

GO

Between



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

KYOTO PROTOCOL ENTERS INTO FORCE

The Kyoto Protocol, an international agreement adopted in December 1997 in Japan, entered into force on 16 February 2005. The Protocol sets binding targets for developed countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on average 5.2% below 1990 levels in order to address global warming (see Focus page 16).

PETER HANSEN LEAVES UNRWA

On 19 January, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan announced that he decided not to reappoint Peter Hansen as the head of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). Mr. Hansen, a Dane, has led UNRWA since February 1996. The United States, the programme's biggest donor and one of ten countries on its advisory board, argued against the reappointment on the grounds that Mr. Hansen had served long enough. The annual US contribution to the agency is US\$120 million. Mr. Hansen remains in the job until March 2005 when his mandate expires.

S-G ANNOUNCES NEW UNICEF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Following consultations with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Executive Board, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has announced the appointment of Ann M. Veneman as the new Executive Director of UNICEF. Ms. Veneman has been the Secretary of the US Department of Agriculture since January 2001, and will succeed Carol Bellamy when her ten-year tenure concludes on 30 April.

S-G NOMINATES NEW HEAD OF UNCTAD

On 28 February UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan nominated Supachai Panitchpakdi of Thailand as

Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) for a term of four years beginning 1 September 2005. Dr. Supachai is the current Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and a former Deputy Prime Minister and Commerce Minister of Thailand. The nomination will go to the UN General Assembly for confirmation. The G-77 has requested time to consider the nomination.

S-G RENEWS PETER PIOT AS UNAIDS CHIEF

In late January, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan announced that he has renewed Peter Piot's appointment as Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations for four more years. Dr. Piot has headed UNAIDS since 1995.

UNHCR HEAD RESIGNS

On 20 February, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Ruud Lubbers resigned his post amidst harassment allegations. Mr. Lubbers said his 50-month term as chief of UNHCR's global efforts to protect and assist 17 million refugees and others of concern was a privilege for him. Mr. Lubbers, who was Dutch Prime Minister from 1982-1994, is independently wealthy and was working as High Commissioner for US\$1 a year. He donated his salary and travel expenses to the United Nations each year, estimated at about US\$300,000.

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S-G APPOINTS NEW CHEF DE CABINET

On 3 January 2005, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan announced the appointment of Mark Malloch Brown, the Administrator of the United Nations Development



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Programme (UNDP), as his Chef de Cabinet. Mr. Malloch Brown replaces Iqbal Riza who retired after more than 25 years in the United Nations, the last eight as Mr. Annan's Chef de Cabinet.

Mr. Annan said that Mr. Malloch Brown would assist him and Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette in leading major initiatives to improve the performance and overhaul the management of the United Nations, leading up to a planned global summit to be held in New York in September.

"The next nine months offers a real opportunity to push through a new round of reforms aimed at revitalizing the United Nations system to ensure it is better equipped to deal with the scale and complexity of 21st century challenges," Mr. Annan said.

At the five-year review of the Millennium Declaration, to be held in New York from 14-16 September 2005, Heads of State and Government will be seeking to reach agreement on a wide set of recommendations relating to UN reform and global security and development challenges. The Secretary-General plans to issue his report on 30 March 2005 reviewing implementation of the Declaration and setting out a proposed agenda for the Millennium+5 Summit. That report will draw on many of the recommendations contained in the recent report of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (see *Go Between 104*), as well as the Millennium Project, a 3-year effort sponsored by the UNDP to recommend the best strategies for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (see Focus page 18).

For more information on the Millennium+5 Summit, see the NGLS website (www.un-ngls.org/mdg).

UNHCR HEAD RESIGNS (CONT. FROM P1)

Mr. Lubbers handed over temporary leadership responsibilities for

the UNHCR to Deputy High Commissioner Wendy Chamberlin. Ms. Chamberlin will work closely with Assistant High Commissioner Kamel Morjane pending the appointment of a new High Commissioner. In her Deputy capacity, Ms. Chamberlin was responsible for the creation of the new UNHCR Council of Business Leaders, on which representatives from Merck and Co., Inc., Microsoft, Nestlé, Nike and PricewaterhouseCoopers have committed to developing public/private partnerships in refugee settings. Ms. Chamberlin served as US ambassador to Laos and later Pakistan.

ECOSOC ELECTS NEW PRESIDENT

On 19 January, Munir Akram (Pakistan) was elected President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for 2005. He replaces Marjatta Rasi (Finland). Addressing the 54-member body following his election, he said, "In our globalized world, prosperity cannot be sustained while poverty afflicts many," adding that though the imbalances in trade and budget deficits, rising oil prices and fluctuating currencies were all signs of global economic fragility, the world also had the collective capacity to end hunger and poverty.

He asserted that ECOSOC had not fulfilled its role as the central organ of the UN system in the socio-economic sphere, and if the international community was to promote development as the highest priority, the Council must be empowered and enabled to play its central role in promoting coherence and coordination, as well as the implementation of agreements and commitments by States, institutions, the private sector and civil society.

On 17 December, the General Assembly adopted a resolution moving ECOSOC's High-Level Segment and substantive session to New York from Geneva on an exceptional basis so that its High-Level Segment could coincide with the High-Level Dialogue on

Financing for Development, to be held in New York from 27-28 June.

ODS AVAILABLE TO GENERAL PUBLIC

On 23 December, the United Nations announced that its Official Document System (ODS) is now available to the general public online (<http://documents.un.org>). The site is a full-text web resource for official United Nations documentation and covers all types of official UN documentation originating from duty stations worldwide, including selective documents of the regional commissions.

Comprehensive coverage starts in 1993, and older documents are added to the system on a daily basis. Selective coverage of General Assembly and Security Council documentation currently reaches back to 1985. The ODS also provides access to the resolutions of the General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council and the Trusteeship Council from 1946 onwards.

Currently, the ODS contains close to 800,000 files and approximately 100,000 new documents are added each year. An ODS Training Guide is available online (www.un.org/Depts/dhl/resguide/train.htm).

TAMPERE CONVENTION ENTERS INTO FORCE

On 7 January 2005 the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations came into force after being ratified by 30 countries. The treaty was unanimously adopted on 18 June 1998 by 75 countries attending the Intergovernmental Conference on Emergency Telecommunications (ICET-98) in Tampere (Finland).

It aims to ensure that victims of disasters will be able to benefit from faster and more effective rescue operations by simplifying the use of life-saving telecommunications equipment in the 30 States that have ratified the treaty. "From the mobilization of assistance to the logistics chain, which will carry assistance to the intended beneficiaries, reliable telecommunication links are indispensable," said UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

The convention describes the procedures for telecommunication assistance, recognizing the right of a State to direct, control and coordinate assistance provided under the convention within its territory. It also requires States to make an inventory of resources—both human and material—available for disaster mitigation and relief, and to develop a telecommunication action plan that identifies the steps necessary to deploy those resources.

The convention provides privileges and immunities to

the staff of NGOs, and it exempts relief agencies, including NGOs, from taxation and duties. It also facilitates NGOs' and implementing partners' use of telecommunications when they are working in tandem on disasters with UN agencies or the International Federation of the Red Cross/Red Crescent (IFRC). Before the arrival of telecommunication assistance in a disaster zone, a State that is party to the convention must specify the fees it expects to receive or have reimbursed. To avoid excessive charges, the fees are based on an agreed model of payment and reimbursement, as well as on other factors such as the nature of the disaster, natural hazard and the particular needs of developing countries.

"Telecommunications saves lives," said Yoshio Utsumi, Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), which, along with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), helped draft and promote the convention. "With this convention, the work of relief workers will be made much easier, enabling them to make full use of today's telecommunication tools which are essential for the coordination of rescue operations."

"OCHA aims to ensure the best response to disasters to prevent loss of life and help survivors. The Convention will make that work easier," said Jan Egeland, United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator and Operational Coordinator of the Tampere Convention.

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RELIEFWEB LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

On 18 January, ReliefWeb launched its new website (www.reliefweb.int) designed to help the international aid community improve the speed and effectiveness of relief efforts by making it easier for decision makers to access critically needed information on global emergencies and natural disasters on a 24/7 basis.

Yvette Stevens, Deputy Director of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), launched the site at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe (see page 20). "The tsunami disaster has demonstrated yet again just how much we rely on ReliefWeb for powerful information management that can help us get aid to those who most need it, and thus save countless lives."

ReliefWeb is used by humanitarian workers,

On 16 February 2005, Lennart Båge was re-elected by delegates attending the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Governing Council for a second, four-year term as the President of IFAD. Mr. Båge, a Swedish national, has served as the President of IFAD since April 2001.

On 26 January, four candidates officially presented their candidacy before the World Trade Organization's (WTO) General Council to replace Supachai Panitchpakdi as WTO Director-General.

Former Uruguayan WTO Ambassador Carlos Perez del Castillo; Mauritian Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Jaya Krishna Cuttaree; Brazilian WTO Ambassador Luiz Felipe de Seixas Correa; and former European Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy of France each made fifteen-minute presentations to the General Council, followed by an hour of questions and answers with member delegations.

"The need to make trade more supportive of development" was the foremost theme in every candidate's introductory speech, and all of them declared that their highest priority as DG would be the swift, successful conclusion of the ongoing Doha Round of trade negotiations.

A General Council meeting has been set for 26-27 May 2005 to formally approve Mr. Supachai's successor.

On 8 February, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the right to education, Vernor Muñoz, issued a statement expressing his support for the adoption of an optional protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which would allow the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to consider complaints from individuals and groups in relation to violations of the rights recognized in the Covenant, including the right to education. Mr. Muñoz stressed that the right to education is justiciable and advocated for joint action by civil society and governments to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights.

During the fifth World Social Forum held in Porto Alegre in January 2005, the Special Rapporteur highlighted the trend to consider education as a negotiable service rather than a fundamental human right. Such a vision of education places at risk the concept of free primary education for all and would jeopardize the achievement of the Millennium Declaration goals on education, he warned. Mr. Muñoz also highlighted his concern about the unequal situation among countries and regions of the world concerning education, and emphasized the unequal access to education for girls, pregnant students and adolescent mothers.

More information on the mandate and work of the Special Rapporteur is available online (www.ohchr.org/english/issues/education/index.htm).

On 17 January the United Nations Commission on Human Rights met to elect the officers of its upcoming session, choosing Makarim Wibisono of Indonesia as its next Chairperson.

Also elected were Hernán Escudero Martínez (Ecuador), Mohamed Saleck Ould Mohamed Lemine (Mauritania) and Anatoly Zlenko (Ukraine), who will serve as Vice-Chairpersons of the 61st session of the Commission, which will run from 14 March to 22 April in Geneva. Deirdre Kent (Canada) was elected Rapporteur.

journalists and decision makers as a “one-stop shop” for information on humanitarian emergencies, which is updated around the clock by a team of 16 staff spread across the globe. In the days following the tsunami disaster, ReliefWeb posted 1,600 documents from 142 NGOs, 50 governments, 31 UN and international organizations, and received an average of 3 million hits each day, thrice its normal usage. “ReliefWeb is an indispensable tool for instant, worldwide communication and coordination in disaster response,” said Jan Egeland, UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs.

ReliefWeb’s site redesign follows two years of extensive research and includes new features such as constantly updated maps that depict key information, and new filter and search tools that make it easier for users to pinpoint information by geographic location or sector. The new site is designed to speed up relief response times by helping users get the specific information they need at a moment’s notice. New technology will allow relief workers, policy makers, senior decision makers and journalists to quickly download information to desktops and CDs and to swiftly navigate the database of information that backs up the site.

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WIPO: ONE-MILLIONTH PCT APPLICATION FILED

On 14 January the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) paid tribute to the world’s innovators on the occasion of the filing of the one-millionth international patent application under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT). WIPO Director General Kamil Idris welcomed the milestone in the 26-year history of the PCT, noting that it reflected a remarkable acceleration in the pace of technological progress. The PCT facilitates the process of obtaining patent protection in more than 120 countries through the filing of a single international application.

“One million international patent applications translates into one million pieces of technology that have entered the public domain for the benefit of society at large. This reflects the contribution that the intellectual property system makes to spurring technological development and expanding the pool of public knowledge,” Dr. Idris said. “While it took 22 years to receive the first half million PCT patent applications, it took only four years to top the one million mark, reflecting an astonishing acceleration in the pace of technological development and unprecedented use of the

international patent system. This is a strong indication of the strategic importance of patents to business and broad-based recognition that the PCT offers a smart business solution for companies seeking international patent protection.”

The largest users of the PCT system have originated from the US, Japan, Germany, the UK and France. However, Dr. Idris pointed out that companies in the developing world are making greater use of the PCT, in particular in China, Brazil, India, and the Republic of Korea, as well as individual inventors around the world. India and the Republic of Korea enjoyed double-digit growth in 2003.

The PCT makes it easier for companies and inventors to obtain patent rights in multiple countries without risking loss of patent rights that may arise in the process of complying with the rules and regulations established by individual national patent systems which, together with a number of regional systems, make up the international patent landscape.

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WORLD BANK: PROMOTING IP IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

A new publication by the World Bank, entitled *Poor People’s Knowledge: Promoting Intellectual Property in Developing Countries*, uses case studies to highlight the knowledge from which poorer countries can earn income, such as craft designs, music and other cultural products, as well as medicines and traditional herbal knowledge. It also explains the problems encountered in trying to patent or copyright products that evolve over generations.

According to the publication, poor countries and peoples can reap the benefits of turning their own knowledge into commercial success if they find new ways of protecting and commercializing that information when the patent laws and the costly compliance of the rich countries fail to serve them.

The book’s editors, World Bank economists Phillip Schuler and J. Michael Finger, say it aims to fill in gaps left by the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) which protects knowledge overwhelmingly owned by developed countries.

According to Mr. Schuler, poor people are cheated by companies that register patents based on traditional knowledge in developing countries “and then collect revenues that should go to the poorer communities.”

The existence of intellectual property rights (IPRs) alone would not be enough to help poor countries meet that challenge, he says, suggesting that NGOs should challenge controversial patent grants.

"The United Nations has estimated that developing countries lose at least US\$5 billion annually in unpaid royalties to multinational corporations that appropriate traditional knowledge," Coenraad J. Visser, a contributor to the publication, said. Contributors Kerry ten Kate and Sarah A. Laird suggest that direct links can be traced between many new medical products on the market and knowledge systems dating back millennia. "For example, of the approximately 120 pharmaceutical products derived from plants in 1985, 75% were discovered through the study of their traditional medical use," yet benefit-sharing agreements between the holders of traditional knowledge and the pharmaceutical corporations are still relatively rare, they say.

Legal protections for artisans has been in place in the global market for decades, but the issues of protection of ancient designs, symbols and traditional knowledge utilized in artisanal crafts have not been well established, contributor Betsy Fowler stressed.

The report is available online (www.worldbank.org/research/Poor_Peoples_Knowledge.pdf).

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UNCTAD HANDBOOK OF STATISTICS 2004

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has produced its *Handbook of Statistics 2004*, which provides a comprehensive compilation of data tables that provide analysts—governments, academia, international organizations and other researchers—with insight into the complex issues of international trade and development.

Handbook figures reveal developments in many key areas of the global economy, such as:

- b · International merchandise trade: values, growth rates, trends and regional trade zones;
- b · Export and import structure, by product and by region of origin and destination;
- b · Trade concentration and structural change in trade indices and terms-of-trade indices;
- b · Commodity prices and relevant price indices;
- b · Trade in services: totals and exports and

imports of services by main sectors;

- b · International finance: current accounts, foreign direct investment, external indebtedness, workers' remittances, international reserves, etc.; and
- b · Selected development, social and telecommunications indicators.

According to the *Handbook*, China's record-breaking export growth is likely to have topped 35% in 2003-2004. Figures also show that China's trade surplus soared by a factor of eight since the early 1990s, leading the growing participation of developing countries in world trade. While China has been one of the main engines of growth for the global economy, the Asian economies more generally have resumed their rapid growth after the crisis of 1997-1998, with export growth rates of 20.4% in the Philippines, 19.3% in the Republic of Korea, 13.5% in India, and 7.8% in Indonesia in 2003. However, "hopes that the least developed countries and the highly indebted countries will be able to trade their way to development are uncertain," according to Carlos Fortin, Officer-in-Charge of UNCTAD: their share of international trade remains stagnant at 0.6% and 0.9%, respectively, unchanged over the past ten years.

The *Handbook* also provides insights into trends in a number of trade and related areas of the global economy:

- b · The Maldives' tourism revenues have quadrupled since 1990, making them a key source of revenue for the country, but these figures will be severely affected by the recent tsunami.
- b · Trade among developing countries amounts to 13% of global merchandise flows, which is low considering there are 165 developing economies, but the figure reflects an upward trend: flows grew by two percentage points between 1998 and 2002.
- b · Between 2000 and 2003, the average annual deficit in United States merchandise trade exceeded US\$500 billion.

The *Handbook* is available on CD-ROM, in print and online. The CD-ROM version is the most comprehensive, containing the full-time series and permitting simultaneous viewing of different data dimensions (such as total values, rankings and percentages). The print version is a consolidated reference of selected statistics—mainly from recent years—and is particularly useful in analysing trade and development trends.

The online version can be accessed interactively (www.unctad.org/statistics/handbook).

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The European Union (EU) has announced that its new system of trade preferences for poor countries will enter into effect three months early. On 10 February, the European Commission (EC), the EU's executive body, announced that its expanded Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) would enter into force on 1 April instead of 1 July as originally planned. The acceleration is aimed at providing immediate benefits to the countries worst affected by the 26 December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, in particular the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Indonesia.

Close to 180 countries benefit from the preferential access to the EU market provided by the GSP. The changes to the preference scheme will add 300 products to the 7,200-odd products that it had previously covered. Countries with a market share of greater than 15% of EU imports in a particular sector (12.5% of textiles and clothing) will continue to be excluded from preferential tariffs for that sector. The GSP also provides for additional tariff reductions for countries that fulfill standards for good governance and implement conventions on human rights, labour rights, and environmental protection. In 2003, EU imports under the GSP amounted to over 52 billion euros.

The new GSP reduces tariffs for all fishery products. Tariffs for Thai shrimp are to fall from the Most-Favoured Nation (MFN) level of 12% to 4%; those for Indian textiles and clothing from the MFN 12% to 9.5%; those for shoes from Indonesia and Thailand from 17% to 13%. The EU claims that under the new regime, 90% of Sri Lankan exports will be eligible for duty-free access to the EU. The EU also promised to review the scheme's "rules of origin" that have been criticized for posing insurmountable barriers to trade.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has offered former US President Bill Clinton the position of his Special Envoy for Tsunami-affected Countries and President Clinton has accepted. Mr. Annan says he is confident that President Clinton will bring energy, dynamism and focus to the task of sustaining world interest in the recovery and reconstruction phase following the tsunami disaster that hit South Asia on 26 December 2004.

According to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the world's airlines registered a strong recovery in 2004 with performance for scheduled traffic as measured in ton-kilometres showing a 14% increase over 2003, according to its preliminary figures released on 22 December 2004.

A ton-kilometre is a combined measure of passenger, freight and mail traffic which also takes into account distance flown. The number of passengers carried worldwide on scheduled services is estimated to have reached 1.8 billion compared with less than 1.7 billion last year, ICAO indicated.

The number of seats offered also increased with an average passenger load of 73%, up from 71% in 2003, according to the figures which are based on statistics supplied by ICAO's 188 Contracting States.

On a regional basis, airlines in the Middle East showed strong growth, followed by the Asia/Pacific which in 2003 was negatively affected by the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) there. Growth in North America was similar to the world average, while Europe, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean showed strong increases that were nevertheless below the world average.

Global rice production in 2004 almost hit the 1999 record, but was inadequate for projected consumption and left little available for trade, according to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO).

Global paddy production reached an estimated 611 million tons, 27 tons higher than 2003, with most of the increases taking place in Asia, especially China and Indonesia, FAO indicates in its Rice Market Monitor - December 2004.

The United States was expecting a record-breaking harvest, while recovery was expected to push output over 2003 in Australia and the European Union, it says. Production was set to rise in Africa, with particularly large crops expected in Egypt, Madagascar and Guinea-Bissau, and in Latin America, with excellent crops in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay.

Rice inventories would rise to only 99 million tons, 4 million tons less than in 2003, and consumption would have to be supplemented from stockpiles, the report finds.

More information is available online (www.fao.org/es/esc/en/20953/21026/21631/highlight_23001en.html)

The first United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation was observed on 20 December 2004 under the theme "Achieving the Millennium Goals through South-South Cooperation." UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan noted that over the past several decades political solidarity within the developing world had helped put development at the heart of the global agenda, but more policies and other steps needed to be taken in order to give a practical expression of that solidarity.

General Assembly President Jean Ping (Gabon) emphasized that the Day was an opportunity for countries to identify new prospects for enriching South-South exchanges, and suggested that the idea of holding an international conference on South-South cooperation should be seriously examined by Member States.

Keynote speaker Wangari Muta Maathai, winner of the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize and Assistant Minister for Environment, Natural Resources and Wildlife in Kenya, drew attention to the need for people at the community level to be engaged and have ownership over development initiatives. The broad agreement, she argued, was that resources should be managed sustainably, and with the realization that they were limited and should be shared equitably. It is not fair, she continued, to allow a few people to enjoy resources at the expense of a large number. Without democratic space, those in positions of power could not be held accountable and a top down approach to development would prevail. Ms. Maathai stressed that this democratic space would need to foster an environment where citizens could be both creative and productive.

According to Carlos Fortin, Officer-in-Charge of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), "A new phenomenon is emerging: the South is moving steadily from the periphery to the centre of world trade and economic relations." UNCTAD says four features of this phenomenon stand out in particular. First, the South is increasingly important as a producer, trader and consumer in global markets, currently accounting for some 30% of world trade.

Second, South-South trade is growing dramatically. Over 40% of all goods exported by developing countries, including basic commodities and manufactures, are directed to other developing countries, and this trade is increasing at an annual rate of 11%—nearly twice that of total world exports.

Third, the composition of trade from developing countries is changing, as these countries begin to export more manufactures than primary commodities, their traditional bread and butter. The share of manufactures in developing-country exports has

climbed steadily, from 20% (US\$115 billion) in 1980 to nearly 70% (US\$1.3 billion) in 2000.

Fourth, international investment flows from and within the South are also soaring. Over the past 15 years, annual foreign direct investment (FDI) outflows from developing countries have grown faster than those from the industrialized world. Their outward FDI accounted for over one tenth of world stock and nearly 6% of world flows in 2003—US\$900 billion and US\$36 billion, respectively—and some developing countries emerged as significant sources of the FDI in other developing countries during the 1990s.

According to UNCTAD, a variety of factors are feeding this "new geography," including strategic policies and actions, including carefully balanced roles for the State and the market; transnational corporations are increasingly internationalizing their production systems, taking advantage of developments in information and communications technologies; and rising liberalization has enhanced the mobility of production and business factors.

At the same time there are risks associated with the new geography, Mr. Fortin said. One is that companies will relocate, because activities that are competitive today may not be competitive tomorrow. Another is the risk of increased asymmetry, with some regions or countries within the South acquiring greater economic clout than others and even crowding them out; thus far, only a limited group of developing countries have benefited from the new trends. However, with judicious policy decisions, Mr. Fortin stressed, the South can succeed in nurturing, reinforcing and spreading the dynamic impetus of the new geography.

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UNCTAD'S JOURNAL ON TNCs

The latest issue of *Transnational Corporations*, a refereed journal published by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) three times a year, provides insights into the operations of transnational corporations (TNCs), including those from developing countries, and their contribution to economic development. Contrary to widely held perceptions, UNCTAD says only a small number of TNCs have achieved truly global corporate success. Although much smaller in size and number, TNCs from developing countries are also increasing their presence in the global economy. The latest issue (*Volume 13, no. 3: December 2004*) contains a study on the emerging phenomenon of developing-country

TNCs that set up manufacturing operations in high-wage industrialized economies. It also contributes to the ongoing debate on the link between foreign direct investment (FDI) and economic growth through an analysis of more disaggregated data than those used in previous studies.

Alan M. Rugman and Alain Verbeke address the geographical distribution of sales of some of the world's largest TNCs, with a focus on the three legs of the "Triad" (North America, European Union, Asia). According to the authors, a firm can be considered to have achieved global corporate success only if it is able to earn a balanced regional distribution of sales. The article identifies the 20 TNCs with the highest foreign-to-total sales ratios from UNCTAD's list of the world's largest TNCs that are also Fortune Global 500 firms.

In another article, Kevin I.N. Ibeh, Stephen Young and Hui Chu Lin examine the modal choices, key activities and motivations of non-dominant information technology and electronics firms from the Taiwan Province of China operating in the United Kingdom, against the backdrop of recent trends in the global economy. Its main findings include the limited prospects of the sample firms' evolution into manufacturing activity in the UK and the increasing importance of inter-firm logistical collaboration.

An article by Peter Nunnenkamp and Julius Spatz notes that it is surprisingly hard to find conclusive evidence supporting the widely held view that developing countries should draw on FDI to spur economic development. The authors contend that virtually all empirical studies on the subject have found the impact of FDI on growth to be ambiguous because of the highly aggregated data they have used. Host economy and industry characteristics, and the interaction among them, strongly influence the growth impact of FDI in developing economies, they report.

The Journal is available online (www.unctad.org/Templates/Startpage.asp?intItemID=2968&lang=1&mode=more).

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In his address, via a satellite link-up, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan underscored that the Anti-Personnel Mine-ban Treaty was a remarkable success story in the history of international cooperation. In the five years since the treaty came into force, he noted, the number of landmine victims has decreased, trade in anti-personnel mines has nearly halted, and huge tracts of mine-affected land have been cleared and returned to communities for productive use. Mr. Annan congratulated Ethiopia on ratifying the treaty during Summit, making it the 144th State to do so.

While recognizing the important progress made to date under the treaty, the President of Kenya, Mwai Kibaki, stressed that each State—no matter how big or how small, no matter how rich or how poor—had a responsibility to protect innocent civilians from the suffering and indignity caused by anti-personnel mines.

Delegates examined a report reviewing the operation and status of the convention since it entered into force on 1 March 1999. To overcome the challenges remaining, the convention's Member States adopted "Ending the Suffering caused by Anti-Personnel Mines: Nairobi Action Plan 2005-2009," which, among other things, recommends universal adherence to the convention and enhanced care, rehabilitation and reintegration for victims of landmines. Delegates also agreed on a Declaration thereby renewing their commitment to the convention and produced a Programme of Meetings and Related Matters to facilitate implementation of the Action Plan. The Programme of Meetings commits signatories to the convention to meet annually until 2009.

As the Summit drew to a close, the President of the Nairobi Summit, Wolfgang Petritsch (Ambassador of Austria), noted that the 144 Member States Parties to the convention had adopted a 70-point action plan to guide the efforts of all stakeholders over the next five years and urged all those present to commence implementation immediately. He also pointed out that the conference was an example of multilateralism working the way it should.

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The US State Department announced on 3 January 2005 that the United States will no longer use landmines—including both anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines—that cannot be detected with standard metal detectors commonly used by military and humanitarian deminers.

"The US landmine policy recognizes that non-detectable landmines pose a particularly insidious threat to humanitarian deminers as well as innocent civilians in a post-conflict environment," said Lincoln Bloomfield, the Special Representative of the President and Secretary of State for Mine Action who also serves as Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs. "Our action meets the first major goal in our new policy, which forswears the use by the United States of non-detectable mines now and all persistent mines after 2010."

The prohibition on the use of non-detectable landmines covers both anti-personnel as well as anti-vehicle mines. The United States action surpasses the detectability requirements of both international landmine treaties: the Amended Mines Protocol to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons to which the United States is a party, and the Ottawa Convention which relates to anti-personnel mines.

The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is set to establish an expanded presence in Guatemala later this year, according to the terms of an agreement signed in New York on 10 January.

The agreement will come into force following its ratification by the Guatemalan congress, possibly this spring. Under the accord, OHCHR will open an office in Guatemala to monitor how human rights are promoted and protected in the country and advise the government on how best to do this. High Commissioner Louise Arbour and Guatemalan Foreign Minister Jorge Briz Abularach signed the accord at United Nations headquarters.

NAIROBI SUMMIT ON A MINE-FREE WORLD

From 29 November-3 December 2004, governments, UN representatives and civil society representatives met in Nairobi (Kenya) for the First Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-personnel Mines, also known as the Nairobi Summit on a Mine Free World.

SECURITY COUNCIL DISCUSSES SMALL ARMS

On 17 February, more than 35 speakers addressed the Security Council, focusing on ways of improving the international small arms regime and stressing the importance of action to stop their proliferation. The discussion was based on the Secretary-General's report (S/2005/69), introduced by Under-

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Government of Kazakhstan have signed five new regional drug demand reduction and drug control projects in Almaty. The UNODC will provide technical assistance to Kazakhstan in the areas of drug intelligence analysis, controlled deliveries, precursor chemical controls, drug abuse and HIV/AIDS prevention. The UNODC will also provide policy advice to the Kazakh, and other Central Asian governments. The value of the projects amounts to US\$9 million for the entire Central Asian region. The UNODC Regional Office for Central Asia is also designing a new project to establish a regional drug treatment training centre (ARTICA) in Pavlodar.

UNODC is also partnering with the World Bank office in Almaty as a regional advisor for anti-money-laundering and countering the financing of terrorism. A UNODC advisor will assist governments in the region to strengthen legislation in these areas and establish effective enforcement tools against money-laundering.

Kazakh law enforcement bodies seized approximately 20 tons of drugs, including 300 kilos of heroin in 2004. Kazakhstan has a domestic source of wild cannabis with a potential annual production of 150,000 tons. With an estimated prevalence of 23 per 100,000 population, the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Kazakhstan is considered to be the most serious in Central Asia. Over 70% of new HIV/AIDS cases are reported among injecting drug users.

A new campaign to combat the growing problem of human trafficking in Turkey has been announced by the Turkish Government. The International Office of Migration (IOM) will implement the US\$700,000 campaign in coordination with the government.

The campaign will include increased public awareness activities, stepping up training for law enforcement agencies and the provision of medical, psychological and direct assistance to trafficked individuals. There will also be funds for a national toll-free emergency rescue hotline, a shelter in Istanbul for victims and the creation of a nationwide network of governmental and civic organizations dedicated to preventing trafficking and to protecting existing victims.

Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs Nobuyasu Abe, which describes initiatives undertaken to implement 12 core recommendations on ways in which the Council could contribute to dealing with the question of small arms and light weapons in situations under its consideration.

The debate focused on four main areas covered by the recommendations: implementation of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons; sanctions and arms embargoes by the Security Council; conflict prevention, peace strengthening, and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants; and confidence-building measures. Speakers agreed that while significant progress had been achieved at the global, regional and national levels, concrete measures were still needed to ensure better coordination of various programmes; share information and lessons learned; and improve controls and transparency.

At the same time, more needed to be done to establish the links between illicit small arms and light weapons and the illicit exploitation of natural and other resources; support the establishment of the Small Arms Advisory Service; and encourage more interaction between the Council and the General Assembly on these matters. Also highlighted in the debate was the need to integrate disarmament, demobilization and reintegration aspects in peacekeeping mandates. Several speakers supported destruction of surplus and obsolete weapons and urged increased stockpile security. It was also said that small arms transfers should be conducted in a very responsible manner and the industry must be carefully controlled.

Many speakers stressed that the question of small arms was not just one of disarmament, but also of development, democracy, human rights and security. The proliferation of such weapons worsened conflict, sparked refugee flows and spawned a culture of violence and impunity. They often paid for civil wars, which had severe economic and social consequences, and were used by terrorists and criminal groups.

The representative of Tanzania said that several African countries, including his own, had been adversely affected by the easy availability of small arms—the weapons of choice in most conflicts and insurgencies. Small arms and dual use instruments, such as machetes, in the hands of undemocratic regimes and insurgent non-State actors, had been responsible for some of the most gross human rights violations, genocides, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Currently, car bombs and dynamite sticks were among the deadliest weapons in the arsenals of terrorists, he stressed, noting that the control over the spread of small arms should be one of the major preoccupations of the Security Council

in maintaining international peace and security.

Emphasis was also placed on the need to implement clear and strict criteria for arms exports. While acknowledging the importance of existing documents, including the UN Programme of Action on small arms, several speakers insisted that in the absence of binding international norms, the currently negotiated draft instrument that would enable States to identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons should be of a binding nature, addressing such key areas as weapons marking, record keeping and increasing cooperation in those areas. The representative of the Philippines said that unless binding instruments were in force, disparate approaches to the issue would give the highly organized, illegal traffickers and brokers ample room to conduct their trade with impunity. All efforts in the negotiations on the draft international instrument on marking and tracing should be exerted to conclude by next June, he stressed. Key to the early conclusion of negotiations was the issue of whether or not the instrument should be legally binding.

Recognizing that the dissemination of illicit small arms and light weapons fuelled disputes and prolonged conflicts, the Security Council on 17 February called upon arms-exporting countries to exercise the “highest degree of responsibility” in the transaction of such weapons. The Council also encouraged international and regional cooperation in identifying the origin and transfer of small arms and light weapons to prevent their diversion, in particular, to Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups. In addition, it called on all States to enforce the Council’s resolutions on sanctions, including those imposing arms embargoes, and to bring their own domestic implementation into compliance with the Council’s measures on sanctions.

Regarding recommendation 4 on the interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly, the Secretary-General recommends that the Security Council and the GA establish a small committee to look into how the two bodies could work together.

STRENGTHENING CONFLICT-SENSITIVE BUSINESS PRACTICES

On 14 December Member States, UN officials, high-level representatives of the business community, civil society and the academic and public policy community met at UN headquarters to explore ways to scale-up cooperation in support of conflict sensitive business practices.

The symposium, co-sponsored by the German Foreign Office, the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation and

the Global Compact Office, was a follow-up event to recent policy initiatives launched at the UN, including the April 2004 Security Council debate on the topic (see *Go Between 103*). It also served to provide input to a policy report currently under development, commissioned by the Global Compact Office as part of its ongoing policy dialogue on "The Role of the Private Sector in Zones of Conflict."

Jannik Lindbaek, Chairman of the Board of Directors STATOIL—an oil company in Norway—acknowledged that while many people argued that corporations should focus on their business and nothing else, successful and vigorous companies today seemed to have a distinct set of core values—and a purpose beyond profits. The direct revenue from the resources industries help produce is one thing, he said, but no less important are all the spin-offs, side-effects and the potential for development that petroleum production brings to a country. Mr. Lindbaek also stressed that the opportunities for local industry, for education and for employment are indirectly just as much a part of the revenue. And like direct revenues, he continued, indirect repercussions must be managed responsibly at every stage; otherwise, the waste, loss and misuse that result may lead to conflict.

Beyond fostering development as a preventative measure to conflict, other topics for discussion at the symposium included the need for a comprehensive international framework on business and conflict; a conflict sensitive investment and lending plan for international financial institutions (IFIs), regional financial institutions and domestic financial agencies; and more systematic work in policy areas covering transparency and anti-corruption.

In their concluding remarks, speakers underlined that public policy engagement should complement, but by no means substitute efforts undertaken by companies. There was a consensus that in order for more sustained public policy engagement to materialize, efforts must focus on building a common understanding of the most effective and appropriate ways to promote conflict-sensitive business practices.

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THE RULE OF LAW AND TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

On 27 January 2005, the United Nations University (UNU) and the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) organized a panel discussion on the rule of law and transitional justice. Examining the Secretary General's 2004 report, entitled *The Rule*

of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict and Post-Conflict Societies (S/2004/616), panellists discussed legal and non-legal impediments to transitional justice and drew attention to current practices that could address these pitfalls.

One of the panellists, Michael Johnson, Registrar in the Court of Bosnia-Herzegovina criticized the lack of accountability at the national level of ad hoc international tribunals and their inability to involve local communities or to contribute to the construction of national justice systems. The weak role often played by victims of crimes in judicial proceedings was presented as another shortcoming of international tribunals. David Hutchinson of the OLA argued that criminal charges brought against perpetrators were not enough to redeem victims' dignity and fell short of providing any form of compensation. The importance of programmes for outreach to the victims, beyond the establishment of tribunals, was emphasized.

Non-legal problems of transitional justice were also discussed. The Director of the Geneva Center for Security Policy, Rama Mani, stressed that only a combination of factors, including truth commissions, official apologies and symbolic reparations could result in a process of national reconciliation. In terms of the UN's role in addressing non-legal problems, Bruce Jones, of the UN Department of Political Affairs, said that the High-Level Panel Report on Threats, Challenges and Change called for more coordination among authorities and activities in the field. Moreover, Mr. Jones emphasized that peace-building was a critical issue for the UN and one of the pillars for transitional justice and the rule of law. The Panel's report, he noted, recommended the creation of a peace-building commission, which could strengthen the institutions of the affected States, thereby enabling them to better address threats, such as organized crime and terrorism.

The final panel examined some case studies that have proven successful in transitional justice. Helena Cobban, writer and commentator for the *Christian Science Monitor*, presented the case of Mozambique where indigenous mechanisms focused on the reintegration of former combatants to society rather than the search for truth behind the crimes. Ms. Cobban stated that each community had their own way to deal with questions of justice and truth, and while indigenous mechanisms might not be satisfactory to all societies, they can at times prove useful to the local population. Paul Van Zyl, Director of the Country Programmes at the International Centre for Transitional Justice, concluded the event by underscoring the importance of being aware of who claims to speak for civil society, communities and victims. He said he was particularly concerned with the case of certain

On 4 February the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and senior officials in the Ethiopian Ministries of Interior, Justice, Foreign Affairs and from the National Bank of Ethiopia agreed on a roadmap to help Ethiopia respond to the threats posed by terrorism and organized crime. The roadmap is the product of a legislative workshop held in Addis Ababa from 1-3 February.

The plan identifies the training and capacity-building activities needed by the Ethiopian authorities, including judges and prosecutors.

In particular, UNODC has been requested to organize workshops designed to promote measures necessary to combat money-laundering and the financing of terrorism. UNODC has also been requested to facilitate the production of a "bench book" for judges, prosecutors, senior police officers and others that would refer to the relevant universal treaties against terrorism and transnational organized crime, as well as the related implementing domestic legislation.

"The rock art of Africa makes up one of the oldest and most extensive records on Earth of human thought. It shows the very emergence of the human imagination. It is a priceless treasure. And it is irreplaceable.

"But Africa's rock art is not just about the distant past. It is about today and tomorrow as well. Scientists, historians, artists and students must be able to study and understand its significance for decades and centuries to come.

"Africa's rock art is the common heritage of all Africans and all people. It is a cultural gift from our ancestors that can bring diverse people together—with pride and a common commitment to share it and preserve it.

"Yet, today, Africa's rock art is severely threatened. Its future is uncertain. Perhaps the greatest threat is neglect. A lack of resources, combined with a lack of official interest, has left too many rock art sites unguarded against vandals and thieves.

"It is time for Africa's leaders to take a new and more active role. We must save this cultural heritage before it is too late. Two initiatives are especially critical: educating our children, and engaging local communities.

"To Africa's children, I would like to say, 'You are the future of Africa. Study your proud history, and protect Africa's rock art'.

"I would also like to ask private businesses, foundations and individuals to contribute their expertise and resources.

"... I am pleased to join Nelson Mandela in supporting TARA, the Trust for African Rock Art, in its work to preserve this vital cornerstone of our world's cultural heritage."

—UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's message for the Trust for African Rock Art, 7 February 2005

NGOs and whether they truly represented the constituents they claimed to be representing.

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UNESCO-OPEC JOINT PROJECT ON HIV/AIDS

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Fund for International Development concluded an agreement in late December 2004 to create a two-year project on "Reducing the Impact of the HIV/AIDS Crisis in and through Education." Covering the period of January 2005 through December 2006, it aims to help curb the rate of new HIV infections among young people in and out of school in 12 countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Uzbekistan, and Viet Nam.

The OPEC Fund has agreed to provide US\$2,250,000 for the project, which will focus on information and education, assistance to ministries, teaching programmes and curriculum enhancement. To be implemented by UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning, in cooperation with National Commissions for UNESCO and education ministries, the project will complement the UNESCO-led Global Initiative on HIV/AIDS and Education that aims to strengthen education ministries' ability to meet the teaching, learning and management needs generated by the pandemic.

Working with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) partners, ministries and civil society organizations, the project seeks to:

1. consolidate knowledge on what works and develop evidence-based advocacy materials for ministries, schools and other actors in education systems;
2. strengthen national and local capacity of key actors in the education sector, including strategic planning, curriculum development, teacher-training, monitoring and evaluation;
3. expand prevention education against HIV/AIDS through the media;
4. strengthen tools for international monitoring and response to the impact of HIV/AIDS on education in cooperation with UNAIDS; and
5. scale up HIV/AIDS prevention education in schools.

The joint project will also build on and expand some ongoing grassroots activities such as peer education programmes for youth leaders in Uzbekistan, or for

men who have sex with men in Viet Nam, advocacy by famous Cambodian sports personalities to promote testing for HIV, and popular music concerts against HIV/AIDS held and broadcast for hill tribe people in Thailand, Lao People's Democratic Republic and southern China.

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PREPARATORY MEETING OF CSD-13

The 13th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-13) held its inter-governmental preparatory meeting (IPM) from 28 February-4 March 2005 at UN headquarters. Chaired by John Ashe, Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, the IPM focused on the issues of CSD-13, namely water, sanitation and human settlements. The session's programme included several expert panels kicking off the inter-governmental debate on each of the three focus issues. Representatives of Major Groups (civil society and private sector actors) participated in these interactive discussions. The week-long meeting also included a number of side events

The outcome of the preparatory session is a Chair's Summary that highlights policy options and actions to address implementation obstacles. Under the section on Water, improving access to safe drinking water in urban and rural areas, creating an institutional policy framework for integrated water resource management plans, and enhancing water use efficiency are among the specific areas identified for actions and policy guidance by CSD-13.

The CSD will re-convene for its 13th session from 11-22 April 2005. This is the "policy year" of the CSD's two-year cycle of work focusing on the water, sanitation and human settlements cluster. Since the Johannesburg Summit (see *NGLS Roundup 96*), the CSD adopted a two-year cycle of work in which first year reviews progress, gaps and implementation obstacles in a set of issue areas which the second year aims to develop policy guidance on how to address the obstacles identified.

The full text of the Chair's Summary is available on the CSD Secretariat's website (www.un.org/esa/sustdev).

Information concerning Major Group participation or the draft programme of CSD-13 can be found online or by contacting Federica Pietracci.

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UN/NGO COOPERATION

BIODIVERSITY: IMPLICATIONS AND REALITIES

A one-day conference, entitled *Biotechnology: Implications and Realities*, was held in New York on 18 January 2005, jointly organized by the Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the United Nations and the NGO Council on Racial Equality (CORE). It brought together academics, scientists, attorneys, farmers, diplomats and others to present their differing points of views on biotechnology.

Simeon Adekanye (Nigeria) advocated a balanced approach to biotechnology, while encouraging the least developed countries (LDCs) to become innovators rather than being consumers. Remarks were also made by Roy Innis (CORE), Decio Ripandelli, (International Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology), and Norman Borlaug (Nobel Peace Prize winner, and senior consultant for the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre).

The first session began with queries regarding the impact of biotechnology, and panellists noted the potential of biotechnology to increase crop yield capacity to striking proportions but suggested caution in dealing with private biotechnology corporations who are not motivated by the needs of the poor. Some speakers distinguished “green revolution” from “gene revolution,” pointing out that the former was based on public sector research, and disseminated freely as a public good, whereas the latter is being carried forward by the private sector for profits.

The next session examined the regulatory requirements for biotechnology products, with speakers concurring on the prospective benefits of biotechnology, while remaining cautious of the related ethical issues.

Another session focused on the ethical implications of adopting agricultural biotechnology. A representative from the European Commission highlighted honesty, transparency, farmer’s rights, environmental safeguards and, ultimately, the main purpose of feeding the poor as the framework for any analysis of the topic. She noted that Europe is vigilant towards potentially hazardous genetically modified crops, though is not entirely adverse to biotechnology in agriculture.

The concluding session dealt with intellectual property and ownership rights. Teruneh Zenna (Ethiopia) recommended that ownership rights and use of biotechnology should not infringe on the mandate to provide sustenance to the poor. A few participants noted that although the conference discussed the advantages and disadvantages of

biotechnology in agriculture, it did not address a number of questions, including farmers’ obligations to corporations after purchasing genetically modified (GM) seeds, the impact of GM seeds on the environment and how the transition from traditional to GM seeds might affect soil fertility.

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ECOSOC COMMITTEE ON NGOS - 2005 REGULAR SESSION

Meeting in New York from 5-14 January, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) held its regular session and re-elected Paimaneh Hataie (Iran) as its Chairperson for a two-year term.

Ms. Hataie spoke of a number of UN activities in the area of working with NGOs, and referred to two recent high-level panel reports (*We the Peoples: Civil Society, the UN and Global Governance* and *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*) that encouraged civil society participation in the UN. She announced that the Committee’s resumed session in May 2005 would examine the recommendations of the Panel on UN-Civil Society Relations in the context of its working methods.

She also noted that the Committee’s two meetings per year would now be held within the same calendar year—a procedural change expected to facilitate greater efficiency and discipline. In closing, Ms. Hataie outlined the Committee’s programme of work and pledged to support NGOs from developing countries.

Hanifa Mezoui, Chief of the NGO Section, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), outlined the upcoming activities of ECOSOC regarding the five-year review of the Millennium Development Goals and the 60th anniversary of the United Nations. She told the Committee that the “paperless” committee was now in place with laptops being used to distribute information among Committee members.

This session of the Committee concluded two days earlier than scheduled, and it recommended 87 new NGOs for consultative status, deferred 48 new applications, and took note of 72 quadrennial reports by accredited NGOs.

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Nicholas Coussidis has replaced Craig Sanders in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) NGO Liaison Unit. Mr. Coussidis has headed UNHCR’s office in Tajikistan for the past few years and was Deputy Representative in Moscow before that. Mr. Sanders has been reassigned as Head of Desk for UNHCR’s operations in Chad and Darfur.

NGO UPDATE

ACTIONAID: REGULATING GLOBAL FOOD TNCs

According to ActionAid, transnational food companies are growing too big and powerful and are threatening the fight against poverty in developing countries. Its new report *Power hungry: six reasons to regulate global food companies*, finds that transnational corporations (TNCs) such as Nestlé, Unilever, Monsanto, Parmalat, Cargill and Wal-Mart have gained control of the global food chain—all the way from seed to supermarket shelf and are threatening the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of poor farmers and undermining their basic rights.

ActionAid research from Brazil shows that 50,000 dairy farmers have been forced out of business, after a series of takeovers by Nestlé and Parmalat. In Peru, twenty-four children died after they were contaminated with a poisonous pesticide that is sold by a subsidiary of Bayer and was poorly labelled. In India, an estimated 12,000 children worked last year on cotton seed farms supplying subsidiaries of Bayer, Monsanto, Syngenta and Unilever. Many children were also exposed to dangerous pesticides.

The report also provides a number of statistics:

- trade within multinationals accounts for about 60% of all global trade,
- three companies control 85% of the world's tea market,
- two companies handle 50% of the world's trade in bananas,
- in Cote d'Ivoire, four multinationals control 95% of cocoa processing, and
- in Peru, Nestlé controls 80% of milk production.

ActionAid is calling for national and international legal obligations on TNCs to promote, secure and protect human rights and the environment. Immediate action is also needed to reform global food markets in order to stop multinationals abusing their power, so that farmers and producers get a fair deal.

The report highlights six reasons to regulate agrifood TNCs:

- 1) TNCs use and abuse their market power to drain wealth from poor communities. Agrifood TNCs are exercising their market power to raise the price of agricultural inputs, engage in unfair buying practices, form price-fixing cartels, shut local companies out of markets, and push down prices for farmers' goods.
- 2) TNCs pay low prices and capture the resulting value. The gap between farm and retail prices is growing, and is wider in countries where TNCs have concentrated market power. The World Bank

estimates that the farm retail price gap is costing commodity-exporting countries more than US\$100 billion each year, and that anticompetitive behaviour by agrifood TNCs is a key cause.

3) TNCs marginalize poor farmers and rural workers by imposing tough standards that poor farmers cannot afford to meet, thus threatening the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of smallholders. Women make up to 90% of the labour force in the supply chains for fruit and vegetables exported from developing countries. Agrifood TNCs are forcing the costs and risks of doing business onto suppliers, who in turn pass on these pressures by undermining women workers' rights.

4) TNCs are not fully accountable for their impacts on human rights and the environment and frequently violate poor people's basic rights. TNCs are operating in what amounts to a "regulatory void" in which they can weaken labour, environmental and public health laws, and practice double standards by behaving more responsibly in countries with tighter regulation, and less responsibly elsewhere.

5) Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is optional and insufficient. The agricultural sector has relatively few company codes, and the food manufacturing industry even less. The selection—or indeed avoidance—of issues covered by a CSR code varies significantly, and many companies have adopted a "pick-and-mix" approach. Out of an estimated 64,000 TNCs operating today, only 1,500-2,000—3% at most—produce annual CSR reports.

6) People harmed by corporate activity are denied access to justice and national authorities are often unwilling or unable to prosecute companies. People harmed by corporate activity are often poor, and yet in most cases they must bear the costs of bringing litigation against corporations.

The report also identifies a number of solutions while noting that many rural communities are mobilizing to defend their interests against the negative impacts of agrifood TNCs through grassroots action. ActionAid International calls on governments to:

- 1) Re-govern agrifood markets towards pro-poor development goals by:
 - preventing the misuse of TNC buyer power in agrifood markets,
 - strengthening, and where appropriate establishing, rural producer organizations,
 - addressing the global agricultural commodity crisis affecting small-scale farming communities.
- 2) Hold TNCs legally accountable for their impacts on human rights and the environment by:

- b` ensuring that TNCs fulfill their obligations to promote, secure and protect human rights under the UN Human Rights Norms for Business
- b` introducing and enforcing domestic legislation to regulate TNC activities in developing countries,
- b` building capacity in developing countries among farmer organizations and civil society groups.

Power hungry: six reasons to regulate global food companies is available online (www.actionaid.org.uk/wps/content/documents/power_hungry.pdf).

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ANTI-TRAFFICKING IN WEAPONS

An international workshop on tackling the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in South Eastern Europe (SEE), hosted by the Albanian Ministry of Public Order, was held in Tirana from 14-15 December 2004, in cooperation with the South East European Cooperative Initiative for Fighting Transborder Crime (SECI Center) and the London-based NGO Saferworld. Participants included law enforcement officials, governmental representatives and international experts from South Eastern Europe, Australia, Japan, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, as well as regional and international institutions.

The main focus of discussion was the SECI Center's forthcoming "Operation Safe Place"—a SEE-wide initiative to combat the illicit trade in SALW through increased cooperation at the regional level, specifically in relation to information exchange on seizures of illicit SALW. The Operation builds on the 2002-2003 Operation Ploughshares (OP) information exchange initiative, and will include two types of actions:

- b` gathering statistical data on SALW trafficking in the region and reporting to the SECI Center during a period of six months. Analysis based on these reports will be disseminated among all the countries.
- b` operational information exchange through SECI Center liaison officers and co-ordinated investigations.

The workshop sought to achieve commitments from SEE countries to participate in Operation Safe Place. In his opening remarks, Albanian Minister of Public Order Igli Toska pointed out that SALW trafficking is a global threat related to other forms of trafficking, and a cohesive and joined-up approach is needed to tackle the problem. By inviting participating countries to report on seizures of all types of SALW, the SECI Center will be able to better define the scope and dynamics of the illicit SALW trafficking in SEE.

According to Saferworld, national initiatives remain

largely inadequate for responding to SALW trafficking and many of the countries are struggling to strengthen their legal systems and improve police capacity and border security. Moreover, large stocks of weapons left after the Cold War are still unaccounted for and are easily available on the black market for criminal groups and terrorist organisations, such as the huge quantities of weapons still unaccounted for after the collapse of State authority in Albania in 1997. Small arms and light weapons (SALW) remain the weapon of choice for terrorists and organized criminals.

According to Saferworld, SEE States do not have the capabilities to tackle the problems of SALW trafficking. They lack equipment for border control, there is a deficiency of specialized training, little logistical and financial support, and insufficient resources to destroy collected arms and munitions.

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MAKING POVERTY HISTORY

On 3 February 2005 in London's Trafalgar Square, Nelson Mandela pledged his support for the Global Call to Action against Poverty and called on groups around the world to unite and fight poverty together. Below are extracts from his speech.

"I am privileged to be here today at the invitation of The Campaign to Make Poverty History.

"As you know, I recently formally announced my retirement from public life and should really not be here. However, as long as poverty, injustice and gross inequality persist in our world, none of us can truly rest.

"Massive poverty and obscene inequality are such terrible scourges of our times—times in which the world boasts breathtaking advances in science, technology, industry and wealth accumulation—that they have to rank alongside slavery and apartheid as social evils.

"The Global Campaign for Action Against Poverty can take its place as a public movement alongside the movement to abolish slavery and the international solidarity against apartheid.

"In 2005, there is a unique opportunity for making an impact.

"[I]n this new century, millions of people in the world's poorest countries remain imprisoned,

enslaved, and in chains. They are trapped in the prison of poverty. It is time to set them free. Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings.

"And overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life. While poverty persists, there is no true freedom.

"The steps that are needed from the developed nations are clear. The first is ensuring trade justice. I have said before that trade justice is a truly meaningful way for the developed countries to show commitment to bringing about an end to global poverty. The second is an end to the debt crisis for the poorest countries. The third is to deliver much more aid and make sure it is of the highest quality.

"In 2005, there is a unique opportunity for making an impact.

"In September, world leaders will gather in New York to measure progress since they made the Millennium Declaration in the year 2000. Do not look the other way; do not hesitate.... Act with courage and vision. That declaration promised to halve extreme poverty. But at the moment, the promise is falling tragically behind. Those leaders

must now honour their promises to the world's poorest citizens.

"The G-8 leaders, when they meet in Scotland in July, have already promised to focus on the issue of poverty, especially in Africa. I say to all those leaders: do not look the other way; do not hesitate. Recognise that the world is hungry for action, not words. Act with courage and vision.

"Sometimes it falls upon a generation to be great. You can be that great generation. Let your greatness blossom.

"Of course the task will not be easy. But not to do this would be a crime against humanity, against which I ask all humanity now to rise up.

"Make Poverty History in 2005. Make History in 2005. Then we can all stand with our heads held high," Mr. Mandela concluded.

The membership of MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY continues to grow with a total membership at 280 organizations. Half of the membership is made up of NGOs, one sixth is made up of faith groups. There are 15 unions, and 12 voluntary sector networks of various kinds.

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OTHER NEWS

HELSINKI PROCESS RELEASES REPORTS

On 27 January, the Helsinki Process released three reports on governing globalization, mobilizing resources for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and security issues in the 21st century. The reports were released simultaneously at the World Economic Forum annual meeting in Davos (Switzerland) and at the World Social Forum at Porto Alegre (Brazil).

Among the key recommendations in the report on governing globalization was the establishment of an expanded G-8-a "G-20" including both developing and developed country members—to help bridge the North-South gap and provide "coherent and legitimate global leadership" and global economic stewardship.

Other recommendations flowing from the Helsinki Process included greater involvement of parliamentarians in supervising global economic management, as well as a joint accountability report by the heads of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The Helsinki Process was created by the Finnish

Government in cooperation with the Government of Tanzania in 2002 to promote democracy and equality in international relations (see *Go Between 102*). Governed by a 22-member Helsinki Group, the Process includes three tracks: new approaches to global problem solving; the global economic agenda; and human security.

These tracks are tasked with developing feasible, practical and strategic policy responses to the lack of fair and effective global governance, financing for the MDGs, and addressing new and emerging human security concerns.

Governing Globalization-Globalizing Governance: New Approaches to Global Problem Solving is available online (www.helsinki.fi/netcomm/ImgLib/24/89/Track1.pdf).

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UNFCCC COP-10 Meets

The tenth Conference of the Parties (COP-10) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the twenty-first sessions of the COP's Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) met in Buenos Aires (Argentina) from 6-18 December 2004, marking the 10th anniversary of the entry into force of the Framework Convention on Climate Change, which served as a central theme for the meeting.

COP-10 brought together over 6,100 participants from 167 governments, two observer States, 272 intergovernmental, non-governmental and other observer organizations to look back on the accomplishments of the past ten years and forward to future challenges, while taking stock of the 16 February 2005 entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol (see *Go Between 104*). Discussions focused on a range of climate-related issues including the impacts of climate change and adaptation measures, mitigation policies and their impacts, and technology. The high-level segment took place from 15-17 December and included four panel discussions. Some 60 exhibits and over 150 seminars and events were held on the sidelines of the intergovernmental talks.

COP-10 negotiations proved difficult as delegates disagreed on how to engage in commitments to combat climate change beyond the expiry of the Kyoto Protocol in 2012 and how to treat oil-exporting countries that might be adversely affected by climate change mitigation measures taking off around the world.

Early on in the meeting, Argentina's lead negotiator, Raul Estrada, introduced the concept of "seminars" to discuss future actions under the UNFCCC. The concept raised expectations among countries ready to implement the Kyoto Protocol, who would like to see non-Kyoto countries like the US and major developing countries join the process at some stage. Non-party countries, however, sought to water down any decision language. The Kyoto Protocol itself requires that Parties start negotiating post-2012 commitments by 2005.

The US and oil exporters such as Saudi Arabia provided strong resistance to attempts to move the process ahead, and large developing countries with high emissions, such as India and China, were explicit about not yet wanting to take on any emissions reduction commitments.

Delegates negotiated the issue of when and how to discuss further commitments and finally agreed on 18 December to hold one seminar in 2005 that would not open negotiations leading to new commitments. The seminar will promote "an informal exchange on actions relating to mitigation and adaptation to assist Parties to continue to develop effective and appropriate responses to climate change; and policies and measures adopted by their respective governments that support implementation of their existing commitments under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol."

Another major issue at COP-10 centred around providing a more prominent role of adaptation. During the negotiations, a number of countries pushed for further support on adaptation for vulnerable countries such as small island developing States (SIDS) and least developed countries (LDCs). On its final day, COP-10 adopted the Buenos Aires Programme of Work on Adaptation and Response Measures, which consists of four components focusing on the adverse impacts of climate change; the impact of the

implementation of response measures; further multilateral activities in this area; and a work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change. The adaptation package supports further implementation of measures to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change, while also addressing calls for economic diversification for countries affected by the global community's response measures to deal with climate change.

Statements by observers were heard on 17 December. The Inuit Circumpolar Conference linked climate change to human rights and suggested that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) facilitate a dialogue among residents of vulnerable areas, such as low-lying countries, small island States and the Arctic. Research and independent NGOs stressed the need to open a dialogue with policy makers. The World Council of Churches said "beyond 2012" negotiations should focus on a principle-based approach concentrating on an equitable allocation of benefits and burdens, precaution, priority for the most vulnerable, and maximum risk reduction. Some NGOs expressed concern about possible restrictions to civil society participation in the "seminars" planned for 2005, noting also that these seminars would take place amidst a number of other very important processes, such as the Millennium Summit +5 reviewing progress on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

In her closing comments, Joke Waller-Hunter, Executive Secretary of the Convention, said, "The Buenos Aires conference marks ten years of action under the Climate Change Convention to address a problem that will be with us for decades if not centuries to come. The meeting succeeded in bringing adaptation into the mainstream of the intergovernmental process."

The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) in collaboration with the Regional and International Networking Group (RING), a global alliance of research and policy organizations, organized "Development and Adaptation Days at COP-10," from 11-12 December 2004. The event sought to raise the profile of adaptation and its linkages with development concerns, with a particular focus on the effects of climate change on the world's poor—the group that will be most affected by the impacts of climate change. On the first day of the meeting sessions were held on climate change and development, food security and disaster planning, and water and health. The second day included discussions on the science of adaptation, funding adaptation, and adaptation in action.

Indonesia, Liechtenstein and Nigeria joined the Protocol during or just before COP-10, bringing the total Kyoto membership up to 132 Parties. Several other countries announced that their ratification was underway. COP-11 and COP/MOP-1 for the Protocol will be held from 7-18 November 2005 in Bonn.

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Kyoto Protocol Enters Into Force

“Climate change represents one of the most serious and far-reaching challenges facing humankind in the 21st Century. The cost of failing to mobilize in the face of this threat is likely to be extremely high. The economic costs alone will be very large.... The social and human costs are likely to be even greater.... Preventing dangerous climate change, therefore, must be seen as a precondition for prosperity and a public good, like national security and public health.” Extracts from the International Climate Change Taskforce’s report Meeting the Climate Challenge.

On 16 February 2005, the Kyoto Protocol entered into force following three months after Russia’s ratification, which gave it the necessary 55% of global emissions. In his message celebrating the Protocol’s entry into force, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said, “Climate change is a global problem. It requires a concerted global response. The Kyoto Protocol provides a truly global framework. And from today, it is legally binding on the rapidly increasing number of countries that are party to it.

“From now on, industrialized countries that are party to the Protocol have a clear obligation to reduce emissions. To do so, they can use the market to trade a new commodity: carbon. The Protocol will also generate resources for developing countries, to help them deal with climate change,” he said, while calling on the world community to be bold, to adhere to the Kyoto Protocol, and “to act quickly in taking the next steps.”

“The 16th of February 2005 marks the beginning of a new era in international efforts to reduce the risk of climate change,” said Joke Waller-Hunter, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). “The Kyoto Protocol offers powerful new tools and incentives that governments, businesses and consumers can use to build a climate-friendly economy and promote sustainable development,” she stressed.

A number of events were held worldwide, including in Kyoto where the Protocol was originally adopted on 11 December 1997. A special meeting, “One day after Kyoto: the next Steps on Climate,” was organized by the UN Foundation to encourage frank discussion of what challenges lay ahead. In Brussels, the occasion was celebrated by members of the European Parliament and by the European Commission. In India, the Ministry of Environment and Forests organized a workshop “Clear Skies India,” while Morocco’s Ministry for Planning, Water and Environment organized a nation-wide TV broadcast and seminar. The City of Bonn, the German NGO Forum, and the UNFCCC secretariat hosted an event in Bonn.

The Kyoto Protocol’s entry into force means that from 16 February 2005:

- b Thirty-five industrialized countries and the European Community are legally bound to reduce their combined emissions of six major greenhouse gases during the five-year period 2008-2012 to below 1990 levels.
- b The international carbon trading market receives a strong market signal. The Protocol’s “emissions trading” regime enables industrialized countries to buy and sell emissions credits amongst themselves; this market-based approach will improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of emissions cuts.
- b The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) gets a major boost. It encourages investments in developing-country projects that promote sustainable development while limiting emissions.
- b The Protocol’s Adaptation Fund, established in 2001, can

become operational to assist developing countries to cope with the negative effects of climate change.

The United States signed the Protocol in 1997, but the US Senate had resolved in advance not to accept it, citing potential damage to the US economy and demanding that emerging polluters such as China and India be covered. In March 2001, President Bush’s administration renounced the Protocol, citing the “incomplete state of scientific knowledge.” Since then, the US National Academy of Sciences has endorsed the scientific consensus about the cause of global warming.

Scientific evidence on climate change continues to mount. The global average temperature rose about 1 degree Fahrenheit during the 20th century. A broad scientific consensus attributes the rise largely to the accumulation of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, and warns of climate disruptions later this century.

At a British Government-sponsored conference, “Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change,” held in Exeter in early February, international experts cited melting mountain glaciers, shrinking Arctic ice and changes in rainfall patterns, among other effects of global warming. Compared with even a few years ago, “there is greater clarity and reduced uncertainty about the impacts of climate change,” the conference committee concluded. The meeting sought to agree on the definitions of danger levels.

The International Climate Change Taskforce, which included leaders from public service, science, business, and civil society in both developed and developing countries, released its report, *Meeting the Climate Challenge*, on 24 January. Through its report, the Taskforce urges G-8 nations to set a goal of generating at least 25% of their electricity from renewable sources by 2025 and to set up markets to trade in greenhouse gas emissions, as the European Union is doing. The report recommends the creation of a “G-8 plus” Climate Group including countries like India and China, which would take on major initiatives to take action to combat climate change. It also said that rich nations should shift farm subsidies from food crops to bio-fuels.

The main conclusion of the report is that world leaders will have to move faster and take more serious measures if they want to prevent major disasters as a result of the increase of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. The taskforce was set up by three leading think tanks: the Institute for Public Policy Research in the UK, the Center for American Progress in the US, and the Australia Institute. Rajendra Pachauri, Chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), served as Taskforce scientific advisor.

Taskforce co-chair Stephen Byers, a UK Member of Parliament, said, “Our planet is at risk. With climate change, there is an ecological time-bomb ticking away, and people are becoming increasingly concerned by the changes and extreme weather events they are already seeing... I appreciate that tackling climate change is politically difficult. Strong international action is vital,” he stressed.

The British Government has welcomed the report, but the Bush administration is said to be unhappy over the role of the Dr. Pachauri. In 2001, Dr. Pachauri replaced Robert Watson at the head of the IPCC under pressure from the US, who estimated Mr Watson too “aggressive” on the issue (see *Go Between 91*).

China has slowed and halted work on building 22 major dams and power stations in a dramatic greening of the policies of the world’s most populous nation, arising from rapidly growing environmental concern in China. President Bush had cited the prospect of growing emissions of carbon dioxide from China as one of the main reasons for trying to kill the Kyoto treaty as “fatally flawed. Although China’s emissions of carbon dioxide rose rapidly between 1978-1996, they then fell sharply as a result of clean-up measures. US Government figures suggest emissions dropped by 17% between 1996-2000, while the Chinese economy grew by 36%. During the same period, US emissions grew by 5%.

The Chinese State Environment Protection Agency announced that the projects—which cover 13 of the country’s provinces and are worth a total of over US\$14 billion—should not proceed until their impact on

the environment had been reviewed. Among the halted projects is an important power facility at the highly controversial Three Gorges dam on the Yangtse River.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Executive Director Klaus Toepfer, when asked what should be the priority in the post-Kyoto debate, responded: “The big issue is adaptation to climate change in developing countries, in other words, how to support them in confronting its impacts. But we need to have a very broad vision for future negotiations, for imagining new alliances, more ambitious goals. For example, strengthening cooperation amongst cities, amongst regions, and promoting commitments by corporations to reduce emissions. We need a great deal of imagination. The challenge we face is enormous and we cannot afford to restrict thinking,” he said.

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Summary of main recommendations of the International Climate Change TaskForce.

- 1) A long-term objective be established to prevent global average temperature from rising more than 2°C (3.6°F) above the pre-industrial level, to limit the extent and magnitude of climate-change impacts.
- 2) A global framework be adopted that builds on the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol, and enables all countries to be part of concerted action on climate change at the global level in the post-2012 period, on the basis of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities.
- 3) G-8 governments establish national renewable portfolio standards to generate at least 25% of electricity from renewable energy sources by 2025, with higher targets needed for some G-8 governments.
- 4) G-8 governments increase their spending on research, development, and demonstration of advanced technologies for energy-efficient and low- and zero-carbon energy supply by two-fold or more by 2010, at the same time as adopting near-term strategies for the large-scale deployment of existing low- and no-carbon technologies.
- 5) The G-8 and other major economies, including from the developing world, form a G-8+ Climate Group, to pursue technology agreements and related initiatives that will lead to large emissions reductions.
- 6) The G-8+ Climate Group agree to shift their agricultural subsidies from food crops to biofuels, especially those derived from cellulosic materials, while implementing appropriate safeguards to ensure sustainable farming methods are encouraged, culturally and ecologically sensitive land preserved, and biodiversity protected.
- 7) All developed countries introduce national mandatory cap-and-trade systems for carbon emissions, and construct them to allow for their future integration into a single global market.
- 8) Governments remove barriers to and increase investment in renewable energy and energy efficient technologies and practices through such measures as the phase-out of fossil fuel subsidies and requiring Export Credit Agencies and Multilateral Development Banks to adopt minimum efficiency or carbon intensity standards for projects they support.
- 9) Developed countries honour existing commitments to provide greater financial and technical assistance to help vulnerable countries adapt to climate change, including the commitments made at the seventh conference of the parties to the UNFCCC in 2001, and pursue the establishment of an international compensation fund to support disaster mitigation and preparedness.
- 10) Governments committed to action on climate change should raise public awareness of the problem and build public support for climate policies by pledging to provide substantial long-term investment in effective climate communication activities.

Members of the Taskforce:

Stephen Byers MP (UK), Co-Chair; Senator Olympia Snowe (US), Co-Chair; Bob Carr MP (Australia); John P Holdren (US); Martin Khor Kok-Peng (Malaysia); Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet MP (France); Claude Martin (Switzerland); Tony McMichael (Australia); Jonathon Porritt CBE (UK); Adair Turner (UK); Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker MdB (Germany); Ni Weidou (People’s Republic of China); Timothy E. Wirth (US); Cathy Zoi (Australia); Rajendra K Pachauri (India), Scientific Advisor to the Taskforce.

Meeting the Climate Change Challenge *is available online* (www.tai.org.au/Publications_Files/Papers&Sub_Files/Meeting%20the%20Climate%20Challenge%20FV.pdf).

UN Millennium Project Presents its Action Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals

On 17 January, the Millennium Project presented its much anticipated report, entitled Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals, to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The report is a compendium of specific cost-effective measures that, if followed by Member States, would cut extreme poverty in half and radically improve the lives of at least one billion people in poor developing countries by 2015.

The UN Millennium Project, an independent advisory body to the UN Secretary-General, included 265 international experts drawn from various disciplines and was headed by Jeffrey Sachs, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Project was designed to contribute to the policy dialogue between partners and cultivate a shift from the “aspirational” to the practical measures required to achieve the MDGs. The Project’s work included 13 separate, extensive reports by specialized task forces in subjects ranging from education to malaria to hunger.

Among its experts, the Project included Ernesto Zedillo, former President of Mexico; Mari Pangestu, Minister of Trade, Indonesia; MS Swaminathan, World Food Prize Laureate; Amina Ibrahim, National Coordinator for Education for All at the Federal Ministry for Education, Nigeria; Pedro Sanchez, winner of the MacArthur Genius Award and World Food Prize laureate; Agnes Binagwaho, Executive Secretary of the National Commission to Fight AIDS, Rwanda; Awash Teklehaimanot, Director of the Malaria Programme at Columbia University; Yolanda Kakabadse Navarro, President of the World Conservation Union; Albert Wright, Chairman of the Africa Water Task Force, Yee-Cheong Lee, President of the World Federation of Engineering Organizations, and Calestous Juma, former Executive Secretary of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

An Action Plan for Development

The Project’s report calls on Member States to improve the way aid is channeled to those in need. The Project’s research found that only 30 cents of each dollar of international aid actually reaches on the ground investment programmes in poor countries. Project experts argue that by pooling aid and spending it locally and strategically, assistance would be more effective and less expensive. As it stands, only 54% of multilateral assistance and 24% of bilateral aid are invested in the MDGs.

A ten-point plan of practical recommendations for developing and developed countries is presented in the Project’s report, among them, MDG-based poverty reduction strategies developed through multistakeholder processes; greater market access to developing country exports and increased investment in trade-related infrastructure (*i.e.* roads, electricity and ports); increased development assistance, from 0.25% of donor gross national product (GNP) in 2003 to 0.44% in 2006 to 0.54% in 2015; training programmes for community based-workers; increased coordination between UN agencies and programmes, and more.

A list of “quick wins” is also featured among the recommendations. Defined as actions that could save millions at a modest cost, they include, among other things, the provision of free school meals and

small diesel or solar power generators for hospitals and schools, antiretroviral AIDS medicines and US\$5 anti-malarial bed nets.

The 2005 Strategy

The report is one of the underlying pieces of what is expected to be a series of global initiatives aimed at accelerating the progress of Member States towards the commitments they made in the Millennium Declaration—the key outcome of the 2000 Millennium Summit. The Project’s proposed action plan combined with the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change will be key components of the Secretary-General’s report to Member States in March; a report which is to serve as the main basis for discussion when world leaders gather in New York for a high-level meeting in September.

Referring to the Millennium Project’s report, the Secretary-General stated that the action plan before him offered a large number of concrete, practical proposals for reaching the MDGs by 2015. He argued that the Goals were not utopian and that they were eminently achievable. Many countries, including some of the poorest and least developed, are making real progress in achieving them, he said. However, he recognized that many others, especially in Africa, were not moving fast enough. The recommendations in the report, he noted, offer ideas and strategies to help those who have fallen behind, as well as those looking to build on their gains.

Echoing the Secretary-General’s remarks, Mark Malloch Brown, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Secretary-General’s newly appointed Chef de Cabinet, said that he hoped the Project’s report would help catalyze world support for a “grand bargain” between global poverty reduction and security at the Millennium +5 Summit. He stressed that taken in parallel with the High-Level Panel’s recommendations on security threats, this action plan offers the world a new start on this critical inter-connected agenda of security and development.

The UN Millennium Project and Civil Society

Underpinning many of the UN Millennium Project’s basic recommendations is the need to involve civil society as a partner in the pursuit of the MDGs, both at a national and international level.

At a national level, the report states, civil society organizations can raise public and political awareness about the MDGs, and maintain constructive pressure on governments to follow through on their commitments. CSOs can also help design national MDG-based poverty reduction strategies, ensuring that the investment strategies meet the needs of historically excluded regions and groups. The report acknowledges that civil society can take on key tasks in public service delivery, particularly those that hinge on person-to-person

training, community-level systems, the mobilization of young people, as well as that of monitoring progress to ensure transparency in investment programmes and accountability in budget management.

The report also encourages civil society to be active at the international level by mobilizing popular support for the Goals, which, ultimately, would keep pressure on world leaders to live up to their commitments. Through their work on the ground, CSOs could be instrumental in sharing best practices and technical expertise.

On 17 January, the Millennium Project team invited over 150 civil society representatives to UN headquarters for the official launch of their report. Guest speakers at the event included: Professor Sachs; Geeta Rao Gupta, Coordinator of the Task Force on Education and Gender Equality for the Project; David Beckmann, President of Bread for the World; Jamie Drummond, Executive Director of Debt, AIDS, Trade in Africa (DATA); Mary McClymont, Chief Executive Officer of Interaction; Thoraya Obaid, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); and Ernesto Zedillo, Former President of Mexico.

Several of the guest speakers emphasized that 2005, and not 2015, would be the critical year for the realization of the MDGs. If political will could not be fostered over the coming year, they said, the achievement of the Goals would be highly unlikely. NGO speakers stressed the need for their organizations to mobilize and collaborate to a greater extent around initiatives related to the

Goals, with an emphasis on building strong grassroots support.

UN and Other Endorsements

A number of high-level officials from the UN system as well as Heads of Governments have released statements of support for the Project's action plan, and many have called for immediate action on its recommendations, including:

Heads of State: Tony Blair, United Kingdom Prime Minister; Jacques Chirac, President of France; Leonel Fernandez, President of the Dominican Republic; and Meles Zenawi, President of Ethiopia.

UN System: Lennart Bage, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development; Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of United Nations Children's Fund; Jacques Diouf, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization; James Morris, Executive Director of the World Food Programme; Thoraya Obaid; Rodrigo de Rato, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund; Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme; James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank; and Lee Jong-Wook, Director-General of the World Health Organization.

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Civil Society Engagement

ActionAid, Bread for the World, CIVICUS, DATA, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), Médecins sans Frontières, InterAction, Oxfam, RESULTS International, and Social Watch are among the many remarkable and dedicated civil society organizations that have contributed mightily to development progress around the world. National strategies to achieve the Goals will not succeed without their active engagement and that of other civil society organizations.

Civil society organizations can raise public and political awareness about the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), maintaining constructive pressure on governments to follow through on their commitments. They can help design national MDG-based poverty reduction strategies, ensuring that investment strategies attend to the needs of historically excluded regions, groups, and policy issues. Many can also take on key tasks in public service delivery, particularly those that hinge on person-to-person training, community-level systems, and the mobilization of young people. In monitoring progress, they can be public watchdogs, ensuring transparency in investment programmes and accountability in budget management.

Internationally, civil society organizations can mobilize support among young people and other key constituencies to keep pressure on world leaders to follow through on political commitments. Through their work on the ground, they can be instrumental in sharing best practices and technical expertise. And they can help with direct service delivery, as they do already, for example, through humanitarian relief efforts in times of crisis in the world's poorest regions.

Private Sector Engagement

Private businesses are important partners in achieving the Goals. Long-term poverty reduction in developing countries will not happen without sustained economic growth, which requires a vibrant private sector. In low-income countries, the majority of the labour force works in rural agriculture, so one powerful route to growth is through a boost in farm productivity and a transition from subsistence farming to commercial farming. In urban areas the transition should be from informal employment to formal employment in internationally competitive manufacturing and services.

Strong public systems are needed to provide the human capital and infrastructure needed for firms to thrive and have access to world markets. The domestic private sector can support the Goals by making investments to increase productivity and create jobs. In some situations, it can also help support service delivery through public-private partnerships.

The private sector should furthermore support the Goals by promoting transparency and corporate governance initiatives, by advocating for the Goals, and by engaging responsibly with the government in economic policy discussions.

Major international businesses should support the Goals through corporate philanthropy, such as donations of life-saving technologies, and through differential pricing to enable the poor to gain access to needed technologies. When investing in developing countries, multinational firms should be responsible, law-abiding corporate citizens. As an important demonstration of corporate social responsibility, we recommend that all large international businesses, especially those that have signed up to the UN Global Compact, report their contributions through a Millennium Development Goals scorecard in their annual reports.

Extracted from: the Overview of Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals

World Conference on Disaster Reduction

Following in the wake of the earthquake-tsunami that struck the Indian Ocean on 26 December 2004, the UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR), held in Kobe (Japan) from 18-22 January 2005, aimed to increase the profile of disaster risk reduction, promote its integration into development planning and practice, and strengthen local and national capacities to address the causes of disasters that hamper development in many countries.

Approximately 4,000 participants attended the meeting, including representatives from 168 governments, 78 UN specialized agencies and observer organizations, 161 NGOs and accredited media.

The meeting followed on the heels of the Mauritius meeting on the sustainable development of small island developing States (SIDS) that reviewed progress on implementing the Barbados Plan of Action (see *NGLS Roundup 118*). The need for early warning was one of the key outcomes of the SIDS meeting that was sent forward to the WCDR. In his opening address on 18 January, Jan Egeland, UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Humanitarian Relief Coordinator, said all disaster prone countries should “adopt clear, local-oriented disaster reduction policies and plans, underpinned by dedicated structures and resources—all disaster prone countries should integrate disaster risk reduction measures explicitly into their national development and poverty reduction plans.”

Throughout the week, participants shared good practices and lessons learned to further disaster reduction; identified gaps and challenges; discussed ways to increase awareness of the importance of disaster-reduction policies; and how to increase the reliability and availability of appropriate disaster-related information to the public and disaster management agencies in all regions. During the discussions, disagreements surfaced over the link between disasters and climate change. The US and some of its allies questioned climate change as the major contributing factor to the increasing number of natural calamities across the globe, while other delegates, particularly those from the EU and the SIDS, insisted on the important causal link between increasing hazards and climate change.

Thematic segments were held on: governance, institutional and policy frameworks for risk reduction; risk identification, assessment, monitoring and early warning; knowledge, innovation and education; reducing the underlying risk factors; and preparedness for effective response. A number of NGOs participated during the thematic sessions and provided their expertise, including Tearfund with its community-focused conceptual framework for disaster risk reduction and donor policy, and ActionAid International, who presented its paper analyzing the challenges, good practices and past experiences in the area of governance and risk reduction. “Experts worked closely with governments in thematic segments which produced a very substantive set of specific guidelines and targets for the next ten years that will be further developed by the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR),” said Salvano Briceño, Director of the ISDR.

Speaking during the meeting, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Executive Director Klaus Toepfer called for greater integration of environmental issues in disaster preparation and response, and underlined the importance of learning lessons from the recent tsunami disaster in South Asia. He warned that while it was too early to present a detailed assessment, early indications from UNEP’s work on the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster were that the direct damage to the environment, including water supplies, forests and other natural resources will likely be high in many of the countries affected. An initial assessment report of the environmental damage, including damage to natural sea defences such as coral reefs and mangrove swamps and chemical and waste installations was released during the 23rd session of UNEP’s Governing Council held in Nairobi from 21-25 February 2005 (see *NGLS Roundup 121*).

On 22 January 2005, governments adopted two negotiated documents: the Hyogo Declaration, which recognizes the intrinsic relationship between disaster reduction, sustainable development and poverty eradication; and *Building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters: Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015*.

The Declaration stresses the importance of involving all stakeholders, including governments, regional and international organizations and financial institutions, civil society, including NGOs and volunteers, the private sector and the scientific community. It recognizes the need to develop indicators to track progress on disaster risk reduction activities as part of the effort to realize the expected outcome and strategic goals outlined in the *Framework*.

The *Hyogo Framework for Action* stresses that an integrated, multi-hazard approach to disaster risk reduction should be factored into policies, planning and programming related to sustainable development, relief, rehabilitation, and recovery activities in post-disaster and post-conflict situations in disaster prone countries. It also calls for incorporating a gender perspective into all disaster risk management policies, plans and decision-making processes, and empowering communities and local authorities to manage and reduce disaster risk by having access to the necessary information, resources and authority to implement actions for disaster risk reduction.

The *Framework* also notes that disaster-prone developing countries—especially least developed countries and SIDS—warrant particular attention in view of their higher vulnerability and risk levels. It calls for enhancing international and regional cooperation and assistance, particularly through the transfer of knowledge, technology and expertise; the sharing of research findings, lessons learned and best practices; the full, speedy and effective implementation of the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, taking into account the impact of disasters on the debt sustainability of countries eligible for the programme; and financial assistance to reduce existing risks and to avoid the generation of new risks.

“Time is short, the task is huge. Progress is contingent on partnerships, on working together to meet this global challenge,” Mr. Egeland stressed at the close of the meeting, which saw the launch of numerous partnerships that call for UN agencies involved in disaster reduction to work closely with civil society and governments to create major initiatives to mitigate the effects of natural hazards on vulnerable populations. An International Early Warning Programme launched at the meeting aims to improve resilience to all types of natural hazards including droughts, wildland fires, floods, typhoons, hurricanes, landslides, volcanic eruption and tsunamis. An open Alliance to Support Earthquake Risk Reduction and Earthquake Megacities Initiative was also announced, which will bring together municipality officials from “megacities” around the world to develop city disaster management plans. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) will lead “A Coalition on Education” that aims to incorporate disaster reduction education into school programmes and to make school buildings safer.

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43rd Session of the Commission on Social Development: Taking Stock of Implementation Gaps

From 9-18 February 2005, the Commission on Social Development held a 10-year review of the implementation of commitments agreed upon at the 1995 World Summit in Copenhagen. The 43rd session was attended by 60 high-level officials, including 30 ministers, who called for renewed momentum in meeting the objectives of the landmark Declaration and Programme of Action, with a special focus on the three core issues of poverty eradication, social integration and promotion of full employment.

Drawing attention to the connection between the commitments set at Copenhagen and those pledged at the Millennium Summit in New York, participants emphasized that the implementation of the Copenhagen commitments reinforced the attainment of the development objectives contained in the Millennium Declaration, which will be reviewed at a High-level Plenary Meeting in September, and was crucial to a coherent, people-centred approach to development.

High-level Segment

Opening the High-level Segment of the Commission, UN Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette recognized that Copenhagen had raised the global standard for achieving development and social progress. While areas of progress were noted, such as the spread of democracy and primary education of boys and girls, she stressed that levels of poverty remained shockingly high; HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria still claimed nearly five million lives a year; and deep chasms persisted between “haves” and “have nots,” both within and between countries. Now was the time to address the “implementation gaps,” she urged.

Speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU), Marie-Josée Jacobs, Minister for Family and Integration of Luxembourg, detailed some of the internal social policies that had generated positive outcomes for EU countries. She recognized that the EU was not immune to unemployment or social exclusion, but that it strived to keep unemployment rates low—9%—while maintaining poverty and social exclusion at a minimum by cultivating a favorable environment for economic growth and harnessing the positive effects of globalization under a social model that guaranteed social justice. The welfare of the individual, Minister Jacobs noted, needed to be at the centre of all policies.

Drawing a link between security and development issues, Qiao Zonghuay, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of China, said that security factors were increasingly becoming the major obstacle to social development. He underscored that harsh facts showed “a long uphill journey” awaited Member States in their quest to achieve the Copenhagen and Millennium objectives. In their efforts to reach the agreed upon targets, Mr. Zonghuay encouraged countries to work in tandem with a focus on the following: working together for peace; choosing the right road to development in line with national conditions; and deepening cooperation and forging comprehensive partnerships.

The High-level Segment culminated with the adoption of a ten-point Declaration recognizing that the situation of many developing countries, particularly in Africa and the least developed countries, as well as those with economies in transition, required further attention and action. Governments renewed their commitments for national, regional and international strategies designed to foster a favorable environment for social and economic development.

Roundtables

The Commission held three roundtable discussions addressing the core social development issues—poverty eradication, social integration, and the promotion of full employment. Describing the roundtable on poverty eradication, Ana Maria Romero-Lozada, the Minister for Women and Social

Development of Peru, said that poverty reduction was an ethical imperative, and the world needed to assume responsibility for it. The global commitment to addressing poverty must be sustained over the long term, including by relieving debt.

On the issue of employment, Aart-Jan De Geus, Minister for Social Affairs and Employment of the Netherlands, stated that many speakers recognized the large number of unemployed young people, stressing that they should be seen as a basis for strategies of full employment, rather than a problem. Employment was the engine of economic growth and a prerequisite for poverty eradication.

Reporting for the roundtable on social integration, Samiollah Lauthan, Mauritius’ Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, Senior Citizen’s Welfare and Reform Institution, stressed that while many governments tended to focus on promoting economic growth, it could actually lead to greater exclusion if social concerns were not addressed.

Member States also discussed the future organization and methods of work of the Commission, and, at the close of the 43rd session, agreed on a set of recommendations to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on the issue. Among other things, the Commission agreed to adopt a two-year cycle of work, a model currently in effect in the Commission on Sustainable Development. The two-year cycle based system would begin in 2007, and is expected to provide further space for interactive dialogues with all stakeholders involved, including those from civil society.

NGO Forum

On the eve of the Commission, a civil society forum, entitled “Reclaiming Copenhagen,” was jointly organized by the NGO Committee on Social Development, the United Nations Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. Over 150 civil society representatives attended the forum to finalize an NGO Declaration, which primarily underscored the urgency for governments to act on their commitments and to generate more political will through open partnerships with civil society. The forum also held a roundtable discussion focusing on the central question of “Why Copenhagen Matters for the MDGs?” Guest speakers from four NGOs—International Council on Social Welfare, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, ATD 4th World and Help Age International—took to the floor and stressed that without the Copenhagen commitments, especially in the area of employment and social integration, the MDGs would not be reached. Speakers argued that the Copenhagen process offered a long-term approach to poverty eradication that could be used as a foundation for the realization of the Goals.

A more detailed account of the 43rd Session of the Commission on Social Development is available online (www.un-ngls.org/roundup.htm).

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International Women's Day Gender Equality 2005: Building a More Secure Future

International Women's Day, celebrated internationally on 8 March every year, focused this year on the theme "Gender Equality 2005: Building a More Secure Future," with particular emphasis on issues around development, human rights, security and disasters. The International Day served to highlight the fact that securing peace and social progress and the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms require the active participation, equality and development of women; and to acknowledge the contribution of women to the strengthening of international peace and security.

In 1975, during International Women's Year, the United Nations began celebrating 8 March as International Women's Day. This year, a number of events were held, including a special programme, "30 Years of United Nations Efforts to Promote Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women" on 4 March. Participating in the commemoration, in person and by video, were the Secretaries-General of the past four World Conferences on Women, including Helvi Sipilä, Secretary-General of the World Conference on International Women's Year in 1975; Leticia Shahani, Secretary-General of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the UN Decade for Women in 1985; and Gertrude Mogella, Secretary-General, UN 4th World Conference on Women in 1995. Glenda Simms, Executive Director, Jamaican Bureau of Women's Affairs, read excerpts of a statement by Lucille Mair, Secretary-General of the 1980 World Conference of the UN Decade for Women.

Rachel Mayanja, the Assistant Secretary-General, Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, said the concept of "gender equality" recognized that ending discrimination against women and girls required the involvement of men and boys, families, communities and nations. Despite divisions across national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic or political barriers, women activists had built organizations and strong networks, whose influence in shaping priorities was of major importance. Those groups had been crucial forces for transforming the way the world thought about women and gender issues.

Bani Dugal, Chair of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, agreed that much of the struggle to advance women's status had been waged by visionary and unrelenting NGOs and women's groups. Beyond raising the level of awareness and discourse, NGOs had provided much of the research about human rights abuses, boldly pushing governments to honour their commitments to the Beijing agenda.

On 8 March, a panel discussion on this year's theme was held, moderated by Shashi Tharoor, Under-Secretary-General for Public Information. Panellists included Rachel Mayanja; Nafis Sadik, Member, High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change; Sálvano Briceño, Director, Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR); Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme; Ambassador Enrique Berruga, Permanent Representative of Mexico; and Jessica Neuwirth, President, Equality Now. The purpose of the panel was to look forward and to link the Beijing+10 Review with other processes going on in 2005, such as the review of progress made in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and responses to the report of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) celebrated International

Women's Day by hosting a roundtable discussion and its second annual International Film Festival on Women and Work, held from 4-10 March in Geneva, which focused on women film directors. The film festival sought to shed light on social problems that may go unnoticed by the public. The overall theme for the films was "women and work," but included other issues such as child labour, globalization, safety and health at work, social security and decent work. The panel discussion was held on 8 March at ILO headquarters in Geneva, bringing together international women film directors to talk about gender equality in the film industry and their experiences in the world of film.

To mark International Women's Day, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Director-General Koichiro Matsuura launched, for the fourth consecutive year, the "Women Make the News" initiative wherein all media producing daily news are requested to hand over editorial responsibility to women to cast the news on 8 March. "Women Make the News" seeks to encourage media organizations to promote equal and fair representation of all women by providing equal opportunities and by presenting a diversity of images which reflect more accurately contemporary society.

"By failing to develop a greater understanding of what women bring to news organizations and by not making full use of their creative potential, intellectual capacities and leadership abilities, media executives tend to deny women the right to personal and professional growth," UNESCO said, noting that "if women's potential in national development is to be utilized in full, societies need to do away with negative perceptions and attitudes that undermine the role of women in leadership in general, and in the media, in particular."

In Vienna a number of activities were held in observance of International Women's Day at the Vienna International Centre, including a panel discussion on the impact on women of crime, terrorism, drug abuse, as well as women in space technology, and an address on "Pioneering the Empowerment of Women in the UN."

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Millennium Development Goal 3 : Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

For more information on this Goal, see the NGLS website : www.un-ngls.org/MDG/Goal_3

UNRISD: Gender Equality Striving for Justice in an Unequal World

There is “much to celebrate” in progress toward gender equality, but also “much at risk,” ten years after the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, according to a report by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) released to coincide with the 49th session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Gender Equality: Striving for Justice in an Unequal World finds that in spite of notable gains in such areas as political participation, education and labour force participation, women continue to face limits on income, authority and power.

Women’s role in public life has grown in what the report calls a “rising tide” since 1995. While the women’s share in national assemblies has only gone from 9% on average to almost 16%, the figure is 30% or more in 16 countries. More women hold office everywhere except Eastern Europe and Central Asia, where the figure fell sharply after communist party quotas for women were dropped.

Women in public life have worked to make laws responsive to women’s reproductive health and rights, and to bar violence and discrimination against women. Internationally, prosecutions against wartime sexual assault as a crime against humanity mean those responsible for sexual violence are starting to be held accountable in their own countries and the world at large. However, the report finds that in spite of “women’s greater prominence in political life, they have in many cases yet to translate their visibility into leadership positions and influence over the decision-making process: there are still many instances where they are simply used as an extension of male power structures.”

The report states that the transition from a heightened presence of women in politics to actual advance for gender equality issues and women-friendly policies takes time, and will depend upon the effectiveness of women’s movements in holding governments to account, and on the capacity of public sector agencies to translate ambitious gender-equity policy agendas into effective implementation.

Political liberalization has sometimes harmed feminist politics. This is the case in Eastern Europe, where feminism has been associated with a repressive State. In other countries, the report says, political liberalization has been only partial and disillusionment with States’ failure to deliver development or democracy seems to have helped make conservative ethnic and religious movements attractive to women.

“Some of these identity-based forms of mobilization assert the superiority of ‘traditional’ gender roles along with systems of patriarchal authority, particularly where ‘women’s liberation’ is seen as part of unwelcome modernization,” the report says.

Moves to decentralize authority to local entities as part of reform efforts have included encouragement of women’s participation, but sometimes there are more women in national than local politics, the report finds, because of resistance from local traditional patriarchal systems. This resistance may mean that decentralization reinforces men’s power over social institutions governing marital relations, conflict resolution and property rights.

“Local government remains a key arena to watch over the next decade, as more and more women assert their leadership ambitions and challenge patriarchal systems at this level,” the report says, pointing to signs that women in local government are affecting local spending and building acceptance of women’s political authority.

Economically, free market and deregulation-oriented policies have not largely benefited women, the report notes, citing severe financial crises, sluggish economic growth, lower government spending, increasing poverty

and the erosion of government public services and social protection. Although women’s pay and conditions have sometimes been better in export industry jobs, many of those jobs are insecure and dead-end, the report says, and it is difficult to close the gap with men’s wages. During the 1997 East Asian crisis, women were often the first to lose their jobs. Moreover, constraints on public spending have particularly hurt women.

Women have increased their economic activity generally during the last 30 years—aside from post-Soviet Eastern and Central Europe, and the Middle East and North Africa—but labour markets continue to be stratified by gender. Even in the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries, men tend to work full-time while women work part-time and there are earnings gaps between male and female full-time workers. Care work—whether paid or unpaid—remains predominantly women’s work in both North and South, with debilitating consequences for women and girls in contexts where the HIV/AIDS pandemic is imposing a heavy care burden.

Women are also working under deteriorating terms and conditions. International Labour Organization (ILO) evidence shows that “informal employment”—lacking secure contracts, benefits or social protection—is half to three-quarters of developing country non-agricultural work and accounts for more work for women than men in developing countries outside of northern Africa. Rural livelihoods have become more insecure in contexts where cutbacks in State support to agriculture have coincided with increasing exposure to competition from large subsidized producers. Rural poverty continues to push women into cities, and many young women from the countryside are in small-scale domestic production, petty trading or elsewhere at the bottom of the informal employment ladder, and may work under conditions designed to avoid labour laws, such as exploitive piece-rate home work.

The report highlights the emergence of new forms of organizing among women in the informal economy during the 1990s, but says many of the new unions and women workers’ rights organizations face difficulties in becoming sustainable and having a policy impact.

In the area of war and conflict, women have been given more credibility in peacemaking and conflict resolution, the report says, and are “beginning to claim, and win, places at the peace table and in the negotiation of a ‘gender-friendly’ peace.” At the same time, their roles in providing care and refuge and conducting humanitarian relief programmes “have been less widely noticed.”

Women ex-combatants still tend to be “relatively marginalized, if not completely neglected” in efforts to help ex-combatants after wars. The report cites prosecutions of wartime violence against women by war crimes tribunals in former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, but says most wartime sexual crimes against women still go unpunished and prosecutions “tend to be painfully slow.”

Gender Equality: Striving for Justice in an Unequal World draws on research by more than 60 feminist scholars from various countries and regions, particularly in the South. It is available online.

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ECOSOC/GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- b ECOSOC Special High-Level Meeting with Bretton Woods Institutions, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and the World Trade Organization, 18 April, New York

EDUCATION

- b Meeting of Education for All (EFA) Goals through Teacher Policy and Teacher Education, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 4-5 April, Paris

HEALTH

- b World Health Organization (WHO) World Health Assembly, 16-25 May, Geneva

HUMAN RIGHTS

- b 61st Commission on Human Rights, 14 March - 22 April 2005, Geneva
- b Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 34th session, 25 April-13 May, Geneva
- b Committee on the Rights of the Child, 39th session, 16 May - 3 June 2005, Geneva
- b Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII), 4th session, 16-27 May, New York
- b Committee on Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers & Members of Their Families, 30 May-3 June, Geneva

HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

- b 20th Session of the Governing Council, 4-8 April 2005, Nairobi (Kenya)
- b "Glocalization" for the Future, United Cities and Local Governments Asia-Pacific Regional Section (UCLG/ASPAC) Congress, 26-29 April 2005, Daegu (Korea)

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

- b World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Phase II regional conference Latin America and the Caribbean, 14-16 April, Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)
- b Committee on Information, 27th session, 18-28 April, New York

POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

- b Commission on Population and Development, 38th session, 4-8 April, New York

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- b Commission on Sustainable Development, 13th session, 11-22 April, New York
- b United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), 5th session, 16-27 May, New York
- b Second Meeting of the Parties to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, (Aarhus Convention) 25-27 May, Almaty (Kazakhstan)

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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