



NGO Reporter

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RESPONDING TO THE TRAGEDY OF CHILD TRAFFICKING

While the practice of human trafficking grows in scope internationally, it has recently gained more attention within the United States government and in the public eye through a surge in media attention. Approximately 18 to 20 thousand people are trafficked every year into the United States according to the U.S. State Department. The majority of the victims are women and children. Very few of the children have been identified and/or helped. ECPAT-USA (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking) has helped energize a local response to the problem in New York City. In an effort to raise awareness of the problem, ECPAT-USA recently published a highly regarded report, *International Trafficking of Children to New York City for Sexual Purposes*. The report "describes the international trafficking of children for sexual purposes to New York City, a major port of entry for traffickers, and offers recommendations for more research, training, and services to meet the needs of these most vulnerable victims."

In publicizing its report, ECPAT-USA identified a general lack of knowledge about human trafficking among many service and community agencies that potentially would come in contact with victims of human trafficking. Also, the recently passed U.S. Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (VTVPA) of 2000 was little understood by New York City community groups. The law grants temporary visas and services to victims of trafficking under certain conditions. In response, in 2002 ECPAT-USA worked with the International Organization for Adolescents (IOFA) to launch New York City's first collaborative effort to combat human trafficking, the New York City Community Response to Trafficking project (CRT). The project developed ways to identify victims of trafficking and helped them gain access to project services.

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NOTE FROM THE NGO SECTION

The NGO Section is uploading more and more information and events on our web site so that a greater number of people can access the latest calendars and information through their personal computers. The Calendar of NGO Briefings in March and April 2004, which has been mailed, is also available on the web site www.un.org/dpi/ngosection. So are the new Guidelines for Special Passes to NGO Section Events.

The first DPI/NGO Communications Workshop of the year, entitled "*Defending the United Nations: What Every NGO Should Know*", was held on 19 February. It was web cast and archived on the web site. An audience of over 400 heard Under-Secretary-General Shashi Tharoor and other speakers address the misunderstandings and inaccurate or unfair criticisms of the United Nations and its work. Participants were particularly moved by the comprehensive overview of Gillian Sorensen, now a senior advisor to the UN Foundation, whose presentation "*Myths and Realities*", is also on the web site for NGOs to use.

The first day of the two-day DPI/NGO Orientation Programme on 25 February, was also web cast and archived on the web site to allow NGOs associated with the Department of Public Information to review the presentations on current working relationships between the UN system, especially DPI, and NGOs at Headquarters.

Meeting every week since mid-January, the Annual DPI/NGO Conference Planning Committee has decided to focus on the theme of how civil society can support the Millennium Development Goals. There are creative ideas on the table and discussions (the Planning Committee has never had less than 45 people in attendance) have been lively and constructive. The invitation to the Conference and call for proposals for the Midday NGO Workshops will be sent to you by mail and e-mail as soon as possible.

We look forward to your participation in the Conference, scheduled from 8 to 10 September, 2004.

Paul Hoefel, Chief, NGO Section

**REACHING OUT TO PARTICIPANTS WORLDWIDE
THE NEW INTERACTIVE WEBSITE OF THE
“56TH ANNUAL DPI/NGO CONFERENCE:
HUMAN SECURITY AND DIGNITY”**

The DPI/NGO Section and the Interactive Media Committee of the Conference consulted with Art Center College of Design in New York City to develop an interactive website to complement and support the 56th Annual DPI/NGO Conference (September 2003). The website provided live audio and video feeds of the plenary sessions and made the Conference’s proceedings accessible beyond UN Headquarters. It also offered an open and dynamic platform for discussion, questions and feedback between remote participants and Conference panelists while the Conference was in session. The site remains a valuable archive and has been recognized by DPI/NGO staff and conference organizers as a blueprint for similar initiatives in the future.

The interactive website and the short signature video created for the 56th Annual DPI Conference were the result of three months of intensive work produced by a team of graduate students from the Media Design Program at Art Center. In the process of conducting the substantial research required, the students had to address such complex issues as selecting appropriate technology and designing a friendly web interface that could be accessed by a large and diverse audience, with varied technical abilities.

The paramount objective of the project was to create a means of globally communicating the mission of the conference by using visual elements that intersected with cultures, beliefs, ethnicities and gender, while carrying the UN’s identity. “We chose organic textures and patterns, and used visual metaphors of people, lands and communities. We used images of family, shelter, food and water to represent human security and dignity,” explained Yael Mayaani, one of the nine members of the highly collaborative design team responsible for the website and video. The website established a new benchmark for interaction, access and connectivity among NGOs that only promises to grow in the future.

For information about Art Center College of Design and its humanitarian program, visit www.artcenter.edu/designmatters.

Mariana Amatullo

Remote Participation
... in the 57th Annual DPI/NGO Conference

Make your voice heard: This year’s NGO/DPI Conference will include live webcasts of the plenary sessions, discussion forums, and special interactive features. Add your voice to the theme: The Millennium Development Goals. We go live in May, catch us at www.ngodpiexecom.org.

UNITED NATIONS YOUTH SUMMIT

Youth interested in United Nations activities may wish to attend a Youth Summit, August 17-21, 2004 at U.N. Headquarters in Manhattan. The Summit itself will be free of charge and focus on how young people can get involved with the Secretariat, the Missions and affiliated NGOs. It will provide participants an opportunity to interact with members of the United Nations community and to network among themselves on world issues related to youth and the future of the United Nations. For more details, visit www.faf.org/unyouthsummit.

HUMAN RIGHTS PRIZE AWARDED

Five winners were awarded the United Nations Human Rights prize for outstanding promotion and protection of civil liberties and fundamental freedoms. UN General Assembly President Julian Hunte presented the winners with commemorative plaques at a special Assembly plenary meeting on 10 December, international Human Rights Day. A special posthumous award was awarded to Sergio Viera de Mello, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights who was killed in August in a bombing in Baghdad while serving as Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s Special Representative for Iraq.

Ms. Barnes de Carlotto won for her work as the president of the Asociación Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo (Association of Plaza de Mayo Grandmothers), established in 1977 to find hundred of children who disappeared following the 1976 military coup in Argentina. Mr. Deng is the founder-director of the 15-year-old China Disabled Persons Federation.

The Family Protection Project Management Team of Jordan promotes open discussion of such taboo subjects as domestic violence, gender equality and other human rights issues. Ms. Koenig heads the People’s Movement for Human Rights Education, which she founded to help create a global human rights culture.

The Mano River Women’s Peace Network groups women’s organizations in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea to prevent conflict and build peace.

COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES

The November 2003 NGO/DPI Communications Workshop focused on the different channels of communication between the UN system and civil society, particularly non-governmental organizations. It was designed to enhance the communication capacities of affiliated NGOs and increase their effectiveness in their dealings with the United Nations.

The speakers were John Clark (Panel of Eminent Persons on UN-Civil Society Relations, Office of the Secretary General), Leanne Mitchell (Worldwatch Institute), and Joanna Weschler (Human Rights Watch). They shared their expertise and insights on how NGOs communicate with the UN and offered advice for more meaningful interaction with the world body.

The primary goal of the Panel of Eminent Persons is to determine ways to enhance civil society's communication lines with the United Nations, thereby making them more effective and insuring informed intervention on the part of NGOs and other sectors of civil society. Citizen trust of NGOs is at an all-time high, and there are some instances where communities of interest are even more important than political parties. Civil society forms a "marketplace" of ideas, ideals and ideologies, in which NGOs compete for attention, physical support and contributions.

Many NGOs, such as Worldwatch, work extensively in the United Nations and elsewhere to build partnerships. The UN can be seen as an excellent platform for spreading the work of NGOs and can bring NGOs to a lot more places and connect to a lot more people than would be possible otherwise. Also, the UN provides affiliated NGOs with legitimacy, since collaborating with UN agencies is proof of the worthiness of their goals and programs. In the partnership with the UN, NGOs can help produce and disseminate their information to a much larger audience. As an example, in working on the World Summit, Worldwatch brought together UN representatives with US politicians and bureaucrats as well as the media to talk about summit issues and to raise the profile of these issues in Washington.

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It also facilitated the prosecution of traffickers and increased the awareness of human trafficking in New York City.

The CRT project model consisted of education, outreach and working group collaboration. Project staff trained local community groups and law enforcement agencies on human trafficking and on their role in helping victims. In partnership with community liaisons, the CRT project developed culturally appropriate outreach campaigns in neighborhoods affected by trafficking. Public service announcements about trafficking ran on ethnic radio stations and in newspapers. Every participating community group produced materials for discrete distribution to suspected victims and provided a hotline number to get help.

The CRT project also created a working group of community organizations, service providers and law enforcement agencies in order to discuss best practices. Working group members recognized that no single organization or agency in New York City had the capacity to meet the complex needs of trafficked persons on its own and that only through collaboration between all interested parties could victims be appropriately served and successful prosecutions completed.

Members of the working group presented the CRT project at the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI/NGO) Conference in September 2003. It is hoped that the project's collaborative model can be used as a guide for other community efforts.

Both internationally and domestically, ECPAT-USA continues to advocate for the child victims of the commercial sex trade. The awareness raising and victim advocacy of human trafficking has often been likened to the early days of the movement against domestic violence. Likewise, the silence must be broken and we must speak out against this modern form of slavery.

More information is available at www.ecpatusa.org, and www.nyc-crt-org.

John Lindsay

EDITORIAL

A Torch Is Passing

After years under the capable and successful helm of Ms. Dorrie Weiss, the *NGO Reporter* welcomes two new Co-editors in this issue. Both Dr. Lester Wilson and Patrick Sciaratta look forward to working with NGOs affiliated with the United Nations. Indeed, we are humbled by the honor.

Through many editions and with a careful hand and thoughtful eye, Dorrie Weiss has become synonymous with sage journalism in the interest of the thousands of NGOs whom we serve. Recently there was a thought to move the *NGO Reporter* solely onto the internet, in order to expand it as an online magazine. Dorrie stood against this, at the risk of losing the paper version of the *Reporter*; she was well aware of how many NGOs are not yet connected to the internet and how important the dissemination of information is to all of our members. Now we are challenged to ensure the growth of the paper version while seeking to expand the online capabilities of the *Reporter*, too – a task we will take seriously in a period of growth and transition where we hope to be guided with Dorrie by our side.

We thank those who have contributed to this first edition, with Lester and Patrick overseeing the text editing and layout design, respectively. And we thank Dorrie once again for helping us select these articles along the way!

Here is to a brighter year ahead and a growth in the *NGO Reporter*, spurred not only by increasing access to technology, but by the will and interest of the affiliated NGOs of the Department of Public Information at the United Nations, needing to say more, hear more, learn more, and communicate more in the coming years.

We look forward to your comments, which may now be sent to: psglobal@faf.org, or Lester.Wilson@liu.edu

COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES

continued

Human Rights Watch, with a different emphasis, regards the UN as an international forum where all concerned parties—from policy makers to victims—can communicate with governments, those in whose countries crimes have been committed and governments that might provide relief to affected individuals and groups. In communicating with sympathetic governments, the most direct method is through “targeted” communications, referring both to the content of the message and to the audience to which the message is directed. A considerable amount of letter writing to specific individuals and groups is almost always required. Informal bilateral meetings with policy makers or other NGOs can also be effective.

All three speakers referred to the competition for funding in an era when funds have become less and less available. This decline in financial support is another compelling reason for working together on common issues. Also, NGOs with limited financial resources should concentrate on projects that do not require extensive funding. The Internet is an effective and inexpensive means of communication that allows an organization to have a global impact.

Stephanie Strauss and Lester Wilson

NGO REPORTER

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