



# NGO Reporter

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## *Special Announcement: Save the Date* 56th Annual NGO/DPI Conference **Human Security and Dignity: Fulfilling the Promise of the United Nations** September 8 - 10, 2003, New York City, USA

Many of us think of human security in terms of individuals who must be protected by their governments. We recognize that each nation state is responsible to its people for ensuring the security of that State. A well-functioning community must also have sound economic and social policies that enable the human family to flourish. That is the ideal situation, but it does not always correspond to conditions in the real world. In reality, about one-fifth of the world's population is forced to subsist on less than one dollar a day. This directly threatens their lives, livelihood and dignity. The challenges of poverty, environmental degradation, lack of safe water, conflicts, refugee problems, illicit drugs, and infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, are all factors that must be addressed by the entire human family. How can we reconcile the Real with the Ideal? (See next column)

### **SMART TALKING: AN NGO PRIMER**

*Building Speaking and Listening Skills*

The NGO/DPI Communications Workshop Committee sponsored a second day-long workshop in late February focused on ways to build effective speaking and listening skills. With the invaluable participation of the NGO Toastmasters International, three major aspects of public speaking were covered: addressing ones colleagues, speaking to a mixed audience, and speaking in front of a camera.

If you intend to convince your audience, your first obligation is to be prepared. Write or compose your comments in advance. A speech has to have an introduction, a body and a conclusion. If at all possible, practice your speech in front of your colleagues and not the mirror. Get feedback from those you know will be honest about it. Remember, your main aim is to reach out to the public because you have a message to convey. Depending on your audience and availability, use a lot of visual aids to illustrate and underscore your message. Power point, flash cards, and posters are effective tools and are relatively easy to prepare. Arrive early, become familiar with the room, and practice using the microphone and visual aid you have brought along.

The International Community has come recognize that to combat terrorism, war, racial and ethnic conflicts due to historic and cultural factors, human right violations, environmental and human and degradation, there must be a new approach in the development and delivery of service programs. These must be supported by non-governmental organizations, member states, and civil society at both the national and local levels.

The 56th Annual Conference, " Human Security and Dignity: Fulfilling the Promise of the United Nations," will consider a comprehensive approach to issues that help define both human security and dignity. This year's conference will shift the focus from problems that foster insecurity and deprivation, to solutions .We must help create societies that are secure, and that provide services to the human family with dignity. The focus will be on programs that demonstrate solutions through the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. Topics will include Psychological Aspects of Human Security and Dignity; Shaping the Future through Education; From Oppression to Empowerment; Sustainable Development in the Context of Globalization ,and Strategies for Building Secure Societies: Global Trends.

The Conference will take place 8-10 September, 2003. For more information regarding registration and the Conference please go to the NGO Executive Committee website: [www.dpingo@un.org](http://www.dpingo@un.org).

We look forward to your participation.

**Fannie Munlin, Chairperson of the Conference**

#### **Introduction**

Successful oral presentations require several stages of development. First, you must introduce yourself. Make it concise and memorable. Describe yourself, your work and affiliations in a thought-provoking manner. One way to make your audience sit up is to have an intriguing opening line; for example "I am a Teacher--I empower the next generation"; or, "I am a Nutritionist--I teach you how to behave in front of food". Remember, the first 30 seconds are the when you make your best impression.

*More ... see page two column two*

## ***Generational Impact of Mass Trauma***

The physical, psychosocial, and spiritual impact of genocide does not end with the generation immediately impacted: it continues in the offspring of survivors. The literature of psychiatry has shown that children of survivors face tremendous issues, more than others. Adverse effects may persist even beyond the second generation. A major study of the children of survivors of the Armenian genocide by the Ottoman Turkish Government from 1895-1915, which cost the lives of one-and-a-half million people, showed how trauma affects the children of victims, who carry the burdens of their parents' victimization. The results of that study may be extrapolated to the victims of any large-scale massacre, like those still occurring on the African continent.

The children in the study were burdened by having to carry emotional memories of previous generations. They were saddled with a sense of forced responsibility for carrying the memories, and for healing their ancestors. They also expressed deep and intense feelings of helplessness on many levels: personal, collective, and global. This helplessness increases when the perpetrators of genocide deny their responsibility. There seems to be a need for reparations or apologies to hasten healing. In response to these negative feelings, over fifty percent of the participants expressed problems with communication. This is consistent with findings in post-Holocaust Jewish families, where some parents did not talk about their experiences in order to protect their children. The review of the Holocaust literature confirms that those parents who refrained from ever mentioning their terrifying experiences reported more disturbances in their children. In a therapeutic group organized to work with children of survivors a number of problems surfaced. Anger, if was not internalized, was expressed horizontally: toward other members of the group, toward other Armenians, toward the facilitators of the workshop. This is a common phenomenon when oppressed people, failing to process their inherited anger, cope by displacing it onto their fellow human beings.

Mental and emotional stresses are often felt and held in the body. Tension and sadness were apparent in the neck and shoulders of the participants, as well as in their voices. Attentive and gentle work with body awareness techniques opened opportunities for healing conflictual mental and emotional stresses and transmitted traumas. Body messages may accelerate the healing process and free the individual of long held tensions.

As the facilitators measured the impact of the group process, they noted that the group struggled with the existential question of rapprochement with the children of those who had wronged them. They also struggled to deal with the denial that the genocide had ever occurred. A particular anger is generated by this question. The anger is an outcome of feelings of helplessness and powerlessness, and the sting of this anger leads to hopelessness and melancholy. But the discussion at the same moment increased group cohesion, since all members shared a similar outrage, and were able to validate one another.

Further research is needed to explore generational transmission of trauma. The group's success can be measured by the fact that members wanted to engage in further workshops, which meant that group melancholy had been transformed into hope.

Hope also marked the group's interactions, which facilitators attributed to the release of shared sadness. Their individual isolation was dismantled. When trauma is processed emotionally there is a cathartic effect. When the facilitators validate each participant's feelings and offer empathy, this helps reintegrate the trauma into the individual's personality in a more effective, therapeutic, healthy, and meaningful way.

Dr. Anie Kalayjian

*Dr. Kalayjian is the author, with Weisberg, of a chapt. in **Jihad and Sacred Vengeance**. ed. Piven, Boyd., & Lawton*

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## ***... More Smart Talking Tips***

### **Language**

The language level you use will depend on how you assess your audience. Avoid technical and professional jargon a layperson would not understand. But also avoid seeming to be condescending or patronizing. Be clear, concise and crisp. Use words that you are comfortable and familiar with. Practice words that you have difficulty pronouncing or use alternate wording. Enunciate long and difficult words. You can even repeat words for emphasis.

### **Voice**

Your voice has to reach the last person sitting in the audience without a mike. It must have an intensity level that reveals the essence of your presentation. If you need to use a mike, test it before you start talking and adjust it to your height level. Vocal clarity is what grips your audience. Energy is infectious; hence if you are vibrant and enthusiastic in your speech projection, your presentation will more likely be a success. Parenthetically, in everyday life, when speaking to your boss or colleagues, remember to listen twice as much as you talk. There are two golden rules for interpersonal communication: Listen to what was said and Listen to how it was said.

### **Body Language**

Audiences take in 7% of a verbal delivery, 38% of the vocal intonations and 55% of the visual persona. So, the content must be interesting and interjected with humor and facts. Body language consists of facial expressions, gestures, and the whole body movement. Your facial expressions reveal attitudes, feelings and emotions. Learn to have an interested look on your face, even when an unexpected yawn comes your way! Don't fidget with your hands. It can be distracting. If you tend to fidget, you may put your hands out of sight, perhaps behind your back. Move around while speaking instead of standing in one spot. Body language shows your sincerity and confidence.

### **Your Presentation**

Reaching out to the public is the key to all presentations. The audience should be able to remember at least three points from your speech. Keep that in mind, and do not overburden your listeners. When you are passionate about a topic, you can keep on talking about it. However, filter what you have to say, interact with the audience when possible, and always be aware of its interest level. Do not let your speech be a total monologue; rather, talk and listen.

### **Evaluation/Critique**

When you are called upon to comment on or critique a presentation, remember that you should always have something positive to say. The three evaluation points to consider are content, organization and delivery. Be empathetic and take into account the experience and confidence levels of the speaker. Always start with the positive, and then add negative points only when necessary.

Karen P. Andrade (with Lester Wilson)

## "So, What is it that you do, exactly?"

Representatives of NGO Organizations have often asked this question of the NGO/DPI Executive Committee. Here is the answer:

The NGO/DPI Executive Committee is a 501c3 Organization comprised of five officers and 13 Directors, bringing the number at any given time to 18 members. Elections are held every year and each member can run for two consecutive two-year terms. Those running for office make a commitment to attend monthly meetings and serve on sub-committees covering a wide range of issues. The aims and purposes of the Committee are twofold: the first is to act as a liaison between the NGO community and the Department of Public Information (DPI) in the production of materials, the provision of services, the use of United Nations facilities, and all matters that meet the needs of Non-Governmental Organizations. The second is to help the Non-Governmental Organizations effectively use available information and material, in order to increase knowledge about and public understanding of the United Nations: its purpose, structure, policies, actions and programmes. The Committee also informs the NGO section of DPI of specific needs expressed by NGOs.

In recent years, the term "Partnership" has been used to describe the unique connection between the Committee and DPI because we co-sponsor several programs, the most prestigious of them being the DPI/NGO Annual Conference in September. More than 2000 representatives from all parts of the world gather at the United Nations to participate in this important event. The Communication Workshop Series of interactive programs, offered 4 times a year, is another joint endeavor. Recent workshops have addressed improving written and speaking skills, developing successful approaches to fund and resource raising, and expanding telecommunication skills.

The Committee recommends NGO speakers for the weekly briefings held in the Dag Hammarskjold Auditorium at UN Headquarters. We help maintain the computers and the database in the Resource Centre, with the aid of an outside consultant associated with the Executive Committee. *The NGO Reporter* is published under the aegis of the Committee. It is distributed in the DPI monthly mailings and is posted on our website. It is also available in the Resource Center at UN headquarters.

At a recent all day strategic planning meeting, we discussed future endeavors. Grant proposals have already been written and submitted for consideration. Money is being sought to fund outreach initiatives and other projects. We are proud of our fruitful partnership with the Department of Public Information and are looking forward to new challenges in the future. Please join one of our many sub-committees, give us your ideas for future projects, and keep in touch through the newly designed website: [www.NGODPIEXECOM.ORG](http://www.NGODPIEXECOM.ORG)

*Joan Levy, Chair*

## What in the World

People are not the only ones with refugee problems: plants and animals are on the move too, as they are forced to migrate because of adverse conditions. Global warming has caused the shifting of range by sixty miles or more in some species, mainly toward the poles, according to a report in the journal *Nature*. Warming trends have also caused changes in the life cycles of some species. Patterns of migration and egg laying occur earlier, threatening to disrupt the relationship of life-cycle activities by decreasing the ability of the organism to access food. There has always been some movement of species, but the accelerating pace of warming has created a state of flux that has not existed before now. It took 18,000 years to warm up from the last ice age. The world gained five to nine degrees during that time. In contrast to that snail's pace, new projections claim that the earth will warm by 2.5 to 10 degrees beyond our current temperatures by 2100 if heat-trapping gases continue at their present rate.

Bad news for air pollution and global warming – the US Environmental Protection Agency reports that the fuel economy of model cars in 2003 is about 6% less than it was 15 years ago. That represents a major retreat from goals articulated in Kyoto. In the area of methane production, which is second only to carbon dioxide as a contributor to global warming, the world is also not doing well. (Some estimate that methane is 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide in its effects.) Humans contribute nearly 20% of the world's methane through industrial practices, but they also contribute greatly to animal releases because of the belching cattle herds they assemble.

Ruminants are responsible for over 15% of the total methane released - an estimated one pound of methane for every two pounds of meat they yield. Astoundingly, four or five percent of all methane emission is contributed by termites, caused by their high fiber diet. While we cannot condemn termites for their flatulence or cows for their burping, we can surely do more to control man-made emissions and look for ways to cut down our gluttony for oil and meat. (More, see bottom, page 4)

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**You can reach the NGO/DPI Executive Committee by phone at 212-963-7872, or by mail at NGO/DPI Executive Committee, NGO Resource Centre, Rm..L1B31, United Nations, New York, NY 10017.**

## Editor's Desk

The collective memory of humankind is woven of threads of words that may be written or spoken or sung. These, however, may not be the most durable vehicles of memory. Often we depend upon objects to carry the weight of history. The curve of an urn handle; the head of a broken god; the pillar of a lost temple – these shards of past ages may be touched and wondered at. Tangible remains carry within them the chronicle of times past, the remnants of lost cultures. They are the threads that bind clans to their ancestry and tie kinship groups together.

Objects are important. Their worth goes beyond their intrinsic value. They may be works of art, but the pull of antiquities goes beyond that purview. Even the detritus of old civilizations connects us to the past and allows us to build on our heritage. The work of our hands connects us through the generations. We are what we make.

The objects of the past should belong to all of us. They are our rightful inheritance. We are outraged when museums are looted and artifacts stolen. When looted objects go into private collections they are often hidden away for the delectation of the few. It is the public, we the people, who are the true heirs of lost civilizations.

The museums that were looted in Iraq represented seven thousand years of civilization, the history of a world that began in what many consider to have been the Garden of Eden. Mesopotamian art, the work of the Babylonians, the Sumerians, and the Assyrians may have been irrevocably lost. Judging from past experience, most of this work will never be recovered. Some will be hidden away in private hands. Some will find its way into the world's flea markets, since reputable galleries will be afraid to take them. Some will simply be destroyed. The looting, and the circumstance surrounding it, is inexcusable.

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### *What in the World - ADDENDUM*

According to a UNESCO press release, 34 of the 49 least developed countries (LDCs) are in Africa, where absolute poverty (less than one dollar a day) will affect 51% of the population by 2005 if current trends continue. AIDS is affecting every area of life, killing off teachers and orphaning students. The region staggers under a debt burden so great that some countries post a ratio of debt to GDP of 66.1%. All 19 of the world's countries with the lowest human development index are in Sub-Saharan Africa.

This is not the first time that museums have been vandalized. The Nazis were master looters. European museums have suffered many thefts. The Culture Ministry in Russia claims that the value of antiquities traded illicitly in that country alone is \$80 million each year. Mexico City's National Anthropological Museum has had losses.

Perhaps the greatest drain comes through the loss of Africa's heritage, where national museums in eight countries have been pillaged, some of the pieces smuggled out of the country even finding their way to the Louvre in Paris. Libraries and temples, too, have fallen victim to thieves. In 1999, Thailand discovered 100 Khmer sculptures that had been taken from a 12th century temple in Cambodia.

UNESCO is in the forefront of the struggle to return cultural property to the country of origin. But that organization cannot do it alone. There must be a worldwide effort to catalogue and protect objects that are irreplaceable. Perhaps those objects can be tagged with electronic signatures. The world must strengthen border controls against smugglers, punish dealers in stolen antiquities, set up funds to reclaim pieces that have been innocently acquired. Developed nations cannot think that they are justified in buying smuggled artifacts on the grounds that they have the moral right to "protect" objects not adequately valued in their own countries. Above all, there must be an awareness that wars destroy the cultural heritage that is the birthright of us all.

#### NGO REPORTER

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