rates. While prevention programmes remain key to stemming the spread of the epidemic, to date no country in the region systematically screens or collects behavioural data on high risk groups, making it difficult to create and implement effective public policy interventions.

The report calls for the creation of more proactive surveillance systems in the region and prescribes a multi-sectoral approach to combating the disease, including the creation of government-civil society partnerships to effectively monitor and prevent the spread of the virus in the region.

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NUMBER OF UNFPA DONORS INCREASING

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) received contributions from 142 of the 191 UN Member States in 2003, with the number of donors more than doubled since 1999 when 60 donors provided funds.

"This number of supporters has surpassed our expectations," said Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, UNFPA Executive Director. "This is strong evidence that countries, from every region of the world, have confidence in the Fund and that there is strong political will in support of our activities." Ms. Obaid said that the funds would allow the organization to meet more of the demands for reproductive health care in the 150 countries where UNFPA works.

The top six donors in 2003 were the Netherlands, Japan, Norway, the United Kingdom, Denmark and Sweden. New donors in 2003 included Armenia, Azerbaijan, Estonia, Hungary, Macedonia, Moldova, Somalia, Swaziland, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste and Uzbekistan. According to the Fund, regular resources for UNFPA in 2003 were approximately US\$294 million.

In July 2002 the United States rescinded its US\$34 million donation to the organization amid allegations that UNFPA was funding forced abortions in China and has not rejoined (see *Go Between* 92). On 23 January 2004, the US Senate passed a foreign operations spending bill for 2004 that includes US\$34 million for UNFPA. Ms. Obaid appealed to the

US administration “to allow the funds appropriated by Congress to be released.”

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WFP REDUCES FOOD AID

The World Food Programme (WFP) has announced that it is reducing aid provisions for both Zimbabwe and North Korea due to donation shortfalls. WFP said rations provided to starving populations in Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, Lesotho and Swaziland may also be cut for the same reason.

A lack of rain has delayed the planting of crops in Lesotho, Mozambique, South Africa and Swaziland and is expected to reduce the yields of crops already planted. WFP expects to feed some 245,000 people in Swaziland in January 2004, roughly a quarter of the country's population.

WFP cut the daily ration of cornmeal in Zimbabwe from 12 ounces to six ounces because of declining stock levels and insufficient replenishment funding, and cooking oil, beans and peas may run out in January. WFP has received US\$161 million of the US\$311 million needed, with about half of the donations coming from the United States.

Low rainfall and a diminished workforce caused by the AIDS crisis have weakened agricultural output in Zimbabwe. Some 23% of farm labourers are estimated to have either already died or are too sick to work. As a result, cropped areas have declined by 39%, while yields have declined by 59% and produce reaching the market has dropped by 66%.

“Unfortunately, January, February and March are the key hungry months before the harvest,” said Richard Lee, WFP's information officer in Johannesburg. “Zimbabwe's situation is by far the worst.”

North Korea faces similar problems as WFP's fundraising efforts have produced only 60% of the money needed to feed 6.5 million North Koreans. Donations by both the United States and Japan are down significantly. WFP says the North Korean Government's reluctance to allow foreigners to monitor food distribution and the competing appeal for Afghanistan have also hurt the campaign.

“In January, we'll probably stop feeding about three million people,” said WFP Executive Director James Morris. However, he said WFP could resume normal distribution with the help of promised aid from

Russia, but that food would only last a few weeks. Russia became a WFP donor for the first time in 2003 with a contribution of US\$11 million, which was used to purchase grain for North Korea and Angola.

Mr. Morris also announced that WFP would close its last programme in China in 2005 after more than 20 years of aid worth US\$1 billion. “China simply doesn't need aid today as it did 25 years ago, and that's something to celebrate,” Mr. Morris said. “As China becomes a more prosperous economy, we want China to become one of our major financial partners,” he added.

During 2003, WFP provided food to 110 million people worldwide, a record in the agency's 40-year history. “We are proud of our achievement in feeding so many of those in need, but we are acutely aware that they represent only a limited proportion of the world's hungry, many of them suffering in silence,” Mr. Morris said.

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WFP LAUNCHES 19-CENTS-A-DAY CAMPAIGN

On 18 December, World Food Programme (WFP) Goodwill Ambassador and former US Senator George McGovern launched the WFP's “19-Cents-a-Day” school feeding campaign that aims to feed 35 million primary students over the next two years. By 2007, WFP hopes to reach 50 million school children around the world. According to the agency, some 300 million children worldwide are chronically hungry, and most schools in developing countries do not have canteens or cafeterias. WFP school feeding programmes currently reach nearly 16 million children in 64 countries.

During his speech, Mr. McGovern noted that school feeding not only helped to improve children's lives, but was also an essential tool for bettering the world in the wake of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States. “I think we're going to discover that school feeding is going to reduce hunger and ignorance and terror. I do think that it's not only possible but it's a practical goal for countries of the world to set out to terminate hunger and school feeding is the greatest way to do that. I hope I live long enough to see a good nutritious lunch for each school kid in the world. I don't think that's unreasonable.”

“Over the holiday season we are hoping that people take time to reflect on the challenges faced by the severely poor,” WFP Executive Director James Morris

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has named Nigerian soccer star Nwankwo Kanu one of its Goodwill Ambassadors in recognition of his work on behalf of children.

Mr. Kanu started the Kanu Heart Foundation after a heart problem threatened to end his own career in the late 1990s. His foundation has benefited more than 50 Nigerian children with heart defects. As a UNICEF ambassador, he will promote child immunization campaigns and girls' education.

Actors Angelina Jolie and Adel Imam, goodwill ambassadors for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), have agreed to pursue initiatives to address the plight of refugees in the Middle East after visiting Sudanese refugees outside Cairo in late December. Egypt hosts 25,000 UNHCR-registered refugees and asylum seekers, as well as 70,000 Palestinian refugees.

Ms. Jolie, who donated US\$10,000 to a community health project in the region, said, “Egypt has always kept the doors open to refugees. Refugees are not just beneficiaries of assistance but, if given the chance, they are also contributing members of the host society.”

The goodwill ambassadors also discussed the possibility of similar trips to refugees in other camps in order to raise awareness of refugees' situations.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has appointed former Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy as UN Special Envoy to help resolve the border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Mr. Axworthy is known for his role in pushing through a global treaty to ban anti-personnel land mines.

Demarcation of the border between the two countries has been stalled amid wrangling over the border town of Badme. Ethiopia has welcomed the appointment of Mr. Axworthy as a mediator, but Eritrea is demanding that Ethiopia accept the ruling of an international boundary commission, which awarded Eritrea the disputed town of Badme.

Ethiopia, Sudan and Yemen announced on 29 December that they have formed an anti-terror axis to combat extremists operating around the Horn of Africa. The pact was announced by Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, who said cooperation would focus on the exchange of information with regard to terrorists operating in the region.

The agreement is part of a tripartite treaty aimed at boosting economic, political and security cooperation.

Among the militant groups the three countries will target is the Somali extremist group al-Ittihad, which has been linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network.

said. "For only 19 cents a day, we can vastly improve the lives of children all over the world." With US\$34, the agency can feed a student for a whole school year.

WFP says that free school lunches not only help to feed some of the world's poorest students, but they also encourage children to attend class and concentrate on their studies. WFP programmes have a special focus on girls' education. Surveys indicate that girls who go to school have 50% fewer children and these tend to be healthier, and better cared for and more likely to attend school themselves.

Donations to the WFP school feeding project and other WFP projects can be made online (www.wfp.org/index.asp?section=4).

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FAO: TOBACCO IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

According to a study published by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the rising demand for tobacco in developing countries is set to overwhelm the trend in the developed world of falling tobacco use and fuel greater worldwide tobacco production through 2010.

Projections of Tobacco Production, Consumption and Trade to the Year 2010 predicts that even though per-person consumption rates are falling across the globe—including in developing countries—the population and income growth expected in developing nations will counteract that effect. By 2010, the study says, tobacco users in the developing world will consume five million metric tons, or 71%, of the world's tobacco. China alone will likely account for about 37% of the world's tobacco users, with India the second-largest consumer at 25% or more. FAO forecasts a shift in production to developing countries, since maintaining profitability in developed countries is getting tougher and production costs are lower in developing countries. Already China produces 35% of the global tobacco crop, followed by India, Brazil, the United States, the European Union, Zimbabwe and Turkey.

As the higher demand for tobacco in the developing countries drives the world tobacco economy, the report suggest that public policy to reduce tobacco use should focus on demand rather than supply. "Reducing demand in the developing countries would be rather difficult given projected population and income growth trends. Mitigating these trends,

however, and reducing consumption per adult using a combination of tax and direct restriction policies, would also be an important achievement. Reducing demand will in turn imply a decline in global tobacco production." FAO estimates that by applying an aggressive anti-smoking and anti-tobacco policy, tobacco consumption per person could drop by as much as 20%. The report is available online (www.fao.org/DOCREP/006/Y4956E/Y4956E00.HTM).

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UNESCAP GUIDEBOOK ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

According to a United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) guidebook, human trafficking is on the rise in Asia and governments do not have a plan to combat the trade. The United Nations estimates that trafficking involves more than 200,000 women and children annually in Asia.

"Trafficking is a fast-growing problem and very transboundary in nature and this affects many countries in the Asian region where there is no comprehensive legal framework," said UN spokeswoman Thelma Kay in Bangkok (Thailand).

The book, entitled *Combating Human Trafficking in Asia: A Resource Guide to International and Regional Legal Instruments, Political Commitments and Recommendations*, is the first comprehensive set of guidelines on the practice and aims to improve coordination between organizations working to curb trafficking in persons, especially women and children. Vitit Muntabhorn, from Bangkok's Chulalongkorn University, said a lack of awareness is a major obstacle to cutting down on trade in women and children.

The guidebook portrays trafficking as a multidimensional problem that can encompass various forms of exploitation involving human rights, including slavery and slavery-like practices, migration, labour, and gender. It calls for a multifaceted response, utilizing the complete range of legal and other instruments relevant to all dimensions of trafficking. The publication was field tested at sub-regional seminars held in South East Asia, South Asia and Central Asia in 2002.

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UN/NGO COOPERATION

UNCTAD XI: CIVIL SOCIETY HEARING

As part of preparatory committee (PrepCom) preparations for the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) eleventh session to be held in Brazil in June 2004, known as UNCTAD XI, a civil society and private sector hearing was held on 16 January. The hearing brought together government representatives, civil society, parliamentarians, and the private sector to debate issues relevant to the sub-themes of UNCTAD XI: development strategies in a globalized world economy; building capacity and international competitiveness; assuring development gains from trade; and partnerships for development.

More than 30 NGOs participated in the hearing, and 11 civil society representatives read their statements to the PrepCom, on issues ranging from foreign direct investment (FDI), to Oxfam's Make Trade Fair Campaign, to making agricultural trade a stimulus for rural development. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the International Federation of Freight Forwarders (FIATA) also gave presentations, representing the parliamentarians and the private sector. All statements from the hearing are available on the NGLS website.

In his introductory remarks, UNCTAD Secretary-General Rubens Ricupero said that many issues in the international trading system cope with the problems of trade and development, while emphasizing that trade is at the heart of the anti-globalization debate. He said these issues will continue to be major concerns in multilateral talks this year, and the agenda of UNCTAD XI is an effort to cope with the problems surrounding trade and development, and to enhance coherence between national strategies and international trade agreements.

In the afternoon, NGOs raised a number of procedural concerns—such as funding for participation, future civil society hearings, and access to pre-conference documents—in a common statement delivered by Iara Pietricovsky from the Brazilian NGO REBRIP.

A second civil society hearing is scheduled for 23 February. More information can be found online (www.unctad.org/Templates/Page.asp?intItemID=2675&lang=1).

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INT'L YEAR: STRUGGLE AGAINST SLAVERY

On 10 January, the United Nations started its year-long commemoration of the anti-slavery movement with a ceremony in the former slave port of Cape Coast in Ghana. The International Year for the Commemoration of the Struggle Against Slavery and its Abolition coincides with the bicentennial of Haiti, the first independent black nation in the Western Hemisphere.

"[This first ceremony is a] rededication to the ongoing struggle against all forms of racism, discrimination, xenophobia, intolerance and injustice," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Director General Koichiro Matsuura said.

The commemorative year, throughout which the UN will sponsor exhibitions, concerts and studies, is an effort to end slavery's offshoots such as human trafficking, child labour, forced marriage and bonded labour.

Although international conventions have banned slavery for decades, UNESCO's figures reveal that in 2002 some 245 million children worked illegally, and each year 1.2 million youngsters are trafficked. For the complete abolition of slavery in the future, Anti-Slavery International is working with UNESCO to raise awareness in schools with a programme called Breaking the Silence.

Through their education programmes, UNESCO and Anti-Slavery International plan to focus on lingering and new forms of abuse, such as a form of hereditary bondage known as chattel slavery, bonded labour and the trafficking of women in the European sex trade. The project aims to increase awareness of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, its causes and its consequences—which include the immense contributions made by Africa to the social, cultural and economic development of the Americas, the Caribbean and Europe—and to help eliminate modern forms of slavery and racism. Worldwide, schools are encouraged to observe the 23 August International Day for the

Urbanization of the world's population will force international aid organizations to change some of their poverty reduction strategies, according to Robert M. Buckley, a housing adviser in the World Bank's Urban Development Department.

Mr. Buckley said the continuing movement of people in developing countries to cities will have "significant implications for the nature of the development paradigm." The world's urban population is expected to rise by 2 billion over the next 25 years.

"Though the majority of the world's poor continue to live in rural areas, poverty is rapidly becoming an urban phenomenon," he said. "Today in many of the Bank's borrowers, Russia, Brazil, Mexico, most of the poor already reside in cities. And while in India most poverty remains in the countryside, according to the Government of India's Planning Commission in most of its larger states, the poverty rates in urban areas are for the first time higher than those in rural areas."

The World Bank says it is increasingly working with NGOs and community-based groups that give people living in slums a greater say. Studies indicate slum-dwelling is becoming less of a transition process, as many in such settlements are now second-generation residents.

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), demobilized child soldiers in the region of Kinshasa, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), are to receive official demobilization certificates from the government in the coming days, which will guarantee that those children will not be re-enrolled in armed groups.

UNICEF says the certificates will be given to around 40 children recently demobilized in the region. The children, who are currently living in a camp run by the non-governmental organization CARE, will then be reunited with their families.

The certificate states that its holder is protected under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the constitution of the transitional government, which says that children under 18 years of age cannot be recruited by armed forces.

A Brazilian Government programme that pays parents for sending their children to school is seeing rewards in improved education and reduced poverty levels. The Family Grant programme targets poor families who would otherwise send their children to work to augment meagre family incomes. The average monthly benefit is about US\$24, a significant sum in a country where many families live on less than US\$1 a day; parents collect the money by swiping government-issued electronic cash cards at local lottery booths. By 2006, the Family Grant programme is expected to reach 45 million people. The model has been duplicated in other Latin American countries, including Nicaragua, Honduras and Mexico, where it reaches 20 million people.

The World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank have supported the programme in Brazil with US\$3 billion in loans, with the balance US\$4 billion needed to run the programme for four years to come from President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's cuts in the civil service pension system.

"I think these programmes are as close as you can come to a magic bullet in development," said Nancy Birdsall, President of the Washington-based Center for Global Development. "They're creating an incentive for families to invest in their own children's futures. Every decade or so, we see something that can really make a difference, and this is one of those things."

Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition.

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WCC, IMF AND WORLD BANK MEET

Meeting in Washington DC in late October, the World Council of Churches (WCC), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) have agreed to continue exploring together in 2004 their respective approaches to the challenges of poverty and inequity in a globalized economy.

The second in a series of discussions initiated in February 2003, the Washington encounter took into consideration the participation of civil society in development; institutional governance and accountability; and the roles of public and private sectors in development.

The encounter proposed doing joint case studies on public and private roles—and civil society participation—in development, as well as a high-level meeting of the three institutions' boards, tentatively scheduled for autumn 2004.

Although all three institutions agreed that "important differences remain between them," the October meeting identified issues for further discussion: how the two financial institutions take human rights into account in their operations, and whether it is possible to achieve a common understanding on the challenges of globalization and the best ways to address them.

"So far, the encounters have been open, transparent and mutually challenging, and we have deepened our understanding of the dynamics of the international financial institutions," said Rogate Mshana, WCC programme executive for economic justice. "But," he added, "we still don't know whether they are prepared to move away from the neo-liberal paradigm, which we see as responsible for much of the suffering in our world today."

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WB AND ARC : RELIGION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

On 14 November 2003, the World Bank and the United Kingdom-based Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) published *Faith in Conservation: New Approaches to Religions and the Environment*, which examines how religions are increasingly partnering with environment and development movements.

Written by ARC Secretary-General Martin Palmer and Victoria Finlay, the book explores how different religions perceive the world, how these worldviews shape environmental policy, and how these religions use mythology, sacred texts and investment strategies to get their messages across.

According to the authors, scientific data and knowledge are not compelling enough to protect the earth's natural resources. Noting that environmental movements based on a wealth of scientific data have made little progress in reversing the trend of unsustainable development, the authors conclude that the environmental crisis is "a crisis of the mind" and that likewise "appropriate development is ultimately an appropriate development of the mind." They propose turning to the major religions of the world to provide a framework of values and beliefs to render environmental information useful for conservation purposes.

The 11 faiths represented in the book include Baha'ism, Buddhism, Christianity, Daoism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Shintoism, Sikhism, and Zoroastrianism. The authors note that these religious groups own approximately 7% of the habitable surface of the earth, have a role in 54% of all schools, and that their institutional share of the investment market is in the range of 6-8%. Practitioners of these faiths therefore represent many billions of investment dollars, as well as traditions of storytelling, celebration, spiritual guidance, activism and advocacy, that the authors say can be brought to bear on a wide range of conservation initiatives.

"After a century of unprecedented persecutions, religions are returning to the public arena in many countries," Mr. Palmer emphasized. "Some of this return is happening in disturbing ways, in the form of fundamentalism and even terrorism. But there is another story. This book is an attempt to show how the vast majority of religious movements are

returning as potential forces for good. And to show how religions and the secular society around them can and have to work together as partners, to make the world a better place.”

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NGO UPDATE

NGOs GAIN ACCESS TO UN ODS

NGOs welcomed the UN General Assembly Fifth Committee's (administrative and budgetary matters) approval of funds for civil society access to the UN's Official Documents System (ODS—formerly known as the Optical Disk System). The UN ODS database contains all UN documents in the UN's six official languages. In 1996, the UN began to offer governments free access to this system, via a web portal. While NGOs could obtain access to the system in exchange for an annual subscription fee, free access had been denied for budgetary reasons as it would entail an additional US\$1.5 million investment to upgrade the system's computer server.

Since 1997, however, NGOs have pressed the UN to provide them free access as well. In October 2003, President Cardoso, Chair of the High Level Panel on Civil Society, (see *Go Between* 96), wrote to the UN Secretary-General encouraging him to do what he could to ensure that this provision was financed through the coming year's budget allocation.

The success in securing civil society access to the ODS was also due to concerted efforts by NGOs to build government allies and work with key Member States in the UN system. There was also a cross-sectoral alliance of NGOs, including the World Federalist Movement, the Global Policy Forum, International Service for Human Rights (ISHR), Amnesty International, Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO), Third World Network (TWN) and many other NGOs who joined in the efforts and helped secure government support. As argued by Victoria Clarke of the World Federalist Movement, “This kind of cross-issue organizing will be critical in coming years as civil society continues to strive for more just and democratic multilateral institutions.”

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2003: PRESS FREEDOM DECLINES

According to Reporters Without Borders, press freedom declined in 2003 and the number of journalists killed and imprisoned on assignment increased dramatically, in part because of the US-led war on terror. Their report finds that 42 journalists were slain, compared with 25 in 2002, and at least 501 media were censored, compared with 389 in 2002.

As of 1 January 2004, 124 journalists and 61 “cyber-dissidents” were imprisoned worldwide. The countries that hold the most journalists in jail are Cuba (30), Burma (17), Eritrea (14) and Iran (11). Last year saw several cyber-dissidents released, including Zouhair Yahyaoui, who spent more than a year in jail for having opened a site taunting Tunisian President Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali. Liu Di, who took part in Chinese discussion forums, was released after a year in solitary confinement. China remains the world's largest prison for cyber-dissidents with 48 Internet users imprisoned. Chinese cyber-police, with an estimated staff of 30,000, use state of the art technology to monitor the Internet and track down cyber-dissidents, technology which is often provided by foreign companies.

“The relentless increase in violations of press freedom since 2001 is, without a doubt, related to the war against terrorism and the anti-terrorism laws adopted in certain countries in response to the attacks of 11 September,” the report says. The group called the Middle East a “red alert” for violations of press freedom—16 journalists were killed there in 2003, 14 of them in Iraq.

Reporters Without Borders says that covering a war is becoming more and more dangerous for journalists, as added to the traditional dangers of war are the unpredictable hazards of bomb attacks, the use of more sophisticated weapons, and belligerents who “care more about winning the war of images than respecting the safety of media staff.”

A November 2003 study of levels of pesticide use on genetically engineered (GE) corn, soybeans and cotton in the US reports that these GE varieties have resulted in the application of more pesticides. While use of *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) transgenic varieties have reduced pesticide use by an estimated 19.6 million pounds in the past eight years, herbicide tolerant crops have been responsible for the application of an estimated 70 million additional pounds of pesticides. Overall, the report, published by the Northwest Science Environmental Policy Center, concludes that GE crops have caused 50 million additional pounds of pesticides to be used in US agriculture.

The full report is available on the Ag BioTech InfoNet website (www.biotech-info.net/technicalpaper6.html).

Nine transnational companies with operations in developing countries—AngloAmerican, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Chevron Texaco, DaimlerChrysler, Eskom, Heineken, Lafarge, Pfizer and Tata Steel—announced in early December that they will use their facilities, employees and other infrastructure to expand workplace HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment programmes into communities where they operate.

By using infrastructure that was created to serve their employees, this corporate contribution will reduce the start-up and running costs of public programmes.

The contribution of businesses in co-invested programmes will include infrastructure as well as project management capacity and is intended to advance country-wide approaches to fighting the disease. Infrastructure costs have accounted for almost 40% of the financial resources required to scale-up Botswana's national AIDS treatment programme, according to the African Comprehensive HIV/AIDS Partnership (ACHAP).

Pilot projects will be undertaken in Cameroon, Ghana, India, Nigeria, and South Africa. Heineken, for example, is building HIV treatment centres and health-care training facilities in Ghana. Tata Steel has 21 clinics in Jamshedpur (India) that will be expanded to accommodate testing and treatment service for the community.

"The International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC) and its partners provide indispensable leadership for the health and rights of girls and women worldwide. If there were more pioneers like you, the world would be a better place. And I am not at all surprised—because I have found this to be true in so many places—that leadership like this is coming above all from women.

"You are a shining example of the increasingly crucial role that civil society plays in the work to improve the lives of people everywhere. In the past few decades, this role has grown beyond all recognition—as civil society groups have become advocates, shapers of policy, and allies of governments in the work on the ground. Today, for the United Nations to succeed in many of its endeavours, partnership with civil society is not an option—it is a necessity.

"Let me remind you that we have just entered the tenth anniversary year of the historic International Conference on Population and Development, held under United Nations auspices in Cairo in 1994. As you know, that conference forged an extraordinary consensus on actions to ensure that reproductive health is recognized as a human right. It also reached agreement on a wide range of actions to achieve gender equality, development, as well as economic and social justice.

"Six years later, the Cairo consensus helped pave the way for the Millennium Development Goals—adopted by all the world's countries as a blueprint for building better lives for people everywhere in the twenty-first century.

"The adoption of the MDGs, as we call them, was a seminal event in the history of the United Nations. These eight commitments range from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS, from reducing child mortality to eliminating gender disparity in education—all by the target date of 2015. They represent a set of simple but powerful objectives that every man and woman in the street, from New York to New Delhi, from Lima to Luanda, can easily understand and support.

"In other words, the MDGs are a call to which every one of us can and should respond. And the International Women's Health Coalition has responded eloquently. You are an exceptionally active and constructive partner in the work to translate the MDGs into reality. You have understood that one of the most effective ways to do that is through the education and empowerment of girls and women."

—Extracts from UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's address to the IWHC, in New York on 15 January

The report finds that measures of press freedom in Latin America in 2003 remained relatively stable compared with 2002, although journalists continue to be imprisoned in Cuba. Internal conflicts and the policies of certain authoritarian regimes such as that of President of Zimbabwe Robert Mugabe reportedly contributed to a worsening situation for a free press in Africa. In September 2003, the Mugabe regime expelled the last foreign correspondent, leaving the country inaccessible to the international media. Sixteen journalists were killed in Asia, and there remain large numbers of arrests and censorship.

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CLUSTER MUNITION COALITION LAUNCHED

Dozens of international NGOs, including Handicap International, Human Rights Watch, Mines Action Canada and Landmine Action, launched the Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC) on 13 November 2003 in The Hague (Netherlands) to address the devastating humanitarian effects of the use of cluster munitions and of explosive remnants of war (ERW).

Cluster munitions have been used in a growing number of conflicts and pose a particularly high risk to civilians. More than 90 countries around the world are affected by ERW, which put innocent lives and livelihoods at risk long after conflicts have ended. According to CMC members, cluster munitions and ERW now stand out as one of the weapon categories most in need of stronger regulation.

The Coalition is calling for a ban on the use, production or trade of cluster munitions until their humanitarian problems have been resolved, as well as increased resources for assistance to communities and individuals affected by unexploded cluster munitions and all other ERW. The CMC is also demanding that users of cluster munitions and other munitions that become ERW accept responsibility for clearance, warnings, risk education and provision of information.

The launch of the CMC was held just prior to government negotiations on a new protocol (Protocol V) to the 1980 Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW). Coalition members monitoring the negotiations welcomed the acceptance of the new instrument on post-conflict measures, which addresses the humanitarian concerns caused by ERW, but expressed concern that much remained to be done on ratification, implementation and

compliance issues as well as on cluster munitions and other preventive measures. They criticized the protocol for its failure to hold users and producers of cluster munitions and other ERW in any way responsible, including retroactively. In addition, NGOs observed an absence of deadlines to reflect the urgency of the situation. "The users of munitions that create ERW must take greater responsibility. Although there are no obligations to do so within the new protocol, we encourage users to take the lead in alleviating the humanitarian suffering caused by the ERW in areas where conflict has taken place," commented Richard Lloyd of Landmine Action. "States within the CCW must do their utmost on cluster munitions and other preventive measures, and agree to negotiations [when they meet] next November. People affected by cluster munitions and ERW need to see a difference made in their lives now, not years in the future."

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IUCN RED LIST OF THREATENED SPECIES

According to the 2003 update of the World Conservation Union's (IUCN) Red List of Endangered Species, over 2,000 entries have been added and 380 taxa (species, sub-species) have been reassessed since the release of the previous year's list. The Red List currently records 12,259 species threatened with extinction. A total of 762 plant and animal species are now recorded as extinct with a further 58 known only in cultivation or captivity.

Thousands of scientists and conservationists from all over the world contributed to compiling the list through the IUCN's Species Survival Commission (SSC) and partner organizations. Indonesia, India, Brazil, China and Peru are among the countries with the highest number of known threatened birds and mammals while plants are declining rapidly in Ecuador, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brazil and Sri Lanka.

The list finds that invasive species are an overriding threat to global biodiversity, threatening to undermine populations of native plants and animals on islands and continents. "While we are still only scratching the surface in assessing all known species, we are confident this figure is an indication of what is happening to global biodiversity," IUCN Director General Achim Steiner said. "We now need the political will and resources to stem the loss of biodiversity. Human activities may be the main threat to the world's species but humans can also help

them recover," he added. "Places such as the Galapagos, Hawaii and the Seychelles are famed for their beauty which owes itself to the diversity of plants, animals, and ecosystems. The Red List tells us that human activities are leading to a swathe of extinctions that could make these islands ecologically and aesthetically barren," Mr. Steiner said.

The Red List is maintained as a searchable database on its own website (www.iucnredlist.org) and is updated every year. IUCN will undertake a major analysis of the Red List in 2004, the results of which will be presented to the third IUCN World Conservation Congress in Bangkok (Thailand) in November 2004.

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MSF TOP 10 LIST OF UNDERREPORTED CRISES IN 2003

Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), the international medical aid organization, has issued its list of the *Top 10 Most Underreported Humanitarian Stories of 2003*. The sixth annual list calls attention to human crises that MSF considers to have been largely ignored by the media in the United States in the past year. An escalating refugee crisis along the border of Sudan and Chad as well as chronic conflicts in Colombia, Chechnya, Burundi, and Democratic Republic of Congo figure on the list.

The list also highlights the lack of media attention paid to the high death toll from malaria this year, ongoing unremitting crises in North Korea and Somalia, a new war in Ivory Coast, and the threats posed by regional trade agreements on poor people's access to life-saving medicines.

Increasing brutality directed at civilians in 2003 also extended to aid workers. MSF volunteer, Arjan Erkel, for example, is still being held hostage more than 500 days after being kidnapped in the Russian Republic of Dagestan in August 2002. MSF says that such insecurity contributes to preventing journalists from providing wider coverage of some of the world's most dangerous regions.

According to Andrew Tyndall, publisher of the online media-tracking journal *The Tyndall Report*, international coverage on the three major US television networks increased in 2003, but it was concentrated on Iraq. The ten crises highlighted by MSF only accounted for 30.2 minutes, or 0.2%, of the 14,635 minutes on the networks' nightly newscasts, and seven of the ten crises received a combined total of 3.2 minutes.

While certain international issues did receive media coverage, the humanitarian dimensions were largely overlooked. Proposals by the US Government in world trade negotiations, for example, were widely discussed without adequate analysis of the devastating impact they may have on poor people's access to essential medicines.

"Few Americans are aware that right now hundreds of thousands of people are seeking refuge from intense violence in Sudan's Darfur region or that tens of thousands of people have been sent back to a war-zone in Chechnya," said Nicolas de Torrente, Executive Director of MSF-USA. "Yet people we speak to around the country tell us they want to know about these crises so they, too, can speak out and act against them."

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Several cold-water coral reefs under the Atlantic Ocean off the west coast of Ireland, mapped by a three-year study, are to be listed as national treasures and will receive special protection by the Irish Government.

According to Marine Minister Dermot Ahern, Ireland "will be one of the first countries taking steps to protect coral habitats in the EU."

Most of the danger the coral reefs face in the area comes from deep-water trawling for orange fish. Fishermen trawling for catch use reef-crushing equipment, said Irish Coral Task Force Chairman Anthony Grehan, who said the coral reefs rival their tropical cousins in places like Australia's Great Barrier Reef in terms of their diversity.

The new protected areas are expected to be on both sides of the Rockall Trough, the Perseverance and Propellor complexes on the Porcupine Ridge and the Therese mound on the Porcupine Seabight.

Some of the reefs are on mounds that have grown to heights of about 300 metres above the seabed and have built up over millions of years. The mounds are largely composed of the skeletons of hard coral. On top are eco-systems of living reef-forming corals. They are at depths of 500 to 1,200 metres, between 80 and 240 kilometres off the coast.

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New Initiatives in Migration

The United Nations estimates that about 3% of the world's population is currently living outside their country of origin. While many of these are refugees searching for safety from violence or persecution, most are seeking better economic opportunities. Recent UN initiatives that focus on international migration issues include the establishment of the independent Global Commission on International Migration and the Geneva Migration Group. The General Assembly has also decided to devote its 2006 High-Level Dialogue to addressing the issue of international migration and development.

The fourth International Migrant's Day—observed on 18 December as the United Nations adopted the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrants Workers and Members of Their Families on that day in 1990—was celebrated worldwide. The Convention, which entered into force on 1 July 2003, establishes binding standards on the human rights and treatment of documented and undocumented migrant workers, and allows the UN to establish an office to monitor the Convention's implementation (see *NGLS Roundup 89*). Twenty-four nations have ratified the Convention so far.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in his message commemorating the Day, said a key challenge in the twenty-first century was to manage migration better. "We need to maximize its many real benefits and minimize the difficulties that it can cause," he stressed.

He referred to the recently launched Global Commission on International Migration, which is backed by over ten governments and jointly headed by Sweden and Switzerland. The Global Commission is co-chaired by Sweden's former Minister for Development Cooperation, Migration and Asylum Policy Jan O. Karlsson, and World Bank Managing Director Mamphele Ramphele, a South African. Other members include Australia, Brazil, Canada, Egypt, Italy, Mexico the Philippines and Switzerland. The Global Commission, which took up its work in January 2004, will issue a final report to the Secretary-General in mid-2005 with recommendations on how countries can promote greater public understanding of migration and build a framework for increased cooperation among countries to manage it better.

"In building that framework, let us remember the people at the heart of this issue—migrants themselves. Many migrate under duress, endure a perilous journey, and face hardships in their new home countries. Many remain vulnerable to exploitation and abuse by unscrupulous traffickers, smugglers and employers. Moreover, in recent years, migrants have been vilified in certain societies, while some have been denied their rights in the name of national security. Despite all these obstacles, the vast majority of migrants contribute greatly to their new societies, and many send back remittances which support the economies of their countries of origin," the Secretary-General's message said. "More must be done to ensure the respect of the human rights of migrant workers and their families—be they regular or irregular, documented or undocumented."

The current net annual flow of migrants is 2.3 million, with the largest

net senders now and for the foreseeable future including China, Mexico, India, the Philippines and Indonesia. The biggest net gainers over the next half-century are projected to be the United States, Germany, Canada, Britain and Australia. Last year alone, migrant workers sent home at least US\$88 billion in remittances, more than the amount spent in official development aid to the same developing countries.

On 18 December 2003, over 60 immigrant, civil, and human rights organizations around the US denounced US immigration policies as endangering, not protecting, the rights of immigrants nationwide. "Immigrants and refugees continue to be the specific targets of intensified law enforcement and public scapegoating in the name of national security," concluded a national statement endorsed by the organizations.

"Law enforcement continues to use immigration procedures in the name of anti-terrorism, denying the most basic of civil and human rights protections to non-citizens," said Catherine Tactaquin, Executive Director of the US-based National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights.

On 23 December, the General Assembly formally adopted the Second Committee's resolution A/C.2/58/L.77, which decides that the high-level dialogue of the General Assembly in 2006 will be devoted to international migration and development.

In Geneva, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has created a new group—the Geneva Migration Group—which brings together the heads of United Nations aid agencies (including the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) to discuss ways of managing migration.

The agencies also share information about population movements, and facilitate policy discussion on issues which impact upon a broad spectrum of organizations, whose work affects or is affected by international population flows, and which require intensified collaboration.

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UNIDO: Industrial Development's Role in Reaching the MDGs

From 1-5 December 2003, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) celebrated the 10th session of its General Conference, the highest governing body of the agency of 171 Member States. The main theme of the 10th session was the contribution of industrial development to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with participants agreeing that industry has a crucial role in contributing to the realization of many of the MDGs, namely the eradication of poverty.

Meeting in Vienna during the first week of December, UNIDO's 10th General Conference brought together delegations from 128 Member States, four Heads of State and Government (Uganda, Madagascar, Timor-Leste and the United Republic of Tanzania), more than 50 ministers of trade and industry or foreign affairs, as well as academicians, development practitioners, and business representatives. In parallel with the plenary session of the conference, discussions were organized around the Industrial Development Forum and its seven roundtables on poverty, trade, investment, clean technologies, post-conflict situations, and two regional roundtables on poverty in Latin America and progress in Central and Eastern Europe.

Opening the conference, UNIDO Director-General Carlos Magariños stressed that to separate the political and security agenda of the UN from its development agenda is not only an "old way of thinking" but is also very dangerous: "Development is the most effective weapon to achieve peace," he said. For that reason, he said it was indispensable to establish the role of the UN in the development debate, today almost monopolized by the Bretton Woods institutions (BWIs). The United Nations voice in development should "go beyond complaints against the injustice of globalization" towards a constructive and proactive agenda of practical solutions to overcome the present marginalization of most developing countries.

The Industrial Development Forum was held on the first day of the conference, with keynote speeches by Jeffrey D. Sachs (Director, Earth Institute at Columbia University), Rubens Ricupero, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and Frederic Sumaye, Prime Minister of Tanzania.

In his opening presentation, Mr. Magariños argued that while the MDGs provide an opportunity to deal with the two-way interaction between breaking poverty traps and getting into a sustainable development track, the poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) are one of the key national policy strategies to leverage the necessary resources. In this context, he argued that private sector participation in the PRSPs needs to be strengthened. He also stressed, "It is essential for the LDCs [least developed countries] to overcome this serious oversight if they are to succeed in stabilizing their economies, create jobs, develop exports, increase productivity and ensure social progress."

Professor Sachs argued that the MDGs represent a contract between the rich and poor countries, and as such the rich countries needed to be held up to the promises they have repeatedly made. He insisted that

if the world was truly going to achieve the MDGs, three critical transitions had to be advanced: progress in human capital transition including health, education and nourishment; a transition in productive capacity enabling the least developed countries to undergo real structural change; and a transition to environmental sustainability. He held that these transitions could be achieved if there was sufficient effort shown at the national policy level, but more importantly if necessary reforms were made in trade access, and if large, yet necessary, investments could be made in infrastructure and social outlays. In this context, he challenged the rich countries to live up to their promises of putting 0.7% of their annual gross domestic product into development, which he said would be more than enough to meet the Goals. He also suggested the MDGs had to be put at the core of Country Assistance Strategies and the PRSPs.

Mr. Ricupero pointed out that at a time when net transfer of funds have been running from developing countries to the developed world for the seventh consecutive year due to debt payments, and when the developed countries have failed to show their willingness to solve the critical issues pertaining to trade liberalization such as agricultural subsidies at Cancun last September, it was difficult to talk about the industrial development prospects of LDCs. He pointed out that in fact what was being observed all over the developing world, with the exception of those few in East and South East Asia, was a premature process of "deindustrialization," which was threatening the very livelihood of millions as jobs in both agricultural and also industrial sectors were becoming scarce.

Prime Minister Sumaye talked about the need to address two key issues of concern to most LDCs—development of agro-industries and HIV/AIDS—when talking about industrial development and the MDGs in Africa. He pointed out that since 70% of all employment and 60% of manufacturing was based in agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa, development of agro-industries was of great importance not only for food security but also for the generation of sustainable livelihoods. He said agro-industries and especially the small and medium enterprises were critical, serving as springboards for the development of a sustainable industrial sector and job creation. He also pointed out the important role of the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic in achieving sustainable industrial development.

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Top Concerns for Children in 2004

On 31 December 2003, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) named what it considers the top five concerns for children in 2004: child survival, HIV/AIDS, war, exploitation and insufficient investment. "Each of these issues alone poses heartbreaking challenges for hundreds of millions of children," said UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy. "Together they represent a global imperative to do more for children in 2004."

Marking the New Year by calling attention to the immediate needs of children in developing countries, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said that nearly 11 million children worldwide die before their fifth birthday and tens of millions more are left with physical or mental disabilities or both. Measles, malaria and diarrhoea are three of the biggest killers, according to Ms. Bellamy.

More than half of new HIV infections occur in people under the age of 25, with girls infected more often than boys, and over 11 million children have been orphaned by AIDS.

When it comes to war, in the last ten years, more than two million children have died in armed conflict and more than three times that number have been permanently disabled or seriously injured. About 20 million children have been forced to flee their homes because of war, and more than one million have been orphaned or separated from their families.

About 246 million children work, 171 million of them in hazardous conditions. An estimated 1.2 million children are trafficked every year, and two million children, mainly girls, are believed to be exploited through the commercial sex trade. Moreover, at least 300,000 child soldiers are exploited in armed conflicts in more than 30 countries.

Ms. Bellamy also said that too many governments fail to recognize that investing in children means investing in the future of their countries. "By making sure that all boys and girls get a basic education, we will not only give them a chance of growing into independent adults who can protect their own health and rights, but we will give the next generation of children a better chance of escaping a life of poverty and hardship," she said.

State of the World's Children 2004

According to *The State of the World's Children 2004*, UNICEF's flagship report, international development efforts are short-changing girls, leaving millions of girls and women uneducated and unable to contribute to positive change for themselves, their children, or their communities. UNICEF says that without accelerated action to get more girls into school over the next two years, global goals to reduce poverty and improve the lives of millions of people, known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, see *NGLS Roundups 98, 105 & 106*), will simply not be reached.

Officially launching the report during the World Summit on the Information Society held in Geneva in December (WSIS, see *NGLS Roundup 109*), the UNICEF Executive Director said that technology could help children, but that it could not replace basic literacy and learning.

"It's truly amazing how far information technology has come in the past 25 years, and yet every year more than 121 million children never see the inside of a classroom," Ms. Bellamy said. "All the technology in the world cannot replace what these children are losing. Which just shows that when it comes to ensuring every child a quality basic education, we don't need a revolution, we just need to take responsibility."

Noting that international development efforts have been "glaringly inadequate" at getting girls into school in too many countries, Ms. Bellamy said, "We stand no chance of substantially reducing poverty, child mortality, HIV/AIDS and other diseases if we do not ensure that all girls and boys can exercise their right to a basic education."

The State of the World's Children 2004 argues that education must be approached as a human right rather than a privilege or an expected outcome of economic progress. The report says that the standard approach to achieving universal education has fallen short because it assumed that generic efforts to enrol more children would benefit all children equally, an assumption that has not examined or addressed the specific barriers faced by girls. Although global enrolment rates show gradual improvement in gender balance, nine million more girls are still left out of the classroom completely, and girls who are enrolled drop out faster, on average, than boys.

The report calls for adjustments in how development is approached from the start, and calls on development agencies, governments, families, and communities to focus and intensify their efforts on addressing the challenges that keep girls out of school. Specifically, the report calls for creating national ethics that recognize the value of educating girls as well as boys; including education as an essential component in development plans; eliminating school fees; integrating education into national plans for poverty reduction; and increasing international funding for education.

The report found that, with few exceptions, industrialized countries and international financial institutions have failed to meet their commitments to fund education. "Despite donor nations' 1990 promises for extra funding for education and their 1996 commitment to ensure universal primary education by 2015, total aid flows to developing countries actually declined during the 1990s, and bilateral funding for education plummeted even further," the report notes. The greatest need is in sub-Saharan Africa, where the number of girls left out of school each year has risen from 20 million in 1990 to 24 million in 2002. Eighty-three per cent of all girls out of school live in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and East Asia & the Pacific.

The first of the MDGs to come due is the goal of gender parity in

education by 2005. UNICEF argues that major progress toward achieving that goal is still possible with the strategic acceleration of national efforts and international support. One year ago, UNICEF made its own commitment to achieving the goal by launching "25 by 2005" campaign to help 25 gender-gap and low enrolment countries eliminate the barriers that keep girls and boys out of school (see *Go Between 100*). *The State of the World's Children 2004* details the progress of the campaign thus far, and provides a set of examples of what is working and why.

"Educating girls on an equal basis with boys, addressing the needs of all, is not an optional investment," Ms. Bellamy said. "None of the world's wealthier countries developed without making a significant investment in education. That's a lesson we need to keep in mind if we're serious about really doing things differently in this world. This is a test for us. Whether we pass or fail will have major and lasting consequences."

UNICEF Reports on AIDS Orphans in Africa

According to a UNICEF report entitled *Africa's Orphaned Generations*, AIDS has already orphaned more than 11 million African children, half of whom are between the ages of 10-14. The countries that will see the largest increases in the number of orphans—Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland—are those with HIV prevalence levels exceeding 30%.

The report warns that in these three countries and Zimbabwe, more than one in five children will be orphaned by 2010; more than 80% of whom will have lost one or both parents due to AIDS. Even in countries where HIV prevalence has stabilized or fallen, like Uganda, the numbers of orphans will stay high or rise as par-

ents already infected continue to die from the disease. "We need to move beyond feeling beleaguered to feeling outraged by the unacceptable suffering of children. We must keep parents alive, and ensure that orphans and other vulnerable children stay in school, and are protected from exploitation and abuse," UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy said.

The report finds that extended families are caring for 90% of all orphans and these networks will face ever-greater burdens as the number of orphans continues to spiral upward. Many countries are seeing growing proportions of families headed by women and grandparents. These households are already generally poorer, and are progressively less able to adequately provide for the children in their care. The report warns that many of the most severely affected countries in sub-Saharan Africa have no national policies to address the needs of orphaned children, including children orphaned and made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS.

Africa's Orphaned Generations argues that providing immediate support to families and communities to ensure that all of Africa's orphans have a secure and healthy childhood could alter the course of the crisis. "Offering children free basic education, giving them safe and viable options for earning a living, and providing families with financial and other assistance can mean that many orphans who might otherwise be separated from their families are able to remain with them," Ms. Bellamy said. "The future of Africa depends upon it."

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Creating a Protective Environment

After families, education is the next perimeter of a protective environment for children. Schools can be a powerful protective force in most children's lives, especially for girls and others who are highly vulnerable. This is not only because schools physically remove children from potential harm for much of the day but also because they help children learn skills and gather information so that they can protect themselves. Education remains a key safeguard preventing child labour and helping to combat the sexual exploitation and trafficking of children, which mainly threatens girls. A girl who is in school is less likely to be drawn into exploitative forms of work outside the home—and is also drawn away from domestic duties that may be excessive. Girls who are literate, and particularly those who have gained greater confidence through life skills training, are less vulnerable to the extreme forms of intrafamily violence, sexual exploitation and trafficking.

The millions of children who are exploited each year are living proof of the world's systemic failure to protect its youngest citizens. According to the International Labour Organization, every year an estimated 1.2 million children are trafficked into forced labour or prostitution. A recent UNICEF survey of households in 25 sub-Saharan African countries indicated that 31% of children aged between 5-14 are engaged in the unconditional worst forms of child labour that should be eliminated, such as slavery, trafficking, and forced recruitment for the purposes of armed conflict, prostitution and pornography; and that 9% are engaged in hazardous work, that is, working more than 43 hours a week in labour that threatens their wellbeing. In the countries surveyed, there are an estimated 31 million child workers, 24 million child labourers and 7 million children involved in hazardous work. More girls were found to be engaged in hazardous work than boys because household chores of more than four hours per day were taken into account.

Ultimately, children will only be free from child labour, trafficking and sexual exploitation when:

- Governments make child protection a priority
- Discriminatory attitudes and practices towards children are challenged and changed by the media and civil society
- Laws are in place and reliably enforced
- Teachers, health workers, parents and all those who interact with children know how to recognize and respond to child abuse
- Children are given the information and knowledge they need to protect themselves
- Adequate monitoring systems are in place to document or highlight the incidence of abuses
- Gender equality and women's rights are ensured.

Extracts from Chapter 4, *The State of the World's Children 2004*, available online (www.unicef.org/sowc04).

Children and Armed Conflict: Situation Remains Grave and Unacceptable

Meeting on 20 January, the Security Council held its annual session on children and armed conflict. Olara Otunnu, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, told the Security Council that in spite of tangible progress in the struggle to ensure the protection, rights and wellbeing of children exposed to armed conflict, their general situation remained "grave and unacceptable."

Children and armed conflict was formally placed on the Security Council's agenda in 1998. Since then, a number of resolutions on the issue have been adopted—1261 (1999), 1314 (2000), 1379 (2001) and 1460 (2003). At the 20 January briefing of the Security Council, Mr. Otunnu introduced the Secretary-General's November 2003 report (S/2003/1053), which addresses not only children and armed conflict, but also other forms of violence against children, including sexual abuse, maiming and kidnapping.

Mr. Annan's 2003 report contains two annexes: the first deals with conflicts on the Council's agenda; the second lists other conflicts. The first list includes factions fighting in Afghanistan, Burundi, Ivory Coast, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Liberia and Somalia, as well as the government forces of all of those countries, except Afghanistan. The second list names insurgents and paramilitary groups in Chechnya, Colombia, Myanmar, Nepal, Northern Ireland, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Uganda, and government-controlled forces in Myanmar, Sudan and Uganda.

The report finds that despite international efforts to stop the practice, children are still being recruited and used as child soldiers on a massive scale. Children also continue to be the main victims of war, whether their suffering is in the form of injury, abduction, loss of parents, no education or lack of health care. Most of the egregious violations are taking place in "a pervasive climate of impunity." Children are exploited as cheap labour and forced to work in unhealthy and dangerous conditions in the illicit mining of diamonds, gold, and coltan (columbite-tantalite), and in timber camps in Angola, DRC, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.

Forced to flee from their homes during conflicts, "children are especially vulnerable to violence, recruitment, sexual exploitation, disease, malnutrition and death" and are often left with "deep emotional scars and trauma," according to Mr. Annan.

The Secretary-General's report recommends that children's issues should be systematically incorporated into all peace negotiations and peace accords, and that child protection should systematically be included in the mandates of all UN peace operations. Targeted measures should be taken against parties responsible for the illicit exploitation of natural resources. The Council should take concrete steps where insufficient or no progress has been made by parties in accordance with its resolution 1379 (2001) and 1460 (2003), including imposition of travel restrictions on leaders and their exclusion from any governance structures and amnesty provisions, a ban on the export of small arms and on military assistance, and

restriction of the flow of financial resources to the parties concerned.

The Secretary-General also recommends that specific steps should now be taken to ensure that persons responsible for crimes against children will be among the first to be prosecuted in the International Criminal Court (ICC) and that greater and more concerted efforts should be deployed to end ongoing conflicts—which are destroying the lives of millions of children—and to addressing the key factors that facilitate the occurrence and recurrence of conflicts.

Mr. Otunnu said that parties to conflict continue to violate the rights of children with impunity, a trend underscored in the past year by particularly tragic experiences of terror, deprivation and utter vulnerability to which children had been subjected in many situations. He also pointed out that it was a "cruel dichotomy" that today the international community possessed, as never before, the means and collective influence to ensure compliance in the protection of children's rights. However, he said, the challenge was one of will and choice and he urged the Security Council to lead the way in making the "era of application" a reality for children exposed to war.

Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), noted that efforts in 2003 to draw global attention to the outrages perpetrated against children had fallen far short of what was required. One example of that collective failure, she said, had been demonstrated by the denial of humanitarian access in last year's siege of Monrovia (Liberia), in Afghanistan, and most recently in Darfur, western Sudan.

Ms. Bellamy said another devastating consequence of today's wars was the creation and exacerbation of the conditions leading to HIV/AIDS. Other conditions such as the disintegration of communities, displacement, the separation of children from their families, rape and sexual violence, and the destruction of schools and health services also fuelled the spread of HIV/AIDS. The past year had seen once again the systematic use of rape as a weapon of war and a means to terrorize populations and destroy communities. She underscored the importance of effective monitoring and reporting of children's rights violations, saying they were essential in ending impunity for crimes against children. Monitoring and reporting allowed the development of a record of violations, which was an essential foundation for pursuing justice, accountability and, ultimately, reconciliation.

In the debate that followed, Security Council President Soledad Alvear, speaking in her capacity as Foreign Minister of Chile, said that as part of the Council's monitoring efforts, the identification of parties to conflict that recruited or used children should be kept under constant review. After the parties had been identified, the Council could begin work on the type of measures or sanctions to impose on them, particularly in cases of repeat offenders in the recruitment or use of children as soldiers.

Many participants emphasized the links between the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict, on the one hand, and the proliferation of and trafficking in small arms and light weapons, on the other. Several speakers linked the illicit exploitation of natural resources in conflict zones with the violation of the rights of children and their exploitation as child soldiers.

In its January 2004 report, Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, an international coalition of NGOs, says that if the Security Council is to effectively stop the use of children in warfare, it must deal with the problem in broader terms than only the use of child soldiers. The report, entitled *Protecting Children in Armed Conflict: Blueprint for Compliance*, outlines three "essential action" areas where progress must be made to begin to close the gap between international commitments to protect children and the harsh reality that children experience gross violations of their rights. These areas include monitoring and reporting; addressing the spectrum of violations against children; and graduated measures to achieve compliance.

The report recommends that the Security Council create a "child protection inspection initiative" to quickly monitor and verify reports of "egregious violations" of Council mandates concerning children and take stronger actions against groups that use child soldiers.

"A big step forward that the Security Council can take is to move beyond just the violations relating to child soldiers to take a more comprehensive view of the violations that children suffer every day

in areas of conflict," said Julia Freedson, a member of the Watchlist steering committee.

The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, founded in 1998 by Human Rights Watch and seven leading NGOs, released its report, *Child Soldier Use 2003*, just ahead of the Security Council's debate to help inform the discussions. The report (see box below) identifies 18 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East where the use of child soldiers persists in armed conflict or its aftermath.

The Coalition calls for action by the Security Council to insist upon—and enforce—an end to child recruitment. "Although the United Nations has clearly identified violators, the recruitment and use of child soldiers persist all around the world," said Jo Becker, child rights advocate for Human Rights Watch and the Coalition's founding chairperson. "The Security Council needs to hold the violators accountable and demand concrete progress in ending the abuse."

"Adopting resolution after resolution, all of which have failed to protect children from conflict, has created 'resolution fatigue' among governments at the United Nations and cynicism among the public," said Casey Kelso, a member of the Coalition. "The United Nations should step up efforts to demand accountability by governments and groups using child soldiers. The Security Council should take steps to end flows of weapons to violators and should apply targeted sanctions to parties that fail to end their use of child soldiers."

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Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 2-12 Pentonville Road, London N1 9FP, United Kingdom, telephone +44-20/7713 2761, fax +44-20/7713 2794, e-mail <info@child-soldier.org>, website (www.child-soldiers.org).

Child Soldier Use 2003

Throughout 2003 thousands of children were deployed as combatants, to commit abuses against civilians, as sex slaves, forced labourers, messengers, informants and servants in continuing and newly erupting conflicts.

In some cases, such as Cote d'Ivoire, parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Liberia, a massive increase in recruitment occurred during 2003. Horrifying reports emerged from the DRC of children forced to commit atrocities, of rape and sexual torture, and of constant beatings. Thousands of children in northern Uganda continued to flee their homes at night to avoid being abducted by the opposition Lord's Resistance Army and forced into brutal combat and servitude. Yet the abductions continued. In Myanmar little if any progress was discerned, with an estimated 70,000 children in the government's armed forces. Exiled children recounted being abducted by government forces while on the way to school and taken to military camps where they were subjected to beatings, forced labour and combat. Disturbing recent reports from Colombia revealed that the number of children used by armed groups has increased to around 11,000 in recent years, with children as young as 12 being trained and deployed to use explosives and weapons. In addition to involvement in combat, girls attached to Colombian armed groups have reported the enforced use of contraceptives and abortions, often after pressure to become the "girlfriend" of an adult soldier. In Sri Lanka the abduction of children by the armed opposition Tamil Tigers of Eelam (LTTE) reportedly continued unabated.

In all the conflicts children were forcibly recruited, sometimes in large numbers. Others enlisted voluntarily as a means of survival in war-torn regions after family, social and economic structures had collapsed. Many said they joined because of poverty, unemployment, or domestic violence, abuse or exploitation. Others reported enlisting after seeing family members tortured or killed by members of government forces or armed opposition groups.

Extracts from *Child Soldier Use 2003*

Cairo Ten Years Later: Approaching the Mid-Point of the ICPD's Programme of Action

At the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo in 1994, 179 countries adopted a Programme of Action (PoA), a forward-looking 20-year plan that established quantitative goals, which include promoting women's social, economic and political participation, as well as securing reproductive health and rights. The first five-year review of the implementation of the PoA was conducted by the General Assembly in 1999. This year—the 10th anniversary of the ICPD—will also mark the mid-point of the 20-year Programme.

In 1999, the General Assembly conducted the first five-year review of the ICPD, and adopted the “Key Actions for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.” The United Nations Population Funds (UNFPA) says that while the review showed that the ICPD goals are still valid and that much progress had been made in advancing them, it also revealed that much greater and urgent action was needed in certain areas. The 1999 Key Actions validated the comprehensive approach to population and development set out in the Programme of Action (PoA), and provided a set of benchmarks for achieving the ICPD goals.

As the tenth anniversary of the ICPD—the mid-point of its 20-year Programme of Action—approaches, UNFPA says that many countries have been able to translate the commitments they made in Cairo into policies and action programmes in improving the lives of women, yet much remains to be done. In order to commemorate “ICPD+10,” a country-by-country analysis of achievements, of constraints, and of lessons learned is being undertaken, and the results will be used in order to accelerate implementation of the PoA. UNFPA says the tenth anniversary will also provide an occasion to reflect on the ICPD goals, and demonstrate how achieving them will contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, see *NGLS Roundups 96, 105 & 106*).

Several activities are planned at the national, regional and global levels. Activities at the national level include responses to regional/global inquiries, national reports, national review meetings, updates of national programmes or strategies, and national advocacy events. A Field Inquiry on national experiences among all countries is being undertaken, and is designed to measure progress in implementing the commitments and recommendations contained in the PoA and Key Actions, as well as the difficulties and constraints the countries have faced.

Regional Level

UNFPA is working with the United Nations Regional Commissions in marking the ICPD tenth anniversary with regional reviews that include a regional analysis of the results of the Field Inquiry, lessons learned, and an exchange of experiences at the regional level.

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

The European Population Forum 2004, held in Geneva from 12-14 January, brought together more than 350 participants, including international experts on population and reproductive health, government representatives, academia and research institutions, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to assess progress in implementing the 1994 PoA, to examine key issues in Europe, and to consider challenges posed by emerging demographic trends in the European region.

Hosted by the Government of Switzerland and co-organized by UNFPA and the UNECE, the Forum, through a number of panel discussions, focused on family planning, safe motherhood, HIV/AIDS prevention, low fertility in ECE countries, health challenges, high morbidity and mortality, the spread of sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS, adolescent sexual and reproductive health issues, gender-based violence, trafficking of young women, international migration and the integration of immigrant populations, challenges in transition countries, as well as the policy challenges of Europe's demographic changes.

Speaking at the Forum's opening session, UNFPA Executive Director Thoraya Obaid said the Cairo PoA “changed the international debate about population from human numbers to human beings” and helped governments move away from a narrow focus on family planning to a new concept of sexual and reproductive health throughout the life cycle. “In many ways, the Cairo agreement anticipated the Millennium Development Goals adopted six years later,” she pointed out. “Enabling people to choose their family size will slow the rapid population growth that undermines poverty reduction efforts in the world's poorest countries. Better reproductive health information and services are critical to reducing maternal and child mortality and halting HIV/AIDS. Preventing unwanted pregnancies helps keep girls in school, advancing women's empowerment.”

Brigita Schmögnerová, UNECE Executive Secretary, pointed out that low fertility rates and declining mortality are creating key policy challenges in Europe as the working-age population decreases and the ageing population increases. She highlighted an increase in the

number of immigrant workers, suggesting that Europe will become more multicultural and multiracial, and will have to adapt to the changing form of its society. She said that Europe's population is expected to decrease by 13% by 2050, and the declining fertility rate in Europe is a trend that is set to continue.

The Forum drew a number of conclusions. On the regional level, participants agreed that empowering young people to fully enjoy healthy sexual and reproductive lives should be a key priority. Participants also emphasized the need to integrate HIV prevention and treatment fully within reproductive health programmes. Other regional concerns identified included widespread human trafficking and gender-based violence.

Priority concerns in transition countries include weakened health care infrastructures and restricted access to quality health care, in particular to reproductive health information and services. Efforts to improve health care are hampered by a lack of reliable data systems. Some countries face high rates of maternal mortality and unsafe abortion.

Low fertility was identified as a major policy concern in a growing number of countries, especially its impact on the labour force in much of Europe. A number of participants noted that admitting more migrant workers to the region could help address the shrinking workforce problem, but could only be part of the solution. Stressing that international migration is an increasingly important resource in a globalized world, a number called for immigration and social integration policies that are more transparent and better coordinated at the local, national and regional levels.

The Forum identified implementation of the Cairo agenda as indispensable to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, including halving world poverty by 2015 and slowing the spread of HIV/AIDS. More funds for sexual and reproductive health are especially needed in transition countries that are currently undergoing health and social reforms.

The lack of adequate resources for population and reproductive health programmes was identified as the primary obstacle to achieving the Cairo objectives. Expenditures for implementing family planning and reproductive health programmes have fallen well short of the US\$17 billion that the Cairo meeting estimated would be required by 2000. Participants emphasized the importance of Europe keeping its promises to mobilize resources for population and reproductive health as a key contribution to international development. Annual global assistance for these sectors, they noted, is nearly US\$3 billion short of the requirements agreed to in Cairo.

"Our primary objective must be to protect and save lives and contribute to the conditions under which all people—men, women and children—thrive and lead secure and healthy lives," said Ms. Obaid at the Forum's closing. "Stronger political commitment, backed by effective policies grounded in human

rights and above all by adequate resources, is the key to realizing our common hopes for humanity."

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

Meeting in Port-of-Spain (Trinidad and Tobago) from 11-12 November 2003 to assess their progress in carrying out the 1994 ICPD Programme of Action, twenty Caribbean countries pledged to ensure reproductive rights and health, gender equality and the empowerment of women. They also recognized the rights of adolescents to youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health information, education and services.

Opening the meeting, Camille Robinson-Regis, Trinidad and Tobago's Minister of Planning and Development, hailed the 1994 conference as "revolutionary in its thinking and concepts." No longer was the issue of population only about demographics, she said, "it was and is about living, breathing human beings facing life's daily challenges. It is about gender equality and equity, and the rejection of all forms of gender-based violence. It is about preparing for a wanted baby and providing for its healthy childhood. It is about improving the quality of life for all humankind."

The Caribbean countries and territories adopted a declaration that reaffirms their commitment to the ICPD's PoA, and asserts that the implementation of the Programme is "essential for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals," including the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger.

Calling HIV/AIDS a major threat to the region's economic and social structures, they pledged to fight the pandemic through prevention, treatment and care in the context of reproductive health programmes.

Turning to other issues, a number of countries stated that their populations, economies and societies had been harmed by structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), heavy debt repayments and inequitable trade practices. They called on the international community to foster a supportive economic environment by promoting an equitable, secure, non-discriminatory international trading system, and asked donors to increase financial support for implementation of the ICPD PoA.

The important and complementary role NGOs have played in policy development, implementation and delivery of services and in promoting reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health was also recognized by the countries, which called upon the international community to support mechanisms to build and sustain partnerships with NGOs.

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

(ESCAP) hosted the Fifth Asia and Pacific Population Conference (APPC) in December 2002, on the theme of *Population and Poverty* (www.unescap.org/pop/5appc/index.htm), and adopted a Plan of Action.

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), along with UNFPA and the League of Arab States is organizing the Arab Population Forum, to be held in Beirut (Lebanon) from 6-8 April 2004, to assess implementation of the PoA and of the Amman 2 Declaration on Population and Development; to identify emerging issues in the framework of the PoA; and to enable stock-taking of lessons learned and best practices that could be replicated in other countries in the region.

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) conducted a survey among all African countries on the implementation of the Dakar-Ngor Declaration (DND) and the ICPD PoA. The Fifth Meeting of the Follow-up Committee on the Implementation of the DND/ICPD will be held from 12-16 April 2004, in Dakar (Senegal) to review and endorse the Africa Regional Report (www.uneca.org/POPIA).

Other Activities

In December 2003, the General Assembly adopted resolution 58/529, entitled "Commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development," which will devote one day of the Assembly's 59th session in 2004 to the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the ICPD.

At the 37th session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD), to be held from 22-26 March in New York, the CPD will review and appraise progress made in the implementation of the ICPD PoA, and will include a general debate on national experiences.

The UNFPA *State of World Population Report for 2004* will focus on the ten years of experience in the implementation of the PoA, and will incorporate some of the results of the Field Inquiry. The report will be released in September 2004.

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ECE Considers Regional Implementation for Sustainable Development in Preparation for CSD-12

The UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) held its first Regional Implementation Forum on Sustainable Development from 15-16 January 2004 in Geneva, bringing together some 300 delegates from ECE Member States, UN agencies, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and NGOs. Participants addressed regional water, sanitation, and human settlements issues in the context of decisions taken at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).

In her opening remarks, Brigita Schmögnerová, ECE Executive Secretary, stressed the need to review regional progress made on water, sanitation, and human settlements issues since WSSD (see *NGLS Roundup 96*) and to analyze remaining problems and challenges for the twelfth session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-12), taking place in New York from 14-30 April 2004 (see *Go Between 100*). Børge Brende, Norwegian Environment Minister and CSD-12 Chair, stressed the importance of political will, integrated water resource management (IWRM), water planning, and cooperation in the management of shared water resources, and called for more effective systems of management and urban planning. He also underscored the important role Europe might play in leading the way toward achieving the global targets.

Outcomes

After a panel discussion on human settlements, delegates agreed on the need to:

- b improve the livability of cities through good governance, accountability and transparency;
- b emphasize sustainable housing reforms and social equity;
- b support participatory local governance, public-private partnerships and civil society to ensure effective implementation of sustainable development policies;
- b encourage government involvement to facilitate investment in the rehabilitation of existing stock, improve asset management and assist marginalized groups in gaining access to social housing;
- b mobilize international support to address poverty and

inequality in human settlements through targeted official development assistance (ODA) in urban planning, land administration and good governance; and

- b mobilize public sector efforts in creating an enabling institutional environment to attract domestic and foreign investment.

A second panel on water issues resulted in delegates agreeing to:

- b develop and implement IWRM schemes with strong stakeholder participation;
- b develop strategies that respond to climate change effects on water ecosystems and the hydrological cycle;
- b develop innovative financial mechanisms, such as compensation schemes for water-linked environmental services, revolving funds, and project development facilities;
- b develop best practices on integrated flood management and control, techniques for waste water re-use and recycling;
- b strengthen joint bodies for managing transboundary waters; and
- b draw up bilateral and multilateral agreements in order to define conduct regarding the prevention, control and reduction of transboundary impact and other issues relevant to IWRM.

After a panel on sanitation issues, delegates agreed on the need to:

- b take a holistic approach to water protection, water supply and sanitation;
- b create legal, regulatory, administrative and economic frameworks to improve water supply and sanitation;
- b encourage individuals to invest in improved sanitation;
- b raise awareness of hygienic behavior; and
- b establish partnerships between governments, local communities, the private sector and others to increase funding for sanitation and ecosystem protection.

Interlinkages

A general discussion was then held to address the interlinkages among the three substantive issues and their linkages with other cross-sectoral issues, such as financing, production patterns, governance and poverty. Chair Margaret Beckett, the United Kingdom's Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, invited delegates to consider three guidelines for the discussion: assessing

failures in the region, identifying the obstacles and challenges, and transforming words into concrete actions.

Ireland on behalf of the European Union (EU) noted that water and sanitation and infrastructure, such as transport and energy, support the delivery of health and education services and are pre-conditions for adequate human settlements. Germany recommended developing sustainable development education schemes to involve all education sectors, while the Czech Republic stressed education as a key tool for implementing sustainable development initiatives.

Georgia, as Chair of the ECE environmental policy department, underlined the importance of subregional activities. The ECE presented EU success stories in formulating, elaborating, implementing, monitoring and reviewing sustainable development strategies, including: the existence of a frequent review mechanism at a high political level; progress reporting and structural indicators; and the role of national consultative councils or partnerships for sustainable development in overseeing the implementation of the strategies. The ECE called on the CSD to focus on elaborating national sustainable development strategies, including poverty eradication strategies, and the commitment to begin implementation by 2005.

The Netherlands said a results-oriented process of concrete action should be started at CSD-12, and that interrelationships between the three themes could assist in setting priorities for action. The Stakeholder Forum stressed the need to link international trade and sustainable development and said the World Trade Organization (WTO) should be encouraged to take into account sustainable development efforts.

Ms. Beckett concluded by urging delegates to take an integrated approach in meeting WSSD targets, highlighting the need for improved capacity building, education, partnerships and technology transfer. She added that it was important for ECE Member States to prepare IWRM plans by 2005 and work to develop national sustainable development strategies.

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UN CALENDAR OF INTERNATIONAL AND WORLD DAYS

February

21 February: International Mother Language Day

March

8 March: International Women's Day
21 March: International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination
21 March: World Poetry Day
22 March: World Day for Water
23 March: World Forecast Day
24 March: World Tuberculosis Day

April

7 April: World Health Day
23 April: World Book and Copyright Day

May

3 May: Sun Day
3 May: World Press Freedom Day
15 May: International Day of Families
17 May: World Telecommunication Day
25 May: Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories
31 May: World No Tobacco Day

June

4 June: International Day of Innocent Children Victim of Aggressions
5 June: World Environment Day
17 June: World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought
20 June: World Refugee Day
26 June: International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking
26 June: UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

July

1st Saturday of July: International Day of Cooperatives
11 July: World Population Day

August

9 August: International Day of the World's Indigenous People
12 August: International Youth Day
23 August: International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade

September

1st September: United Nations General Assembly
4 September: International Day of Peace
8 September: International Literacy Day
16 September: International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer

October

1st October: International Day of Elderly People
4-10 October: World Space Week
5 October: World Teachers' Day
9 October: World Habitat Day
10 October: World Mental Health Day
16 October: World Food Day
17 October: International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
24 October: World Development Information Day
24 October: International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction

November

16 November: International Day for Tolerance
18-26 November: Week for International Solidarity
20 November: Africa Industrialization Day
20 November: Universal Children's Day
21 November: World Television Day
25 November: International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

December

1st December: World AIDS Day
2 December: International Day for the Abolition of Slavery
3 December: International Day of Disabled Persons
5 December: International Volunteer Day
10 December: Human Rights Day
29 December: International Day for Biological Diversity

NGLS is an inter-agency programme of the United Nations system that facilitates dialogue and cooperation 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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Selected UN Events in 2004

The following lists some of the UN meetings and events that are due to take place in 2004. Please note that dates may be subject to change. Not all meetings listed below are open to NGO participation.

CRIME

- b Africa Regional Preparatory Meeting for the 11th United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (General Assembly), February 2004, Addis Ababa
- b Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice 13th session, 13-22 May, Vienna
- b Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of a Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 26 January - 6 March, Vienna

Contact: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Vienna International Centre, PO Box 500, A-1400 Vienna, Austria, website (www.unodc.org/odccp/index.html)

DISARMAMENT

CHEMICAL WEAPONS

- b Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Executive Council
 - 18-21 March, The Hague
 - 12-15 October, The Hague
- b First Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention, 28 April-9 May, The Hague
- b Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, 8th Session, 20-24 October, The Hague

Contact: Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Johan de Wittlaan 32, NL-2517 JR - The Hague, Netherlands, e-mail <inquiries@opcw.org>, website (www.opcw.org)

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

- b Conference on Disarmament,
 - first part, 19 January - 26 March, Geneva
 - second part, 10 May - 25 June, Geneva
 - third part, 26 July - 10 September, Geneva

Contact: Conference on Disarmament, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland, website (www.un.org/disarm/dconf.htm)

DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

- b Disarmament Commission, 5-23 April, New York
- Contact: Disarmament Commission, Room S-2977-H, UN, New York, NY 10017, USA, telephone +1-212/963 5595, fax +1-212/963 1121, website (<http://disarmament.un.org/undiscom.htm>)

LANDMINES

- b Preparatory Meeting of the First Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and Their Destruction,
 - 13 February, Geneva
 - 28-29 June, Geneva
- b First Review Conference, 29 November-3 December, Nairobi

Contact: Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Office of Mine Action Service, Room S-3630, UN, New York NY 10017, USA, website (www.un.org/Depts/dpko)

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

- b Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, Working Group B and Informal/Expert Meetings,
 - 19 April - 7 May, Vienna
 - 24 May-4 June, Vienna
 - 30 August -10 September, Vienna
- b Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization,
 - 22nd session, 22-25 June, Vienna
 - 23rd session, 15-19 November 2004, Vienna
- b Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of States Parties to the treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 3rd session, 26 April- 7 May, New York

Contact: CTBTO Preparatory Commission, Vienna International Centre, PO Box 1200, A-1400 Vienna, Austria, e-mail <info@ctbto.org>, website (www.ctbto.org)

ECOSOC/GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- b Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
 - Substantive session, 6-30 July, New York
- b Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, 10-28 May, New York

Contact: NGO Section, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Room DC1-1480, UN, New York NY 10017, USA, e-mail <mezoui@un.org>, website (www.un.org/esa/coordination.ngo)

- b ECOSOC High-Level Segment Preparatory Meeting on LDC's and Resource Mobilization for Poverty Eradication,
 - 17-18 March, New York
 - 6-8 July, New York

Contact: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Room DC2-2150, UN, New York NY 10017, USA, telephone +1-212/963 4867, fax +1-212/963 1061

Dates may be subject to change

- b Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- 32nd session, 26 April - 14 May, Geneva
- 33rd session, 8-26 November, Geneva

- b ECOSOC Special High-Level meeting with the Bretton Woods Institutions and the World Trade Organization, 26 April 2004, New York

- b General Assembly Fifth Committee, resumed session, 8 March - 2 April 2004, New York

- b General Assembly, 59th session, September-December, New York

- b ECOSOC Coordination Segment (Mainstreaming Gender, Rural Development), and Operational Activities Segment (Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review), Date TBA, New York

EDUCATION

- b Fifth Meeting of the Working Group on Education for All (EFA), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 25-29 July, Paris

- b International Conference on Education, UNESCO, 8-11 September, Geneva

- b Fourth Meeting of the High-Level Group on EFA, UNESCO, 14-16 November, Brazil

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

- b UN Food and Agriculture Organization, Committee on World Food Security, 30th session, 20 -24 September, Rome

- b FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission, 27th session, 28 June -2 July, Rome

- b FAO Council, December, Rome

Contact: FAO, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, I-00100 Rome, Italy, website (www.fao.org)

HABITAT

- b World Urban Forum on Cities: Crossroads of Cultures and Integration, UN-HABITAT, 13-17 September, Barcelona

Contact: UN-HABITAT, PO Box 30030, Nairobi, Kenya, +254-2/623153, fax +254-2/624060, website (www.unhabitat.org)

HEALTH

- b World Health Organization (WHO), World Health Assembly, 57th session, 17-22 May, Geneva

Contact: WHO, 20 avenue Appia, CH-1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland, website (www.who.int)

HIV/AIDS

- b United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), 13th International Symposium on HIV & Emerging Infectious Diseases, 3-5 June, Toulon (France)
- b UNAIDS XV International AIDS Conference, 11-16 July, Bangkok (Thailand)

HUMAN RIGHTS

- b Commission on Human Rights, 60th Session 15 March - 23 April, Geneva

- b Human Rights Committee
- 80th session, 15 March - 2 April, New York
- 81st session, 12-30 July, Geneva

- b Committee against Torture, pre-sessional working group, 26-30 April, Geneva

- b Rights of the Child
- 36th session, 17 May - 4 June, Geneva
- pre-sessional working group, 4-8 October, Geneva

- b Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights
- Intersessional Forum on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Social Forum), 3-4 May, Geneva
- 56th session, 26 July - 13 August, Geneva

- b Commission on Human Rights, Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, 24-28 May, Geneva

- b Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 10-21 May, New York

- b Commission on Human Rights, Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, 21-25 June, Geneva

- b Meeting of persons chairing human rights treaty bodies, 21-25 June, Geneva

- b Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 65th session, 2-20 August, Geneva

- b Commission on Human Rights, Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances, 73rd session, 16 - 20 August, New York

- b Twenty-second Meeting of States Parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, September, New York
- b Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, 3rd session, 24 May - 4 June, New York
- 4th session, 23 August - 3 September, New York

Dates may be subject to change

Contact: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland, telephone +41-22/917 9000, website (www.unhcr.ch)

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

b Committee on Information, 26th session, 26 April-7 May, New York

INTERNATIONAL LAW

b International Criminal Court
Third session of the Assembly of States Parties, 6 - 10 September, The Hague

Contact: Office of the Legal Counsel, Office of Legal Affairs, UN, New York NY 10017, USA, telephone +1-212/963 1942, fax +1-212/963 3386, website (www.un.org/law/icc/index.htm)

b International Law Commission, 56th session
- 3 May - 4 June, Geneva
- 5 July - 6 August, Geneva

b Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, 7-11 June, New York

b Meeting of the States Parties to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea 14-18 June, New York

Contact: UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs, Room DC2-0450, UN, New York NY 10017, USA, e-mail <doalos@un.org>, website (www.un.org/Depts/los/index.htm)

b United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), 37th session, 14 June-2 July, New York

Contact: Secretariat of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), Vienna International Centre, PO Box 500, A-1400 Vienna, Austria, telephone +43-1/26060 4061, fax +43-1/26060 5813, e-mail <unictr@unictr.org>, website (www.uncitral.org)

NARCOTIC DRUGS

b Commission on Narcotic Drugs, 47th session, - 16 -25 March, Vienna

Contact: Commission on Narcotic Drugs, UNODC, Vienna International Centre, PO Box 500, A-1400 Vienna, Austria, website (www.unodc.org/odccp/cnd.html)

b International Narcotics Control Board,
- 80th session, 17 - 28 May, Vienna
- 81st session, 27 October - 11 November, Vienna

b Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Meeting of heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, 4-8 October, Vienna

Contact: International Narcotics Control Board, UNODC, Vienna International Centre, PO Box 500, A-1400 Vienna, Austria, e-mail <secretariat@incb.org>, website (www.incb.org)

POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

b Commission on Population and Development, 37th session 22-26 March, New York

Contact: Population Division, DESA, Room DC2-1950, UN, New York NY 10017, USA, website (www.un.org/esa/population/unpop.htm)

REFUGEES**OFFICE OF THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)**

b Pre- Executive Committee Consultations with NGOs, October, Geneva

b Executive Committee, 55th session, 4-8 October, Geneva

Contact: NGO Unit, Division of Communication and Information, telephone +41-22/739 7944, fax +41-22/739 7302, e-mail <hqng00@unhcr.ch>

REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

b Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), 60th session, 22- 28 April, Shanghai

b Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 30th session, 10-14 May, Puerto Rico

b Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), 59th session, 24-26 February, Geneva

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

b Commission for Social Development, 42nd session, 4-13 February, New York

b International Labour Organization (ILO), General Conference, 1-18 June, Geneva

b ILO Governing Body and its Committees, 18 June, Geneva

Contact: Bureau for External Relations and Partnerships, ILO, 4 route des Morillons, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland, e-mail <aumont@ilo.org>, website (www.ilo.org)

b Children's World Congress on Child Labour, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 10-12 May, Florence (Italy)

*Dates may be subject to change***SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT****COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (CSD)**

b Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the Preparatory Committee for the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), 14-16 April, New York

b Commission on Sustainable Development, 12th Session 19 - 30 April, New York

b Barbados +10: International meeting to review the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Islands Developing States (SIDS), 30 August-3 September, Mauritius

Contact: Secretariat for Mauritius 2004, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development, United Nations, New York NY 10017, USA, telephone +1-212/963 8563, fax +1-212/963 4340, e-mail <Mauritius2004@sidsnet.org>, website (www.sidsnet.org)

UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS

b United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), 4th Session 3-14 May, Geneva

Contact: UN Division for Sustainable Development, DC 2-2286, 2 UN Plaza, 12th Floor, New York NY 10019, USA, e-mail <unff@un.org>, website (www.un.org/esa/forests/index.html)

UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

b Meetings of subsidiary bodies of the Conference of Parties to the Convention, 14 - 25 June, Bonn

b Conference of Parties to the Convention, 10th session, 29 November-10 December, Buenos Aires (Argentina)

ROTTERDAM CONVENTION

b First Conference of the Parties of the Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, 20-24 September, Geneva

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

b NGO Consultation
- 18 May, Washington DC
- 16 November, Washington DC

b GEF Council Meeting
- 19-21 May, Washington DC
- 17-19 November, Washington DC

Contact: GEF Secretariat, 1818 H Street NW, Washington DC 20433, USA, website (www.gefweb.org)

b Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, date TBA, New York

TRADE, FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT**UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (UNCTAD)**

b Trade and Development Board, 21st special session, 10 -11 May, Geneva

b Commission on Science and Technology for Development, 7th session, 24-28 May, Geneva

b Preparatory Committee for UNCTAD XI

- 1-5 March, Geneva

- 19-23 April, Geneva

- 3-7 May, Geneva

b UNCTAD XI, 11th Session, 13-18 June, Sao Paulo, Brazil

Contact: UNCTAD, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland, e-mail <info@unctad.org>, website (www.unctad.org)

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND (IMF) AND WORLD BANK

b Annual Spring Meetings of the World Bank Group and the IMF, 24-25 April, Washington DC

b Annual Meetings of the World Bank Group and the IMF, 4-5 October 2004, Washington DC

WOMEN

b Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), 48th session, 1-12 March, New York

Contact: Division for the Advancement of Women, DESA, UN, New York NY 10017, USA, e-mail <daw@un.org>, website (www.un.org/womenwatch/daw)

b Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

- Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol to the Convention, 28 June - 2 July, New York

- 31st session, 6-23 July, New York

- Pre-sessional Working Group, 26 - 30 July, New York

b Thirteenth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 12 August, New York

Contact: Women's Rights Unit, Division for the Advancement of Women, DESA, UN, New York NY 10017, USA, e-mail <daw@un.org>, website (www.un.org/womenwatch/daw)