

UN NEWS

UN SECRETARY-GENERAL UNVEILS REFORMS

On 17 March, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan unveiled sweeping reforms to streamline the secretariat, consolidate functions and secure cost savings. Mr. Annan said he also intends to re-orient information services, expand common services and boost the secretariat's ability to respond to intergovernmental processes. He expressed his pride in the accomplishments of the United Nations and staff and stressed that improvements will be accomplished in a manner that "revitalizes the spirit and commitment of staff and renews confidence in the future of the organization."

As part of the reforms, secretariat activities in the economic and social areas will be integrated with the essential functions of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD), Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis (DESIPA) and Department for Development Support and Management Services (DDSMS) consolidated into a single department. The Department of Public Information will be transformed into a new Office for Communications and Media Services to strengthen capacity to provide relevant and timely communications to governments, the media and civil society. Closer links will be established with the UN secretariat's substantive departments and resources re-allocated to country offices.

In order to streamline intergovernmental services, major technical support will be integrated into a new Department of General Assembly and Conference Services.

The Secretary-General's proposed 1998-1999 regular budget will be US\$123 million lower than in the previous biennium. He said he has instructed the Department of Administration and Management to present a detailed plan for reducing administrative costs by one-third over the next two biennia with resources re-allocated to development activities. He has also proposed a reduction of approximately 1000 posts in the programme budget for 1998-1999 against a background of current staff vacancies of a similar amount.

In order to enhance the ability of the UN to better deliver programmes at the country level, the SG has decided to:

- n strengthen the position of resident coordinators;
- n request all funds and programmes to join together in a new UN Development Assistance Framework plan for delivering development programmes in appropriate consultation with host governments;
- n intensify the drive for common services and premises; and
- n fully integrate United Nations Information Centres (UNICs) into the resident coordinator's office.

Mr. Annan said existing arrangements for the United Nations, funds and programmes will be closely examined to find areas for consolidating and extending common services, and possibly establishing a common service facility. In addition, a Code of Conduct, which has been drafted for submission to the General Assembly, will require the highest standards of efficiency, competence, independence and integrity for all staff as stipulated by the UN Charter.

Mr. Annan has also created a Policy Coordination Group, which he chairs, made up of heads of secretariat departments and offices as well as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The group has a dual purpose: it is intended to ensure that the organization as a whole is managed as an integrated entity, and that management and policy decisions by the Secretary-General systematically benefit from advice from all senior programme managers. The group will be aided in its efforts to concentrate on the substance of UN activities by four Executive Committees, bringing together some 30 UN entities in the key substantive areas of peace and security, economic and social affairs, development operations, and humanitarian relief.

Mr. Maurice Strong, Executive Coordinator for UN Reform, will advise and assist the SG in the continuing reform process. Mr. Strong chairs a Steering Committee on UN Reform, which comprises a number of senior officials. All entities have been asked to set up reform groups to improve

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The United States is "committed to revitalizing" the United Nations, and the Clinton Administration has made "repaying our debt to the United Nations a foreign policy priority," US Ambassador to the UN Bill Richardson said on 3 March. He said the US wants to prevent new arrears and is especially seeking a "new, affordable and sustainable assessment scale."

The US, which owes the UN more than US\$1000 million in arrears, is now assessed 25% of the UN's regular budget and over 30% of peace-keeping costs. It is seeking to have its assessment reduced to about 20% and 25% respectively.

Such an adjustment, according to Richardson, "would better reflect recent economic growth in many countries of the world, broaden the base of shareholders with significant stakes in the international system, and reduce excessive dependence on the United States as the largest contributor."

management processes, achieve cost savings and modernize the way they work.

The Secretary-General has ordered a 25% reduction in documentation produced by the secretariat, and managers have been empowered to act in their areas of responsibility, thus reducing layers of centralized administration.

On 24 February, Mr. Annan announced a two-track reform process when he addressed the open-ended high-level working group of the General Assembly on strengthening the UN system. The first track is made up of managerial initiatives and decisions under his authority, while the second track involves longer-term and strategic issues that only member states can decide.

Contact: Web site (<http://www.un.org/reform>).

ABUSIVE CHILD LABOUR CONDEMNED

The most abusive forms of child labour were unanimously condemned by delegates to the Amsterdam Child Labour Conference, held from 26-27 February in the Netherlands. Delegates called for solidarity on a global scale to meet the challenge of "eradicating child exploitation as a matter of paramount urgency."

Conference chairman Ad Melkert (Netherlands), Minister of Social Affairs and Employment, urged participating countries, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UN member states to launch a time-bound programme of action to eliminate child labour and immediately put an end to its most intolerable forms. Michel Hansenne, ILO Director-General, identified intolerable forms of child labour as slavery or slave-like conditions; forced labour; prostitution; and work in mines, factories, deep-sea fishing and commercial agriculture. He denounced the situation of millions of children employed in these activities as "a veritable insult to human rights and an intolerable assault on the dignity of the individual."

Mr. Melkert called upon the ILO to expand the scope of its work and to regularly report on global trends in the number of children removed and rehabilitated from exploitative situations and provided with alternatives. He said systematic worldwide monitoring would be a mechanism to periodically review and identify best practices in combatting child labour. The Netherlands government pledged the first US\$1 million for the operation of such a trend-reporting system, which will be implemented via the ILO's International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour.

Over 250 delegates from 30 countries attended the conference, which was organized by the Netherlands government in cooperation with the ILO. An ILO report prepared for the event estimates that among the approximately 250 million working children between the ages of five and 14, nearly half work fulltime. The vast majority of child workers are involved in commercial agriculture and other rural activities, which the report says puts them at risk of injury and poisoning from dangerous

chemicals and pesticides. Many other children work in small, often family-run businesses for little or no pay. Domestic service absorbs millions of girl workers, whose only reward is usually board and lodging in return for long hours of unpaid housework.

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IMF APPROVES NEW BORROWING ARRANGEMENTS

The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved new borrowing arrangements on 27 January. Under the arrangements, 25 countries have agreed in principle to lend the IMF up to 34 billion special drawing rights (SDRs), worth about US\$47 billion, to supplement existing quotas. The countries include France, Germany, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, United Kingdom and the United States. SDRs, the currency used by the IMF, are based on a mix of the German mark, Japanese yen and US dollar.

The board made the decision in order to cope with the current crises in the world monetary system: the enormous increase of trade in goods and in global financial flows has left prior IMF arrangements too small to ensure their effectiveness. The General Agreement to Borrow will remain; under it the Group of Ten industrial countries and Switzerland guarantee to provide up to US\$24 billion. The New Arrangements to Borrow (NAB) will become the first recourse should a crisis arise.

NAB, when adopted by a majority of participating institutions and countries, will enter into force for an initial five-year period and be subject to renewal. Both NAB participants and non-participants can apply for this new credit line, but non-participants face more stringent eligibility conditions. The agreement concludes a process set in motion at the June 1995 Halifax Summit of the Group of Seven industrial countries. In a related effort to strengthen the IMF's financial reserves, IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus is pushing for a significant increase in IMF quota levels. These are the amount of money individual countries, as members of the IMF, must pledge to give in support of the international financial system in case of a crisis.

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WORLD BANK BOARD ENDORSES COMPACT

Executive directors of the World Bank have indicated their "broad endorsement" of the overall Strategic Compact and its objectives, which were proposed to the board by President

James Wolfensohn in March. The compact is a plan for fundamental reform and renewal of the World Bank to make it more effective in achieving its basic mission of reducing poverty. "Through the compact," according to the External Affairs Department, "the bank's shareholders and management will invest in and implement a series of changes over the next 30 months to transform the way the institution does business: improving its products, speeding up its processes, lowering its costs, and increasing its development impact." The compact will also establish clear performance criteria against which progress will be measured and management will be held accountable.

The key elements of the compact are:

- strengthening front-line operations, such as ensuring the bank meets its commitments in country assistance strategies and responding to new client demands;
- responding to the broader development agenda, particularly in the social dimensions of development and the changing relationship between the public and private sectors;
- enhancing the bank's knowledge base by building a Knowledge Management System to collect, synthesize and disseminate knowledge and make it readily accessible to staff, clients and partners; and
- renewing the bank's internal capabilities, such as integrating its internal information system, further decentralizing to the field to be closer to its clients, making its budget process more efficient and strategic, and investing in its staff and revamping skills and incentives.

UNCTAD REPORTS ON TRIPS AGREEMENT

The Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement represents a notable change in international standards for protecting intellectual property required by many developing countries, according to a report from the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). *The TRIPS Agreement and the Developing Countries* says the agreement's implementation is likely to engineer fundamental changes in industrial structure, market competition and growth in many countries. The agreement, one of a series adopted at the conclusion of the Uruguay Round in 1994, legally binds all members of the World Trade Organization. It covers many disciplines on intellectual property rights (IPRs), including patents, copyrights, trademarks, industrial designs and trade secrets.

According to UNCTAD, the agreement entails both costs and benefits. "In accommodating their economic development goals to the TRIPS requirements," says the report, "developing countries and economies in transition would do well to safeguard a balance between incentives to innovate and the need for adequate diffusion of technological knowledge into their economies."

UNCTAD outlines three key conclusions from its assessment of the long-term costs and benefits stemming from TRIPS. First, the agreement requires substantially strengthened protection

and enforcement of intellectual property rights in many countries. Strengthening IPRs regimes is expected to have a positive impact in developing countries, such as bringing about more local innovation. However, it could also lead to higher prices for protected technologies and products, and restricted ability for developing countries to increase sales through product imitation or copying.

The second conclusion is that developing nations, when implementing the TRIPS agreement, should try to strike a balance between the needs of innovative firms and their licenses for protection from easy appropriation of their intellectual property, and the needs of follow-on competitors and consumers.

Thirdly, the agreement requires all WTO members to enforce IPRs protection standards that are as strict as those prevailing in developed countries, and in some cases going beyond their existing legislation. This represents a significant burden for poorer countries. For example, Bangladesh will need to spend about US\$250,000 in one-time costs for legislative drafting and over US\$1.1 million in annual costs for judicial work, equipment and enforcement measures. UNCTAD has called on industrialized countries and international organizations to provide assistance to developing countries to help them adapt and implement the agreement, since the changes could entail significant expenditures and have social implications, especially for least developed countries.

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NEW MINISTERIAL FORUM TO GUIDE UNEP

The resumed 19th session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) ended on 4 April at UNEP headquarters with agreement on outstanding agenda item 4(d) on governance of UNEP. After two days of debate, delegates decided to establish a High-level Committee of Ministers and Officials in Charge of Environment, as a subsidiary organ of the Governing Council. The committee will consist of 36 members, elected from among members of the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

The new committee will have the mandate to consider the international environmental agenda and to make reform and policy recommendations to the Governing Council. It will also provide guidance and advice to UNEP's Executive Director, enhance UNEP's collaboration and cooperation with other multilateral bodies (including the environmental conventions and their secretariats), and will help mobilize adequate and predictable financial resources for UNEP.

The Governing Council decided to strengthen the CPR, which will now hold four regular meetings a year. The CPR's revised mandate includes: to review, monitor and assess

"United Nations reform will be successful if Member States first determine whether the United Nations is a political priority for the international community. If the UN is to be strengthened to deal with the 21st century, Member States must provide four inter-related building blocks for change: a common vision for the future, political recommitment, a reasonable reform process that comes to closure, and adequate financial resources."

A solid and predictable relationship between the United States and the United Nations is also essential, so too the interest, leadership and resources of middle powers. Meaningful and lasting reform of the United Nations will require, at a minimum, a substantial investment of political will—that elusive but magic ingredient: compromise: perseverance and resources. It will also require overcoming fears of loss of power and the unknown."

Ambassador Razali Ismail (Malaysia)
UN General Assembly President

The US General Accounting Office reports that five organizations of the United Nations system are performing work that no other organizations could accomplish, although it says they are responding slowly to the need to reform.

The report, issued in February at the request of Senator Jesse Helms, examines the World Health Organization (WHO), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), International Labour Organization (ILO), UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA).

The report says the five organizations need reforms to operate more efficiently. But it concludes that their work benefits the United States and allows collaboration among a number of countries on international problems that no single country could afford to solve by itself. The full report is available on the General Accounting Office web site (www.gao.gov/).

implementation of decisions of the Governing Council on administrative, budgetary and programme matters; to review UNEP's draft programme of work and budget; to review reports requested of the secretariat by the Governing Council on the effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of the secretariat's work; and to prepare draft decisions for consideration by the Governing Council based on inputs from the secretariat.

The next regular session of UNEP's Governing Council will be held in May 1999. A special session, to examine the results of the forthcoming United Nations General Assembly Special Session, is planned for later this year. The new governance structure of UNEP will be reviewed by the Governing Council at its 21st session, with a view to assessing its effectiveness, taking into account any relevant results of the reform process of the UN system.

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AGBM-6 MEETS AGAIN IN GERMANY

The sixth round of talks on future reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by developed countries, which concluded on 7 March in Bonn, has set the stage for finalizing a new agreement over the coming months.

Delegates to the Ad hoc Group on the Berlin Mandate (AGBM) focused on streamlining and merging a series of government proposals, which had earlier been consolidated into a single document. While some sections of the document were shortened and restructured during the week, others have been revised by adding new ideas and paragraphs. This negotiating text will be distributed in all UN languages by 1 June and will be the subject of further talks in Bonn in August and October. A new agreement under the climate change convention is to be finalized by ministers when they meet in December in Kyoto (Japan).

During the talks the European Union (EU) challenged other developed countries to agree to a 15% cut in emissions of a basket of greenhouse gases by the year 2010 compared to 1990 levels. The basket is based on a weighted total of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide using their 100-year "global warming potentials." EU ministers had agreed earlier that this would be a common EU target. The final numbers for developed country targets and timetables will be determined during the next negotiating rounds.

The EU proposal sparked a renewed debate on "differentiation." While some countries support a common target for all developed-country parties, others believe that targets should vary by country while respecting an agreed overall target.

The negotiating text retains differing views on the policies and measures that could be adopted to meet agreed targets and

timetables. Some governments (notably EU members) argue the need for internationally coordinated policies. Others say it would be more cost-efficient to allow each country to adopt the policies and measures best suited to its national circumstances.

Other issues on which various negotiating positions are reflected in the text include emissions trading permits, the "joint implementation" of emissions cuts, the use of multi-year "budgets" in the timetable, the possible impacts of developed-country policies on developing-country economies, and the evolution to future commitments by all parties.

Over 850 participants were present at the subsidiary body session, including about 70 NGOs. The talks will be reconvened in Bonn from 28 July-7 August and from 20-31 October. The third session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) is scheduled for Kyoto from 1-10 December.

The Framework Convention on Climate Change was adopted at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil). It entered into force on 21 March 1994 and has been ratified by 164 countries and the EU. Under the convention, developed countries have agreed to take measures aimed at returning their greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2000. At the first session of the treaty's COP in 1995 in Berlin, governments recognized that stronger measures were needed for minimizing the risk of climate change. They established the Ad hoc Group on the Berlin Mandate to negotiate new developed-country commitments for the post-2000 period.

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EFFECTS OF URUGUAY ROUND ON DEVELOPMENT

Speakers at a meeting in Geneva from 3-4 March agreed that the Uruguay Round Agreements have "somewhat limited" the freedom of member governments of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to set their own domestic economic policy. They said this has implications for management of their countries' development. However, because the agreements are now international law, speakers recommended that policies be identified that meet development objectives while conforming to the multilateral obligations. They also emphasized the role of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in assisting developing countries in this regard.

Mr. Rubens Ricupero, UNCTAD Secretary-General, spoke frankly of the lack of preparation on the part of nearly all the developing countries for the Uruguay Round, and he noted that developing countries are discovering only now the implications of their signing of the final agreements in 1994. He proposed that developing countries take a pro-active stance in multilateral negotiations on trade; many participants agreed.

Other participants said UNCTAD and regional institutions, such as the United Nations regional commissions, have an important role to play in assisting developing countries to be well-informed and prepared for future trade negotiations. They emphasized the need to look ahead and respond to issues on the trade agenda for the next two years. However, they warned against the precedent set in Singapore, where they said the decision to liberalize trade in information technology was taken outside a negotiating round and involved only a few countries until it was nearly final. They said developing countries cannot be expected to prepare properly if such processes for reaching agreements become commonplace. About 30 trade and development specialists from regional, international and academic institutions participated in the meeting, which was organized by UNCTAD. They included WTO, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

On 14-15 April in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), UNCTAD, the Organization of African Unity/African Economic Community (OAU/AEC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) organized a brainstorming meeting of African trade policy experts on preparing for multilateral trade negotiations and follow up.

This brainstorming session is the first step towards the establishment of a permanent mechanism to help African governments take a pro-active attitude and initiate negotiating proposals on trade issues of common interest to their countries. Such a mechanism was deemed necessary by the African ministers participating in the first WTO ministerial conference in Singapore last December.

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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY PANEL

Hundreds of women gathered at the United Nations on 6 March to attend a panel discussion entitled Women at the Peace Table, in observance of International Women's Day on 8 March. The panel was also held to honour women from around the world who have served as peace negotiators.

Dame Margaret Joan Anstee, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Angola, recounted her groundbreaking decision to head the peace-keeping mission in Angola. She urged the Secretary-General to appoint more women as special representatives and said women must be encouraged to play the fullest part possible in all aspects of implementation of peace processes.

Angela King, Special Advisor to the UN Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women and former Chief of the UN Observer Mission in South Africa (UNOMSA),

said that the development and deployment of peace-keeping and peace-building teams with women and men as equal partners improves the efficiency of peace-keeping and peace maintenance around the world. She highlighted what she described as compelling evidence that UN peace-keeping missions with more equal gender balance have been highly effective, and she said the presence of women is key to fostering and maintaining confidence and trust among the local population. Examples of such missions include: Namibia with 60% women in the mission, South Africa with 53% women, and Guatemala with 49% women.

She also said that when a critical mass of women is involved in a peace-related mission, the women act as role models. According to her, the presence of so many women in leadership positions in UNOMSA acted as a catalyst to change the views and attitudes of many local women.

Ana Guadalupe Martinez, Vice-President of the National Assembly of El Salvador and former delegate to the El Salvador peace talks, called on the UN to establish a mechanism to assess the impact of armed conflict on women. She said women are often involved in war as combatants but few end up at the negotiating table. Nonetheless, she said women in El Salvador have been very involved in demobilization and re-entry into civilian life.

The panel, organized by the Department of Public Information in coordination with the Division for the Advancement of Women/Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, was moderated by Samir Sanbar, Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information.

CONFERENCE ON PEACE, GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

A three-day meeting on Peace, Gender and Development, held in Kigali (Rwanda) from 1-3 March ended with a call for establishing a compensation fund for the victims of genocide in Rwanda. The Kigali Declaration also urges all governments to cooperate in bringing the perpetrators of genocide to justice. More than 100 participants attended the conference, including representatives of governments, women's associations, NGOs and regional associations.

At the conference a group of African women called on governments to recognize "women's traditional peace-making roles and their rights to equal involvement in all peace initiatives—including early-warning mechanisms and swift responses at national, regional and international levels." Conference participants also urged the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity to accelerate the establishment of an African Women Committee on Peace, and they called on governments to prioritize poverty eradication policies and programmes to foster economic empowerment and advancement of women.

The conference was sponsored by Pro-Femmes/Twese Hamwe of Kigali, the Rwandan National Consultative Committee for Women, and the Rwandan Ministry of Family

"Women are notably absent from the peace table, despite evidence suggesting they bring a particular and positive perspective to preventive diplomacy, peace-making and peace-keeping...As the United Nations continues to strengthen its capacities for conflict resolution, I will call upon women in increasing numbers for their unique skills in promoting environments conducive to stability and peace."

In a similar vein, I encourage Member States to nominate women candidates to serve as Special Representatives or Special Envoys and in other assignments in preventive diplomacy and peace-making."

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Message on International Women's Day

Kamil Idris (Sudan) has been elected Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). Mr. Idris, formerly WIPO Deputy Director General, was favoured as Director General by the Group of 77 developing countries. He replaces Arpad Bogsch (United States), who is retiring after holding the post since 1974.

The United Nations has appealed for US\$11.9 million for the humanitarian needs of displaced persons as a result of conflict in Chechnya. The appeal contains programmes for returnees to Chechnya and for integrating people who are not returning to their place of origin.

The UN has also appealed for US\$120.8 million to meet the emergency humanitarian needs of about 4.2 million war-affected and displaced persons in Sudan. Many are struggling to cope with chronic malnutrition and an alarming increase in infectious diseases. The UN says persistent insecurity, combined with natural disasters and crop failures in Sudan, has worsened the plight of vulnerable groups who are already living below subsistence levels.

The UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) are working together to set up free courses to teach Liberians basic farming skills and trades, such as brick-making, housing construction and shoe-making. The goal of the courses is to help Liberians—particularly young adults—become self-sufficient and raise their living standards as the country rebuilds.

and Women in Development. It was funded by, among others, the UN Development Programme (UNDP).

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COMMISSION REVIEWS TRADE, ENVIRONMENT ISSUES

UNCTAD's Commission on Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities will convene an expert meeting later in the year to discuss how to encourage the integration of trade and development with positive measures, such as opening access to markets and technology transfers. The commission, which met from 19-21 February in Geneva, also decided to convene an expert group to examine environmental management standards and their impact on trade and investment, and it sent a message to the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). The message to the CSD, meeting from 7-25 April in New York, calls for "renewed efforts at both national and international levels to make trade and environmental policies mutually supportive."

During an informal panel presentation at the Geneva meeting, Ambassador Anthony Hill (Jamaica) spoke on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group and suggested that UNCTAD continue to play a role in three key areas. They are policy analysis and debate; conceptual work and research, such as defining positive measures more carefully; and capacity building for member states.

The representative of the European Community called for concrete measures to assess integration of trade and environment objectives in order to avoid discussions that are too abstract. Ms. Santa Cadalina (Philippines), speaking for the Asian Group and China, warned that environmentally-sound processing methods are still too expensive for developing countries. She urged that the search for resources for this purpose, including foreign direct investment, should be high on the commission's agenda. Mr. Lahcen Aboutahir (Morocco), speaking for the African Group, pointed to what he called high dependency on commodity exports as a serious constraint on African countries' ability to protect the environment.

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AFRICAN FOOD SUPPLY REPORT

The food security outlook is bleak in parts of the African Great Lakes Region, while it is stable in most Sahelian countries, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) most recent *Food Supply Situation and Crop Prospects in Sub-Saharan Africa*.

The report, published in February, warns that pockets of famine could develop in eastern Zaire as relief distribution continues to be hampered by hostilities and logistical difficulties. "Deaths from malnutrition and disease are already reported from some camps," it says. "Only urgent action by the international community to ensure uninterrupted flow of relief assistance to the trapped refugees will avert further human suffering and loss of life."

In most Sahelian countries the food situation is stable, although local deficits persist. Average to above-average harvests have been gathered in most of the countries, and aggregate cereal production is estimated to be 8.9 million tons, which is 2% up from 1995. Above average output has been reaped in Niger and Senegal, although regions in some countries had poor harvests; they include northern Chad and parts of Mali, Mauritania and Niger. In Liberia the food supply situation remains precarious, while in Sierra Leone it is gradually improving following the signing of a peace agreement.

In southern Africa harvest prospects are favourable, following good rains. However, red locusts pose a serious threat to crops in several countries. Locust swarms originating from Mozambique have been reported in Botswana, Malawi, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe, among others.

In eastern Africa, the food outlook is mixed: it is unfavourable in Kenya, Eritrea and Somalia, where harvests have been substantially reduced by dry weather conditions, while Ethiopia and Sudan have had good cereal harvests.

According to the report, sub-Saharan Africa's aggregate food aid needs in 1997, although less than in 1996, will remain high. "However," it says, "despite a large rise in global cereal production, 1996-1997 is likely to be marked by continuing relatively tight supplies, and the global food aid availability is unlikely to improve much over the low level of 7.2 million tons in 1995-1996." In addition, most low-income food-deficit countries in sub-Saharan Africa face acute balance of payment difficulties, which severely constrain their import capacity. The report says exceptional food assistance will be needed to avert suffering from underconsumption in several of these countries.

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UNDP REPORT ON ENERGY TECHNOLOGY

New energy technology is a key stimulant to improving the economies, health care systems and the status of women in developing countries, according to a report released in March by the UN Development Programme (UNDP). The report, *Energy After Rio—Prospects and Challenges*, focuses on how increased access to energy would provide improved health care, education, housing and water and sanitation services for the poor. It was prepared by a group of 22 international environment and energy specialists.

UNDP says the poor are being forced to use precious natural resources to supply themselves with energy, which has disastrous environmental consequences—including an important loss of fertilizers for the soil and devastated landscapes. In addition, the burning of fossil fuel, which generates 76% of the world's primary energy, and reliance on it has had severe environmental consequences, such as air pollution, acid rain, and increased atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases.

The report says women in particular would benefit from better energy technology. For example, replacing traditional stoves with higher efficiency stoves would cut smoke-related health problems, which disproportionately affect women and children. And relief from time-consuming collection of firewood would allow women to invest their time in income-generating activities.

The report analyzes the opportunities to use energy more efficiently and increase the use of renewable sources. It says developing countries have an opportunity to use modern technologies: wind power is technologically ready to provide electricity, photovoltaic cells are ready for small-scale, stand-alone power applications, and solar energy could be an important source of electric power.

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FAO REPORTS HIGH DEFORESTATION LEVELS

Worldwide deforestation is continuing at a high rate, according to a new UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) report.

State of the World's Forests—1997 estimates that 11.3 million hectares (ha) of the world's forests are lost each year. "The estimates of forest cover change in the 1990-1995 period," says the report, "indicate a net loss of 56.3 million ha of forests (natural forests plus plantations) worldwide, representing a decrease of 65.1 million ha in developing countries, which was partly offset by an increase of 8.8 million ha in developed countries." The report estimates the annual rate of forest loss in developing countries is 0.65%.

The report was published to coincide with a meeting of the FAO Committee on Forestry, held from 10-13 March in Rome. The meeting brought together senior forestry officials from around the world to review progress toward sustainable forestry management, consider the implications of the World Food Summit Plan of Action for forestry, and guide FAO's forestry programme of work for the coming two years.

Contact: Steven A. Dembner, Publications and Information Coordinator, Forestry Department, FAO, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, I-00100 Rome, Italy, telephone +39-6/5225 4778, fax +39-6/5225 3024.

WHO CONDEMNS HUMAN CLONING

The World Health Organization (WHO) considers the use of cloning for replication of humans to be ethically unacceptable and is taking the lead in organizing debates about research on animal cloning and transgenic species, according to Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima, WHO Director-General. In March he stressed that human cloning violates some basic principles that govern medically-assisted procreation, including respect for the dignity of the human being and protection of the security of human genetic material. "We propose that the ethical aspects of health-related research and technology should be at the core of the debate," said Dr. Nakajima. "In our sphere of competence, we will focus initially on two priority areas: reproductive health and the biomedical applications of research on the human genome. Our objective would be to help assess current needs and practices, to review available techniques and procedures, and to help build consensus on the technical and ethical safeguards to be applied."

Dr. Nakajima said the Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction, which reviewed the technical aspects of medically-assisted procreation and related ethical issues in 1992, upheld "the right of everyone to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications." But it stressed that there is universal consensus on the need to prohibit extreme forms of experimentation, such as human cloning and interspecies fertilization. Dr. Nakajima said these guiding principles should serve as a starting point for public debate at national and international levels to establish the necessary norms and safeguards. WHO's Scientific and Ethical Review Group plans to lead the work on ethical aspects of research in reproductive health.

Contact: Philippe Stroot, Health Communications and Public Relations, WHO, 20 avenue Appia, CH-1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland, telephone +41-22/791 2535, fax +41-22/791 4858.

WHO ANNOUNCES BREAKTHROUGH IN TB CONTROL

The World Health Organization says that a breakthrough in tuberculosis (TB) control could save millions of lives and dramatically reduce the threat of multidrug-resistant strains in the next decade. The breakthrough, known as Directly Observed Treatment Short-course (DOTS), is causing the global TB epidemic to level off for the first time in decades.

A recent global assessment reveals that "use of the DOTS strategy has virtually stopped the epidemic's upward surge," according to WHO. "Computer projections of the future impact of wide scale use of DOTS show that it can quickly cut the current annual number of TB cases in half during the next decade" and prevent at least ten million deaths with the introduction and extensive use of the DOTS strategy.

A unique feature of the strategy is its use of "patient observers" to watch TB patients swallow each dose of

France has become the 86th state that is party to the 1970 UNESCO convention against illicit traffic in cultural property. The Convention on the Means of Prohibiting the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property is the first and most important international legal instrument to combat theft, clandestine excavation and illegal export of cultural property.

The US House of Representatives has voted Charlene Barshefsky to become the government's trade representative. Ms. Barshefsky has been serving as acting trade representative since April 1996, when US President Bill Clinton nominated her to succeed Mickey Kantor, who resigned to become US Secretary of Commerce.

Germany has donated more than US\$500,000 to the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) for contraceptive supplies to six Central Asian countries.

The contribution, which will be used over two years, will be divided among UNFPA's reproductive health projects in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

medicines. This helps overcome one of the most difficult problems that has hindered TB control efforts: patients who take enough of their medicines to feel better, but fail to finish the course of treatment so that they are completely cured and no longer able to spread the disease to others. Failure to ensure that TB patients take all their medicines and are cured has been the primary factor in recent outbreaks of virtually incurable, multidrug-resistant TB in New York City, London, Milan, Bangkok and Johannesburg, among others. Over the past few years, the DOTS strategy has been tested in Tanzania, New York City, Indonesia and Peru with "impressive results." The largest DOTS project," says WHO, "supported by the World Bank in China, has achieved 94% cure rates."

Contact: Catherine Dansen, WHO, 20 avenue Appia, CH-1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland, telephone +41-22/791 2189.

WHO/WORLD BANK REPORT ON WORLDWIDE DISEASES

A new Internet site called WomenWatch, the UN Internet Gateway on the Advancement and Empowerment of Women, will provide up-to-date information on data and women worldwide, and an evolving electronic forum on women's issues in the follow-up to the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women.

The site is a joint initiative of the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) in the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD), the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW).

World Wide Web site:
(<http://www.un.org/womenwatch>)
e-mail: <womenwatch@un.org>
gopher: <gopher://gopher.un.org>

New web sites for DAW
(<http://www.un.org/dpcsd/daw>),
UNIFEM
(<http://www.unifem.undp.org>),
and INSTRAW
(<http://www.un.org/instraw>)
will be linked through the
WomenWatch web site.

The next two decades will see dramatic changes in the health needs of the world's population, according to *The Global Burden of Disease* series, published by the World Health Organization, World Bank and Harvard School of Public Health. In developing regions, noncommunicable diseases, such as depression and heart disease, are replacing infectious diseases and malnutrition as the leading causes of disability and premature death. In all regions, life expectancy at birth is expected to grow for women, while life expectancy for men will grow more slowly, mainly because of the impact of the tobacco epidemic. The study says that by the year 2020, men between the ages of 15 and 60 in the formerly socialist economies of Europe could face a higher risk of death than men in Sub-Saharan Africa.

By 2020, infant girls born in the established market economies are expected to live to approximately 88 years of age, while males born in sub-Saharan Africa can expect to reach only 58 years. Males born in Latin America and the Caribbean, who in 1990 could have expected to live to 65, can expect to reach 71 years.

In 2020 noncommunicable diseases are expected to account for seven out of every ten deaths in developing regions, compared with less than half today. Injuries are growing in importance, and by 2020 they could rival infectious diseases worldwide as a source of ill health. The study predicts these changes will take place because of rapid ageing of populations in the developing countries. In China, some other parts of Asia and Latin America, this "epidemiological transition" is much more advanced than many public health specialists expected. "In all regions," says the study, "the rapidity of change, and the very large absolute numbers of people involved, will pose serious challenges to healthcare systems and force difficult decisions about the allocation of scarce resources."

The study uncovers some surprises: it says mental illnesses such as depression, alcohol dependence and schizophrenia have been seriously underestimated by traditional

approaches, which take account only of deaths and not disability. These underestimated illnesses are responsible for about 1% of deaths, although they account for almost 11% of disease burden worldwide. Also, tobacco is expected to kill more people by 2020 than any single disease and will surpass even the HIV epidemic.

Contact: Christopher Murray, Harvard School of Public Health, 9 Bow Street, Cambridge MA 02138, USA, telephone +1-617/495 8498, fax +1-617/496 3227.

PANEL ON AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT MEETS

The Panel of High-Level Personalities on African Development met from 13-14 March in New York to review the efforts of African countries to implement political and economic reforms, and the social impact of economic trends in recent years. The panel, which was set up in 1992 to assist the UN Secretary-General in the implementation of the UN New Agenda for the Development of Africa (NADAF), also addressed issues of good governance, and agriculture and food security.

Participants at the meeting, chaired by Baroness Chalker of Wallasey, Minister for Overseas Development of the United Kingdom, included Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development; Bahiti Temane, Botswana's Minister for Labour and Home Affairs; Mohammad Sadli, Adviser to the President of Indonesia for South-South and North-South Cooperation; Vijay Makhan, Assistant Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity; and Delphin Rwegasira, Senior Adviser to the President of the African Development Bank, among others.

The panel urged the donor community to target official development assistance (ODA) to build capacity, especially in health care, education, water and physical infrastructure. The panel also welcomed the World Bank's debt relief initiative related to the heavily indebted poor countries; 33 out of 41 of the countries are African. The panel urged the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and bilateral donors to be more flexible in its implementation of the initiative and expressed concern over its credibility if it fails to result in meaningful debt reduction in the first group of countries to be considered.

The panel said good governance should go beyond the electoral process and democratization to include elements such as civic education, gender mainstreaming and the separation of powers among executive, legislature and judiciary branches of government. The panel noted that the development of civil society leads to more accountability, and it recommended regular tripartite consultations among civil society, the private sector, and governments. It said poverty and ethnicity are the two principal elements that trigger escalation of conflicts into violence, particularly in cases where access to power and resources are not perceived to be equitable. In this connection, the panel noted that the cultural aspects and traditional values of African countries should be taken into account in conflict resolution.

The panel recognized that food insecurity is related to both inadequate food production and poverty and proposed a two-pronged approach to solving the problem. It recommended creating productive employment and increased income-earning opportunities, and it underscored the importance of providing an enabling environment, not only domestically but at the international level, to achieve a sustainable level of food security. It also called for improved market access and increased trading opportunities for developing countries and least developed countries (LDCs). The panel, which stressed that food security should be a national responsibility, said emphasis should be placed on rural development and rural infrastructure, including food storage, water resources and productivity improvement. It also called attention to maintaining the production of traditional food crops and promoting inter-regional trade in Africa.

The panel commended African countries for their continued efforts to assume ownership of their development programmes and for their improved economic performance. It warned, however, that poverty has increased and called upon African countries to carry out, concurrently with political and economic reforms, social programmes targeting vulnerable groups.

SEMINAR ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

A three-day seminar on The Role of Community Development in Shelter and Human Settlements Improvement concluded on 26 February in Bangkok (Thailand) with participants calling for a new style of United Nations programme that is flexible, participatory and focused directly on the needs of the urban poor.

The Deputy Director of Thailand's Urban Community Development Office, Somsook Boonyabancha, said programmes should be open to direct participation of community-based organizations and should respond to their needs. She said such a programme would have an important political role to play and should be more demanding on government commitments to protect people's housing rights and halt evictions whenever possible, as agreed at the second UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) held in Istanbul in 1996.

The seminar, which was organized by the Community Development Programme for Asia of the UN Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), brought together some 45 participants from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam to assess poor urban communities' access to housing and services. Representatives of governments, NGOs and community-based organizations also shared experiences on how to strengthen the legitimacy of communities when dealing with governments.

Seminar participants requested the Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) to assist in promoting and strengthening community-based processes in their countries. It was generally agreed that when communities are involved in planning and implementing shelter and settlement upgrading projects that

affect members' lives, the results will be appropriate and sustainable. Participants stressed that strong and capable community organizations are essential, need to have legal recognition in order to work with local authorities, and should have a say in the design of government programmes.

Contact: Peter Swan, Coordinator, UNCHS, Community Development Programme for Asia, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), United Nations Building, Rajadamnern Avenue, Bangkok 10200, Thailand, telephone +66-2/2881604, fax +66-2/2881097.

ASIAN INVESTMENT RISING IN EUROPE

Investors from Asian developing countries are discovering Europe: foreign direct investment (FDI) flows from Asia into Europe increased from an annual average of US\$100 million in 1989-1991 to US\$860 million in 1992-1994. While North America remains the main location of Asian investment outside the region, it is "gaining momentum" in the European Union, both in manufacturing and services. Evidence and analysis of this phenomenon is provided in a report by The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) on *Sharing Asia's Dynamism: Asian Direct Investment in the European Union*.

The report says the share of the European Union in the total FDI stock from developing Asia reached about 5% in 1995. Though this is still relatively low, this does "not reflect neglect, but rather the fact that Asian firms are just at the beginning of their entry into Europe."

According to the report, many firms of the Asian newly industrializing economies (NIEs) increasingly see need for a direct presence in the European Union in order to serve this large and rich market. Others are seeking access to advanced technology and skills, research and development programmes. Approximately 40% of FDI stock held by Asian NIEs in the European Union is located in the United Kingdom, around 30% is in Germany, and about 20% is in the Netherlands.

Asian transnational corporations also recently began investing in Central and Eastern Europe to take advantage of privatization programmes. The report says the corporations find a low-cost production base in the region and a good platform for relatively unrestricted entry into the European Union internal market. Moreover, local demand for manufactured consumer goods in Central and Eastern Europe is projected to rise strongly and provide more encouragement for Asian investment there.

UNCTAD anticipates a "continuing upsurge" in FDI from developing Asia into the European Union. The report reviews various measures that could be taken to increase Asian FDI in Europe to the benefit of both investors and host countries.

Contact: Karl Sauvart, Chief, International Investment, Transnationals and Technology Flows Branch; Division on Investment, Enterprise Development and Technology;

José Ayala-Lasso has resigned as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in order to take up the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs in Ecuador.

"In more than 100 countries, per capita incomes are lower than they were 15 years ago. More than a quarter of humanity, 1.6 billion people, are worse off than they were a decade and a half ago. While total global income increased sixfold—to US\$23 trillion—between the years 1960 and 1993, three-fifths of humanity lives in a prison of poverty....The world on many fronts is divided between rich and poor, between haves and have-nots, between the wealthy and the dispossessed. A house divided against itself cannot stand.

The defining concerns of international affairs in the next century will revolve around this struggle for equity—equity among nations and within nations, equity between the sexes, and equity for future generations. Let it not be said of our time that we, who had the power to do better, allowed the world to grow further apart."

James Gustave Speth
Administrator, United Nations
Development Programme

The 1997 United Nations Population Award will be shared by Elizabeth Aguirre Salderon Sol, Director of the National Family Secretariat (El Salvador); Toshio Kuroda, Director Emeritus, Nihon University Population Research Institute (Japan); and Vechai Veravaidya, Director of the Population Development Association (Thailand).

The award is presented annually to individuals and institutions that have made outstanding contributions to increasing the awareness of population problems and their solutions.

Delia Buratto (France) and Bhagwan Shrestha (Nepal) have won the United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Volunteers Award for distinguished work in the field of population. Ms. Buratto has been instrumental in introducing population education in schools in Zimbabwe, and Mr. Shrestha has trained health professionals, educators and community leaders in information, education and communication in Guyana.

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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON UN CHARTER

The Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on Strengthening of the Role of the Organization has approved its report to the General Assembly, which contains recommendations on strengthening the International Court of Justice, implementing Charter provisions on assistance to third states affected by UN sanctions, and increasing the number of officers in the GA's main committees.

The committee, which concluded its two-week session on 7 February, recommended that the General Assembly invite states that are members or parties to the Statute of the International Court of Justice to present their observations about the effect of the court's increased workload on its operations.

The committee also recommended that the 52nd session of the GA consider the question of implementation of Charter provisions on assistance to third states affected by sanctions imposed under Chapter VII of the Charter. The committee said implementation of assembly resolutions 50/51 and 51/208 on the question should also be considered. Resolution 51/208 underlines the importance of consultations under article 50 of the Charter with third states confronted with special economic problems arising from sanctions imposed by the Security Council. Article 50 grants third states the right to hold consultations with the council on how to solve the economic problems they face from sanctions imposed on other states.

The committee also asked the GA to consider a draft resolution to amend the first sentence of rule 103 of its Rules of Procedure to read: "Each Main Committee shall elect a chairman, three Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur." Rule 103 allows each main committee four officers, who are drawn from each of the regional groups represented in the UN. Some committee members said that since there are now five regional groups, the proposal will help ensure equitable geographical representation in the main committee bureaux.

ILO SAYS FULL EMPLOYMENT ATTAINABLE

Full employment is a goal that can be realized without overheating national economies, according to a report prepared by the International Labour Organization. *Priority Theme: Productive Employment and Sustainable Livelihoods* was presented to the Commission for Social Development in New York, which convened from 25 February-6 March. It says citizens have paid a price for the overriding concern of policy makers to control inflation and reduce public deficits, and the relative neglect of measures to combat unemployment. It warns that in Western Europe unemployment is reaching the highest level since the Great Depression in the 1930s. The resulting pressures threaten to undermine the achievement of greater integration within the

European Union, while fuelling persecution of minority groups and immigrants and exacerbating social tensions.

The report reviews employment policy issues from countries and regions around the world and presents policy recommendations, which include:

- economic growth rates need to be pushed higher to increase the rate of growth in employment;
- political and social stability are as essential to economic progress as macroeconomic stability;
- consensual approaches to income determination can be an additional instrument for increasing employment and stabilizing prices;
- the "excessive rigours" of structural adjustment policies in indebted poor countries need to be "moderated;"
- in some countries, "a more gradual and selective approach to trade liberalization may be warranted;" and
- government action to initiate growth, such as incentives to new investment, are needed to offset shortcomings in pure market mechanisms.

The report says "high and productive levels of employment...are fundamental means of combatting poverty, of ensuring equality, of meeting peoples' aspirations for participation in economic and social life, and for preserving social cohesion." Job creation in developing countries is lagging behind an increase in the labour force, which is averaging about 2% annually. It also notes that widespread unemployment and underemployment remain primary impediments to poverty eradication.

Contact: John Langmore, Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, United Nations, New York NY 10017, USA, telephone +1-212/963 5855 or Elizabeth Ruzicka-Dempsey, Department of Public Information, United Nations, New York NY 10017, USA, telephone +1-212/963 1742.

OECD RELEASES 1996 DAC REPORT

The 1996 *Development Cooperation Report* from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) sets out a newly-agreed strategy for development cooperation, which proposes measurable goals for poverty reduction, social development and environmental sustainability. The goals, many based on recent UN world conferences, include: reduce by 50% the proportion of people living in extreme poverty in developing countries by the year 2015; achieve universal primary education by 2015; eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary school enrolment by 2005; ensure universal access to reproductive health services by 2015; implement national sustainable development strategies by 2005; and reverse trends in the loss of environmental resources by 2015. The report says these are presented as a basis for discussion with individual recipient countries on development assistance goals, and are not intended to displace nationally-determined development priorities.

The strategy also recommends that donors better coordinate their work, especially in the field, and proposes that global

reporting by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD on results be complemented at the national level by the publication of country human development reports. These are already produced in many countries in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The report also highlights trends in international cooperation. It says total net resource flows to developing countries set a record high in 1995 at just over US\$225 billion. However, the aggregate volume of DAC members' Official Development Assistance (ODA) disbursements to developing countries and multilateral organizations declined about 9% in real terms. Official resource flows to the poorest countries continued to decline in that period, while flows to richer countries increased. The geographic distribution of ODA remains relatively constant, with about 40% going to Africa, 30% to Asia, 10% to Latin America, 10% to other recipients, and

10% for administration, global programmes, research and other activities. The report suggests that the size of allocations to emergency assistance has peaked.

The strategy for development cooperation was the outcome of a year of negotiations in the DAC, which culminated in 1996 with a report entitled *Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Cooperation*. This report was adopted by the OECD Council at Ministerial Level in 1996 and is now meant to provide the basis for development cooperation relationships for OECD member donor countries.

Contact: Communications Division, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2 rue André-Pascal, F-75775 Paris Cédex 16, France, telephone +33-1/45 24 80 91, fax +33-1/45 24 80 03, e-mail <news.contact@oecd.org>, web site (<http://www.oecd.org/dac>).

Pierce Gerety (US) has been appointed Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Great Lakes Region. Mr. Gerety succeeds Martin Griffiths, who has resumed his function as Director of the Geneva Office of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. Mr. Gerety will coordinate the response of the United Nations system to the continuing humanitarian challenges in Africa's Great Lakes Region.

UN AND NGO NEWS

NGOS BRIEF SECURITY COUNCIL

In an unprecedented informal briefing, NGOs told members of the UN Security Council that humanitarian action in Africa's Great Lakes Region is being used as a substitute for political action. During the briefing on February 12, representatives of Oxfam, CARE and *Médecins sans frontières* (MSF) stressed the grave access problems they face in Rwanda, Burundi and particularly in eastern Zaire and called for a commitment comparable to the one required to address the situation in the former Yugoslavia. The briefing did not take place in the Security Council Chamber, but in another conference room at UN headquarters.

"Since the beginning of the genocide in 1994 in Rwanda," the NGOs said in a joint statement, "the Security Council has consistently failed to abide by the Geneva Conventions and to take action to address the underlying causes of the conflict and to help find political solutions in the region. Humanitarian action has been used as a substitute for political action." The NGOs told council members they strongly support the appointment of Mohamed Sahnoun (Algeria) as the UN/Organization of African Unity Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region. But they said Mr. Sahnoun needs to receive what they called the proper degree of support. "Aid agencies," the NGOs said, "cannot solve these problems with biscuits, vaccines and water. People will continue to die and the war will continue to spread throughout the region unless the UN Security Council, Member States and regional leaders take decisive action."

Pierre Salignon, Country Coordinator for MSF in Zaire, raised his concerns about protecting civilians and the vulnerable refugee population in the region, which he said is being used as "a human shield." David Bryer, Oxfam Executive Director, called on the Security Council to apply political pressure to

bring parties to negotiate measures of protection, such as establishing safe corridors for immediate needs.

Ambassador Juan Somavía (Chile) initiated the meeting to enable humanitarian NGOs active in conflict areas to brief Security Council members. He said he hoped additional meetings will take place because "the Security Council has to be informed as widely as possible" on complex peace and security issues. NGOs expressed their hope for similar meetings in the future.

The NGOs also met informally with the bureaus of the Economic and Social Council and the Second (Economic and Financial) and Third (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) Committees of the General Assembly.

UNESCO has named Rigoberta Menchu Tum (Guatemala) a Goodwill Ambassador for A Culture of Peace. Ms. Menchu, a human rights activist who won the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize, has travelled around the world to call attention to the situation of indigenous peoples.

UNESCO is awarding its 1997 Prize for Children's and Young People's Literature in the Service of Tolerance to Kathryn Cave and Chen Danyan. Ms. Cave is the author of Something Else, published in the United Kingdom, and Chen Danyan is the author of Neun Leben (Nine Lives), originally written in Chinese and published in German.

AFRICA FORUM ON MICROCREDIT HELD

The Africa Advocacy Forum on Microcredit and Poverty Eradication, held in New York on 6 February, focused on how improving access to credit can help empower Africa's poor, especially women, to free themselves from poverty and become more active participants in the development process. The forum, organized by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the UN Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and Least Developed Countries, examined the UN's role in dealing with poverty eradication and the potential role of microcredit in addressing five topics pertaining specifically to Africa: food security; women's economic empowerment; provision of basic social services; employment/self employment; and traditional banking systems.

Speakers discussed objectives of recent UN conferences and initiatives, African women's experiences with traditional "responsive banking" techniques, and what some perceived

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) honoured 25 women from around the world on 6 March for their actions to help protect the environment and safeguard the health and well-being of people. Honorees include Bella Abzug (US), Gro Harlem Brundtland (Norway), Yolanda Kakabadse (Ecuador), Wangari Maathai (Kenya) and Queen Noor (Jordan). UNEP, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, also hosted an exhibit about the honorees in New York entitled *Eyes on the Environment—25 Women Leaders in Action*.

to be the marginalization of Africa at the February 1997 Microcredit Summit.

The forum was co-sponsored by, among others, the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD), UN Development Programme (UNDP), Department of Public Information (DPI), NGLS and the Trickle Up Program.

Contact: Ruth Engo, Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the LDCs (OSCAL), DPCSD, Room DC1-1048, United Nations, New York NY 10017, USA.

UNESCO KIT ON WORLD PRESS FREEDOM

World Press Freedom Day, observed on 3 May each year, is the time to review the state of press freedom in the world, speak up against violations and take action. In order to promote press freedom, media independence and pluralism, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has published a kit with information on activities to promote the free flow of information and a practical guide for journalists investigating infringements of press freedom.

The pocket guide, co-published with *Reporters sans frontières*, includes the basic principles of press freedom, procedures for investigating infringements of press freedom and writing a report of an investigation. The guide contains useful addresses including international NGOs specializing in freedom of expression and press freedom.

The kit also includes information about violations of press freedom around the world in 1996 and UNESCO activities to promote the free flow of information.

Contact: H el ene Gosselin, Director, Office of Public Information, UNESCO, 7 place de Fontenoy, F-75700 Paris, France, telephone +33-1/45 68 18 50, fax +33-1/45 68 56 54.

1% FUND REPORTS 75% SUCCESS RATE

The 1% for Development Fund is a non-profit association of UN system staff and other intergovernmental organizations in Geneva who voluntarily contribute 1% of their salary to finance development projects in underprivileged countries. Contributors say 217 projects they funded from 1986 to January 1995 for a total cost of 2,231,685 Swiss francs have had a 75% success rate, based on reports of funded organizations and visits by UN staff.

The highest success rates were among organizations working on education (79%), crafts (76%) and agriculture projects (73%). Projects that performed best were those carried out by international NGOs (83%) and churches (81%). "Indeed, almost half of the projects managed by international NGOs were classified as outstanding," according to Peter McCarey, who carried out the study. Grassroots projects had a success rate of 65%, and local NGOs had a success rate of 73%. For the purposes of the study, "satisfactory" projects were defined

as those that fulfilled their objectives, and "outstanding" projects were those that clearly benefited the community.

The 1% fund in Geneva has financed more than 400 projects in about 50 countries, mostly in Africa, Latin America and Asia. There are also independently-run 1% funds in Rome, New York and Vienna. Projects supported by the fund must encourage collective autonomy and promote local development, among other things. Projects usually focus on health, education and vocational training, agriculture or small businesses.

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CHILDREN RECEIVING DIET OF JUNK FOOD ADS

Few people would urge their children to eat more sugar or consume more fat. Yet everyday kids around the world are bombarded with food television advertisements—sometimes as many as 12 an hour—telling them bad food is good. These are the results of a survey, carried out by Consumers International (CI), in 13 countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom, as well as Australia and the United States. The results of the survey, which was sponsored by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Commission of the European Communities, and the Swedish Consumer Agency, are published in a report entitled *A Spoonful of Sugar*. "

Key findings in the survey show mainly sweetened breakfast cereals and fastfood make up over half of all food advertisements; these form by far the largest proportion of all television advertisements aimed at children in 11 out of 13 of the countries in the survey. The United Kingdom has the most television advertising during children's programming in Europe, with an average of 17 commercials an hour and ten for food. A nutritional analysis of the advertised foods in the UK found that 95% were for foods high in fat, sugar and/or salt. Sweden and Norway, where virtual bans exist on television advertising toward children, have the least amount.

The most prolific advertiser during children's programming is McDonald's, with commercials for the fastfood chain found in every country in the survey. "It is no surprise," says CI, "that an Australian survey found that just over half of Australian children aged nine and ten think Ronald McDonald knows best what is good for children to eat."

The report makes a number of recommendations, including tougher restrictions on advertising to children; mandating clearer breaks between programmes and advertisements to help young people understand the difference; and overturning the current practice of allowing the regulations of a transmitting country to apply where cross-border advertising is concerned.

Contact: Consumers International, 24 Highbury Crescent, London N5 1RX, UK, telephone +44-171/226 6663, fax +44-171/354 0607.

NGO NEWS

SOCIAL WATCH REPORT

The *Instituto del Tercer Mundo* has published the first edition of the Social Watch report, which reports on progress or lack of it in fulfilling national commitments made at the 1995 World Summit for Social Development and other conferences. A trial edition of the annual report was published last year.

The report includes chapters on, among other issues, the dimensions of poverty, a fulfilled commitments index, family and work, the sex trade, and human and social development in the European Union. Chapters also cover 25 countries including Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Germany, India, Malaysia, United Kingdom and the United States. The country chapters, contributed by NGOs, attempt to measure poverty using indices such as education, health and nutrition, water, employment, income and access to resources. They also describe government programmes aimed at reducing poverty and give suggestions for improving them.

The report says that in many countries, despite good resolutions at national level, women and girls in remote areas and indigenous population sectors in particular are lagging behind in education and health care. The report gives factual information, but it also tries to analyze why the poorest are not being reached. The publication is supported by the Netherlands Organization for International Development Cooperation (NOVIB).

Contact: *Instituto del Tercer Mundo*, Juan Jackson 1136, 11200 Montevideo, Uruguay, telephone +598-2/496192, fax +598-2/419222, e-mail <item@chasque.apc.org>.

INTERACTION ON US DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

InterAction says the United States must refocus its development assistance programmes on new development challenges and increase its development resources to "affirm and protect US global leadership." These commitments are crucial given new global realities, according to the US-based organization's policy paper on *American Values/National Interests: The New Shape of International Development Cooperation*. The paper says the new realities include booming international trade, which makes the US economy more dependent on the developing world; the post-Cold War surge in democratization and internal conflicts; and global threats including population growth, environmental degradation and infectious diseases.

The paper says that development assistance must be part of a broader policy agenda, which includes, among other issues, trade, investment and debt relief. It says the United States should focus on four priority areas in development assistance: promoting human development and broad-based economic

growth; addressing imminent global threats; assisting countries undergoing political transition; and supporting emergency humanitarian and refugee programmes.

The paper, which also proposes guidelines for effective international assistance programmes, takes its title from a central thesis: Whereas Cold War foreign aid often required the US to choose between humanitarian values and national interests, these two motives now complement each other. "Today," says InterAction, "programmes that help poor people and development nations also strengthen our economy and support our broader foreign policy goals."

Contact: *InterAction*, 1717 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington DC 20036, USA, telephone +1-202/667 8227, fax +1-202/667 8236, web site (www.interaction.org).

JUBILEE 2000

Jubilee 2000, an educational charity based in the UK, is campaigning to achieve "a one-off cancellation of the backlog of unpayable debt for the world's poorest countries," which the charity describes as one that "either cannot be paid, or can be paid only with enormous human suffering."

The campaign, which focuses on relieving the debt burden of governments to other governments, international financial institutions, or to commercial banks by the year 2000, is designed to promote social justice, fundamental human rights and sustainable development. Organizers say that they also want to provide a focus and a catalyst for harmonizing and mobilizing international cooperation, support and actions to achieve the remission of debt. Jubilee 2000 says countries will have to meet a specific set of criteria to be eligible for the write-off. They should be a low- or middle-income country with strong deprivation indicators and have a gross domestic product per capita at purchasing power parity of US\$2000 or below. They should also meet at least two of the following criteria: net present value of total external debt of 50% or more of gross national product; a total external debt value of 200% or more exports of goods and services, and net of food and fuel imports; and net present value of public and publicly-guaranteed external debt of 200% or more of total government revenues.

Other specific instances where write-off is possible would be considered. The campaign is encouraging people to help to create an informed constituency, including economists, politicians and decision makers, to lobby for action at the highest level. The organization has published *The Debt Cutter's Handbook*, which gives more detail about the campaign's origins and aims.

Contact: *Jubilee 2000*, PO Box 100, London SE1 7RT, UK, telephone +44-171/620 4444, fax +44-171/620 0719, e-mail <j2000@gn.apc.org>.

According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, based in Switzerland, no political party is recognized in the following states possessing a parliament: Bhutan, Kuwait, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Sudan, Swaziland, Tonga, Tuvalu and United Arab Emirates.

The Building and Social Housing Foundation is calling for entries for its 1997 World Habitat Awards. The foundation, based in the United Kingdom, is seeking to identify projects in developed and developing countries that offer sustainable futures to residents and provide practical and imaginative solutions to current housing problems. Winning projects receive worldwide publicity to encourage their replication in other countries. Preliminary submissions should reach the foundation by 31 July 1997.

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Brazil, Canada and Russia have more than two-thirds of the world's remaining great tracts of forests, although the survival of many of them is threatened by logging and agricultural settlement, according to the World Resources Institute. The institute, based in the US, says original forests in 76 countries are either completely lost, or remaining portions are so small that they cannot sustain the diversified plant and animal life they once had. The countries include almost all the nations of Europe and East Africa and all of North Africa and the Middle East.

World Resources Institute says another 11 countries are about to lose the remaining 5% of their original forests. They include Bangladesh, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Guatemala, Nigeria, Thailand and Vietnam. Twenty-eight countries will lose their remnants of ecologically-intact forest if they do not take preservation action now. They include Argentina, Australia, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Panama, Papua New Guinea, and the United States.

Only eight have large tracts of relatively secure original forests. They are Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Federation of Russia, French Guyana, Guyana, Suriname and Venezuela.

PEOPLE IN AID CODE

A code on Best Practice in the Management and Support of Aid Personnel has been launched by the People in Aid network, based in the United Kingdom. The code complements existing ones of the Geneva-based Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response, and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. But People in Aid says the code differs in three ways: it is intended for use by development as well as relief agencies; it includes indicators against which achievement in implementing the code can be measured; and it will undergo testing by relief and development agencies over a period of up to three years in order to evaluate its effectiveness.

The guiding principles of the code include: the people who work for us are integral to our effectiveness and success; our human resource policies aim for best practice and aim to be effective, efficient, fair and transparent; we consult our field staff when we develop human resource policy; plans and budgets reflect our responsibilities toward our field staff; we provide appropriate training and support; and we take all responsible steps to ensure staff security and well-being.

Contact: Sara Davidson, Inter-Agency Coordinator, People in Aid, c/o International Personnel, BRCS, 9 Grosvenor Crescent, London SW1X 7EJ, UK, tel./fax +44-171/235 0895.

WWF WARNS ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE IN AFRICA

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) says climate change will alter natural vegetation through southern Africa, as well as wildlife habitats, crop growing seasons, and the distribution of pests and diseases in the region.

In its study on *Climate Change and Southern Africa*, WWF predicts that climate change will alter the habitat in 15%-20% of southern Africa's large nature reserves. The changes in habitat will also have serious impacts on conservation and tourism, which is an important source of revenue in the region.

The study, which was coordinated by the Climatic Research Unit of the University of East Anglia, says there has been noticeably less rainfall in southern Africa over the past 20 years, and drought has become an increasing threat. Between 1985-1995, many bore holes dried up in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, southern Zambia and South Africa, making it impossible to grow crops or maintain livestock herds in many areas.

Climate change also threatens human health, according to the study. "Global warming looks set to expose millions of Africans to new health risks," said Dr. David Rogers of Oxford University and one of the report's authors. "There are clear signs that as climate conditions change, disease-bearing mosquito populations will increase, and more of the African population will become vulnerable to malaria." He said research suggests that climate change is likely to increase the distribution of malaria-bearing *Anopheles gambiae* mosquitoes. These mosquitoes will probably maintain their

stronghold in equatorial Africa, and their range will extend into areas of Namibia and northern South Africa, where human populations have little immunity to the disease.

Adam Markham, Director of WWF's Climate Change Campaign, added, "The whole of Africa contributes around 7% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. It is both ironic and tragic that Africa should suffer such devastating effects as a result of other countries' activities." WWF is urging African countries that are parties to the UN climate convention to join in efforts to commit industrialized countries to greater reductions in carbon dioxide emission.

Contact: WWF International, CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland, telephone +41-22/364 9550, fax +41-22/364 8307.

WOMEN-CENTRED HEALTH RESOURCES KIT

The Asian-Pacific Resource & Research Centre for Women (ARROW) has produced a health resource kit, which shares the experiences of organizations and individuals who are striving to change perspectives, policies and programmes on women's health, to become more focused on women's needs and more responsive to gender issues. The kit highlights a variety of efforts in the Asia-Pacific region to meet women's health needs, such as developing a new women's health policy, sensitizing policy makers, health practitioners and others, and empowering women with information on health. It features pull-out sections containing case studies with lessons learned for easy reference and practical use. The kit also contains tested and practical tools, including frameworks, guidelines and questionnaires with instructions.

A wall-chart poster, which contrasts the conventional population control and family planning approach with women-centred and gender-sensitive ones, is also provided along with a description of concepts and terms.

Contact: ARROW, 2nd Floor, Blk. F, Anjung Felda, Jalan Maktab, 54000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, telephone +60-3/2929913, fax +60-3/2929958, e-mail arrow@po.jaring.my

CONGRESS ON ENVIRONMENT AND PEACE

The International Association of Educators for World Peace (IAEWP) is holding the 1997 International Eurasian Congress on Environment and Peace in Giresun (Turkey) from 2-9 August. Participants will discuss environmental issues including the effects of technology, energy and pollution, teaching conflict resolution, potential conflicts around the world, effects of technology on peace, and the relationship between peace and the environment.

Contact: IAEWP 1997 International Eurasian Congress, Executive Committee, Gazi Caddesi No. 72, 28100 Giresun, Turkey, telephone +90-454/212 3190 or 216 6790, fax +90-454/216 4518 or 216 0095.

International Criminal Court PrepCom Concludes Third Session

The third session of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court met from 11-21 February in New York. The committee discussed the list, definition and elements of crimes to be included in the court's jurisdiction, and general principles of criminal law.

The PrepCom recommended that the texts defining genocide and crimes against humanity be included in the draft consolidated text of the convention for the International Criminal Court (ICC). Texts on war crimes, aggression and terrorism will be reconsidered at a future date.

The PrepCom made progress in synthesizing different principles of criminal law into one system. They include the principles of *nullum crimen sine lege* (no crime without law); non-retroactivity; individual criminal responsibility (personal jurisdiction); irrelevance of official position; command responsibility; *mens rea* (mental elements of crime); *actus reus* (act and/or omission); mistake of fact or of law; age of responsibility; and statute of limitations. The PrepCom did not consider nine articles, including various defenses and presumptions of innocence, nor did it have time to discuss penalties.

Drafts and Definitions

Participants produced drafts on genocide, war crimes, aggression, crimes against humanity and terrorism. They defined genocide as any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group: killing; causing serious bodily or mental harm; inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about physical destruction; and imposing measures intended to prevent births and forcibly transfer children. Participants were unable to agree on some phrases, which were placed between brackets until agreement can be met. Bracketed text classifies the following acts as punishable under the statute: genocide; conspiracy to commit genocide; direct and public incitement to commit genocide; attempt to commit genocide; and complicity in genocide.

Crimes against humanity are defined as any of the following when committed on a systematic basis: murder, extermination; enslavement; deportation or forcible transfer of population; torture; rape or other sexual abuse or enforced prostitution; persecution on political, racial, national, ethnic, cultural or religious grounds; and enforced disappearance. Within the context of crimes against humanity, extermination is defined as infliction of conditions of life calculated to bring about the destruction of part of a population. Bracketed text includes definitions of deportation and forcible transfer, torture, persecution and disappearance.

The draft text on aggression, which is within brackets, defines the crime as the planning, preparing, ordering, initiating or carrying out of actions by one state against the territorial integrity of another. Terrorism is defined as undertaking, organizing, sponsoring, ordering, facilitating, financing, encouraging or tolerating acts of violence against another state directed at persons or property so as to create terror, fear or insecurity. The text also defines terrorism as murder, kidnapping or attacks upon the liberty of UN and associated personnel, and violent attacks upon their official premises and private accommodations. All of the text described above is within brackets.

War crimes, which are defined as grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, include acts directed against persons or property protected under the provisions of the relevant Geneva Convention.

NGO Positions

NGOs advocating for the creation of the ICC distributed a statement outlining their positions, based on discussions on 27 January at a meeting co-sponsored by the Coalition for an International Criminal Court (CICC) and Human Rights Watch/Women's Rights Project. The positions reflect NGO concerns regarding, among other things, gender implications in the definitions of war crimes and crimes against humanity, and the need to incorporate rape, traffic of people, forced prostitution and forced pregnancy into the definition of these crimes. Many of the NGO proposals were taken up by governments and incorporated into the draft—though mainly in the consolidated text within brackets that define war crimes and other crimes committed in international and/or intra-national conflicts.

Background to the International Criminal Court

The idea of a standing international court to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and aggression was first proposed in the context of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Progress on the issue stalled during the Cold War years, but in 1989 the government of Trinidad and Tobago raised it again. In 1992 the UN General Assembly directed the International Law Commission (ILC) to elaborate a draft statute for the court. ILC deliberations were stimulated by the establishment of international criminal tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda. In 1994, the GA decided to establish an ad hoc committee to review major substantive issues arising out of the ILC's 60-article draft statute.

The ad hoc committee met twice in 1995, but several nations were undecided or opposed the establishment of a permanent court. However by late 1995, the GA, under pressure from NGOs and a majority of states, called for the creation of a PrepCom to prepare "a widely acceptable consolidated text of a convention for an ICC" to be submitted to a diplomatic conference of plenipotentiaries in 1998. The conference, which will be hosted by Italy, will seek to finalize and adopt the convention.

The next session of the PrepCom, from 4-15 August, is expected to concentrate on complementarity, the "trigger mechanism" and procedures. Future sessions are scheduled for 1-12 December 1997 and 16 March-3 April 1998. ○

Contact: Rik Panganiban, World Federalist Movement, 777 UN Plaza, 12th floor, New York NY 10017, USA, telephone +1-212/687 2176, fax +1-212/599 1332, email <wfm@igc.apc.org>.

The NGO Coalition for an International Criminal Court (CICC) has established a web site on the ICC (<http://www.igc.apc.org/icc>). Users of the apc-affiliated networks (IGC/Peacenet/Econet/GreenNet/Web) can also access this information at the <un.icc> conference address.

The official report of the third PrepCom will be made available on the UN home page web site (<http://www.un.org>).

UNDP Roundtable on the Role of Civil Society

Fifty-five participants from 30 countries, representing governments, UNDP at headquarters and field level, NGOs and multilateral organizations, took part in Building Partnerships for Sustainable Human Development: A Civil Society-Government-Donor Round Table, held by UNDP from 20-22 February in Warsaw (Poland). Go Between summarizes the roundtable discussions and recommendations.

The roundtable aimed to allow participants to share information and current thinking on the role of civil society in the development process, and the necessary mechanisms and strategies needed to foster civil society-government-donor partnerships. Participants said it also allowed a frank and informal discussion with representatives from different sectors on the challenges of working with civil society organizations (CSOs). The term CSO is used to encompass the broad range of non-governmental organizations at every level now engaged in development work.

Translating Commitment into Practice

When considering the role of civil society, participants discussed the current development context and the implications of globalization. They also examined new thinking on poverty reduction, equity issues, the question of governance, and legislative and financial instruments needed to facilitate CSO operations. They discussed how to create economic and political space for CSOs and how to build their capacity and evaluate their work. Working groups allowed time for representatives of the different sectors to clarify their views and concerns, and to propose recommendations for follow up. On the final day of the roundtable, participants discussed UNDP's initiatives to strengthen the role of CSOs in its programming, the constraints and opportunities in doing this work, and strategies for moving the work forward.

Participants agreed that the modalities for translating commitment to working with civil society into practice need to be determined at the field level, and in line with a government's "level of comfort" and the kind of CSOs present in a specific country. They agreed that blueprints from headquarters might not be helpful because each country context is so different. On the other hand, participants agreed that guidelines suggesting ways to incorporate CSOs into programming, and discussion of pitfalls and possible models, would be useful.

Experiences of Polish CSOs

Roundtable participants also heard presentations from three representatives of Polish civil society organizations. A representative of an NGO called Don't Mind the Weather, which measures trends in the non-governmental sector, gave an overview of the NGO community in Poland. There are 20,000 to 30,000 NGOs in the country, which demonstrates the growth of NGOs there since the 1989 fall of the communist government. However, these numbers represent only the organizations that incorporate themselves; the number of NGOs is still growing, although the growth rate in this sector has started to slow. Within the NGO sector there are an estimated two million volunteers, as opposed to 100,000 paid staff—60% of Polish NGOs do not have even one paid staff member. According to Don't Mind the Weather, income is very concentrated: 2% of the country's NGOs receive 60% of available resources.

Polish NGO representatives said uncertain funding is an important problem, and the NGO sector is very young, with no experienced organizations to help newcomers overcome the transition from a popular movement to an established organization. In addition, umbrella organizations are needed to help the NGO sector coordinate its work and to provide more mutual support. One current concern is the draft legislation being discussed that will establish the legal basis for the government's relations with NGOs.

Reflections on UNDP's Role and Recommendations

Participants in the roundtable emphasized the need to consider UNDP's comparative strengths as an actor in development and to understand the varied nature of civil society in different parts of the world. They emphasized the importance of providing an enabling environment, including proper legal provisions and a democratic culture, with free press and participatory decision-making processes.

Participants said they consider UNDP is playing a central role in building participatory development frameworks. They mentioned UNDP's potential role to provide a forum for strengthening government, private sector and CSO interaction, since UNDP is seen to be a relatively neutral actor and has a large responsibility for designing country level strategies for development. Participants encouraged UNDP to act as an information channel and use its global presence and new technologies to ensure that CSOs have access to the information they need and that successful development experiences are shared as widely as possible.

Many participants observed that although UNDP is a funding agent, collaboration with CSOs requires flexibility and often non-financial support. For example, sponsoring a CSO that deals with a socially difficult issue, such as AIDS, can improve the CSO's credibility. Others suggested strategies such as inviting CSOs to participate in some dialogues with government on development concerns, and attending CSO-organized meetings and encouraging national civil servants to do the same.

Questions Raised at the Roundtable

Participants also discussed UNDP's role in building CSOs' capacity to formulate policies and programmes and to perform evaluations. In the area of financial autonomy, recommendations suggested that UNDP be alert to the pitfalls of creating CSO dependency on UNDP funding. Participants recommended that UNDP help governments define tax regimes that foster a strong non-governmental, not-for-profit sector. They also emphasized the importance of UNDP's role in working with governments to ensure that they see the benefits of collaboration with CSOs, rather than seeing them as a rival recipient of donor funding.

Participants agreed that UNDP should ensure that it is ready to work with CSOs, which already exist in almost all countries, rather than assuming it must create CSOs with which to work. This includes developing straightforward and flexible mechanisms for delivering the usually small grants CSOs require, giving field level staff more autonomy to select and support CSOs, and improving performance criteria to allow more effective monitoring and evaluation of collaborative work with CSOs. ○

Contact: Sonam Yangchen, Manager, CSO and Participation Programme, Social Development and Poverty Eradication Division, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, UNDP, 1 UN Plaza, New York NY 10017, USA, telephone +1-212/906 5316, fax +1-212/906 5313, e-mail <sonam.yangchen@undp.org>.

Final Intergovernmental Panel on Forests Meets

The fourth and final session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development's (CSD) Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF-4) met at UN Headquarters in New York from 11-21 February. The meeting was held to negotiate action proposals and conclusions under 12 programme elements dealing with the conservation, management and sustainable development of forests.

The programme elements are: national and sustainable land-use plans; underlying causes of deforestation; traditional forest-related knowledge; ecosystems affected by desertification and pollution; needs of countries with low forest cover; financial assistance and technology transfer; forest assessment; valuation of forest benefits; criteria and indicators; trade and environment; international organizations and multilateral institutions; and legal mechanisms.

Delegates could not agree on key issues, such as financial assistance, trade-related matters and whether to begin negotiations on a global forest convention. The meeting ended by forwarding a range of options to the CSD for future consideration, which included an annex of recommendations on specific characteristics and functions of a continued intergovernmental forum or process for negotiations.

Debates on the Convention

Debate was dominated by the question of whether or not there is a need for a legally binding forest convention covering all types of forests. Pro-convention advocates, led by the European Union and Canada with support from Malaysia and Indonesia, argued that current measures on forests are uncoordinated and widely dispersed and that a new convention would consolidate actions on forests. While many forest-related problems are already covered in existing conventions on biodiversity, climate and desertification, proponents of the new convention contend that it would serve as a magnet to attract financial and technical resources to the forest sector.

Opposition to the convention was led by the United States, with support from India and Brazil. NGOs also rejected the convention; they expressed their views in plenary and in several declarations, which are the African Forest Action Network Declaration, the European NGO Declaration, and the International Citizen Declaration Against a Global Forest Convention. The latter was signed by 78 environmental organizations from around the world and presented at a press conference prior to the opening of IPF-4.

NGOs said they believe convention advocates are motivated by the promise of free trade and political reward. NGOs signing declarations against the convention said they feel that if negotiations are initiated now, consensus will result in commitments of the lowest common denominator, which would formalize unacceptably weak forest management standards. They said the result would provide an international seal of approval for unsustainable forest practices, cripple several existing and stronger forest initiatives, and render obsolete national and regional standards currently in various forms of development. "It is bad timing and bad politics, and at the end of the day, it will be bad convention," said Lambert Okrah of the Ghana-based Green Earth Organisation.

Options for Post-IPF Follow Up

As the debate proceeded, the uncertainty of what the convention would and would not contain, and failure to reach consensus on several other matters, led the majority of governments to agree that it is premature to advance the idea. The panel forwarded three options to the CSD regarding post-IPF follow

up: continue the policy dialogue within existing UN bodies; continue dialogue in a forum dedicated to an international-level forest debate, with a mandate to reach consensus and then proceed to negotiations on a convention; or immediately commence negotiations for a convention on forests. All three options will be presented to the CSD at its 7-25 April session. In addition, they will probably be taken up at the June 1997 special session of the UN General Assembly to review progress in implementing agreements of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

Proposals for Action

In its proposals for action, the panel recommended that:

- ▢ all governments formulate national forest action programmes as a basis for sustainable forest management activities, taking into account competing demands on land, including human settlements and agriculture;
- ▢ determine the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, emphasizing the need for internationally acceptable definitions of key concepts and terms for criteria, indicators, and for methods of data collection;
- ▢ promote the incorporation of traditional forest-related knowledge in forest programmes; and
- ▢ reduce the impact of international trade and patterns of consumption and production on forests.

The panel also recognized the importance of promoting sustainable forest management through mutually-supportive trade and environment practices.

NGOs advocated a continuation and enhancement of the intergovernmental policy dialogue under the CSD to further the process of agreement on implementation executed at national levels and on the ground. "The primary rationale for the continuation of the policy dialogue," stated one NGO declaration, "must be to focus on problems solving initiatives, based on clearly defined targets and timetables, while continuing to work toward consensus on issues where agreement has not yet been reached."

Background

During its two years of work, the IPF has reached consensus on many important issues and advanced the understanding of intergovernmental policy on forest problems. The panel has enhanced the technical aspects of forest planning and research, spurred action in a number of countries to begin addressing forest problems, and raised the profile of emerging certification initiatives. Social concerns, participation and transparency have also been integrated into the IPF's Proposals for Action. ○

Contact: T. Michaelson, Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD), United Nations, New York NY 10017, USA, telephone +1-212/963 5294, fax +1-212/963 3463, web site (<http://www.un.org/dpcsd/dsd/ipf.htm>).

International Monetary and Financial Issues for the 1990s

This collection of research papers covers the evolution of private capital flows to developing countries in the 1990s, the integration of developing countries into the international financial system, and the management of capital flows between developing countries.

Available from: UN Publications, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland, fax +41-22/917 0027, e-mail <unpubli@unog.ch> or UN Publications, 2 UN Plaza, Room DC2-0853, New York NY 10017, USA, fax +1-212/963 3489, e-mail <publications@un.org>.

World Development Indicators

This report from the World Bank combines key economic information from major public and private organizations worldwide and statistics from over 200 economies to provide a comprehensive picture of modern development. The report also contains over 75 tables on topics such as malnutrition, global patterns in tax rates and traffic congestion.

Available from: World Bank, 1818 H Street NW, Washington DC 20433, USA, fax +1-202/473 1796, e-mail <phay@worldbank.org>.

Equity in the Classroom: Towards Effective Pedagogy for Girls and Boys

This book, co-published by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), aims to provide teachers with a range of pedagogic strategies that can be used to make education for students more just. It examines international trends in subject performance in science, mathematics, technology, French, English and information technology. It also looks critically at interventions to enhance equity in schools and higher education institutions, and the constraints and consequences of effecting change from researchers' and teachers' perspectives.

Available from: UNESCO Publishing, Promotion Unit, 7 place de Fontenay, F-75352 Paris, France, fax +33-1/45 68 57 41.

Children First! Resource Kit

This kit is a project of the Geneva-based NGO/UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) Committee on Activities for Children in Central/Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). It includes a UNICEF-funded publication (available in English and Russian), which incorporates conceptual and practical material on child and family welfare and NGO capacity-building. Each section includes a selection of useful documents, a basic bibliography and contact details of important resource institutions. The kit is intended for use by organizations in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS working on children's issues.

Available from: NGO Liaison Office, UNICEF, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland, fax +41-22/909 5900.

UN Research Institute for Social Development Publications

The Legitimization of Violence

This book explores various types of violence, from ideological to fundamentalist movements, within a framework of comparative theory. It presents case studies, commissioned by the UN Research Institute for Social Development, on the Shining Path in Peru, Neo-Nazism in contemporary Germany, and political violence in Sri Lanka, Lebanon and Ireland, among others.

Contact: Macmillan Press, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS, UK.

Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and After the Soviet Union: The Mind Aflame

This book, written by a well-known Russian historian and anthropologist, draws on inside knowledge of major events and extensive primary research to examine ethnicity, nationalism and conflict in the territory of the former Soviet Union. The book suggests a strategy and mechanisms for governing conflicting ethnicity in complex societies, through a policy of cultural pluralism, civil rights and individual freedom.

Available from: UN Research Institute for Social Development, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland, fax +41-22/740 0791.

Food Security: A Domestic Approach

This issue of *Development Education Exchange Papers (DEEP)*, prepared by the Liaison Committee of Development NGOs to the European Union, focuses on international and macroeconomic influences of food security.

Available from: Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, I-00100 Rome, Italy, fax +39-6/5225 5249.

Multi-Media Training Package on Women, Environmental Management and Sustainable Development

This package was prepared by the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) to assist policy makers and development officials to integrate women's needs and participation in all phases of sustainable development and environmental management. The package contains a 400-page training manual, over 170 transparencies, a trainer's guide, bibliography and audiovisual support material.

Available from: UN Publications, 2 UN Plaza, Room DC2-0853, New York NY 10017, USA, fax +1-212/963 3489, e-mail <publications@un.org>.

Microfinance and Poverty Reduction

This book considers various types of microfinance schemes and compares their effectiveness in reducing poverty. The authors emphasize the importance of studying local contexts and considering the macroeconomic factors of a particular country.

Available from: Oxfam, c/o NEBC, PO Box 1496, Parkstone, Dorset BH12 3YD, UK or Oxfam, c/o Humanities Press, 165 First Avenue, Atlantic Highlands NJ 07716-1289, USA.

NGO Funding Strategies: Introduction for Southern and Eastern NGOs

NGOs are facing the challenge of increasing competition for sparse resources. Establishing firm financial roots requires a clear vision and organizational planning. This book provides an essential guide to questions that need to be asked before starting the process of self-financing. It is a resource book rather than a fundraiser's manual, although the book does provide some suggestions for fundraising.

Available from: International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC) Publications, PO Box 563, Oxford OX2 6RZ, UK, fax: +44-1865/201852.

Democracy Still in the Making: A World Comparative Study

This book is the result of a survey carried out in several countries by the Inter-Parliamentary Union to determine how far women are integrated into political life. The book includes analyses of the data received, as well as excerpts of observations and comments made during the survey.

Available from: Inter-Parliamentary Union, BP 438, CH-1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland.

World Directory of Environmental Organizations

This directory, in its fifth edition, is a comprehensive guide to organizations in all parts of the world that are concerned with urgent problems of the environment and natural resources. It describes more than 3200 organizations in over 200 countries, and includes detailed profiles of environmental activities of international organizations and listings of key national governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Available from: California Institute of Public Affairs, PO Box 189040, Sacramento CA 95818, USA, fax +1-916/442 2478, e-mail <cipa@igc.org>.

Respectful Engagement: Cuban NGO Cooperation with Latin America, Europe and Canada

This book, published by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), provides a wide-ranging view of the international role of cooperation and development of Cuban NGOs. The book also contains a summary of the Helms-Burton Act, the Cuban Democracy Act, AFSC's statement on US-Cuba relations, and the Charter of Principles for Non-Governmental Cooperation Between Canada and Cuba.

Available from: Linda Love, AFSC, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102-1479, USA, telephone +1-215/241 7000, e-mail <llove@afsc.org>.

The Urban Opportunity: The Work of NGOs in Cities of the South

This book aims to demonstrate how urban issues are moving on to the agendas of Northern NGOs. The book describes and analyses a variety of approaches and methodologies used over the last decade, such as building partnerships to support local organizations that are tackling urban problems.

Available from: Intermediate Technology Publications, 103/105 Southampton Row, London WC1B 4HH, UK.

Dimitra Guidebook: Rural Women and Development

This guidebook contains a list of European NGOs, research institutes and information centres working with and for rural women in the South. It provides information on the projects run by the organizations with local partners and a bibliography. The guidebook is also published in French, Spanish and Dutch.

Available from: King Baudouin Foundation, rue Brederodestraat 21, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium, fax +32-2/511 5221, e-mail <101654.777@compuserve.com>.

Tough Choices: Facing the Challenges of Food Security

The shortage of food may be a defining issue of our era, and the first major economic manifestation of an environmentally unsustainable global economy. This book argues that food scarcity is likely to become a rapidly accelerating crisis. It focuses on the policy response to scarcity and the kinds of choices that governments will have to make to try to ensure security of food supplies in the years ahead.

Available from: Earthscan Publications, 120 Pentonville Road, London N1 9JN, UK, telephone +44-171/278 0433, fax +44-171/278 1142, e-mail <earthinfo@earthscan.co.uk>.

South-North: New Alliances for Dignity in Labour

This book contains speeches, conclusions and other documents from a conference on South-North: New Alliances for Dignity in Labour, held in Italy in October 1995. Delegates from 28 countries participated in the conference, which was organized by *Centro Nuovo Modello di Sviluppo*. The book is available in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish.

Available from: *Centro Nuovo Modello di Sviluppo*, Via della Barra 32, I-56019 Vecchiano, Italy, fax +39-50/827165, e-mail <coord@cnms.it>.

Effects of Armed Conflict on Girls

This study is part of World Vision's contribution to the UN study on the *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*. It seeks to determine what effects armed conflicts have on girls and draws from the experiences of World Vision partners in several countries.

Available from: *World Vision International*, 6 chemin de la Tourelle, CH-1209 Geneva, Switzerland, fax +41-22/798 6547.

Root Causes: A Gender Approach to Child Sexual Exploitation

This report assesses the World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, held in Sweden in August 1996. It examines the congress agenda for action and outlines advocacy strategies in consultation with other groups and activists with a long record in fighting commercial sexual exploitation. It also carries a brief overview of the special session of the UN General Assembly held in 1996 to commemorate the abolition of slavery.

Available from: *Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)*, 355 Lexington Avenue, 3rd Floor, New York NY 10017-6603, USA, fax +1-212/973 0335, e-mail <wedo@igc.apc.org>.

International Labour Organization Web Site

This web site provides online information on the history, structure and major programmes of the ILO, along with press releases and information on current activities and publications. The site, which provides links to other labour-related sites, exists in English, French and Spanish.

The web site can be accessed on <http://www.ilo.org>

Network of East-West Women

This network is an international communication and resource network supporting dialogue, information exchange and activism among those involved in the changing situation of women in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

The web site can be accessed on <http://www.igc.apc.org/newww/>

CALENDAR

ENVIRONMENT

Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)

- ☐ Special Session of the General Assembly on Agenda 21, 23-27 June, New York

UN Convention on the Law of the Sea

- ☐ Meeting of the States Parties to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, 19-23 May, New York

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

- ☐ Conference of the Parties, 9-20 June, Harare

Climate Change Convention

- ☐ Conference of the Parties, 3rd session, 1-12 December, Kyoto

Convention to Combat Desertification

- ☐ 10th resumed session, 18-22 August, Geneva
- ☐ Conference of the Parties, 1st meeting, 29 September-10 October, Rome

Global Environment Facility (GEF)

- ☐ NGO Consultation, 18-19 May, Washington DC
- ☐ GEF Council Meetings, 20-22 May, Washington DC

DISARMAMENT

- ☐ Conference on Disarmament, 2nd part, 12 May-27 June
- ☐ Disarmament Commission, 21 April-13 May, New York

ECOSOC/GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- ☐ Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), substantive session, 30 June-25 July, Geneva
- ☐ 52nd UN General Assembly, 16 September-December, New York

HUMAN RIGHTS

- ☐ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 7th session pre-session working group, 26-30 May, Geneva
- ☐ Commission on Human Rights, Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, Working Group on Minorities, 2nd session, 26-30 May, Geneva
- ☐ Commission on Human Rights, Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, Working Group on Indigenous Populations, 15th session, 28 July-1 August, Geneva

Rights of the Child

- ☐ Committee on the Rights of the Child 15th session, 20 May-6 June, Geneva
- 16th session pre-session working group, 9-13 June, Geneva

SOCIAL ISSUES

- ☐ International Labour Conference, 85th session, 3-19 June, Geneva

TRADE

- ☐ United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), 30th session, 12-30 May, Vienna

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

- ☐ Commission on Investment, Technology and Related Financial Issues, 2nd session, 29 September-3 October, Geneva
- ☐ Trade and Development Board, 44th session, 13-24 October, Geneva

WOMEN

- ☐ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 7-27 July, New York

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
		WHO	World Health Organization

GUEST EDITORIAL

GUSTAVE SPETH, ADMINISTRATOR
UN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)

Popular demands for democratization have swept the globe over the last decades. Their most dramatic manifestation has been in the crowds of thousands and hundreds of thousands of people who have gathered in many different countries to claim their right to participate in their own governance. This "people power" has helped bring political change and representative rule to many lands.

But the economic and social development crucial to encouraging and consolidating democratic reforms has too often lagged behind. These processes are inextricably intertwined. Central to promoting sustainable, people-centred development is the involvement of its intended beneficiaries in every stage of the design and implementation of development policies and programmes. Without such participation, without a new people power, the key goals of poverty eradication, gender equality, job-led growth and environmental regeneration will remain forever elusive. And, it is certain that the suffering and frustrations engendered by the world's inequities make peaceful transitions to democracy far more difficult.

This message has been understood at the international level. The global conferences organized under United Nations auspices during the 1990s have provided a much-needed impetus for the redirection of concepts and policy priorities and a much greater emphasis on enablement, empowerment and participation. This would not have been possible without the powerful partnerships that were set in motion, for their preparation, between governments and organizations of civil society the world over. The greater access civil society has gained to the UN machinery itself has played an equally important role.

In just a few years, we have moved from a situation in which governments were the sole decision makers in multi-lateral fora to one where non-state actors, civil society organizations (CSOs) and businesses have become components of a more inclusive system of global governance. An illustration of what I see becoming the new "people power" at the international level was the Micro-Credit Summit. The summit was recently organized in Washington DC by a group of development activists and practitioners, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and micro-entrepreneurs from around the world joined by eminent political personalities, ministers and executive heads of transnational and multilateral banks and UN agencies in addressing key issues.

This is clearly indicative of a growing realization that no component of society, no single set of actors, whether on the world scene or within countries, can come to grips with the size and complexity of the challenges with which the world is confronted. The world is slowly but, it seems, steadily becoming better aware that solutions, especially if they are to have lasting value, lie in dialogue and partnership building. We must renew multilateral approaches without which there can be no meaningful concept or exercise of global governance.

What is required is an equally powerful effort to translate these advances into partnerships among governments, CSOs and the donor community at the local and national levels. We must build on what has already been achieved and take successful approaches and experiences to a new level. This is what the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which for the last four decades has worked mainly with governments, seeks to do.

We are working around the world to create partnerships that involve a broad range of CSOs—from grassroots farmers to university think tanks—along with governments and donors. In so doing, UNDP is both learning from and helping to empower local communities. And, it is taking concrete steps to promote the new "people power" that strengthens civil society and gives people a greater say in shaping the decisions that affect their lives.

Partnerships already in place offer success stories from communities around the globe, from improving slum dwellers' housing in the Philippines to raising environmental awareness in Zambia. But, to understand why these programmes are working so well, it is important to note several reasons why collaboration among CSOs, governments and donor agencies promotes more successful development programmes and makes better use of ever-scarcer funds available for development. These partnerships build legitimacy for development activities by seeking contributions from a larger section of society in setting policy priorities; increase programme effectiveness by ensuring that local experience and expertise is incorporated; promote transparency and accountability on every level and build trust among participants; and help broaden and strengthen the role of civil society by facilitating contacts between CSOs and governments, including by enhancing capacity within civil society.

With the current trend towards a more "enabling" and less "doing" state, and in an environment of fewer funds for development, such partnerships are a practical necessity to optimize international assistance and domestic resources. This is crucial at a time when "compassion fatigue" is presented as an explanation for increasing donor reluctance to maintain funding levels. It can convince funders that a credible new level of commitment to make the best use of external assistance is taking hold.

Developing effective partnerships is neither quick nor easy. Administration structures will have to be modified. CSOs must continue to build their own capacities to move beyond their service-delivery roles and become influential in policy discussion and orientation. UNDP believes that this challenge can and must be met. It is a threshold requirement to realize our priority goals of poverty eradication and sustainable human development. And, it is