

Inside Global Civil Society: How it Networks

World Social Forum, Porto Alegre 2003

The 2003 World Social Forum will take place in Porto Alegre, Brazil, from January 23 -28, 2003. Over 100,000 participants, including some UNAs, are expected at the Forum, which has the theme "Another world is possible".
<http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/home.asp>

Trickle Up: Building Better Lives for People Around the World, By: Francesca Campagnoli, WFUNA Intern

There is growing recognition that civil society's role in mobilizing "bottom-up demand for change" is essential for the achievement of the MDGs. Working in partnership with local organizations, Trickle Up provides conditional seed capital grants and business training to entrepreneurs who are often not eligible for micro-credit. The Trickle Up Program philosophy is: if you provide a way for people with the lowest income to start their own businesses, they will seize the opportunity to help themselves. Through its work, Trickle Up has made great strides to combat extreme poverty, empower women and support universal primary education and environmental sustainability. UNAs and Trickle Up, working in synergy, could help to raise awareness of the MDGs and empower civil society organizations to contribute to their implementation. Trickle Up Program's proven social and economic empowerment model combined with the advocacy and outreach efforts of the UNAs, could bring the United Nations closer to the peoples it serves — making the UN more relevant and valuable to people's lives in this new Millennium.

Building Links Among Asian NGOs

The Asian Civil Society Forum, convened by the Conference of NGOs in consultative relationship with United Nations (CONGO) in Bangkok, from 9 – 13 December 2002, brought together over 500 participants of Asian Civil Society Forum (ACSF) 2002, representing over 200 local, national, regional and international NGOs from more than 33 countries, on the theme "UN/NGO Partnerships for Democratic Governance: Building Capacities and Networks for Human Rights and Sustainable Development". WFUNA was represented by Deputy Secretary-General, Pera Wells, who spoke on the opening day, at the closing session and helped facilitate the discussion on the Millennium Development Goals. For further information, including the final statement, see www.acsf.net/promodoc.

The Perdita Huston Human Rights Award

On the 1 year anniversary of Perdita C. Huston's passing, her family and friends, with the help of the UNA-USA -National Capital Area Division, are commemorating her life by initiating the annual Perdita Huston Human Rights Award, recognizing an outstanding advocate for women's rights in the third world. A \$10,000 purse will be awarded to an individual "whose efforts continue Perdita Huston's work". Nominations for the 2003 award are currently being solicited. www.perditahustonaward.com



- Share your insights and experiences of participating in networks and partnerships shaping relationships between the emerging global civil society and the UN.
- Tell us all about "best practices", new initiatives, and how to optimize the benefits of information communication technologies.
- Send your feedback, comments, and suggestions for future issues to the Editor, Stephanie Rossi at editor@wfuna.org.



WFUNA-FMANU
United Nations
Room DC1-1177
New York, NY 10017, USA

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Amb. William vanden Heuvel
President, Friends of WFUNA
One UN Plaza
Room 11-77
New York NY 10017

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Economic and Social Council - High-Level Segment - July 2003

The theme for the 2003 High-Level Segment of the Economic and Social Council is "Promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development." It will be discussed at ECOSOC's substantive session in July 2003 in Geneva. NGOs in general consultative status with the Council are entitled to present their views and recommendations to the High-Level Segment of the Council. They are encouraged to consult with other NGOs in order to present recommendations that reflect civil society views at all levels - local, regional and global. Proposed studies or events should be submitted or scheduled no later than April 2003. For more information, visit <http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ecosoc/>

WFUNA to Begin Monthly Meetings on Campaign for MDGs

Following WFUNA's 20 November discussion on the role of civil society in implementing the Millennium Declaration, many civil society representatives expressed an interest in having follow-up discussions on the implementation of the MDGs. Beginning in January, WFUNA is convening monthly meetings for interested organizations on the Global Millennium Campaign. The first meeting is planned for Thursday 30 January. For more information, please contact Stephanie Rossi at rossi@wfuna.org.



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Global Civil Society Champion

Hanifa Mezoui

Chief of NGO Section, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs



"With 2,250 NGOs in consultative status with the United Nations, building coalitions and establishing networking systems will, in fact, be one of the major challenges for NGOs that seek to make a meaningful contribution to the United Nations' efforts to establish a culture of peace through international cooperation. The UN NGO Informal Regional Network (UN NGO IRENE) is an ideal vehicle for building the capacities of organizations to take part in UN work, support coalitions of NGOs and disseminate information on the work of ECOSOC. This initiative, spearheaded by the NGO Section/DESA, is intended to lift some of the barriers to effective NGO participation in the development activities of ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies and the United Nations system. The overarching goal of the Informal Network is to increase parity in the NGO sector by providing access to information and the benefits of ICT through a technology-based system designed to promote interactive exchanges among NGOs and between NGOs and the United Nations. Given the reality of the historic and regional differences in cultural structure and needs, reaching agreement on common ground for action, will be one of the first challenges. Finding a common voice with which to send the message of peace will be the second. Today NGOs are strategic partners in policy. NGOs have a crucial role to play in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. Our duty in DESA is to make sure that we look at the potential of their contribution to ECOSOC. Through our work, we channel their energy, greatly needed to reach the ultimate goal of the UN: the well being of the people and renewing the United Nations."

1 United Nations Plaza
Room DC1-1177
New York, NY 10017, USA
Tel: (212) 963-5611
Fax: (212) 963- 0447
E-mail: wfunany@wfuna.org

c/o Palais des Nations
Room E4-2A
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
Tel +41 22 917 3239
Fax +41 22 917 0185
Email: wfuna@unog.ch

www.wfuna.org

The mission of the World Federation of United Nations Associations is to inform, sustain and energize a global network of United Nations Associations to support the principles and programs of the United Nations and to help shape its agenda.

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Who's Who at the UN

Carolyn McAskie, currently the UN's Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, was designated Secretary-General **Kofi Annan's Humanitarian Envoy for the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire**. Ms. McAskie's mission will further enhance the profile of the humanitarian effort in Côte d'Ivoire and ensure that the work of the UN country team is part of a more coherent UN approach to the crisis, according to a UN Spokesman.



John C. Whitehead

Speaking at a dedication ceremony for the John C. Whitehead School of Diplomacy and International Relations at Seton Hall University, Secretary-General Kofi Annan praised **John C. Whitehead**, Board Member of the Friends of WFUNA and former US Deputy Secretary of State, as a "true internationalist who served his country by serving the world." He went on to say, "At some of its most challenging times Mr. Whitehead passionately led the charge to defend and support the very idea of the United Nations."

Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed **Angela Kane**, currently the Director of the Americas and Europe Division in the UN Department of Political Affairs in New York, as his **Deputy Special Representative for Ethiopia and Eritrea**. Ms. Kane, a national of Germany, has worked for the UN for 25 years in a variety of political and managerial positions.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan has sent his Special Advisor and former WFUNA President, **Maurice Strong**, to North Korea to assess the humanitarian situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Strong will travel first to Beijing and then Pyongyang.



WFUNA Highlights

WFUNA 37th Plenary Assembly

On the invitation of UNA-Spain, the 37th Plenary Assembly of the World Federation of United Nations Associations will be held in Barcelona from 8-11 May 2003. The Plenary Assembly is the supreme organ of the Federation, responsible for pursuing and achieving its objectives as a peoples' movement for the United Nations. Each and every United Nations Association is actively encouraged to participate in the Plenary, which shall elaborate and adopt WFUNA's policy positions as well as program of activities, including a new global initiative for youth. In addition to the formal Plenary session, WFUNA will hold a public conference on Friday 9 May with several keynote speakers. Further details on the program will be available on the WFUNA website shortly. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact wfuna@unog.ch.

Students debate key human rights issues

Some 70 students from the United Nations Associations of France, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom participated in a Model UN Commission on Human Rights on 9-10 December in Geneva. Organized under the aegis of the WFUNA Academy for a Stronger United Nations by the WFUNA staff in Geneva and UNA-UK, the event was held in the historic Palais Wilson – the original home of the League of Nations and now the office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Sergio Vieira de Mello. Three key issues were discussed – the right to conscientious objection to military service; the International Criminal Court; and the right to fresh water and sanitation, one of the key UN Millennium Development Goals which is the theme of the International Year in 2003.

What's Happening at the UN

Information about deadlines and contacts for NGO participation in UN events

Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations Resumed 2002 Session

8-24 January, UNHQ, NY
<http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo/committee.htm>

Commission for Social Development, 41st Session

10-21 February, New York
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/>

Second Preparatory Committee to the World Summit on the Information Society

Geneva - 17-28 February
<http://www.itu.int/wsis/>

Commission on the Status of Women, 47th Session

March 3-14, New York
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/47sess.htm>

UN Partnerships in Action: Implementing the Millennium Declaration

1. "Freedom From Want": The Development Agenda

UN Creates World Solidarity Fund

The 57th U.N. General Assembly passed a resolution creating a World Solidarity Fund, as recommended by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. The fund is modeled after the Tunisian National Solidarity Fund, set up by President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, and it will be set up as UNDP Trust Fund. UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown called the fund "an innovative mechanism that will support national development efforts with the energy of community-based organizations, the commitment of individuals and the vibrancy of the private sector". He went on to say, "We ... look forward ... to making full use of this instrument of world solidarity as we move to implement the Millennium Development Goals." <http://www.solidarity-fund.org/>



2. "Freedom From Fear": The Security Agenda

Civil Society Peace Group, with support from UN Agencies, promotes community dialogue in Côte d'Ivoire

With a delicate ceasefire in position in Côte d'Ivoire, UNDP and UNICEF are supporting efforts by the Civil Society Peace Group (*Collectif de la Société Civile pour la Paix*) to reduce religious and ethnic tensions and promote human rights, tolerance and peace. The Peace Group is setting up local committees to encourage leaders to promote peace and reconciliation in their communities. UNDP arranged for two consultants from Search for Common Ground, a conflict resolution organization based in Washington, DC, to help the peace efforts. The consultants met with political parties, traditional chiefs, religious leaders, women's organizations and youth groups and discussed proposals for activities by local committees, including confidence building among members and establishing a code of conduct defining members' rights and responsibilities. (Relief Web 17 December)

3. "A Sustainable Future": The Environmental Agenda

Europe's Financial Community Discusses Follow-up to World Summit on Sustainable Development

Environmental risk and the impact of recent financial scandals on corporate governance were high on the agenda at a gathering of Europe's financial community on 10 January in Paris hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiatives (UNEP-FI). The one-day meeting brought together more than 250 bankers, insurers and asset managers from across Europe to look at the implications of last year's World Summit on Sustainable Development. UNEP-FI, a public-private partnership between UNEP and some 300 financial institutions worldwide, launched a special 16-page newsletter report on corporate finance for the conference. Some of the key speakers have contributed articles to the newsletter (available at www.unepfi.net).

4. "Renewing the UN: The Institutional Agenda

General Assembly Adopts Key Reform Measures

Wrapping up the main part of its session, the General Assembly adopted the Secretary-General's proposed agenda for further reform of the UN. Among numerous measures set out, the Assembly supported

- the proposed systematic evaluation of the impact, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the UN Department of Public Information
- the decision to entrust key responsibilities to the Special Adviser on Africa, including coordinating guidance on the continent and supporting the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).
- the establishment of a panel of eminent persons, "reflecting a diversity of views," to review the relationship between the UN and civil society.

NGOs Concerned about Exclusion from Conference Follow-Up

The General Assembly adopted a draft resolution that established a working group to follow-up on UN conferences in the economic and social fields. The final resolution does not include any provisions for NGOs, but the *International NGO Task Group on Legal and Institutional Matters* appealed to the President and Chairs to allow NGOs monitoring rights. (INTGLIM 17 December)

<http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/ngo-un/ga/2002/1217include.htm>

"If we want to save Africa from two catastrophes [famine and AIDS], we would do well to focus on saving Africa's women."

– Secretary-General Kofi Annan in an opinion piece that was published in The New York Times and in the International Herald Tribune