

# NEWSLETTER



## NGO's Discuss at the UN

**Non-governmental organizations from throughout the world attend Conferences at the United Nations. This year The National Service Conference participated in the UN/DPI Conference for NGO's and the World Forum for Peace, in addition to regular briefings throughout the year. Above NGO's listen to global issues on ageing.**

## New Leadership in both UN General Assembly and Secretariat in 2006

Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, Lawyer from Bahrain was elected President of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly on June 8, 2006. A champion of women's rights, she is an advocate of a progressive interpretation of Islamic texts as they apply to women. She has held many high level posts in her home country.

Applauding in acclamation, The UN General Assembly appointed Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon of South Korea as the world body's next Secretary-General to succeed Kofi Annan when he steps down on December 31, 2006. Mr. Annan, quoting Trygvie Lie, said, "Your are about to take over the most impossible job on earth"(but) "this is also the best possible job on Earth," he added.



### *From our Friends:*

Greetings from Atlanta, hope that all is well with you and your families. Thank you all for the chance to serve in the NSC with you. We are adjusting well to Atlanta. Assiza and Ayinde are settled into school, Westlake HS and Nsoromma respectively. They both seem to be fitting in quite well. Ayinde's school provides an absolutely enriching and liberating experience and is a kind of a warm welcoming embrace for the whole family. Both Azizza and I are involved in activities facilitated by the Nsoromma community. Plus they serve hot vegan lunches everyday.

Lyndon Wilberg,

Vice President of the NSC

It was good to hear about your work at the UN as it brought back memories for me and was an informative talk which our members appreciated. Most were unaware of the NGO connection to the UN and it gave them something to discuss. It's clear to see you enjoy the time you spend there and the connections you have made with like-minded organizations.

Sincerely,

Muriel Neufield,

Past President of the AEU.



**During the first report of the International Criminal court to the United Nations**, President Judge Philippe Kirsch, spoke with members of The American Coalition to The International Criminal Court, Thursday, October 5 from 4-5 pm at the United Nations Association in New York. President Kirsch delivered his annual report to the General Assembly on Monday, October 9.

### **The International Criminal Court Makes Progress**

While 104 governments have signed onto the ICCt, the US administration finds itself caught in conundrums of its own making. For example, in response to the US declaration that the Darfur conflict is genocide, the UN Security Council voted to refer the atrocity to the ICC.

The US took leadership in drafting the SC Resolution only to abstain from voting for it to act in accordance with US policy regarding the Court.

Another setback was handed to the US with regard to the impunity agreements, In August 2002, the U.S. threatened to withdraw military aid for countries that would not guarantee U.S. immunity from prosecution by the ICC. At that time, Human Rights Watch described the pressure on these countries as the Bush Administration's attempt at "blackmail."

### **THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

By 2015 all United Nations Members States have pledged to:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
2. Achieve universal primary education.
3. Promote gender equality and empower women.
4. Reduce child mortality.
5. Improve maternal health.
6. Combat HIV/AIDs, malaria and other diseases.
7. Ensure environmental sustainability.
8. Develop a global partnership for development.

Instead, other countries such as Russia and China are offering arms and military support to replace US withholding in those countries who refused to sign, several of them in South America. The impact is to further erode US influence abroad to the consternation of the pentagon and Secretary of Defense, Condoleeza Rice.

Meanwhile, The National Service Conference continues to advocate for US involvement with the Court. Justice requires that those who plan acts of war and genocide must be held accountable. This Court both pushes forward the foundations for international law and addresses for the first time in human history our leaders' responsibility to promote peace.

*Suggestion: Some Societies are putting on their Platform-calendars International Peace Day, September 21 and Human Rights Day, December 10.*



**Dan Thomann, Head of The Chicago Alliance for the ICC, Martha Gallahue, President of the NSC and Peter Lesser, Chicago Society and translator at the First Nuremburg Trials, chat during the NSC luncheon at the AEU Assembly in June, 2006 Dan and Peter were guest speakers at the luncheon.**

### KURT JOHNSON ORGANIZES ISDnA

NSC Treasurer, Kurt Johnson, founding member of Interspiritual Dialogue continues an international outreach with its offspring now called Interspiritual Dialogue in Action which began in 2005 in Austin, Texas.

He has been invited to attend and will represent the NSC in an informal international “network” which includes Deepok Chopra, Kosmos publisher Nancy Roof, and David Woolfson.

**ISDnA** is an informal network open to all persons and groups with interest in interspiritual community, dialogue and activism. At its heart, ISDnA seeks to illumine Brother Wayne Teasdale’s vision that there is a shared experience common to all Awakened Consciousness, be it religious or secular. At the core of this experience, which is Oneness, the invigorated Heart fosters a life of unconditional service and an honoring of all experience as it has been passed down by myriad religious, philosophical and ethical traditions. Bro. Wayne believed that this millennium is a time forsharing from this Consciousness of Oneness and witnessing it unfold in what he called a “civilization with a heart”.



(Above) Kurt Johnson enjoys a moment of reflection amidst his busy schedule.

(Right) Recently, in NYC, members of the SWA participated in a rally to save Dafur, another great concern of the NSC.



Rose Walker, President Emerita of the NSC, (above right) takes a minute to have her picture taken with a friend at the UN in October, 2006.

### THE STUDENT WORLD ASSEMBLY IS A GLOBAL BODY SAYS PAUL RAYNAULT

NSC Executive Council member, Paul Raynault reports that in the past two years, The Student World Assembly has grown into its present membership of over 600 schools in more than 100 countries.

The Student World Assembly is a non-governmental, nonpartisan organization created to represent students globally. Its goal is to promote global democracy by engaging students in the democratic process throughout the world. They act as decision makers upon global affairs via the internet discussions, one-on-one meetings and international elections. Paul began in agricultural schools in this country and abroad in order to bring a leadership opportunity to students who might not see themselves as policy builders.





### **PANEL, TRANSMISSION OF HATE**

by Sylvain and Phyllis Ehrenfeld

**Sylvain and Phyllis Ehrenfeld have hosted three major events in Bergen County this year. They are founders of a UNA/USA Chapter in Teaneck, NJ.**

The UN has undertaken to study the causes of transmission of hate and work to create approaches for prevention. The Director of the Group Project for Holocaust Survivors and their Children, the American Red Cross's Senior Partner for International Services, and the President of the International Psychoanalytical Association, joined in a panel discussion to share their perspectives on this fundamental problem.

Dr Eizirik, President of the Psychoanalytic Association emphasized the early upbringing of an individual in fostering either love or aggression which can be directed against groups. The environment outside the family also plays an important role. Social division between groups promotes contempt, dislike and fear. Given the existence of this conditioning, the task of listening to others becomes difficult. As an interesting example, research to promote the listening experience with Israeli and Palestinian children has found that music works well as an instrument in teaching children how to listen and play with each other.

Dr Danieli, who studies concentration camp survivors, prisoners of war, and the terminally ill, identified the so-called "conspiracy of silence," as powerful transmitters of trauma created by violence. Everyone involved, the perpetrators, their families, the victims and their families suffered from the tensions created by inability to voice--and release--their pain. The effect of such silence led the next generation of those involved to act out the emotions their parents did not express. Culture can also promote or transmit hate through hate talk.

The International Services Program Manager of the Red Cross, Mr Lobry-Boulanger, identified the enormity of child suffering created by conflict;

children lost or separated from family members, abuses of all kinds, children forced into labor or violence, and homeless and displaced children. 20 million children are refugees or displaced persons, two million have died in the past 20 years because of war or conflict, one million are separated from their families, and six million became handicapped. Denial of painful trauma is another source of hate. Demands that the Turkish government acknowledge the killing of one million Armenians has been systematically denied. Bringing this information into public knowledge is a criminal offense in Turkey. A first attempt at a trial for the Armenian genocide-- the first in the 20th century, directly after World War I-- could not take place because of the threat of retaliation. This is why there is a need for an International Criminal Court, which the American Ethical Union strongly supports. .

### **FORGIVENESS: PARTNERING WITH THE ENEMY** by Martha Gallahue

Forgiveness and reconciliation are essential elements for systematic peace building, according to four experts at the World Conference for Non-Governmental Organizations at the UN called "Unfinished Business: Effective Partnerships."

Saths Cooper, PhD of Psychology who was himself tortured at Robbins Island, Edward Majian, Armenian student at St. Peters College, NJ , Ervin Staub, PhD, specialist on the holocaust, and Eileen Borris, EdD all agreed that forgiveness required special ego strength and often exceptional circumstances. Dr.Deanna Chitayat of The American Psychological Association organized and moderated the speakers' panel on September 8, 2006,

Forgiveness is defined as a process involving a change in emotion and attitude regarding an offender. It is an intentional and voluntary act, driven by by a deliberate decision. The result is decreased motivation to retaliate and letting go of negative emotions toward the offender. Mahatma Ghandi contended that "the weak can never forgive."

True forgiveness includes recognition of the wrongdoing and sometimes requires a formal process for reconciliation to occur. To discuss these issues at the UN is remarkable, since it brings before the nation states a deeply personal dimension of the impact of war.