

GO

Between



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UN UPDATE

S-G MAKES NEW APPOINTMENTS

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has appointed Asha-Rose Migiro of the United Republic of Tanzania as his Deputy Secretary-General. Ms. Migiro currently serves as her country's Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the first woman to do so. Among her main priorities as Foreign Minister has been attaining peace, security and development in the Great Lakes Region.

The Secretary-General has appointed Vijay Nambiar (India) as his Chef de Cabinet effective 1 January 2007. Mr. Nambiar has held many important roles in and around the United Nations, including, among others, Special Advisor to Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations.

(continued on page 2)

"ONE UN" PILOT COUNTRIES

The Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Kemal Dervis, in his role as the Chair of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), announced on 1 February 2007 that the UN will explore new ways of enhancing greater cohesion at the country level in Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uruguay, and Viet Nam. The governments of these countries each volunteered last year to become pilots in what has been labeled "One UN."

(continued on page 2)

STANDARDS ON DDR LAUNCHED

On 18 December 2006 the United Nations launched a new set of standards aimed at improving the process of disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating (DDR) ex-combatants, which is considered essential to restoring stability to war-ravaged countries.

The *Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards* (IDDRS) are a comprehensive set of policies, guidelines and procedures covering 24 areas of DDR jointly developed by DDR practitioners, at headquarters and country level, of the UN system. The IDDRS consolidate policy guidance on DDR, providing a United Nations integrated approach on the planning, management and implementation of DDR processes. They are also the most complete repository and best practices drawn from the experience of all UN departments, agencies, funds and programmes involved in DDR. The IDDRS are accompanied by the *DDR Briefing Note to Senior Managers* and the *Operational Guide to the IDDRS*.

(continued on page 3)

OBITUARY: ANGELA E.V. KING

On 6 February UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon voiced sadness at the death of Angela E.V. King, the Jamaican who served as the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, and paid tribute to her legacy in fervently championing the equality of women and men.

"Angela King led the United Nations' efforts for the empowerment of women with knowledge, passion and courage," Mr. Ban said.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

UN Update		Other News	
<i>S-G Makes New Appointments</i>	1	<i>OECD: Development Aid Declining</i>	18
<i>"One UN" Pilot Countries</i>	1	<i>Joint Initiative on Civil Society Development</i>	18
<i>Standards on DDR Launched</i>	1	NGO Update	
<i>Obituary: Angela E.V. King</i>	1	<i>Campaign for Decent Work</i>	19
<i>IPCC Releases Report</i>	4	<i>Int'l Year of Reconciliation</i>	19
<i>Paris Commitments on Children Soldiers</i>	6	Focus Pages	
<i>UNICEF: Humanitarian Action Report</i>	7	<i>State of the World's Children 2007--Women and Children: The Double Dividend of Gender Equality</i>	20
<i>New Convention Enters into Force</i>	8	<i>FAO State of Food and Agriculture 2006: Food aid for food security?</i>	21
<i>ILO: Unemployment Remains High in 2006</i>	8	<i>Security Council and General Assembly Hold Discussions on Post-conflict Peacebuilding</i>	22
<i>UNEP/WGMS: Glacier Melting</i>	10	<i>Third Session of the Human Rights Council</i>	24
<i>UNEP: GEO Year Book 2007</i>	11	<i>61st Session of the General Assembly</i>	25
<i>UN-HABITAT at the WSF</i>	11		
<i>WIPO: Copyright Guide for SMEs</i>	12		
<i>WHO: First Meeting of the IGWG</i>	13		
2007 Calendar of UN Events	13		
<i>NGLS/Ford Foundation: NGO Accountability</i>	17		

Ms. King, whose UN career spanned 40 years, was appointed to the post by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and she served as Special Adviser from March 1997 until her retirement in early 2004. Mr. Ban credited her with work in translating into practice the Beijing Platform for Action, an extensive blueprint for promoting and protecting the rights of women and girls which was adopted in 1995, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

The Secretary-General also acknowledged Ms. King's commitment to ensuring that women engage in the realm of peace and security, where her advocacy and partnership with civil society paved the way for the first-ever Security Council resolution recognizing the essential role of women in peacebuilding, peacemaking and peace negotiations.

Besides dealing with gender issues, Ms. King served as the Chief of Mission of the UN Observer Mission in South Africa (UNOMSA) at the time of the country's first democratic, non-racial elections. She was also a Director in the Office of Human Resources Management.

Ms. King joined the UN Secretariat in 1966 from the Permanent Mission of Jamaica, where she was one of the first two women foreign service officers posted after the country joined the world body, working on matters relating to human rights and social development.

S-G MAKES NEW APPOINTMENTS (CONT. FROM PAGE 1)

The Secretary-General has also appointed Michèle

Montas as Spokesperson. Ms. Montas, an award-winning journalist from Haiti, is currently the head of the French unit of UN Radio. She served as the Spokesperson for the General Assembly President in 2003.

Alicia Bárcena of Mexico, who served as Chef de Cabinet to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, has been appointed as Under-Secretary-General for Management. She previously served as Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). In this position, she actively promoted the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean.

John Holmes of the United Kingdom has been appointed as Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. Mr. Holmes replaced Jan Egeland (Norway).

"ONE UN" PILOT COUNTRIES (CONT. FROM PAGE 1)

"The eight pilot countries reflect a broad spectrum, both in terms of size and level of income, and all host a wide range of UN activities," Mr. Dervis said. "We look forward to assessing the success of these pilots to learn valuable practical lessons which can inform the broader debate on strengthening the UN's development activities."

The "One UN" pilots will test how the UN family can deliver in a more coordinated way at the country level. The objective is to ensure faster and more effective development operations and accelerate progress to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by

establishing a consolidated UN presence—with one programme and one budgetary framework and an enhanced role of the UN Resident Coordinator—while building on the strengths and comparative advantages of the different members of the UN family.

The creation of these pilots was recommended by the High-Level Panel on UN System wide Coherence, a group of heads of State and policy makers tasked to examine ways to strengthen the UN's ability to respond to the challenges of the 21st Century (see *Go Between 111*).

The aim of the initiative is to reduce duplication and transaction costs so that the UN can use resources more effectively to support partner countries to achieve their development goals.

"These pilots show the UN's commitment to bring together the expertise, experience and capacities of the entire UN family to support national development strategies," Mr. Dervis said. "The specialized agencies have a wealth of knowledge and commitment to offer, and much closer cooperation between the Funds and Programmes and our wider family can yield great benefits."

Over the next year, the UN Development Group and Member States will evaluate the pilot programmes and discuss the possible extension of the approaches to a larger number of countries.

The UNDG is an instrument for UN reform, created by the UN Secretary-General in 1997, to improve the effectiveness of UN development at the country level. The UNDG brings together the operational agencies working on development and develops policies and procedures that allow member agencies to work together and analyse country issues, plan support strategies, implement support programmes, monitor results and advocate for change. These initiatives aim to increase UN impact in helping countries achieve the MDGs, including poverty reduction.

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STANDARDS ON DDR LAUNCHED (CONT. FROM P. 1)

"We're very proud of the work we've done so far in places like Sierra Leone and Afghanistan, where more than 134,000 combatants laid down their arms with the UN's help, but we acknowledge that we can do better," said then UN Deputy Secretary-General Mark Malloch Brown.

"That is why these standards are so important; they will allow us to ensure that all phases of the process—from disarmament to demobilization to reintegration of former combatants back into society—are carried out smoothly, with due attention to the special concerns of different groups and situations," Mr. Malloch Brown continued.

Many aspects of the new Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS) are "field-tested," having been drawn from the best practices of various UN agencies and missions currently working in peacekeeping.

The UN has been involved in supporting DDR programmes since the late 1980s. In the past five years alone, DDR has been included in the mandates for multidimensional peacekeeping operations in Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Liberia and Sudan. Simultaneously, the UN has increased its DDR engagement in non-peacekeeping contexts, such as Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo, Indonesia (Aceh), Niger, Somalia, the Solomon Islands and Uganda.

This extensive experience has fostered a body of knowledge about the specific needs of key groups, including female combatants, children associated with armed conflict, and cross-cutting issues like gender, HIV/AIDS, and health. In parallel, attention has increasingly been paid to the longer-term requirements for stability, based on a growing awareness of the link between successful disarmament and demobilization and genuine and lasting opportunities for ex-combatants to reintegrate into their peacetime communities.

The new Integrated DDR Standards acknowledge the difficulty of transforming individuals who have been scarred by conflict, in some cases for years or even

Partnering Against Hunger

National Football League star Reggie Bush and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) have partnered up to raise awareness in the United States about global hunger.

Mr. Bush, a running back in his rookie year for the New Orleans Saints, appears in a new televised Public Service Announcement and print advertisement in which he cooks his perfect meal: "pigskin," or a US football, on a plate.

The spot, targeted at raising awareness of global hunger across the United States, ends with the proclamation, "Unfortunately, not everyone can live off football – help those who can't."

"These days, more people are worried about their waistlines than the problem of global hunger," said WFP Director of Communications Neil Gallagher.

Worldwide, there more than 800 million people – more than the combined populations of the United States and the countries of the European Union – who are hungry. Children account for half of all deaths, approximately 25,000 daily, attributed to hunger and hunger-related causes.

"I want to do whatever I can do to help," Mr. Bush announced. "It's surprising but there are more hungry kids in the world than ever before. They need our help."

The television ad uses music by the Rolling Stones who performed at the halftime show of the 2006 Super Bowl, the pinnacle of US football. The band has given the WFP the rights to use one of their songs.

Ninemillion.org

Ninemillion.org is a campaign led by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to raise awareness and funds for education and sport programmes for nine million refugee children around the world, many of whom are forced to spend years of their young lives away from home with little hope of returning.

An initiative by UNHCR corporate partner Microsoft, every Internet search performed at <http://click4thecause.live.com> using the computer software giant's Live Search facility will result in a donation to UNHCR's ninemillion.org global campaign, launched last World Refugee Day on 20 June with help from Microsoft, Nike and other corporate partners.

Under the "Click for Cause" initiative, Microsoft has agreed to host the search site until the end of March 2007 and to promote it by creating a downloadable gadget and developing online advertising to appear on the MSN portal websites in certain countries.

It will guarantee a minimum donation of US\$100,000 to UNHCR based on the number of queries generated from the search site. The rate for each query will be US\$0.01, with a maximum donation payable by Microsoft of US\$250,000, equivalent to 25 million search queries.

"Driving awareness is critical to finding lasting solutions for the millions of refugees and displaced people worldwide," UNHCR Division of External Relations Director Nick Van Praag said. "Through Microsoft, utilizing the MSN network on behalf of ninemillion.org, we are able to generate consumer awareness that we hope will result in donations to support this important cause, giving hope to refugee youth and children."

Two-thirds of the money raised will be distributed by UNHCR to support education in refugee communities.

decades, into productive members of their societies. In order to ease the transition, the Standards call for measures to provide psycho-social counseling, job training, educational opportunities and mechanisms to promote reconciliation in the communities where they return.

The Standards have been launched together with three accompanying tools that will ensure their widespread application.

- *The Operational Guide* aims to help users find their way through the IDDRS by briefly explaining the key guidance in each area, highlighting practical steps for the planning, implementation and evaluation of DDR programmes.
- *The Briefing Note for Senior Managers* contains key strategic and policy guidance.
- The web-based *DDR Resource Centre* (www.unddr.org) includes all of these documents, and serves as the UN's "one-stop shop" for all related information.

"We've learned that while different combatants in various contexts may have similar concerns and needs, there are also many specific factors that must be taken into account," explained Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. "A child soldier must be reunited with his family, while a person living with HIV/AIDS will have particular health concerns that require attention."

"By refining our approach to DDR," he continued, "we can better help each ex-combatant to ultimately reintegrate into society, so that they can go from being a cause of insecurity to a force for growing stability in countries urgently in need of committed people who can contribute to the rebuilding process."

Also participating in the launch was Kathleen Cravero, Assistant Administrator of the UN Development Programme (UNDP), who said that a common approach to DDR in the UN system is a basic requirement for cooperation with its international and local partners. "Whether in Afghanistan or Haiti or Sudan, we must operate based on a coherent set of principles. This new set of standards is a system-wide accumulation of our DDR knowledge and experience. It is a concrete example of how the UN can deliver as one," she said.

The launch was simultaneously held in New York and Geneva. In both locations the launch of the IDDRS was followed by a panel discussion, including statements by representatives of Sierra Leone and Sweden on national or international initiatives on DDR.

The DDR Resource Centre is available online (www.unddr.org/index.php).

IPCC RELEASES REPORT

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said in its latest report released on 2 February 2007 that warming in the atmosphere, the oceans and glaciers and ice caps are unequivocally due to human activity.

The IPCC, which brings together the world's leading climate scientists and experts, concluded that major advances in climate modelling and the collection and analysis of data now give scientists "very high confidence"—at least a 9 out of 10 chance of being correct—in their understanding of how human activities are causing the world to warm. This level of confidence is much greater than the IPCC indicated in their last report in 2001.

The report, the first of four volumes to be released this year by the IPCC, also confirms that it is "very likely" that humanity's emissions of carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and other greenhouse gases have caused most of the global temperature rise observed since the mid-20th century.

It also says that it is likely that effect of human activity since 1750 is five times greater than the effect of fluctuations in the sun's output. Susan Solomon, co-chair of the IPCC working group that produced the report, said records from ice cores, going back 10,000 years, show a dramatic rise in greenhouse gases from the onset of the industrial era. "There can be no question that the increase in these greenhouse gases are dominated by human activity."

Three years in the making, the report is based on a thorough review of the most-up-to-date, peer-reviewed scientific literature available worldwide. IPCC Chair Rajendra Pachauri said the science has "moved on" and the extent of knowledge and the

research carried is now several steps beyond what was possible for the last report.

The report describes an accelerating transition to a warmer world—an increase of 3°C is expected this century—marked by more extreme temperatures including heat waves, new wind patterns, worsening drought in some regions, heavier precipitation in others, melting glaciers and Arctic ice, and rising global average sea levels.

“The 2nd of February 2007 in Paris will perhaps one day be remembered as the day where the question mark was removed behind the debate on whether climate change has anything to do with human activity on this planet,” said Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). “Momentum for action is building; this new report should spur policymakers to get off the fence and put strong and effective policies in place to tackle greenhouse gas emissions,” he said.

The report also concludes that:

- The world’s average surface temperature has increased by around 0.74°C over the past 100 years (1906 - 2005). A warming of about 0.2°C is projected for each of the next two decades.

- The best estimates for sea-level rise due to ocean expansion and glacier melt by the end of the century (compared to 1989 – 1999 levels) have narrowed to 28 - 58 cm, versus 9 - 88 cm in the 2001 report, due to improved understanding. However, larger values of up to 1 m by 2100 cannot be ruled out if ice sheets continue to melt as temperature rises.

- Sea ice is projected to shrink in both the Arctic and Antarctic regions. Large areas of the Arctic Ocean could lose year-round ice cover by the end of the 21st century if human emissions reach the higher end of current estimates. The extent of Arctic sea ice has already shrunk by about 2.7% per decade since 1978, with the summer minimum declining by about 7.1% per decade.

- Snow cover has decreased in most regions, especially in spring. The maximum extent of frozen ground in the winter/spring season decreased by about 7% in the Northern Hemisphere over the latter half of

the 20th century. The average freezing date for rivers and lakes in the Northern Hemisphere over the past 150 years has arrived later by some 5.8 days per century, while the average break-up date has arrived earlier by 6.5 days per century.

- It is “very likely” that precipitation will increase at high latitudes and “likely” it will decrease over most subtropical land regions. The pattern of these changes is similar to what has been observed during the 20th century.

- It is “very likely” that the upward trend in hot extremes and heat waves will continue. The duration and intensity of drought has increased over wider areas since the 1970s, particularly in the tropics and subtropics. The Sahel, the Mediterranean, southern Africa and parts of southern Asia have already become drier during the 20th century.

- The number of tropical cyclones (typhoons and hurricanes) per year is projected to decline. However, the intensity of these storms is expected to increase, with higher peak wind speeds and more intense precipitation, due to warmer ocean waters.

The IPCC does not conduct new research. Instead, its mandate is to make policy-relevant assessments of the existing worldwide literature on the scientific, technical and socio-economic aspects of climate change. Its reports have played a major role in inspiring governments to adopt and implement the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol, which presently requires 35 industrialized countries and the European Community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an average of 5% below 1990 levels in its first commitment period between 2008 and 2012.

UNFCCC Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer has called for speedy and decisive international action to combat the phenomenon. “The world urgently needs new international agreement on stronger emission caps for industrialized countries, incentives for developing countries to limit their emissions, and support for robust adaptation measures,” he said.

The IPCC will complete its assessments of the impacts of climate change and of available preventive measures within the

Brunei Joins ILO

Brunei Darussalam has become the 180th Member State of the International Labour Organization (ILO) following receipt in Geneva of a letter from Mr. Pehin Dato Adanan Yusof, Minister of Home Affairs, stating on behalf of the Government that Brunei formally accepts the obligations of the ILO Constitution.

Brunei Darussalam’s membership became effective on 17 January 2007. The country has been a member of the United Nations since 21 September 1984.

IFAD: Rural Development

The United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is providing funding to a US\$22.2 million project to allow more than 70,000 rural poor in eastern El Salvador to transition their small-scale farms into businesses.

IFAD will contribute US\$15 million in loans and a US\$1 million grant to the programme while the Government of El Salvador will finance the remainder. Many poor rural families grow fruit, vegetables and nuts, and raise pigs, poultry and cattle, but mostly for household consumption. This project will assist these families in El Salvador, one of the poorest countries in Central America with over half the rural population living in poverty, to transform their farms into for-profit businesses.

Small farmers, micro-entrepreneurs, artisans and young people will be trained under the programme in leadership and management skills. It will also tackle environmental problems caused by desertification, soil erosion and loss of water quantity and quality by promoting the use of crop residues and conservation of biodiversity.

The biggest source of El Salvador's foreign exchange comes from funds sent home by Salvadorans working abroad. These remittances are crucial for poor people in rural areas, and under the IFAD/Inter-Development Bank Multilateral Investment Fund plan, these funds will be channelled into productive investments such as small irrigation schemes, equipment and infrastructure, including rural road repair.

next four months and inform of the findings at the next UNFCCC talks and negotiations scheduled for May 2007 in Bonn. A synthesis of all three reports will be presented approximately one month before this year's United Nations Climate Change Conference, being held in December.

"Any future agreement, which will require global participation, should recognize that industrialized countries need to continue to take the lead in reducing emissions and be prepared to undertake emission reductions on the order of 60% to 80% by 2050," said Mr. de Boer. "This is the target that must be achieved in order to stabilize concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere at a level which prevents the worst consequences," he added.

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PARIS COMMITMENTS ON CHILDREN SOLDIERS

From 5-6 February, the Government of France and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) hosted an international conference in Paris on children involved in armed forces and armed groups, entitled "Let us Free the Children of War," which brought together representatives from 58 countries, international organizations, and representatives of civil society, in particular former child soldiers and NGO leaders active on the ground.

The conference was co-chaired by Philippe Douste-Blazy, Foreign Minister of France, and Ann M. Veneman, UNICEF Executive Director and included the participation of Radhika Coomaraswamy, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for children in armed conflict.

"An estimated 250,000 children are involved in conflicts around the world. They are used as combatants, messengers, spies, porters, cooks, and girls in particular are forced to perform sexual services, depriving them of their rights and their childhood," Ms. Veneman said. "We have a shared commitment to help children caught in the wars of adults and to protect, release and reintegrate child soldiers. We have

made strides in bringing children from battlefields back to their communities and classrooms, but much remains to be done."

Fighting forces are recruiting and using child soldiers within Afghanistan, Burundi, Chad, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ivory Coast, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. Government forces are also implicated in countries such as Southern Sudan, where the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA) is re-recruiting children who have already been released from their own ranks.

Participants discussed a new set of commitments and principles to end recruitment of children and to demobilize and reintegrate those who have been involved with armed groups and forces.

Adopted by participants on 6 February, the Paris Commitments, as they are now known, lay out detailed guidelines for protecting children from recruitment and for providing assistance to those already involved with armed groups or forces. They will complement the political and legal mechanisms already in place at the UN Security Council, the International Criminal Court and other bodies trying to protect children from exploitation and violence. These principles will define the framework for effective international action on the ground in light of the experiences acquired over the past ten years.

Speaking before the conference, Ms. Coomaraswamy said, "We have come a long way since Graça Machel's ground breaking report to the General Assembly in 1996 calling the world's attention to the needs and rights of children affected by armed conflict. While progress is being made, it is also true that today, in over 30 situations of concern around the globe, children are being brutalized and callously used to advance the agendas of adults. It has been estimated that over 2 million children have been killed in situations of armed conflict; another 6 million have been permanently disabled; and more than a quarter of a million children continue to be exploited as child soldiers.

"In the course of the past year, there have been new tragic experiences of terror and deprivation to which children have been subjected in many conflict situations, including the Middle East, Darfur and eastern Chad. In other situations, such as

Haiti, where the dynamics of conflict are very different, children also face similar grave violations including systematic recruitment into armed groups, death and maiming, abductions and sexual violence.

“Further, recent evidence indicates that recruitment and use of child soldiers and other grave violations are beginning to ‘migrate’ within regions such as in the Great Lakes regions of Africa. Although Herculean efforts have been undertaken to identify and re-integrate these children, the lack of long-term funding and integration into post-conflict programming, often results in vulnerability which breeds a population of abandoned children who are most apt to be enticed or forced into conflicts in neighboring lands,” she warned.

“The guidelines before us emphasize that the reintegration of children formerly associated with armed groups requires a sustained approach. On the one hand, there is the need to be able to respond immediately to commitments for the release of children, while on the other hand, evidence suggests that reintegration into communities is a process that takes time, and requires sustained support. This needs to be reflected in humanitarian, peacebuilding and national development efforts. Too often the sustained support for child reintegration efforts drops from the radar of donor aid policies in the transition from emergencies to development assistance. Longer term reintegration efforts including, specific measures for youth employment, need further attention,” the Special Adviser stressed.

Johanna MacVeigh, Protection Advisor, Save the Children UK, said, “Being recruited by armed forces has a devastating effect on children’s lives. They are immersed in violence, are subject to terrible abuse and are forced to forfeit love, play, education and hope. It is inconceivable that ten years after international guidelines were set up to protect children from recruitment, so many are still being horrifically exploited. Children can’t wait. Governments and the UN must show their support for the Paris Principles and commit to stamping out the use of child soldiers and looking after those who have been released.”

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UNICEF: HUMANITARIAN ACTION REPORT

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has launched its *Humanitarian Action Report 2007*, calling on donors to provide US\$635 million to aid children and women in 33 emergencies, ranging from Darfur in Sudan, which accounts for nearly a fifth of the appeal, to Haiti, Eritrea and the Central African Republic (CAR).

“Emergencies, both natural disasters and new or protracted conflicts, continue to take a toll on the lives of children and women around the world,” UNICEF Executive Director Ann M. Veneman said. “Life-saving activities are essential for those children in peril.”

The report provides an annual overview of the agency’s emergency aid programmes within the context of UN-wide appeals, setting out its relief activities and financial requirements for meeting the needs of children and women.

Of the requested amount US\$121 million is for Sudan, including programmes in the war-torn Darfur region, where continued conflict between Sudanese Government forces, allied militias and rebel groups has disrupted the lives of some 4 million people, including 1.8 million children. Children account for half of the more than 2.5 million people forced from their homes.

Children struggle to survive elsewhere, displaced by emergencies that lack the global attention surrounding Darfur. Some children in Colombia are forced from their homes by violence or recruited to fight. High HIV/AIDS rates and chronic poverty and food insecurity mean Zambian children live in one of the world’s poorest nations. Many of Chad’s children have fled fighting in neighbouring countries, or their own.

“Many of the crises in which UNICEF operates are neglected because they are no longer considered emergencies by the public,” UNICEF Emergency Programmes Director Dan Toole said. “The crisis for children does not end when the media coverage ends, whether a child lives in Darfur or Haiti. As long as a humanitarian situation exists for children, UNICEF will be assisting.”

UNICEF’s emergency funding raised US\$513 million in 2006, as of 1 November 2006,

AU Elects New Chair

On 29 January 2007 African leaders picked Ghana as the new chair of the African Union (AU), turning down Sudan’s bid for its failure to end the conflict in Darfur. The 53 African Heads of State and Government chose Ghanaian President John Kufuor over the Sudanese President Omar al Bashir at the start of their two-day summit in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa.

UNICEF: Health Centres

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has completed construction of the first of the 227 mother-and-child health centres it is building in Indonesia's tsunami-devastated Aceh province and earthquake-hit Nias Island.

"Through these family health and development centres, mothers, children and babies will have immediate and full-time access to professional midwives, specialized infant health care and learning and development activities," UNICEF's Chief of Field Office in Aceh Edouard Beigbeder said.

"This is a brand new facility for the community. It's not replacing something; it's giving the community something they didn't have before. Strengthening community-based health systems will have a long-lasting impact on child survival and development and will help facilitate Aceh and Nias' recovery, rehabilitation and development."

The new centres built by UNICEF combine community midwifery and basic preventive and curative services for women by providing a blend of essential services, such as antenatal and neonatal care, breastfeeding support, growth monitoring, regular immunization, parental education, micronutrient provision, basic health information and behavioural change promotion. Most health centres will also have an Early Childhood Development Centre offering learning and stimulation activities for pre-school children aged three to six. Fifteen of them will also be equipped with a Child Protection Centre.

UNICEF has set aside US\$11 million for the construction of the centres, in addition to US\$90 million for the construction of more than 300 permanent schools, the first time UNICEF has taken on a construction role.

covering 53 emergencies. Immediate tragedies continued to garner global media attention during the past year, but forgotten emergencies, highlighted in the report, received only 37% of the funding required. Overall, UNICEF appeals for emergencies were 49% funded.

Among the less topical crises, UNICEF cited South Sudan where 240,000 people have returned since signing of a peace accord in a conflict that is separate from Darfur; the Horn of Africa beset by cyclical drought then flooding and finally war in 2006; and Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, which have been affected by extensive damage to social and economic infrastructure.

Other emergencies include South Asia, which has the highest number of children living in absolute poverty, the highest prevalence of underweight children and the highest child mortality rates in the world; East Asia and the Pacific, still recovering from the 2004 tsunami and facing new crises such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, typhoons and floods; and the Middle East and North Africa, beset by the Iraq conflict, the aftermath of the Israeli-Hizbollah war in Lebanon and violence in the occupied Palestinian territory.

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NEW CONVENTION ENTERS INTO FORCE

The International Convention against Doping in Sport entered into force on 1 February 2007, after its ratification on 11 December by Luxembourg. The Convention, the first such international instrument in the area of doping in sport, was ratified by 30 States in record time.

"No other international standard-setting instrument elaborated by UNESCO has been ratified so rapidly," declared Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). "This is good news for all and a clear signal to youth and the sporting world—both amateur and professional—that we take this question very seriously.

"UNESCO's Member States have shown determination and responsibility by respecting the commitments they have made to sport. The struggle against doping is a choice of education, an ethical combat for human rights, and a wager on life. Thanks to this Convention, the anti-doping struggle is brought for the first time into the realm of international law. Governments, sporting federations, the Olympic movement and civil society now have a veritable, legally-binding international instrument."

The World Anti-Doping Code, adopted by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) in March 2003, represented the first attempt to harmonize standards in the fight against doping in sport. But because WADA is a Swiss private law foundation, the Code was not legally binding according to public law. The new Convention harmonizes the rules concerning doping in all sports and all countries.

The first session of the Conference of States Parties was held in Paris from 5-7 February at UNESCO headquarters. States Parties elected a Bureau, adopted rules of procedure and created a Voluntary Contribution Fund for the elimination of doping in sport. Modifications to the World Anti-Doping Agency's Prohibited List was also on the agenda.

As part of the effort to promote the fight against doping, the Belgian tennis player Justine Hénin-Hardenne was named UNESCO Champion for Sport on 14 December 2006. She has pledged to use her fame to promote the fight against doping in sport and to help educate young people about the risks they incur.

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ILO: UNEMPLOYMENT REMAINS HIGH IN 2006

The number of people unemployed worldwide remained at an historical high in 2006 despite strong global economic growth, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO) in its report *Global Employment Trends Brief 2007*.

Even though more people are working

globally than ever before, the number of unemployed remained at an all time high of 195.2 million in 2006 or at a global rate of 6.3%. This rate was almost unchanged from the previous year.

The ILO also reports only modest gains in lifting some of the world's 1.37 billion working poor—those working but living on less than the equivalent of US\$2 per person, per day—out of poverty, stressing that there weren't enough decent and productive jobs to raise them and their families above the US\$2 poverty line.

“The strong economic growth of the last half decade has only had a slight impact on the reduction of the number of workers who live with their families in poverty and this was only true in a handful of countries. In addition growth failed to reduce global unemployment,” ILO Director-General Juan Somavia said. “What's more, even with continued strong global economic growth in 2007 there is serious concern about the prospects for decent job creation and reducing working poverty further.”

The report notes that in order to maintain or reduce unemployment rates, the link between growth and jobs must be reinforced. It stresses that creation of decent and productive jobs—not just any jobs—was a prerequisite for reducing unemployment and slashing the number of families working but still living in poverty. This in turn is a precondition for future development and economic growth.

Other findings in the trends report showed that:

- For the last decade, economic growth has been reflected more in rising levels of productivity and less in growing employment. While world productivity increased by 26% the global number of those in employment rose by only 16.6%.
- Unemployment hit young people (aged 15-24) the hardest, with 86.3 million young people representing 44% of the world's total unemployed in 2006.
- The employment gap between women and men persists. In 2006, only 48.9% of women aged 15+ were working compared to 49.6% in 1996. The comparable male employment-to-population ratios were 75.7 in 1996 and 74.0 in 2006.
- In 2006, the share of the service sector in

the global employment progressed from 39.5% to 40% and, for the first time, overtook the share of agriculture that decreased from 39.7% to 38.7%. The industry sector represented 21.3% of total employment.

The report finds that in most of the regions, unemployment rates did not change markedly between 2005 and 2006. The largest decrease occurred in the region of the Developed Economies and European Union, where the unemployment rate declined by 0.6 percentage points between 2005 and 2006 to 6.2%. East Asia's unemployment rate was 3.6%, thereby remaining the lowest in the world. South Asia's unemployment rate was 5.2% and South-East Asia and the Pacific's was 6.6%.

The Middle East and North Africa remained the region with the highest unemployment rate in the world at 12.2% in 2006. Sub-Saharan Africa's rate stood at 9.8%, the second highest in the world. The region also had the highest share in working poverty, with 8 out of 10 women and men living on less than US\$2 a day with their families. This underscores that tackling the decent work deficit in Africa is a regional and global priority.

The ILO estimates showed that in all regions, the total number of working poor at the US\$1 level declined between 2001 and 2006 except in sub-Saharan Africa where it increased by another 14 million and in Latin America and the Middle East and North Africa where it stayed more or less unchanged. Over the same period the total number of US\$2 a day working poor declined in Central and Eastern Europe (non-EU) and CIS, and most significantly in East Asia by 65 million. On the other hand, it increased in South-East Asia and the Pacific, South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa with the biggest rise, of 26 million, occurring in sub-Saharan Africa.

“Every region has to face major labour market challenges,” says the ILO report, “young people have more difficulties in labour markets than adults; women do not get the same opportunities as men, the lack of decent work is still high; and the potential a population has to offer is not always used because of a lack of human capital development or a mismatch between the supply and the demand side in labour markets.”

Int'l Mother Language Day

February 21 was proclaimed International Mother Language Day by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in November 1999, and observed every year since February 2000 to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism.

Today, about half of the 6,000 or so languages spoken in the world are under threat. Over the past three centuries, languages have died out and disappeared at a steadily increasing pace, especially in the Americas and Australia.

At least 3,000 tongues are endangered, seriously endangered or dying in many parts of the world. According to recent estimates, very few people speak most of the 6,000 known languages around the world. Half of today's languages have fewer than 10,000 speakers and a quarter have fewer than 1,000.

“Nowadays the widespread conviction is that decent work is the only sustainable way to reduce poverty, which is why the target of ‘full, productive and decent employment’ will be a new target within the Millennium Development Goals in 2007. Therefore it is now the time for governments as well as the international community to make sure that the favourable economic conditions in most parts of the world will be translated into decent job growth,” *Global Employment Trends Brief 2007* concludes.

The report is available online (www.ilo.org/trends).

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UNEP/WGMS: GLACIER MELTING

According to new data collected by scientists all over the world and published by the World Glacier Monitoring Service (WGMS) in Zurich (Switzerland), mountain glaciers around the world continue to melt, with new, still tentative figures for 2005 indicating a further average thickness reduction for a set of reference glaciers of 0.6 metre water equivalent (w.e.). On average, one metre water equivalent corresponds to 1.1 metre ice thickness.

The new data on glacier mass balance measurements confirms the trend in accelerated ice loss during the past two and a half decades and brings the average thickness loss since 1980 of the 30 reference glaciers of nine mountain ranges at about 9.6 metre w.e.

The preliminary data on glacier change for the year 2005 from 80 glaciers was reported to the WGMS from the majority of the glaciated mountain ranges of the world. 30 of these glaciers have continuous mass balance measurement series since 1980. Their average annual ice loss since the year 2000 was about 0.6 metre w.e., which is 1.6 times more than the average of the 1990s and three times the loss rate of the 1980s. Comprehensive data for the year 2006 are not yet available, but as it was one of the warmest years in many parts of the world, it is expected that the downward trend will continue.

Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), said, “This is the most authoritative, comprehensive and up-to-date information on glaciers worldwide and as such underlines the rapid changes occurring on the planet as a result of climate change. Glaciers across the globe are important sources of water for many important rivers—rivers upon which people depend for drinking water, agriculture and industrial purposes.

“The findings confirm the science of human-induced climate change, confirmation that will be further underlined when the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change unveil their next report on 2 February. These findings should strengthen the resolve of governments to act now to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and put in place the medium to longer term strategies necessary to avert dangerous climate change,” he added (see article page 4).

Michael Zemp, a glaciologist and research associate at the WGMS, said, “Today, the glacier surface is much smaller than in the 1980s, this means that the climatic forcing has continued since then. The recent increase in rates of ice loss over reducing glacier surface areas leaves no doubt about the accelerated change in climatic conditions.”

The WGMS collects and publishes standardised glacier data which are considered to be among the best natural indicators of climate change. Scientific measurements relate to the so-called “net mass balance” of glaciers, which can be seen as their overall ice thickness change. The long-term monitoring of glacier mass balance produces one of the most essential variables required for the regular assessment reports on global climate monitoring. As such, the glacier mass balance data are an important contribution to UNEP’s *Global Environment Outlook (GEO)* report and one of the headline indicators presented in the *GEO Yearbook* series.

Further information is available online: World Glacier Monitoring Service website (www.wgms.ch) and the UNEP GEO Data Portal (<http://geodata.grid.unep.ch>).

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UNEP: GEO YEAR BOOK 2007

Rising demand for seafood and other marine produce will lead to a collapse of today's commercial fish stocks by 2050 unless better management is introduced, exemplifying the challenges facing governments in a globalized world, according to a report released by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

"If rising living standards and inefficient methods of production and consumption intensify pressure on nature's natural resources—from fish, freshwater and the atmosphere to forests and fragile lands—globalization could become a spectacular failure rather than a saviour," UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner said.

The UNEP *Global Environment Outlook (GEO) Year Book 2007* notes that climate change may aggravate the fishery situation by increasing the acidity of oceans and seas and bleaching coral reefs, important nurseries for fish, and one management technique for countering the collapse includes a dramatic expansion of marine protected areas.

Experts have found that such areas, which currently cover just 0.6% of the world's oceans, increase numbers of fish species by over a fifth and can boost catches in waters nearby, and governments at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002 backed a plan to develop a network of marine reserves by 2012.

But the *GEO Year Book*, written to inform the debate being held by Environment Ministers attending UNEP's 24th Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum in Nairobi in February 2007 stresses that the pace at which new marine reserves are being listed means the goal will be achieved three decades after the collapse of today's commercial fisheries. "At the current rate of designation, the target will not be reached until 2085," it adds.

"Globalization is one of the defining issues of our time. Wealth is being generated on an unprecedented scale and millions are being lifted out of poverty. But a big question mark hangs over its future and its sustainability

for current and future generations," Mr. Steiner said.

"The question is not whether globalization is good or bad but whether we have in place the regulations, creative economic instruments, guidelines, rules and partnerships that ensure it delivers the widest possible benefits at the minimum price to the planet and thus to its people—in other words do we have the international environmental governance structures in place, firing on all cylinders, to match and guide the powerful engine of globalization."

The *Year Book* outlines a range of options to steer globalization onto a more intelligent, environmentally, economically responsible and sustainable course if more widely deployed and acknowledges the importance of responsible business and the power of consumerism to direct globalization.

Measures cited include expanding a system of certification of forestry, now covering some 10.5 million hectares—3%—of natural production forests, to other natural resources and complimenting it by green procurement policies. Environmental accountability by lending institutions can also help by predicating loans on higher environmental, agricultural and social standards.

The *Year Book* is available online (www.unep.org/geo/yearbook/yb2007).

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UN-HABITAT AT THE WSF

Speaking at the 2007 World Social Forum (WSF), the Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), Anna Tibaijuka, said that slums pose particular problems for women and girls, especially the way this growing phenomena affects the global effort to combat HIV/AIDS.

Addressing a special session entitled "World Court of Women on Poverty: lives, livelihoods, lifeworlds," Ms. Tibaijuka called for greater focus on the challenges of urbanization, noting that half of the world's population will

soon live in urban areas.

“This is a result of natural population growth, human mobility including rural-urban migration and international migration, as well as the reclassification of rural areas as urban areas. It is therefore important to consider the challenges of urbanization as you discuss women and poverty and listen to testimonies of women,” she stressed.

“Slums pose serious challenges to action to prevent, treat and effectively address HIV/AIDS. Sadly, it is the women and the girl child who bear the brunt of all this because of their disadvantaged position in society as proscribed by our cultures, traditions, values and belief systems.”

The special session, which was held at UN-HABITAT headquarters, heard testimonies from women in developing countries on problems of poverty, pain, survival and resistance to the structural causes of poverty and destitution. Ms. Tibaijuka challenged the participants to appreciate the problem of slums and the hardships that slum dwellers went through.

The 7th edition of the World Social Forum, held in Nairobi from 20-25 January 2007, brought together activists, social movements, networks, coalitions and other progressive forces from Asia-Pacific, Latin America, the Caribbean, North America, Europe and all corners of the African continent. The Forum included panels, workshops, symposia, processions, film nights and focused on a diverse range of issues, including water, housing, women’s struggles, human rights, food sovereignty/land reform, environment and energy, free trade, and migration, among others.

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WIPO: COPYRIGHT GUIDE FOR SMEs

Entrepreneurs, managers and staff of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) can now consult a World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) publication that explains, in practical terms, using concrete

examples, how copyright and related rights can be used to further strategic business goals. The guide, entitled *Creative Expression: An Introduction to Copyright and Related Rights for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises*, is the fourth in the *Intellectual Property for Business* series.

The revolution in digital technologies has transformed the landscape of entertainment and marketing, creating enormous economic opportunities and underlining the importance of copyright and related rights to business. Entrepreneurs and business employees are likely to create or use materials that are protected by copyright and related rights on a daily basis. Unfortunately, companies often fail to protect their valuable intellectual capital because the central role and importance of copyright and related rights in protecting business assets is not widely recognized.

Assets that can be protected by copyright and related rights include: computer programs; website content; product catalogues; newsletters; operating manuals for machines or consumer products; maintenance manuals for various types of equipment; artwork and text on product literature, labels or packaging; and advertising materials.

The new WIPO guide explores some of the most frequently asked questions about the copyright and related rights system, providing companies with hints and tips on how to go about developing a copyright strategy that is suited to their needs. The guide provides practical information to help readers understand what is protectable under copyright and related rights, how to protect the works that they create or in which they own rights; how to get the most out of their copyright and/or related rights; and how to avoid violating the copyright or related rights of others.

The guide follows a format similar to the other three guides in the series which are already available in various languages. All four guides are available online (www.wipo.int/sme/en/documents/guides).

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WHO: FIRST MEETING OF THE IGWG

Delegates from more than 100 Member States of the World Health Organization (WHO), joined by civil society and industry representatives, met in Geneva on 4-8 December to chart a way forward on a plan to promote research on diseases that disproportionately affect people in poor countries.

The new Intergovernmental Working Group (IGWG) on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property was established in May 2006 by the WHO's top decision-making body, the World Health Assembly (WHA, see *Go Between 110*). It was mandated to draw up a medium-term framework based on the findings of an earlier WHO Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation, and Public Health (CIPRH).

The IGWG was charged with agreeing on a global strategy and plan of action to submit to the 2008 World Health Assembly, "giving particular attention to needs-driven research and other potential areas for early implementation."

One proposal under consideration calls for a global treaty for funding pharmaceutical innovation, which would have governments fund research and development (R&D) and make the findings public. Drugs thus developed could then be produced and sold cheaply, since manufacturers would not have to recoup heavy expenditures on research.

During the IGWG meeting, government negotiators discussed a document based on the CIPRH report that had been prepared by the WHO Secretariat, with input from pharmaceutical sector and NGO representatives. Called the "Elements of a global strategy and plan of action," it included sections on how to identify research and development priorities, promote research and development, and build innovative capacity. It also addressed improving delivery and access; ensuring sustainable financing mechanisms; and establishing monitoring and reporting systems.

Countries met in regional groupings to examine the text. The Secretariat incorporated their comments into the body of the text, with the stated aim of being "as inclusive as possible."

Ultimately, member countries agreed to break the document into two annexes—one on the plan of action and the other on the global strategy. They expanded the plan of action to include elements on technology transfer and the management of intellectual property. This includes recommendations such as to "encourage innovations adapted to realities of health-care delivery in developing countries."

The global strategy annex stresses that "high quality research and the generation and application of knowledge are critical for achieving the internationally agreed health-related development goals." Drawing from the WHO constitution, past resolutions, and the CIPRH report, it sets out principles, challenges, and responsibilities, declaring that "efforts to develop new products will be of no value if they cannot be made available and accessible to those who need them."

With regard to alternative ways of promoting medical research and development, the delegate from India suggested that the IGWG could set up a "trust fund" and establish rules for how it would be funded and accessed. Brazil's representative suggested that governments should aim to devote 0.7% of gross domestic product (GDP) to research and development.

Due to the limited time available for incorporating members' comments, the chair of the IGWG, Peter Oldham (Canada), explained on the final day of the meeting that governments would have until the end of February to provide additional observations and corrections to the document. The IGWG will meet again for a week in October 2007 to finalize the text so that it can be presented to the World Health Assembly in May 2008.

The Secretariat is expected to update the document to include comments submitted by the end of February, and make it available by June 2007.

Documents from the IGWG meeting are available online (www.who.int/gb/phi).

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Selected UN Events in 2007

The following list represents some of the UN meetings and events that are due to take place in 2007. Please note that dates may be subject to change. Not all meetings listed below are open to NGO participation.

Crime/Narcotic Drugs

Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, 16th session, 23-27 April, Vienna

International Narcotics Control Board
88th session, 29 January - 2 February, Vienna

89th session, 7-18 May, Vienna
90th session, 30 October - 16 November, Vienna

Commission on Narcotic Drugs, 50th session, 12-16 March, Vienna

Corruption

Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, 2nd session, 10-14 December, Vienna
Economic and Social Council, organizational session, 6-9 February, New York

Disarmament

Chemical Weapons

Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, 12th session, 5-9 November, The Hague

Conventional Weapons

Conference Annual meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, November, 7-13 November, Geneva

First Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol V to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, 5 November, Geneva

Biological Weapons

Annual meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, November/December, Geneva

Conference on Disarmament

Conference on Disarmament
1st part, 22 January - 30 March, Geneva
2nd part, 14 May - 29 June, Geneva

3rd part, 30 July - 14 September, Geneva

Disarmament Commission

Disarmament Commission, 9-27 April, New York

4th Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament
Open-ended working group for the 4th Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, organizational session, 12 February, New York
first session, 2-5 April, New York
second session, 25-29 June, New York

Landmines

States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, 8th session, 11-22 November, Jordan

Nuclear Weapons

Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 1st session, 30 April - 11 May, Vienna

Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, 28th session, 19-22 June, Vienna

ECOSOC/General Assembly

Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
Organizational session, 6-9 February, New York
Resumed organizational session, 25-26 April, New York
Substantive session, 2-27 July, Geneva

Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations

2007 regular session, 22 January - 2 February, New York
2007 resumed session, 14-18 May, New York

Special High-Level Meetings of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods Institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), 16 April, New York

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 38th session, 30 April - 18 May, Geneva

pre-sessional working group, 39th session,
21-25 May, Geneva

39th session, 5-23 November, Geneva
pre-sessional working group,
26-30 November, Geneva

High-level Committee on South-South
Cooperation, 15th session, 29 May - 1 June,
June, New York

First Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
Development Cooperation Forum, July 2007,
Geneva

Special Committee on the Charter of the
United Nations and on the Strengthening of
the Role of the Organization, 26 March -
5 April, New York

General Assembly, 62nd session,
18 September - December, New York

General Assembly, High-Level Dialogue on
Financing for Development (3 days), October,
New York

Food and Agriculture

International Fund for Agriculture and
Development (IFAD), Governing Council,
12-16 February, Rome

World Food Programme (WFP), Executive
Board, first regular session, 19-23 February,
Rome

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
Council
20-25 June, Rome
14-16 November, Rome
26 November, Rome

FAO Conference, 17-24 November, Rome

Codex Alimentarius Commission,
30th session, 2-7 July,
Rome

Health

World Health Organization (WHO), World
Health Assembly, 60th session, 14-23 May,
Geneva

Human Rights

Rights of the Child Committee on the Rights
of the Child
44th session, 15 January - 2 February,
Geneva
45th session, 21 May - 8 June,
Geneva
46th session, 17 September - 5 October,
Geneva

Pre-sessional working group
45th session, 5-9 February, Geneva
46th session, 11 - 15 June, Geneva

Committee against Torture
Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and
Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment
or Punishment
first session, 19-23 February, Geneva
second session, 2-6 July, Geneva

Working Group on the Committee against
Torture
38th session, 30 April - 18 May, Geneva
39th session, 5-23 November, Geneva

Committee on the Elimination of Racial
Discrimination
70th session, 19 February - 9 March, Geneva
71st session, 30 July - 17 August, Geneva

Human Rights Committee
89th session, 12-30 March, New York

Human Rights Council
4th session, 12 March - 6 April, Geneva
5th session, 18-29 June, Geneva
6th session, 10-28 September, Geneva
7th session, 26 November - 7 December
(TBC), Geneva

Human Rights Council, working group on the
Universal Periodic Review, 3rd session, 16-27
April, Geneva

Human Rights Council, working group on the
Review of Mandates, 3rd session, 16-27
April, Geneva

Human Rights Council, Sub-Commission on
the Promotion and Protection of Human
Rights, 59th session (3 weeks), July/August,
Geneva

Human Rights Council, Working Group on
Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances,
19-23 March, Geneva

Committee on the Protection of the Rights of
All Migrant Workers and Members of Their
Families
6th session, 24-27 April, Geneva
7th session, 26-30 November, Geneva

Third meeting of the States Parties to the
International Convention on the Protection of
the Rights of All Migrant Workers and
Members of Their Families (1 day),
December, New York

Human Rights Council, intergovernmental
working group on the effective
implementation of the Durban Declaration
and Programme of Action, 5-9 March, Geneva

Preparatory Committee for the Durban Review Conference, 30 April - 4 May, Geneva

Human Rights Council, working group on arbitrary detention
48th session, 7-11 May, Geneva
49th session, 10-14 September, Geneva
50th session, 21-30 November, Geneva

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 6th session, 14-25 May, New York

Information and Communication

Committee on Information, 29th session, 30 April - 11 May, New York

International Law

Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, resumed 5th session, 29 - 31 January, New York
6th session, 30 November - 4 December, New York

Meeting of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 18-22 June, New York

Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, 25-29 June, New York

Labour

International Labour Organization (ILO), Governing Body and its committees, 8-30 March, Geneva
ILO, General Conference, 5-21 June, Geneva

Peacekeeping

Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and its Working Group, substantive session, 26 February - 23 March, New York

Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and its Working Group, resumed substantive session, 11 June, New York

Population and Development

Commission on Population and Development, 40th session, 9-13 April, New York

Refugees

Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
Annual Consultations with NGOs, Geneva, 26-28 September 2007

UNHCR, Executive Committee, 58th session, 1-5 October, Geneva

Social Development

Commission for Social Development, 45th session, 7-16 February, New York

Sustainable Development

Commission on Sustainable Development
Intergovernmental preparatory meeting for the 15th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-15), 26 February - 2 March, New York

Commission on Sustainable Development, 15th session, 30 April - 11 May, New York

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, 5th session, 12-21 March, Buenos Aires

United Nations Forum on Forests, 16-27 April, New York

United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC), Conference of the Parties to the Convention, 13th session, and meetings of subsidiary bodies, 3-14 November, Bonn

Trade, Finance and Development

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

Commission on Investment, Technology and Related Financial Issues, 11th session, 8-14 March, Geneva

Commission on Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities, eleventh session, 9-23 March, Geneva

Trade and Development Board, 41st Executive Session, 18-20 April, Geneva

Trade and Development Board, 54th session, 1-12 October, Geneva

Women

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
37th session, 15 January - 2 February, New York
pre-sessional working group, 5-9 February, New York
38th session, 14 May - 1 June, New York
39th session, 23 July - 10 August, New York

Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol to the Convention
5-9 February, New York
16-20 July, New York

Commission on the Status of Women, 51st session, 26 February - 9 March, New York

NGLS/Ford Foundation: NGO Accountability

On 19 January 2007 UN-NGLS and the Ford Foundation hosted a panel discussion and book launch of two publications at UN headquarters on the subject of NGO accountability. The panel discussion fostered a debate on the role of NGOs within civil society and global governance. The panel discussion was followed by the launch of a Development Dossier by UN-NGLS entitled Debating NGO Accountability and the book NGO Accountability – Politics, Principles and Innovations (Jordan & Van Tuijl, Earthscan, 2006).

Deputy Coordinator of UN-NGLS, Elisa Peter, said that given the heightened visibility and role of NGOs in the international community, this was an important and timely debate to have, particularly on the eve of the World Social Forum. The 2005 World Summit outcome document welcomes the positive contributions of NGOs in the promotion and implementation of development and human rights programmes, and stresses the importance of their continued engagement with governments, the UN and other international organizations.

Ambassador Rezland I. Jenie (Indonesia) a personal adviser to the president of the 60th General Assembly on the relationship between Member States and civil society, including NGOs, opened the debate with a question: “Are NGOs good or bad for the UN?” Pointing to a “confidence deficit” that exists at the heart of the relationship between Member States and NGOs, he said that this has greatly proliferated due to the fact that NGOs have become more visible, while they remain highly unregulated in many parts of the world. “A lack of international standards has allowed far less legitimate NGOs to undermine the effectiveness of credible NGOs,” he stressed.

Lisa Jordan, co-editor of *NGO Accountability – Politics, Principles and Innovations*, said that NGOs are responsible to many different stakeholders and have to figure out how to be accountable to them. The context is crucial in answering the question of “to whom should NGOs be accountable,” as it would not be the same for NGOs in China as in the US. “It is not going to be the same for a human rights organization or an environmental one, and it is different for NGOs that work on a local and global scale, and for service and advocacy organizations,” she said, while emphasising that there is a need for NGOs to embrace accountability.

Jem Bendell, author of *Debating NGO Accountability*, said that even though NGOs are still very trusted, the reputation of NGOs is falling along with trust in other parts of society as well. “NGOs should define themselves in terms of who they are and what they are for, and importantly, NGOs need to practice what they preach. That means maintaining their budgets; achieving their missions better; and contributing better to society,” Dr. Bendell stated. He argued that “accountability” in itself is not simply a good thing, as is so often assumed; rather, it must be clear that groups must be accountable specifically to those that are affected by their decisions and actions. It is this concept of “democratic accountability” that lies at the heart of the book and will allow NGOs to continue to develop as effective and important actors in the international arena.

Co-author of *NGO Accountability*, Steve Charnovitz, said NGOs need to do better to get their own house in order and that they also need to promote better governance. He agreed with Mr. Jenie’s notion that a confidence deficit does exist, and with the importance of building confidence and a level playing field for NGOs. NGOs need to be more scientific and fact based in their work, he stressed.

Another co-author, Patricia Armstrong, talked about the limits and risks of NGO regulation. “Human rights and the right of association must be at the centre of thoughts around NGO accountability and regulation systems,” she said, noting that there is a direct link between the right of freedom of speech and association and accountability. Co-author Enrique Peruzzotti pointed out that civil society organizations are constitutive organizations and are an important complement to an electorate representation. NGOs are not forced to compete for votes, and being free from such constraints allows for innovation and creative action. The transformative logic of civil society is crucial and should be preserved—civil society should not be forced to be representative. “Good representation requires constitutive representation and action as well as political representation, and those are two interdependent and interconnected aspects of government,” Mr. Peruzzotti argued.

Juliette Majot, co-author, said NGO legitimacy is more of a road trip than an end point. In order to be legitimate and effective, it is necessary to have a set of values and understanding in the way of working. Ms. Majot stressed that NGOs need to be extremely committed to accuracy, rigorous thinking to get the information from the best possible sources, and to seek new and innovative ways of working. She further noted that representation in numbers is not what gives NGOs legitimacy; rather it is the argument and the integrity of that argument that gives NGOs their legitimacy.

An interactive debate followed on a number of questions, ranging from what kind of codes of conduct may be appropriate in relation to NGO accountability, to whether the norms of accountability should vary depending on the mission of the NGO, to who has the authority to hold NGOs accountable.

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OTHER NEWS

OECD: DEVELOPMENT AID DECLINING

Development aid to most of sub-Saharan Africa actually declined in 2005, according to new data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Although total worldwide official development assistance (ODA) from donor countries increased over that period, the bulk of the rise was accounted for by Afghanistan and Iraq. If Nigeria, which benefited from exceptional debt relief in 2005, is excluded from the total, ODA to sub-Saharan Africa fell by 2.1% to US\$24.9 billion.

The decrease came in a year during which leading donor governments repeatedly vowed to ramp up assistance to the world's poorest countries. Leaders from the Group of Eight industrialized nations vowed at Gleneagles in July 2005 to double aid by 2010—with half of the US\$50 billion increase slated to go to Africa. UN Member States committed to a similar goal at the 2005 UN World Summit held in September 2005. The evidence of a decline in aid flows led OECD Development Assistance Committee Chair Richard Manning to conclude that “donors will need to undertake major expansions of their core development programmes to Africa if they are to meet this target.”

ODA from major donor countries increased by 32% in 2005 to a record high of US\$106.8 billion. However, much of this was one-time forgiveness of long-ago defaulted debt, including a US\$13.9 billion worth of relief for Iraq and US\$5.5 billion for Nigeria. Reconstruction in Afghanistan and Iraq accounted for much of the new spending on development programmes. Aid to countries affected by the December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami amounted to a further US\$2.2 billion.

Notably, repayments on ODA loans exceeded new disbursements for the third year in a row.

The US was the largest donor in 2005, contributing US\$27.6 billion in aid and debt relief, pushing its ODA-to-GDP ratio from 0.17% to 0.22%. Although much of the increase went to Afghanistan and Iraq, some US\$4.2 billion went to sub-Saharan Africa (including Nigeria). If debt relief is excluded, French and German aid spending actually declined slightly in 2005 from the year before. Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden remained the

only countries to surpass the UN's 0.7% target debt-to-GDP ratio.

The OECD data is available online (www.oecd.org/dataoecd/52/18/37790990.pdf).

Contact: OECD, 2, rue André Pascal, F-75775 Paris Cedex 16, France, telephone +33-1/45 24 82 00, website (www.oecd.org).

JOINT INITIATIVE ON CS DEVELOPMENT

The European Commission and the World Bank have signed an agreement establishing a three-year programme to facilitate donor coordination in the area of civil society development, called the Donor Exchange, Coordination and Information Mechanism (DECIM). The agreement, under which the EC pledges Euro 500,000 for a three-year programme managed by the World Bank, was signed in Brussels on 12 December.

The programme will support the implementation of DECIM, which is open to bilateral, multilateral donors and private foundations, and which will benefit a wide range of civil society organizations. The programme will be jointly implemented, starting January 2007, by the signatories' organizations and managed by the World Bank. The DECIM initiative was developed through an elaborate process of consultations among the governmental and intergovernmental donor agencies, foundations and civil society organizations.

The DECIM initiative has four objectives:

- To share information on the operational programmes of the respective DECIM participants;
- To identify synergies and joint initiatives at the country and sub-regional level involving other actors of development;
- To engage other agencies and development partners in policy discussion on civil society development across the region; and
- To embark on and support joint initiatives to accelerate civil society development where opportunities arise.

For further information, please e-mail Jan Pakulski in the Bank's Europe and Central Asia (ECA) Region Social Development Team: <jpakulski@worldbank.org>.

NGO UPDATE

CAMPAIGN FOR DECENT WORK

A worldwide campaign for Decent Work was launched in Nairobi at the World Social Forum by the Decent Work Alliance and with the help of Wangari Maathai, Kenya's 2004 Nobel Peace Prize winner. It aims to place Decent Work, a concept covering equal access to employment, living wages, social protection, freedom from exploitation and union rights, at the core of development, economic, trade, financial and social policies at the national, European and International level through public campaigning and lobbying.

"As a guiding principle, the achievement of decent work for all should be the object and the outset of increased policy coherence between the main actors of global economic and social governance. The global institutions such as the IMF [International Monetary Fund], WTO [World Trade Organization] and World Bank must recognise that their policies are leading to more insecurity, irregularity and informality for most of the world's workers. For the sake of human well being we cannot let this continue," Bart Verstraeten, Social Alert International, said.

"Although decent work is starting to figure in international statements, it is still not being promoted by the main actors of global governance," said Guy Ryder, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) General Secretary. "We need to make those actors change their minds and realize that international trade and economic growth alone are neither creating enough good jobs nor eradicating poverty. Decent work is a central part of the solution to globalisation's unpopularity," he added.

Decent Work for Decent Life campaign is led by the International Trade Union Confederation, the Global Progressive Forum, Social Alert and Solidar. It aims to:

- build awareness of Decent Work amongst citizens, decision makers and key institutions;
- show that Decent Work is the only sustainable way out of poverty and is fundamental to build democracy and social cohesion;
- place Decent Work at the core of development, economic, trade, financial and social policies at the national, European and international level.

More information is available online (www.ituc-

csi.org/spip.php?rubrique69).

Contact: International Trade Union Confederation, Boulevard Albert II 5, 1210 Brussels, Belgium, telephone +32-0/22240211, e-mail <press@ituc-csi.org>, website (www.ituc-csi.org).

INT'L YEAR OF RECONCILIATION 2009

On 20 November 2006, the General Assembly, recognizing that reconciliation processes are particularly necessary and urgent in countries and regions of the world which had suffered, or were suffering, situations of conflict that had affected and divided societies in their various internal, national and international facets, proclaimed 2009 the International Year of Reconciliation (A/61/L.22).

The resolution invites concerned governments and international and non-governmental organizations to support reconciliation processes among affected and/or divided societies, and to plan and implement adequate cultural, educational and social programmes to promote the concept of reconciliation, including holding conferences and seminars and disseminating information about the issue.

To help raise awareness around the International Year, the Foundation for Subjective Experience and Research S.E.R. is announcing the 3rd Annual Reconciliation Week, to be held from 21-29 April 2007. The Foundation aims to foster reconciliation and peace, support of children and youth, cultural and educational projects.

Individuals and organizations are invited to sign up initiatives conducted in their areas of operations and programmes that have reconciliatory content in socio-economic, political and cultural fields. The projects may be initiated either personally, together with friends, as a group or as an organization. The project may concern different fields of endeavours: an exhibition, a panel, a stage play with a school class, a benefit concert, a conference, etc. The concept and conduct of the same, as well as duration, is up to the initiator.

Contact: S.E.R. Stiftung CH, Sekretariat Oberer Kanalweg 8, CH-2560 Nidau, e-mail <info@ser-foundation.ch>, website (www.ser-foundation.ch).

State of the World's Children 2007

Women and Children: The Double Dividend of Gender Equality

The State of the World's Children 2007 examines the discrimination and disempowerment women face throughout their lives—and outlines what must be done to eliminate gender discrimination and empower women and girls. It looks at the status of women today, discusses how gender equality will move all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) forward, and shows how investment in women's rights will ultimately produce a double dividend: advancing the rights of both women and children.

According to a report by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), eliminating gender discrimination and empowering women will have a profound and positive impact on the survival and wellbeing of children. *The State of the World's Children 2007—Women and Children: The Double Dividend of Gender Equality* was issued on UNICEF's 60th anniversary.

Gender equality produces the “double dividend” of benefiting both women and children and is pivotal to the health and development of families, communities and nations, the report finds. “Gender equality and the wellbeing of children are inextricably linked,” said UNICEF Executive Director Ann M. Veneman. “When women are empowered to lead full and productive lives, children and families prosper.”

The report notes that eliminating gender discrimination and empowering women will require enhancing women's influence in three distinct arenas: the household, the workplace and the political sphere. A change for the better in any one of these realms influences women's equality in the others and has a profound and positive impact on children everywhere.

However, despite progress in women's status in recent decades, the lives of millions of girls and women are overshadowed by discrimination, disempowerment and poverty. Girls and women are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS and women in most places earn less than men for equal work. Millions of women throughout the world are subject to physical and sexual violence, with little recourse to justice. As a result of discrimination, girls are less likely to attend school.

The report finds that women do not always have an equal say in crucial household decisions, which can have negative consequences for children. In only 10 of 30 developing countries surveyed did 50% or more of women participate in all household decisions, including those regarding major household spending, their own health care or their visits to friends or relatives outside the home.

Women's ability to control their own lives and make decisions that affect their families is closely linked to child nutrition, health and education, the report states. In

families where women are key decision makers, the proportion of resources devoted to children is far greater than those in which women have a less decisive role.

A study by the International Food Policy Research Institute found that if men and women had equal influence in decision making, the incidence of underweight children under three years old in South Asia would fall by up to 13 percentage points, resulting in 13.4 million fewer undernourished children in the region. In sub-Saharan Africa, an additional 1.7 million children would be adequately nourished.

The report notes that while there has been great progress in recent decades in engaging women in the labour force, there has been considerably less advance on improving the conditions under which they work, recognizing their unpaid work, eliminating discriminatory practices and laws related to property and inheritance rights, and providing for support for childcare. The report suggests that governments should undertake legislative, financial and administrative measures to create a strong and enabling environment for women's entrepreneurship and participation in the labour market. Social policies should be promoted to tackle discrimination in the workplace and to enable women and men to reconcile their work and family responsibilities.

The report also suggests that increasing women's participation in politics is vital to promote gender equality, empower women and fulfil children's rights. The remaining formal entry barriers must be dismantled, and women encouraged and supported by political parties to stand for office.

Gender initiatives also need the involvement and support of men, especially male parliamentarians and political leaders. Better data and research are required to fully assess the impact of women legislators on policies related to children.

The report is available online: (www.unicef.org/sowc07/report/report.php).

Contact: UNICEF, 3 UN Plaza, New York NY 10017, USA, telephone +1-212/824 6648, fax +1-212/303 7992, website (www.unicef.org).

FAO State of Food and Agriculture 2006: Food aid for food security?

This year the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), through its report, The State of Food and Agriculture 2006, examines the issues and controversies surrounding food aid and seeks to find ways to preserve its essential humanitarian role while minimizing the possibility of harmful secondary impacts.

FAO estimates that 854 million people in the world lack sufficient food for an active and healthy life, a number that has hardly changed since the early 1990s. Each year the World Food Programme (WFP) provides emergency food aid to millions of people—73 million in 2005 alone—and the number is rising rapidly with the increasing scale and frequency of natural and human-induced disasters. Emergency food aid now accounts for one half to two-thirds of all food aid, with 39 countries receiving it. The biggest food aid recipient in recent years has been the Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK), which receives an annual average of 1.1 million tonnes of grain equivalents – amounting to over 20% of the country's total food supply. Ethiopia and Bangladesh come respectively second and third.

“Food aid has rightly been credited with saving millions of lives; indeed, it is often the only thing standing between vulnerable people and death. Yet food aid is sharply criticized as a donor-driven response that creates dependency on the part of recipients and undermines local agricultural producers and traders upon whom sustainable food security depends. The economic evidence regarding these issues is surprisingly thin, but it confirms that the timing and targeting of food aid are central to achieving immediate food security objectives while minimizing the potential for harm. Reforms to the international food aid system are necessary but they should be undertaken carefully because lives are at risk,” *SOFA 2006* warns.

Despite the magnitude of the global food security challenge, food aid is relatively small in relation to global production and trade, averaging about 10 million tonnes per year. This amounts to less than 2% of global cereal exports and less than 0.5% of global production. Food aid has changed significantly in recent years. Until about a decade ago, most food aid was provided bilaterally on a government-to-government basis and was sold on the open market in recipient countries. But, currently, about 75% of all food aid is now targeted directly to hungry people through emergency operations or projects addressing chronic hunger.

According to FAO, development specialists have long been concerned with the risk of imported food aid undermining local agricultural development. Food aid can depress and destabilize local market prices if it is not well managed, potentially threatening the livelihoods of local producers and traders upon whom long-term food security depends. Studies show that these destabilizing effects of food aid are most severe when it arrives at the wrong time or when it is not targeted at needy households.

The risk of food aid displacing commercial trade has also been

recognized for a long time. Although food aid can be beneficial to recipient countries, enabling them to save scarce foreign exchange, many commercial exporters consider it to be a form of unfair competition. This has been one of the most contentious issues discussed in the Doha Round of World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations. Studies find that food aid partially displaces commercial imports by recipient countries. The trade displacement effect of food aid when it is a short-term phenomenon may actually promote commercial trade in the longer term, perhaps by stimulating consumer demand for a wider variety of foods. Food aid that is well targeted to insecure households and needy people can minimize the trade displacement effect, the report suggests.

According to FAO, a policy gap exists between food aid and food security on many levels. Bridging this gap will require: (i) improved food security analysis to ensure that responses are needs-based, strategic and timely; (ii) the incorporation of needs assessment as part of a process linked to monitoring and evaluation, rather than a one-off event driven by resource requirements; and (iii) support to national and regional institutions to make food security a primary policy concern, reinforced by interventions at the global level focused on reforms to the international food aid and humanitarian systems.

The report notes that reforms to the international food aid system are necessary, but they should be undertaken giving due consideration to the needs of those whose lives are at risk. “Much of the debate on food aid is based on surprisingly weak empirical evidence; nevertheless, it is known that the consequences of food aid are closely linked to timing and targeting. A few basic reforms could improve the effectiveness and efficiency of food aid while addressing legitimate concerns regarding the risk of causing adverse consequences.”

International food aid currently provides about 10 million tonnes of commodities a year to some 200 million needy people, at an estimated total cost of US\$2 billion. The report acknowledges that there is no substitute for food aid in coping with humanitarian crises and in some cases with chronic hunger. However, food aid should essentially, be seen as one of many options within a broader range of social protection measures to assure the access of needy people to food and to help households manage risks, the report concludes.

Contact: Prabhu Pingali, Director, Agricultural and Development Economics Division, FAO, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy, telephone +39-6/5705 4217, fax +39-6/5705 4975, e-mail <prabhu.pingali@fao.org>, website (www.fao.org).

Security Council and General Assembly Hold Discussions on Post-conflict Peacebuilding

On 31 January an open debate was held in the Security Council on the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) to take stock of recent PBC work. The Presidents of both the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the General Assembly, in addition to the PBC Chair and Vice-Chairs, were invited to participate. A General Assembly debate on the future of post-conflict peacebuilding was held on 6 February.

Security Council Open Debate

Speaking before the Security Council, Ismael Gaspar Martins (Angola), Chairman of the Organizational Committee (OC) said the Peacebuilding Commission would only be relevant and successful if it paved the way for an engaged partnership linking it with the donor community, regional organizations, multilateral financial institutions and the governments, civil society and private sectors of countries on its agenda. The Commission's efforts should be aimed at preventing relapse and moving countries swiftly onto the path of stability, recovery and development, he said. Noting that peacebuilding is a complex and long-term process requiring persistent and long-term commitment by all, he stressed that concrete action is more important to those suffering the direct consequences of conflict than eloquent statements.

Carolyn McAskie, Assistant Secretary-General in the Peacebuilding Support Office, said staffing requirements are almost complete and budget discussions continued apace. The Secretary-General has recently announced the allocation under the Peacebuilding Fund—US\$35 million for Burundi—and would soon announce one for Sierra Leone. The Fund, however, could only act as a catalyst as it cannot address the resource needs of countries emerging from conflict, while the PBC's role in marshalling resources is much broader. She stressed that the PBC had an important role in bringing all the actors together to fulfil its mandate to advise on and propose integrated strategies.

Johan Løvald (Norway), Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's country-specific meeting on Burundi said the situation remained fragile and the country required continued international support. He said the Commission's engagement with Burundi would finalize its work plan in early February and would commence work on an integrated approach to peacebuilding, clearly outlining Burundi's commitments and the response to be provided by the international community in critical areas.

Frank Majoor (Netherlands), Chair of the meeting on Sierra Leone, highlighted ongoing consultations to finalise the priority plan for financing from the Peacebuilding Fund. A country envelope in excess of the initially

indicated US\$25 million is expected to be made available. Furthermore, the World Bank's International Development Association and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had agreed that Sierra Leone had made sufficient progress to reach the completion point under the Enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative.

Sierra Leone's delegate said that assessment of the Commission's work must be based on its objectives and mandate as a "special mechanism created to address the special needs of a special group of countries." Burundi's representative said his government wished to hold a donors' roundtable in March and appealed for the Commission's support on three levels: the presence of its members at the roundtable, planned for 14 March; the Commission's support for government plans to mobilize donors so as to ensure the event's success; and, since most of the donors were members of the Commission, each Member State was invited to announce its contribution.

Oscar A. Avalle, special representative of the World Bank to the UN, said the World Bank's country directors and teams had worked closely with UN country teams and with members of the PBC and its Support Office. The World Bank had not yet attended meetings in the OC, but is ready to do so as soon as requested by Member States.

Country-specific meetings were held in December and PBC members have requested that detailed work plans and corresponding calendars on peacebuilding activities be presented for the next formal country-specific meetings. A mapping exercise is currently taking place, designed to identify ways in which international donor assistance in Burundi and Sierra Leone is currently allocated, with particular attention to the share of funds received by the PBC-identified priority areas.

General Assembly Day-long Discussion

On 6 February, General Assembly President Sheikh Haya Rashed Al Khalifa (Bahrain) opened the day-long discussion on peacebuilding, noting that while the PBC had embarked on crucial tasks in Burundi and Sierra

Leone, the challenge now was for the international community to deliver on pledges to assist the peoples of those countries in their efforts to rebuild the institutional and human capacity needed for comprehensive and lasting peace.

All Member States had a collective responsibility to ensure that the strengthened United Nations peacebuilding architecture would develop as envisioned, she said, also making reference to the Security Council's 31 January debate.

She emphasized the strong connection between poverty, weak State capacity and instability, which in turn led to relapses into conflict. The United Nations must play a leading role in helping countries build and strengthen institutional capacities, so as to promote coexistence and the peaceful and sustainable resolution of conflicts, she stressed, noting that national authorities played a critical role in creating the right atmosphere for sustainable peace, and stressed the importance of affirming national ownership.

While the Peacebuilding Fund could play a vital role in providing countries with start-up funding for early recovery, the Fund should not be seen as a substitute for the long-term financial support needed in the transition from recovery to sustainable development. To date, donors had contributed and pledged more than US\$140 million to the Fund and Member States should work together to reach the US\$250 million target.

ECOSOC President Dalius Cekuolis (Lithuania) said that organ's ad hoc advisory groups on Guinea-Bissau and Burundi had played a pioneering role in advancing the integrated approach to peace and development. Their work was based on the recognition that the Economic and Social Council's mandate enabled it to play an important role in coordinating economic and social reconstruction in post-conflict countries and its capacities remained valuable and relevant with the advent of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Peter Burian (Slovakia), President of the Security Council, said the Council's debate had been aimed at giving impetus to a mutually supportive partnership among all actors contributing to the peacebuilding process and at facilitating the PBC's work. Council members had stressed that the Commission should focus on its core mandate of providing recommendations to post-conflict States in danger of falling back into conflict, and useful assessments to the Security Council about specific countries.

Jamaica's representative, speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, emphasized that last week's open Security Council debate and today's meeting provided only the basis for some preliminary exchanges that might inform, but not substitute for, the Peacebuilding

Commission's annual report and subsequent review to be presented to the Assembly as mandated by resolution 60/180. The Non-Aligned Movement would like the Commission to be more proactive, its rules to be strengthened, and the inclusion of requirements for regular meetings of its Organizational Committee, which should act as a planning, review and evaluation mechanism between country-specific meetings.

Mirjana Mladineo (Croatia) said it was important to recall that the Commission had been established to fill a gap in United Nations peacebuilding. For the first time, the UN had a mechanism ensuring that countries emerging from conflict had a better chance for sustainable peace. In that regard, the Commission's establishment was truly historic. For the peacebuilding process to be effective, national consensus and the political commitment of the government in question was needed.

Sustainable international support for that effort was also needed, however. By working together, governments and the international community needed to create a conducive environment for democracy, good governance, human rights and the rule of law. The Assembly's involvement, with its constant focus on those issues, was of utmost importance, the representative stressed.

Carmen Maria Gallardo Hernandez (El Salvador), Chairperson, Working Group on Lessons Learned of the Peacebuilding Commission, said countries emerging from conflict aspired to achieve a way of life that provided security, sustainable development and the rule of law. Those that had recently made the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding had shown the political will to reach those goals. However, they lacked the necessary financial and other resources, which hampered the projects aimed at making the transformation to a working peace. The Working Group's mission was to compile a body of memory and a series of experiences for the benefit of future UN activities.

She said that, while it was necessary to respect the national character of each post-conflict situation, there were some similarities, including those relating to new forms of relationships between former adversaries, the need for civil security, youth employment and other requirements for the consolidation of national endeavours to avoid the risk of relapsing into violence.

The Working Group's mission should constitute a source of inspiration and enrichment in order to guide the peacebuilding process and point the way forward in countries emerging from conflict. It should listen to civil society, the private sector, various political actors and the United Nations system, all of which played a crucial role in resolving conflicts.

More information on the Peacebuilding Commission is available online (www.un.org/peace/peacebuilding).

Third Session of the Human Rights Council

The third session of the Human Rights Council took place from 29 November - 8 December and was largely devoted to future work of the Council. It started immediately following the conclusion of the second session and adopted six resolutions and one decision, as well as its annual report to the General Assembly.

During the third session, interactive debates and dialogues were held with the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide and the Commission of Inquiry on Lebanon. Discussions took place on missions to the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and with the four facilitators from the Working Group on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 60/251 on the Universal Periodic Review mechanism, the review of mechanisms, the complaint procedure, and the Expert Advice Body.

Juan E. Mendez, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, said the prevention of the genocide was a legal and moral imperative. Prevention of genocide required early warning based on indicators or warning signs for situations that risked deteriorating. Mr. Mendez said he would collaborate with the Human Rights Council while he provided early warning reports to the Security Council. He would have regular relations with the Council with regard to country situations so that the Council might take urgent action.

Stelios Perrakis, Commissioner of the Commission of Inquiry on Lebanon, said the conflict, which lasted 33 days, inflicted serious damages and losses on Lebanon. It had exacted a heavy human toll, with 1,191 people reported dead, 4,409 injured, and 900,000 people fleeing their homes; roads, factories, water sources, cultural and economic infrastructure and homes were affected, among many others.

Mr. Perrakis said the use of some weapons was illegal, such as the use of cluster munitions, which were mainly fired during the last 72 hours of the conflict. Their use was excessive and not justified by military necessity, and went beyond the arguments of proportionality. He stressed they were a flagrant violation and that there had been violation of the right to life and property.

The Council also debated methods of work and rules of procedure for the future work of the body and decided at to establish a working group that will formulate recommendations on the Council's agenda, annual programme of work, methods of work, and rules of procedure. The first meeting of the working group took place from 15-19 January 2007 and was

chaired by the President of the Council and facilitated by the Ambassadors of Guatemala and the Philippines.

The third session of the Council also discussed the status of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which the President recalled the Council had adopted on 29 June at its first session, but that what was expected to be a simple endorsement by the General Assembly had become a rather long process of re-negotiation of the text.

In a discussion on "other issues" related to the protection and promotion of human rights, the Council discussed the situation of children involved in armed conflict, human rights violations linked to sexual orientation and gender identity, and the situation of human rights in various countries of the world. It was vital to protect children in all circumstances, and this was especially important during armed conflict where children often were victims of grave human rights violations, speakers said. Children were involved in armed conflicts in many parts of the world, including Sri Lanka. The situation of children under foreign occupation was also raised.

Speakers expressed deep concern at ongoing human rights violations around the world based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The principles of universality and non-discrimination required that these be addressed. All Special Procedures and treaty bodies should continue to integrate consideration of human rights violations based on sexual orientation within their relevant mandates. Tackling stigma and discrimination was about political and moral leadership: from politicians, religious figures, communities, the media, campaigning organizations, and from individuals, including how each behaved.

The Council adopted six resolutions and one decision during the session, including on the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory; Preparations for the Durban Review Conference; Global efforts for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive follow-up to the World Conference and the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action; regional cooperation for the protection and promotion

of human rights in the Asian and Pacific region; the report of the Commission of Inquiry on Lebanon; and implementation of General Assembly resolution 60/251.

Among other issues raised was the situation of human rights in a number of countries, including Darfur. Speakers welcomed the calling of the special session on Darfur, which was held on 12-13 December following a request from Finland, on behalf of 29 countries. They called for a comprehensive and constructive dialogue on the situation, stressing that this would “give a clear signal that the Council would take action everywhere gross violations of human rights occurred.”

Decision S-4/101 on the Situation of Human Rights in Darfur adopted during the special session requested the dispatch of a High-Level Mission to assess the human rights situation in Darfur and the needs of the Sudan.

Appointed by the President of the Human Rights Council following consultation with the members of the Council, the five-person High-Level Mission to Darfur will be led by Jody Williams, 1997 Nobel Peace Prize recipient and co-founder of the Nobel Women’s Initiative established in 2006. Sima Samar, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Sudan will also participate in the Mission. The

President has also invited, in their personal capacity, Mart Nutt, Member of Parliament of Estonia and Member of the Council of Europe’s European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance; Bertrand Ramcharan, former Acting United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and Deputy High Commissioner; Patrice Tonda, Permanent Representative of Gabon to the International Organizations in Geneva; and Makarim Wibisono, President of the 61st session of the Commission on Human Rights and Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the International Organizations in Geneva, to be part of the High-Level Mission.

The Mission is requested to assess the human rights situation in Darfur and the needs of the Sudan in this regard, and to report to the Council at its fourth regular session to be held from 12 March to 5 April 2007.

Information on the third session is available online (www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/3session/index.htm).

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Sixty-First Session of the General Assembly

The 61st session of the General Assembly (GA) was in many ways about sweeping reform and making the United Nations more effective, credible and democratic. The session was marked by intense debates and negotiations on a number of recommendations emanating from the 2005 World Summit outcome document (see NGLS Roundup 124), including Security Council reform, disarmament and non proliferation, Mandate Review and System-wide Coherence, among several others.

In her General Assembly opening speech on 12 September, GA President Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa (Bahrain), the third woman ever to hold this position, said, “I believe it is the common responsibility of you, the Member States, to make the General Assembly and the United Nations even more effective. As efforts to revitalize the General Assembly are under way, we must not lose sight of the main purpose of these actions: to meet the rising expectations of the hundreds of millions of peoples around the world.”

The General Assembly opened its sixty-first session by convening the first-ever United Nations High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. Sheikha Haya told the gathering that, if harnessed constructively, “migration can have a profound effect on development,” with migrants’ remittances to their native countries proving particularly helpful in reducing poverty.

The Assembly then held a High-Level Meeting on the Midterm Review of the Brussels Programme of Action for

Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, which adopted a declaration by which participants recommitted themselves to meeting the special needs of the 50 United Nations-identified least developed countries (LDCs).

Among the main highlights of the Assembly's 61st session was its appointment of Ban Ki-moon, former Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea, as Kofi Annan's successor, the eighth Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Assembly was able to adopt a resolution to strengthen the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)—a key element of the reform agenda endorsed by the 2005 World Summit. Among other things, the Council is now set to regularly convene a new Development Cooperation Forum and to share its experience in helping post-conflict countries with the one-year-old Peacebuilding Commission. Another achievement during the 61st session was the adoption of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities—the first major human rights treaty of the twenty-first century (see *Go Between 111*).

Two resolutions were adopted on the topic of religion and interfaith cooperation (A/RES/61/221 and A/RES/61/161). A/RES/61/221 of 20 December 2006, cosponsored by Pakistan and the Philippines, was adopted by consensus. It calls for the organization of a High-level Dialogue on interreligious and intercultural cooperation of the promotion of tolerance, understanding and universal respect on matters of freedom of religion or belief and cultural diversity (OP 14). This High-level Dialogue could take place in September 2007. The resolution also requests the establishment of a focal unit in the Secretariat to ensure the organizational follow up of and overall coordination and coherence in all UN-related interreligious, intercultural and intercivilizational cooperation efforts (OP 16). Some of the initiatives going on at the regional and national levels include the Alliance of Civilizations initiative, the Bali Declaration on Building Interfaith Harmony within the International Community, the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, the Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures and the Tripartite Forum in Interfaith Cooperation for Peace.

During his final address as UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan called upon all Member States to play their part in establishing a true multilateral world order, with a renewed, dynamic United Nations at its centre. "Yes, I remain convinced that the only answer to this divided world must be a truly United Nations," he said, stressing that such issues as climate change, HIV/AIDS, fair trade, migration and human rights had each acquired a global dimension that could only be addressed by global action, agreed and coordinated "through this most universal of institutions."

Security Council Reform

The Assembly returned once again to the issue of Security Council reform, seeking to end the 15-year stalemate over how to reshape the most powerful United Nations organ and remedy the democratic and representative deficit by which many felt it was afflicted. A number of speakers stressed that the current Security Council, with its five permanent veto-wielding members—China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States—and ten rotating members, reflected the anachronistic, post-Second World War global balance of power.

Other delegates said Council reform was central to revitalizing the UN and any changes should encompass expansion of the organ, both in the permanent and non-permanent membership categories, as well as the further improvement of its working methods. But the question of who would get a seat on an expanded Council—and with what powers—loomed large. Speakers said the Assembly's efforts to agree on a formula had been stalled for the past year, following what had seemed like promising bids put forward in 2005 by a number of political alliances and regional groupings pressing to restyle the Council for the twenty-first century. The powerful body—in which Africa, Latin America and the Arab world lacked a permanent voice—was still heavily weighted towards the developed world and could not realistically speak for the international community.

Wrapping up the two-day debate after having heard nearly 70 speakers, Sheikha Haya said that, while a consensus had emerged on the need for the Council membership to reflect twenty-first century geopolitical realities, delegations were divided over the path to change, with particular regard to additional members. She presented three possible options for that process: continuing the process within the framework of the General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group on Security Council Reform; allowing Member States themselves to continue their efforts to untangle the knotty issue; or an inclusive consultation and negotiation process, led by the Assembly President, to reach the broadest possible agreement.

First Committee

The Assembly adopted 54 texts—following 45 separate recorded votes—on the recommendation of its First Committee (Disarmament and International Security), including a groundbreaking resolution entitled "Towards an Arms Trade Treaty: establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms." The text represents a first step towards establishing international standards in the conventional arms trade following years of deadlock in that field. The Assembly also adopted texts on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones,

the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW), the Conventions on Biological and Chemical Weapons and anti-personnel mines, measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and preventing an arms race in outer space, among others.

Second Committee

Keeping in mind the 2015 deadline for attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Second Committee (Economic and Financial) drafted more than 40 draft development-related resolutions and decisions aimed at bolstering the efforts of Member States still struggling to meet their targets, particularly least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, transition economies and middle-income nations, a group not normally considered as needing assistance. Several of the resolutions touched on general aspects of development economics—for example, on the need for an equitable multilateral trading system and the need to meet the widespread demand among poor people for financial services—as well as the specific challenges faced by individual countries, such as insurmountable government debt and low commodity prices.

The “Group of 77” developing countries and China (G-77/China) tabled a resolution emphasizing shared responsibility between creditors and debtors for preventing unsustainable debt. The Assembly adopted that text unanimously, although a few Member States had previously questioned, in a December meeting of the Committee, whether the world still faced a debt “crisis,” as indicated by the resolution’s title.

Third Committee

On the recommendation of its Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural), the Assembly adopted 48 resolutions and 8 decisions, including a groundbreaking text adopting and opening for signature a treaty on enforced disappearances. Measures condemning the human rights situations in several Member States once again provoked heated debate, with the establishment of the Human Rights Council and its relationship to the Third Committee adding a new element to the discussions, specifically, whether the new Council was the proper forum to act on resolutions.

The International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance—adopted by the Assembly on 20 December and which had been adopted by the Human Rights Council in June—recognizes the right of persons not to be subjected to enforced disappearance, regardless of circumstances, and the right of victims to justice and reparation. It commits States Parties to criminalize enforced disappearance, to bring those responsible to justice and to take preventive measures. An innovative follow-up mechanism, in the form of a Committee on Enforced Disappearances, will

serve a preventive function by making urgent appeals and conducting field visits, when necessary, and even alerting the Secretary-General in the event of massive and systematic violations.

A measure that would have had the Assembly also adopt the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples had been tabled in the Committee, but after extensive debate, the text was amended to defer consideration of and action on the draft Declaration until sometime before the end of the current sixty-first session.

The question of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance was another major subject of Third Committee proceedings, with South Africa sponsoring a draft resolution proposing a 2009 review conference to examine progress made in implementing the 2001 Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

In addition, the Assembly adopted texts on the advancement of women, the protection of the rights of children, social development, globalization, the right to self-determination, human rights and extreme poverty; the right to development and the right to food, among others.

Fourth Committee

Acting on the recommendations of its Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization), the Assembly adopted 25 resolutions and 2 decisions—16 by a recorded vote—on issues including decolonization, information, effects of atomic radiation, international cooperation for the peaceful uses of outer space, the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and Israeli practices in occupied Arab territories. Nine of the texts focused on the Middle East, including four on UNRWA and five on the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices. The Committee also reviewed United Nations peacekeeping and the University for Peace.

The Committee also approved two texts on the peaceful uses of outer space, one of which contained a proposal to establish a United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (SPIDER).

Fifth Committee

With 2006 being a “personnel year” for the Fifth Committee under its biennial cycle of work, and with reform high on the Organization’s agenda, much attention during the session was devoted to the efforts to reform human resources management and the procurement system, review of the governance and oversight system, and strengthen the international civil service. Proposals presented in the Secretary-General’s

Investing in the United Nations report sought to speed up recruitment; introduce unified contractual arrangements; harmonize conditions of service at Headquarters and in the field; and designate 2,500 career civilian peacekeeping positions to ensure continuity and expertise (see *Go-Between* 109).

The Committee also opened the way for uninterrupted financing of the Organization's activities by agreeing on the Organization's regular and peacekeeping scales of assessment for 2007-2009, defined the budget outline for the next biennium, and approved the US\$1.88 billion Capital Master Plan to renovate the headquarters complex in New York by mid-2014.

Sixth Committee

The Sixth Committee (Legal) this year approved more than 15 draft resolutions and decisions for adoption by the Assembly, one of them being a mechanism for considering criminal accountability of United Nations

officials and another continuing the process of making operational a modern internal justice system to replace the current "dysfunctional" one by 1 January 2008.

The Assembly decided to establish an ad hoc committee to consider criminal accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission. The proposed Committee would meet from 9-13 April 2007 to examine legal aspects of a report to be prepared by a five-member group of experts. It would then report to the Assembly on how best to ensure that United Nations staff and experts on mission were neither effectively exempt from the consequences of criminal acts nor unjustly penalized.

All General Assembly resolutions can be viewed online (www.un.org/ga/61).

NGLS Publications

Available upon request, NGLS's latest in the Development Dossier Series

Debating NGO Accountability, by Jem Bendell

This Dossier attempts to define organizational accountability and looks at NGO accountability in relation to international development assistance and global governance. It also examines new regulations and initiatives on NGO accountability, including voluntary mechanisms, as well as donor accountability. Finally, it offers a broader perspective, suggesting that democracy and human rights should be placed firmly at the centre of the debate about NGO accountability.

Debating NGO Accountability is available online (www.un-ngls.org).

For a hard copy version, please send an email to ngls@unctad.org.

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

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