



NGO REPORTER

Published Quarterly by the NGO/DPI Executive Committee

Vol. 11 No. 8

By NGOs For NGOs

February 2006

LET EVERY VOICE COUNT

The 58th Annual DPI/NGO Conference took place at United Nations Headquarters in September on the eve of the much-discussed World Leaders Summit. *OUR CHALLENGE: Voices for Peace, Partnerships and Renewal* was the theme. A multitude of NGO representatives from hundreds of non-governmental organizations around the world participated in a series of plenary sessions, round tables, workshops and networking caucuses. Member States' representatives, parliamentarians and UN staff were also present in large numbers.

The three-day Conference agenda, based on the Secretary-General's report, *IN LARGER FREEDOM: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All*, was focused on the realization of the MDGs, the urgent need to address the problems of extremely poor and vulnerable communities, and the necessity for UN reform. These issues require significant, substantive and normative civil society involvement at every level. NGOs offer their exceptional capacities to transform the status quo into equitable life and justice for women, children and men everywhere. The Conference provided an opportunity to press for NGO access and partnership as a major representative of civil society and global stakeholder in the work of the United Nations to achieve these ends.

We affirmed loudly and clearly that ultimate success in our work was more than a numbers game, whether monitoring MDG indicators or human rights records, or whether representing powerful donor countries or aspiring developing countries in remote corners of the world.

The strong recommendations that emerged from the Conference deliberations indicated that NGOs, once again, were offering partnerships across all sectors of society, to all with ears to hear and eyes to see. Most significantly, NGOs were helping to create the political will necessary to effect change.

Every echo, from the General Assembly Hall on the first morning to Conference Room #4 on the closing afternoon, resonated with the assurance that NGOs are here to stay, that our collective value and historic investments and the UN are quintessential contributions to this international organization. Secretary-General Kofi Annan affirmed this recognition with his supportive voice and vision at the notable closing session.

EVERY VOICE COUNTS and must be heard, from grassroots to the Security Council. The 58th DPI/NGO Conference was a call to action, enthusiastically applauded by the nearly 2000 participants.

Joseph Cornelius Donnelly,
Chair-58th Annual DPI-NGO Conference
International Delegate to UN
CARITAS INTERNATIONALIS



Response to a major plenary: where every voice counted!

~ U. N. Renovations ~

Since September 2005, members of the Executive Committee have been presenting NGO concerns to the UN Secretariat staff, accompanied by solid support from DPI, regarding the Capital Master Plan for a major renovation of the secretariat buildings. The renovation is scheduled to begin in 2006 and the work will likely continue through 2012, or beyond. The Executive Committee, along with CONGO and other NGO partners, is determined to make known our interests to UN executives managing the vast process. We are worried about NGO space/access during the actual renovation period. We are equally anxious about planned NGO space in the final renovated facility. A formal meeting took place on 5 January 2006 to review the CMPlan and the still uncertain renovation schedule. We will continue to monitor all developments through the Resource Center & NGO Facilities Committee.

Joseph Cornelius Donnelly

RESPONSIBILITY IN A CHANGING WORLD: A NATIONAL YOUTH FORUM

The African Youth Movement, supported by the DPI/NGO section of the United Nations and in conjunction with the World Forum of Civil Society Networks [UBUNTU], is inviting 300 young leaders from all parts of Nigeria and from all over the world for a conference promoting civic responsibility, international governance and the millennium development goals [MDGs] in local communities and beyond.

The Conference will be held in Akwa Ibom State, one of the Niger Delta States in Nigeria, 20-21 March 2006. We believe the venue will give extra depth and context to the discussions and expose grassroots leaders-in-the-making to the complex and multi-cultural nature of life in Nigeria.

The main objective of the conference is to establish an active national and global coalition of youth leaders that will promote responsible citizenship, conflict resolution and democracy around the world. Conference sessions and events will feature two days of dialogue, expositions and brainstorming. In order to guarantee that the coalition we hope to create is not merely a one-time event, and that the participants will be able to continue working on promoting dialogue and democracy, we intend to create a network of youth-oriented NGOs that will ensure the continuity and viability of our actions.

Uwem Robert Otu

African Youth Movement [AYM] is a not-for-profit organization based in South Africa and Nigeria, working in the fields of education, health improvements [HIV/AIDS], poverty eradication and environment, within the broad context of sustainability.

Its vision is "Empowering young Africans to act towards a better world for current and future generations through local and global initiatives." UBUNTU is a wide network of International Organizations, with its secretariat based in Spain and working on the Campaign for the In-depth Reform of the System of International Institutions.

Mr. Otu is president of the African Youth Movement (AYM), a non-governmental organization based in Abuja, Nigeria. He was a Plenary Panel speaker at the 57th Annual DPI/NGO Conference. AYM partners with fifteen non-governmental organizations. He is interested in connecting with other youth-oriented NGOs in the United States.

www.africanyouthmovement.org

DO THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS MATTER OUTSIDE OF THE UN?

Global Voices, an exhibition presented by *what moves you?*, was a major crowd drawer during the annual DPI/NGO Conference. On display in a transit space never before used as a gallery, Global Voices was visited by hundreds of conference participants, as well as by UN staff, members of the press and the diplomatic community.

Viewers of the exhibition, aware of MDG goals, were asked to provide personal responses to questions, such as: What motivates activists committed to change? Why must grandparents bear their children's burdens? How can young women save their communities from social oppression? Is partnership possible between different cultures and generations? The purpose was to learn the relevance of MDGs in the world beyond the precincts of the United Nations.

Founded by Gala Narezo and Executive Committee member Shamina de Gonzaga, *what moves you?* is a new youth-oriented organization designed to create social awareness campaigns and address critical societal issues through art, media and creative problem solving.

Participating organizations included: Global Youth Action Network (GYAN), Global Student Leadership (GSL), Crystal Foundation, Committee for Hispanic Children & Families (CHCF), Healing Through Writing Workshop (HTWW) and Grandparents Empowered Active Response (GEAR). Shamina de Gonzaga

SABBATICAL LEAVE

NGO Section Chief Paul Hoeffel was in touch with us from Seoul, South Korea, where he is on sabbatical leave from the UN until the end of January. He is developing a model for academic partnerships between DPI and Kyung Hee University, which has had a long relationship with the United Nations. Among the possible projects: A UN Resource Center in Korea, NGO conferences, UN and NGO visiting lecturers, cyber connections with the UN and internships with the UN and internships with the UN and NGOs in New York. He sends his holiday greetings to all.

TOWARDS THE 59TH ANNUAL DPI/NGO CONFERENCE

Planning is well underway for the 59th Annual DPI/NGO Conference, tentatively scheduled for 6-9 September 2006. The Executive Committee is eager help streamline the planning process. To this purpose, the annual DPI/NGO Town Hall Meeting, held in early December, served to offer NGO representatives a forum for discussion of possible conference themes. Suggestions from the audience were noted on flip charts and placed into five thematic groups: MDGs, Migration and Employment, Peace and Security, Responsibility and Accountability, and Strengthening the UN through Reform and NGO Partnerships.

These themes were revisited in an all-day follow-up DPI/NGO Communications Workshop, "Developing Communications Strategies," on 8 December. The Workshop was divided into two parts, a morning panel session and an interactive group afternoon session. The morning session provided particularly helpful information and guidelines on the need to develop communications strategies for promoting the conference and its goals. A panel of five communications specialists concentrated on ways to alert and utilize the media, and on strategies for increasing NGO outreach efforts beyond the perimeters of UN Headquarters and New York City. They emphasized the importance and advantages of developing a communications strategy well in advance of the 2006 September conference

In the afternoon session, the audience separated into five discussion groups, each focused on one of the five themes identified in the Town Hall Meeting. Much of the information provided during the morning session set the stage for the interactive discussion period. Following an hour set aside for deliberations, the discussion groups presented their findings and recommendations to the reassembled Workshop audience. These will be discussed further at the first 59th DPI/NGO Conference Planning Committee in mid-January 2006.

Lester N. Wilson

NOMINATIONS ~ 2006-2008 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

NGOs associated with the UN Department of Public Information are invited to nominate candidates for the 2006-2008 Executive Committee. This committee acts in an advisory and liaison capacity with UN/DPI and meets at UN Headquarters in New York City. The officers to be elected include the Vice-Chairs (2) and Treasurer, in addition to seven members. Letters containing criteria and eligibility requirements along with the related nomination form have been mailed to NGOs. Nominations must be received by 15 March 2006.

Anne-Marie Carlson, Chair

REQUIRED ANNUAL ACCREDITATION FORMS

2006 Accreditation Forms should be sent via fax to the Resource Center (212-963-2819). Each organization may designate three persons to represent them at UN Headquarters, one main and one alternative, in addition to the President or Chief Administrative/Executive Officer. Each pass must be obtained in person from the Pass & ID Office on First Avenue at 45th Street, 1st floor, between 9 a.m. and 4.p.m., Monday through Friday. Mona Gillet

NGO/DPI EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE • 2005-2006

OFFICERS

Sister Joan Kirby, Chair
Temple of Understanding

Aaron Etra, Vice-Chair
Academia Mexicana De Derecho Internacional

Doris Schapira, Vice-Chair
League of Women Voters, USA

Janet Stovin, Secretary
Women of Reform Judaism

Jonina Sutton, Treasurer
Women's International Zionist Organization

MEMBERS

Anne-Marie Carlson
The Kappa Gamma Society International

Yee Ching-Lee
The Art of Living Foundation

Joseph Donnelly
Caritas Internationalis

Shamina de Gonzaga
Fondacion Cultural Baur

Maram Hallak
Association for Women in Psychology

Muriel Hertan
Women's American ORT

Jeffrey Huffines
National Spiritual Assembly of
the Bahai'is of the US

Lynn Karpo-Lantz
Hadassah, Women's Zionist
Organization of America

Judy Learner
Peace Action

L. Eudora Pettigrew
International Association of University Presidents

Patrick L. Sciarratta
Friendship Ambassadors Foundation

Anne Zanes
Peace Links

Dan Utti
Philippines Human Rights Information Center
NGO/DPI Webmaster

...FUND DRIVES...

For many years the NGO/DPI Executive Committee has requested affiliated NGOs to assist with the funding and development needs of Executive Committee activities. Last fall, two important initiatives were developed: Very impressive was the CENTERPOINT NOW Journal, created by Shamina de Gonzaga (Editor), a member of the Executive Committee, and Sherrill Kazan Alvarez de Toledo (Publisher), a former member of the Executive Committee, who continues to lead the fundraising efforts of the committee. Together, they went to great efforts to produce and disseminate an eighty-page subscription journal. Contributions to the journal resulted in a gift of nearly \$20,000 to support the work of the committee. In addition, Friendship Ambassadors Foundation offered modest travel packages for conference attendees. The foundation, directed by *NGO Reporter* co-editor and Executive Committee member Patrick Sciaratta, also arranged hotel stays and other logistical details for the visitors, and raised \$1,600 for the committee's purposes.

Guest Editors' Desk

GREETINGS!

I am pleased to follow Joan Levy whose term as Chair of the NGO/DPI Executive Committee raised awareness of the NGO presence at the UN



We have entered a very important year for NGOs at the United Nations, a year when it will be important to ensure that renovation plans for the UN facilities include continued access for NGOs to maintain relations with Member States. The Building Plan for the renovation of UN Headquarters overlooks the need for space for NGO activities during the years 2007-12. We feel confident that with support from Member States and advocacy from the Executive Committee we will succeed in the delicate task of gaining recognition and space. We have asked Joseph Donnelly, past Chair of the 58th NGO/DPI Conference, to use his diplomatic skills to negotiate space for the NGO Community in the coming years.

Building on the progress made in 2004-05, the NGO/DPI Executive Committee continues to raise NGO visibility at the United Nations. The Special Hearings arranged by the President of the General Assembly in June 2005 and the 58th NGO/DPI Conference where representatives of Member States articulated their support for the NGO voice at the UN are openings to be pursued during the years to come.

Shamina de Gonzaga has been given official status as Special Advisor for NGO Affairs to the President of the 60th Session of the General Assembly and will serve as a liaison for the NGO community

Our ultimate goal is to bring the voices of NGOs from all over the world, especially developing countries of the South, into the discussion at UN Headquarters.

Sister Joan Kirby, Chair

NGO REPORTER

EDITORS

Lester N. Wilson, Director
U.N. Graduate Studies Program, Long Island University
Patrick L. Sciaratta, Executive Director
Friendship Ambassadors Foundation

Editorial Board

Sr. Joan Kirby, Joan Levy, Dr. Elaine Valdov, Paul Hoeffel, Vincenzo Pugliese. Dr. Lester Wilson, Patrick Sciaratta

Contributors

ANNE-MARIE CARLSON
THE KAPPA GAMMA SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL

JOSEPH CORNELIUS DONNELLY
CARITAS INTERNATIONALIS

SHAMINA DE GONZAGA
FUNDACION CULTURAL BAAUR

MONA GILLET
NGO RESOURCE CENTER

SISTER JOAN KIRBY
TEMPLE OF UNDERSTANDING

UWEM ROBEERT OTU
AFRICAN YOUTH MOVEMENT

Design: Stephanie Sigg, ArtsCenter; Layout: P. Sciaratta

**The Executive Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations
Associated with the United Nations Office of Public Information**

*Comments and suggestions: Lester Wilson (Lester.Wilson@liu.edu)
or Patrick Sciaratta (psglobal@faf.org).*