



Women's

Federation for World Peace International

United Nations Office Newsletter

Fall 2005

Our Challenge: Voices for Peace, Partnerships and Renewal 58th Annual DPI/NGO Conference

September 7-9, 2005 - UN HQ, New York



WFWPI Delegation to the 58th DPI/NGO Conference at the opening session in the General Assembly Hall.

By Bonnie Berry

A Call to Action to the General Assembly of the UN: *"We, the Thousands of NGOs meeting at the UN today, urge at this crucial time in the world's need for security, peace and development, that you embrace the larger vision of the UN to benefit all the peoples of the world. We urge you to yield narrow interests and to work with each other for real change, expressed in concrete terms in the 2005 World Summit Outcomes Document. Please do not squander this opportunity."*

Representatives of the 58th Annual DPI/NGO Conference formulated this statement and it was presented and approved at the closing session of the conference as our collective message to the General Assembly deliberators that we are watching, listening and insisting on advancement for the benefit of all on security, peace and development. The fact that the DPI/NGO Conference formulated this message at all is a testament to our sense of empowerment as a group, as a result of much affirmation that NGOs and Civil Society have been at the heart of formation of political will

to bring about important changes and advancement through our activism as well as our grassroots service efforts. At this printing, an outcome document has been agreed upon that defines action on many of the critical areas stated in Secretary General Kofi Annan's report, "In Larger Freedom" that the General Assembly had been deliberating on. (Complete text of outcome document available at www.un-ngls.org/UN-summit)

This year's DPI/NGO Conference came at the culmination of at least six months process of engaging the Voices of the NGO and Civil Society sector regarding the Millennium Summit of the General Assembly evaluation of progress and process toward achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. NGOs in consultative status with the UN were invited to respond in writing to the Secretary General's report. These responses, including that of WFWPI, were compiled into a document that became part of the GA's permanent record. In addition, The Congress of NGOs (CONGO), the Millennium + 5 Network and others solicited input from us on a myriad of issues surrounding implementation of the

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Millennium Development Goals, and this input was compiled into a report. Finally, first ever in the history of the UN, unprecedented joint informal hearings with civil society and the General Assembly were held June 23 and 24 at UN New York Headquarters.

The hearings provided historic momentum as NGOs and Civil Society organizations had the opportunity to experience increased and strengthened participation within the United Nations system. This momentum set the stage for the largest number of NGOs and participants at any DPI/NGO Conference, with over 2000 NGOs represented by 3500 participants from more than 100 nations. Also, this conference was the final gathering of civil society representatives prior to the General Assembly meeting for the 2005 World Summit.

The opening session of the conference was addressed by notables Under-Secretary General for Public Information and Communications Shashi Tharoor, as moderator, General Assembly President Mr. Jean Ping, Under-Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs and

Our Challenge, continued on pg. 10



Statement of Purpose

The Women's Federation for World Peace International (WFWPI) supports a network of National WFWPI Chapters worldwide. WFWPI Chapters adhere to the principle that women, working together, taking initiative and empowering one another across traditional lines of race, culture and religion to create healthy families, are resolving the complex problems of our societies and world.

Ultimately "solutions" come as *true* partnerships between men and women are established in all levels of society. The beginning point is within society's most elemental level—the family. Peace then expands into our communities, nation and world.

Therefore, WFWPI works to provide women worldwide with:
the knowledge, tools and support needed to create peace at home, peace in our communities, our nations and our world.

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At the UN in New York...

Reports of NGO Briefings

HIV/AIDS and Family Well-Being

In Observance of the International Day of Families on May 15th
May 12, 2005 - UN HQ, New York

By *Motoko Sugiyama*

The observance was organized jointly by UN DPI, DESA and New York NGO Committee on the Family. First, the video on "Grandmothers Against Poverty and AIDS" made in Cape Town, South Africa was shown. The story was about grandmothers who lost their daughters to HIV/AIDS and are raising their grandchildren left behind after their daughters' death and the support group they formed, "GAPA".

Mr. Paul Hoeffel, Chief of NGO Section, DPI opened the briefing by introducing a message from the Secretary General read by Mr. John Shclilvinck, Director for Social Policy and Development of DESA.

S.G. Kofi Annan stated in his message that the impact of HIV/AIDS on families is particularly devastating for children. The absence of caring and supportive adults leaves many children highly vulnerable to discrimination, child labor or other forms of exploitative behavior and in turn to HIV infection. We must do all we can to help the family remain resilient. UNGA Special Session on HIV/AIDS in 2001 recognized the important role played by the family in prevention, care and support. It called on governments to develop or strengthen strategies, policies and programmes.

The first speaker, Dr. Mark Belsey, retired officer of WHO and author of "AIDS and the Family Capital" UN/DESA publication, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the publication. He quoted from the speech of Dr. Nakajima, Director General of WHO, given on World AIDS Day December 1, 1994. "Families whose bonds are based on love, trust, maturity and openness are the best place to protect their members from infection and to give compassionate care." However, there are 108.4 million households in 34 Sub-Saharan African countries. Among them, 13 million families were affected by HIV/AIDS in 2003 alone. In closing, Dr. Belsey stressed that the crisis in family capital due to the loss of adults, etc. makes the whole country become dysfunctional. There can be no society without families and there can be no family without society.

The next speaker, H.E. Mr. Alfred M. Dube, Ambassador to UN from Botswana stated that his country had been devastated by HIV/AIDS. However, since the National AIDS Council created a strategy as follows: 1. Prevention, 2. Treatment, 3. Care, 4. Support, testing of all pregnant women and volunteer testing around the country began. Through support from pharmaceutical companies, free drugs for treatment are available in every part of the country. 30 million people are being treated. Mr. Dube informed us that the successful program has saved a great number of babies. National resources and international partnerships are keys to the successful prevention program.

The third speaker, Ms. Beatrice Krauss, Executive Director, Hunter College Center for Community and Urban Health shared her experience with a family education program for HIV/AIDS prevention. HIV is new to grandparents and parents. Those two generations need to be educated first, then the family as a whole needs to be trained not to be silent and scared.

During the Q & A period, the questions were focused on: UN's ABC program to prevent HIV (ABC stands for Abstinence, Be faithful, Condoms.) and Uganda's remarkable success of reducing HIV/AIDS epidemic by emphasizing abstinence education.

Dr. Belsey responded to the questions by saying that we need all three ABC components to succeed and we shouldn't narrow the focus only to abstinence because the most important point is to emphasize responsible sexuality. Uganda's fight against AIDS started immediately after 1984's first epidemic and it took 20 years to succeed. It was not simple. Botswana will be the next success after Uganda.

On the International Day of Families, we came to understand more deeply and clearly that strengthening families and focusing on the value of families is most essential. It is within the family, protected by love and compassion that people have the greatest potential to become their best and truest selves. We must truly expand our love and compassion to the whole world as members of one human family on this global home.



Preview of General Assembly Hearings with Civil Society on Millenium +5 Summit

June 9, 2005 - UN HQ, New York

By *Motoko Sugiyama*

The briefing was moderated by Mr. Paul Hoeffel, Chief of NGO Section, DPI.

H.E. Mr. Tommo Montke, Deputy to the Chief Cabinet, Office of the President of the 59th Session of GA overviewed the process to the GA's Informal Hearings with Civil Society led by president of GA, Mr. Jean Ping. He stressed that the president of GA will take the outcome of these hearings very seriously.

H.E. Mr. Eduardo J. Sevilla Somoza, Ambassador to UN from Nicaragua stated that he is fully supporting the President of GA for his initiative in holding the Hearings. He believes we are taking a major step with these Hearings because the UN is more than just the member states, but also civil society, NGOs, and the private sector.

H. E. Mr. John L Lovald, Ambassador to UN from Norway commended the GA President and his office and all who were involved with the process. He also praised the release of the GA President's Draft Outcome document for the GA Summit.

Ms. Gemma Adaba, Member, Task Force for the General Assembly/Civil Society Hearings, and UN representative of International Free Trade Unions, appreciated the openness of the GA President to civil society. She explained that since January 2005, members of the task force have been proactive to facilitate every voice of civil society to be heard before the September Summit. The task force defined four themes from the SG's report, "In Larger Freedom: Towards Security,

Development and Human Rights for All (A/59/2005)" for discussion. They are: Freedom from Want, Freedom from Fear, Freedom to Live in Dignity, and Strengthening the United Nations.

In the 2-day Hearings, there will be four NGO speakers, four civil society speakers and four private sector speakers followed by questions from active participants. Also there will be an interactive session of member states as well as an NGO section side event.

Task Force member and conference coordinator for Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, Mr. Vandy Kanyako stressed that there are two guiding principles for the upcoming hearings: interaction, and inclusion. He emphasized that this is a golden opportunity to maximize the inclusiveness of the summary document to the GA Summit.

H.E. Mr. Montke concluded the meeting, informing us that the GA President had advised all member states to participate in the Hearings. The GA President will revise the outcome document based on the Hearings, the G8 Summit, African Union meetings and others. His summary will be the broadest possible in defining the right direction toward human dignity and security for all.

The human family faces very critical issues, yet our beliefs and commitments should keep us continuing to work together for a better world. Indeed the UN, especially the General Assembly is taking a great step forward through this upcoming hearing by including efforts and voices of more NGOs and civil society.



At UNICEF, June 20, 2005: A presentation of donation, the AID for Children Victims of Earthquake and Tsunami in South East Asia in December 2004 by Mrs. Motoko Sugiyama, VP of WFPW International representing WFPW International and WFPW Japan to Mrs. Meg Gardinier, Managing Director, Educational Community Partnership, US Fund for UNICEF.

Reports from Special Events

Informal Interactive Hearings of the General Assembly with NGOs, Civil Society Organizations and the Private Sector

June 23-24, 2005 - UN HQ, New York

By *Merly Barete-Barlaan*

On June 23-24, 2005, the General Assembly met to launch its first-ever informal interactive hearings with representatives of civil society, nongovernmental organizations and the private sector at UN Headquarters, New York, in preparation for its high-level plenary meeting scheduled for 14 to 16 September, at the beginning of its sixtieth session. The themes for the hearings are based on the Secretary General's report, "In Larger Freedom".

At the opening of the General Assembly dialogue with NGOs, civil society and the private sector, Deputy Secretary General Louise Frchette said that the world can either tackle threats collectively, or risk increased disorder

and inequality. Ms. Frchette said the hearings were a significant new step in the way the United Nations related to civil society. Ms. Renate Bloem, President of the Conference of NGOs (CONGO), declared the day a historic moment built on a long history of growing interaction between governments and civil society. General Assembly President Jean Ping said he appreciated the sense of responsibility the task force had displayed and he hoped that the hearings would provide the framework for a fruitful dialogue. A wide range of participants from 200 civil society organizations, NGOs (including Women's Federation for World Peace, International), the private sector, and more than 1,000 observers were in attendance. The interactive hearings were focused on

themes from the Secretary General's report, "In Larger Freedom, as follows: freedom from want; freedom from fear; freedom to live in dignity; and strengthening the United Nations.

Freedom to Live in Dignity Session

In the first hearing, Freedom to Live in Dignity was discussed. During the dialogue a number of speakers emphasized the need to include women, children, youth, and indigenous people when discussing and taking action on human rights. Several speakers urged the international community to commit itself to poverty reduction as a whole in order to achieve the MDGs. Speakers stressed the need to advance human rights for all people and

GA Interactive Hearing, *continued on pg. 4*

GA Interactive Hearing, continued from pg. 3 strengthen the commitment to democracy, emphasizing that they would like the outcome document to be more specific on how human rights can be enforced and how accountability can be strengthened.

The Ambassador from Egypt responded to concerns raised by the speakers. He said that support for all the initiatives should be addressed through development efforts. There should be more interactive work among all States, without claims of supremacy. Argentina's Ambassador said he agreed on the formation of a Human Rights Council. The United Nations needs more power to intervene in areas where human rights are being violated. The Ambassador of Norway said he had taken into consideration the various views presented, and promised that States would continue to work on the issues. He emphasized the need to achieve gender equality in order to achieve the MDGs by 2015. The Ambassador of Germany said that the proposal in the draft outcome document for a Human Rights Council was very important. He asked the NGO representatives to recommend how to structure the new body. The Ambassador of Canada expressed her country's strong commitment to multilateralism, civil society partnerships and coordination, and said that she was happy to see the wide range of issues represented.

Freedom from Want Session

The Interactive Segment on Freedom from Want was opened by General Assembly President Jean Ping with Shannon Kowalkski of Family Care International as Rapporteur. During the dialogue, several speakers connected achieving the MDGs to promoting the right to freedom from want. Many spoke about the importance of providing Family Planning information. Some speakers called for the involvement of young people in decision-making. Young people should be more involved and integrated in the development of their countries. Other speakers emphasized that the way to achieve freedom from want was to promote sustainable development in both production and consumption.

The Ambassador of Tunisia agreed that wording and focus must be on eradicating poverty rather than merely reducing it. Ambassador of Sweden said that the MDGs served as both a "road map and a yardstick" for measuring progress. Countries should be responsible to monitor their own progress toward reaching the MDGs. Ambassador of Luxembourg spoke on behalf of the European Union and Associated States, to support the decision by the European Commission to increase its support for development by 2015 to 20 million euros per year. He said development was an issue for the EU and a central dimension of the outcome they hoped

to see for the September Summit. The EU is on track to fulfill its Monterrey commitments. The Ambassador of Norway stressed the need to increase the momentum existing today. Recipient countries should take the primary responsibility for their own development with good governance and anticorruption measures. The Ambassador of Egypt indicated that methods for official review of commitments for official development assistance (ODA) be developed. He also stressed strengthening of interdependence between the Bretton Woods institutions, the WTO and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

"Together we can make poverty history!"

Some NGOs expressed concerns that development will get lost in the discussion of UN reform and emphasized that development should be rooted in a rights based approach. Debt cancellation and aid quality are critical aspects of advancing the development agenda. In addressing the issue of debt, a speaker from Zambia said he believed that trade rather than aid was the way for Africa to be donor independent. Speakers also stressed that promises made 10 years ago to cancel debt had not been fulfilled. Thirty six years had passed since countries had committed to meeting ODA targets. That anniversary can not be celebrated. Eliminating conditions on ODA was asked for. Richer countries were urged to fulfill their commitments in order to improve the quantity and effectiveness of aid. Many speakers noted that social indicators had deteriorated in the 1990s. Unless the MDGs are attained, millions will continue to live in poverty.

Freedom from Fear Session

This session focused on the Prevention of Armed Conflict. Many speakers from civil society and Member States welcomed the Secretary General's proposal for a Peace Building Commission to serve in post conflict situations and advised this commission to partner actively with civil society. Several speakers stressed the need to shift from reaction to prevention of armed conflict, emphasizing the need for early warning systems. The discussion between governments and civil society focused on the important role of civil society in conflict prevention and resolution. Africa and the Middle East were focused on, with calls for more resources to strengthen conflict prevention mechanisms, end poverty and ensure good governance. **The role of women is very important in peace building and conflict prevention and resolution processes.**

Strengthening the UN Session

Speakers highlighted several key recommendations: Advancement of women's NGO involvement, new human rights mechanisms must incorporate past successes. Establishing a new relationship between poor and rich countries, paying more attention to poor countries is essential. **There were calls for ending both the veto and permanent membership, increasing the number of members and above all improving the working methods of the Security Council, as well as providing longer lead times for NGO participation and increased funding for NGO and civil society engagement at the country level.** Proposals for reform of ECOSOC included support for its becoming a high level development forum. It was widely agreed that the time had come for Heads of State to create a more equal partnership between the UN and the International Financial Institutions.

Closing Session

"Together we can make poverty history," was Secretary General Kofi Annan's confident message at the closing session of the hearing, stressing that the United Nations would need to work in close partnership with civil society to implement every decision made during the upcoming September World Summit. He said that a wide range of issues had been raised, including gender, human rights, conflict prevention, trade, and debt. GA President Jean Ping said, in his closing remarks, that the hearings were a milestone in the relationship between Member States and civil society. The debate would contribute greatly to the consultations being held among Member States for the high-level plenary in September. The range in perspectives and range of questions, though they did not yet appear in the draft outcome document, were already being discussed in the Assembly. A number of speakers and observers commended the efforts of GA President Jean Ping and the task force on the quality and diversity of presentations and interventions. **Some observers noted that the formal format of the hearings prevented a genuine interactive exchange of views between civil society and governments. None the less, this was a historical event. Hopefully, it is just a beginning and the process will be developed into an even more effective format for the future.**



Achieving the Internationally Agreed Upon Development Goals

ECOSOC High Level Segment

June 29 - July 1, 2005 - ECOSOC Chamber, UN HQ, New York

By *Motoko Sugiyama*

The theme of this High Level Segment was "Achieving the Internationally Agreed Upon Development Goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, as well as Implementing the Outcomes of Major UN Conferences and Summits: Progress Made, Challenges and Opportunities."

H.E. Mr. Munir Akram, President of ECOSOC opened by pointing out that this year's session occurs at a crucial point. The GA just concluded its High Level Dialogue on Financing for Development and preparations for the September High Level event on the 60th Anniversary of the UN are well underway. In both the SG's report, and ECOSOC's deliberations, there is a sense of urgency to respond to challenges of development and solve poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, marginalization and joblessness.

There is a serious deficit in the level of commitment to implement MDGs. **At the**

present pace the MDGs may not be realized for one hundred years or more. Yet, we continue to hope because the political will to succeed is growing. There is visible support among people in richer countries. Many developing countries are succeeding in growth and development. Solutions for global underdevelopment will have to be comprehensive and coherent, encompassing adequate external financing, larger trade opportunities and good global governance. Such comprehensive and coherent solutions can be evolved within the framework of the UN and its Economic and Social Council.

Mr. Akram concluded that the comprehensive participation, goal oriented focus and growing commitment to making poverty history will enable this meeting to bring forth ideas, initiatives, conclusions and recommendations to promote the vital development goals to which we all are committed.

Secretary General Mr. Kofi Annan's address followed. (Mr. Annan's address can be found at <http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/meetings/2005/hl2005/Annan.pdf>.)

The High Level Segment's 3 day program consisted of: 1. High Level policy dialogue on current development in the world economy and international economic cooperation in the context of achieving the MDGs. 2. Roundtable dialogue (eight topics). 3. Ministerial round table (six topics). and 4. General debate on the theme of the High Level Segment. The three day session ended with adoption of the Ministerial Declaration. **Please visit "President's Summary of the High-level Segment of the Substantive Session of ECOSOC 2005 at <http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/meetings/2005/hl2005/05PresSummaryHL.pdf> for full text.**



Hoping and Coping: A Call for Action, the Capacity Challenge of HIV/AIDS in Least Developed Countries

ECOSOC Coordination Segment

July 12, 2005 - Conference Room 1, UN HQ, New York

By *Motoko Sugiyama*

This Launch Program was organized by UN OHRLLS (Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) and UNDP (United Nations Development Program).

Chairman H.E. Mr. Felipe Chidumo, Ambassador to the UN from Mozambique opened the programme, stating that LDCs (Least Developed Countries) depend on agriculture and natural resources for survival. 43% of the population in LDCs earn under \$1.00 per day and 35% don't get their basic needs met. Also, the HIV/AIDS crisis challenges these countries immensely. Mr. Zephirin Diabre, Associate Administrator, UNDP pointed out that 11-14 million people infected by HIV/AIDS live in LDCs. Life expectancy is rapidly decreasing. Mr. Chidumo commended the efforts of UNDP and UN OHRLLS for their focus on 50 LDCs countries illuminated in the report.

Mr. Anwarul Chowdhury, the Under-Secretary General and High Representative of OHRLLS explained that this report is a result of the collaboration of UNDP and UNOHRLLS. He stressed that leadership is crucial. The countries can choose to utilize the report and implement its advice. Mr. Oussau Edouard Aho-Glele, Chief Charge d' Affairs

of Benin and Chairman of the Coordination Bureau for LDCs agreed that implementation of the report's suggested initiatives is critical.

Presentation of the report was by two key contributors from OHRLLS and UNDP, Ms. Zahra Nuru, Director/Senior Advisor to the Under-Secretary General and High Representative and Dr. Joseph Annan, Senior Policy Advisor HIV/AIDS Group, UNDP. **Ms. Nuru stated that 22 million out of the 40 million infected in the past have died. People are dying of HIV/AIDS slowly, so HIV/AIDS victims don't get attention the way victims of a sudden crisis do. Many more women are dying than men. Women are dying of HIV/AIDS nine times faster in LDCs as in developed countries.**

Dr. Annan explained the Ten Action Points from A Call for Action listed on page 4 of the published report. Interactive discussions followed. Questions arose from Representatives of some developed country missions to the UN. Some questions were: 1. Among countries categorized as LDCs, each LDC has diverse situations, in view of this how can we improve national capacity? 2. UNAIDS set the program already. How does this report change the programme? 3. How can this report cover all LDCs?

Mr. Shoji Nishimoto, Assistant Administrator and Director of UNDP Bureau

for Development Policy reminded us that HIV/AIDS is a very complex issue. It is very different in LDCs than developed nations. UNDP and OHRLLS are already cooperating. UNDP faces challenges daily. Issues are being examined from multiple perspectives. LDCs have the least capacity or no capacity to present their problems so UNDP and OHRLLS strategy is: 1. Residential coordination of efforts in each of the 50 LDCs, 2. Integration between OHRLLS and UNDP, 3. Member states, civil society, and media will partner. **Mr. Nishimoto concluded by giving a formal vote of thanks but also stressing that HIV/AIDS is a real threat to humankind, and immediate action is urgently needed to minimize the threat.**

* **50 LDCs are:** Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Kiribati, Laos People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Rwanda, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Island, Somalia, Sudan, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zambia.



At the UN in Geneva ...

The Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights

August 12, 2005 - UN Geneva

By Carolyn Handschin

The Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights concluded its 57th session on August 12, 2005. In his concluding remarks, Chairperson Vladimir Katashkin reassured the body that no matter what the reforms may be for the human rights mechanisms, the need for a body such as the Sub-Commission was evident.

The Sub-Commission is the main subsidiary body of the Commission on Human Rights established by the Commission at its first session in 1947 under the authority of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Its title was changed in 1999 by ECOSOC from Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to its present name.

Its functions are twofold: To undertake studies guided by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, resulting in recommendations to the Commission concerning the prevention of discrimination of any kind relating to human rights, fundamental freedoms, the protection of racial, national, religious and linguistic minorities and secondly, to perform any other functions which may be entrusted to it by the Council or the Commission.

The Sub-Commission is composed of 26 experts who act in their personal capacity and are elected by the Commission with equitable geographical distribution of membership. The present membership consists of seven experts from African States, five from Asian States, five from Latin American States, three from Eastern European States and six from Western European and other States. Half the members and their alternates are elected every two years and each serves for a term of four years.

The Sub-Commission meets annually in Geneva. In addition to members, it is attended by observers from States, United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, other intergovernmental organizations and NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.

At present, the Sub-Commission has six working groups: the Working Group on Communications (deals with complaints of gross and reliably attested violations of human rights, together with replies from Governments), Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, Working Group on Indigenous Populations, Working Group on Minorities, Working Group on Administration of Justice; and Working Group on Transnational Corporations.

Although this year's Sub-Commission took decisive action in numerous areas, the uncertainty of its future weighed heavily on the deliberations. Addressing the Sub-Commission at the opening session was UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour. She emphasized that over the years, the Sub-Commission had provided the Commission on Human Rights and other human rights mechanisms with invaluable insights through the studies and working papers undertaken by its members.

NGO participation at the Sub-Commission has been more acceptable than at the Commission itself, but that too is called into question by anticipated UN reforms. In support of NGO collaboration, issues were raised related to implementing more efficient methods for NGO intervention, including joint statements, better networking to prevent repetition and possibly a future pre-session meeting between experts and NGO's to glean prominent issues.

Other developments in this session included the appointment of Special Rapporteurs to prepare a comprehensive study on how best to include economic, social and cultural rights in international, regional and bilateral technical cooperation in the field of human rights. Special Rapporteur, Yozo Yakota, was asked to prepare a study of discrimination towards leprosy victims and their families. Another Special Rapporteur was asked to prepare a study on the accountability of international peacekeepers involved in peace support operations.

Several members were asked to prepare or expand their working papers: Vladimir Kartashkin on human rights and state sovereignty; Francoise Jane Hampson on the circumstances in which civilians lose their immunity from attack under international humanitarian law. Janio Ivan Tunon Veilles was likewise asked on transitional justice and investigation mechanisms for truth and reconciliation.

Concerning two former Experts of the Sub-Commission, Special Rapporteur Barbara Frey was asked to submit her final paper on the violations committed with small arms and light weapons. Special Rapporteur Leila Zerrougui was requested to present her paper on discrimination in the criminal justice system. Following the decision of Special Rapporteur



Halima Embarek Warzazi to discontinue her mandate, the Sub-Commission invited the Commission on Human Rights to request its Special Rapporteur on violence against women to consider the issue of harmful traditional practices affecting the health of women and the girl as an integral part of her mandate.

A resolution was agreed on that the transfer of person(s) to a State where that person faced a real risk of being subjected to torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or extra-judicial killing is a breach of customary international law. Also, two Rapporteurs were requested to prepare a study on the implementation in practice of the right to an effective remedy for human rights violations.

The Sub-Commission took special interest in the World Programme for Human Rights Education and adopted measures to ensure human rights education be included in the agenda of the annual meeting of the chairs of treaty bodies so that they could make recommendations on how human rights education could contribute to national capacity building aimed at strengthening national human rights protection mechanisms.

In fervent anticipation of a continued mandate, dates were set for the Sub-Commission in 2006.



*"And into plowshares turn their swords."
(Sculpture on UN grounds, New York)*

At the UN in Vienna ...

By Elizabeth Riedl

WFWP Austria has been actively engaged with the Working Group on Peace. Dr. Maria Reihl, one of the founding members of WFWP Austria is a Working Group for Peace board member. The Working Group for Peace organized a number of activities this year that were held at the Vienna International Centre, Vienna's UN Headquarters complex. In addition to the organizing efforts of Dr. Reihl, a delegation of WFWP members participated in these activities.



In advance of the 2005 Review Conference for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held May 2-27, 2005 in NY, the Working Group on Peace composed a letter to the Heads of State of the five nuclear weapon states asking them to agree to an agenda under which the operation of the Treaty and the long term aims of it could be discussed as well as advancement in transparency regarding storage locations of weapons outside their own territories. The letter also requested that these states maintain the present moratorium on nuclear testing and articulate their commitment to this ban. Twenty two NGO representatives signed the letter including 4 WFWP reps. The letters were hand delivered between Jan 26 and February 23, 2005 and discussed with representatives of the heads of state. A similar letter was taken to non-NPT adhering nuclear weapons states India, Israel and Pakistan asking them to commit to NPT, nonproliferation and disarmament.

Other speaking events organized by the Working Group on Peace and attended by WFWP representatives: "The Non-Aligned Movement, Initiatives for Peace and Development", a talk by Ambassador Hussein Haniff, Permanent Rep. of Malaysia to the UN, Vienna and Ambassador to Austria on Jan 5, 2005, "The United Nations in the 21st Century – Threats, Challenges, Change – The recommendations of the panel convened by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan" a panel discussion held on Feb. 23, 2005.

A most significant commemoration was held on August 5, 2005. The Peace Bell in Memorial Plaza at the Vienna International Centre was rung at 1:00PM in remembrance of the sixtieth anniversary of the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This gave us all the opportunity to reflect on the importance of working to prevent the use of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and emphasized how critical it is for the international community to make this goal among the highest priority. A message from Secretary General Kofi Annan was read and distinguished Ambassadors and a medical doctor, all taking leadership in non-proliferation work spoke as a part of the commemorative event.



At the UN in Bangkok

AIDS Prevention Seminar

March 21, 2005 - UN Bangkok

By Delia Javanasundara

WFWP Thailand and Japan cohosted an AIDS Prevention Seminar on March 21 at the United Nations Conference Center, sponsored by the NPO Mayumi Foundation. Most of the 110 participants were high school teachers keenly interested in this issue.



Dr. Phakong Wittayasai, Executive Committee of Support the Children Foundation, presented up-to-date and practical approaches for AIDS patients. Mr. Patrick

Brenny, UNAIDS Coordinator, Thailand reported that 50% of those infected globally and 57% in Sub-Saharan Africa are women. Half of new infections in Thailand are estimated to be housewives and about 70% of new infections among Thai youth (age 15-24) are among young girls. Three points about women's vulnerability to HIV infection were mentioned: biological, socio-cultural and economic.

Suggestions were given for what can be done: provide equal access to health care and education, especially for young girls; reduce violence against and trafficking of women; protect property and inheritance rights for

women; especially women of PLHAs; promote prevention alternatives which support and favor women and young girls.



Activities Around the World in 2005

Creating a Culture of Peace for Our Children

9th Annual Women's Conference for Peace in the Middle East
May 16-19, 2005 - Athens, Greece

By Carolyn Handschin

The Women's Federation for World Peace International together with Women's Federation for World Peace - Japan held their annual Women's Conference for Peace in the Middle East on May 16-19, 2005 in a tranquil and picturesque setting along the sea coast just outside of Athens, Greece. The issue of this year's conference was chosen in order to address the gaps between the goals and vision for the **Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for our Children** (2001-2010) and their implementation at this mid-term mark with hopes of reinvigorating the process. In attendance were thirty nine women leaders from 15 Middle Eastern countries and Palestine

including ministers, congresswomen and experts in the fields of education, youth, development, human rights and law, government and non-governmental relations, communications and media, finance, health and environment.

The conference chair, Dr. Lan Young Moon Park, the president of WFWPI, invited the participants during the sessions to consider how to institutionalize a culture of peace on the family level as an accessible means to generate future leaders who would expect and promote the same for the



societies that they influence. H.E. In'am Al-Mufti, Congresswoman in the Jordanian Upper House and conference cochair reminded all in attendance that creating a culture of peace is the responsibility of

MIDDLE EAST: Peace for Our Children, *contd on pg. 11*

7th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific

July 1-5, 2005 - Kobe Convention Center, Kobe City, Hyogo, Japan

By Chika Yasojima, WFWP Japan

Japan is the only country among developed countries where those affected with HIV are increasing yearly. From that perspective, the fact that the International Congress on AIDS was held in Japan helped awaken the Japanese to this growing problem and thus was very significant.

The congress was sponsored by UNAIDS, AIDS Society of Asia and the Pacific (ASAP), six other AIDS related organizations, and six special sponsors such as the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. The local governments such as Hyogo Prefecture and Kobe city, the Boards of Education, the media, and medical organizations such as Japanese Red Cross Society also supported the congress. Approximately 4,500 people including 2,750 registered participants and staff members from 70 countries participated in this conference. It was the biggest meeting ever in the history of this congress. Four members of WFWP Japan registered and participated.

This time in particular, there were many domestic and overseas participants who were HIV positive. Attention was focused on stigma and discrimination toward those infected.

The congress dealt with broad themes such as medical research, prevention, treatment, care and support for those with

HIV, gender, politics and economics. It consisted of plenary sessions, oral sessions, symposia, skill building workshops, satellite workshops, various forums, and poster presentations. There were about 150 sessions during the four day event. In addition, about 90 groups including WFWP Japan set up exhibition booths and presented their activities.

All sessions were held in English, but some sessions were also held in Japanese so that more Japanese could participate. Many Japanese participants were interested in the session on "How can the local community accept those with HIV" and "How condoms are introduced into the classroom."

Mr. JVR Prasada Rao, Regional Director of the Regional Support Team of UNAIDS, spoke on the AIDS situation in Japan. He pointed out that in Japan, in reflection of political priority, measures focusing on drug users and the sex industry, who have high infection rate, have not been established. He emphasized that the respective governments must first accept that people under vulnerable conditions exist in their countries. It may not lead to political popularity, but this is an issue that requires immediate response just as last year's tsunamis did. Strong leadership is required.

Because the Japanese Parliament was in session on a bill, none of Japan's leaders, including the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, spoke publicly at the congress. The initiative of governments has been very

important in many of the success stories on AIDS issues. The total number of people with HIV/AIDS in Japan is more than 10,000, but it is said there are more than 50,000 potentially. Many medical doctors feel an imminent crisis of an explosion of the epidemic in ten years. This is a serious issue that the Japanese government must soon face and deal with.

**Exhibition booth of WFWP Japan,
Theme: Abstinence and Self-Control**



The theme of this congress was "Bridging Science and Community." Therefore, WFWP Japan focused on our community based grassroots AIDS preventive education as the theme of our exhibition booth.

JAPAN: AIDS Congress, *contd on pg. 11*

Activities Around the World in 2005

Uniting Women to Take Action: Moral Healing of Our Families & Societies

June 2005 - Report

By Lily Chen, WFWP Taiwan

❖ About Taiwan

Taiwan is an island of 36,000 square kilometers lying off China's southeast coast, north of the Philippines. Rugged mountains comprise two thirds of the island, while 23 million people make their homes in the one-quarter of the territory that is inhabitable. The average lifespan is 76.7 years, and the literacy rate is 94%.

The current living conditions of women in Taiwan can be described with the "three lows and highs of women": low birth rate, low educational investment, and low job opportunities/salaries; high rate of violence against women, high contributions to domestic labor, and high social contributions. This means that women still have many obstacles and hindrances in the development of certain areas such as education and employment, and we need to pay more attention to the rights of women.

WFWP Taiwan Activities

❖ Empowerment Training for Women Leaders in the Community

The content of this series included the topics: women's growth and life planning, community consciousness and service, women and gender education, utilizing community resources, the art of talking, and development of potential.

❖ Women & AIDS Prevention

As of April 2005, the number of HIV+ in Taiwan was 8316. Among the HIV carriers, the number of women & girls are increasing rapidly. In view of this, WFWP Taiwan held "Women & AIDS Prevention—Women Elites Growth Camp" on Sept.12-13, 2004, and on April 10-11, 2005.

Scholars and medical experts instructed participants about best practices for AIDS prevention during the keynote speech and panel discussions. Group discussions about morals and ethics to help raise awareness of personal and spiritual values were also held to empower women to make healthy choices regarding sexual activity.

❖ Training Camp on Pure Love for Youth Leaders

Young people cannot protect themselves if they do not know the facts about HIV/AIDS. Educating young people about HIV/AIDS, and teaching them skills in negotiation, conflict resolution, critical thinking, decision making and communication, improves their self-confidence and ability to make informed choices. It was with this purpose that WFWP Taiwan organized a Training Camp for 60 Junior and Senior High School Youth Leaders on AIDS Prevention.

❖ Youth! Let's Show Our Concern for AIDS—Q & A Activity & AIDS Prevention Speech Campaign



Observing the rapid increase of youth carriers of HIV in Taiwan, WFWP continued to hold the "Youth! Let's Show Our Concern for AIDS" project. Each September since 2000, we have sent posters to 4480 schools (junior high/ senior high schools, colleges, universities) and culture centers. The Ministry of Education assisted us by sending official letters to all schools introducing this campaign. Two Broadcasting Networks assisted by publicizing this activity. We also delivered AIDS prevention information by video, speech, Chinese talk show, and using role playing. Content includes: what is AIDS, causes and spread of AIDS, prevention.



Emphasis was on the importance of abstinence and gender respect.

In 2004 WFWP speakers gave talks to around 61,824 students in 103 schools. From Sept. to Nov. 2004, we received 22,382 response surveys from students (more than 14,000 in 2003), and 82% got correct answers.



WFWP Activities in Thailand

June 2005 - Report

By Delia Javanasundara, WFWP Thailand



Economic Empowerment Seminar: 120 Women, mainly representing Islam attended;



Foster Parents Program: 10 Islam Students received 3-year Scholarship

58th Annual DPI/NGO Conference

Our Challenge, contd from pg. 1

Emergency Relief Jan Egeland, Nobel Peace Prize Nominee from Kenya Wahu Kaara and conference cochairs Joan Levy and Joseph Donnelly. We were instructed to participate in this process of strengthening partnership between the UN and Civil Society, encouraged to be guardians of this process. It was stressed that we are all in this together. On the heels of the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, we were reminded that we are all vulnerable to growing hazards and that these threats transcend boundaries. Not only should the UN and relief workers be able to respond to devastation caused by crisis but we also must be able to face the root causes and work toward prevention. There was agreement that all our futures depend on our ability to collectively deal with the numerous challenges we face.

GA President Mr. Jean Ping inspired us with his commitment to further interaction and partnership between the General Assembly and civil society. We learned later in the conference that incoming GA President Jan Eliasson of Sweden is just as committed to this relationship and hopes to solidify the joint hearings between the GA and civil society into a permanent tradition. This is incredible affirmation of the value of the contribution of civil society, who are ears and eyes in the field, activists and servers with a depth and breadth of experience and knowledge of situations and best practices. Along with this acknowledgement comes an incredible sense of hope and vision of possibilities of partnerships for creating peace, security and development where it is most needed.

It is impossible to summarize the content of all the proceedings in this conference. For those who are interested, there is video of all the plenary sessions archived on the dpi/ngo executive committee website (www.undpingoconference.org) I encourage you to view this significant dialog. Plenary sessions included themes such as The Challenge of Partnerships, Implementing the MDGs, Collective Security: A Focus on Human Development, The Future of the UN and Spare No Effort: 2015 is Now. In addition, several round table discussions were held with the format of a panel discussion as well as response statements from several conference participants. The topics of these roundtable discussions were: Envisioning a Secure World, Eradication Poverty: Timelines and Lifelines, and United Nations and Civil Society.

The menu of 30 plus midday workshops sponsored by partnerships of nongovernmental organizations gave participants an opportunity to hear about best practices as well as participate in deeper dialog about areas of interest and network with others who have similar aims. I am particularly impressed with the contributions of young adults in these

sessions. Photography students from the Art Center College of Design had been paired with nongovernmental organizations of their choice in the Los Angeles area including Head Start and an agency serving people who are homeless, among others. It was the task of the students to become immersed in the work and the people and create a compelling photographic representation of the work of the NGO and its community. The students did a stunning job of capturing images that communicated the essence of the work and the people served. The images were used by the NGOs as a part of promotional materials, educational materials and more. The theme of this workshop was Creating New Tools: Using the Arts to Build Peace and Transform Conflict. Other young adults in this workshop demonstrated how improvisational theatre can be used to bring about openings in people's hearts to discuss difficult challenges and facilitate conflict resolution. This session, again was just one of thirty.

Perhaps the highlight of this conference was, in fact the closing session. We were inspired to hear Secretary General Kofi Annan and 2004 Nobel Peace Prize winning Attorney and activist from Iran, Ms. Shirin Ebadi.



Sec. General Annan, listing milestones during his 9 year tenure as Secretary General that included the declaration of the MDGs, establishment of the International Criminal Court, and the Global Fund to fight AIDS and Malaria, cited the NGO Revolution, as he put it, as the most notable occurrence. He commended Ms. Ebadi for her Nobel Peace Prize, and commented that this prize demonstrates the power of NGOs. He praised Doctors Without Borders for their ability to set up a nutrition center in Nigers in three weeks time to assist in averting a hunger crisis there. He affirmed that NGOs are working everywhere in all areas, often far ahead of the UN in identifying new threats. "You can see and address what the officials might not be ready to admit," Annan confided. He continued by reinforcing that our voice has had an impact on the World Summit deliberations and encouraged us to remind

Governments and their representatives to the UN that we are watching, that we will assess the outcome document and monitor progress on all levels, from village to nation. Finally he assigned us the task of guardians of implementation and in closing, told us that what really matters is what happens "out there on the ground".



Ms. Ebadi spoke forcefully about the crucial role of NGOs as a mediating force between the public and their government. She emphasized the importance of conveying the needs, concerns and criticisms to government as well as offering ideas to correct shortcomings and to improve existing conditions. It is her perspective that independence from government is a critical aspect of NGOs because it guarantees authenticity and effectiveness. This doesn't mean that NGOs can't accept assistance from governments, but that this assistance should not compromise their autonomy. Ms. Ebadi courageously pointed out that some governments are suspicious of NGOs and don't tolerate their activities. She revealed the reality that some governments' security forces interfere with activities and seek the ability to approve of NGO leadership before they are allowed to function. Even though Ms. Ebadi has won awards for her work for human rights, her own government refused to register her organization without offering any reason, in violation of its own laws. She stressed that NGOs play an important role in pressuring governments to advance human rights. Also, Ms. Ebadi revealed the reality that governments will form sponsored NGOs (referred to as GNGOs) and send representatives to international conferences disguised as nonpartisans to present the agenda of the autocratic state. Even though the UN assumes that governments represent their own people, some governments do not. She went on to say that the existence of this falsehood is part of the reason that the UN has difficulty living up to its vision and charter. In this context Ms. Ebadi questioned the rights of nations not respecting human rights of their own people to be in positions to judge human rights efforts or violations of other nations. She strongly supports the Secretary General's reform measures regarding

Our Challenge, contd on pg. 11

Because a number of infections are among young people, WFWP Japan is focusing on AIDS prevention and sex education based on abstinence and self-control. Because the highest cause of HIV infection is through sexual intercourse, we cannot help but include sex education in AIDS preventive education. Many modern Japanese mothers think that schools should be responsible for sex education. However, the schools are teaching the children content beyond the mothers' imagination; visually teaching the sexual act using dolls, or showing how to use condoms in detail. This kind of education accelerates sexual activity among increasingly younger ages, causing moral degradation, and eventually increasing the number of HIV/AIDS patients.

We believe that AIDS prevention and sex education should originally be given at home, and that the mothers should know what to tell to their children. Therefore, we selected the theme, "AIDS Preventive Education from Mothers to Children" in order to introduce our domestic activities. We displayed panels showing the results of a nationwide AIDS awareness survey conducted by WFWP Japan members of 16,000 high school and university students, the reason why we support abstinence and self-control education, and examples of the educational content that mothers can share with their children. We also introduced our overseas grassroots AIDS preventive education activities of volunteers since 1994, entitled "Grassroots and Worldwide AIDS Preventive Education," displaying panels with activity reports and photos from projects in some African and Latin American countries. In addition, "The New Viewpoint of Sex Education," a power point presentation developed by WFWP Japan, was shown throughout the day.

Since abstinence is supported mainly by Christians, it is categorized as a religious concept in Japan. Moreover, it is not a widely

Our Challenge, contd from pg. 10

establishment of the Human Rights Council, and suggested that human rights NGOs become voting members of the new Human Right Council because international NGOs can act without the constraints that governments have. She closed her statement by admonishing us to think idealistically and act pragmatically.

Under Secretary General of Communication and Public Information Shashi Tharoor followed with a few closing remarks. He told us that our views are supported by the Secretary General and senior UN staff and representatives of many member states. He said, **"We at the UN are counting on you, much as you count on us."**



accepted concept among medical professionals and school teachers, since there is no scientific data to prove its effectiveness. However, WFWP Japan appeals to people's conscience and common sense, emphasizing the necessity of abstinence for health reasons as well as from a moral standpoint. It does so, for example, by



showing the physical and psychological problems resulting from teenage pregnancy, the importance of developing the ability to control desire, and the continuity and preciousness of human life.

Although there were very few booths which dealt with this theme, many people from home and abroad visited our booth, sympathized with the contents of our panels, left comments and requested materials. It was a great pleasure and success for us to meet and build a network of medical experts and professional teachers actually teaching AIDS preventive education to young students, who have felt the limitation of scientific preventive education and appreciated the content of our presentation. These were allies outside the scope of our usual

Peace for Our Children, contd from pg. 8

parents, teachers and all society. Guest speaker, Dr. Ilias Liberis, Chief Programme Officer of UNICEF, Greece added that children are always seen as victims, not part of the solution and that this conference was a powerful and timely reminder to world leaders of the significance that a culture of peace could and should have on the lives of children.

Some of the issues dealt with were: defining dignity as a standard, the role of reconciliation, the role of women in nation building, advocacy on the Plan of Action for the Culture of Peace towards Middle Eastern governments, enhancing the special capacities of women in the ME due to religious and cultural traditions and norms, identifying the core universal values while respecting the local ones, considering children's contribution to world peace, 'family' peace as the foundation for 'world' peace, mobilizing to heal the wounds of war, mother's/family's role in training future women leaders. How can the constraints to women's empowerment be addressed by

grassroots outreach efforts in local areas. After the congress, many of our new professional contacts agreed to support our work.

Of course, not all people agreed with our presentation. A homosexual and HIV positive man criticized our presentation. We usually focus only on preventive activities and scarcely meet HIV carriers in our daily life. However, we were asked several times at the booth, "What do you think about HIV carriers?" and we felt that now is the time to deal with this issue.

We learned many things from this congress, but we realized more deeply that AIDS is indeed a horrible disease that necessitates people to organize a huge international meeting with thousands of attendees from all over the world. Our concern deepened and solidified for the reality of the impact of HIV/AIDS worldwide.

AIDS is an infection that lasts a lifetime, and about 10,000 people are dying of it everyday. We have to realize that this situation is more horrendous and serious than the big earthquakes and the wars. We must wake up to the horror of HIV/AIDS. It is said that AIDS is a quiet Tsunami. In Africa, one village was wiped out because of this disease. AIDS is now a great security issue for many nations. Prevention is not so easy because it intrudes on someone's privacy, namely their sexual lifestyle. However, we felt a greater need to continue grassroots AIDS preventive education, to convey a serious sense of urgency that it could happen to our own families.



solidarity among women achievers? How can women harness the power of communications and media towards a culture of peace? The most pressing and most deliberated issue was how best to educate children to give them a basis for good moral judgement and accessibility to the tools and mechanisms needed to generate peaceful lives and lifestyles.

One participant, a relentless advocate for Kuwaiti women's rights, brought the historic news to the conference of the successful vote, held that same day, giving Kuwaiti women the right to be elected to Parliament and the right to vote for the first time.

Determined to advance the conclusions with conviction and consensus, delegates adopted the Athen's Declaration and Plan of Action: Middle-Eastern Women for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (see www.wfwp.org for full text). Attendees of the conference closed with a spirit of determination, solidarity and an agenda to move forward until the next conference.



