



# NGLS Between

United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS)  
Serving the UN system and NGO community for 27 years

## UN UPDATE

### WFP SOUNDS THE ALARM

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has launched a massive international appeal to provide emergency food relief to southern Africa (Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, Lesotho, and Swaziland), where millions of people are threatened with starvation over the next nine months in the worst crisis that the region has experienced in a decade. WFP says that a "regional cocktail of drought, flooding, mis-government and devastated economies" lies at the heart of the current emergency. See focus page 21.

### VIEIRA DE MELLO NAMED HR HIGH COMMISSIONER

The General Assembly approved the appointment of Sergio Vieira de Mello of Brazil as the next UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on 23 July 2002. Mr. Vieira de Mello had been the head of the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), helping to oversee East Timor's transition to independence. Prior to that, he was briefly Mr. Annan's Special Representative for Kosovo after a stint at UN headquarters in New York as Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs. Since 1969, a large part of his career has been with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), where he also had considerable field experience.

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### ANNA TIBAIJUKA NAMED HABITAT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka has been nominated as Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) at the level of Under-Secretary-General. Her four-year term of office will start 1 September 2002.

### WORLD BANK DONORS INCREASE IDA GRANTS

The World Bank has announced that donor countries have reached agreement on a three-year plan to fund the Bank's International Development Association (IDA) programme, which provides assistance to 79 countries where the vast majority of people live on less than US\$2 a day. The Bank says approximately US\$23 billion in resources will be made available during the three years, of which about US\$13 billion will come from new contributions from 39 donor countries, representing an 18% increase over levels in the previous replenishment. Half of the resources is expected to be used to support development projects in sub-Saharan Africa.

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### SECURITY COUNCIL ADOPTS RESOLUTION ON ICC

The UN Security Council has adopted a resolution that grants peacekeepers a one-year immunity from the International Criminal Court (ICC), ending a controversy that was threatening the mandate of the ICC and UN peace-keeping operations. The resolution applies to peacekeepers from States that are not party to the ICC, and would involve not only UN operations, but operations approved by the UN, such as the NATO mission in Afghanistan.

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### SG SPEAKS ON GLOBALIZATION AND ROLE OF STATES

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan addressed the Conference on Globalization and International Relations in the Twenty-First Century at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva on 7 June 2002. Below are excerpts from his address.



Go Between, published five times a year, is produced for NGOs and others interested in the institutions, policies and activities of the UN system, and is not an official record. The text of Go Between is available online at the NGLS website ([www.unsystem.org/ngls](http://www.unsystem.org/ngls)).

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“I do believe that globalization represents a great opportunity for the whole human race, and I have said so to many audiences who are less ready to accept that message than you here today.

“But, I always say in the next breath that at present the benefits of globalization are far from being equitably shared. There are many, many people in the world who are not enjoying them, and one reason for that is that they do not live in well-organized States that are capable of managing the process.

“Globalization makes well-organized States, if anything, more necessary, not less. But even the best-organized States are not finding globalization easy to manage. That is because globalization challenges their ability to perform their historic function of providing security to their citizens, in all three of its aspects—physical security, economic security, and psychological security.

“This is most obvious in the case of economic security. Globalization is only partly the result of technological change. Equally important have been decisions, taken by States, to reduce the controls and restrictions they formerly imposed on the economic life of their citizens.

“On balance, and in the long term, I have no doubt that this move away from State control is beneficial. But its immediate effect is to deprive States of many of their traditional instruments for protecting vulnerable groups. It has become more difficult to finance social expenditure by raising taxes, or to enforce standards in such areas as environmental protection, working conditions, and even basic human rights, without being accused either of

obstructing the free flow of trade, or of imposing unfair conditions on your own exporters, in a highly competitive global market.

“But, globalization now challenges the ability of States to protect and provide the physical security of their citizens, too.

“Weak States in the developing world—especially in Africa—find that they are no longer able to monopolize and control the flow of weapons in their societies, because groups within those societies are able to bypass the State, financing weapons purchases on the global market through sales, on the same global market, of illicit crops or illicitly mined natural resources. For these countries, globalization represents a return to some of the worst features of the pre-colonial or early colonial era.

“But, the same phenomena, or related ones, are also undermining security in developed countries. Neither crime nor terrorism is a new problem. But, increasingly, they are global problems, from which no country can feel safe.

“One of the lessons of the twentieth century is that a strong State is not the same thing as a coercive State. States that were extremely coercive, like Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, looked terrifyingly strong for a time, while liberal democracies appeared weak and decadent. But, at the end of the century it was the liberal democracies that proved resilient. So, it would be a tragic mistake if, as the new century begins, States tried to assert themselves mainly by coercive methods.

“Please understand: I am not advocating a passive approach. It was not through laissez-faire policies, nor yet by unilateral

disarmament, that the liberal democracies outlasted Nazism and communism.

"States need robust policies. They must have the capacity to resist aggression, to detect and punish crime, to protect their citizens against terrorism, and also to provide basic services and safety nets.

"But many challenges, in the age of globalization, can only be met at the global level. What is needed is a kind of ladder of institutions, rising through many steps from the village or district council to the United Nations itself. Through these institutions, individuals must be able to express their many different identities, and link up with each other in an emerging world community.

"Just as States remain relevant and necessary at the national level, so the United Nations and its Charter are more relevant than ever at the global level. Fundamental principles enshrined in the Charter—sovereign equality, good faith, and the peaceful settlement of disputes—must form the core of any viable international community.

"Of course the UN is not, and does not aspire to be, a world government. But it is a kind of parliament, in which all sovereign States are represented. That gives it unique legitimacy, in the age of globalization, as a source of international law and a convener of global action.

"The United Nations must be a forum where States come together with each other and these other actors.

"Non-State actors cannot and should not usurp the proper role of States, which is to take binding decisions and make binding agreements on behalf of all their citizens. But the dialogue between States and non-State actors can be richer and more constructive than it has been so far. Many more creative partnerships can be formed.

"To facilitate such partnerships has been one of my prime objectives since I became Secretary-General, and I remain firmly dedicated to it."

#### HR HIGH COMMISSIONER (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Mr. Vieira de Mello, who succeeds High Commissioner Mary Robinson, will begin his four-year term on 12 September. Mrs. Robinson had agreed to stay on for one more year after completing her tenure in September 2001.

The post was created by the General Assembly following the 1993 UN Conference on Human Rights, with José Ayala-Lasso—a key negotiator in that process—becoming the first UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on 5 April 1994.

#### IDA GRANTS INCREASED (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Sven Sandstrom from the World Bank and Chair of the IDA negotiations, called the agreement "an important step forward in addressing the goals highlighted at the recent development conference in Monterrey" [International Conference for Financing, held in March 2002, see *NGLS Roundup 91*]. US Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill, who has argued for more grants as opposed to loans to avoid poor countries falling further into debt (see focus page 27), said it would "make a difference in the lives of real people." However, European donor countries had expressed their concern that the US push for more grants would threaten IDA's long-term financial health. According to John Taylor, the US Treasury Department's Undersecretary for International Affairs, "There's still a lot of discussion" among leading donors about potential mechanisms for ensuring that the move to more grants does not hurt IDA's financial health.

The Bank says that the replenishment discussions produced innovations in policies and processes:

- IDA donors urged World Bank management to establish a results-based measurement system to link IDA programmes to a country's development outcomes in order to better track the results of IDA's assistance and to help ensure the greatest possible impact on poverty reduction.
- Donors also recommended a significant expansion in the use of IDA grants (in a range of 18 to 21%) to increase IDA's flexibility in addressing the special difficulties faced by the poorest and most vulnerable countries.
- Replenishment discussions were opened up to representatives of borrowers and civil society, and policy papers prepared for this replenishment were made publicly available in advance of meetings in a move to increase transparency.

Donors emphasized a number of clear objectives for IDA, including policy priorities such as improving the quality and access to basic education; creating an enabling environment for gender equality; strengthening the fight against the spread of communicable diseases, including HIV/AIDS; fostering good governance; building a healthy investment climate as the basis for a competitive private sector and the promotion of free and fair trade; diversifying the sources of growth and exports; and mainstreaming environmental concerns in IDA operations.

IDA was created in 1960 and is the world's largest source of concessional financial assistance for the poorest countries. This agreement represents the thirteenth multi-year replenishment of IDA's resources.

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*On 9 July 2002, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution officially endorsing the Monterrey Consensus. The resolution, which comes almost four months after the International Conference on Financing for Development (see NGLS Roundup 91), stresses the importance of keeping fully engaged—nationally, regionally and internationally—and calls for proper follow-up to the implementation of agreements and commitments reached at the Conference. The resolution also stresses the importance of continuing to build bridges between development, finance, and trade organizations and initiatives.*

*The UN Secretary-General will be issuing a report containing proposals on putting together a secretariat to support this work. This will be ready in time for the 57th Session of the General Assembly that begins on 10 September 2002.*

*The resolution, which was adopted by acclamation, was co-sponsored by Australia, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Russian Federation, United States and Venezuela.*

*Speaking after adoption of the resolution, Cuba called the Monterrey Consensus an "imposed consensus" and said its commitments and goals were "below the challenges faced by the developing world." The representative said that Cuba joined the consensus for the sake of unity with the Group of 77 and China.*

*Also speaking after adoption, the representative of India indicated that their delegation had cleared certain domestic procedures before being able to endorse the Monterrey Consensus. The representative said India had joined the consensus because it was important to endorse the outcomes of recent major conferences.*

On 31 May 2002 all 15 countries of the European Union (EU) ratified the Kyoto Protocol, and called on other major Parties to ratify as soon as possible. The EU has also urged the United States to participate in the global framework for addressing climate change.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan reacted to the ratification: "The unanimous ratification of the Kyoto Protocol by the European Union is good news for the entire world. Climate change is one of the greatest challenges the world will have to face in the 21st century. With these ratifications, the EU shows that it takes this threat seriously. I hope others will follow suit so that the Protocol—a sound and innovative response to a truly global threat affecting rich and poor countries alike—can enter into force as soon as possible."

On 4 June, Japan ratified the Protocol and said it will push for other countries to do the same. The Japanese ratification means that the Protocol now has the binding support of countries responsible for nearly 40% of 1990 global greenhouse gas emissions. Seventy-two countries have now ratified the Protocol, including 19 industrialized countries accounting for 26.9% of 1990 emissions. Entry into force will require ratification by signatories representing 55% of 1990 emissions.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has appointed Shashi Tharoor (India) as Head of the United Nations Department of Public Information, a post that carries the rank of Under-Secretary-General. Mr. Tharoor has served as interim head of the department since January 2001.

Mr. Tharoor has been a close aide to Mr. Annan, serving as Special Assistant to the Secretary-General in the area of peacekeeping. In addition to his career with the United Nations, which began in 1978, Mr. Tharoor has won awards for his writing as a journalist, satirist and political analyst.

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#### SC ADOPTS ICC RESOLUTION (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

The adoption of the resolution followed intense negotiations. The United States wanted the Court to give US peacekeepers permanent immunity, which was not accepted by Member States. In retaliation, the US vetoed the renewal of the mandate of the UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, saying it did not want to expose its peacekeepers to the possibility of "politicized prosecution" by the ICC. After the adoption of the resolution, the Council renewed the mandates for the mission.

In response to the US's demand for blanket immunity, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan addressed a letter to US Secretary of State Colin Powell, in which he said, "The issue that the United States is raising in the Council is...highly improbable with respect to United Nations peacekeeping operations. At the same time, the whole system of United Nations peacekeeping operations is being put at risk....My concern is that the only real result that an adoption by the Council of the proposal would produce—since the substantive issue is moot—is that the Council risks being discredited. The purpose of this letter is to ask you to consider this aspect."

UK Ambassador Jeremy Greenstock said that the resolution provides a "time-out for the right action to be taken by the Member State whose national is accused or indicted. It's a very different proposition from the blanket immunity that was present in some of the earlier drafts."

Some States believe that the Security Council resolution violates the UN Charter, which says that the Council can intervene only when there is a threat to peace, breach of peace or an act of aggression. "This is a sad day for the United Nations. We are extremely disappointed in the outcome," said Canadian Ambassador Paul Heinbecker. "We don't think it's in the mandate of the Security Council to interpret treaties that are negotiated somewhere else."

NGOs have also expressed their concern about the resolution. They see the decision as going against the Court's founding treaty, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, as well as the UN Charter. "The two biggest losers as a result of today's decision are the United States and the Security Council," said William Pace, Convenor of the NGO Coalition for the International Criminal Court. "The US lost on two levels. First because it came away with a good deal less than it wanted, and second because it squandered any claim of legitimate interest or concern. The Security Council

was damaged because it acted beyond its powers. Several Security Council members party to the Rome Statute shamed themselves by ignoring the UN Charter, international law and the International Criminal Court treaty. The ICC will rise above this assault and prove to be one of the greatest instruments of peace ever created by the international community." The US says it intends to seek renewal of the resolution on an annual basis and "build additional protections" during the year through bilateral agreements with countries where peacekeepers are deployed. The Security Council will reconsider the resolution in July 2003. The Parliamentarians for Global Action has launched a campaign against the renewal of the resolution.

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#### UNCTAD SG: POLICY SPACE FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Speaking on the subject of 'Rethinking Development Strategies, Reshaping Globalization' during the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Mid-Term Review, held in Bangkok (Thailand) in May 2002, UNCTAD Secretary-General Rubens Ricupero outlined some of the constraints that have shrunk the policy space of developing countries as they struggle to design development strategies, and says those constraints must be re-examined with an open mind. Following are excerpts from his speech.

"There are currently concerns in developing countries that pursuing the kind of development strategies that have proved successful in the past is no longer feasible, owing to constraints imposed by the emerging international economic order. Diminished official financing and greater reliance on private capital flows are one source of such constraints. Another source is new obligations under the World Trade Organization (WTO), which subject domestic policies to stricter disciplines than before. Conditionalities attached to multilateral loans have also brought a wider set of policy measures under the close surveillance of the multilateral financial institutions.

"All these constraints need to be re-examined to ensure that developing countries have sufficient policy space to create the sort of investment-export nexus that can support rapid and sustained economic growth.

"For most developing countries, the current working of the international trade and finance systems does not provide sufficient resources to enable them to achieve the rapid and sustained growth needed to

reach various poverty alleviation targets set by the international community for the new millennium. Full implementation of commitments by most developing countries undertaken during the Uruguay Round, together with continued restrictions on market access in some major industrial countries, are factors contributing to generating payment deficits that cannot be financed on a sustained and reliable basis by international capital markets. Moreover, official financing is no longer available on a scale to fill this gap. The outcome of the Financing for Development Conference in Monterrey does not, by itself, remove this inconsistency. The additional pledges made in the context of this conference fall short of amounts needed to close the resource gap, which, according to a number of independent estimates, would require the doubling of official aid. This implies that many developing countries may have to accept slow growth that is unlikely to make much of a dent on poverty.

"The fact that so few developing countries, perhaps a dozen out of 140, have been able to overcome the longer-term payments constraint by pursuing targeted trade, investment and technology policies, seem to indicate that the existing arrangements do not allow sufficient policy space. Although, of course, mistakes in national policies also are a contributing factor. So there are increasing concerns that current policy orthodoxy and global arrangements have, or may have, the result of kicking away the ladder by which today's advanced countries attained their present levels of economic development—by denying developing countries many of the policy instruments that were widely and successfully used in the past. We have to discuss and examine those problems with an open mind, with an attitude of balance, accepting that the responsibilities between the external environment and national policies should be equally shared."

#### OPEN LETTER FAILS, BUSH WITHHOLDS FUNDS TO UNFPA

In late June, 25 women's rights, religious, health and other organizations urged US President George W. Bush in an open letter to release the US Government's US\$34 million contribution to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The groups cited cuts in personnel and programmes that could cost lives in the developing world, and urged President Bush to overturn his previous decision made last January to stop the payment due to allegations that the UNFPA was funding forced abortions and sterilizations in China (see *Go Between* 91).

The letter warned that the funding "shortfall could lead to as many as two million unwanted pregnancies, 800,000 induced abortions, 4,700 maternal deaths and 77,000 infant and child

deaths." It added that both main political parties in the US Congress had reached an agreement, "signed into law by you, to provide these life-saving funds to UNFPA."

Addressing President Bush's concerns about the agency's China programme, the 25 signatories said none of the monitors sent to study the programme "have found evidence of support of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization. If they had, we all could not support UNFPA."

The signatories included health, rights and advocacy groups, including the International Women's Health Coalition, Population Connection, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, US Committee for the UN Population Fund, as well as a pro-choice coalition from President Bush's own Republican Party. Religious groups—including the Presbyterian Church, Catholics for a Free Choice and the National Council of Jewish Women—also signed the letter.

On 22 July, the Bush Administration formally announced that it would withhold the international family planning funds from UNFPA, saying the organization "implicitly condones forced abortions and sterilizations in China." Secretary of State Colin Powell informed lawmakers that the money would be diverted to child and maternal health programmes administered by the US Agency for International Development, which has family planning initiatives in roughly half as many countries as the UNFPA.

UNFPA Executive Director Thoraya Obaid, speaking at a news conference, said, "It is disturbing that the US Administration has chosen to disregard the findings and recommendations of its own fact-finding mission and also the will of the US Congress...UNFPA does not promote abortion anywhere in the world. The services we promote reduce the incidence of abortion. Abortion rates are actually declining in the 32 counties in China where we operate."

The European Union has announced that it will fill what it calls the "decency gap" left by the US's decision to stop funding to UNFPA. The European Commission will provide the money to projects run by UNFPA and the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

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*Angus Archer, who founded the New York office of the Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS) in 1975, and headed it until 1989, passed away in Ottawa on 11 July 2002. Born in Ayr, Scotland on 27 July 1942, and a graduate of Carleton University, Angus devoted his life to the cause of the United Nations, international development, and to strengthening the role of NGOs. Following NGLS, Angus became Executive Director of the United Nations Association in Canada (UNAC) where he remained until his failing health meant he could no longer continue his responsibilities.*

*He will be sadly missed by his many friends and colleagues in the UN system and the NGO community. Donations in his memory can be made to the Angus Archer Memorial Fund for International Development, c/o Joan Broughton, UNAC-Canada/ACNU, 900-130 Slater, Ottawa, ON K1P 6E2, telephone +1-613/232 5751, extension 230, fax +1-613/563 2455, e-mail <joan@unac.org>, website (www.unac.org).*

*The United Nations Security Council has extended the life of the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) for another year.*

*MONUC has an authorized strength of 5,537 personnel, although only 3,800 troops are deployed. In recommending the one-year extension, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan also suggested adding 400 troops to assist in the disarmament and demobilization of forces in the eastern cities of Kisangani and Kindu.*

In an unprecedented meeting, the First Ladies of 18 African countries met in Geneva from 17-19 July to establish the "African First Ladies Organization Against HIV/AIDS."

"As the most highly visible women and mothers of their nations, the First Ladies have the capacity to focus much needed attention on the challenges and opportunities of AIDS in Africa," said Sandra L.

Thurman, President of the International AIDS Trust (IAT), which facilitated the meeting with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

"By joining forces for advocacy, resource mobilization and social change, these First Ladies are demonstrating true leadership. The organization they are creating here this week will be a powerful catalyst for action against AIDS—in their individual countries, across Africa and around the world."

"It is a great step forward to see African First Ladies so committed to fighting the devastating HIV/AIDS epidemic on the worst-hit continent," said UNAIDS Executive Director Peter Piot. "Through their leadership and dedication, I am certain the First Ladies will inspire communities, families and individuals to play a more active role in turning back the epidemic."

More information is available on the UNAIDS website ([www.unaids.org](http://www.unaids.org)).

Ibrahima Fall, former UN Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, has been appointed as the Secretary-General's Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region, and Ahmedou Ould-Abdullah, a senior Mauritanian diplomat and former high-level UN official, was named Special Representative for West Africa. Mr.

Ould-Abdullah is currently the Executive Director of the Global Coalition for Africa. Mr. Fall replaces Berhanu Dinka, who was reassigned last month as the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Burundi.

## OPTIONAL PROTOCOL TO TORTURE CONVENTION ADOPTED

On 25 July the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted the optional protocol to the Convention Against Torture in spite of US opposition. The protocol will be sent to the General Assembly later this year before being opened for ratification.

The optional protocol, sponsored by Costa Rica and supported by members of the European Union, Latin American, Caribbean and African States, would establish an international system of inspection visits to places of detention in countries that ratified it. US Deputy Ambassador Sichan Siv said the US objected to the protocol because of "certain flaws," including incompatibility with aspects of the US Constitution and that "the regime...would be overly intrusive." The US was seeking to delay action on the protocol by calling for renewed negotiations.

According to expert observers, the proposed system of visits has many checks and balances, ensuring consultation with governments, prior notification of visits and the confidentiality of reports, and can be adapted to different legal cultures, including federal systems.

Human Rights Watch has criticized the US call for renewed negotiations on the draft optional protocol. "Yet again, the Bush Administration is on a collision course with its allies over an important new mechanism to protect human rights," said Rory Mungoven, Global Advocacy director for Human Rights Watch. "Last week, it was the International Criminal Court; this week, it's the prevention of torture."

Human Rights Watch said the draft optional protocol represented the best compromise possible after ten years of difficult negotiations, and addressed many of the concerns previously raised by governments, including the US. Reopening talks as the US had asked would have been the "kiss-of-death for the treaty," according to Human Rights Watch.

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## PREVIEW OF WORLD ECONOMY

The world is pulling out of the global slowdown of 2001, but recovery in 2002 is shaping up to be modest, with growth in the gross global product at less than 2%, according to the report *World Economy in 2002*.

The report, which represents the first chapter of the forthcoming *United Nations World Economic and Social Survey 2002*, was released on 26 June 2002 prior to the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which opened with a policy debate on the state of the world economy.

"Whereas the slowdown was rapid and quickly embraced many countries, the recovery is expected to be both slow and less synchronized among economies," the report says, predicting only "a modest recovery" of 1.25% in developed countries, while "economies in transition are forecast to experience a further deceleration." The report notes that China and India were able to maintain growth during 2001, and are expected to continue to do so in 2002 and 2003. Elsewhere in the developing world, the report says, the majority of countries are not expected to return to the growth rates of the mid-1990s of around 5% until next year. Though African countries suffered relatively little effect from the slowdown, their economies continued to grow with an increase that had a negligible effect on development.

The study attributes the "synchronicity" in the 2001 downturn among many countries to "a series of common shocks," including: the increase in oil prices, the bursting of economic "bubbles" in the information and communication technology (ICT) sector, and the 11 September terrorist attacks on the United States.

According to the report, these events "highlighted the instability associated with increased global synchronicity and the growing dependency on the economy of the United States." Since the mid-1990s, "the United States has been the 'single engine' for global economic growth. This became more apparent during 2000-2001 when the engine stalled," the report said. None of the other major economies has replaced the US or shared its role of supporting global growth. The report calls for a "transition from a 'single engine world economy' to multi-polar and more balanced global economic growth," terming it crucial to sustaining the current recovery and to ensuring robust growth in the long run.

The report also says consumer spending has had a "steadying effect" on many economies—Japan being a notable exception—while "in sharp contrast...the corporate sector was a major dragging force in many economies in 2001 and its weakness continues to pose uncertainties for the strength and sustainability of the global recovery in 2002." That weakness is the result of declining corporate profits, a fall in equity prices, capital spending cuts and a drop in industrial production, according to the report. The cumulative effects of reduced overall growth and higher unemployment, reinforced in the developed countries by negative effects from stock market returns, is expected to muffle consumer spending around the world in 2002.

Among the positive signs for the medium-term, the report cites improved understanding between countries of the North and South on key development issues, as a result of trade negotiations in Doha (Qatar) in November 2001 and pledges of national reforms and of increased development assistance made at the International Financing for Development Conference in Monterrey (Mexico) in March 2002.

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#### UNECA ECONOMIC REPORT ON AFRICA

The latest *Economic Report on Africa (ERA 2002)*, entitled *Tracking Performance and Progress*, shows that Africa grew faster than any other developing region in 2001, "reflecting better macro-economic management, strong agricultural production, and the cessation of conflicts in several countries."

These gains were made amid the "synchronized slowdown" of all major economies and the 11 September terrorist attacks on the United States, which were expected to lower commodity prices and reduce the amount of foreign investment in Africa, said the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in the annual report. Output remained relatively strong and Africa's overall economic growth increased from 3.5% in 2000. However, Africa's average gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 4.3% in 2001 masks wide disparities, from 65% growth in Equatorial Guinea to a 7.5% contraction in Zimbabwe, and the report emphasizes that economic growth remains fragile, and confirms that at current rates Africa "will not achieve any of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set by the United Nations at its Millennium Summit (see focus page 33)."

Based on a number of positive recent developments, *ERA 2002* provides a cautiously optimistic prognosis of the medium-term prospects for Africa. These developments include the opportunities created by the US African Growth and Opportunity Act, the European Union's "Everything but Arms" initiative, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and the launches of the Doha Development Round and the newly launched 53-member African Union. In the medium-term, issues of political governance, civil conflicts, and developments in the world economy dominate the downside.

*ERA 2002* reached these conclusions by supplementing its traditional analysis with seven in-depth country studies spanning the diversity of Africa—from South Africa to Guinea.

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#### ARAB HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT

In spite of a decrease in infant mortality and fewer people in dire poverty, the Arab region still has a long way to go, according to the *Arab Human Development Report*. The report, published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and compiled by Arab scholars, covers 22 countries in the region, calling it "richer than it is developed."

There is a wide disparity among countries in the region within the Human Development Index (HDI). Kuwait, for example, scores only slightly less than Canada, which has the highest HDI, while Djibouti scores close to Sierra Leone, which has the lowest. While noting that the region does have a certain amount of wealth, the report points out that it suffers from a "poverty of capabilities and poverty of opportunities," due to "three deficits: freedom, women's empowerment, and knowledge."

Life expectancy has increased by 15 years over the last 30 years, and infant mortality rates have dropped by two-thirds. Although there are fewer people living in "dire poverty"—defined as an income of less than US\$1 a day—than in any developing region, the report notes that one in five Arabs live on less than US\$2 a day.

Around 15% of the labour force—an estimated 12 million people—was unemployed in 1995. If the present trend continues, this figure could rise to 25 million in 2010. The report says that the impediments to employment generation are traditional, "severely segmented and dysfunctional" labour markets and ineffective labour-market intermediation through employment exchanges.

Adult literacy is an area where Arab countries have made progress: adult illiteracy dropped from 60% in 1980 to 43% in mid-1990, and female literacy has tripled since the 1970s. However, ten million children between the ages of six and 15 are not in school.

The region scores low in the "freedom index," which comprises factors such as political participation, civil liberties, and independence of the media. Arab women's political and economic participation is the lowest worldwide in quantitative terms. In some countries, women are denied the right to vote or hold office.

The report says that cross-border and internal conflicts, sanctions, and embargoes in the region are serious obstacles to security and progress. It

The UN Special Committee on Decolonization has urged the United States to immediately halt its military activities on the island of Vieques (Puerto Rico).

Approving without a vote the resolution introduced by the Cuban representative, the Special Committee also urged the US to return the occupied land to the people of Puerto Rico; halt the persecutions, incarcerations, arrests and harassment of peaceful demonstrators; immediately release all persons incarcerated in this connection; respect the fundamental human rights of health and economic development; and decontaminate the impact areas in the target ranges.

The Special Committee also called on the US to assume its responsibility for expediting a process that would allow the Puerto Rican people to fully exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and independence, and further requested the US President to release all Puerto Rican political prisoners serving sentences in US prisons for cases related to the struggle for Puerto Rico's independence.

According to the World Food Programme (WFP), 14% of the 516 million Latin American and Caribbean people live in extreme poverty and suffer from under-nourishment in rural and urban areas alike. WFP cites Argentina, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua and Peru as the countries facing the most difficult situations.

Prolonged drought, inequalities, economic decline, failed harvests, falling prices for important export products such as coffee or sugar, and natural disasters have contributed to the rise in food insecurity.

WFP, stating that more than 200 million people in Latin America and the Caribbean are vulnerable to hunger due to the deepening of economic problems or new natural disasters, says there is an urgent need to draw international attention to the region.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), renewed fighting between Liberian rebels and the government has uprooted tens of thousands of residents and Sierra Leonean refugees living northeast of Monrovia, dashing hopes for a speedy re-supply of the Sinje camps, which house 13,000 refugees and have been inaccessible to aid workers for weeks.

"We have been in contact with them by radio and we know that they will run out of food and fuel soon," UNHCR spokeswoman Astrid van Genderen-Stort said. She also said the UNHCR would be unable to re-supply the camp without solid Liberian assurances that the road from Monrovia to Sinje is safe.

UNHCR also expressed concern about the plight of more than 150,000 people internally displaced within Liberia, saying the number of internally displaced people (IDPs) has increased steeply over the past weeks. Many are living in makeshift camps, classrooms, transit centres and other temporary shelters across the country. Neighbouring Guinea hosts close to 100,000 Liberian refugees, while Sierra Leone, itself only recently emerged from years of civil war, hosts over 24,000. Another 130,000 remain on the Cote d'Ivoire.

On 23 May 2002, three days after Independence, the UN Security Council recommended to the General Assembly that the Democratic Republic of East Timor be admitted to membership in the United Nations. In a statement by Council President Shunmugam Jayakumar (Singapore), the Council expressed its anticipation of the day in the near future when East Timor would join the United Nations as a Member State. The Security Council also reaffirmed that a strong international commitment will be required in East Timor to ensure stability and development of the country for some time after independence. This will take place largely under the newly established United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMSET).

On 23 July, East Timor became the 184th member of both the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

names Israel's "illegal occupation of Arab lands" and the denial "of the most basic Palestinian human rights" as the most pervasive conflict.

The report lists areas important for progress:

- n building Arab capabilities and knowledge, especially in basic education and investment in research and development;
- n using human capabilities through re-invigorating growth and productivity to focus on "human-intensive rather than capital-intensive" research and development. This includes mainstreaming human development and poverty reduction within national economic policy, monitoring the labour market, supporting measures for pro-poor capital accumulation through education, training and health-care systems and institutional reform, removing gender-bias in labour markets, and resolving conflicts in the region; and
- n promoting good governance, which includes allowing people more political participation, undertaking legal reform, ensuring citizens' fundamental human rights, strengthening local governance, liberating civil society organizations, and fostering free and responsible media.

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#### IASC WARNS OF FUNDING SHORTAGE

Speaking to representatives of donor States and humanitarian agencies at a UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) meeting held in Geneva on 28 May, UN Assistant Emergency Relief Coordinator Ross Mountain said the United Nations and its partners are facing a shortfall of US\$2.2 billion to address humanitarian emergencies around the world.

In November 2001, the United Nations and its partners launched appeals for 19 areas, calling on countries to support some 33 million people in conflict zones. Following the creation in January 2002 of an Afghanistan assistance programme, US\$3.7 billion in all is being requested for this year. So far, the response to the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) is 38.5%, but it falls to 29% if funding to the "high-profile crisis," Afghanistan, is not included. IASC says, as in the past, high-profile crises continue to draw the majority of resources, often to the detriment of "forgotten" emergencies.

The CAP Mid-Year Review Status Report also indicates that there is a clear donor preference towards funding

the food sector with less support for other sectors such as agriculture, health and education. It calls for "timely, flexible and unearmarked" contributions to be provided early in the calendar year to enable agencies to implement strategies designed to meet identified priorities, and to plan based upon need rather than available resources.

Progress towards peace has created opportunities for increased humanitarian assistance in countries like Angola, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone, permitting humanitarian programmes to reach vulnerable populations. Protracted conflicts in Burundi, Somalia and Liberia, however, will require renewed diplomatic efforts of the international humanitarian community, complemented by humanitarian aid, to assist those most in need.

The Consolidated Appeals Process, a key coordination tool for humanitarian assistance, brings together IASC members, host governments, NGOs and donors to discuss and set common directions and principles for humanitarian assistance in a country. It works to ensure that assistance goes to populations who suffer from natural disasters, genocide, armed conflict and other humanitarian emergencies, so that they can resume normal life as soon as possible.

CAP covers the following countries and regions: Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Great Lakes Region and Central Africa, Indonesia, North Caucasus (Russian Federation), Somalia, Southeastern Europe, Sudan, Tajikistan, Uganda and West Africa (including Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone).

#### CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT HOLDS 2ND SESSION

The Conference on Disarmament was held in Geneva from 13 May to 28 June 2002, and its presidency was shared between Ambassador Hubert de la Fortelle (France) and Ambassador Volker Heinsberg (Germany). In his opening remarks as President, Mr. Heinsberg expressed his country's strong commitment to the further strengthening and developing of multilateral instruments of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation.

Mr. Heinsberg suggested that the Conference should continue its efforts to adopt a programme of work on the basis of the agenda agreed upon by all Members at the start of this year's session. He said he would address in that regard the "four issues"—nuclear disarmament; a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices; prevention of an arms race in outer space; and effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear weapon States against the use or threat of use of

nuclear weapons. He called on Member States to look at new and innovative ways to break the persistent deadlock and to start meaningful work.

Making reference to the Treaty on Strategic Disarmament, signed on 24 May 2002 in Moscow by the United States and Russia, and distributed in the Conference as Document CD/1674, he said it had shown that progress in the field of bilateral disarmament was possible. He asked, "Why not also in the field of multilateral disarmament and, in particular, within the Conference?"

Making a statement before the audience, Rakesh Sood, representative of India said that the post-11-September change in thinking was the realization of diffusion of power away from a government to an individual or a transnational group. Global terrorism had privatized war; conflicts do not have to be among sovereign States; and casualties in those conflicts were no longer combatants but increasingly, innocent bystanders and civilians. He asked how such conflicts could be prevented. He said that in recent weeks and months, one had witnessed a remaking of the global security agenda: in June, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, long described by many as the "cornerstone of strategic stability," had ceased to exist; in May NATO leaders welcomed Russian President Putin into a NATO-Russia Council; on 24 May, US and Russian leaders had signed the Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty; and earlier in the year, the US Nuclear Posture Review had provided, what he said was a "disconcerting glimpse into new doctrines and roles for nuclear weapons in the post-11-September world." According to Mr. Sood, the cases of anthrax in the mail last year galvanized the world against the threat of bio-terrorism, but, at the same time, the Biological Weapons Review Conference session was so wracked by dissension that it had to be suspended for a year.

The US representative reiterated that his country saw no need for new outer space arms control agreements and opposed the idea of negotiating a new outer space treaty, adding that the US Government believed that the existing outer space regime was sufficient. While the US understood that certain other Member States had differing views, the representative said that the work of the Conference should be broad enough to encompass diverse priorities and goals, and it should be hoped that Member States would be able to develop an agreed approach that would lead to consensus.

Saying that outer space was the common heritage of mankind, China's representative said the exploitation and utilization of outer space for peaceful purposes was a universal aspiration and demand of the international community. He said that for more than half a century, the development of space technology had enormously facilitated the economic, scientific

and social progress of all nations, while, at the same time, stimulating the research and development of outer-space-related weaponry and military technologies. Various combat theories and concepts relating to space warfare had been unveiled, and outer space was faced with the danger of weaponization and an arms race.

On the final day of the Conference on Disarmament, the Russian Federation and China submitted a joint working paper on the prevention of the deployment of weapons in outer space. Speakers from Sri Lanka, Ecuador, Venezuela, Iran, Chile, Zimbabwe, Algeria, Vietnam, Cuba, Syria, Belarus, Pakistan, Iraq and Kenya supported the proposal on "possible Elements for a Future International Legal Agreement on the Prevention of the Deployment of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force Against Outer Space Objects," and urged the Conference to start substantive discussion on the subject. The representative of the Russian Federation said that in proposing basic parameters of a possible new agreement in the area of outer space, the delegations of China and the Russian Federation had taken into account the experience of nearly nine years of work at the Conference's Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS).

The Conference on Disarmament, established in 1979 as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community, was a result of the first Special Session on Disarmament of the United Nations General Assembly held in 1978. It succeeded other Geneva-based negotiating fora, which include the Ten-Nation Committee on Disarmament (1960), the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament (1962-68), and the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (1969-78). The Conference on Disarmament's third session will be held from 29 July-13 September 2002 in Geneva.

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#### FIRST WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

The first World Day Against Child Labour, an initiative of the International Labour Organization (ILO) seeking to focus world attention on the urgent need to eradicate child labour, was observed on 12 June 2002. It was celebrated in an array of activities, ranging from gatherings of child workers and their supporters to school events, children's art shows and drama performances, child-adult information workshops, activities organized by worker and employer representatives, media events and other public activities.

*United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Director General Koichiro Matsuura has nominated the Cuban ballerina and choreographer Alicia Alonso as a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador. Ms. Alonso will join the 36 other Goodwill Ambassadors who work to promote the UNESCO goal of peace through education, science and culture.*

*Ms. Alonso, who is director and choreographer of the Cuban National Ballet, was born in Havana, where she began studying dance in 1931. She made her professional debut in the United States in 1938 after training with Enrico Zanfretta, Alexandra Fedorova and other teachers at the School of American Ballet.*

*The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has appointed the Guinean singer and storyteller Sayon Camara a UNESCO "artist for peace."*

*Ms. Camara is considered to be among the great griots, or traditional storytellers, of the Mandingo civilization of western Africa, and is the first African woman to be named by UNESCO Director-General Koichiro Matsuura as a UNESCO artist for peace.*

Musician Femi Anikulapo-Kuti has been named as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) newest special representative. UNICEF says Mr. Kuti, born in London and raised in Nigeria, will concentrate on HIV/AIDS prevention.

*"It is a natural partnership between one of the world's most prominent activist entertainers and the most influential organization working on behalf of the world's children," said UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy.*

*"Ever since I wrote an essay called 'My Song Against AIDS' in a UNICEF publication two years ago, I have seen how powerful my cooperation with UNICEF could be. We have the same goals and they give me the opportunity for even more ways to help young people, especially regarding the HIV/AIDS emergency," said the musician.*  
*"One of the most important actions for people in influential positions is to raise the alarm around AIDS loudly and clearly. Information is a powerful tool in the struggle to tame the pandemic's rampant spread."*

"This first World Day Against Child Labour is intended to help spread the message that child labour remains a serious problem and that we must do more to combat it," said ILO Director-General Juan Somavia. "We are asking everyone to join together in working towards a world where no children will be deprived of a normal, healthy childhood, where parents can find decent jobs and children can go to school. Our goal is a world free from child labour."

ILO says the World Day will be held annually to increase support for the global campaign against child labour and will also serve as a catalyst for enhancing the growing worldwide movement against child labour, as reflected in the steadily mounting ratifications of ILO Conventions Nos. 182 (on its worst forms) and 138 (on minimum age), as well as the work of the ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC).

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#### CEDAW HOLDS 27TH SESSION

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has appointed Swiss diplomat Heidi Tagliavini as his new Special Representative for Georgia. Ms. Tagliavini will also head the UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), which monitors the situation between government troops and those of the breakaway region of Abkhazia.

Ms. Tagliavini previously served as UNOMIG's deputy head in 1998 and 1999 and has worked with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on issues involving the Caucasus region, including Chechnya.

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) held its twenty-seventh session from 3-21 June 2002 at UN headquarters in New York. The session, which examined the progress of seven States Parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) dealt with a wide range of issues but focused on women's access to decision making; the situation of rural women; means of overcoming negative traditional stereotypes; women's health; their access to education; discrimination within the family and in the labour market; and special measures to advance gender equality.

Examining Zambia's progress on implementation, the expert members of the Committee warned that pervasive traditional stereotypes and prejudices regarding women, as well as across-the-board discriminatory provisions in the country's legislature and common law, were undermining most of the country's efforts at ensuring gender equality and equal representation. The Committee said the reports from Zambia honestly represented the problems the country was facing in the areas of discrimination in education, health and marriage.

During the review of St. Kitts and Nevis, experts of the Committee said they were encouraged by the country's pioneering national machinery used to ensure that both men and women enjoyed equal rights. It praised the government for the new bill regarding equal pay for equal work and the country's

efforts to make foreign investors adhere to a code of ethics. However, the Committee regretted the fact that St. Kitts and Nevis was submitting its initial report 17 years after ratification—a process that should only take one year.

Examining Ukraine's progress, the Committee experts noted that a major problem was not so much an inadequate number of legal standards, but the lack of machinery to ensure equal legal representation of women in elected bodies. They pointed out that highly educated women in Ukraine simply were not proportionately represented in decision-making positions and said that without women in such positions, it was particularly difficult to achieve gender-related decisions because of men's resistance.

Expert members of the Committee urged Suriname to overcome the ingrained stereotypical attitudes and complacency that threatened to undermine the rights of women and girls. In particular, the experts were concerned with the status of the Convention in Suriname's domestic law, because there were still a number of clearly discriminatory laws in effect.

The Committee congratulated Belgium on its progress and agreed that Belgium's equality-oriented policies were, in many ways, exemplary and should serve as an example to other countries. However, it also expressed concern over the intricacy and complexity of its national machinery. In this connection, the Committee experts inquired into the coordination between various bodies at the federal and local levels, saying that their multiplicity could lead to confusion and duplication in implementation of the Convention.

The Committee's expert members observed that there seemed to be two societies in Denmark—that of the country's basic citizens, on the one hand, and that of migrants, refugees, ethnic minorities and asylum-seekers on the other. While Denmark had set an example for others in its efforts to combat violence against women and mainstream women's issues in its national policies, it had some progress to make on the situation of migrant and minority women in Denmark, including Kosovo refugees, as well on the advancement of women in the Danish territories of the Faroe Islands and Greenland.

The Committee commended Tunisia's strong political will to implement the Convention through numerous amendments to national legislation and measures to improve de facto gender quality. Besides many institutions and programmes for gender equality, the experts noted Tunisia's efforts to integrate women in development and reduce illiteracy, maternal mortality and women's health problems. The Committee also said it was encouraging to see the country's efforts to harmonize the provisions of Islam with the human rights approach. However, it warned that patriarchal stereotypes still hindered

progress in Tunisia in many respects, and said a large portion of the female population was still illiterate and unaware of its rights.

The Committee is composed of 23 experts, who serve in their personal capacities and monitor the implementation of CEDAW, which was adopted by the General Assembly in 1979 and came into force in 1981. An exceptional session will be held from 5-23 August 2002 at UN headquarters in New York, where the Committee will hear reports from Argentina, Armenia, Barbados, Czech Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Mexico, Norway, Peru and Yemen.

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#### UN PUBLISHES STUDY ON ABORTION POLICIES

The United Nations Population Division has published *Abortion Policies: A Global Review*, an updated, country-by-country examination of national policies concerning induced abortion and the context within which abortion takes place. In three volumes it provides comparable information for all Member and non-member States of the United Nations.

The publication aims to provide the most up-to-date, accurate and objective information about the nature of laws and policies relating to abortion in both developed and developing countries at the end of the twentieth century. It includes information on the social and political settings of these developments, the ways in which these laws and policies have been formulated, and how they have evolved over time.

Of the approximately 50 million abortions carried out every year in the world, estimates place the number performed illegally at 40%. The publication shows that abortion is legally permitted to save the life of the woman in 98% of the countries in the world. Other grounds for abortion are: to preserve the physical health of the woman (63% of countries), to preserve mental health (62%), in case of rape or incest (43%), foetal impairment (39%), economic or social reasons (33%), and on request (27%).

The report notes that grounds on which abortion is permitted varies greatly among regions. For example, abortion is permitted upon request in 65% of developed countries, but 14% of developing countries, and for economic and social reasons in 75% of developed countries and 19% of developing countries. Nonetheless, abortion to save the

woman's life is permitted in nearly all developed (99%) and developing (96%) countries.

The report is available on the Population Division website ([www.unpopulation.org](http://www.unpopulation.org)).

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#### NEW BASEL GUIDELINES TO IMPROVE RECYCLING

In an effort to reduce the global risk of lead poisoning, the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal has finalized a set of guidelines promoting the environmentally sound recycling of spent lead-acid batteries, which it says is the number one source of secondary lead in the world today.

"Since ancient times, lead has brought us great benefits but also innumerable poisonings, particularly amongst workers and children," said Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), under whose auspices the Basel Convention was adopted.

"The recycling of lead-acid batteries is one of the greatest potential sources of risk, especially for exposed workers in the informal sector in many developing countries. The safe recycling of these batteries requires strict environmental and occupational standards that can only be ensured by specialized firms, of which only a few are found in developing countries," he said.

Malleable and resistant to corrosion, lead is the most widely used metal after iron. Of the 2.5 million tonnes produced worldwide every year, some 75% goes into the lead-acid batteries used in automobiles, industrial facilities and portable tools. The Basel Convention notes that lead has been mined for at least 8,000 years and was probably one of the first health and safety issues in the workplace. Reports of lead poisoning date to ancient Greece, and high levels of lead have been found in ancient Egyptian mummies.

The new Basel guidelines aim to improve the management of lead-acid batteries by enabling governments to develop the necessary legislation and facilities for coping with the dramatic growth in the quantity of used batteries. They offer governments and industry a set of best practices and principles for setting up effective systems for recycling batteries. Rigorous controls, economic incentives, appropriate technologies and stable market conditions are the keys to safety, according to the Basel Convention. The

*On 25 June, the United Nations and Switzerland launched a website ([www.chernobyl.info/en](http://www.chernobyl.info/en)) to disseminate public information about the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster and its continuing aftermath.*

*UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Kenzo Oshima stressed the importance of "the provision and exchange of neutral, politically independent, reliable and continuous public information on the consequences of Chernobyl."*

*"Radioactive contamination of large territories and the effect this has on humans, on plant and animal life, is not an exact science. Humankind has had, in historic terms, only a short period of time after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to accumulate and exchange information on their effects. The aftermath of Chernobyl is even shorter. We have no firm knowledge of what we may yet be faced with," Mr. Oshima said.*

*"We must never forget the human dimension of the Chernobyl problem. And if we are to mobilize the international support that the people still living in the shadow of this tragedy so badly need, we must ensure that others do not forget it by providing a steady and sustained flow of impartial and reliable public information," UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said in his message at the launch.*

The European Commission announced on 25 June 2002 that the 15-member European Union (EU) has ratified the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The Protocol seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology, and establishes an advance informed agreement (AIA) procedure for ensuring that countries are provided with the information necessary to make informed decisions before agreeing to the import of such organisms into their territory.

So far, 36 ratifications have been made and the Protocol will enter into force when 50 of 110 signatories ratify it. "This is another example of our commitment to finding multilateral solutions for global problems," said EU Environment Commissioner Margot Wallström.

The United States, which is not a party to the Protocol, has criticized the EU for limiting imports of genetically engineered crops. The Europeans are creating new legislation on separating modified and conventional crops, which US exporters call too costly and unnecessary.

64-page guidelines describe how to collect, transport and store used batteries, as well as addressing medical issues and public awareness.

The *Technical Guidelines for the Environmentally Sound Management of Waste Lead-Acid Batteries* have been developed by the Convention's Technical Working Group, which met in Geneva from 23–24 May. They will go forward for final adoption to the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (COP-6), scheduled for 9–13 December 2002, also in Geneva.

The Basel Convention, adopted in March 1989, has 150 members. It regulates the movement of hazardous wastes and obliges its member countries to ensure that such wastes are managed and disposed of in an environmentally sound manner.

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#### WORLD DAY TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Executive Director Klaus Töpfer, speaking on World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought on 17 June, warned that the world's deserts are continuing to expand despite international efforts to stem the tide. He said that since the 1994 establishment of the legally binding UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), many countries have begun to take measures to stop soil degradation and the advance of the deserts, but the global trend of shrinking arable land still continues. Desertification affects over 110 countries worldwide.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in his message commemorating the day, painted a bleak picture of the situation.

"Desertification and drought pose a worldwide threat with serious economic, environmental and socio-political implications.

"Every year, an estimated US\$42 billion in income and six million hectares of productive land are being lost because of desertification, land degradation and declining agricultural productivity, and 135 million people who depend primarily on land for their livelihood are at risk of being displaced.

"The fallout is felt on all continents. In Africa, over the next 20 years some 60 million people are expected to move from the Sahelian region to less hostile areas if the desertification of their land is not halted. In north-east Asia, dust and sandstorms have buried

human settlements and forced schools and airports to shut down. In the Americas, dry spells and sandstorms have alarmed farmers and raised the spectre of another 'Dust Bowl,' reminiscent of the 1930s. And in southern Europe, lands once green and rich in vegetation are turning barren and brown.

"The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, adopted eight years ago today, integrates environmental and developmental concerns and thus is a key instrument not only in protecting ecosystems and resources, but also in alleviating poverty. However, a lack of predictable financial resources has hampered implementation. I urge developed countries to follow through on the commitments they made both in adopting the Convention and at the 'Earth Summit' ten years ago in Rio de Janeiro—including the provision of financial support through the Global Environment Facility (an alliance of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the World Bank), which should serve as a financial mechanism of the Convention.

"Desertification will be among the most important issues to be discussed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development... We need to find ways to halt land degradation, and to manage land more responsibly. We need to reverse the decline in agricultural productivity, especially in Africa, so that food production keeps pace with the number of mouths to feed. We need, in short, to implement the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification as a key element in the world's quest for sustainable development," the Secretary-General concluded.

As the only convention to stem directly from a recommendation of Agenda 21, the UNCCD is a key instrument in addressing both poverty alleviation and environmental protection within the framework of sustainable development. "The fight against desertification is fundamentally a fight against poverty," said Hama Arba Diallo, UNCCD Executive Secretary, who also called on the international community to make financial commitments to enable countries affected by land degradation to implement the UNCCD.

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#### STATE OF AFRICAN ENVIRONMENT

Sharp increases in air and water pollution, land degradation, droughts and wildlife losses are facing Africa unless urgent action is taken to deliver environmentally-friendly development for its citizens,

according to a report released by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). *Africa Environment Outlook (AEO)* finds that growing populations, wars, high levels of national debt, natural disasters and disease have all taken their toll on the people and the rich natural environment of Africa in the past three decades.

Over the coming three decades new and emerging threats, including climate change, the unchecked spread of alien, introduced species, uncontrolled expansion of cities and pollution from cars and industry are likely to aggravate levels of poverty, environmental decline and ill-health.

Many African countries are now attempting to address some of the root causes of environmental degradation through initiatives such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). But UNEP says a far bigger effort—by countries within and outside the Continent—is needed to steer Africa on a prosperous and environmentally-sustainable course.

Actions include deeper cuts in Africa's debt burden, a boost in overseas aid, the empowering of local communities, enforcing environmental agreements, introducing green and clean technologies and allowing African countries fair access to international markets for their goods and services. Without this, the report says Africa is unlikely to develop in a way that benefits its people, its landscapes and its wildlife.

The report was compiled by UNEP for the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) and involved hundreds of experts. Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of UNEP, said, "The right decisions cannot be made without the right facts. We have those here in the AEO. It chronicles where Africa has been, where it is now and possible directions for the future with an array of positive and negative consequences. At the beginning of this new century we have all the resources, both financial and technological, to build Africa and the lives of its citizens and to conserve its astonishing biological richness and diversity."

Report findings include:

- n Records since 1900 show that Africa's annual rainfall has been decreasing since 1968, possibly as a result of global warming due to man-made emissions. Countries regularly affected by drought include Botswana, Burkina Faso, Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritania and Mozambique.
- n Droughts and floods are increasing pressure on fragile lands and leading to the displacement of people and wildlife as well as adding to increased soil erosion and the silting up of rivers, dams and coastal waters.
- n The Gulf of Guinea, Senegal, Egypt, the Gambia, the eastern African coast and the Western Indian Ocean islands are at particular risk from rising sea levels. A one-metre rise would flood large areas of the Nile Delta and the Egyptian city of

Alexandria would be severely affected. A similar rise would swamp 70% of the Seychelles.

- n Emissions of carbon dioxide, the main global warming gas, have risen eight-fold since 1950 in Africa to 223 million metric tonnes of carbon. South Africa accounts for 42% of these emissions, while Egypt, Nigeria and Algeria combined account for 35.5%.
- n Significant extinction of plants and animals is anticipated over the coming decades affecting rural livelihoods and tourism if global warming continues unchecked. Hartbeest, wildebeest and zebra in South Africa's Kruger National Park, Botswana's Okavango Delta and Zimbabwe's Hwange National Park could be severely threatened by a predicted 5% drop in rainfall.
- n Economic pressures to boost timber, crops and mineral exports are, alongside other activities such as slash and burn agriculture, poaching, invasive alien species, a lack of awareness of the value of biological resources and inadequate enforcement of conservation laws, putting increasing pressure on the Continent's wildlife. A total of 126 animal species are recorded as now being extinct, with 2,018 threatened. Over 120 plants are now recorded as extinct with 1,771 threatened.
- n An estimated 38% of coastal ecosystems, such as mangrove swamps and coral reefs, are under threat from developments such as ports and the growth of coastal settlements and their sewage discharges. The damming of the Nile River at Aswan has reduced the level of nutrients so much, that the sardine catch in the Nile Delta has slumped from 22,618 million tonnes in 1968 to under 13,500 million and is still declining.
- n Over-harvesting of fish by local and foreign fleets is leading to a decline in stocks. The shrimp catch in the west and central Gulf of Guinea is estimated at 4,700 tonnes, which is deemed unsustainable, and in some countries, including Ghana and Liberia, the average diet contains less fish protein now than it did during the 1970s.
- n Coastal erosion rates are, along some parts of Western Africa such as Togo and Benin, now as high as 30 metres a year.
- n In the Western Indian Ocean islands, dynamite fishing, walking on coral reefs, recent high sea temperatures and illegal use of nets, are damaging the reefs and discharges of untreated solid and liquid wastes are becoming a major problem.

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*During the first week of June 2002, Nicaraguan groups alerted US lawmakers that food aid delivered to Nicaragua from the US by the World Food Programme had been contaminated with genetically modified organisms (GMOs) unbeknownst to the recipient government. Furthermore, the contamination was determined to be from a strain (Starlink) that was deemed unfit for human consumption by the US Environmental Protection Agency in 1998.*

*The food aid, which was provided in order to alleviate hunger and malnutrition resulting from an El-Niño-induced drought, was donated by the US Agency for International Development (USAID). USAID said the agency could not ensure that food sent as aid had not been grown from genetically modified seeds because grain mills in the US do not normally separate traditional crops from genetically altered crops.*

*Another case of GMO presence affecting food aid was reported in May 2002 when Zimbabwe rejected a shipment of 10,000 tonnes of maize.*

#### INC-6 ON PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS MEETS

The Sixth Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-6) for an International

*The International Management Code for the Safe Operation of Ships and for Pollution Prevention (ISM Code) becomes mandatory for most ships trading internationally on 1 July 2002. Compliance with the Code has been mandatory for tankers, passenger ships and bulk carriers since July 1998, under the first phase of ISM implementation, and now all other vessels covered by the SOLAS Convention, which includes all but the smallest internationally-trading vessels, must comply.*

*"This is a significant day for the shipping industry and for all those involved with shipping," said William A. O'Neil, Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). "This is a positive step which contributes to IMO's goals of safe, secure and efficient shipping on clean oceans."*

*The mandatory ISM Code provides an international standard for the safe management and operation of ships and for pollution prevention. It places direct responsibility on shoreside management to ensure that its ships operate to the prescribed level of safety.*

*According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), knowledge stored digitally, including important scientific and government information, is vanishing, and more could be lost if action is not taken to conserve it. UNESCO says some of the material in jeopardy exists only in digital form, meaning it could become impossible to consult unless the original or compatible hardware and software are also maintained. UNESCO cited the case of a neurobiologist seeking information from the Viking space probes, which were sent to Mars in the 1970s, who discovered the software used to read the 25-year-old computer tapes no longer existed and that "the programmers who knew it had died."*

*UNESCO also warned that information contained on private and public websites could be lost, as the sites are often changed without saving the previous data.*

Legally Binding Instrument for Implementing International Action on Certain Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) brought together approximately 400 delegates from more than 125 countries, including representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, from 17-21 June 2002 in Geneva, to discuss preparations for its first Conference of the Parties (COP) and dimensions of the implementation process.

Delegates discussed a number of issues and adopted decisions on: DDT and register of specific exemptions; the expert group on best available techniques and best environmental practices; wastes and stockpiles; implementation plans; the POPs Review Committee; a clearing-house mechanism; technical assistance; financial resources and mechanisms and the interim financial mechanism; effectiveness evaluation; non-compliance; INC-7; as well as the size of the Bureau and budget.

The Stockholm Convention was adopted and opened for signature on 22 May 2001. The treaty calls for international action on 12 POPs grouped into three categories: (1) pesticides: aldrin, chlordane, DDT, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, mirex and toxaphene; (2) industrial chemicals: hexachlorobenzene (HCB) and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs); and (3) unintended by-products: dioxins and furans. Governments are to promote best available techniques and environmental practices for replacing existing POPs while preventing the development of new POPs. One of the most pressing issues facing the Stockholm Convention is the lack of funds for its basic administration.

Key elements of the treaty include: the requirement that developed countries provide new and additional financial resources; control measures to eliminate production and use of intentionally produced POPs, eliminate unintentionally produced POPs, where feasible, and manage and dispose of POPs wastes in an environmentally sound manner; and substitution involving the use of safer chemicals and processes to prevent toxic by-products. Precaution is operationalized throughout the Stockholm Convention, with specific references to it in the preamble, the objective and the provision on identifying new POPs.

Since the Stockholm Convention's adoption, 151 countries have signed the treaty, and 11 have ratified it (Canada, Fiji, Germany, Iceland, Lesotho, Liberia, Nauru, the Netherlands, Rwanda, Samoa and Sweden). The Convention will enter into force 90 days after receipt of the 50th instrument of ratification.

Contact: Jim Willis, Director, Chemicals, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 15 chemin des Anémones, CH-1219 Châtelaine (Geneva) Switzerland, e-mail <opereira@unep.ch>, website (www.chem.unep.ch/sc).

## UN INTRODUCES INTERNET OCEANS ATLAS

The United Nations and leading international scientific agencies launched a pioneering Internet-based atlas ([www.oceansatlas.org](http://www.oceansatlas.org)) on 5 June 2002 that provides users with updated strategic data on the state of the world's oceans, maps, development trends as well as the threats posed to human health from the deteriorating marine environment.

More than two and a half years in development after a decade of planning, the UN Oceans Atlas represents ambitious global scientific information collaboration online and is an international consensus-building tool expected to assist negotiations of future marine-related agreements. The website will be supplemented by a CD-ROM and other media to reach broader audiences and regions where Internet access is difficult.

Project manager John Everett of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said the Atlas is intended for a complete cross-section of users—from schoolchildren, educators and the general public to policy makers, scientists, the media, and NGOs needing access to comprehensive databases.

The Atlas is designed to be an encyclopaedic resource but also the world's foremost information clearing-house and online forum for experts in ocean issues. The Atlas focuses on nine main issues: climate variability and climate change; economics; emergencies; food security; governance; human health; pollution and degradation; safety at sea; and sustainable development.

"Ocean-related issues will almost certainly dominate the international agenda later this century if, as predicted, the Earth's continued warming accelerates sea-level rise and adds up to one metre to the height of our oceans," said Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Members of the project partnership include: the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Maritime Organization (IMO), World Meteorological Organization (WMO), United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, and the UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea.

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## UNESCO LAUNCHES GLOBAL ALLIANCE

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has launched an

initiative entitled the Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity, aimed at fostering creative diversity by bringing together public, private and civil society sectors. The initiative is intended to promote the ability of developing and transitioning countries to produce and disseminate their creative products at both the local and international levels.

Pointing out that human creativity is renewable, environmentally safe, and one of the most evenly distributed natural resource in the world, UNESCO says one of its central concerns is the imbalance in the reach, capacity and geographic distribution of cultural industry players who create and commercialize creative products.

The ability to produce and access the products of human creativity is affected by consumer preferences and buying power. The fear that only a few powerful players who provide the citizens of the world with a pasteurized, standardized set of cultural products is not about protectionism, UNESCO says, it is more about removing barriers and advocating open societies that promote multiple views and expressions.

The Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity aims to combine the expertise and financial resources of the private sector, the mobilizing force of NGOs and the political and regulatory powers of governments to develop production and distribution firms in the areas of publishing, music, film, multimedia, crafts, and design in as many countries as possible. UNESCO says it is committed to focusing diverse interests and forces towards a common goal of creating and strengthening small and medium-sized cultural enterprises in the developing world. Professional training, sectoral reorganization and access to capital are also components of this project.

The Global Alliance also seeks to address the problem of technology transfer to the South, not only through the reinforcement of cultural and linguistic diversity on the Internet, but also through the development of electronic commerce.

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#### ODCCP RELEASES REPORT ON ILLICIT DRUG TRENDS

The United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP) released its annual *Global Illicit Drug Trends 2002* report on 26 June, timed to coincide with the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. The report, produced

each year by ODCCP since 1999, presents annual estimates of illicit drug production, trafficking and consumption around the world. Statistics are based on data provided by Member States supplemented by other sources, including satellite monitoring.

This year's edition offers evidence of Afghanistan's importance in world opium production and trafficking, showing that in 2001, illicit opium production in Afghanistan went down by 94%, causing a two-thirds decline in global opium production. However, in 2002 production resumed and it is expected to be between 1,900-2,700 tonnes, comparable to levels recorded in the mid-1990s.

"Today, the challenge is to break the vicious circle which made Afghanistan the world's biggest producer of illicit opium. The United Nations is assisting Afghan farmers in achieving sustainable agricultural alternative to opium poppy cultivation. We are especially strengthening national authorities' efforts to enforce their strong commitment against cultivation, trafficking and abuse of drugs," ODCCP Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa said.

Mr. Costa also commented on the role of civil society and the spread of drugs: "Afghanistan and some regions in Latin America prove that the weakening of civil society and the breakdown in law and order facilitate criminal activities. As the uncivil elements hurt socio-political developments and even regional security, our response has to be comprehensive. We assist countries to combat the spread of drugs by helping them establish democratic accountability and sustainable development. This is the way to fight narcotics, as crime and drugs are an enemy of society."

Another major trend highlighted in the report is the increase in levels of heroin abuse in practically all countries in Eastern Europe, particularly along the main heroin trafficking routes. In the Russian Federation alone the number of registered drug addicts rose by 30% in 2000, mostly abusing opiates. The rapidly increasing rate of drug-related HIV infection in the Russian Federation also threatens to become a major AIDS epidemic.

The report notes that recent years have also seen a significant increase in the abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS). There are estimated to be about 33 million consumers of amphetamines and seven million consumers of Ecstasy globally. Abuse of amphetamines increased strongly in East and South-East Asia although their use appears to be stabilizing in West Europe and North America. The report estimates there are about 13 million abusers of opiates and the same number of abusers of cocaine worldwide.

*Contact: Sumru Noyan, External Relations Unit, ODCCP, Vienna International Centre, PO Box 500,*

*The UN Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP) has announced the launch of a US\$2.2 million project aimed at strengthening the ability of south-eastern European countries to fight drug trafficking and organized crime. The initiative comes in response to a growing heroin trade and higher levels of drug abuse among young people. The project, partly funded by the United Kingdom, involves the collection and analysis of criminal intelligence by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Yugoslavia, Macedonia, Romania and Slovenia.*

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#### WHO RELEASES DRAFT TEXT OF TOBACCO CONVENTION

The World Health Organization (WHO) has released the draft text of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), which will provide the basis for negotiations by Member States from 14-25 October in Geneva. The FCTC, to be submitted to the World Health Assembly in May 2003 for adoption, must be ratified by 30 countries before coming into force.

The draft treaty covers issues such as tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, illicit trade in tobacco products, taxes, and international cooperation in agricultural diversification and financial resources. The treaty aims to eventually halt tobacco advertising and tobacco sponsorship of sports and cultural events, and signatories have been asked to phase out subsidies to tobacco

farming and manufacturing. Diplomats said that the treaty used a truly multisectoral approach, involving not only the health sector, but also ministries of trade, finance and foreign affairs.

The chief negotiator, Ambassador Luiz Felipe de Seixas Correa (Brazil), called the draft "a basket of best options for nations seeking to curb the tobacco epidemic." WHO says that tobacco kills 4.2 million people annually and unless steps are taken, will kill over 10 million people by the 2020s.

NGOs have criticized the treaty, saying it needs to be strengthened "dramatically." They said they were concerned that it does not put public health before trade, leaving the FCTC subordinate to the World Trade Organization (WTO). NGOs were also disappointed that the treaty did not call for a blanket ban on direct and indirect advertising for tobacco.

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## NGO UPDATE

According to Trade Union World, Issue No. 4, non-sustainable production systems currently cause the deaths of over 1.3 million workers each year (3,300 per day), which is almost double the number caused by wars.

Twelve thousand of these victims are children, 335,000 deaths are caused by occupational accidents and a further 325,000 can be attributed to occupational diseases, mostly due to dangerous substances.

Every year there are over 160 million new cases of workers who are injured at work or fall victim to occupational illnesses.

#### AI: NO TRADE-OFF BETWEEN HUMAN RIGHTS & SECURITY

The *Amnesty International Report 2002*, which evaluates the human rights in the world during 2001, says the world has undoubtedly changed since 11 September 2001. However, the report points out that many things remain the same: a disregard for human life and human dignity, as well as for economic, cultural and social rights; and an escalation of violence in the Middle East, Afghanistan and Colombia.

The report documents extra-judicial executions in 47 countries; judicial executions in 31 countries; "disappearances" in 35 countries; cases of torture and ill-treatment in 111 countries and prisoners of conscience in at least 56 countries. However, the organization says it believes that the true figures are much higher.

Amnesty International says that in the wake of the attacks of 11 September, a number of governments jumped on the "anti-terrorism" bandwagon and seized the moment to step up repression, undermine human rights protection and stifle political dissent by imposing measures such as indefinite detention without trial, special courts based on secret evidence, or cultural and religious restrictions.

"The universality of human rights is facing the strongest challenge yet. Double-standards and selectivity are becoming the norm," said Secretary-General of Amnesty International Irene Khan. She continued, "Security can not and must not take precedence over human rights. The biggest danger to human rights is when political and economic interests are allowed to drive the human rights agenda."

The report notes that despite worldwide celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the UN Refugee Convention, core principles of refugee protection continued to be challenged in 2001, as hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing conflict and human rights abuses were refused entry into neighbouring countries. At the same time, the right of asylum-seekers to have their cases examined came under severe attack in 2001.

In August 2001, Amnesty International expanded its agenda and is urging that respect for human rights encompass not only the universality, but also the indivisibility of all rights—economic, social and cultural as well as civil and political. The organization says that as globalization spreads, bringing greater wealth to some and destitution and despair to others, human rights activists must promote not just legal justice but also social justice. "An ethical approach to globalization can mean nothing less than a rights-based approach to development," said

Ms. Khan. "The challenge we face, and the responsibility we all shoulder, is to make human rights real for everyone, regardless of background or belief."

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#### PAN CELEBRATES 20TH ANNIVERSARY

The Pesticide Action Network (PAN), which works to eliminate hazardous pesticides and to promote safer alternatives, celebrates its 20th Anniversary this year. Formed in May 1982, PAN currently links almost 1,000 organizations in some 60 countries, coordinated by five regional centres.

Founding member and Programme Director at PAN North America, Monica Moore says PAN had a three-part vision from the start. First, to stop the poisoning and damage caused by the misuse of pesticides. Second, to work towards a world where food and fiber can be produced safely and plentifully, where agriculture is carried out in a way that doesn't damage people or the planet. The third part of the vision was to create a mechanism giving individuals, groups or organizations access to information, knowledge and other resources that exist in different parts of the world.

Saying that the battleground is now even more complicated by the trends of economic globalization, rapid concentration of corporate power and the rewriting of intellectual property rights to include patents on life, Ms. Moore speaks of PAN's role in the next two decades: "I will be very disappointed if we're not able to leverage what we've accomplished in the first 20 years and really pick up the pace. I would like to see a lot of progress, rapid progress, in getting bad products and chemistries off the planet in the next ten years.

"[F]or starters, the term 'sustainable development' has just got to expand. Labor has to be in there, fair and just trade relations have to be integral or the term is a mockery. The challenge of scaling up from the individual success story or pilot project—the living proofs that it can be done—to mainstream is also a major challenge. It's not clear to me at this point what institutional structures will help make that happen," Ms. Moore said.

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#### ANTI-SLAVERY INTERNATIONAL RELEASES REPORT

An estimated 27 million women, children and men are forced into slavery around the world, while poverty, vulnerability and lack of political will contribute to its continuation, according to a series of reports by Anti-Slavery International released to coincide with the 27th session of the United Nations Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, held in Geneva from 27-31 May 2002.

Anti-Slavery International is calling on governments to end slavery and provides recommendations for action. The report focuses on:

- n Bonded labour in Pakistan: many women, children and men are forced to work for no wages. Poverty and starvation in the Sindh Province force communities to accept landlords' cash advances. Many work from dawn until dusk and receive no wages. A recent court ruling undermines existing protection.
- n Child domestic work and its relationship to sexual exploitation: many of the millions of girls around the world who work as domestics are denied freedom and education. They suffer physical and verbal abuse, and for a large number, sexual abuse combined with working in conditions of servitude makes them vulnerable to entry into sex work.
- n Child trafficking to the United Arab Emirates: it is estimated that hundreds of boys, aged between four and ten, are trafficked from South Asia to the UAE and other Gulf States each year to be camel jockeys. Camel racing is dangerous and can cause serious injury and even death. In the UAE it is illegal to employ a child under 15.
- n Forced labour and slavery in Sudan: between 5,000 and 14,000 people have been abducted in Sudan since 1983. The Sudanese Government is failing to take adequate steps to end raiding and slavery.
- n Forced labour in Brazil: more than 1,000 people were rescued from forced labour in 2001 by the Special Group for Mobile Inspection. However, many more remain enslaved on Amazonian estates and landlords are not being punished.
- n Forced labour in Mauritania: slavery was abolished in 1981, but there has been little action to secure the slaves' release or punish those who use slaves.

Discussion at the UN working group conference focused on the trafficking of Nigerian children, with several NGOs urging more efforts by the country's authorities to combat the problem. Nigeria is believed to be the source of 70% of Africa's 70,000 victims of sex-slave trafficking.

According to US scientists with the NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center's Ice, Cloud, and Land Elevation Satellite (ICESat) project, Greenland's ice sheet has been moving faster during its summer melting season since 1996.

Jay Zwally, ICESat project scientist, says the sheet is moving faster because more runoff from melting ice is penetrating down to the bedrock, lubricating the ice sheet as it moves toward the ocean—a phenomenon that has been documented in smaller glaciers but, until now, not in a large ice sheet. Scientists believe the same phenomenon may have occurred during the last interglacial period. The researchers said the finding suggests the sheet may be responding more quickly than previously thought to global climate change.

A group of women leaders from the Horn of Africa have launched a website ([www.un.org/depts/eca/divis/acw](http://www.un.org/depts/eca/divis/acw)) to aid discussion among women in Eritrea, Kenya, Malawi, Somali, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

The Horn of Africa Region Women's Knowledge Network (Hawknet) said the website is designed to allow women to discuss the marginalization of Africa and other regional issues, as well as information communication technologies, human resources development and information exchange for women.

The United Nations estimates the trafficking of women to be one of the world's most lucrative illegal industries at US\$7 billion annually.

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#### "WE THE PEOPLES" CAMPAIGN

In an effort to shore up greater public support for policies to tame "corporate-driven globalization," and to protect national governments and the United Nations from a perceived "corporate takeover," a group of NGOs, led by the Third World Network (TWN), is running a campaign rooted in the opening lines of the UN Charter entitled "We the Peoples Believe Another World is Possible." The campaign was launched away from the site of negotiations at a seeds ceremony in Bali (Indonesia) during the Fourth Meeting of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). It aims to gather one million signatures in time for the WSSD, to be held in Johannesburg (South Africa) from 26 August-4 September 2002.

The petition states that citizens groups are alarmed at the "downgrading and weakening of the UN and the escalating influence of the international financial and trade organizations" which they say do not hold to the spirit and principles of the Charter. The petition also suggests that the corporate sector is being given more rights, privileges and access at a time when "powerful governments" are opposing

and walking away from treaties that are dealing with life and death issues. The ten years between the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio in 1992 and the forthcoming WSSD, they say, have been a triumph for corporate-driven globalization, propelled by mercantile forces and economic liberalization.

However, there are reasons to be hopeful as well, the petition says, including: the joining together of citizens from the North in mass protest against globalization; a body of innovative good practices from around the world; and the building of alliances amongst communities, NGOs, scientists, women, youth, some governments and parts of the UN.

The petition explicitly calls for the following:

- To change the course of corporate-driven globalization and development paradigms that destroy peoples and nature;
- To reject technologies and products that endanger nature, health and life such as genetically modified organisms, nuclear technology and toxic chemicals;
- To reject the patenting of nature;
- To reclaim nature and the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities; and
- To reclaim national governments and the United Nations from corporate takeover.

The initial group of NGOs that endorsed the campaign at the launch included TWN, Oilwatch, World Federalist Movement, KONPHALINDO (Indonesia), Amigransa (Venezuela), Acción Ecológica (Ecuador) and Tebtebba Foundation (Philippines).

Contact: Third World Network, 228 Macalister Road, 10400 Penang, Malaysia, e-mail <[twmet@pojaring.my](mailto:twmet@pojaring.my)>, website ([www.twinside.org.sg](http://www.twinside.org.sg)).

## OTHER NEWS

#### AFRICAN UNION LAUNCHED

The 40-year-old Organization of African Unity (OAU) opened its final summit on 8 July in Durban (South Africa), and was replaced on 9 July by the newly established 53-member African Union (AU). The AU is meant to advance the work of African leaders in reducing poverty and promoting good governance, and will have close relations with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

The AU, loosely modelled on the European Union, will work to set up its own central bank and court of justice, and will establish a single currency. It is

equipped with a standby peacekeeping force drawn from African armies and intended to intervene in any African conflict involving crimes against humanity.

South African President Thabo Mbeki is serving as the Union's first chairman, which will inherit US\$42 million in debt from the OAU, and only 16 of the 53 OAU Member States have settled their dues. "It is regrettable to note that at this juncture, the OAU is bequeathing to the commission (secretariat) of the African Union a heritage which is far from positive," said OAU Secretary General Amara Essy. "We have to end the war and get the economy off the ground, take care of the basic welfare of our people, before we can get the time to look at our regional and

international debt obligations and plan a payment schedule."

During the opening of the 38th Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU, President Mbeki spoke on the AU's role: "Our experience of the last forty years says that we have a duty radically to change the structure and content of our political, economic and social relations with the rest of the world. Among other things, we have to cease being merely an exporter of raw materials and an exporter of capital to the developed world because of an unsustainable debt burden. We have to end the situation according to which our continent seems condemned to the increasing impoverishment of its people, continuing underdevelopment and global marginalization."

UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) Executive Secretary K.Y. Amoako pledged UNECA's full backing. "We at ECA are invested in the African Union and will do all we can to help make it a major success," he said. "Just as we are coming to the end of a series of international meetings creating added solidarity with Africa, we are also entering a new era of internal solidarity."

South African Foreign Minister Dlamini Zuma, in his closing address at the OAU Council of Ministers, said, "We have come to the last meeting of the Organization of African Unity. In actual fact this period does not represent the death of our OAU but its rebirth as the African Union. The Organization of African Unity has achieved its principal mandate of the liquidation of the systems of colonialism and apartheid crime against humanity in the continent. We have wrapped and wound up the affairs of our Organization in readiness to address new challenges. However, the most important challenge facing us is to ensure that the new AU works for the betterment of Africa. Indeed the dawn of the new day is upon us. Let those who have 'eyes to see, see' and recognize that Africa is on the move to a better tomorrow. A brighter day has finally arrived."

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#### USCR SAYS NUMBER OF WORLD'S UPROOTED GROWING

According to a report published by the United States Committee for Refugees (USCR), refugees worldwide suffered the repercussions of the events of 11 September 2001. The US, preoccupied by security concerns in the wake of the attacks on New York and Washington, temporarily shut down its refugee resettlement programme on 1 October 2001 and, as

a result, admitted fewer refugees in 2001 than in any year since 1987.

The *World Refugee Survey 2002* states that thousands of refugees in Africa, the Middle East, South Asia and elsewhere who expected to go to the US became stuck where they were, often in places where they were at risk. The report also calls attention to the fact that a number of countries—concerned about security but also responding to growing anti-immigrant sentiment—tightened admissions procedures and criteria for asylum-seekers and immigrants. For example, the United Kingdom and Germany passed anti-terrorism laws in late 2001 that curtailed the rights of immigrants and refugees inside their borders, while Denmark, traditionally welcoming to asylum-seekers and refugees, drafted some of Europe's toughest asylum regulations in January 2002.

The *World Refugee Survey 2002* notes that worldwide, conflict and human rights abuse brought the total number of refugees to 14.9 million, the largest number in six years. More than 22 million people were internally displaced with Afghanistan producing the largest number of uprooted people in 2001. Some 4.5 million Afghans were refugees in other countries, mostly Pakistan and Iran, and another one million Afghans were displaced within Afghanistan. However, the report notes that midway through 2002 more than half a million Afghan refugees had returned, and hundreds of thousands more appeared willing to return, but international donors were not keeping pace with the repatriation and reintegration costs.

Among the newly uprooted were some 1.8 million Africans driven from their homes by war, armed insurgencies, or violent civil unrest, where massive population displacement occurred in 19 of the 48 countries in Africa last year. According to the report, poor funding by donor nations has resulted in harsh living conditions for millions of uprooted Africans.

"Failure of the rich countries of the north to bear their fair share of the human and financial cost in assisting and protecting refugees is shortsighted and likely to multiply future costs," said Bill Frelick, editor of the report. "Whether contributing financially to maintain refugees in safety and dignity in their places of initial asylum, providing rescue through resettlement for those still in danger in the regions of initial flight, or funding sustainable return and reintegration in places like Bosnia, Sierra Leone, and Afghanistan, donor countries can do more than simply provide charity—they can invest in a more stable and secure future for all."

"At a time when freedom is under attack, the world is turning its back on people fleeing war, persecution, and terror in search of freedom," said USCR Executive Director Lavinia Limón. "This indifference towards refugees undermines our stated values."

NGOs in developing countries can now request free online help through the United Nations Volunteers and NetAid joint collaboration programme, which provides online volunteering opportunities in support of developing countries.

Since early 2000, NetAid, through a service managed by the UN Volunteers programme, has brought Online Volunteers and organizations in developing countries together through their database of online volunteering opportunities.

Their website ([www.netaid.org/OV](http://www.netaid.org/OV)) provides feature stories on the connections made by both individuals and organizations that use the site to connect with each other, and provides first hand accounts of these experiences. A message board is also available on the same site.

The US-based NGO consortium, InterAction, has launched a new website ([www.interaction.org](http://www.interaction.org)) to better assist its members, which include over 160 private voluntary organizations, in promoting resources and information, bring new capabilities to current users and increase visitors to both the InterAction website as well as member sites.

The website is database-driven, making the entire site searchable by topic. Users can target their searches for information on the InterAction site, as well as member sites.

Speaking on 28 May at the University of Victoria (Canada) during the international conference "Making the Connection: Sexually Exploited Youth, the Challenges and Opportunities," UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa Stephen Lewis said each year one million children around the globe are forced into the sex trade. "The world has an incomprehensible willingness to sacrifice children," he said. "I can't imagine a more ugly pattern on the face of the earth. I don't know what's gone wrong with this world."

Mr. Lewis, a former United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Deputy Head, said the growing problem of commercial sexual exploitation "speaks to a lack of leadership politically," adding that the Internet, sex tourism and globalization are responsible for the phenomenon's growth.

Mr. Lewis said the trade's hot spots are always shifting but cited in particular conflict-ridden West African countries. He cited figures, including more than 400,000 child sex workers in India and up to 30,000 young Albanian women working abroad as prostitutes. In northern Uganda, he said, the rebel Lord's Resistance Army has kidnapped up to 12,000 teenagers, forcing the girls to act as sex slaves. "Conflict leads to the commercial exploitation of children, particularly girls," he said.

The Special Envoy also cited the 13 million AIDS orphans in Africa, deploring the phenomenon of "survival sex"—where children are forced to sell themselves for sex in order to meet basic needs—as another form of commercial sexual exploitation.

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#### ZIMBABWE INVOKES TRIPS AND HEALTH DECLARATION

On 27 May 2002, Zimbabwe became the first State to declare a national HIV/AIDS emergency, thereby freeing itself from its obligations to respect relevant HIV/AIDS drug patents under the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). The six-month emergency declaration lifts all legal restrictions that block access to generic medicines.

"The government has decided to override patent protection on antiretrovirals and use generics—this means that the price of the first-line AIDS cocktails recommended by the World Health Organization will plummet from US\$1,168 to US\$412," said Carmen Pérez Casas, pharmacist coordinator at the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Access Campaign. "Although prices are just one barrier to overcome to increase access to antiretrovirals, this measure will allow available resources to treat more than twice as many patients."

MSF says Zimbabwe's announcement marks the first time that a government has gone beyond using the threat of compulsory licensing as a negotiating tool, and actually declared that it will override patents to increase access to needed medicines when the prices are too high as a result of patent protection.

"Zimbabwe doesn't manufacture antiretrovirals, so it will need to import them from other countries which produce cheaper generics," said Ellen 'T Hoen from MSF. "Exporting generics is still permissible for these countries under international trade regulations—but this will change as the TRIPS Agreement is fully implemented in all WTO members. Unless the TRIPS Council finds a swift and workable solution to this question of production for export, measures such as those taken by Zimbabwe to deal with health care needs may become impossible."

Over 2,000 people die of AIDS every week in Zimbabwe and life expectancy has dropped to less than 41 years, compared to 70 years before the epidemic.

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#### LATINO FARMWORKERS FACE GREATER CANCER RISK

A recent study by the Cancer Registry of California (US) analyzed cancer incidence among California Latino farmworkers who had been members of the United Farmworkers of America (UFW) union. Out of more than 140,000 farmworkers, the study found that 1,001 had been diagnosed with cancer between 1973 and 1997. Compared with the general Latino population, farmworkers were more likely to develop certain types of leukemia by 59%, stomach cancer by 69%, cervical cancer by 63% and uterine cancer by 68%.

The report says farmworkers are regularly exposed to pesticides in the following

- ▣ while mixing or applying them;
- ▣ during planting, weeding, thinning, irrigating, pruning, and harvesting crops;
- ▣ living in or near treated fields; or
- ▣ eating pesticide contaminated food.

As a result, farmworkers face greater risk of exposure to hazardous pesticides than any other sector of society.

Pesticide exposure results in both short-term acute poisonings—including rash, headache, blurred vision, chest pain, excessive sweating, nausea and vomiting—as well as long-term or chronic illness, such as cancer, birth defects and other reproductive and developmental problems.

According to the study's co-author Paul Mills, farmworkers were diagnosed at a later stage than most of California's Latinos, which reveals the lack of health care and education available to most farmworkers—a finding confirmed by a recent study of California farmworker health conducted by the California Institute for Rural Studies. Many cancers, such as uterine cancer, are more treatable with early detection.

Although the study doesn't directly link pesticide use to the higher rates of cancer, the UFW believes there is a direct relationship between the chemicals and cancer. The Cancer Registry of California data may actually underestimate the true incidence among farmworkers since some may have worked in California but moved away, been diagnosed and treated in Mexico or never sought medical attention.

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# World Food Programme Sounds the Alarm

*With southern Africa facing its worst food crisis in a decade, the UN World Food Programme (WFP) has launched a massive international appeal to feed millions of hungry people in six countries. However, unlike the devastating drought of 1991-1992, a variety of factors—ranging from high prevalence rates of HIV/AIDS infection, to rising levels of poverty and a succession of poor harvests, to regional economic decline and governmental mismanagement—has contributed to current food shortages.*

WFP is asking for US\$507 million to fund close to one million tonnes of food, enough to feed 10.2 million people in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, Lesotho, and Swaziland until the next main harvest in March 2003. WFP—which has been providing emergency food aid in the region since last year—says it has only one-quarter of the food it needs for the next three months. "This is WFP's largest emergency operation but it needs donations to succeed and those donations are needed now," said WFP Executive Director James T. Morris. "Southern Africa is already facing an extremely severe crisis, which will only worsen in the coming months. However, it is still possible for the international community to avert a catastrophe by responding rapidly to this appeal."

WFP says that already, from June to September 2002, seven million people need food aid, rising to just over 11 million from September to November, and peaking at 12.8 million from December until March 2003. Until now, WFP has been targeting 4.6 million people. Warning that these numbers could easily rise as the crisis becomes more acute, WFP says the current figures are based on a number of assumptions on issues such as expected commercial food imports, effective government agricultural policies, winter harvest production, and affordable maize supplies.

## **Democratic Republic of Congo**

WFP has announced the resumption of an emergency airlift operation for thousands of people trapped by war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The operation, WFP's third airlift in eastern DRC in the last 12 months, allows the agency to transport food aid to at least 24,000 people in DRC's northern Katanga province who remain cut off by war. "Tens of thousands of people continue to come out of their hiding places in the woods, attracted by food distributions provided in nutritional centres," said Felix Bamezon, WFP's Representative for DRC. "The majority of these people are women and children whose nutritional status is precarious."

With the farming season currently in progress, WFP and NGOs plan to also airlift much needed seeds and agricultural tools to enable families with access to their fields to cultivate it.

## **Angola**

WFP has warned that food supplies for post-war Angola are dwindling precisely at a time when more food is urgently needed for growing numbers of hungry people. Until recently, hundreds of thousands of people were completely isolated and inaccessible to humanitarian agencies due to years of conflict. However, security and access improved dramatically when a peace agreement was signed on 4 April 2002, ending over 20 years of civil war.

WFP says that many people, especially women and children, are in extremely poor condition and face starvation unless food supplies are urgently increased. Over recent weeks, WFP has started

feeding an extra 120,000 desperately hungry people who were until recently completely cut off from aid due to the war. The agency says it needs US\$241 million to feed up to 1.5 million people over the next 18 months, and that in spite of its growing activities in Angola, pledges from international donors have been sporadic.

## **Afghanistan**

Mr. Morris has urged donors to be as generous as in the past winter to ensure that urgently needed reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts can continue and make a difference for the people of Afghanistan. With all the stocks and pledges WFP has received so far, the food aid agency still faces a shortage of 175,000 million tonnes of food, worth approximately US\$102 million, and is appealing to donors to help on a larger scale. "Unless we get additional cash immediately, we could see malnutrition with the risk of starvation rising especially in the highlands," Mr. Morris said.

About one million refugees returning from neighbouring countries have also benefited from WFP food support over the past few months, but due to funding shortages WFP had to cut down the food package to the returning families to one-third of the original ration.

## **Indonesia**

WFP has launched a US\$65 million relief operation to ease Indonesia's crisis of more than one million internally displaced people now competing with a growing urban poor underclass for survival. The WFP operation, running from 1 July to 31 December 2003, intends to help 2.1 million Indonesians who face the highest risk of hunger and malnutrition because of the spiralling costs of food, petrol and other commodities during a period of slow economic recovery.

"The operation is designed to solve at least one problem for these people—getting enough to eat—so they can grapple more effectively with serious setbacks of poverty, unemployment and poor health," said Mohamed Saleheen, WFP Country Director for Indonesia. "We are working with what are called the 'ultra poor,' a designation which means that they spend over 75% of their income on food but consume less than 75% of the minimum daily calorie requirement," he added. "It is a losing battle unless we step in and help fill the food gap for them."

Noting that wages for unskilled urban labourers are half what they were before the 1998 economic meltdown, Mr. Saleheen explained that a large proportion of WFP's target group has no access to government social safety nets because they are illegal settlers in a shadow existence on the fringes of the economy.

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# World Food Summit: five years later

*The World Food Summit: five years later (WFS:fyl) took place at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) headquarters in Rome from 10-13 June, where a large number of Heads of State and Government met to adopt a political declaration reaffirming the commitment made at the World Food Summit in 1996 to reduce the number of hungry people in the world by half (from 800 million to 400 million) by 2015.*

## Introduction

Eighty-two Heads of State or Governments assembled at FAO to participate in the WFS:fyl. Of these, only two were from the rich industrialized countries—Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi (host country) and Spanish Prime Minister José María Aznar (Presidency of the European Union). Altogether some 4,000 representatives from more than 180 countries participated in the Summit, with 301 NGO/CSO representatives officially accredited to the meeting.

In his opening speech, FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf called for an International Alliance Against Hunger to mobilize the political will needed to put the hungry at the centre of the concerns of governments, parliaments, communities and civil society.

Also addressing the opening session, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said, "Hunger is one of the worst violations of human dignity. In a world of plenty, ending hunger is within our grasp. Failure to reach this goal should fill every one of us with shame. The time for making promises is over. It is time to act. It is time to do what we have long promised to do—eliminate hunger from the face of the earth."

## Negotiations

The negotiations over the Declaration to be adopted at the Summit took place over the days preceding the event. Despite the initial intention of not opening up the basic precepts of the 1996 World Food Summit Declaration, the United States, European Union (EU), and the Group of 77 (G-77) tabled a large number of proposals and amendments.

After difficult late-night negotiating sessions, the main sticking points were a US proposal on the positive role of biotechnology in the fight against hunger, and an EU proposal on a Code of Conduct on the Right to Food and the implications of using the term "International Alliance Against Hunger" to connote what had been agreed in Rome.

An initiative by middle-income developing countries to have their hunger problems specifically recognized and addressed by the international community did not meet with success. In the end, after over 80 hours of negotiations, a consensus text was adopted on the evening before the opening of the Summit on Monday, 10 June.

## The Declaration

The Declaration, adopted in the opening plenary session of the meeting, broadly reconfirms the commitments and actions adopted at the 1996 Summit and recognizes that insufficient progress has been made over the five years since. Paragraph 3 says, "We

recognize that progress had not been adequate to reach the WFS target. Recognizing that responsibility for assuring national food security rests with national governments in cooperation with civil society and the private sector and with the support of the international community, we resolve to accelerate implementation of action to halve hunger by no later than 2015. This requires a rate of hunger reduction of more than 22 million per year on average."

The agreed language resulting from the negotiations on a Code of Conduct on the Right to Food is found in paragraph 10, which says, "We invite the FAO Council to establish at its One Hundred and Twenty-third session an Intergovernmental Working Group, with the participation of stakeholders, in the context of the WFS follow-up, to elaborate, in a period of two years, a set of voluntary guidelines to support Member States' efforts to achieve the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security; we ask the FAO, in close collaboration with relevant treaty bodies, agencies and programmes of the UN system, to assist the Intergovernmental Working Group, which shall report on its work to the Committee on World Food Security."

With regard to the role of biotechnology in addressing hunger, paragraph 25 states: "We call on the FAO, in conjunction with the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and other international research institutes, to advance agricultural research and research into new technologies, including biotechnology. The introduction of tried and tested new technologies including biotechnology should be accomplished in a safe manner and adapted to local conditions to help improve agricultural productivity in developing countries. We are committed to study, share and facilitate the responsible use of biotechnology in addressing development needs."

The United States lodged a reservation with regard to the reference to the Right to Food in the Declaration, on the familiar grounds that it could have legal ramifications under the US Constitution. The US also made known its interpretation of the reference to the International Alliance Against Hunger as not implying the establishment of any new structures or funding.

In the week preceding the Summit, FAO launched an "Anti-Hunger Programme," arguing that to reach the 1996 WFS goals would require additional public investment in agriculture and rural populations of some US\$24 billion per year, a figure strongly supported by Jeffrey Sachs, Special Advisor to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who referred to the programme as a business plan for development assistance and the only realistic chance to reach the Summit's goal.

Conceived as a partnership between developing and rich countries, US\$12.8 billion would be provided by official development assistance (ODA), and US\$11 billion would be provided by developing countries. While the programme did not receive the endorsement of the major donor countries, the Summit Declaration, in paragraph 27, calls upon member countries, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the private sector and others to consider voluntary contributions to FAO's Trust Fund for Food Security and Food Safety, established in July 2001, with a target of US\$500 million and to which Italy has contributed US\$47 million.

Coming as it did just a few weeks after the United States Government announced a new farm bill that will provide US\$180 billion in support to US farmers over the next ten years, developing countries, members of the Cairns Group, and the EU took the opportunity to broadly criticize the US for going back on commitments to liberalize made at the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial meeting in Doha last November.

During the four days of the meeting, the US and EU delegations took every opportunity to denounce each other's agricultural policies and defend their own, and also sought to outdo each other on their generosity as aid donors. Some of the African leaders present at the meeting took the opportunity to promote the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Non-governmental and other participants held a series of side events at FAO headquarters over the four days of the Summit. CGIAR held a seminar in the presence of Norman Borlaug, the so-called father of the Green Revolution, which firmly endorsed biotechnological approaches to increasing agricultural production.

On the third day a multistakeholder dialogue was held, a first for FAO. A great majority of the interventions were made by NGOs/CSOs with rather few from governments despite the encouragement of the co-chairs, Norwegian Minister for International Development Hilde Johnson, and Sorojeni Rengam of Pesticide Action Network. In one moving testimony, a woman from the Korean consumer movement explained how she had unknowingly fed genetically modified food to her children and how ashamed it had made her feel. Addressing the US delegation she asked why, if genetically modified foods were safe, was there opposition to labelling them as such.

#### **NGO/CSO Forum**

The NGO/CSO Forum on Food Sovereignty was held across town from FAO in the Palazzo dei Congressi, where the 1974 World Food Conference took place, when world leaders pledged to abolish hunger in ten years. Over 700 participants took part in the Forum, organized by an International Planning Committee (IPC) and an Italian Host Committee (see *NGLS Roundup* 86). On the Saturday prior to the Summit, some 20,000 people took part in a peaceful march through the streets of Rome on the theme "Land and Dignity."

The main sub-theme of the Forum was "hunger is not a problem of means but of rights," under which banner the Forum discussed the impact of world trade patterns on food sovereignty; the object of having the Right to Food enshrined in international law; and the

need to increase recognition and support for ecological approaches to agriculture.

The Forum comprised two segments. An official segment comprised some 500 representatives of social movements, farmer and fisher organizations, and other NGOs from developing country regions, who had met together at the regional level during the preparatory process for WFS:fyl. The organizers had identified 450 participants from developing countries and 150 from the OECD region, although a large number of developing country representatives failed to show, due to "visa problems," according to the organizers.

The other NGOs/CSOs present were able to organize workshops and other thematic and regional meetings on issues such as genetically modified organisms (GMOs), the WTO, NEPAD, organic agriculture, etc. Participants who had been present at the fourth Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Bali (Indonesia) from 27 May-7 June, made linkages between the two processes.

FAO, the World Food Programme (WFP), and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) also held a number of briefings and information sessions each day at the Forum.

In its Declaration to the Plenary of the WFS:fyl, the NGO Forum expressed its "collective disappointment in, and rejection of, the official Declaration of the World Food Summit: five years later. Far from analyzing and correcting the problems that have made it impossible to make progress over the past five years toward eliminating hunger, this new plan of action compounds the error of 'more of the same failed medicine' with destructive prescriptions that will make the situation even worse."

NGO and civil society activists were particularly concerned by the uncritical and non-precautionary embrace of biotechnology in the document, the lack of mention of alternative, ecological approaches to raising agricultural production, and the weakening of the language on a Code of Conduct—although NGOs are committed to monitoring and lobbying the two-year process to establish the voluntary guidelines agreed at the Summit.

The NGO Forum also adopted a plan of action, Food Sovereignty: An Action Agenda with over 130 proposals for action in the coming years. In the final meeting of the IPC, it was agreed to maintain and build on the regional focal point system created in the preparation for the Forum and maintain a coordinating presence in Rome to interface with the Rome-based UN food agencies.

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# UNCTAD Proposes Alternative Approach to Poverty Reduction

*Where extreme poverty is as pervasive as it is in most least developed countries (LDCs), poverty reduction strategies should not target only the poorest but seek to raise living standards for the majority through development. This is one of the key messages of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in its Least Developed Countries Report, 2002, which proposes an alternative to the prevailing approach, one that addresses broader structural problems, including what it defines as the "international poverty trap."*

Over a billion people, including at least two-thirds of those in the 49 least developed countries (LDCs), are currently taking part in a massive social experiment, UNCTAD says. Their governments are preparing and implementing Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) as a condition for aid and debt relief. How this experiment works in practice will be critical for the lives of at least one billion people and for achieving the global poverty reduction goals agreed by the international community.

The PRSP process is the centrepiece of the approach to international development cooperation for low-income countries introduced in the late 1990s by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. The UNCTAD report argues that the central insight of the PRSP approach—that more effective poverty reduction will come not from national policies imposed by donors but from allowing countries to formulate and implement their own policies—is the right one.

It also agrees with the key judgement underlying the shift in international development cooperation, which is that the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) of the 1980s and 1990s were not doing enough to reduce poverty in poor countries. Using a new set of poverty estimates, the report shows that on average the incidence of extreme poverty did not fall in LDCs undertaking SAPs, even in the group of countries where they were well implemented. Where productive capacities, markets and an entrepreneurial class investing in production are all underdeveloped, SAPs do not deliver accelerated and sustained economic growth at rates sufficient to make a significant dent in poverty.

However, the initial experience with PRSPs in the LDCs shows that the creative potential of the new approach is not being realized, according to the report. Like the old adjustment programmes, the emerging PRSPs still give priority to short-term stabilization over long-term development, with tight credit ceilings and restrictive fiscal policies.

They continue to broaden and deepen past structural reforms in the belief that an economy where four out of five people are living on US\$1 a day will behave like a perfectly competitive market, and economic activities will automatically spring up if the government gets out of the way and the national "market" opens up to the rest of the world.

Although there is one new anti-poverty component—more closely tracked public expenditure being channelled into basic health, education and local infrastructure projects—the overall approach, says UNCTAD, is still not the best way to combat poverty in the LDCs. In fact, "there is a possibility that with these new strategies, countries will end up with the worst of all worlds. The new policies

will increase exposure to intensely competitive global markets but without facilitating the development of the productive and supply capacities necessary to compete. At the same time, there will be increased aid dependence through arm's-length international guidance of social welfare."

## **Genuine National Ownership and Policy Autonomy**

UNCTAD contends that through the PRSP approach it should be possible to promote more effective poverty reduction in the LDCs than in the past. But this is not happening now, as governments are reluctant to move beyond adjustment. Their dilemma is that their PRSPs still have to be endorsed as satisfactory by the IMF and World Bank to be eligible for concessional aid and debt relief.

The report notes that developing country governments know from past experience that if there are interruptions in aid flows and delays in debt relief, the incidence of poverty is bound to rise. Therefore, realizing the full potential of the PRSP approach will require fewer and more flexible conditionalities, as well as greater open-mindedness on the part of international financial institutions to alternative poverty reduction strategies, with donors firmly aligned behind those strategies.

The report advocates the introduction of donor performance-monitoring indicators at the recipient country level to provide incentives for, and monitor progress towards, increased ownership and partnership, and thereby aid effectiveness. Rebuilding key State capacities—particularly in such areas as financial auditing and accounting, economic forecasting and debt management—is also essential.

## **An Alternative Approach**

With genuine national ownership and policy autonomy, a greater variety of poverty reduction strategies can emerge. But a key question is whether there is a credible alternative. UNCTAD argues that the best way to move beyond adjustment now is by anchoring poverty reduction strategies in long-term development strategies. Priority policy actions over a three-year time span in the PRSP would be derived from the overall development strategy, representing the steps taken in the short-term in support of the realization of the strategy.

The overall goal should be to promote sustained economic growth in order to double average household living standards; if this happens, the incidence of extreme poverty will then fall sharply. This doubling will be best achieved through mutually interacting investment and export growth that expands productive capacities and generates sustainable livelihoods.

UNCTAD's alternative approach builds on earlier research on the policies that facilitated sustained economic growth over a long

period in East Asia and how these policies can be applied in sub-Saharan Africa. The approach is based on establishing a dynamic investment-export nexus through the creation of profitable investment opportunities, reducing the risks and uncertainty of investment activity, and ensuring the availability of finance so that entrepreneurs are able to invest in expanding production. Key elements of the approach are more growth-oriented macro-economic policies, sectorally focused productive development policies, export promotion policies and policies to ensure that marginalization within LDCs does not occur as economic growth takes place.

Private enterprise has a leading role to play in development-oriented poverty reduction strategies, the report says. But the development process should be catalyzed and guided by a developmental State that, through effective governance of markets, harnesses the profit motive for the purposes of national development and poverty reduction. Creating effective States, and also a dynamic domestic entrepreneurial class willing to commit its resources to domestic investment rather than to luxury consumption or holding wealth abroad, remains a central institutional issue.

### **The International Poverty Trap**

An implicit assumption of the PRSP approach is that global poverty reduction goals can be achieved with national poverty reduction means alone. The report recognizes that without the right national policies and responsible government, effective poverty reduction in LDCs is impossible. But responsibility without the freedom to act independently and without the resources to achieve agreed targets will prove ineffective in reducing poverty, the report says, and will ultimately lead to crises of legitimacy. However well-designed domestic policies may be, it says, in the current era of globalization they will be ineffective without a supportive international environment. It is the interrelationship

between perverse domestic and external cause-and-effect relationships, together with the interdependence between trade and finance, which create what the report defines as the "international poverty trap."

At the domestic level, five main interrelationships are identified in the report:

- n Domestic resources available to finance physical and human capital investment and productivity growth are low owing to generalized poverty.
- n State capacities are weak as all activities, including administration and law and order, are under-funded.
- n Domestic corporate capacities in business, finance and support services are weak, even though there may be a thriving informal sector.
- n Generalized poverty engenders rapid population growth and environmental degradation.
- n In a situation of generalized poverty, the probability of political instability and conflict is greater.

All these factors serve to reinforce generalized poverty directly and indirectly. Generalized poverty in turn results in low savings and investment, and low productivity—so the vicious circle continues.

At the international level, three main interrelationships are identified:

- n The build-up of unsustainable external debt;
- n The emergence of a perverse aid/debt system;
- n Primary commodity dependence in a context of a persistent decline and instability in world prices.

The report emphasizes the need for increased and accelerated debt relief delivered through a simpler mechanism than the current enhanced Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC II). Under HIPC II, the annual debt service relief in 2003-2005 for

## **REVIEW OF THE IMF/WORLD BANK POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY PROCESS**

*By March 2002, ten countries had completed their first full PRSP (Honduras, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso, Uganda, Tanzania, Mozambique and Albania). More than 60 other countries are expected to do a PRSP, with 34 of these countries already having completed their interim PRSP.*

*A recent review of the PRSP approach, undertaken two years after its introduction, examined early experiences with developing, implementing and monitoring PRSPs. It drew on World Bank/IMF staff and external contributions, notably from low-income countries, bilateral and multilateral agencies, NGOs, trade unions, research institutes, academics and journalists.*

*At a public meeting on poverty reduction organized by the World Bank in Geneva on 8 July 2002, an UNCTAD official noted that a key finding of the PRSP review process is that the new approach has engendered a much more significant break with the past in terms of processes of policy formulation than in the content of policies (with the important exception of better tracked*

*and more pro-poor social expenditure), suggesting that an underlying structural problem remains.*

*A senior World Bank representative responded by highlighting two key challenges. One is how recipient governments manage the plurality of viewpoints on appropriate macro-economic and structural reform policy rather than simply accepting the relatively orthodox economic prescriptions of the Bretton Woods institutions. The other is how the governing boards of the World Bank and IMF would react if a "heterodox" PRSP was presented for their approval. This challenge has not presented itself so far, but could be seen as an important test of the "national ownership" principle of PRSPs.*

*The main findings of the review process, which also included an international conference on the PRSP approach in January 2002, have been summarized by World Bank/IMF staff. Contributions and other documents related to the review are available on the World Bank website: [www.worldbank.org/poverty/strategies/review](http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/strategies/review).*

the 20 LDCs that have qualified for debt relief will be only 5.5% of net official development assistance (ODA) disbursements to those countries in the year 2000. The forecasts of a sustainable exit from the debt problem through the Initiative are systematically and simplistically overoptimistic, UNCTAD argues. With falling commodity prices, the enhanced HIPC Initiative is on a knife-edge, and the fledgling PRSPs will be derailed if debts and arrears accumulate again.

Unsustainable external debt also undermines aid effectiveness, the report finds. "There is now clear evidence that the build-up of external debt has influenced donor behaviour," it says. "Official donors, who are also the major creditors, have been supplying aid to ensure that official debts can be serviced."

There is an urgent need for increased and more effective aid. The report notes that it is a positive sign that the sharp decline in aid flows to the LDCs that began at the start of the 1990s was halted during 1998-2000. But in real per capita terms, net ODA disbursements to the LDCs were still 46% lower in 2000 than they were in 1990. The poverty-reducing impact of relaxing, to different degrees, the financial constraint within which PRSPs are framed should be jointly explored by developing country governments and donors.

Productive sectors, notably agriculture, and economic infrastructure, which have both been relatively neglected in the context of declining aid flows, are likely to receive greater attention in the type of poverty reduction strategy advocated by UNCTAD. Aid effectiveness will be greatly increased if aid inflows are geared to government priorities, delivered through government systems unless there are compelling reasons to the contrary, and provided on a more stable, long-term basis.

### **International Commodity Policy**

The type of export in which LDCs specialize makes a big difference in their economic success and patterns of poverty, the report finds, noting that primary commodity exporters are being left the farthest behind in global development. In 1997-1999, 79% of the people living on less than US\$1 a day in the LDCs were living in these countries.

The ability of international trade to act as an "engine of growth" and poverty reduction is being short-circuited by a persistent fall and instability of world commodity prices, the report points out. At the end of 2001, real non-fuel commodity prices had plunged to one-half of their annual average for the period 1979-1981.

The report reviews past efforts to mitigate excessive instability through economic measures in international commodity agreements (ICAs), which it says have been successful only for limited periods of time. In view of this mixed record and the lack of political will to implement such economic measures, the report suggests that their reintroduction into ICAs appears unlikely. One possible approach, UNCTAD suggests, is the promotion of arrangements between buyers and sellers that are based on longer-term commitments rather than on daily dealings. "All parties must accept, however, that attaining some degree of stability may mean forgoing short-term gains," UNCTAD stresses.

The introduction of at least some aspects of "fair trade" principles into mainstream trade may be an avenue to explore in

this regard. But for this to happen, incentives need to be provided by governments and cooperation between the NGO community and large business concerns must exist. The report cites a joint UNCTAD/International Development Research Centre project that is exploring modalities in this area, with an initial focus on coffee. It notes that some firms, such as Starbucks, have already decided to procure part of their supplies under "fair trade" arrangements, and the marketing of Max Havelaar products through the Migros supermarket chain in Switzerland has been a determining factor in achieving significant market shares, notably in bananas.

The report also refers to price risk management financial instruments as a way to limit the incidence of instability for producers and traders, but warns that ongoing application of these instruments in some LDCs is likely to reveal both the problems and the potential of this approach.

The report emphasizes that the international community, in discussing a new developmental approach to international commodity policy, must reconsider the use of compensatory financing for export earnings shortfalls. This is a particularly important aspect in addressing what the 2001 UN Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (paragraph 86) calls the "structural causes of indebtedness." In this regard, the report notes that the IMF contingency credit line would not be available to a country that is borrowing from any other IMF facility, while the costs of accessing the IMF Compensatory Financing Facility are so prohibitive that they would breach the standard concessional borrowing ceilings in Poverty Reduction Growth Facility programmes.

It goes on to review the European Union's so-called "B envelope" funding, designed to replace its STABEX and SYSMIN (the EC's compensatory finance scheme to stabilize export earnings of the African, Caribbean, and Pacific group of States for agricultural goods and the mining sector) and export shortfall compensation windows. While B envelope funding is more flexible, the terms governing access to this finance are very restrictive, requiring shocks equivalent to a 10% drop in export earnings as well as a 10% worsening of the budget deficit. "The design of appropriate contingency financing facilities for LDCs and other low-income countries is urgent," UNCTAD insists.

In terms of the causes of long-term decline in world primary commodity prices, the report cites improvements in yields and productivity (the benefits of which have largely accrued to buyers), and the entry of new producers into primary commodity markets.

The report highlights strategies that could help producers in capturing more of the benefits of yield and productivity improvements. It also suggests that international commodity policy should include modalities for regular consultations among international organizations, including international commodity bodies, and governments, designed to help in directing efforts to increase production away from crowded markets to more dynamic products.

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## ECOSOC High-Level Segment on Education and Health Care

*The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) opened its annual substantive session with a high-level segment where top Member State officials, heads of international agencies and other senior UN officials addressed the segment's main themes—education and health care—termed “the surest antidote to strife and the strongest foundation for long-term economic growth,” by ECOSOC President Ivan Simonovic (Croatia).*

At the meeting, held from 1-3 July 2002 at UN headquarters in New York, Ministerial participants concentrated their discussion on the contribution of human resources development to the process of development, and concluded the high-level segment with the adoption of a Ministerial Declaration on the subject. Many embraced the implementation of the Millennium Declaration as the central organizing framework for their development efforts and recognized that a funding gap needed to be closed in order to meet the targets.

United States Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill, recently back from his tour of Africa with activist rock star Bono, highlighted three investments that he said were vital to realizing human potential and making an immediate difference in people's lives: clean water, primary education, and fighting HIV/AIDS. He said that the US was increasing its contributions largely through the Millennium Challenge Account, which was launched during the International Conference on Financing for Development (ICFFD) held in Monterrey (Mexico) in March 2002 (see *NGLS Roundup* 91). Mr. O'Neill noted that the Account represented a 50% increase over the next three years in US official development assistance (ODA) and was being used to assist countries that “govern justly,” “invest in people” and “encourage economic freedom.”

Mr. O'Neill echoed Mr. Simonovic's comments regarding the need for investment in impoverished countries through grants. “We must avoid creating the next generation of highly indebted poor countries,” Mr. O'Neill said. “The reality is that essential investments in sectors such as education and health care cannot directly generate the revenue to service new debt. These projects should be funded by grants, not loans.”

Rubens Ricupero, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), delivered a withering critique of the international response to the spread of economic instability, particularly in Latin America, noting that even after several episodes of painful crises in emerging markets, the international community still lacked a realistic strategy for dealing with financial instability and the debt problem. Just “muddling through” had cost Latin America the entire decade of the 1980s, he said, and a similar lack of procedures had recently exposed Argentina. Uncertainty, he noted, continued to surround the modalities of official intervention in the financial crisis, adding to the overall volatility. It was time to end ad hoc approaches, Mr. Ricupero said, and get on with genuine reform of the international financial architecture. Only multilateral action could effectively deal with the debt problem and only cooperation among the major economic powers could deliver the degree of currency stability needed by developing countries to ensure that trade and financial flows complemented their domestic efforts.

Stressing that trade had always been one of the channels for transmitting recessions in the industrial countries to the developing countries—as was the case in 2001—Mr. Ricupero further emphasized the need for a strong multilateral trading system and the successful delivery of the Doha promises to inject as much growth and development potential as possible into the negotiations. Mr. Ricupero noted that the international development community had been “distressed by the recent threats to those promises,” apparently arising from a series of protectionist measures. He called on all countries to resist protectionism, but emphasized that it was only the major trading powers that could make a difference by exercising responsible leadership.

### NGO Input

Mr. Simonovic attempted to enhance the participation and effective involvement of all stakeholders, including civil society in this year's session. NGOs were invited to participate fully in the policy dialogue with the international financial and trade institutions, the panel discussions, high-level roundtables and the Ministerial Roundtable breakfasts.

Two weeks prior to the high-level segment, the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Status with the UN (CONGO) collaborated with the ECOSOC Secretariat to coordinate an “NGO Forum” that consisted of a panel and a workshop to discuss input for the Ministerial Declaration. The first recommendation made by the Forum was that the gender aspects of human resources development needed more attention, as investments in girls' education and health had a long-lasting and mutually reinforcing impact on poverty reduction. The Forum also suggested that all types of education—formal, informal and non-formal—needed to be considered in this connection and that each should be relevant for employment. In the area of health, NGOs applauded the new Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria but urged that more financing be committed to it. NGOs also highlighted the need to build up infrastructures for health care, safe water supply, sanitation and waste disposal, to help prevent avoidable diseases. The Forum additionally called on the Bretton Woods institutions to prioritize capacity building, education and job creation in their financial assistance.

Regarding their evolving relationship with ECOSOC, NGOs said they appreciated being able to make direct input to the high-level meeting and expressed a desire to be more involved in the monitoring and evaluation of progress on health and education targets and work related to the Millennium Development Goals.

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# G-8 Summit Addresses African Development Assistance

*Leaders of the Group of Eight (G-8) most industrialized countries held their annual summit from 26-27 June 2002 in the resort of Kananaskis, Alberta (Canada). Although nearly overshadowed by discussion about conflict "hot spots," anti-terrorism issues, and industry and farm subsidies, aid to Africa did prove to be a major focus of discussion, as promised by Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien.*

In the first appearance by African leaders at a G-8 meeting, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade and South African President Thabo Mbeki, as well as UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan met with G-8 leaders to discuss development assistance to Africa.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) provided the focus for the summit discussions. NEPAD, an action plan devised by the African leaders and based on partnership, calls for US\$64 billion in annual investment and support to sustain an economic growth rate of 7% for 15 years in conformity with goals set by northern institutions on poverty reduction, education, health and sustainable development. It also creates a peer-review mechanism, under which African countries would monitor each other's progress.

Among the G-8 countries, Canada and the United Kingdom led the fight for more aid to Africa, with Mr. Chrétien calling on G-8 countries to reduce trade barriers to African farm products, textiles and footwear, and pushing for increased support for

education, agriculture, fresh water, government and judicial restructuring, foreign investment, and the fight against HIV/AIDS and malaria. British Prime Minister Tony Blair pushed for more trade access and debt relief, pledging to increase British aid to the region to over US\$1.5 billion by 2006.

Mr. Chrétien was unable to secure agreement on getting half of the US\$12 billion pledged by G-8 countries earlier this year to be devoted to Africa. Although Canada and European countries agreed to the US\$6 billion target, Japan and the US refused to commit themselves. G-8 countries also only offered vague assurances they would reduce subsidies for their farmers, which African leaders have complained reduces the competitiveness of their agricultural exports.

Promising a "new beginning" for Africa, G-8 leaders ultimately signed a historic action plan backing NEPAD and increasing aid to the continent by billions of dollars. In addition, the G-8 approved US\$1 billion in debt relief for as many as 22 African countries under the World Bank's Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative.

## CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE G-8

*A significant step was taken by the Canadian Government in preparation for the Kananaskis Summit, when it undertook a wide range of outreach activities and consultations with interested citizens and groups in an effort to make the G-8 Summit process and priorities more transparent.*

*Among the major events was a meeting coordinated by the Montreal International Forum (FIM), held in Montreal and Ottawa from 21-23 May 2002 with assistance from the Ford Foundation. FIM is a global alliance of individuals and organizations with the goal of improving the influence of international civil society on the UN and the multilateral system. In convening this meeting, FIM sought to concentrate on the means of improving the process of dialogue between civil society and the G8, recognizing that it was a long-term process and at the same time emphasizing that it did not wish to confer legitimacy upon the G-8 as a global governance mechanism.*

*Some 15 participants from around the world were invited in their personal capacity and on the basis of their knowledge and experience with international civil society dealings with multilateral bodies. They met with G-8 government representatives and*

*officials from the G-8 Summit policy office, presenting a history of multistakeholder dialogues as well as African perspectives on the NEPAD experience, with special attention given to the role to date of African civil society.*

*The participants delivered a blistering critique of the NEPAD consultative process, noting that it did not have wide African support, nor was it a one-time opportunity. "It is seriously flawed," they said, "with a total lack of gender analysis. Its underlying macro-economic framework has been put into question, and its resource mobilization strategy may well be unworkable. The NEPAD process needs to be opened up," they said.*

*With regard to future G-8 civil society dialogue, participants emphasized the underlying principles of good governance, transparency and legitimacy. "The G-8 cannot continue to hide from its constituents," they said.*

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Activists criticized the move as insufficient, however, with some NGOs saying the amount barely countered a fall in prices of commodities such as coffee and cotton, vital to developing countries. Andrew Graham, a spokesman for CARE Canada, said the US\$1 billion represented only 50 days of debt repayment by poor countries. "Poverty is killing more people every day than terrorism," Mr. Graham added.

"We have acted collectively to make sure globalization benefits all and no nation is left behind," Mr. Annan said as he welcomed the plan. "If Africans really stick to the commitments they have made in NEPAD to themselves, and to each other, and if the G-8 really carry out the action plan they are announcing today, this summit might come to be seen as a turning point in the history of Africa, and indeed of the world," he said.

In the view of many NGOs, however, the G-8 leaders are simply unleashing more of the conditions that have spawned economic regression in Africa. "Isn't it amazing that a few African countries sat down and mapped out a future for Africa that looks exactly like structural adjustment programmes of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization, to be presented to the rich nations?" asked Njoki Njehu of the anti-poverty campaign "50 Years is Enough Network" in an interview with InterPress. To critics like Ms. Njehu, NEPAD allows the G-8 to place the responsibility for Africa's future on Africa itself and to thereby evade responsibility for an international system that plunged the continent into deep poverty in the first place.

Critics also expressed dismay at what they saw as NEPAD's reinforcement of the notion that the North has a monopoly on monitoring or certifying progress—or its lack—in the South. Even the peer review mechanism, they said, would ultimately report to northern financial institutions and donor governments in order for them to disburse aid and loans.

"It is an identical blueprint and has all the components of economic restructuring, privatization, and trade programmes pushed in other arenas through structural adjustment programmes by the multilateral financial institutions," Ms. Njehu told InterPress. "This shows the lie and the hypocrisy in saying that this is an African-owned thing. It is neither something that comes from the grassroots nor is it something that is organically African."

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### **INDEPENDENT PANEL URGES UNITED NATIONS TO SUPPORT NEPAD**

After surveying another decade (1991-2001) of what it calls "poor economic performance in Africa," an independent panel of 12 eminent personalities, named by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and chaired by Ghana's former Finance Minister Kwesi Botchwey, has found that Africa has made some impressive strides in democratization in recent years, but also says that a sharp drop in development aid, unfavourable markets for African exports,

devastating conflicts and continuing poor governance have greatly hindered progress.

The panel found that economic growth in Africa for the decade of the 1990s averaged only about 3%, down from the 6% target set in 1991 by the now-concluded United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa (UN-NADAF)—created to serve as a catalyst for Africa's development in the 1990s. The panel also found that official development assistance (ODA) to Africa fell from US\$28.6 billion in 1990 to US\$16.4 billion in 2000, a 43% decrease.

Other factors affecting Africa's economic growth during the UN-NADAF period were the proliferation of wars and civil strife; the spread of major diseases, especially HIV/AIDS; structural adjustment programmes—although liberalization, privatization and market-based reforms were believed to have helped improve the macro-economic situation in Africa somewhat; and the low representation of women in parliaments and decision-making bodies, among other factors.

Mandated to consider whether the UN should develop another agenda or programme to extend or follow UN-NADAF, it concluded that recent international agreements to promote peace and development in Africa have essentially failed, while noting that some 80 million more Africans live in poverty today than at the start of the 1990s.

The panel has recommended that the United Nations put its support behind African leaders' new initiative, NEPAD, which focuses on issue around democratization, infrastructure development and investment. The panel noted that, however, that NEPAD is "still an evolving process," and said that greater consensus needs to be achieved on NEPAD's priorities through intensive engagement with African democratic institutions and civil society.

The panel added, "NEPAD's potential also reflects its fragility. While an African initiative, NEPAD's charter also candidly acknowledges its substantial dependence on external assistance in order to realize many of its aspirations. Donors, from whom such assistance is sought, would need to play their partnership role in the NEPAD framework with a renewed commitment to the assurance of African leadership and the avoidance of a return to old-style conditionality that has been counterproductive in the past." For NEPAD and other efforts to have greater success in the future, the panel argued, rich countries need to increase their aid commitments, provide greater debt relief and open their markets to African exports.

The panel cited lessons learned that point to the conditions for success in the future as including; African ownership, where each African country "must evolve its own development strategy;" and peace efforts, which "must be the primary responsibility and highest priority of African countries, individually and collectively."

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# ILO Holds 90th Labour Conference

*The International Labour Organization (ILO) concluded its 90th annual International Labour Conference after adopting measures designed to promote a more rigorous approach to meet the challenges of globalization and to create a wider base for personal security through poverty reduction, job creation and improved workplace health and safety.*

ILO's annual Conference, held from 3-20 June 2002 in Geneva, brought together governments, workers and employers representing ILO's 175 Member States in order to adopt and oversee compliance with international labour standards, establish the budget of the ILO, and elect members of the Governing Body. The Conference elected Jean-Jacques Elmiger, Secretary of State of the Federal Department of the Economy of Switzerland, as its President.

ILO Director-General Juan Somavía said this year's Conference was marked by an "exceptionally rich" discussion surrounding globalization, child labour and other issues and saw a "broad and steadily deepening consensus over the goal of decent work for all." Mr. Somavía stressed, "Until we see a globalization that prioritizes the creation of employment and the reduction of poverty, the whole concept is going to remain dogged by controversy and division."

The Conference also considered a wide range of issues, including decent work in the informal economy, child labour, safety and health, and the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories.

## Globalization

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Bin Mohamad, and Owen Arthur, Prime Minister of Barbados, addressed the issue of globalization during the Conference. Mr. Mahathir said that globalization in its actual form cannot be "the remedy for the social ills of the world" and called for "globalization with a social dimension." Mr. Arthur condemned the linkage of labour standards and trade as "immoral and counterproductive" and said the ILO "must have more clout in the formulating of global, financial and trade policy and not just an advisory role."

Speaking on globalization, the Director-General said the world was experiencing a "yawning decent work deficit," with more than a billion women and men unemployed, some 120 million migrants seeking work abroad, and that an estimated 500 million new jobs will be needed over the next decade to absorb new entrants to the labour market, largely youth and women. "The present form of globalization has not produced enough jobs for all who seek them or in the places where they are most needed," he said. "This is probably its biggest failure."

Mr. Somavía proposed a five-point plan aimed at combining public and private policies to address the work deficit, including: promoting local development, markets, entrepreneurship, social protection and coping capacity; releasing the creative potential of women and men trapped in the informal economy; enhancing basic economic and social security for all people and their families; promoting policy coherence and pluralism on economic reform, reducing poverty and job creation; and maintaining a "rhythm of change" at the ILO by "listening to a wide range of opinions: from those who like our work and also from our critics."

The Conference also adopted a Recommendation on the Promotion of Cooperatives, which replaces ILO Recommendation 127 adopted in 1966, which was limited to developing countries. The Recommendation asks members to adopt measures to promote cooperatives in all countries to create employment, develop their business potential, increase savings and investment, and improve social wellbeing. Members are asked to consider the promotion of cooperatives as one of the objectives of national and social development, and to reflect on measures to create an enabling environment to promote the growth of economically viable and democratically managed cooperatives.

ILO says that cooperatives are one of the most powerful tools to fight social exclusion and to further sustainable development. Ivano Barberini, President of the International Co-operative Alliance, stressed "cooperatives are a form of enterprise that put people first." Ranging from small-scale to multimillion-dollar businesses across the globe, cooperatives are estimated to employ more than 100 million women and men, and have more than 800 million individual members. In his concluding remarks, the Director-General noted that delegates had urged the ILO to "set increasingly rigorous performance indicators that relate to the needs of constituents and be more aggressive in evaluating how our intervention can best help to redress decent work deficits in a globalizing world."

## Informal Economy

In an effort to address the issue of making decent work a reality for the hundreds of millions of people struggling to earn a living in the informal economy, the Conference held lengthy and often intense discussions. According to ILO, the magnitude of the informal sector is huge, involving half to three-quarters of workers in developing countries: 72% in sub-Saharan Africa, 65% in Asia, 51% in Latin America and 48% in North Africa.

ILO says there is great difficulty in defining the term "informal economy." In principle, the term refers to "all activities of workers and economic units that are 'in law or in practice' not covered by formal arrangements," operating outside of the scope of the law. In some countries the term refers to the private sector, while in others it is another name for the "underground" or "shadow" economy, even if the workers in the informal economy produce legal goods and services. There is also an area between the two where economic activity involves characteristics of both the formal and informal economy, for instance when formal workers receive undeclared remuneration.

According to experts at the Conference, the growth of the informal economy is more a result of poor governance than of globalization, which they attribute to "inappropriate, ineffective, misguided or badly implemented macro-economic and social policies." ILO says that in order to reduce the informal economy, it

is essential that structural adjustment, restructuring and privatization policies take into account the need to promote employment creation.

ILO warns that the multitudes of workers in this category are not recognized, registered, protected by legislation, or covered by social security. The absence of health and safety guarantees, as well as low and irregular incomes for long hours of work, place workers in a situation of varying degrees of dependency, leaving them vulnerable to harassment, including sexual harassment of women, and various forms of exploitation and abuse, such as corruption and bribery.

The Conference adopted a call for a new ILO programme of work that would focus on the issues of employment generation, social protection and poverty reduction for those in the informal economy. The new programme is intended to provide a roadmap for future ILO activities aimed at extending rights to those who need them and access to the benefits of labour standards and the global economy.

### **Child Labour**

According to ILO figures, nearly 250 million child labourers work worldwide. Referring to ILO's Global Report *A Future without Child Labour* (see *Go Between* 91), which analyzes the scale and nature of the problem, a number of speakers at the Conference expressed their concern, especially for children engaged in the worst forms of child labour, and called for comprehensive and urgent action to "guide these children out of the workplace and into school." Turkish Minister Yasar Okuyan stressed, "When children are exploited through labour, an important potential of the country is lost." A plan of action that will build on reinforcing the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), mainstreaming the effective abolition of child labour in the Decent Work Agenda, and forging stronger partnerships and alliances for the elimination of child labour is underway, and will be submitted to the Governing Body at its 285th Session in November 2002.

"The plight of children who cannot play and learn because they work touches a raw nerve everywhere. I am sure all of us wish we had the powers of Harry Potter to wave a wand and change their lives," said the Director-General.

The conference also launched the World Day Against Child Labour, celebrated on 12 June, aimed at reinforcing the global movement to abolish child labour.

### **Safety and Health**

The latest ILO estimates for the year 2000 show that annually there are two million work-related deaths—more than 5,000 every day—and for every fatal accident there are another 500-2,000 injuries, depending on the type of job. In addition, the ILO said for every fatal work-related disease there are about 100 other illnesses causing absence from work.

In the report *Decent Work—Safe Work, Introductory Report to the XVIth World Congress on Safety and Health at Work*, the ILO says the number of estimated annual deaths among workers has clearly increased since 1990, mainly because work-related communicable diseases were not counted previously and the number of cases of work-related cancer and circulatory diseases have increased. During this same period, figures for fatal accidents

went up slightly in developing countries but decreased in most industrialized countries.

The Conference adopted a new Protocol to the Occupational Safety and Health Convention No. 155, adopted in 1981, and a Recommendation updating a 22-year-old list of occupational diseases. The Protocol asks ratifying Member States to establish and review requirements and procedures for the recording and the notification of occupational accidents and diseases, dangerous occurrences and commuting accidents. It also asks Member States to publish annual statistics following classification schemes that are compatible with the latest international schemes of the ILO or other relevant international organizations. The Recommendation asks Member States to establish a national list of occupational diseases for the purpose of prevention, recording, notification and compensation.

### **The Situation of Workers in the Occupied Arab Territories**

The Conference also debated the situation in the occupied Arab territories and heard pledges in support of enhancing ILO efforts to create jobs in the area and promote dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis. Mr. Somavia said the ILO would allocate resources immediately with a view to establishing a Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection.

"The present situation cannot continue and only dialogue can lead to peace," the Director-General said in his address to the Conference. "I appeal to Palestinian and Israeli constituents to take the risk of embarking on social dialogue across the present divide in their specific areas of competence. We shall assist and support you in all possible ways."

"The whole of the ILO has a responsibility and we cannot shirk it," Mr. Somavia continued. "Beyond the ILO, the international community must respond to the aspirations of all families in the region: parents at work, children at school, security in the streets and peace in the community."

### **Conclusion**

Concluding, the Director-General said that the ILO will be "guided in the years ahead by the resolution adopted at this Conference that encourages us all to renew our efforts to strengthen tripartism [governments, workers and employers] and social dialogue at home and here at the ILO across the range of all our activities." He said the resolution recognizes the value of dialogue with other civil society organizations at both the national and international levels. "At a time when many international organizations are finding international consensus difficult to find, the resolution shows that the ILO has the potential will to move forward and to deepen our commitment to tripartism."

Mr. Somavia said that 347 speakers addressed the plenary sessions, but noted with "disappointment" that only 45, or 13%, were women. He urged governments, workers and employers to consider ways of ensuring "a stronger participation of women" at the annual Conference, and suggested the ILO might consider "setting a target in the coming years" for addressing gender imbalance among the speakers.

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## High-Level Meeting Focuses on Digital Divide

*The UN General Assembly held a high-level information and communication technologies (ICT) development meeting from 17-18 June in New York, bringing together ministers and other government representatives, chief executive officers of digital corporations, information technology experts and representatives of civil society to address the digital gap.*

The high-level meeting sought to promote coherence and collaboration between regional and international ICT initiatives, discussed the United Nations ICT Task Force (see *Go Between* 88) and also contributed to the preparation of the 2003 World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS, see *NGLS Roundup* 95) held in Geneva from 1-5 July.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in his opening statement, said the world was still far from ensuring that ICT benefits were available to all, stressing that efforts to reverse that situation must be based on the real needs of those requiring help and that better ways must be found to ensure the participation of developing countries at all stages. President of Senegal, Abdoulaye Wade, head of the ICT activities in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), said the struggle to harness the benefits of new technologies was well under way but stressed that partnerships must provide equal opportunities to all countries, for all men and women. An estimated two-thirds of the world's population are excluded from the benefits of the digital revolution.

Yoshio Utsumi, Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), said that while ICT initiatives in many regions were making the notion of a "global village" a reality, many of the world's inhabitants were being excluded and said every effort must be made to extend ICT to every citizen of the world, adding that ICT may help poor countries "leapfrog" development opportunity. José María Figueres-Olsen, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for ICT and Chair of the UN ICT Task Force, said that the meeting sought to further the bridge building between his Task Force and other efforts, particularly with the private sector.

In parallel with the plenary, two informal panels were held to discuss how ICT can foster development to meet the Millennium Summit goals, building on broad partnerships for promoting digital opportunity; and to address the role of the United Nations in supporting efforts to promote digital opportunity, in particular in Africa and the least developed countries.

A number of suggestions were brought forth by delegates addressing the meeting. Kenshiro Matsunami, Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Japan, warned that the digital divide could result in a further widening of the economic gap between industrialized and developed countries. He stressed the importance of making full use of private sector energy in order to use ICT effectively for development, and called on developing countries to establish an environment "congenial to private sector activities" in order to attract foreign investment, demonstrate ownership, and make efforts to improve the environment for business and investment.

Orlando Jorge Mera, President of the Institute of Telecommunications of the Dominican Republic, said the right to knowledge was inherent to all citizens and that exclusion only contributed to despair. He said that what the developing countries needed was for new technologies to reach them at an affordable cost and in an equitable manner. He called on the international community to strengthen global education systems and elaborate clear rules and regulations on the use of ICT to ensure an equitable information society.

Costa Rican representative Bernd Niehaus said the only way for developing countries to close their digital gap with the developed world is through strong political commitment in poor countries to investing in the future and to building the necessary infrastructure to engage the technological revolution. Cuba's Orlando Requeijo Gual and Brazil's Luis Tupy Caldas de Moura, however, said most developing countries need to devote their limited resources to poverty eradication. Because these countries are forced to concentrate on more urgent needs such as raising nutritional levels and eradicating illiteracy, the West should provide assistance to offer technology to the poor, Mr. Requeijo Gual said.

In his statement, General Assembly President Han Seung-soo called for the problem to be addressed from both sides. Although the information technology needs of poor countries will "require support from the international community," he said, "the potential of collaboration among developing countries (South-South cooperation) should also be fully explored." He said technological advances can "bridge the distance between rural and urban populations" and "significantly strengthen the global fight against diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria," as well as empowering women, the elderly and the disabled.

Computer giant Microsoft joined the World Economic Forum's CEO Charter for Digital Development, under which it agrees to earmark at least 20% of its philanthropic budget to providing technology for development. Hewlett-Packard (USA), Vivendi Universal (France), MIH Group (South Africa), Masreya (Egypt) and Equitable Cardnetwork (Philippines) are already taking part in the programme. The UN ICT Task Force supports and promotes the CEO Charter, which is mandated to develop and propagate creative public and private sector initiatives to transform the digital divide into an opportunity for growth.

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# Meetings on the UN Millennium Development Goals

*The UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), adopted as part of the Millennium Declaration, committed signatories to achieving, by 2015, ambitious objectives in halving world poverty and hunger, controlling killer diseases, achieving universal education, and reversing environmental degradation. The two following meetings are an example of the growing number of initiatives that are building the profile of the MDGs.*

The MDGs are potentially very useful tools that can focus energies on sustainable development, provided they open debates on national policy and generate sufficient political will and financial commitments. These were some of the views expressed at a policy dialogue on the MDGs between civil society and non-governmental organizations (CSOs/NGOs), government ministers and UN officials organized by the German Foundation for International Development (DSE) in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) held in Berlin from 27-28 June 2002.

UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown said that the International Financing for Development Conference held in Monterey last March gave a big boost to the international commitment on resources (see *NGLS Roundup 91*). Citing an emerging consensus across party lines in the United States that higher levels of development assistance are critical, Mr. Malloch Brown said that US aid is up by 50%, and EU aid levels as a proportion of gross domestic product (GDP) have risen from 0.33 to 0.39%. "We are moving in the right direction, the political templates are changing, but there are no commitments yet on getting anywhere near the amount needed," he said.

The ambition of the MDGs—through national reports coordinated by UN country teams and civil society campaigns—is to change policies in developing countries to reduce poverty and improve the access of the poor to basic services. "We want the numbers in those reports to shock voters in the rich countries into demanding more of their governments," Mr. Malloch Brown said. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has given UNDP the task of campaign manager and scorekeeper on the MDGs.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Deputy Executive Director Kul Gautam stressed the imperativeness of forging alliances and partnerships, and emphasized the need for a system of public monitoring and accountability on the goals, one that is not confined to expert analysis but involves the participation of communities. Monitoring should be designed to provoke public debate in parliaments and assemblies and avoid unintended discrimination.

CSOs/NGOs with campaign and advocacy experience present at the meeting affirmed the centrality of civic engagement in advancing the MDGs, saying this could take various forms, such as national monitoring, as in the Philippines, or stimulating public debate and campaign strategies through regional forums, as in West Africa. Whatever the type of engagement, it is always key to link local discourse to the global level, said Sheela Patel, Director of the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) in India. Consensus building has to be horizontal, she said. "The local constituency is not there only to react, without being involved. The

poor make a lot of investments in their development and we must take account of their aspirations."

Social Watch and ActionAid said they are already using the MDGs in their global policy and advocacy reports and are well placed to participate in the national reporting on the goals. The 2002 Social Watch report ([www.socialwatch.org](http://www.socialwatch.org)) measures progress on the goals and ranks countries in terms of official development assistance (ODA) and social expenditures on basic services and also charts the ratification of international treaties cited in the Millennium Declaration. Roberto Bissio of Social Watch called on the UN to create more space for genuine civic engagement in the global monitoring and reporting on the MDGs in the General Assembly.

## **CEA SURF Forum on the MDGs in Central and Eastern Africa**

From 17-19 June, the Central and East Africa Sub-Regional Resource Facility (CEA-SURF), in collaboration with the Ethiopian and Cameroonian country offices, convened the Campaigning for Action: Forum on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Central and Eastern Africa, in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia). Participants included country delegations of the 14 CEA countries, regional and international institutions, national and international CSOs/NGOs, as well as the media and business sectors.

The meeting sought to raise awareness of the MDGs and to discuss the various components required for carrying them out, with topics ranging from country level reporting and costing to campaigning, monitoring and evaluation. Discussion focused on the challenges CEA countries face in meeting the MDGs and the types of steps necessary to achieve them. Country delegations were able to develop their own national strategies outlining key actions and possible time frames to reach the goals by 2015, with most strategies coinciding as they addressed alignment and consistency between the MDG process and others, such as the poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs). Other common elements included developing a clear communication strategy, the mobilization of domestic resources, and capacity building.

Participants proposed that poverty reduction be the main thrust of the MDGs, and identified "bad" governance; lack of peace and security; cross border issues such as refugees; HIV/AIDS; low capacity; and lack of financial and human resources as the main barriers to successfully achieving the MDGs. Delegates identified community development; mobilizing domestic resources; debt relief, particularly multilateral debt (for least developed and medium-income countries); and capital flight as key issues to tackle.

Participants endorsed a draft statement of action and declaration during the final session of the forum. The declaration recognizes

the challenges faced by the countries in the region, such as poverty and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, but also calls attention to more positive notes such as returning stability and peace in the region, and more concerted efforts by governments to address poverty within their own countries.

### CSOs/NGOs

In his concluding statement to the Forum, Action Aid Ethiopia declared that partnership between CSOs/NGOs, donors, governments and the business sector had been given the rightful place and recognition at the Forum. Moreover, he stated that the MDGs should be rooted in the human rights approach to development.

Building the capacity of CSOs/NGOs and the importance of an enabling environment emerged as the principal issues among the CSOs/NGOs as both are viewed as critical to their engagement in the MDG process. CSOs/NGOs expressed the need to position themselves as partners in the development process and emphasized their role in sensitizing and sharing information at the

community level. More interaction between northern and southern CSOs/NGOs was encouraged, especially in the areas of information exchange and capacity building. It was recommended that a mechanism for consultation be established between donors and CSOs/NGOs and that a joint strategy for monitoring be developed.

CSOs/NGOs said that MDGs need to be popularized and that local and traditional authorities should be engaged, while noting that the campaign surrounding the MDGs would define their success or failure.

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*The following NGLS publications are available upon request.*

#### *Recent publications:*

*Engendering the Global Agenda: The Story of Women in the United Nations by Hilikka Pietilä*  
*The book tells the story of how the United Nations has become a women-friendly global institution through the strenuous and skillful diplomacy and struggles of women over the decades since the League of Nations.*

*Voluntary Approaches to Corporate Responsibility: Readings and a Resource Guide, co-published with the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)*  
*This book focuses on the growing debate on corporate social and environmental responsibility, which has taken on a higher profile in recent years as increasing attention has been drawn to the need for policy response to the phenomenon of globalization that secures social cohesion in environmental protection.*

*NGLS also has extra copies of its earlier publications. These include:*

- n *Markets and Good Government: The Way Forward for Economic and Social Development? by Robert Archer*
- n *The Development of Capacity by Allan Kaplan*
- n *Report of UNCTAD Consultation with Non-Governmental Organizations and Trade Unions, Geneva, 11-12 June 1998*
- n *The NGLS Handbook of UN Agencies, Programmes, Funds and Conventions Working for Sustainable Economic and Social Development, 2000*
- n *Directory of Non-Governmental Organizations Active in Sustainable Development, Part II: Australia, Canada, Japan, Korea, New Zealand and United States, co-published with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation, North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, InterAction, Australian Council for Overseas Aid, Canadian Council for International Co-operation, Council for International Development (New Zealand), Japanese NGO Centre for International Cooperation, and the Korean International Cooperation Agency.*
- n *International Cooperation for Habitat and Urban Development: Directory of Non-Governmental Organizations in OECD Countries, co-published with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation, UN Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), and Research and Technology Exchange Group.*
- n *Women and the World Economic Crisis, prepared by Jeanne Vickers and co-published with Zed Books*
- n *Refugee Women, prepared by Susan Forbes Martin and co-published with Zed Books*
- n *Women and Empowerment, prepared by Marilee Karl and co-published with Zed Books*

*Write to or e-mail NGLS (see contact details on next page).*

#### DISARMAMENT

- n Conference on Disarmament, 3rd part, 29 July-13 September, Geneva
- n Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty Organization, 18th session, 20-23 August, Vienna
- n 4th meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Landmines and on Their Destruction, 16-20 September, Geneva
- n Disarmament Commission, Organizational session, December (2 days), New York

#### ECOSOC/GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- n General Assembly, 57th session, September-December, New York

#### FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

- n Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA), acting as the interim committee for the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, 9-11 October, Rome
- n 9th regular session, Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, 14-18 October, Rome

#### HUMAN RIGHTS

- n Subcommittee on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Working Group on Communications, 19-30 August, Geneva
- n Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 61st session, August (3 weeks)
- n Working Group on Arbitrary Detention
  - 34th session, 9-13 September, Geneva
  - 35th session, 25 November-6 December, Geneva
- n Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 27th session, 11-29 November

#### Rights of the Child

- n Committee on the Rights of the Child, 31st session, 16 September-4 October, Geneva

#### NARCOTIC DRUGS

- n International Narcotics Control Board, 75th session, 30 October-15 November

#### REFUGEES

- n Pre-Executive Committee Consultations with NGOs, 25-27 September, Geneva
- n Executive Committee, 53rd session, 30 September-4 October, Geneva

#### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- n World Summit on Sustainable Development, 26 August-4 September, Johannesburg

#### Basel Convention

- n Conference of Parties, 6th session, 9-13 December, Geneva

#### Convention on Migratory Species

- n Conference of Parties, 7th session, 15-28 September, Bonn

#### Framework Convention on Climate Change

- n Conference of Parties, 8th session, 2nd sessional period, 28 October-8 November, Bonn

#### Global Environment Facility (GEF)

- n NGO Consultation, 13 October, Beijing
- n GEF Council Meeting, 14-15 October, Beijing
- n GEF Assembly, 16-18 October, Beijing

#### Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

- n Conference of Parties, 8th session, 18-26 November, Valencia

#### TRADE, FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

##### International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank

- n Annual meetings of the World Bank Group and IMF, 29 September, Washington DC

##### UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

- n Trade and Development Board, 49th session, 7-18 October, Geneva

#### WOMEN

- n 12th Meeting of States Parties to the CEDAW, 29 August, New York
- n Exceptional session, CEDAW, 5-23 August, New York

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

*Go Between, published five times a year, is produced with support from DESA, DPI, FAO, IFAD, ILO, UNAIDS, UN-HABITAT, UNCTAD, UNDCP, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, World Bank, the Governments of Canada and Denmark, and the UN Foundation.*

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G U E S T E D I T O R I A L  
AMBASSADOR ANWARAL KARIM CHOWDURY  
HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

Least developed countries (LDCs) and development partners met in Brussels in May 2001 for the Third United Nations Least Developed Countries Conference (UN LDC-III), and adopted the Brussels Declaration and the Programme of Action (POA) for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010. The Brussels Declaration reaffirms the collective responsibility of the international community to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity, and to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force, as set out in the Millennium Declaration.

When we look back at the First and Second United Nations Least Developed Countries Conferences (1981 and 1991), it is disappointing that these two conferences produced little impact in the LDCs. According to UN estimates, the number of people living on less than US\$1 a day in the LDCs will reach at least 420 million by 2015 if current trends continue. In the second half of the 1990s, almost nine out of ten people in African LDCs were living on less than US\$2 a day. These countries, with over 600 million people, face formidable obstacles, which include high population growth, lack of infrastructure and environmental constraints—including water shortages—declining terms of trade, barriers to market access for their products, declining external resource flows, and external debt problems.

UN LDC-III was considered a turning point in many ways. The Brussels POA differs from the earlier programmes in terms of its objectives, orientation, scope and follow-up arrangements. It provides a framework for a strong global partnership to accelerate sustained economic growth and sustainable development in these countries, as well as a framework for putting an end to marginalization. Poverty eradication, gender equality, employment, governance, capacity building, and the challenges faced by LDCs affected by conflict, are singled out in the POA as cross-cutting issues. The ultimate goal of the POA is to achieve substantial progress towards meeting the Millennium Declaration goal of reducing extreme poverty by half by 2015, and promote sustainable development.

The POA is focused on seven specific areas of commitment: (i) fostering a people-centred policy framework; (ii) good governance at the national and international levels; (iii) building human and institutional capacities; (iv) building productive capacities to make globalization work for the LDCs; (v) enhancing the role of trade and development; (vi) reducing vulnerability and protecting the environment; and (vii) mobilizing financial resources.

To undertake the follow-up and coordination of the implementation of the POA, the Office of the High Representative for LDCs, Land-Locked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) was established on the recommendation UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 56/227 of 24 December 2001. The Office of the High Representative (OHRLLS), located at UN headquarters in New York, aims to enhance the mobilization and galvanization of international support for—and ensuring the effective coordination of—the implementation of the Brussels POA.

My Office will begin with a three-pronged approach: (i) placing the issue of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS high on the intergovernmental agenda through appropriate legislative mandates, as needed; (ii) centering its focus on Africa; and (iii) establishing country-level mechanisms for implementation. It will promote linkages with civil society including NGOs involved in development efforts of LDCs as well as the private sector, academia and foundations, in an attempt to forge closer cooperation to respond more capably to LDC concerns.

With its mandate of coordination and advocacy for the effective implementation of the Brussels POA, the OHRLLS is eager to promote dialogue with the NGOs and civil society. NGOs, with their experience in collaborative and participatory approaches, can help build bridges and establish channels of communication and cooperation between people and communities on one side, and governments, development institutions, and funding agencies on the other. NGOs have the ability and commitment to work with the poor and other excluded segments of society, but they also need support to enhance their capacity and means to fulfil their job.

On many occasions in the past few years, we have seen how NGOs from the LDCs and developed and developing countries came together using new technology such as e-mail and the Internet, and have built coalitions, such as the campaign to ban landmines, and the coalition for the International Criminal Court (ICC). And, perhaps the most impressive of all was the Jubilee 2000 debt cancellation campaign.

With such coalitions, NGOs can continue to bring more LDC concerns to the international development agenda. Much development work in LDCs is attributable to NGOs—campaigns promoting literacy; the fight against HIV/AIDS and care of AIDS orphans; environmental education; as well as debt cancellation.

I would like to call on the NGO communities of the LDCs and other developed and developing countries to be active contributors in the LDCs through assisting them in the effective implementation of the Brussels POA. In the coming months, the OHRLLS will make every effort to work more closely with the NGOs and civil society. The combined efforts of all development partners would also contribute to cover substantial ground towards realizing the Millennium Development Goal of halving the numbers living in poverty by 2015.