

# GO

# Between

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

### WIPO ADOPTS DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

The General Assembly of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) met for its 31st session in Geneva from 27 September-5 October, bringing together its 181 member states to review WIPO's activities of the past year and to agree on its agenda for the next year. It concluded by adopting a proposal tabled by developing countries entitled *Proposal for Establishing a Development Agenda for the World Intellectual Property Organisation*, which aims to help ensure effective technology transfer to developing countries and a proper balance in intellectual property norms between the respective interests of producers and users of technical knowledge, among other things. It will also integrate in a more systematic manner the development dimension in all of WIPO's work.

*(Continued on Page 2)*

### KYOTO PROTOCOL TO ENTER INTO FORCE

On 18 November UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan received the Russian Federation's instrument of ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, thus triggering the 90-day countdown to the entry into force of the climate change agreement. "This is a historic step forward in the world's efforts to combat a truly global threat," Mr. Annan said.

*(Continued on Page 3)*

### S-G PAYS TRIBUTE TO YASSER ARAFAT

On 11 November, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan spoke before the General Assembly, paying tribute to President Yasser Arafat shortly after his death.

"For nearly four decades, Yasser Arafat expressed and symbolized in his person the national

aspirations of the Palestinian people. He was one of those few leaders who was instantly recognizable by people in any walk of life, all around the world.

*(Continued on Page 3)*

### INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MICROCREDIT

On 18 November the United Nations launched the International Year of Microcredit in an effort to build support for making financial services more accessible to poor and low-income people. It will aim to raise public awareness about microcredit and microfinance, and promote innovative partnerships among governments, donors, international organizations, NGOs, the private sector, academia and microfinance clients.

*(Continued on Page 4)*

### MILLENNIUM SUMMIT+5

The General Assembly has generally agreed on how the Millennium Summit+5 will take place. Last May, the GA decided to hold in New York in 2005 a ministerial level meeting to review the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the integrated follow-up to other major UN conferences and summits. On 22 November, the Assembly decided the ministerial meeting would be held from 14-16 September 2005, including three days of plenary debate, made up of two meetings per day and four roundtable discussions.

### FAO COUNCIL ADOPTS RIGHT TO FOOD GUIDELINES

On 24 November, the Council, the executive governing body of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), adopted voluntary guidelines that would "support the progressive realization of



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### *UN Update*

WIPO Adopts Development Agenda	1
Kyoto Protocol To Enter Into Force	1
S-G Pays Tribute to Yasser Arafat	1
International Year of Microcredit	1
Millennium Summit +5	1
FAO Council Adopts Right to Food Guidelines	1
ILO and UNHCR Strengthen Cooperation	4
Int'l Day for the Eradication of Poverty	5
International Day for Children: 20 November	5
UNICEF: Child Survival Report Card	6
First Committee Concludes 2004 Session	6
Eliminating Violence Against Women	7
S-G Reports on Staffing Equality	8
ILO: Future of Work in the Information Society	8
International Day for Disaster Reduction	9
State of the World's Cities Report 2004/2005	9
World Habitat Day: 4 October	10
Basel Convention COP-7 Meets	11
CITES COP-13: Strengthening Wildlife Management	12
Childhood Pesticide Poisoning	13
World Food Day: Biodiversity & Food Security	13
FAO Reports on Insects and Food Security	14
World Bank Report: Doing Business in 2005	14
UNODC: Container Control Programme	15

### *UN/NGO Cooperation*

WAVE: Ending Gender Apartheid	15
ILC Launches New Website	16

### *Calendar Insert*

**i-iv**

### *NGO Update*

Child Soldiers Global Report 2004	16
World Rural Women's Day	17
Sustaining a Future for Agriculture	18

### *Other*

World Disaster Report	19
IOM Glossary on Migration	19

### *Focus*

WSIS – Moving into Phase II	20
UN Launches "Action Two" Reform Initiative on Human Rights	22
General Assembly Commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of ICPD	23
CEDAW at 25: Are We Moving Forward?	24
2005 Education For All Global Monitoring Report	25
51st Session of the UNCTAD Trade and Development Board	26

the right to adequate food in the context of national food security."

The adoption of the Right to Food Guidelines comes two months after the FAO Committee on World Food Security endorsed them after over a year and a half of negotiations (see *Go Between 104*). According to FAO, the guidelines were conceived "to provide practical guidance" to help countries implement their obligations relating to the right to adequate food, which in turn should improve the chances of reaching the hunger reduction goals set by the 1996 World Food Summit and the United Nations Millennium Assembly. Both agreed to cut the number of hungry people in the world by half by 2015.

The voluntary guidelines take into account a wide range of human rights principles, including equality and non-discrimination, participation and inclusion, accountability and the rule of law, as well as the principle that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interrelated and interdependent.

"The guidelines are a human rights-based tool addressed to all States to help implement good practices in food security policies. They cover the full range of actions that need to be taken at the national level to construct an enabling environment for people to feed themselves in dignity and to establish appropriate safety nets for those who cannot. This landmark event signifies universal acceptance of what the right to food really means," said Hartwig de Haen, Assistant Director-General of FAO's Economic and Social Department.

"Now we face the challenge of putting these guidelines into everyday practice in a way that will bring an end to the injustice of hunger. The guidelines provide us with a new instrument to better define the obligation of the State and to address the needs of the hungry and malnourished and we should use them to empower the poor and hungry

to claim their rights," Giuliano Pucci, FAO Legal Counsel, stressed. More information is available online ([www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/008/J3345e/J3345e01.htm](http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/008/J3345e/J3345e01.htm)).

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### **WIPO ADOPTS DEVELOPMENT AGENDA (CONT FROM P1)**

During its meetings, the WIPO General Assembly debated and reviewed a number of issues, including: audiovisual performers rights; the protection of broadcasting organizations to update international intellectual property standards for broadcasting in the information age; and the convening of a Diplomatic Conference for the Adoption of a Revised Trademark Law Treaty (TLT) to update the existing treaty (to be held in March 2006), among others.

On 5 October, the General Assembly adopted a proposal presented by Brazil and Argentina and co-sponsored by Bolivia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Iran, Kenya, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania and Venezuela. The core concept of the proposal is the integration of a development dimension into WIPO's activities (intellectual property norm-setting, transfer of technology and technical cooperation). Specifically, the proposal suggests that the upcoming General Assembly consider the following actions:

- b adoption of a high-level declaration on Intellectual Property (IP) and development, addressing the development concerns that have been raised by WIPO Members States and the international

- community at large;
- b an amendment to the WIPO Convention in order to explicitly incorporate the development dimension into the organization's objectives and functions;
- b inclusion of provisions on transfer of technology, anticompetitive practices and safeguarding the public interest flexibilities into treaties under negotiation;
- b the establishment of a multi-year WIPO programme for technical cooperation with the aim of strengthening national intellectual property offices so that they can become an acting element in national development policies;
- b the creation of a Standing Committee on IP and Transfer of Technology, which would consider, among other things, the negotiation of an Agreement on Transfer of Technology to developing and least developed countries (LDCs);
- b the organization of a joint WIPO, World Trade Organization (WTO), and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) international seminar on intellectual property and development;
- b the adoption of measures to ensure the wide participation of civil society in WIPO activities and a change of WIPO's terminology with regard to NGOs; and
- b the establishment of a Working Group for a further discussion on the implementation of the Development Agenda and work programmes for WIPO.

In his closing remarks, the General Assembly Chair, Ambassador Bernard Kessedjian (France), welcomed the spirit of cooperation that he said had characterized the talks, in particular the talks to enhance the development dimension in WIPO's work, suggesting that it had added renewed impetus to the future work of the organization.

Consumers International (CI) welcomed the adoption of the WIPO Development Agenda, which it defined as a "breakthrough move." Anna Fielder, Director of the CI's Office for Developed and Transitional Economies, said, "The WIPO decision to move on this resolution is good for creators and consumers alike. We particularly welcome the willingness to look at increasing access to knowledge and technology in developing countries." James Love of the Consumer Project on Technology said WIPO's adoption of the development agenda represented "a change in culture and direction for WIPO. We are moving forward and WIPO will never be the same."

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#### KYOTO PROTOCOL (CONT. FROM P1)

The Protocol will become legally binding on its 128 Parties on 16 February 2005, at which time 30 industrialized countries will be legally bound to reduce and limit their emissions of six greenhouse gases linked to global warming. The formal handover of the accession papers on ratification follows a 27 October decision by the Russian Federal Council to ratify the Convention and the 4 November signing of the bill by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"The fight against climate change has been under starters orders for far too long. But it is finally out of the blocks and running as a result of this very welcome decision to ratify by the Russian Parliament," said Klaus Toepfer, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

"The winning tape, in other words the goal of stabilizing the climate and securing the stability of the planet, is however a long way off and we must now re-double efforts to deliver the even deeper cuts in emissions needed," he stressed.

#### S-G PAYS TRIBUTE TO YASSER ARAFAT (CONT. FROM P1)

"President Arafat will always be remembered for having led the Palestinians, in 1988, to accept the principle of peaceful coexistence between Israel and a future Palestinian State. By signing the Oslo accords in 1993, he took a giant step towards the realization of this vision.

"It is tragic that he did not live to see it fulfilled. Now that he has gone, both Israelis and Palestinians, and the friends of both peoples throughout the world, must make even greater efforts to bring about the peaceful realization of the Palestinian right of self-determination.

"Thirty years ago this week, Yasser Arafat stood in this chamber, when he became the first representative of a non-governmental organization to speak to a plenary session of the General Assembly. One year later, the General Assembly adopted resolution 3237, conferring on the PLO the status of Observer in the Assembly and in other international conferences held under United Nations auspices.

"But the relationship between the United Nations and the Palestinian people is far deeper and broader, and dates back much longer, than that. For 55 years, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency has provided humanitarian assistance, health care, housing and education to Palestinians. Today, there are a total of 19 UN agencies and bodies lending their assistance to the Palestinian people. We must and will continue that work, for as

*On 15 October, Argentina, Denmark, Greece, Japan and Tanzania won seats as non-permanent members of the Security Council.*

*The General Assembly voted in the five uncontested candidates for two-year terms that begin 1 January 2005, replacing Angola, Chile, Germany, Pakistan and Spain on the 15-member body.*

*The other members of the so-called "elected 10"—Algeria, Benin, Brazil, the Philippines and Romania—will remain on the Council through 31 December 2005.*

*The five permanent, veto-bearing countries are China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States.*



*On 4 October, the heads of the United Nations and the International Criminal Court (ICC), the first permanent tribunal to try war crimes, signed an agreement to encourage greater cooperation and consultation between them.*

*In a ceremony at UN headquarters in New York, Secretary-General Kofi Annan and ICC President Judge Philippe Kirsch signed an agreement, which recognizes the status and mandate of each organization and outlines that the two institutions will cooperate closely on administrative and judicial matters and consult each other on issues of mutual interest.*

*Established by the Rome Statute of 1998, the ICC is based in The Hague in the Netherlands and can try cases involving people charged with committing war crimes after 1 July 2002. As of 27 September 2004, 97 nations have signed on as members of the Court.*

long as the Palestinian people need our help.

"Together with our partners, we will also continue our efforts to achieve the full implementation of the Road Map, as endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 1515. Our goal is the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, based on Security Council resolutions 242, 338 and 1397. This includes as its centrepiece the establishment of a sovereign, democratic, viable and contiguous Palestinian State, living side by side in peace with a secure Israel.

"Though President Arafat did not live to see the attainment of these goals, the world will continue to strive towards them," the Secretary-General concluded.

#### **INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MICROCREDIT (CONT. FROM P1)**

At opening celebrations at UN headquarters in New York, experts addressed the challenge of expanding the reach of microfinance by identifying best practices and the hurdles to wider availability. One key need is to collect and analyse hard data on the state of microfinance: its availability by region, client profiles, and types and quantities of services offered.

"The world has set an ambitious course to meet the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of cutting in half, by 2015, the proportion of people living on less than one dollar a day. Microfinance is a powerful tool to help us get there," said Mark Malloch Brown, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

More than one billion people—90% of the world's self-employed poor—lack access to basic financial services, depriving them of the means to improve their incomes, secure their existence, and cope with emergencies. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is calling for global efforts to further accelerate the growth of microfinance in order to enable millions of people around the world with little income or collateral to invest—especially women—to start up businesses, save, and support their families' education and welfare. "Poor people are becoming part of the global financial market and want to access a greater range of financial services and products. To meet their needs, we have to help microfinance move closer towards the formal financial system," Lennart Båge, President of IFAD, said.

Over the last five years the microfinance sector has grown at an average rate of 25%-30%. Sixty-three of the world's top microfinance institutions (MFIs) had an average rate of return of about 2.5% of total assets, comparing favourably with returns in the commercial banking sector. Banks can no longer view credit to the poor as a bad risk, IFAD says. In countries as diverse as Bangladesh, Benin and the Dominican Republic, repayment rates are as high as 97%.

Since 1978, IFAD has worked to help rural people overcome poverty, and it was one of the first agencies to support the Grameen Bank, pioneer of the microcredit concept, which now serves 2.4 million borrowers in Bangladesh. "IFAD is pushing hard for greater diversity in financial services for the poor in rural areas and nowadays we are working with an amazing array of institutional partners—commercial, cooperative and village banks; post offices; and even marketing, insurance and ICT companies to develop and improve the long-term prospects of MFIs," Gary Howe, IFAD's Chief Development Strategist, said.

The General Assembly has designated the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs as focal points to coordinate UN activities for the International Year.

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#### **ILO AND UNHCR STRENGTHEN COOPERATION**

The heads of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have announced that they will strengthen their cooperation on reducing poverty for refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) by implementing programmes dealing with skills and enterprise development, microfinance and social protection.

"Accumulated experience has demonstrated the effectiveness of employment-oriented strategies for promoting sustainable livelihoods in bridging relief and development," ILO Director-General Juan Somavia and High Commissioner for Refugees Ruud Lubbers said in a joint statement at the ILO Governing Council's 291st session held in Geneva from 4-19 November.

Acknowledging that refugees and returnees can work on socio-economic development either in their host countries or in their countries of origin, the partnership would also contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of reducing extreme poverty.

With financial support from Italy, a joint ILO-UNHCR global programme for the socio-economic integration of refugees, returnees and internally

displaced persons was launched at the end of 2003. The programme focuses on strategies that bring together employment-intensive reconstruction, enterprise development, microfinance, skills development, women's economic empowerment, social protection, local economic development and capacity building.

Projects are currently being undertaken in Angola, Eritrea, Mozambique, Serbia and Montenegro, Somalia, Southern Sudan and Uganda, and there are plans to deploy experts to Benin, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana and Northern Caucasus in the near future.

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#### INT'L DAY FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY

To mark the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the International Movement ATD Fourth World, the UN Department of Public Information and the NGO Sub-Committee for the Eradication of Poverty jointly hosted, on 14 October, a ceremony in honour of the victims of extreme poverty followed by a panel discussion.

In his message observing the International Day, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said that while it was important to draw a solid statistical picture of the gains and shortfalls in the fight against poverty, all concerned should remember that poverty was not about numbers but individuals: young people at work and out of school, children orphaned by AIDS and other preventable diseases, mothers who die in childbirth, communities affected by environmental degradation. Mr. Annan emphasized that it was well within the power of Member States and others concerned to overcome these and other terrible manifestations of poverty and underdevelopment.

The ceremony in honour of the victims of extreme poverty included testimonies from children and adults living in poverty as well as performances by the Peace of Heart Choir. The panel discussion that followed drew attention to the issue of "How Poverty Separates Parents and Children," a theme taken from a recent study published by ATD Fourth World.

In his opening statement, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs José Antonio Ocampo

said the centrality of the family in society often had escaped the attention of policymakers and they had shown insufficient regard for the contributions families make to the wellbeing of their members. Mr. Ocampo stressed that the UN Department of Social and Economic Affairs (DESA) was now more actively promoting the integration of a family perspective into policy making.

Summarizing its study, ATD Fourth World underscored that in the face of poverty, parents could show unstinting resilience and courage on behalf of their children, making enormous efforts to safeguard relationships and keep the family together. The report is available online ([www.atd-quartmonde.org/accueil-uk.html](http://www.atd-quartmonde.org/accueil-uk.html)).

Established by General Assembly resolution 47/196 in 1993, the International Day has been observed every year since to promote awareness of the need to eradicate poverty. More recently, the Day has served to remind people that a continued effort is vital to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of halving the number of people living in poverty by 2015.

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#### INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR CHILDREN: 20 NOVEMBER

20 November is celebrated as the International Day for Children, and this year it marked the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Executive Director, Carol Bellamy, despite major advancements for children that include the creation of new laws in many countries, the rights of millions of children remain forgotten or ignored.

"The enactment of new laws set in motion by the Convention is a positive step that is critical to protecting the rights of children, but legal reform must be pursued at the same time as social policies that address the challenges facing children right now," Ms. Bellamy said. "Too many children are growing up without basic health care, education and protection from abuse and exploitation."

Adopted in 1989 and ratified by every country in the world except two, the CRC is the most widely accepted international human rights treaty in history. It spells out the basic human rights that children everywhere have: the right to survival; to develop to the fullest; to protection from harm, abuse and

*After a decade of receiving foreign aid, Poland has pledged to devote some US\$230 million to development assistance by 2006, with most of it going to help poor African and Asian countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) said on 8 October. The amount is equal to 0.1% of Poland's gross domestic product (GDP) and would be an increase from the US\$27 million contributed last year.*

*UNDP and the Government of Poland presented a joint campaign to promote the MDGs. The effort also seeks to raise awareness of the country's responsibility as a participant in global development cooperation, as Poland joins countries like Brazil and India, which also had been major recipients of development assistance in the past but are now emerging as donors of international aid.*

*"As long as wars have existed, the environment and natural resources have been their silent victims. Crops have been torched, water wells polluted, forests cut down, soils poisoned and animals killed. The objectives have varied: to provide a strategic advantage, to demoralize local populations, to subdue resistance or simply to feed soldiers. But the consequences, even if unintended, have been uniformly devastating. We have seen outright physical destruction, including the release of pollutants and hazardous substances. We have seen social disruption, such as the creation of refugee populations which in turn put increased pressure on resources. And since most conflicts are being waged in poor countries, we have seen economic devastation inflicted on vulnerable populations least able to cope with harm to their environment and setbacks to their development.*

*"During the 1991 Gulf War, Kuwait's oil wells were deliberately set on fire, and millions of gallons of crude oil were discharged in waterways. In Cambodia, 35% of the forest cover was destroyed during two decades of civil war and unrest. During the conflict in Angola, the wildlife population dropped by 90%. And during the Viet Nam War, millions of tons of Agent Orange were sprayed over that country's jungles, stripping vast areas of vegetation, some of them still unsuitable, even today, for agricultural use.*

*"Modern warfare techniques and armaments continue to develop rapidly, with potentially catastrophic environmental consequences. At the same time, too many conflicts are left to fester along for years and even decades, slowly chipping away at natural resources. On this International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflicts, let us recognize that no war or conflict is remote enough not to affect our environment, wherever we live. And let us pledge to do our part in fighting against this common yet oft-forgotten threat to our lives and wellbeing."*

—UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's message on the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflicts, observed on 6 November

exploitation; and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life. A recent review by UNICEF of 62 countries that have strived to implement the CRC shows that more than half the countries studied have incorporated the CRC into domestic law; nearly a third of the countries have incorporated important provisions on the rights of the child into their constitutions; and nearly half the countries have adopted codes or comprehensive laws on children.

In addition, two optional protocols anchored on the CRC have been approved since: one on the involvement of children in armed conflict; and the second on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (see *NGLS Roundup 92*). There has been widespread ratification of both, and their implementation is gaining momentum, Ms. Bellamy noted.

The survey also found that while high-level political commitment has been essential to the development of new laws protecting children's rights, social change has been sustained only when that commitment has been matched by effective law enforcement, allocation of adequate resources and the engagement of all levels of society.

"Only when governments are dedicated to developing and implementing laws to protect children and work in partnership with all sectors of society will we have the true culture of human rights for children that the CRC envisions," Ms. Bellamy said.

"If we are truly to make a difference in children's lives, and have a chance at achieving the social and economic goals of the world community, we must make the rights of these marginalized and forgotten children our highest priority. The rights to education, health care and a safe and loving environment in which to thrive must never be theoretical. They must be a reality for all children," Ms. Bellamy stressed.

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#### UNICEF: CHILD SURVIVAL REPORT CARD

Almost 100 countries are behind schedule in reaching the globally agreed goal to reduce the rate of child deaths by two-thirds by 2015, according to a study by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), entitled *Progress for Children: A Child Survival Report Card*. If current trends continue, the average death rate of children under the age of five will have fallen worldwide by only a quarter in the 25 years to 2015—far short of the target set in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

While much of the industrialized world, the Middle East, North Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, East Asia and the Pacific is on target to achieve the MDG, many nations in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Central and Eastern Europe lag far behind.

According to UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy, there are 11 million preventable child deaths every year as far too many children still do not have access to basic services, such as health care, sanitation and clean water. "It is incredible that in an age of technological and medical marvels, child survival is so tenuous in so many places, especially for the poor and marginalized. We can do better than this," she said.

Inadequate birthing conditions are responsible for the most preventable deaths: without skilled attendants during delivery or help for the mother, many babies fall victim almost immediately to infectious and parasitic diseases such as diarrhoea, malaria and measles. Acute respiratory infections, malnutrition and HIV/AIDS are among the biggest causes.

"The world has the tools to improve child survival, if only it would use them," Ms. Bellamy stressed. She called for greater spending on vaccines, micro-nutrient supplements and insecticide-treated mosquito nets, which "don't cost much, and would save millions of children."

The study highlights the vast discrepancy in child mortality rates between rich and poor States. One out of every six children in sub-Saharan Africa die before they reach the age of five, compared to one in every 143 in the industrialized world.

Sierra Leone, despite a small improvement, retains the worst rates on the planet. In 2002 there were 284 deaths for every 1,000 births. The most successful nation is Sweden, which has cut its child mortality rate to three deaths per 1,000 births.

Overall, 90 countries—including 53 in the developing world—are on target to achieve the MDG, but another 98 developing nations trail behind. In 11 States, the rates have actually worsened since 1990, partly because of HIV/AIDS. Those countries are Botswana, Cambodia, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kenya, South Africa, Swaziland, Uzbekistan and Zimbabwe.

The report is available online ([www.unicef.org/media/files/pfc\\_english.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/media/files/pfc_english.pdf)).

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#### FIRST COMMITTEE CONCLUDES 2004 SESSION

Concluding its third session on 5 November, the First Committee (Disarmament and International Security)



approved without a vote a draft resolution (document A/C.1/59/L.60) that would have the General Assembly invite Member States to take steps towards improving the effectiveness of the Committee's methods of work.

The steps would include: submitting draft resolutions in a more concise, focused and action-oriented manner; considering the biennialization or triennialization of agenda items; continuing to hold interactive debates; and merging texts that were similar in substance.

In his closing remarks, Committee Chairman Luis Alfonso De Alba (Mexico) said delegations must approach their work with a readiness to commit themselves to attaining common goals. Declaring that challenges to international peace and security were indeed global, he said it was impossible for countries to succeed in protecting themselves if they worked alone. He added that, whereas the Committee had made progress in improving its working methods, such reform must not be seen as an end in itself. After all, substantive issues also needed to be tackled, he urged.

Mohamed Yusoff Zain (Malaysia) on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) pointed out that 2004 had been a "disappointing year" in the field of multilateral disarmament. Looking ahead to the Nairobi Summit on the Ottawa Convention in late November and the Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference in December, as well as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conference in May 2005, he suggested those meetings would provide the much-needed impetus to move the global disarmament agenda forward.

The Secretary-General, in his most recent report on the work of the Organization (A/59/1), said the clandestine network and violations of non-proliferation commitments—along with the slow pace of disarmament and the threat of terrorism—"jeopardize international peace and security and may increase the risk of new instances of unilateral or pre-emptive use of force." In light of those dangers, he told the General Assembly on 21 September that "it is by strengthening and implementing disarmament treaties, including their verification provisions, that we can best defend ourselves against the proliferation—and potential use—of weapons of mass destruction."

More information on the First Committee is available online ([www.un.org/ga/59/first/press.shtml](http://www.un.org/ga/59/first/press.shtml)).

#### ELIMINATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women was observed on 25 November with

commemorative events—including workshops, concerts, educational fairs, art exhibitions and academic debates—taking place worldwide. On 17 November, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) organized a special event at UN headquarters in New York, and the UN Department of Information's (DPI) NGO section held a briefing on 18 November. Below are extracts from UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's message commemorating the day.

"Violence against women is global in reach, and takes place in all societies and cultures, affecting women no matter what their race, ethnicity, social origin, property, birth or other status may be.

"Gender-based violence is particularly pervasive in situations of armed conflict, when women and girls become victims of rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and are vulnerable to trafficking. Last May, in an important step towards ending the impunity with which such crimes are committed, the Trial Chamber of the Special Court for Sierra Leone approved a motion to add a new count of 'forced marriage' to indictments against six defendants. Thus, for the first time, forced marriage will be prosecuted as a crime against humanity.

"Violence against women is a challenge in itself, but comes with an added deadly dimension: the risk of HIV infection. Sexual violence increases women's vulnerability to the virus. All too frequently, the threat of violence forces women to have unprotected sex.

"The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the human rights treaty body that monitors implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, continues to play a dynamic role in ensuring that this issue is a high priority for the international community. The Optional Protocol to the Convention gives women and groups of women the right to petition, and has the potential to become a highly effective tool for addressing gender-based violence and other violations of women's human rights," Mr. Annan stressed.

On 17 November, a UNIFEM event, entitled "Building partnerships to end violence against women," highlighted the critical role of global partnerships between governments, the UN system, women's networks, civil society and the private sector to address the issue. It also sought to remind the international community that their commitment and action to end gender-based violence must be intensified to meet future challenges.

On 18 November, DPI's NGO section held a briefing on the theme of "Women, Violence and HIV/AIDS." Among the key points raised at the briefing was the issue of gender equality in dealing with HIV/AIDS. Participants argued that without putting an end to domestic violence, gender equality in the fight

*On 8 October, the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Kenyan Deputy Environment Minister Wangari Muta Maathai. She is the first African woman to win the prestigious award.*

*UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan congratulated her on her work to improve the Kenyan environment, and paid tribute to Ms. Maathai's unstinting efforts, her staunch views on environmental health, saying that she was a model woman and a model African.*

*Renowned and admired throughout her native Kenya and across Africa for her pioneering struggle against deforestation and for women's rights and democracy, Ms. Maathai has also played an important role at UN conferences such as the Earth Summit, making an imprint on the global quest for sustainable development.*

*"If you want to save the environment you should protect the people first, because human beings are part of biological diversity. And if we can't protect our own species, what's the point of protecting tree species?"*

*"It sometimes looks as if poor people are destroying the environment. But they are so preoccupied with their survival that they are not concerned about the long-term damage they are doing to the environment simply to meet their most basic needs. So it is ironic that the poor people who depend on the environment are also partly responsible for its destruction. That's why I insist that the living conditions of the poor must be improved if we really want to save our environment," she said in an interview with the UNESCO Courier.*

*Jamaica has been elected to Chair the Group of 77 and China (G-77/China) in 2005. Jamaica's Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Minister K. D. Knight said his country's assumption of the group's leadership comes at a critical time in the international system "given the impact of globalization and liberalization" and called for "a more equitable and inclusive international environment," where developing countries can benefit from those processes.*

against HIV/AIDS would be undermined. Speakers also drew attention to the loss of women's rights in times of conflict and how this made them targets of acts of sexual violence, molestation and rape. It was noted that these sex crimes often lead to an increase in HIV/AIDS cases among women, which, in turn, affects the way these women contribute to the livelihood of their communities.

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#### S-G REPORTS ON STAFFING EQUALITY

The United Nations has given itself a mixed report card for its efforts to reach the General Assembly's target of equality between the numbers of men and women in professional and managerial staffing. A report from Secretary-General Kofi Annan to the GA says although the proportion of women at those levels in the Secretariat, with contracts for one year or longer, rose 1.7% last year to 37.4% on 30 June of this year, "the analysis of the longer-term trends portrays a picture of uneven progress in women's representation at all levels."

The reasons cited include unacknowledged biases among hiring managers who are not being held accountable. Another cause relates to expectations that managers must "work long hours and always be available," thereby fostering imbalances between work and home life. In addition, jobs for spouses of UN employees are not always easy to find in UN host countries and permission to work is sometimes slow in coming, making transfers impossible for some families, the survey adds.

The annual growth rate towards the 50/50 goal is expected to rise by only 0.4% in professional and higher categories for appointments of one year or more, the report says. It recommends some three dozen measures to deal with all the obstacles to women's advancement that have been found so far while suggesting a deeper examination of other obstructions that are more difficult to analyze because "barriers to career progression for women become more informal and, thus, harder to identify, particularly at the more senior levels of the Organization."

An accompanying chart shows that on 30 June of this year women formed 83.3% of staff at the lowest professional level, the P-1, but 16.7% of the highest staff level, the Under-Secretaries-General.

For positions filled according to geographical region,

women make up 42.3% of staff and the ratio is growing by 1% per year, the report says.

Meanwhile, "the Secretary-General fully shares the views of the General Assembly regarding the issue of creating a work environment in the United Nations system that is free of harassment, especially sexual harassment, and remains firmly committed to a zero-tolerance policy in this regard."

#### ILO: FUTURE OF WORK IN THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

New media, multimedia and information and communication technologies (ICTs) may increase the demand for journalists, editors, artists and others in the media, graphical and culture sectors, but compromise the quality of their work and of their working conditions, according to a report by the International Labour Organization (ILO). *The Future of Work and Quality in the Information Society: The Media, Culture, Graphical Sector* notes that computerization is tending to create jobs in the sector rather than killing them, although some segments are experiencing serious declines in employment.

Conversely, the report also observes that the explosion of new and multimedia is prompting growing concerns over the level of quality of working conditions and of output in the media, cultural and graphical sectors, and presents new challenges in terms of training for jobs in the media and entertainment industry.

"The impact of ICTs on the sector in terms of 'quality' can pose the question of whether certain primary standards of the ILO are being met in the domains of fundamental principles and rights at work, employment, social protection and social dialogue," John Myers, author of the report, said. "Questions of quality, whether of the product, the content or of the profession, already permeate debate in this field," he added. Copyright protection for the materials that writers and performers produce is also an issue at stake, ILO warns.

The report stresses that "many of the new opportunities will arise for geographically mobile, well-educated, multiskilled and adaptable people, but more and more jobs are likely to be unstable, temporary assignments without fringe benefits or social security coverage, and some job losses or downgrading are inevitable."

Government, employer and worker representatives from around 50 countries met at an ILO meeting in Geneva from 18-22 October to discuss the trends affecting several occupational groups in these industries. The meeting also examined how the World Summit on the Information Society



(WSIS, see *NGLS Roundup 109*) process has reflected on issues relating to work and quality in the sector, as well as possible relevant topics for the second phase of WSIS, to be held in Tunis in November 2005.

During phase one of WSIS, ILO argued that developing countries must identify policies and programmes to allow workers and employers, especially women and the young, to fully exploit the potential of ICTs, to minimize the pain of adjustment and to permit all economic sectors to benefit from the gains accrued from using the technologies. ILO also stressed the importance of ensuring respect for international labour standards in the process.

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#### INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR DISASTER REDUCTION

Early warning about looming natural disasters and other advance planning could halve the rates of death and destruction they cause over the decade beginning in 2010 compared to the previous ten-year period, according to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), marking the International Day for Disaster Reduction, observed on 13 October.

WMO Secretary-General Michel Jarraud stressed the importance of building a culture of prevention. "This could be done through further improvements in risk assessment, monitoring, forecasting for early warnings, capacity building and raising the awareness of the public as well as decision makers through education and sharing of knowledge and information," he said.

According to the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, in the decade from 1992-2001, natural disasters related to weather, climate and flooding killed 622,000 people and adversely affected another two billion. "The total value of economic losses over the same period is estimated at US\$446 billion, accounting for about 65% of damage arising from all natural disasters," WMO said.

This year's disasters included hurricanes in the Caribbean and the United States, typhoons in the West Pacific, floods in East and Southeast Asia and the invasion of northwest Africa by locusts whose life cycles depend on weather conditions.

In his message, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Klaus

Toepfer called attention to the link between environmental neglect and poverty, which together turn natural hazards into disasters. "Time and again we see ordinary natural phenomena, such as heavy rains or prolonged dry spells, triggering extraordinary and sometimes catastrophic events." Wetlands could reduce flooding, forested watersheds could help to prevent landslides, while mangroves and coral reefs could lessen the effect of coastal storms and extreme tides, he said. "The loss of these and other similarly important services has widespread implications for development."

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan emphasized the need to learn from past mistakes. "All should work together to improve the chain of information and decision making, so that their communities are better prepared should hazards strike again," he said. He also said next year's World Conference on Disaster Reduction, to be held in Kobe, Japan from 18-22 January, would provide an opportunity to establish clear guidelines for the future. The conference aims to raise the profile of risk reduction and emphasize the importance of education and public awareness for disaster reduction.

Also on the International Day, a new children's board game called "Riskland" was launched. It harnesses the power of fun to teach youngsters what to do in the event of a natural disaster. Riskland was first developed by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the UN staff of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) regional office for Latin America and the Caribbean, and has spread worldwide. It is being translated into nearly 40 languages.

One of Riskland's creators, Elina Palm, said that some 254 million people were affected by disasters caused by natural hazards—a 180% increase compared to 1990. Last year, the economic losses were estimated to be US\$65 billion and every year thousands of people, mostly women and children, were killed by natural disasters. Emphasizing the importance of children learning at an early age about the long-term benefits of disaster reduction, Ms. Palm pointed out that they can spread messages about the issue throughout their communities.

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*The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) have signed a US\$4.9 million agreement aimed at facilitating trade and customs activities in Afghanistan.*

*The UN will combine their expertise to support the modernization of trade-related activities in the country, which after years of conflict and isolation suffers from severely damaged infrastructure, restrictive trade policies and a flourishing black market.*

*According to UNCTAD, the Afghan Government "cannot depend on a predictable and reliable flow of revenue." The country's US\$1.7 billion development budget for 2003 was financed entirely by external sources.*

*Officially, reported imports in 2002 totalled US\$851 million, but due to poor reporting and smuggling, UNCTAD said a more realistic estimate would be US\$2.4 billion.*

*Earlier this year, the World Bank approved a US\$31 million interest-free credit for the development and execution of an emergency customs modernization and trade facilitation project in Afghanistan, which will be executed by UNOPS in collaboration with UNCTAD. UNCTAD said the project would help improve the framework for doing business, facilitate foreign trade and create a climate conducive to investment in Afghanistan.*

*"The global landscape continues to be scarred by fanaticism, exploitation of ignorance, and the fear of the 'other.' One of the best responses to such toxic behaviour is to cultivate tolerance.*

*"No society can hope to flourish if it does not promote this essential virtue. Tolerance is an essential condition for peace, democracy and sustainable development. The world's leaders recognized this when, in adopting the Millennium Declaration in 2000, they placed tolerance among the fundamental values on which international relations in the twenty-first century must be based. This is also why tolerance has always been at the heart of the work of the United Nations.*

*"In an increasingly interdependent world, societies are increasingly multicultural and more and more people are the product of several cultures. But beyond our differences, we all aspire to the same things: to lead a decent life, and to leave our children a world in which they can live freely, protected from want and fear. Practising tolerance, so as to live together as good neighbours, plays a crucial role in translating such hopes into reality.*

*"Tolerance does not mean simple 'putting up with' others. On the contrary, it means being actively committed to human rights and fundamental freedoms, constantly recognizing that what brings us together is more powerful than what keeps us apart, and adhering to rules of conduct that emphasize responsibility not only to oneself, but also to others.*

*"On this International Day of Tolerance, I call on all people to turn the political and moral ideal of tolerance into a principle of action that will guide our work and our lives."*

—UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's message on the International Day of Tolerance, observed 16 November

## STATE OF THE WORLD'S CITIES REPORT 2004/2005

A report by the United Nations Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) lauds multiculturalism as an urban phenomenon that should be celebrated, not feared, maintaining that multiculturalism enhances the fabric of societies and brings colour and vibrancy to every city it touches.

*State of the World's Cities Report 2004/2005* shows that there are approximately 175 million documented international migrants worldwide and the flow of humanity into the world's cities is fuelling a new multiculturalism that has the potential to broaden the cultural and ethnic dimensions of cities. However, it notes that some cities have been unable to cope with multiculturalism, which has generated increasing xenophobia and ethnic tensions. It therefore calls on local governments to help create harmonious and inclusive multicultural cities by combating xenophobic ideologies and anti-immigration policies.

According to the report, the more developed economies attract most of the international migrants (77 million), followed by the transition economies of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics (33 million), Asia and the Pacific (23 million) and the Middle East and North Africa (21 million).

In many cities, lack of affordable housing and discriminatory practices force the newcomers to live spatially segregated lives in ghettos where they suffer labour exploitation, social exclusion and violence. This is unfortunate, says the report, because immigrants make important economic contributions, not only to the urban economies of the host countries, but also to the countries that they leave behind. Remittances back home are second only to oil in terms of international monetary flows, providing an important and reliable source of foreign exchange finance. In 2003, for example, the Indian Diaspora sent back US\$15 billion, exceeding the revenues generated by the country's software industry, the report notes.

In his foreword, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said that policy makers need to plan for "cities of difference" that are open to all and exclude none, and which are able to capitalize on the benefits of a multicultural existence. This requires the engagement of all non-governmental and community stakeholders, on the basis of legislation that guarantees citizens' right to the city, and judicial systems that enforce those rights.

UN-HABITAT Executive Director Anna Tibaijuka said that the report provided valuable information on progress made in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and towards the realization of the

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and targets on slums, water and sanitation. "The report shows how poverty is increasing in many cities and how this is partly an outcome of the uneven costs and benefits of economic globalization. In addition, the report shows how urban poverty has been increasingly concentrated in particular neighbourhoods that have generally become the habitats of the urban poor and minority groups: racial minorities in some societies, international immigrant groups in others," she said.

The last two decades have witnessed a transformation of the global economy, which has led to vast economic, social and political realignments in many countries and cities. The trend towards open markets has enriched some countries and cities tremendously, while others have suffered greatly, the report says. World trade in this period has grown from about US\$580 billion in 1980 to a projected US\$6.3 trillion in 2004, an eleven-fold increase. Flows of capital, labour, technology and information have also increased tremendously, and have transformed the role of cities in a globalizing world.

*State of the World's Cities* predicts that the world's urban population will grow from 2.86 billion in 2000 to 4.98 billion by 2030. It further reveals that urban-based economic activities account for more than 50% of gross domestic product (GDP) in all countries, and up to 80% in more urbanized countries in Latin America and Europe.

The report is available online ([www.unhabitat.org/mediacentre/sowckit.asp](http://www.unhabitat.org/mediacentre/sowckit.asp)).

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## WORLD HABITAT DAY: 4 OCTOBER

Since 1985, World Habitat Day has been celebrated on the first Monday in October each year, a day set aside to reflect on the state of human settlements and the basic right to adequate shelter and to remind the world of its collective responsibility for the future of the human habitat.

Celebrated this year on 4 October under the theme "Cities—engines of rural development," the Day underlined the importance of mutually beneficial linkages that are essential for the development of both cities and rural areas. According to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-

HABITAT), urban markets provide a powerful incentive for increased rural production and income, while expanding rural markets create increased demand for production of goods manufactured in urban areas. In the long run, cities drive secondary and tertiary investment of capital derived from primary production in rural areas.

"In the next 25 years, virtually all population growth will take place in the world's cities, most of it in the cities of developing countries," said UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in a message read on his behalf by Anna Tibaijuka, UN-HABITAT Executive Director, during a ceremony held in Nairobi, which sought to highlight the phenomenal rate and social-economic significance of urbanization in the developing world. Large-scale migration to cities as a result of rural poverty has led to the proliferation of slums.

"The fastest growing cities will be secondary and market towns, which are especially close to rural areas. This growth can help to improve rural life and ease the problems associated with mega-cities. But to do so, it will need to be well-managed, with significant investments in communication, transport channels and other infrastructure, and with concerted efforts to ensure that all people have access to adequate services," Mr. Annan said.

As part of World Habitat Day celebrations, Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki joined Ms. Tibaijuka in Kibera, an informal settlement located outside of Nairobi—often referred to as "Africa's biggest slum"—to call attention to the Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme, a joint project which got underway in January 2003. It involves the construction of 14 blocks of flats and 770 housing units and will also ensure the provision of basic services such as water and sanitation. UN-HABITAT says improvements in other informal settlements across the country will follow suit, in a process that is expected to take 10-15 years.

"We wish to remind policy makers around the world that sustainable development can only be achieved if rural and urban areas are considered part of an inter-dependent, mutually reinforcing economic and social order," Ms. Tibaijuka told the crowd that had gathered for the ceremony.

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#### BASEL CONVENTION COP-7 MEETS

The seventh meeting of the Conference of the

Parties (COP-7) to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal was held in Geneva from 25-29 October 2004, bringing together over 450 participants to discuss partnerships for meeting the global waste challenge—the main theme of COP-7. Currently, there are 162 State Parties to the Basel Convention.

In his message to the meeting, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said, "Our world is generating more and more hazardous and other waste each year, and it is increasingly intermingled with municipal and household wastes. Waste generation has therefore become a global challenge. We can only address that challenge through partnerships, innovative thinking and cooperation at all levels. We must shift from 'end-of-pipe' solutions to an 'integrated life-cycle approach'—one that encompasses generation, storage, transport, treatment, recycling, recovery and final disposal."

"Minimizing and safely managing hazardous and other wastes contributes to the UN Millennium Development Goals of reducing poverty and improving access to safe drinking water and sanitation," said Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which provides the Convention's secretariat.

"The Basel Convention needs to mobilize more resources and further engage industry and other partners if it is to achieve its full potential for protecting human health and the environment. Investments in effective systems for separating hazardous from non-hazardous wastes at the local level should be an important priority," he added.

COP-7 launched new talks for determining the legal status of obsolete ships—which generally contain large amounts of hazardous wastes—on route to ship-breaking yards and for addressing the problem of abandoned ships. However, it failed to secure the entry into force of the Basel Ban Amendment that would ban the transboundary movement of hazardous recyclable commodities and wastes from developed countries to developing countries. So far, 44 countries have ratified the Basel Ban Amendment, and 62 are needed before it can enter into force. A number of countries, including Australia, the US, Canada, Japan, and the UK, as well as various organizations, such as the International Chamber of Commerce, oppose the ban.

COP-7 concluded by adopting a ministerial statement setting out strategies for mobilizing additional resources to address hazardous wastes. The statement calls for strengthening partnerships with industries and other international organizations and agreements, in particular the Rotterdam Convention on trade in hazardous

*Opium cultivation in Myanmar dropped 29% per cent in 2004 compared to 2003, continuing a steady decline that began nearly a decade ago, according to the annual country survey released today by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).*

*The Myanmar Opium Survey 2004 reveals that opium cultivation this season is estimated at 44,200 hectares, representing a cumulative decline of 73% when compared to the 163,000 hectares in 1996. Meanwhile, opium production for 2004 totalled 370 tons, a 54% reduction over the previous year. About 260,000 households—mostly in remote, mountainous and isolated areas—were involved in opium cultivation, often the primary or sole source of income, the survey says. However, the average income of non-opium producing households is 30% higher than opium producing households.*

*"Opium is a last resort for farmers confronting hunger and poverty," UNODC Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa said. "If we do not provide for the basic human needs of farmers in Myanmar, they will never escape the vicious circle of poverty and opium cultivation. The opium communities will remain vulnerable to human rights abuses, human trafficking and forced relocation."*

*The survey also indicates the average farm-gate price of opium has increased by 80% over last year to US\$234 per kilogram, up from US\$130 in 2003, reflecting the scarce opium production this season—a possible incentive for farmers to cultivate greater amounts next year.*

*The report is available online (www.unodc.org/myanmar/en/reports.html).*



*José Maria Figueres, former President of Costa Rica, will assume the Chairmanship of the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC). Mr. Figueres, who also serves as CEO of the World Economic Forum, will succeed Jan Pronk, who was recently appointed UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Special Representative in Sudan.*

chemicals and pesticides and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. It also encourages governments to consider setting their own individual or regional targets for minimizing wastes. As adequate funding remains an ongoing problem for the Basel Convention, a number of participants expressed their hope that partnerships could prove to be an effective way of mobilizing adequate and sustainable resources.

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#### **CITES COP-13: STRENGTHENING WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT**

The 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-13) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) met in Bangkok from 3-14 October, attended by some 1,200 participants from 154 governments and numerous observer organizations. It closed after agreeing decisions to strengthen wildlife management, combat illegal trafficking and update the trade rules for a wide range of plant and animal species.

"The Bangkok conference has crafted solutions to meet the particular needs of many wildlife species that are either endangered or that could become so if traded unsustainably," said CITES Secretary-General Willem Wijnstekers, whose secretariat is administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). "These solutions seek to conserve the earth's rich heritage of biological diversity while supporting the sustainable development of local communities and national economies," he added.

COP-13 decided to place ramin (a Southeast Asian tree that produces high-value timber) and agarwood (which produces "agar" oil) on Appendix II. By requiring the use of CITES export permits, these listings will improve the ability of the ramin and agarwood range States to manage tree stocks. It will also allow both exporters and importers to ensure that trade is sustainable and to tackle illegal trade.

The great white shark and the humphead wrasse—two fish species of great commercial value—were also added to CITES and can now only be traded with permits. Another marine species, the Irrawaddy dolphin, was transferred from Appendix II to Appendix I, which forbids all commercial trade. Appendix I lists species that are the most endangered among CITES-listed animals and plants.

"In recent years CITES has started to list commercially valuable fish species such as sturgeon,

seahorses, and the basking and whale sharks. The addition of more listings suggests that governments believe CITES can contribute to the goal agreed at the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development of restoring fishery stocks to sustainable levels by 2015," Mr. Wijnstekers said.

The African elephant was the subject of extensive debate. The conference agreed to an action plan for cracking down on unregulated domestic markets in elephant ivory. Under the plan, all African elephant range States will strengthen their legislation and their enforcement efforts, launch public awareness campaigns and report on progress by the end of March 2005. The meeting also agreed that Namibia and South Africa may open up trophy hunting of the black rhino for the first time in many years, with an annual quota of five animals each. Swaziland may also open up strictly controlled hunting of its population of white rhino and export some live animals. The intent of these decisions is to allow the range States to manage their rhino herds more effectively and to earn income for rhino conservation.

Decisions that will promote the practical implementation of the Convention were taken on economic incentives, guidelines for sustainable use, and synergies with the Convention on Biological Diversity, among others.

On the sidelines of the meeting, the Secretariat announced the 2004 quotas for caviar exports from the Caspian Sea. The five Caspian Sea States agreed to take stronger action on sturgeon conservation and illegal trade and harvesting. The new rules require caviar processed this year to be exported by 31 March 2005. From 2006 onwards, all caviar must be exported in the same year that it is produced, with no opportunity to "carry over" stocks from one year to the next. In addition, there can be no re-exports of caviar more than 18 months in age, another loophole that illicit traders have used.

"This is a major victory in the war against the caviar criminals," said CITES Deputy Secretary-General Jim Armstrong. "This will bring stability to the caviar trade and close the door on the criminal opportunists who have engaged in large-scale fraud."

COP-14 will be held in 2007 in The Netherlands.

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#### **CHILDHOOD PESTICIDE POISONING**

According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Environment

Programme (UNEP) and the World Health Organization (WHO), pesticide poisoning is a serious health problem that disproportionately affects infants and children. The agencies are calling for urgent steps to minimize youngsters' exposure to potentially deadly chemicals.

An estimated 1-5 million cases of pesticide poisonings occur each year, resulting in several thousand fatalities, including children, according to *Childhood Pesticide Poisoning: Information for Advocacy and Action*, a report prepared by Lynn Goldman, Professor, Environmental Health Sciences, John Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health (USA) for FAO, UNEP and the WHO.

Children face higher risks from pesticides than adults because they may be more susceptible or are exposed more to such chemicals over the course of their lifetime, the report says. Most of the poisonings take place in rural areas of developing countries, where safeguards typically are inadequate or lacking altogether. Although developing nations use just a quarter of the world's production of pesticides, they experience 99% of the deaths due to pesticide poisoning.

Diet and poverty are two of the major sources of exposure for children, *Childhood Pesticide Poisoning* finds. Food and water containing pesticide residues may be a source of chronic, low-level pesticide exposure; growing food on or near contaminated soils puts children at risk; and even pesticides stored incorrectly in the field or the household may contaminate food or water.

In poor families, children often help on family farms where pesticides are used; pesticide users, including teenagers, may lack access to protective equipment or receive no training; and in many developing countries, the marketing and advertising of pesticides is often uncontrolled or illicit.

To minimize risk, FAO, UNEP and the WHO urge reducing and eliminating possible sources of pesticide exposure to children and home and at work, keeping such chemicals out their reach, and cutting the use of agricultural pesticides through Integrated Pest Management (IPM). Other steps to reduce the harmful effects include training health workers to recognize and manage pesticide poisoning, providing training to people on how to use pesticides safely, running educational and information campaigns in the media, and addressing all aspects of pesticide management from manufacturing until use or disposal.

Tackling the risks to children of pesticide exposure and poisoning requires comprehensive strategies, which should be designed for the local level and supported nationally, regionally and internationally. They should include research activities on how to develop effective economic and legal instruments. In addition, they should ensure that the public is informed, health conditions are monitored and, where necessary, treatment programmes are established, the

report suggests (available online [www.who.int/ceh/publications/pestipoison/en](http://www.who.int/ceh/publications/pestipoison/en)).

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#### WORLD FOOD DAY: BIODIVERSITY & FOOD SECURITY

World Food Day was observed on 16 October and this year's theme was "Biodiversity for Food Security," which sought to highlight the role of biodiversity in the fight against hunger. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in his message commemorating the Day, called attention to the 840 million people in the world who suffer from chronic hunger.

"Such large-scale hunger is not only unprecedented but also should be unacceptable in our world of plenty. In a world in which enough food exists to feed every man, woman and child, we need to do far better—politically, economically, scientifically, logistically—if we are to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of reducing by half, by the year 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger," he said.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that about three-quarters of the genetic diversity of agricultural crops have been lost over the last century. And of 6,300 animal breeds, 1,350 are endangered or already extinct.

"The world's biodiversity is under threat and this could severely compromise global food security," FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf said. "As a consequence, the food supply becomes more vulnerable, there are less opportunities for growth and innovation in agriculture and less capacity for agriculture to adapt to environmental changes or to the appearance of new pests and diseases," he added.

According to FAO, global efforts to conserve plants and animals in gene banks, botanical gardens and protected areas are vital, but an equally important task is to maintain biodiversity on farms and in nature. Conserving biodiversity for agriculture will require efforts on many fronts including measures to preserve the environment, better education, increased research and government support.

*The World Health Organization (WHO) has launched a campaign to eliminate the incidence of diseases carried by food, aiming to spare the world's two million affected people.*

*Inaugurating its "5 Keys" strategy in Bangkok (Thailand), WHO started distribution of a manual to train food safety professionals on eradicating the dreaded illnesses, which include dehydrating diarrhoea, by keeping hands and cooking surfaces clean, separating raw and cooked food, cooking food thoroughly, storing food at safe temperatures and using safe water and raw ingredients.*

*"The burden of food-borne disease is enormous but much of this burden can be prevented through simple techniques," said Jorgen Schlundt, Director of WHO's Food Safety Department. "The 5 Keys strategy is complemented by a manual which helps individuals to adopt good food-handling practices. They show how people around the world, no matter where and how they live, can protect themselves from food-borne illness."*

*The 5 Keys are available online ([www.who.int/foodsafety/publications/consumer/en/5keys\\_en.pdf](http://www.who.int/foodsafety/publications/consumer/en/5keys_en.pdf)).*

The International Year of Sport and Physical Education was launched at UN headquarters in New York on 5 November with top UN officials and internationally reputed athletes urging governments, sports federations, industries, clubs and NGOs to use 2005 to step up or join efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan emphasized that sport is a universal language that can bring people together irrespective of their origin, background, religious beliefs or economic status. He said that this is why the UN is turning more and more to the world of sport for help in its work for peace and the MDGs.

Adof Ogi, the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Sport for Peace and Development, told journalists that the International Year should be used as a springboard to spread the message that sport offers values to the younger generation.

Top-ranked tennis player Roger Federer of Switzerland and Margaret Okayo of Kenya, winner of the 2003 New York City Marathon, were also on hand to express their enthusiasm for the International Year and agreed with the importance of sports for the development of children. They also described assistance programmes they supported in South Africa and Kenya.

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In the past, the contributions made by farmers in the developing world towards the preservation of agricultural biodiversity have not been properly appreciated, FAO said. Today, however, their rights have been recognized and incorporated into the Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, which entered into force in June this year (see *Go Between 103*). The Treaty is a binding international instrument that:

- b secures the conservation and sustainable utilization of the world's agricultural genetic diversity;
- b guarantees that farmers and breeders have access to the genetic materials they need; and
- b ensures that farmers receive a fair and equitable share of the benefits derived from their work.

According to FAO, a Global Crop Diversity Trust is also being established to strengthen the capacity of developing countries to preserve agricultural biodiversity and maintain comprehensive gene banks.

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#### FAO REPORTS ON INSECTS AND FOOD SECURITY

A study released by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) stresses that edible insects such as caterpillars and grubs should be considered an alternative source of nutrition in efforts to overcome food insecurity in central African countries.

"Edible insects from forests are an important source of protein, and unlike those from agricultural land, they are free of pesticides," said Paul Vantomme, an FAO forestry expert, noting that caterpillars are already an important food intake for many people in central Africa. More than 90% of participants in a survey in Botswana said they consumed caterpillars, with 85% in the Central African Republic and 70% in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) doing the same.

For every 100 grams of dried caterpillars, there are about 53 grams of proteins, about 15% of fat and about 17% of carbohydrates, according to the *Contribution of Forest Insects to Food Security*. The insects are also believed to have a higher proportion of protein and fat than beef and fish with a high-energy value. Depending on the species, caterpillars are considered to be rich in minerals such as potassium, calcium, magnesium, zinc, phosphorus and iron, as well as various vitamins. Research shows that 100 grams of insects provide more than 100% of the daily requirements of the respective minerals and vitamins. Experts believe that the

collection of edible insects by hand could prove to be a potential source of income for rural populations, especially women, because it requires little capital income.

"The nutritional and economic value of edible insects is often neglected and we should further encourage their collection and commercialization, given the benefits to the environment and human health," said Mr. Vantomme, noting that insects were already widely offered in local village markets and restaurants.

The study shows that trans-border trade in edible insects is significant not only within Central African countries, but also in Sudan and Nigeria. Dried caterpillars are also exported to France and Belgium.

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#### WORLD BANK REPORT: DOING BUSINESS IN 2005

A World Bank report finds that the past year has been good for doing business in 58 of the 145 *Doing Business* sample countries. According to *Doing Business in 2005*, streamlined business regulations, strengthened property rights and the creation of an enabling environment for businesses to raise financing have helped these countries.

*Doing Business in 2005* is the second in a series of annual reports investigating the scope and manner of regulations that enhance business activity and those that constrain it. The 2004 report, entitled *Understanding Regulation*, presented five indicators: starting a business, hiring and firing workers, enforcing contracts, getting credit and closing a business. The 2005 report updates these measures and adds another two sets: registering poverty and protecting investors. The indicators are used to analyze economic and social outcomes, such as productivity, investment, informality, corruption, unemployment and poverty, while identifying what reforms have worked, where and why.

The analysis in this year's *Doing Business* report leads to three main findings. Firstly, businesses in poor countries face much larger regulatory burdens than those in rich countries. They face three times the administrative costs, and nearly twice as many bureaucratic procedures and delays. Secondly, heavy regulation and weak property rights exclude the poor from doing business. In poor countries 40% of the economy is informal. Faced with rigid employment regulations, women, youth and low-skilled workers are most prone to opt-out of the formal economy. Thirdly, the report suggests that payoffs from regulatory reform can be substantial. A hypothetical improvement



to the top quartile of countries on the ease of doing business is associated with up to 2 percentage points more in annual economic growth. *Doing Business in 2005* is available online (<http://rru.worldbank.org/doingbusiness>).

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#### UNODC: CONTAINER CONTROL PROGRAMME

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has teamed with customs agencies around the world to combat the illegal transport of people, weapons and drugs in the more than seven million shipping containers that move around the globe each day. The Container Control Programme is intended to support port control measures in developing countries, bringing together new teams of customs officials and police, and providing them with training and equipment to target illicit trafficking via maritime freight containers.

Launched by UNODC in partnership with the World Customs Organization (WCO), the programme's

US\$1.4 million first phase will begin at the ports of Guayaquil (Ecuador) and Dakar (Senegal). Similar port control activities should expand to Pakistan and Ghana next year.

According to UNODC, container traffic has risen over the past ten years to 220 million units in 2000, and is expected to double by 2012, as licit merchandise transported in containers generates legitimate revenue for hundreds of millions of people. UNODC warns that containers also facilitate the trafficking of large quantities of heroin and cocaine. They also often serve the trade in weapons, chemical waste and even human beings, and are used to ship money earned illicitly from organized crime.

"Visiting borders and ports in developing countries, one can notice a huge number of trucks and containers without the specialized controls needed to separate commercial trade from criminal activities," said UNODC Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa. More information on the Container Control Programme is available online ([www.unodc.org/pdf/containerbriefpresoct04.ppt](http://www.unodc.org/pdf/containerbriefpresoct04.ppt)).

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The new Inter Press Service (IPS) newsletter Development Deadline 2015 is available online ([www.ipsnews.net/new\\_focus/devdeadline](http://www.ipsnews.net/new_focus/devdeadline)). It focuses on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), linking global policy to results at the grassroots. Readers are invited to subscribe online. More information is also available on the Millennium Campaign website ([www.millenniumcampaign.org](http://www.millenniumcampaign.org)).

## UN/NGO COOPERATION

#### WAVE: ENDING GENDER APARTHEID

Under the banner Women As the Voice for the Environment (WAVE), the first Global Women's Assembly on the Environment was held in Nairobi from 11-13 October 2004, bringing together over 140 women from 60 countries including seven ministers of environment from Iran, Kenya, South Africa, Swaziland and Sweden and other high level representatives. The WAVE assembly was sponsored by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO).

The Assembly aimed to put women's issues at the centre of the global environmental effort to deliver the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development's (WSSD) Plan of Implementation. It also highlighted the crucial roles women play in conservation and sustainable development. Speaking at the opening ceremony, UNEP Executive Director Klaus Toepfer said, "In the past, the role of women and their know-how has often been sidelined. I sincerely hope that our assembly signals an end to this

gender apartheid. All too often women are treated like second-class citizens, with fewer rights and lower status than men. I hope we have now started a WAVE that will wash away the inequities of the past and bring women into the centre of environment and development issues."

The Assembly included a number of roundtables ranging from "A World in Conflict—A World in Peace: Gender sensitive policies on sustainable livelihoods" to "Women's rights, environment, poverty and health" to "Starting a Mentorship Programme—A world in need of female leadership." It also included workshops and working group and plenary sessions.

During the conference, leading women environmentalists called for research into the effect of toxic chemicals on the health of women and girls as they urged governments to make funds available to associations of poor women for environmental projects such as water, sanitation and poverty alleviation schemes and ecosystem management. They also recommended identifying the roles of women in the environmental recovery of war-torn zones.

GRAIN, an international non-profit organization which promotes the sustainable management and use of agricultural biodiversity based on people's control over genetic resources and local knowledge, has teamed up with other organizations to launch a new website ([www.bilaterals.org](http://www.bilaterals.org)) that seeks to share information about bilateral trade and investment agreements. More information is available online.

Participants developed a *Manifesto on Women and Environment* that includes concrete policy recommendations and a portfolio of specific project ideas. Through the manifesto, delegates stressed that "globalization, militarization, fundamentalism, and the market-driven economic model have undermined the achievement of the agreed goals." The manifesto also included expressions of similar deep concern over "the ever-widening gap between rich and poor," "unsustainable levels of production and consumption" and the "culture of fear and threat, with its many conflicts and increasing levels of violence and militarization."

The Network of Women Ministers for the Environment drafted a separate declaration on the theme of gender equality and empowerment. Their declaration, as well as the WAVE Manifesto and WAVE recommendations and project ideas, will be forwarded to UNEP's Governing Council in 2005. They will be also forwarded to relevant intergovernmental meetings, including the Beijing+10 review session and the WSSD follow-up.

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#### ILC LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

The International Land Coalition's (ILC) new website is now up and running ([www.landcoalition.org](http://www.landcoalition.org)), with a number of new features, including:

- b Partners Map: a world map showing the location of all ILC partners and the various activities they have carried out with the ILC.

- b Partners/Stakeholders page: provides links to the websites of the more than 150 organizations involved with the ILC.
- b Links: provides links to land-related organizations, portals and databases.
- b Documents by theme: documents are classified by 17 topical land-related themes.

The International Land Coalition is:

- b an institution of members, working to increase the rural poor's secure access to resources by strengthening the individual and collective capacity of its members and partners;
- b a global convenor on land issues, using its multistakeholder convening capacity to strengthen networks for collective action;
- b a mechanism to open spaces for dialogue with policy and decision makers;
- b an arena for innovation and scaling up of community-based experiences;
- b an advocate for the participation by partners, in national and global forums on land policy and related operational issues;
- b a communication network forming a hub for the interchange of ideas, best practices and lessons learnt; and,
- b a monitor of levels of compliance with programmes for action on land issues embedded in international agreements and summit outcomes.

More information on ILC and its activities is available online.

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## NGO UPDATE

#### CHILD SOLDIERS GLOBAL REPORT 2004

According to a report by the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, governments are undermining progress in ending the use of children as soldiers as children are fighting in almost every major conflict, in both government and opposition forces. They are being injured, subjected to horrific abuse and killed. The Coalition has called for the immediate enforcement of a ban on the use of child soldiers, calling on governments to ban all recruitment of children under 18 into any armed force.

"Children should be protected from warfare not used to wage it. Instead generations are having their

childhoods stolen by governments and armed groups," said Casey Kelso, head of the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers. "A world that does not allow children to fight wars is possible, but governments must show the political will and courage to make this happen by enforcing international laws."

*Child Soldiers Global Report 2004* reviews trends and developments since 2001 in 196 countries. Despite some improvements, the situation remained the same or deteriorated in many countries. Wars ending in Afghanistan, Angola and Sierra Leone led to the demobilization of 40,000 children, but over 25,000 were drawn into conflicts in Côte d'Ivoire and Sudan alone.

Opportunities for progress, including the creation of and growing support for a UN child soldiers treaty, the creation of demobilization programs in some countries and momentum towards prosecutions of those recruiting children, have been undermined by governments actively breaking pledges or failing to show political leadership. Although the UN Security Council has condemned child soldiering and monitors those using children in war, some members have blocked real progress by opposing concrete penalties for violators. The Coalition said that the Security Council should take immediate and decisive action to get children out of conflict by applying targeted sanctions and referring child recruiters to the International Criminal Court for prosecution.

Armed groups, both government-backed paramilitaries and opposition forces, are the main culprits in recruitment and use of child soldiers, according to the report. Dozens of groups in at least 21 conflicts have recruited tens of thousands of children since 2001, forcing them into combat, training them to use explosives and weapons, and subjecting them to rape, violence and hard labour. Girls and boys in the opposition Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, for example, were subjected to “war councils” for disciplinary offences and in some cases other children were forced to execute them. In eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, armed groups sexually abused and raped girls and forced children to kill their own relatives.

The Coalition said that all armed groups should protect children from conflict or be held legally accountable.

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#### WORLD RURAL WOMEN'S DAY

World Rural Women's Day (launched during the 1995 United Nations Beijing Women's Conference) was celebrated on 15 October 2004, with this year's theme “Claim your right to decision making.” An open letter to rural women of the world was distributed and posted on the Women's World Summit Foundation (WWSF) website. Below are extracts from the open letter.

“This year, we wish to empower you in claiming your right to decision making at the legislative level so that your voices are heard both locally and in society at large. Until you are fully represented at senior levels of public, professional and economic leadership, you neither enjoy equal rights nor have an equal voice. The undervaluing of your contributions to development and your underrepresentation in decision making are the source of much of your marginalization. Your social and economic advancement has to be promoted within

the framework of national development plans.

“Rural development is primarily the responsibility of each country's government, its civil society and the people directly involved—and is predicated on an enabling national environment, which combines effective and coherent policies, good governance and accountable institutions. At the 1995 United Nations Beijing Women's Conference your government committed ‘to ensure your equal access to and full participation in structures and decision making, and increase your capacity to participate in decision making and leadership.’

“Your voice can promote accountability and combat neglect from your government and donors. We encourage you to claim your right to participate in implementing and evaluating rural development programmes, patterns of international trade and that external investments are adjusted. You play a very special role as users and managers of natural resources which derives from the primary responsibility you have for food security, water, fuel and family welfare in your households. You have therefore the right to co-create with men the space in which you live and decide for the future of society to which you give birth.

“With the vast majority of the poor living in rural areas (three-quarters of the world's poor), you are key to ensuring that your government listens to your call to put in place the right policies and services without which no farmer, entrepreneur or donor for that matter will be willing to invest. We, therefore, urge you to claim your right to be part of designing your development process and evaluate for yourself what you need and what you can contribute. You must be accorded the right to own and inherit land, and the system of land distribution must be transparent protecting the rights of the poor and weak in your societies.

“What can you do? Get involved, demand that your government:

- b Empower you by giving you a larger voice in decision-making processes on resource allocation and in the design, development and implementation of rural development strategies
- b Keep its commitment in giving you an enhanced role in all aspects of rural development, including agriculture, nutrition and food security, and in ensuring that your work is recognized and valued;
- b Provide you equal access to education, skill training, health care, property, credit and inheritance, and that local, national and international institutions advance your status and mainstream gender;
- b Establish and strengthen rural financial institutions, including microfinance, savings and insurance facilities and cooperative ventures for your development and the development of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises;
- b Expand your access to safe drinking water and to basic sanitation;

*MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY brings together 50 charities, campaigns, trade unions, faith groups and celebrities who share a common belief that 2005 offers an unprecedented opportunity for global change. They are campaigning for urgent and significant policy changes in the areas of trade, debt and aid in order to combat world poverty.*

*The organizations that are currently working together to MakePovertyHistory are: ACORD, ActionAid, BOND, Book Aid International, CAFOD, CARE International UK, Catholic Institute for International Relations, Christian Aid, Church of Scotland Board of World Mission, Comic Relief, CONCERN, Grow Up Free From Poverty Coalition, Health Unlimited, Help the Aged, IMPACT Foundation, Intermediate Technology Development Group, International Service, Jubilee Debt Campaign, Jubilee Scotland, Leicestershire AIDS Support Services, Methodist Relief & Development Fund, NIDOS, One World Action, One World Week, OXFAM, People & Planet, Plan UK, RESULTS, Save the Children, Skillshare International, Stop AIDS Campaign, Student Partnerships Worldwide, Tearfund, The Fairtrade Foundation, The International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS, The Leprosy Mission, The Mother's Union, TIDAL, Trade Justice Movement, TUC, UK Coalition of People Living with HIV and AIDS, UNICEF UK, UNISON, Unitarian & Free Christian Churches, United Reformed Church, Viva Network, Wateraid, World Development Movement, World Emergency Relief, World Vision UK, Y Care International.*

*More information is available online (www.makepovertyhistory.org).*



- b Accelerate the process and facilitate implementation of information and communication technologies to help you be informed of vital issues concerning;
- b Give priority attention to policies and legislation to achieve well-defined and enforceable land and water use rights and the promotion of legal security of tenure, and guarantee your enhanced access to social services;
- b Strengthen rural health systems with particular attention to reducing maternal and infant mortality, infectious diseases, and provision of family planning; and
- b Mainstream HIV/AIDS concerns into rural development planning, including poverty eradication and food security strategies.

"Dear Sisters, remember: you are one among 1.6 billion rural women and represent about a quarter of the total world population. You produce on average more than half of all the food that is grown: up to 80% in Africa, 60% in Asia, between 30% and 40% in Latin America and Western countries. You own only 2% of the land, and receive only 1% of all agricultural credit. Your number living in poverty has doubled since 1970. Your voice needs to be heard NOW!"

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#### SUSTAINING A FUTURE FOR AGRICULTURE

A conference entitled "Sustaining a Future for Agriculture" was held at the World Council of Churches' headquarters in Geneva from 16-19 November. Convened by a group of civil society organizations from around the world, it brought together over 175 participants from farmer and peasant associations, food workers unions, environmental, church, women, and consumer groups, development NGOs, human rights organizations, fair trade organizations, and others. The conference provided an opportunity for participants to exchange views; to discuss possible rules to "better manage" international trade in agricultural commodities; to meet with government negotiators and discuss World Trade Organization (WTO) developments; and to build common strategies ahead of the WTO's 6th ministerial meeting, to be held in Hong Kong from 13-18 December 2005.

On the first day of the conference, UN officials and government delegates presented their positions in three sessions. Ambassador Muhamad Noor Yacob (Malaysia) and Samuel Gayi (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, UNCTAD) discussed the role of the WTO and international commodity markets. Delegations from India, Honduras, Philippines, Indonesia and Switzerland discussed the issue of WTO agreements protecting food security. Daniel Zulauf (Switzerland) pointed out that WTO is not an organization of development but first and foremost a trade organization. However, he

underlined that the WTO indirectly influences food security in defining trade policies. Ambassador Hardeep Puri (India) said that it is difficult for developing countries to make progress in the negotiation of WTO agreements without the help of civil society.

The remaining days were spent discussing the international dimensions of a "just and sustainable" food system and preparing for the WTO's ministerial meeting. A number of questions were addressed, including: "Where is the global food system headed? What role are corporations playing? How do the WTO, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UNCTAD, regional and bilateral trade deals, structural adjustment policies and third world debt figure in these trends?"

Philip Mc Michael (Cornell University, US), Tom Lines (independent researcher, UK), and Caroline Dommen (Trade-Human Rights-Equitable Economy, 3D) launched the debate on international commodity markets, including identifying the main issues and the impact they have on human rights. Mr. Lines pointed out that trade is a means and not an end in itself. In regard to the right to food, he said the international community has a duty towards the populations who suffer because of damaging trade policies. Ms. Dommen supported this analysis and highlighted that economic and social rights, such as the right to food, are rights in themselves. Although economic, social and cultural rights are less well known than civil and political rights, they are also legally binding.

Five working groups—international commodity agreements; supply management; standards, fair trade and market access; food sovereignty, human rights and the role of UN institutions; and tackling market concentration—were held. The concept of food sovereignty led the debate. According to Via Campesina, food sovereignty is the right of people, countries, and State Unions to define their agricultural and food policy, without any dumping by third countries. Many participants agreed to promote the concept of food sovereignty as a high priority for the WTO ministerial meeting.

The conference report and all documents are available online ([www.tradeobservatory.org](http://www.tradeobservatory.org)).

The organizing committee included: the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP); Southern and Eastern African Trade Information and Negotiations Institute (SEATINI); Lutheran World Federation (LWF); International Union of Food Workers (IUF); APRODEV; Focus on the Global South (FOCUS); Oxfam International; ActionAid; Via Campesina; World Vision Brazil; Consumers International; Friends of the Earth International; Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance; the World Council of Churches; and Heinrich Boell Stiftung.

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## OTHER

**WORLD DISASTER REPORT 2004:**

According to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, in the hours after sudden disaster strikes, most lives are saved by the courage and resourcefulness of friends and neighbours. During slow-onset crises such as drought, some rural societies have developed extraordinary capacities to cope and bounce back. The resilience and capacity of disaster-affected people to cope with apparently hopeless situations is the main theme of this year's *World Disasters Report*. It asks the question "How can aid organizations strengthen rather than undermine this local resilience?"

*World Disasters Report 2004* argues that a more developmental approach to creating disaster resilience is needed, which puts communities in charge of defining their needs and crafting the right solutions. Failure to include communities in disaster mitigation and response can undermine their resilience to risks.

"People continually adapt to crisis, coming up with creative solutions. Supporting resilience means more than delivering relief or mitigating individual hazards. Local knowledge, skills, determination, livelihoods, cooperation and access to resources are all vital factors enabling people to bounce back from disaster," Markku Niskala, Secretary-General of the International Federation, said.

The report indicates that the face of disasters is changing, noting that "natural" disasters are not the biggest killers. In sub-Saharan Africa last year, 2.2 million people died from HIV/AIDS, while 25 million live with the infection. Disease, drought, malnutrition, poor healthcare and poverty have together created a complex catastrophe, demanding a more integrated response than simply food aid or drugs. The unplanned acceleration of urban areas is also concentrating new risks as diseases from filthy water and sanitation kill over two million people a year—many of them slum children. "So why have national governments and aid organizations barely addressed the issue?" the report asks.

Mapping vulnerabilities and meeting needs is no longer enough, the report says, suggesting that three things need to happen. First, governments and aid organizations must understand what enables people to cope with, recover from, and adapt to the risks they face. Second, responses must be built on the community's own priorities, knowledge and resources. Third, community responses must be scaled up, by creating new coalitions with governments and advocating changes in policy and practice at all levels.

"We have talked about building capacity and resilience for decades. It is now time to turn rhetoric into reality: to dispel the myth of the helpless victim and the infallible humanitarian, and to put disaster-affected people and their abilities at the centre of our work," the report concludes.

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**IOM: GLOSSARY ON MIGRATION**

The International Office for Migration (IOM) has produced a *Glossary on Migration*, compiled and edited by the IOM's Legal Services, in an effort to strengthen its involvement in international migration law and to serve as a guide to the morass of terms and concepts in the migration field.

In the foreword, IOM's Legal Adviser, Richard Perruchoud, states, "Migration is increasingly being acknowledged as an issue that needs a global approach and coordinated responses. States are not only discussing migration issues at the bilateral level, but also regionally and lately in global arenas. A commonly understood language is indispensable for such coordination and international cooperation to be successful."

IOM said that when compiling the glossary, it became quickly apparent that definitions in the field are often vague, controversial or contradictory. There is also an absence of universally accepted definitions, which stems partially from the fact that migration is something which has traditionally only been addressed at the national level; the result is that the usage of migration terms varies from country to country.

IOM says migration is of concern to a number of bodies, including governments of both sending and receiving countries, police and border authorities, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and migrants themselves. And where there are no universally accepted definitions, the potential exists for each group to decide, formally or informally, on its own definition, according to its perspective.

The Glossary is available online ([www.iom.int](http://www.iom.int)).

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# World Summit on the Information Society Moving into Phase II

*The first Preparatory Meeting (PrepCom1) of the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), held in Hammamet (Tunis) from 24-26 June 2004, defined three areas of focus for the Tunis Phase: Internet governance; financial mechanisms, and multistakeholder stocktaking. Since PrepCom1, a wide range of activities has been undertaken in these key areas.*

## **Working Group on Internet Governance**

During the Geneva Summit held in December 2003, consensus was not reached on the issue of Internet governance (see *NGLS Roundup 109*) and the UN Secretary-General was requested to establish a working group on the issue. The task of this working group is to organize an open dialogue on Internet governance among all stakeholders, and to bring recommendations on this subject to the second phase of the Summit, to be held in Tunis from 16-18 November 2005.

From 20-21 September 2004, consultations were held in Geneva to establish a Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG), as requested by Phase I of WSIS last December. Over 250 participants from governments, civil society organizations and the private sector met together to define the Working Group's mandate, other issues that the WGIG should take into consideration, and the relationship of the Working Group with other consultations in the preparatory process leading up to Phase II.

In his opening remarks, Chairperson Nitin Desai underlined that the purpose of the WGIG's existence is to facilitate the negotiations that will take place in Tunis. "The WGIG process therefore will have to be designed in a manner to assist WSIS negotiations," he stressed.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan formally announced on 11 November the establishment of the WGIG, as well as the 40 members of the working group. The Executive Coordinator of the WGIG, Markus Kummer, had previously organized a number of informal consultations, and asked for official nominations of WGIG members from governments, the private sector and civil society. All three constituents share the same number of seats in the WGIG.

A next round of open-ended consultations is scheduled for 15-16 February 2005, and a final report is expected to be submitted to the Secretary General in July 2005.

## **Task Force on Financial Mechanisms**

During Phase I of WSIS, Mr. Annan was requested to review the adequacy of existing financial mechanisms to meet challenges for ICT for development. Under the Secretary-General's auspices, the Task Force on Financial Mechanisms (TFFM) was launched on 4 October 2004. Set up by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in collaboration with the World Bank and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), among others, the TFFM will complete its review of the adequacy of existing financial mechanisms by the end of December 2004 and

will submit a report for discussion at PrepCom 2, to be held in Geneva from 17-25 February 2005.

The Task Force, chaired by UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown, aims to produce an action-oriented report with a set of recommendations that can be used to facilitate negotiations at the intergovernmental level leading up to and during the Tunis phase of WSIS.

"It has been demonstrated that ICT can change the way development takes place and, used effectively, it can be a powerful tool, contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals," Mr. Malloch Brown said at the launch. "The role of the Task Force is not to come up with a negotiated text—this is the task of the Summit process—but to provide expert inputs and recommendations that can contribute to facilitating the negotiations." José Antonio Ocampo, Under Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, reiterated the need for the Task Force to look into different forms of provision and to make its recommendations on the basis of what is actually working in practice.

An informal consultation on the work of the Task Force was held in Geneva on 16 November 2004, providing the opportunity for Member States and stakeholders to be updated on its work and for the Task Force to hear about issues of concern and effective approaches adopted by different countries to address the financing question.

A virtual consultation process was also launched ([www.wsis.online.net/financing/finance-root/TFFM](http://www.wsis.online.net/financing/finance-root/TFFM)), allowing the Task Force to benefit from the participation of governments, the private sector and civil society from both developing and developed countries.

## **Multistakeholder Stocktaking**

As part of the preparations for the Tunis Phase, the WSIS Executive Secretariat is undertaking a stocktaking exercise of the implementation of the WSIS Plan of Action by governments and all other WSIS stakeholders. A questionnaire was sent out to all stakeholders inviting them to inform the WSIS Executive Secretariat about their implementation activities and projects. The deadline for submissions was 15 December 2004.

The stocktaking serves several objectives, including providing material for a substantive report for the Tunis Summit and moving the Plan of Action forward. It also aims to assess progress on commitments and to provide a mechanism for sharing information and learning from various experiences. As part of the output, the WSIS Secretariat plans to draft a report and a website on best practices and success stories, as well as a booklet before 2005. The



WSIS stocktaking questionnaire is available online ([www.itu.int/wsis/stocktaking/scripts/q.asp](http://www.itu.int/wsis/stocktaking/scripts/q.asp)).

### **UN ICT Task Force**

The seventh meeting of the UN ICT Task Force, the Global Forum, was held in Berlin from 19-20 November, hosted by the German Foreign Ministry, on the subject of "Promoting an enabling environment for digital development."

The Forum, attended by nearly 300 practitioners from the public and private sectors, academia and civil society, looked at new models for financing ICT for development. Participants included Italy's Minister for Innovation and Technology Lucio Stanca; Mozambique's Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology Lidia Brito; China's Vice-Minister of Information Industry Guo Hua Xi; Roberto Bissio, Director of Third World Institute, and NOKIA Senior Vice-President Veli Sundback.

Participants recognized the need for a global platform for a productive dialogue among stakeholders that will continue to operate beyond the Tunis phase. In order to provide a forum with the necessary legitimacy, inclusiveness and global scope, the Task Force decided to undertake wide consultations with all stakeholders to promote a Global Alliance on ICT-for-Development that could be launched in Tunis next year. The Alliance will seek to promote a voluntary multistakeholder forum and platform for debate and dialogue with the objective of promoting the use of ICT for achieving the Millennium Development Goals on the basis of a close collaboration of all stakeholders. Concrete methodologies and modalities of operation of the Alliance will be developed in close consultations with all stakeholders.

Task Force members felt that an enabling environment is indispensable for creating a global, development-oriented information society. This involves establishing a legal and policy framework that encourages investment, innovation and entrepreneurship; promoting regulatory regimes conducive to the elimination of barriers for competition; supporting the creation of ICT-for-development policies and national e-strategies; and stimulating the application of ICTs in sectors such as education, health, e-government and e-commerce.

The outcome of the Global Forum—a summary of its proceedings and proposals for action—will be submitted to the Secretary-General's Task Force on Financial Mechanisms and to the WSIS Preparatory Committee. Secretary-General Kofi Annan established the ICT Task Force in 2001.

### **Regional Meetings**

A number of regional meetings are being held in the run-up to Phase II. The West Asia Preparatory Conference was held from 22-23 November in Damascus (Syria), and sought to produce a Regional Plan of Action, taking into account regional needs for building a sustainable Arab information society, as well as active promotion of partnerships among the various stakeholders, including governments, the private sector, non-governmental and international/regional organizations, in order to implement the regional plan.

The African Preparatory Conference will be held from 2-4 February 2005 in Accra (Ghana), and has for a theme "Access—Africa's key to an inclusive Information Society." The conference will examine a report on the implementation of the Geneva decisions, and bring

together a broad panel of representatives (civil society, private sector and international organizations) to discuss various topics, including financing the information society, indicators and benchmarking, ICTs for socio-economic development, access and infrastructure, industrialization and Internet Governance.

The Asia-Pacific Preparatory Conference will be held from 11-13 October 2005 in Bangkok (Thailand), and will focus on the regional and national implementations of the outcomes of the Geneva Phase as well as the formulation of a draft Regional Plan of Action.

The Latin America and Caribbean Preparatory Conference will be held in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) from 8-10 2005.

### **New Team Appointed for Phase II**

Yoshio Utsumi, WSIS Secretary-General and Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), has announced the appointment of a team to organize Phase II of the Summit.

Charles Geiger (Switzerland) has been appointed Executive Director of the WSIS Executive Secretariat, based at ITU headquarters in Geneva. In cooperation with the intergovernmental WSIS Bureau, he is charged with the overall planning and implementation of the organization of the Summit including its preparatory process. Mr Geiger took up his new duties as of 1 November 2004, and prior to this appointment held senior positions in the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs and at the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

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# UN Launches "Action Two" Reform Initiative on Human Rights

*Seeking to bolster its support for efforts undertaken by Member States in strengthening their national human rights promotion and protection systems, the United Nations launched, on 27 October in New York, its Plan of Action for the "Action Two" reform initiative.*

The main goal of the Plan of Action is to develop the capacity of the UN's humanitarian and development operations so that they can support the efforts of Member States in establishing and strengthening national human rights mechanisms consistent with international human rights norms and principles. The Plan of Action draws on the experience in human rights work of UN agencies and interagency mechanisms, and has a three-year time frame (2004-2006).

To launch the Plan of Action, a panel was invited to raise awareness about the initiative among partners and stakeholders and to promote it with donors and beneficiaries. Louise Arbour, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), chaired the event, and panellists included Mark Malloch Brown, Chair of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); Jan Egeland, Chair of the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs; and Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Vasuki Nesiah, senior associate with the International Centre for Transitional Justice, was also invited as a guest speaker.

In her opening statement, Louise Arbour outlined three features of the Plan of Action that would guarantee a lasting impact for the Action Two initiative. Firstly, the Plan will make UN country teams the central vehicle for country support in the area of human rights, which, in turn, will improve assistance by tailoring it to the specific needs at the national level. Secondly, the Plan will follow a rights-based approach that will draw proper connections to development and humanitarian sector, rather than treating human rights as an isolated issue. Thirdly, the Plan will be inclusive as it will require the systematic cooperation of different programmes and agencies of the UN system.

In light of these features, Ms. Arbour emphasized that the Action Two initiative sought nothing less than a fundamental improvement in the chances of each and every individual to live a life of security and dignity. In that sense, she explained, Action Two went to the core of the very purpose of the United Nations.

Mr. Malloch Brown noted that while support for human rights has always been at the heart of the UN's mission, for too long during the Cold War years, discussion of the concept was too often distorted by political rhetoric. He noted, however, that with the end of the Cold War, the world had moved beyond the confrontational nature of the human rights discourse and that all rights—whether civil, political, economic, cultural or social—should be achieved. Access to education, healthcare, shelter and employment, he argued, is as critical to human freedom as political and civil rights.

Underscoring the link between security and human rights, Mr. Egeland said that the promotion and protection of human rights lay at the very heart of humanitarian action. The very right to life and survival is the core principle that compels humanitarians to act, he added. Noting examples in Darfur, Sudan, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) where basic human rights were flagrantly violated, he stressed that all serve as compelling reasons why the UN must take humanitarian action and be better able and better equipped to work with national partners to extend protection to the innocent victims of conflict and violence.

In her remarks, Carol Bellamy said that the UN system's experience with a human rights based approach to development and humanitarian operations so far has resulted in deepening support to national efforts. According to Ms. Bellamy, it is through a better analysis of the economic and social environment in which people live; through strengthened partnerships with both the State and civil society, facilitating the participation of a wide range of actors; and through involvement in issues related to governance, such as legislative reform and accountability mechanisms, that people can be allowed to claim their rights.

Addressing the audience, Ms. Nesiah spoke of the importance of creating stronger partnerships between Member States, the UN and civil society. The International Centre for Transitional Justice, she noted, was established to help countries in their efforts to pursue accountability for past atrocities and human rights abuses. Ms. Nesiah explained that her organization provided comparative information, legal and policy analysis, documentation and strategic research to governments, the United Nations and other non-governmental organizations. While acknowledging that adhering to international standards must be encouraged, Ms. Nesiah emphasized that there was a need for greater support for national initiatives. The Plan of Action for the Action Two initiative, she argued, could lead the UN to be more responsive to a particular country's context by being independent and flexible to address domestic imperatives.

The Plan of Action is the product of a year-long collaborative process between twenty-one heads of UN department and agencies, and was developed under the framework of the UNDG, the ECHA, and the OHCHR in response to the Secretary-General's report *Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change* (A/57/387, see *Go Between* 93) and General Assembly resolution 57/300.

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# General Assembly Commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of the ICPD

*On 14 October, the General Assembly marked the tenth anniversary of the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), which adopted a 20-year plan to provide access to reproductive health, reduce maternal deaths, promote women's rights and help reduce poverty. The Assembly heard statements by a number of countries expressing their support for the ICPD Programme of Action (POA) and sharing experiences on how the mandate is helping their countries, communities and families.*

Speaking before the Assembly on 14 October, Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), said, "Cairo was a turning point in development thinking for it put the focus where it should be—on improving the quality of life of all people no matter where they happen to be born and whether they are women or men. It put the focus on protecting human rights and the natural resources on which all life depends. It recognized that migration, urbanization, ageing, poverty and sustainable development are all interconnected.

"The agenda is built on a simple premise: that providing universal access to education and reproductive health services and promoting women's empowerment will reduce gender inequality and poor health, and help break the cycle of poverty in which millions of individuals and families now find themselves," said Ms. Obaid. "If governments make these critical investments in people, and use population data and policies not only to count people but to make people count, then a chain reaction will occur, leading to concrete progress that is not only measured by scientists, but most importantly, by individuals as they go about their daily lives." She urged the Cairo mandate to be fully reflected in the 2005 review of the Millennium Declaration.

Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette said, "Today, countries throughout the world continue to use the ICPD Programme in forging the strategies and policies with which they hope to address population issues and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. And they are making substantial progress, building on the achievements of earlier decades. Yet any satisfaction we may feel at the expansion of rights and freedoms involving population issues must be tempered by an acute awareness of the unfinished agenda, the fact that parts of the world are not sharing in this progress, and the daunting challenges that have emerged in the meantime," she warned, making reference to high population growth in the developing world, AIDS, ageing, and rapid urbanization.

Pointing to the ten-year reviews of both the Beijing and Copenhagen conferences and the five-year review of the Millennium Declaration, Ms. Fréchette concluded, "I hope governments are ready to forge closer partnerships and provide the necessary resources, notably to the United Nations agencies that do such important work on the ground, helping people to improve their daily lives. As we commemorate the tenth anniversary of the ICPD, I would like to commend the UN Population Fund, for its tireless and brave efforts in advancing the Cairo agenda. As we look ahead, I urge you to overcome your remaining differences on sensitive issues, reaffirm your full commitment to the ICPD Programme of Action, and intensify our common work towards a world of development and wellbeing for all."

"If we are to translate our commitment to the achievement of the MDGs into concrete results by 2015, we must dedicate ourselves to the complete and improved implementation of the Cairo Programme of

Action," said Hans van den Broek (Netherlands) speaking on behalf of the European Union and associated nations. "The way to 2015 leads through Cairo," he urged. Despite the efforts of developing countries to set up and expand access to reproductive health programmes, millions of their citizens still lacked access to crucial services, said Qatar's Sultan Al-Mahmoud, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77. "There are still gaps in the implementation of the Programme of Action, with dire implications for the realization of the development goals, particularly the MDGs," he warned.

On 13 October, a statement by world leaders and more than 30,000 signatures from citizens in Europe and the United States expressing support for the Cairo consensus was presented to the United Nations. "We call on the international community, national governments and private philanthropic organizations, to prioritize and fund the ICPD Programme of Action," it said, with leaders also pledging to do their part. The Cairo consensus was reached by 179 governments, which agreed on actions to alleviate poverty and promote development by reducing maternal and infant deaths; promoting women's rights and education; preventing HIV/AIDS; and ensuring universal access to reproductive health, including family planning (see *NGLS Roundup 116*).

Signatories include Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, French President Jacques Chirac, Mexican President Vicente Fox, Rwandan President Paul Kagame, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski, among many others. Also endorsing the declaration were Oscar Arias, the former President of Costa Rica, Gro Harlem Brundtland, the former Prime Minister of Norway, former US Presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, and Nobel Laureates Nadine Gordimer and Desmond Tutu.

"This most welcome and priceless support provided through the World Leaders' Statement complements the renewed commitments expressed by the world's governments and peoples in the regional meetings held over the last two years in preparation for the tenth anniversary," said Ms. Obaid. "Based on the resolute, universal commitment of governments at the regional meetings and the exciting support mobilized through this Statement, we are more confident than ever that the hopes of Cairo will be fulfilled and the dreams of the hundreds of millions of women and men in need of health, rights and development will be realized in the coming decade."

The statement is available online ([www.icpdleadersstatement.net/documents/statement.htm](http://www.icpdleadersstatement.net/documents/statement.htm)).

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# CEDAW at 25: Are We Moving Forward?

*On 13 October, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs' (DESA) Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) organized a commemorative roundtable discussion to mark the 25th anniversary of the General Assembly's adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) that recognized the achievements made in the name of women's rights over the last 25 years, while alerting those present to the challenges lying ahead.*

The 13 October roundtable discussion featured a number of speakers, including Louise Fréchette, UN Deputy Secretary-General; Dame Silvia Rose Cartwright, Governor General of New Zealand; Thoraya Obaid, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Executive Director; and Ayse Feride Acar (Turkey), current chairperson of the CEDAW Committee. Also taking part in the discussion were the four previous chairpersons of the CEDAW Committee—Ivanka Corti (1993-1996), Salma Khan (1997-1998), Aida González Martínez (1999-2000) and Charlotte Abaka (2001-2002)—and the former Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, Angela E.V. King.

In her opening remarks, Ms. Fréchette recognized the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as the preeminent global tool for the promotion of gender equality in the home, community and society. The Convention, she said, ensured a woman's freedom from discrimination, whether perpetrated by the State or any other person, organization or enterprise. She stressed that the anniversary was an opportunity to foster greater public debate at the national level and galvanize new policy initiatives to increase compliance with the Convention.

Ms. Cartwright asserted that the Convention was a living document, which has allowed for the development of jurisprudence for women. However, she acknowledged that sometimes States ratify the Convention simply because they want international approval. These States often enter reservations to key Articles, which hinder the intended effect of the Convention. Such hollow ratifications, she warned, were increasingly being met with fierce criticism from the CEDAW Committee and would eventually be unsustainable as the focus of attention turns more sharply from policy to practice.

Speaking on behalf of the UN system, Ms. Obaid emphasized that the UN had worked, and continued to work, in building awareness and capacity at the local level to bring the words of CEDAW to life. She noted that assistance is provided to women's and girls' rights organizations, youth groups, women's health groups, legal associations and other organizations to increase awareness of the Convention's provisions; training is given to government officials and to the personnel of judicial systems, including police officers, paralegals, lawyers and judges; and support is supplied to the reporting and monitoring mechanisms established under the Optional Protocol of the Convention.

Ms. King, in her remarks, said, "In our review of progress we should also reflect on the landmarks that would never have happened had there been no CEDAW. Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security is one such. On 31 October we celebrate its fourth anniversary. Women in countries newly gaining the right to participate in democratic processes whether after colonialism or

armed conflict, such as Afghanistan, Timor-Leste, or Rwanda, for example, have clamoured for their rights under the Convention.... As we view these examples, we can see hope for the women and men of Darfur, Haiti and other war-torn areas. [M]any challenges lie ahead. A major one is developing the institutions and mechanisms that make laws come alive and the necessary funding for their sustainability," she concluded.

Drawing on the history of the CEDAW Committee, four former Chairpersons of the Committee provided a review of the results achieved and their impact on the UN. Many landmark decisions and initiatives were underscored, most notably the inter-agency cooperation on women's reproductive rights and health.

Ms. Acar recognized the important involvement of women's NGOs as stakeholders in the international monitoring of women's human rights. Such groups, she stressed, had an increasing and more effective participation in the CEDAW process. Ms. Acar went on to say that it was now the rule, rather than the exception, to have women's NGOs actively involved in the preparation and presentation of CEDAW reports. It was in this spirit of collaboration, she said, that two NGOs dedicated to the rights of women were among the invited speakers: Shanthi Dairiam, Executive Director, International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAP) Asia Pacific, and Bani Dugal, Chairperson, Non-Governmental Organization Committee on the Status of Women.

In her address, Ms. Dugal commended the Committee for the way its members had reached out and welcomed the contributions of NGOs over the years. She also recognized that CEDAW had been critically important for NGOs insofar as it had provided them with a framework for articulating specific rights, which have empowered and emboldened their work with governments. Expanding on the relationship between government and NGOs, Ms. Dairiam urged greater dialogue on CEDAW implementation, especially at the national level.

At the end of the discussion, the Committee released a statement in which they called upon States to hold public debates about equality for women on 18 December—the anniversary day of the adoption of the Convention by the General Assembly in 1979—and launch new initiatives to increase compliance with the Convention. The statement is available online ([www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw25anniversary/cedaw25-CEDAW.pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw25anniversary/cedaw25-CEDAW.pdf)).

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# 2005 Education for All Global Monitoring Report

*In April 2000 in Dakar (Senegal), over 160 countries attending the World Education Forum pledged to achieve by 2015 wider access to early childhood care and education; universal primary education; improved youth and adult learning opportunities; a 50% improvement in adult literacy rates; gender equality; and an improvement in all aspects of the quality of education. The 2005 Education for All Global Monitoring Report monitors progress being made towards these goals.*

Despite significant efforts to increase resources, and record levels of children going to school, many drop out before the fifth grade or graduate without mastering even a minimum set of cognitive skills, threatening global educational goals set in 2000, according to report published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The report, *2005 Education for All Global Monitoring Report*, monitors progress towards the six EFA goals set by over 160 countries at the World Education Forum in 2000 in Dakar (see *Go Between* 81). Its findings served as the basis for discussions at the Fourth High-Level Group Meeting on Education for All (EFA) held in Brasilia from 9-10 November 2004.

"Overcrowded classes, poorly qualified teachers and ill-equipped schools with scant learning materials remain all too familiar pictures in many countries," UNESCO Director-General Koichiro Matsuura said at the meeting in Brasilia. "Yet, achieving education for all fundamentally relies on assuring decent quality: what children learn and how they learn can make or break their school experience and their subsequent opportunities in life," he stressed.

In his opening address, President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva highlighted Brazil's strong engagement with the EFA challenge. Stressing that HIV/AIDS, conflict and deepening poverty have eroded gains in enrolling more girls in school in many countries, Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), called on nations to respect promises made to ensure that girls and boys receive the same educational opportunities. Ms. Bellamy outlined a strategy to achieve a "radical breakthrough" in these countries:

- b Sending supplies and services to those countries where enrolment levels have been stagnating for decades.
- b Urging governments to abolish school fees and other costs where deepening poverty combines with a rising population of children orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS.
- b Establishing standards for quality experiences and quality learning as an integral part of the new education systems, "so we do not have to continue fixing schools without water or toilets, schools that do not provide the necessary resources for teachers and learners, or schools that fail to create a welcoming environment for quality learning."
- b Anticipating and pre-empting crisis, as well as addressing emergencies and dealing with post-conflict situations in countries that are sliding towards crisis, are actually in a state of emergency, or in transition from emergency to development.

- b Identifying countries which appear to be doing well but in which national averages mask pockets of serious discrimination and give rise to complacency in the form of wider gender discrimination in society.

UNICEF said that eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005 is an essential step toward education for all children, and will be the first test of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Worldwide, 121 million primary-school-age children are currently denied schooling. More than half of them are girls.

"All children have a right to schooling and all the opportunity that education provides," Ms. Bellamy stressed. "Children must no longer be denied an education simply because they are girls, or live in rural communities, or are from poor families or belong to minority population groups."

*2005 Education for All Global Monitoring Report* says that exhaustive analysis of research data shows that the quality of education systems is failing children in many parts of the world, and could prevent many countries from achieving EFA by the 2015 target date. Improving the quality of learning through inclusive, holistic policies is an overriding priority in a majority of countries.

The report highlights a number of urgent needs—for more and better-trained teachers, for improved textbooks available to all learners, for pedagogical renewal and for more welcoming learning environments. While no reform comes without cost, better learning outcomes have achieved in very diverse political contexts, and in societies with greatly varying degrees of wealth.

Every investment in basic education must be measured against how well it serves both to expand access to education and to improve learning for all children, youth and adults. This endeavour begins at home, with a national consensus on quality and a robust long-term commitment to achieve excellence. However, the international community must also give strong and consistent support to countries that are boldly seeking to expand and improve learning for all of their citizens, the report stresses.

*Contact: The EFA Global Monitoring Report Team, c/o UNESCO, 7 place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07, France, telephone +33-1/4568 2128, fax +33-1/4568 5627, e-mail <efareport@unesco.org>, website (www.efareport.unesco.org) or (www.unesco.org/education/efa/index.shtml).*

# 51st Session of the UNCTAD Trade and Development Board

*The Trade and Development Board (TDB) of the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD) met for its 51st session in Geneva from 4-15 October 2004. During its two-week meeting, the 148-member Board considered recent UNCTAD reports on economic development in Africa, the least developed countries (LDCs), and new developments in international economic relations.*

The TDB defined its programme of work for the coming months in keeping with priorities set for the secretariat at UNCTAD XI, and discussed developments in the post-Doha work programme of particular concern to developing countries, and ways to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in particular for the world's poorest countries. The Board also held consultations with representatives of civil society and discussed interdependence and global economic issues from a trade and development perspective.

On 5 October, new developments in international economic relations were examined as part of follow-up to UNCTAD XI. Rodolfo Severino (Philippines), Presidential Advisor on Trade and Development and a candidate to replace Rubens Ricupero as Secretary-General of UNCTAD, argued that it is no longer relevant to see the world in terms of the centre (the industrial world) and the periphery (everything else). Rather, the nature of comparative advantage is changing and countries in the South are no longer being seen as permanently in the periphery. Some speakers, however, warned that the new trade dynamism in the South appeared to be largely unsupported by significant increases in investment or other resource flows, and that most export and investment growth in the South was concentrated in just a few developing countries.

During its consideration of interdependence and global economic issues from a trade and development perspective, the Board highlighted the need for the international community to establish a more global general policy framework that could strengthen the coherence between the international trade system and the international monetary and financial systems.

Carlos Fortin, Officer-in-Charge of UNCTAD, said that UNCTAD has endeavoured to play an active, supportive role in making the development promise of Doha a reality. Following the collapse of the Doha Round of trade talks at the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Ministerial Conference in Cancun (see *Go Between 100*), a decision to re-start negotiations on the post-Doha work programme was reached last July, shortly after UNCTAD XI, held in June 2004 in Brazil (see *NGLS Roundup 115*).

The second week of the TDB meeting was devoted to economic development in Africa and to the LDCs, and the Board stressed the urgent need to adopt development strategies that respond to the development needs of the LDCs. Increased international trade flows could potentially enable economic development in these countries, but such flows should also be combined with other factors, including the effective development and use of productive capacities to transform the vicious circle of the poverty trap into a virtuous circle leading to the promotion of economic and human development in the world's 50 poorest countries.

The Board considered and adopted a report that reflected the new work areas arising from UNCTAD XI in the current programme budget. While there was a general agreement that the poorest countries should continue to benefit from UNCTAD's technical cooperation, it was stressed that the Secretariat should ensure equal access to its technical support by all developing countries.

## ***Economic Development in Africa***

UNCTAD's 2004 report on economic development in Africa argues that the debt service is incompatible with the achievement of the MDGs. "Any lasting solution to the debt overhang hinges as much on political will as on financial rectitude," *Economic Development in Africa: Debt Sustainability, Oasis or Mirage* argues, noting that many African countries continue to suffer from a debt overhang despite the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC)s Initiative and various actions in the context of Paris Club, which seeks to find co-ordinated and sustainable solutions to the payment difficulties experienced by debtor nations. Exogenous shocks, commodity dependence, poorly designed reform programmes and the actions of creditors have all played a "decisive part in the debt crisis."

The figures in the report provide a stark illustration of the situation: "between 1970-2002, Africa received some US\$540 billion in loans, but despite paying back close to US\$550 billion in principal and interest it still had a debt stock of US\$295 billion as at the end of 2002." The situation is even worse in Sub-Saharan Africa, which received US\$294 billion in disbursements, paid out US\$268 billion in debt service and yet remains straddled with a debt stock of some US\$210 billion. A more nuanced picture shows that debt profile moved from "sustainability" in the 1970s to "crisis" in the first half of the 1980s, with much of the debt being contracted between 1985-1995 under the guidance of structural adjustment programmes and close scrutiny by the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs). The report concludes that this amounts to a reverse transfer of resources from the world's poorest continent and argues for a total cancellation of Africa's debt.

However, even a full debt write-off would be only a first step towards restoring growth and meeting the MDGs. UNCTAD estimates that such a write-off would represent less than half of those countries' resource requirements, with the gap filled by increased official development assistance (ODA) grants as a prelude to Africa increasing the level of domestic savings and investment required for robust and sustainable growth.

## ***Civil Society Hearing***

On 4 October, civil society hearings were held as part of the TDB's efforts to include all development actors in its work, bringing together government representatives and civil society actors to debate a list of issues. The future of UNCTAD; trade and development related issues; commodities; UNCTAD's contributions



to the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major UN conferences and summits in the economic and social fields were among the items discussed.

More than 20 NGOs attended the hearing, and eight civil society representatives were on the agenda to address the TDB—raising issues ranging from trade and development to gender and supply-sided constraints for African countries, as well as the MDGs. Ten other NGO representatives were able to express their comments, positions and ask the Secretariat questions.

In the session on commodities, Kristin Dawkins (Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, IATP) stressed that for tens of millions of people in developing countries, agriculture is essential to survival and commodities production is the base of many developing country economies. Seventeen of twenty of the most important non-fuel exports from Africa are primary commodities or partially processed commodities, she indicated, while pointing out that for decades the prices of these critical products have declined.

She said it is urgent that UNCTAD finalize the terms of reference for its International Task Force on Commodities (ITFC), as agreed during UNCTAD XI, and appoint the stakeholder groups and their representatives. According to IATP, the ITFC should look towards innovative institutional mechanisms that will ensure the rapid conversion of the commodities trade—to no longer drain developing country economies but instead to generate a greater share of global revenue for investment in developing countries, especially the LDCs.

Martin Khor (Third World Network) said that the Sao Paulo Consensus had helped the adoption of the July package by the WTO members on 1 August 2004, and two major positive signs emerged from the package. First, three out of four of the Singapore Issues had been dropped from the agenda, relieving developing countries of excessive strain on their negotiating capacity and avoiding negotiations in new areas that would have constrained their policy space even further in important areas for development. Second, the commitment to eliminate export subsidies was a welcome development, though the question as to when this would be done remained open.

However, there were other trends in the July package. Concerning

non-agricultural market access (NAMA), the proposed formula would cut tariffs aggressively and rapidly, particularly for developing countries, thus creating a threat for unprepared domestic industries. Second, it was proposed to bind almost all national tariffs at a rate equivalent to two times the current applied rates, which could also lead to dramatic cuts. On agriculture, while the commitment to eliminate export subsidies was welcome, gauging the result with regard to domestic subsidies was difficult.

Janice Goodson-Foerde (International Coalition for Development Action) and Elizabeth Eilor (African Women's Economic Policy Network) both highlighted the issues on trade and gender. Gender and development, according to Ms. Goodson-Foerde, were sporadically taken up at UNCTAD XI, but the work and progress in this area must be continued. She also questioned how the new UNCTAD management will follow-up on its tasks. Ms. Eilor said that without addressing the supply-side constraints in the African region, "the MDGs will not be a dream achieved." UNCTAD should work together with governments, not only in terms of research and capacity building, but also in refining policy analysis for addressing poverty alleviation.

Mike Waghorne (Public Services International, PSI) speaking under the heading of the future of UNCTAD, said that it seems to be well accepted that development cannot occur unless there is decent, sustainable employment. He recalled that in Sao Paulo there were several issues raised by civil society groups in terms of what they wanted from UNCTAD. He suggested that policy coherence at the national and international level is of key importance, something that has been stressed by the International Labour Organization's (ILO) World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization (see *NGLS Roundup 112*) and further promoted by the Cardoso Panel (see *NGLS Roundup 113*), and, in that context, UNCTAD should play a role in a globalization policy forum, which should be set up among the different international organizations. The other issue was policy space, which enables developing countries to set their own time and manner of doing what development calls for.

Contact: Amel Haffouz, Civil Society Outreach, UNCTAD, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva, Switzerland 10, telephone +41-22/907 5048, fax +41-22/917 0043, e-mail <amel.haffouz@unctad.org>, website (www.unctad.org).



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# Millennium Development Goals

Internet Portal

The portal provides background information on the MDGs, such as aims and indicators, current UN and civil society action towards achieving them, regional action, a calendar of events and a section of links.



[www.un-ngls.org/mdg](http://www.un-ngls.org/mdg)

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## Selected UN Events in 2005

*The following lists a number of UN meetings and events that are due to take place in 2005. Please note this list is not exhaustive and dates may be subject to change.*

*Not all meetings listed below are open to NGO participation.*

### CRIME/NARCOTIC DRUGS

- b Commission on Narcotic Drugs  
--48th Session, 8-17 March, Vienna  
--Committee on the Whole, 8-17 March, Vienna
- b 11th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, 18-25 April, Bangkok
- b International Narcotics Control Board  
--83rd session, 2-13 May, Vienna  
--84th Session of the 7-25 November, Vienna

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

### DISARMAMENT

#### BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

- b Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction,  
--Meeting of Experts, 11- 22 April, Geneva  
--Annual meeting of the States Parties to the Convention, 14-18 November, Geneva

#### CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

- b Conference on Disarmament  
--1st part January - March, Geneva  
--2nd part May - June, Geneva  
--3rd part, July - September, Geneva

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

#### DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

- b Disarmament Commission, 11-28 April, New York  
Contact: Disarmament Commission, Room S-2977-H, UN, New York NY 10017, USA, telephone +1-212/963 5595, fax +1-212/963 1121, website (<http://disarmament.un.org/undiscom.htm>)

### ILLICIT SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

- b Open-Ended Working Group on an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, 2nd session, 31 January-11 February, New York
- b Second Biennial Meeting of States to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, 11-15 July, New York

### NUCLEAR WEAPONS

- b 2005 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 2nd session, 2-27 May, New York

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

### ECOSOC/GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- b Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)  
--Organizational session, 1-4 February, New York  
--Resumed organizational session, 27-28 April, New York  
--Substantive session, 28 June-23 July, Geneva  
--Resumed substantive session, 16 September, New York
- b Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations,  
--2005 regular session, 5-18 January, New York  
--2005 resumed session, 9-20 May, New York

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

- b ECOSOC Special High-Level Meeting with Bretton Woods Institutions and the World Trade Organization, 18 April, New York
- b Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights  
--34th session, 25 April-13 May, Geneva  
--35th session, 7-25 November, Geneva  
--pre-sessional working group, 28 November - 2 December, Geneva



*Dates may be subject to change*

b ECOSOC High-Level Segment on Achieving the Internationally Agreed Development Goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, as well as Implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations Conferences and Summits: Progress made, Challenges and Opportunities, 4-6 July, Geneva

b ECOSOC Coordination Segment and Operational Activities Segment, Date TBA, New York

b United Nations General Assembly, 60th session, 13 September-December, New York

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

b Millennium Declaration Follow-up General Assembly High-Level Event (Millennium Summit +5), 14-16 September, New York

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

## EDUCATION

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

b Meeting of the Working Group on Education for All (EFA), UNESCO, July, Paris

b Meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All (EFA), 28 - 30 November, Beijing

## FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

b World Food Programme (WFP) Executive Board, 1st Regular Session, 31 January - 4 February, Rome

b UN Food and Agriculture (FAO) Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, 55th Session, Rome, 9-11-February

b FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI), 26th session, 7-11 March, Rome  
--FAO Ministerial Meeting on Fisheries, 12 March, Rome

b FAO Conference, 19-30 November, Rome

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

## HEALTH

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

b 4th Pan African Malaria Conference, 13-18 November, Yaounde, Cameroon

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

## HIV/AIDS

b General Assembly High-Level Dialogue on HIV/AIDS, June, New York

b International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific, 1-5 July, Kobe, Japan

b 14th International Conference on HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections in Africa (ICASA), 5-9 December, Abuja, Nigeria

## HUMAN RIGHTS

b Commission on Human Rights, 61st Session  
14 March - 22 April, Geneva

b Human Rights Committee  
--84th session, 11-29 July, Geneva  
--85th session, 17 October - 4 November, Geneva

b Rights of the Child  
Committee on the Rights of the Child  
--38th session, 10-28 January, Geneva  
--39th session, 16 May - 3 June, Geneva  
--40th session, 12 - 30 September, Geneva

Pre-sessional working group  
--31 January-4 February, Geneva  
--3-7 October, Geneva  
--10th Meeting of the State Parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 23 February, New York

b Commission on Human Rights, Intergovernmental Working Group on Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, January-February (2 weeks), Geneva

b Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII)  
--4th session, 16-27 May, New York

b Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers & Members of Their Families, 30 May-3 June, Geneva

*Dates may be subject to change*

b 57th Session on the Commission on Human Rights, Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, 25 July-12 August, Geneva

b Commission on Human Rights, Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Working Group on Indigenous Populations, July (1 week), Geneva

b Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination  
66th session, 7-25 March, Geneva  
67th Session of the, 1-19 August, Geneva

b Commission on Human Rights, Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Working Group on Communications  
--15-26 August, Geneva  
--10-14 October, Geneva

b Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Intersessional Forum on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Social Forum), 21-22 July, Geneva

b Commission on Human Rights, Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, 40th session, 13-17 September, Geneva

b Committee against Torture  
--pre-sessional working group, 7-11 November, Geneva  
--35th session, 7-18 November, Geneva  
--10th Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 25 November, Geneva

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

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

b World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Phase II  
--PreCom 2, 17-25 February, Geneva  
--PreCom 3, September, Geneva  
--Summit Phase II, 16-18 November, Tunis

b WSIS Regional Conferences  
--Africa, 2-4 February, Accra, Ghana  
--Latin America & Caribbean, 14-16 April, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil  
--Asia Pacific, 11-13 October, Bangkok, Thailand  
--Western Asia, 22-23 November, Damascus, Syria

b Committee on Information, 27th session, 18-28 April, New York

b Commission on Science and Technology for Development, 8th session, 24-28 May, Geneva

b High-Level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, 14th session, 31 May-3 June, New York

## INTERNATIONAL LAW

b International Criminal Court, 4th session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute, 28 November-3 December, The Hague

Contact: International Criminal Court, Maanweg, 174, 2516 AB The Hague, The Netherlands, telephone +31-70/515 8108, fax +31-70/515 8555, e-mail <[pio@icc-cpi.int](mailto:pio@icc-cpi.int)>, website ([www.icc-cpi.int/home.html](http://www.icc-cpi.int/home.html))

b Meeting of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 13-24 June, New York

## POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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

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

b World Conference on Disaster Reduction, 18-22 January, Kobe, Hyogo, Japan

## REFUGEES

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

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

b Executive Committee, 56th Session, October, Geneva

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

## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

b Commission on Social Development, 43rd session, 9-18 February, New York

*Dates may be subject to change*

b United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities, November (1 day), New York

b International Labour Organization  
--Governing Body and its Committees, March, June and November, Geneva  
--General Conference, 93rd session, 31 May-16 June, Geneva

### **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

#### **COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (CSD)**

b Intergovernmental preparatory meeting for the 13th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, 28 February-4 March, New York

b Commission on Sustainable Development, 13th session, 11-22 April, New York

#### **SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS)**

b Ten-year Review of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS)  
--Informal Consultations, 8-9 January, Mauritius  
--International Meeting, 10-14 January, Mauritius

#### **UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS**

b United Nations Forum on Forests, 5th session, 16-27 May, New York

#### **UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

b UNFCCC meetings of subsidiary bodies of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, 16-27 May, Bonn  
b UNFCCC Conference of the Parties to the Convention, 9th session (COP-9), and meetings of subsidiary bodies, 7-18 November, Bonn

#### **UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (UNCCD)**

b UNCCD Committee to Review the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC-3), 3rd session, 27 April-6 May, Bonn  
b 7th UNCCD Conference of the Parties (COP-7) to the Convention, and meetings of subsidiary bodies, August/September, Bonn

### **TRADE, FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT**

#### **UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (UNCTAD)**

b Commission on Investment, Technology and Related Financial Issues, January, Geneva

b Commission on Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities, 14-18 March, Geneva

b Trade and Development Board, 52nd Session, October, Geneva

### **WOMEN**

b Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)  
--32nd session, 10-28 January, New York  
--33rd session, 5 - 22 July, New York  
--Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol to the Convention, 31 January-4 February, New York  
--pre-session Working Group, 25 - 29 July, New York

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

b Commission on the Status of Women, 49th session, Review and Appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Outcome Document of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly, 28 February - 11 March, New York

### **INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETINGS**

b Sixth World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference, 13-18 December, Hong Kong

### **REGIONAL COMMISSIONS**

b Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), 60th Session, March, Geneva

b Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) 23rd Session, April, Beirut

b Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) 61st Session, 21-27 April, Bangkok

b Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, 38th Session, June, Addis Ababa

### **INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CONFLICT PREVENTION**

International Conference, Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, 19-21 July, New York

Contact: European Centre for Conflict Prevention, PO Box 14069, 3508 SC Utrecht, The Netherlands, telephone +31-(0)30/242 7777, fax +31-(0)30/236 9268, e-mail <info@conflict-prevention.net>, website (www.conflict-prevention.net) or (www.gppac.net/index.html)