



Women's Federation for World Peace International

United Nations Office Newsletter

Spring 2005

Forum on Global Perspective to End Racial Discrimination

March 21, 2005 - UN HQ, New York



Interracial Bridge of Peace Ceremony - Ms. Alexa Ward, Forum Moderator and Ms. Zahra Nuru, Forum Panelist

By *Motoko Sugiyama*

The Forum on the Global Perspective to End Racial Discrimination in Commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was held on March 21, 2005 in Conference Room 4, UN HQ, New York and sponsored by the NGO Section of DESA (Department of Economic and Social Affairs) cosponsored and organized by Women's Federation for World Peace International (WFWPI) and WFWP-USA.

Opening Session was moderated by Ms. Sheri Rueter, Vice President of WFWP-USA and Director of the Interracial Sisterhood Project (ISP). Welcoming remarks were delivered by Ms. Motoko Sugiyama, Vice President of WFWPI and Director of WFWPI UN Office, representing the sponsors and organizers. She overviewed the two types of ISP projects, the signature projects of WFWP. They are the International (and Interracial) Sisterhood Projects and the International Service Projects. Both projects started in 1994 when the Japan-Korea sisterhood campaign started and

simultaneously, volunteer WFWP members went out to 160 nations from Japan to start service projects.

Ms. Sugiyama briefly explained the initiation of the Interracial Sisterhood Projects that developed in USA as an outgrowth of the many successful international sisterhood projects. The Interracial Sisterhood Project, featured in today's forum presents an excellent best practice to facilitate an end to racial discrimination. While WFWPI's service projects such as schools, vocational centers, health clinics, foster care program, HIV/AIDS prevention programs and others in over 60 developing countries currently focus on poverty eradication. She concluded by saying that WFWP will continue to focus on the issues of poverty eradication and elimination of racial discrimination through the two ISPs, because those two issues are closely linked in many situations and those focuses are essential to the creation of a peaceful global family.

Ms. Donzaleigh Abernathy, actress, author and daughter of civil rights leader, Rev. Ralph David Abernathy gave the keynote speech on

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"A Woman's Role in Ending Racial Discrimination"

First, she gave an overview



of the history of slavery in America, beginning in 1562 when the British went to Africa to kidnap people from their villages and literally sell African people as slaves to America. In 1619, one year before white settlers arrived in Plymouth to seek religious freedom, the foundation for slavery in America had taken root. It continued until President Lincoln declared the freedom of slaves in 1865. Mr. Lincoln stressed that if a house is divided with half free and half slave, this house could not stand. African people were called Niggers and

Global Perspective, 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.

Motoko Sugiyama
Publisher & Editor-in-Chief

Bonnie Berry
Editor

Merly Barete-Barlaan
Production & Distribution

Friederike Buczyk
Layout & Design

This newsletter is published by the United Nation's Office of the Women's Federation for World Peace International,
4 West 43rd Street, Suite 506
New York, NY 10036.

For information, subscriptions, comments or editorial suggestions, please call 212-760-0146
Fax 212-760-0318
or write to:

WFWPI, 4 West 43rd Street, Suite 506
New York, NY 10036.
E-mail: WFWPInt1@aol.com

Find us on the Web at
<http://www.wfwp.org>

At the UN in New York...

Reports of NGO Briefings

Advancing Health for Older Persons

DPI/NGO Briefing • October 7, 2004 - UN HQ, New York

By Merly Barete-Barlaan

The 14th Annual UN International Day of Older Persons continued the tradition of previous International Days by building on significant UN milestones that acknowledge older persons as an increasingly major segment of society. Its mission statement includes: Continue to raise awareness of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Aging. Ensure that issues of aging are included in the implementation of MDGs. Identify the critical aging and health related issues that are being faced, and recognize that older persons continue to be active participants and contributing members of society as volunteers, advisors, role models and agents of change.

The Opening Session began with Mr. Shashi Tharoor, Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information reading a greeting from Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Ms. Florence Denmark, Chairperson, NGO Committee on Aging, UN NY, also delivered a message pointing out that life long health promotion is the key to mental health.

Ms. Ann Pawliczko, Senior Technical Adviser, Focal Point on Aging, Technical Support Division, UNFPA stated that in order to promote health, there needs to be accessible information about HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment programs. Also it is important to recognize the ability many older persons have to lead. The UNFPA goal is to have a society for all ages where elderly can participate, and have equal access to mainstream services.

Mr. Alexander Kalache, Chief of Aging and Health, WHO, stated that health is a critical asset for dignity and quality of life. In the MDGs, health is the core development agenda. He pointed out the regional inequalities and social inequalities currently existing in the world. For example, in Japan average life-span is 85 while Sierra Leone it is 30. There is also an issue of brain drain in developing countries to developed countries. He emphasized that only through partnership can we succeed. A healthy culture of aging is a culture where there is harmonious coexistence of young and old, rich and poor, public and private and north and south.



The Persistence of Slavery: A Focus on Human Trafficking

In Observance of the International Day to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and Abolition on November 4, 2004 - UN HQ, New York

By Motoko Sugiyama

Mr. Paul Hoeffel, Chief of NGO Section of DPI, moderated the Briefing. He opened by stating that trafficking is a modern form of slavery. The end result of trafficking is the slave labor of prostitution. UNODC (United Nations Department of Drugs and Crime) in Vienna is the focal organization for this issue and through UN Trust Fund for Trafficking; UNODC helps NGOs who focus on ending trafficking.

The first panelist was Ms. Marie Yvette Banzon, the Third Secretary of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations. She explained:

1. How trafficking began in Philippines: A group from US recruited women who were interested in the movie industry through a "destiny movie offer" twice a year at a hotel. They trafficked for prostitution, forced labor, slavery, sexual labor, etc. Such underground criminal organizations have global reach and target women and children.

2. What needs to be done to stop it: Neighboring countries in South East Asia need to cooperate to implement law enforcement

through interagency dialogue between governments and NGOs and by working with UN agencies.

3. What needs to be done to help the victims after they are rescued: Aftercare for those rescued victims is most crucial for recovery from trauma and becoming independent. Psychological therapy has to be provided as well as economic assistance.

Ms. Banzon stressed that solving the trafficking problem is essential to eradicating poverty and peace-building. The next panelist, Mr. Howard Dodson, Director of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture at New York Public Library, expert in African Slavery in US stated that the global system for the abolition of slavery was formed when the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted. Therefore, putting the Universal Declaration into practice in every corner of the globe is most important. Because of this new slave trade in the 21st century, we need a stronger global antislavery movement.

Persistence of Slavery, contd on pg. 4

NGO Partnership of the MDGs: Local, National and UN Opportunities

A DPI/NGO Communication Workshop • December 9, 2004 - UN HQ, New York

By *Motoko Sugiyama*

This report covers the morning session of an all-day event. Ms. Shamina Gonzaga, Youth Representative of the 57th DPI/NGO Conference was the moderator.


The first speaker Mr. Hank-Jan Brinkman, Senior Economic Affairs Officer, Executive Office of the Secretary General stated that in the beginning, the UN did not have the challenges and threats it is now facing. He explained the process for the 2005 Millennium +5 Summit and resolution scheduled for Sept. 2005. The Millennium Summit in 2000 adopted the Millennium Declaration and later, the Millennium Development Goals.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan will cover the whole issue of the Millennium Declaration in his report due out in May 2005. Civil society and NGOs will be able to use this report to appeal to and lobby their

governments. The Functionary Commission of ECOSOC met in Copenhagen in February, which will be followed by ECOSOC's substantive session in Geneva where real negotiation begins in July and August 2005 in preparation for the September summit.

The second speaker was Mr. William Yotive, Project Manager, Global Learning and Teaching Projects (Cyberschool Bus) Unit, Civil Society Service, Outreach Division, DPI. He explained DPI's creation of the Global Learning and Teaching Projects. This project provides an interactive conference where students can have discussions online via new technology. This is an excellent way for youth at a distance to connect to the UN. The UN can be more accessible to young people whom the UN wants to reach. It will also provide information regarding current issues and

debates in the General Assembly. He encouraged us to make use of a new UN website regarding the MDGs that will be launched in the near future. Finally Mr. Yotive gave an example of using technology to make progress on the MDGs. MDG# 8 is to develop a global partnership for development, especially between poor and rich countries. This has been mandated by the GA, therefore, agencies should take initiative for partnership. DPI also should initiate partnerships, including DPI and NGOs. For example: the education committee in the nation of Congo and DPI partnered to make education available online.

At the end of the briefing, Moderator, Ms. Shamina Gonzaga showed a DVD presentation of Youth Cultural events at the 57th DPI/NGO Conference. Young performing artists from diverse cultural backgrounds came together to perform and exchange their music and dance. It was very impressive and gave a glimpse of understanding about how the differences of humankind can be harmonized. 

Reports of NGO Briefings Continued:

Women and Violence

"In Observance of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women"

Nov. 18, 2004 - UNHQ, New York

By *Merly Barete-Barlaan*

Mr. Paul Hoeffel, Chief of DPI/NGO Section gave the introduction. According to Ms. Marijke Velzeboer-Slacedo, Chief, Latin America and the Caribbean Section, UNIFEM, Violence against 15-49 year old women is a leading cause of HIV/AIDS. In Africa only 3% of infected women are treated. Universal Education can prevent HIV/AIDS if schools include HIV/AIDS education in the curriculum. Women should know that they have rights and should be supported by their communities. Strategies to end violence must include educating women about their rights and empowering them to claim their rights. All of us have the right to live in a violence-free society.

Ms. Kyung-hwa Kang, Chair, Commission on the Status of Women, Minister Counselor, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations reported on the stance of CSW regarding women and violence. According to Ms. Kang, it is difficult for countries to make a commitment to stop violence against women. The 1995 Beijing Platform of Action laid out what governments should do. In 2000 CSW reviewed the Beijing Platform of Action. Last year CSW failed to agree on a conclusion. It was a major disappointment. Its failure was not because of

Women and Violence, *continued on pg. 5*

Millennium + 5 Process: Civil Society Preparations

March 3, 2005 - UN HQ, New York

By *Bonnie Berry*

Moderator: Paul Hoeffel, DPI; Panelists: Henk-Jan Brinkman, Senior Economic Affairs Officer, Ex. Office of the Secretary-General, Najet Karaborni, NGO Section, UN Dept. of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Fanny Munlin, Representative, Millennium +5 NGO Network, Joseph Donnelly, 58th Chair, Annual DPI/NGO Conference.

The main purpose of this briefing was to discuss the process of NGOs and Civil Society to give input to the September 2005 Millennium +5 Review held by the General Assembly. Paul Hoeffel stressed that Civil Society are major players from the local to international levels. There is great urgency to face and solve problems. The question and goal is how to integrate the power and energy of Civil Society into the UN in a meaningful and effective way. Mr. Brinkman told us that Secretary General Kofi Annan has resolved that the General Assembly have hearings with civil society, now scheduled for June 23rd and 24th, 2005 to prepare for the Millennium +5 Summit to address issues such as development, security, rule of law, protection for vulnerable people and UN reform.

Ms. Karaborni listed three objectives of DESA: To give all NGOs the opportunity to contribute to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, Focus on networking and capacity building, as well as

create partnerships among NGOs, resulting in concrete proposals and reports of best practices to the UN High Level Segment.

Ms. Munchin's committee is focusing on getting NGOs together to look for commonalities and give crucial input to heads of state with a unified voice. Her committee is taking input on the following questions: What are the significant changes in the lives of women and girls in your community in the last decade? What are some factors that most impede the empowerment of women and girls in your community? What are your recommendations for supporting women at the community level to advance the status of women and girls? What is the first action you will take to implement these ideas in your community?

Mr. Donnelly stressed that the UN can't be effective unless people are informed. Panelists encouraged NGOs to deliberate, create consensus and generate one unified outcome statement (coordinated by the Millennium +5 NGO network) to be submitted to member states.

We encourage you to submit input for the above questions to Bonnie Berry, WFWPI UN Representative at:

bonnieberry@msn.com.



UN Launching of United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation

“Achieving the MDGs through South-South Cooperation”

December 20, 2004 - UN HQ, New York

By Merly Barete-Barlaan

The United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 58/220 of 23 December 2003, declared December 19th as the United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation. The theme of this year’s commemoration is “Achieving the Millennium Development Goals through South-South Cooperation”.

The proclamation by the General Assembly of this Day underscores the importance Member States attach to South-South cooperation as a complement to North-South cooperation and as a driver of effective development aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Renewed emphasis on South-South approaches to development emanates from current trends in international relations as countries of the South that are home to two thirds of humanity increasingly stress the need for turning to each other to address shared development challenges. The search for South-South development solutions has become all the more urgent, as countries on the margins of the

globalization processes face the risk of not meeting the MDGs.

The UN Day for South-South Cooperation highlighted the vast possibilities that a cooperative spirit holds for the Global South. New prospects for mutually enriching South-South exchanges rest on the fact that a number of developing countries that have attained economic growth and poverty reduction at unprecedented rates in recent years have relevant experience and knowhow to share with other nations in the South. The UN Day for South-South cooperation also provides an opportunity for the world to seek solutions to the development setbacks particularly by some Least Developed countries.

The thematic segment started with a welcome by Chairperson, H. E. Mr. B. G. Chidyausiku, President of the General Assembly High-Level Committee on the Review of South-South Cooperation. A statement by the President of the 59th Session of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Jean Ping

was delivered by Mr. Zephirin Diabre, UNDP Associate Administrator. Next, H. E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, Chairman, Group of 77 and China gave a statement. The keynote speaker was Professor Wangari Maathai, winner of the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize. She gave a presentation on Environment and Sustainable Development. Mr. Harris Gleckman, Chief, UNCTAD, New York gave a presentation on Promoting South-South Trade and Investment for Poverty Reduction. Dr. Anthony Pramualratana, Executive Director of the Thailand Business Coalition on AIDS gave a statement on The Role of the Private Sector in Fighting HIV/AIDS (Example from Thailand). A Model of Triangular Cooperation in Food Security (The Case of New Rice for Africa) was delivered by Dr. Monty Jones, Executive Secretary, Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa, Chief breeder of the NERICA, varieties of rice and winner of the 2004, World Food Prize Foundation Award.



UN Launches International Year of Microcredit

November 18, 2004, UN HQ, New York

By Hannah Alexander

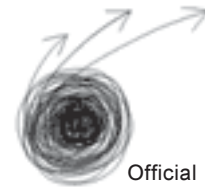
The United Nations launched the International Year of Micro credit, as part of an effort to build support for making financial services (e.g. credit, savings, insurance, transfer remittances, etc.) more accessible to poor and low-income households. The Year’s overarching goals are to raise the profile about microcredit and microfinance; to promote partnerships among the United Nations system, governments, donors, nongovernmental organizations, the private sector, academia and microfinance clients; and to increase public awareness about the reliability of microfinance clients, especially women, in repaying loans, managing household incomes, building assets and enterprises and contributing to the economy. As Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, states: “The International Year of Micro credit offers a pivotal opportunity for the international community to engage in a shared commitment to provide financial services to the poor. Together, we can and must build financial sectors that help people improve their lives.”

At the opening celebration at UN Headquarters in New York, government leaders, representatives of major donor agencies, private sector leaders (Citigroup and ING Group N.V.) and microfinance experts (e.g. Maria Otero of Accion International and

Nancy Barry of Women’s World Banking) addressed the challenge of expanding the reach of microfinance by identifying best practices and the hurdles to wider availability.

Most of the speakers at the Launch acknowledged that although microcredit and microfinance has already had a positive impact on the household income and quality of life of more than 25 million poor people (or 6 percent of the world’s poor), most, especially the poorest, still lack access to financial services that could raise their standard of living and protect them against economic setbacks (caused by illness, natural disasters, macroeconomic instability, etc.). “Reaching the poorest of the poor is the greatest challenge the development community faces” said José Antonio Ocampo, Undersecretary General of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). Diederik Laman Trip, Chairman of ING Netherlands, supported this view: “Large groups of people who could make use of microcredit are not being reached.”

To meet this huge gap in services, stakeholders at the Launch agreed to share best practices and to collectively critically assess how to better construct inclusive financial sectors that strengthen the entrepreneurial capabilities of the poor.



Official website ---
<http://www.yearofmicrocredit.org>

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The third panelist, Mr. Wenchi Yu Perkins, Anti-Human Trafficking Program Officer, Vital Voices Global Partnership introduced her organization’s strategy to deal with trafficking. In 1997, Vital Voices Global Partnership was created as a nonprofit organization in US, to expand networking of NGOs advocating against trafficking of women. Public awareness was heightened through the newsletter, Trafficking Alert, a Tool Kit and flyers as well as a website in nine languages. We also have to elevate this issue of governmental enforcement. She stressed that more awareness and government cooperation are still needed to fight the problem.

The following points were stressed by panelists after questions from the floor: Law enforcement must mandate the end to trafficking. Civil society must work with law enforcement agencies against organized crime. Eradication of poverty is essential to prevent victims from being lured into trafficking. It needs to be emphasized that poverty is a violation of human rights.



At the UN in Vienna ...

Workshop on NGO and UN Cooperation, and the Perspective of UNODC

(UN Department of Drug and Crime)

September 24, 2004 - Vienna, Austria

By Elisabeth Riedl

A Workshop on NGO and UN Cooperation and the Perspective of UNODC was held in Room No. GO 545 at UN Vienna International Centre on Friday 24th September 2005 from 2:30 to 5:00pm. The forum was sponsored by the NGO Committee on Peace, Vienna. Women's Federation for World Peace Austria cosponsored and organized the event. There were 100 international participants: WFPW International Board members and National Chapter Presidents.

The forum was opened by Moderator Dr. Maria Riehl, Cochair of the Forum Organizing Committee and WFPW UN Vienna Representative. She spoke about implementing the culture of heart through bridges of peace, acknowledging the work of others to fulfill our common desire for a peaceful world. She mentioned the necessity of opening our eyes to the problems of the world. She also encouraged women to act on their commitment to healing the world through service.

Welcoming remarks were given by the cosponsor Prof. Felix Bertram, Pax Christi Austria, board member of the NGO Committee on Peace. Prof. Bertram stressed that NGO's have an important role in setting the preliminary conditions for peace. Observing and making practical criticism assists the observance of democratic procedures. He described the activities of the Vienna UN NGO Committee on Peace, with its 28 member organizations. The focus of the Committee on Peace is on disarmament & the elimination of atomic weapons.

Marlene Parenzan, former vice-president of CONGO (Congress of NGOs), addressed the topic NGO and UN cooperation. There are 2000 NGO's accredited to ECOSOC. Since 1945 NGO's have been involved in UN work. As of May 1968 ECOSOC resolution 1296/31, amended 25th July 1996 ECOSOC resolution 1996/31, the work relationship became more structured. NGO's

are granted consultative status in 3 categories: general, specific, and on the roster according to the scope of their concerns. The resolution 1996/31 regulates the day to day interaction of NGO's in consultative status with the UN, ECOSOC and its functional commissions. NGO's have the right to attend UN meetings as observers, can submit written and oral statements and may be asked to prepare special papers and carry out specific studies. They have access to official and conference documentation of Commissions, AD Hoc Committees, Expert Group meetings, Press Documentation, and UN libraries. NGO's in consultative status are obliged to submit quadrennial reports to the Council committee, describing their activities. Each year NGO's Headquarters submits a list of names of representatives for accreditation to the UN offices in New York, Geneva and Vienna. Then, ground passes are issued. In New York, NGO's are also accredited to the Department of Public Information. CONGO (Congress of NGOs) was formed in 1948 (400 organizations) to facilitate NGO participation in UN debates and decisions. It also mobilizes NGO's to organize parallel activities to major UN global meetings. CONGO assists the NGO Committees by providing model statutes to guarantee democratic procedure. NGO's have organized parallel and ancillary meetings to sessions of the CSW, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice as well as the Congress on the Prevention of Crime while participating fully in the annual deliberations of the official governmental meetings. NGO's have been instrumental in preparations for, the holding of and follow up to the International Year of the Family.

UNODC Ms. Shannon Brown spoke on Drugs and Crime. Two films were shown on Trafficking of persons. UNODC (UN Office of Drugs and Crime) has 22 field offices, with Headquarters in Vienna. Their main strategy

focuses are supply reduction, drug treatment, prevention, fighting human trafficking, working with governments to fight drug trafficking, and supporting adherence to treaties and conventions. She informed us that there are special challenges in the treatment of women and drug abuse. Because there is a connection between HIV/AIDS and drug abuse, UNODC partners with UNAIDS. Human Trafficking is mainly a transnational organized crime. The two major aspects of trafficking are the sexual exploitation of people and exploitation of women and children for forced labor. Origin, Transit and Destination points are all being examined in order to rescue these victims. In 2000 UNODC started a Victims Assistance campaign. Forty countries broadcast television public service announcements that included a local contact number to access victim's assistance. Ms. Brown pointed out that the 2004 Drug Report and other additional information is available on the UNODC website.

www.unodc.org



Defend Peace, continued from pg. 6

In some ways, a stark contrast to the details of widespread human rights violations deliberated on in the conference, the Culture of Peace evening was a celebration of the goal being worked towards. The evening included former Director of UNESCO and passionate promoter for the Culture of Peace, Frederico Mayor, an exhibition by the Red Cross (ICRC) and a song written especially for the event titled, "Save Tomorrow".

In the closing ceremony, both Mrs. Mubarak and Mrs. Calmy-Rey reiterated their hopes that this gathering could produce important tangible results and a four year time frame was set. Dr. Aleya Hammad, Secretary General of the Coalition was given a standing ovation for her passionate behind the scenes work in preparing the conference. Closing remarks were offered by Sheika Sabeeka Bint Ibrahim Al Kalifa, wife of H.M. the King of Bahrain who said she believed that this coalition would be "a powerful driving force for preserving the dignity of women around the world by protecting their rights and interests and empowering them to be in control of their destiny".



Women and Violence, contd from pg. 3

lack of interest, but because there was so much interest and passion but differing perspectives, there was little room to compromise. Reflecting on the failures of last year, this year the hope is that as we celebrate Beijing + 10, delegations and constituents will be more willing to compromise and reaffirm the platform. NGO input and impetus play a very important role in the process.

Ms. Sara Nordstrom, Representative of Sixteen Days of Activism against Gender Violence, explained how her NGO worked to raise global awareness that violence against women not only violates women's rights but also violates human rights.



Report from Geneva ...

Global Coalition to Defend Peace

International Women's Conference on Women Defending Peace
November 22-24, 2004 - Geneva, Switzerland

By Carolyn Handschin

The International Conference on Women Defending Peace was held in Geneva, Switzerland on November 22-24, 2004. Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak, President and Founder of the Women's International Peace Movement and Mrs. Micheline Calmy-Rey, Swiss Minister of Foreign Affairs cosponsored the event. There were more than 400 delegates, many of whom have personal experience of armed conflict.

With a strong sense of solidarity that transcended religious, ethnic or national preference; women's organizations, politicians, experts, jurists and peace activists joined together to make a collective commitment to undertake a set of priority actions and to establish monitoring mechanisms that address root causes of insecurity. The conference was called to intensify efforts to achieve peace and to restore a sense of human dignity as well as respect for the human rights of all individuals.

In the preface of the book, "Wounds of War" that was presented at the conference, Mrs. Mubarak explained, "The wounds of war do not heal because conflicts end or signing of peace treaties. It is the resilient courage and toil of women that preserves families during the turmoil of war and fleeing civilians and then helps to rebuild devastated communities and defend peace. Greater involvement of women in preventing wars and strengthening peace would contribute to effective exploration of options and alternatives."

In the opening ceremony, Mr. Juan Somavia, the Director of the International Labor Organization, read a message from the United Nation's Secretary General. "We must be answerable to the needs of women in conflict and make sure that there is a direct link between our diplomacy and their reality", said Kofi Annan. In her opening address, the Swiss Foreign Minister noted that, "while men are fighting wars, women are often preparing for peace, not at the negotiating table but at the grassroots level- sometimes in spectacular ways, at other times, in ways that rarely come to our attention."

The gathering reviewed case studies to identify the ingredients of successful peace interventions in order to draw pragmatic lessons and principles that could be applied elsewhere. Then the focus turned to obstacles that inhibit effective participation by women in peace processes. The final work of the conference was to concretize a set of priority actions that will be undertaken.

In the first session, opened by former United Nation's Secretary-General Butros Galli, the theme was "Success Stories: Promoting Women's Participation in Peace Building". Jody Williams, 1997 Nobel Peace Prize winner explained the dynamics in building a grassroots momentum for change. Chair of the Independent Afghanistan Human Rights Commission, Sima Samar, told of the painstaking efforts to open hospitals, clinics and schools that accommodate women and girls. Palestinian Women Affairs Minister, Zahira Kamal and former Knesset member, Naomi Chazan who received the Middle East Peace Network's "Women for Peace" award gave personal insight about their efforts to keep hope alive in their country.

Examples of some of the hard-won steps of African women to be included in peace processes and influence change in policy making was explained by Bineta Diop, Executive Director of Femme Africa Solidarite. Other speakers included Vesna Terselic, Alternative Nobel Peace Prize winner from Bosnia, Ivette de Oliviera, Justice and Reconciliation in East Timor and Asha Haji Elmi, chair of the Save Somali Women and Children.

In the second series of sessions, "Obstacles: Protecting Women in War, Supporting Women in Peace", case studies examined the constraints to justice and security for women focusing on three areas: 1) trafficking in women, 2) defense of and compensation for women who have been raped during conflict and 3) the deprivation of social and political rights. UNIFEM Director, Noleen Heyser addressed the issue of the implementation of SCR 1325 in the field and for the future. Newly appointed High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour and Senior Advisor at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, Mrs. Elisabeth Rehn analyzed diverse aspects of the constraints to women's effective participation.

Also speaking during that session were; Ellen Sirleaf Johnson, Chair of the Governance Reform Commission of the National Transitional Government of Liberia and Mr. Mattias Steifel Executive Director of War-torn Societies Project and Kamel Idris, Director of the World Intellectual Property Organization. Each Panel theme was followed by debate and discussion in an effort to extract principles of success that could be applied in future projects and programs.



The drafting process of the plan of action, seen as the most important aspect of the conference, began with some difficulty. When disagreements over small details seemed to obscure the possibility of consensus, Mrs. Mubarak intervened to remind delegates of the importance of solidarity based on trust in creating a plan for future work, even if not every idea can be included initially. In the final sessions, chaired by Gertrude Mongella, the plan of action was agreed upon,

"Towards this end, we resolve today to join our efforts and form a *Global Coalition – Women Defending Peace.*"

The document continued, "The coalition will bring together women's groups and other organizations, as well as individual women and men, to combine their respective skills, capacities, best practices, lessons learned and resources to achieve our common endeavor to defend and maintain peace and justice involving women and men as equal partners."

Some of the agreed upon proposals for the coalition were to establish a World Bank for Peace Initiatives, run by women, as suggested by Women's World Summit Foundation and preparing a Map of Peace that identifies the locations of ongoing activities involving women building peace with the goal to be more effective and to appreciate the investment of women worldwide. This project has been an ongoing activity of a special task force that includes Women's Federation for World Peace, International within the Geneva-based CONGO Working Group on Peace.

The Coalition will establish an early-warning network to track trouble spots and dangerous situations and seek to engage in a dialogue with those who have political, economic or media power. There will be a concerted effort to ensure no less than 40% participation of women at the negotiating table and in influential positions and promote education and training at all levels, especially of youth. Plans were already being made to send a high-level delegation to Palestine to monitor the elections and as encouragement to Palestinian women to participate.

Defend Peace, contd on pg. 5

CSW Reviews the Beijing Platform of Action (Beijing +10)

49th Commission on the Status of Women

February 28 to March 11, 2005 - UN HQ NYC

By Bonnie Berry

The 49th Commission on the Status of Women convened on February 28th at UN Headquarters in NYC. This meeting had the very special purpose of evaluating progress worldwide on the Beijing Platform of Action, evaluating the status of women and officially reaffirming the Platform of Action. This reaffirmation serves the purpose of renewing the commitment of the nations and the worldwide community of NGOs to achieving the high but very worthwhile vision of achieving gender equity in all the areas of concern listed in the Platform.

The proceedings of the CSW involved a representative of each national delegation giving a report on the status of women in their nation. The reports reflected progress in many areas particularly in the areas of legislative and social policy changes to perspectives more sympathetic to the cause of achieving gender equity. These laws and policy changes were regarding employment matters, education, health issues, immigration, criminal matters, domestic violence and more. Some nations created quotas for women's participation in government decision making bodies. A number of nations are conducting research that segregates data according to gender in order to have a better understanding of where progress and problems exist. Senegal's Minister of Family Solidarity and Social Development informed us that the African Nations had adopted a framework of action regarding women and children's predicament. Some nations have improved free access to reproductive health care services, enabling women to choose the timing and spacing of their children's births. Spain's delegation announced that its' government has gender parity, including 8 men and 8 women as ministers, as well as a woman Vice President. Spain's government is also providing training for personnel about dealing with gender violence and each person's right to live in freedom. Much progress was reported.

In spite of the progress, as you can well imagine, there are still some very difficult and dire circumstances. For example, in Afghanistan, though this CSW was historical as it was the first opportunity for Afghan women to represent their nation on the world stage, money issues and economic issues still afflict women's progress. According to the Minister of Women, in Afghanistan the life expectancy of half the women is only age 44. Infant and maternal mortality rates are the second highest in the world. The psychological trauma women have experienced is severe and needs to be treated. Only 14% of women have

completed primary education. 70% of women in Afghanistan live in extreme poverty. Women are largely ignorant of their rights and very few women are participating in public life. These realities are similarly true in other areas dealing with conflict or post conflict situations. At least in Afghanistan, 20% of the loya jirga that met to formulate the new constitution were women, and women's rights are protected in that constitution. But Afghanistan is just one example of many nations where there is a long road ahead. There is additional concern that the predicament of indigenous women, who do not receive direct representation, often fail to have a voice in decision making on both the national and international levels.

Prior to the CSW, there were meetings of the Regional Economic Commissions, to report the status of women in their respective regions. Also, all nations in the UN network received questionnaires in regard to the status of women in their nations as well as evaluation of progress each nation has made regarding the Beijing Platform of Action. One hundred and fifty nations responded to the questionnaire and all reports are posted at the Division of Advancement of Women website: (www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/Review/English/reponse)

These questionnaires reveal the official positions of the various governments in regard to the Platform of Action. Specific legislation, mechanisms and accomplishments toward equity for women and addressing the problems uniquely faced by women are listed within the questionnaire responses. Written reports of the various Regional Economic Commissions also are available online. During the CSW panel of representatives from these Regional Commissions, unequivocal support for the reaffirmation of the Beijing Platform of Action was vocalized.

International Women's Day was celebrated as a part of the Commission on the Status of Women. Diverse musical entertainment took place, from opera to Latin/African fusion that brought the delegates and observers to their feet to dance. Speakers included Nobel Peace Prize winners Ms. Rigoberto Menchu Tum of Guatemala, and Dr. Wangari Maathai of Kenya. Ms. Tum gave tribute to women who have lost their lives to violence over the last 30 years. She stressed the enormous hope and expectation created by the Beijing Platform of Action for all women who struggle, empowering them to create and invent more hope and progress. Ms. Tum also pointed out that fighting for women's rights was not just one decade's work or that of an era, but a

lifelong course and that there is much to be done for women to move forward with dignity, including recovering cultural values that have been abandoned.

Dr. Maathai, first woman PhD in West Africa and current Member of Parliament in Kenya emphasized that rural women's priorities are for clean water, fuel, food and environmental protection. She pointed out that without protecting the environment, gender equity would not be sustainable. In reference to her Nobel Peace prize, Dr. Maathai expressed that she is a symbol for all of us, and she thanked all women who have provided leadership. It is important to note that she asked us all if we are listening to Bono (of rock band U2). She paid homage to Bono, who is saying that we must make poverty history. She told us that she is listening to him and watching what he is doing to solve the problem of poverty. Finally she encouraged us all to Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Repair. She made us all repeat the Japanese word, *Mottainai*, which incorporates all four R's in one.

In addition, as a part of the Women's Day commemoration, there were statements from Chairwomen of Women's Congresses of 1980 (Dr. Lucille Mayer) and 1985 (Dr. Leticia Shahani), and the Secretary General of the 4th World Congress of Women in 1995 (Ms. Gertrude Monzella). Dr. Mayer emphasized how far women had come as agents and participants rather than just recipients. She pointed out that men and women experience suffering equally in the face of war, but that women and girls are more often refugees and have special vulnerabilities. Dr. Shahani called for implementation of the Platform of Action at the grassroots level, hand in hand with the Millennium Development Goals as well as strengthening UNIFEM (UN Fund for Women) within the UN system. Ms. Monzella urged us to celebrate progress toward gender equity and push for acceleration toward achievement. She said, "A revolution has begun and there is no going back." At this, the audience erupted into cheers and applause.

Former UN Special Advisor on Gender Issues Ms. Angela King and her successor, Ms. Rachel Miyaja also spoke. She pointed out that the World Women's Congresses stigmatized exclusion of women and highlighted the issues of discrimination against women. She insisted that ending discrimination against women will require boys and men as partners and that strong leadership is needed into the next generation for all commitments to gender equality to become everyday reality.

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Activities Around the World in 2004

Equatorial Guinea

❖ Aid from Japan

40 Boxes of Aid Supplies are shipped annually from Japan

Volunteers visited the Interior Minister of Equatorial Guinea to apply for tax exemption for Aid Supplies.



❖ Primary Schools

WFWPI has built and operates the Motoko Shiroma Primary School (grades K thru 6).

Volunteers are making plans to build another primary school and are applying for government permission.



❖ Foster Parents Program

55 students at Motoko Shiroma School receive support from the Foster Parents program.

5 Students at another school receive support from the Foster Parents program.



Cote D'Ivoire

❖ HIV/AIDS Prevention

Conferences were held at 3 IFEF Feminine Institutes in Yopougon and Port-Bouet areas of Abidjan between 1/21/04 and 2/25/04. 405 participants attended.

❖ International Women's Day 3/8/04: WFWP had a sales and information booth at the exposition. The booth received visits from Women's Ministers.

❖ WFWP participated in the Family Festival organized by the NGO, REPERES at Cocody Hall in Abidjan 5/21/04 to 5/23/04.

❖ AIDS Education presentation, panel discussion and dinner. The 6 Women Panelists are the leaders of the NGO UFA (Union of Adobo Women) 6/1/04

❖ Working Session at the Women's Ministry with the President of the African Women Development Fund.

❖ UFA and WFWP

Participation at the ceremony of nomination of the NGO UFA President. WFWP presented a gift to First Lady Mrs. Gbagbo and to Mr. Dona Fologo, godfather of the ceremony. 6/04

❖ Sisterhood Ceremony between WFWP women and ladies of the NGO UFA. Each WFWP woman received two UFA women as sisters. Gifts of Soap and special oils were offered by WFWP, and fruit and vegetable baskets were offered by the UFA women. 8/28/04

❖ Education Seminar for WFWP members. 12/4/04



Mauritius

❖ Foster Parents Project

One of our foster children, Nathalie Becherel, won the national scholarship. She came from a very poor family and has great determination to do her very best in her studies. With the coordination by WFWP, a Japanese family has been sponsoring Nathalie for the 3 years she has been with us. In the photo, Nathalie is thanking WFWP members for their support. The sincere dedication and contributions of these WFWP members has made the Foster Parent program a success. Japanese families are sponsoring 9 foster children. There are also 8 local sponsors such as Lions Club, Rotary Club and some businesses.



❖ Pure Love Education and Character Education

Demands for our straight forward educational programs promoting the value of sexual purity and character education have been increasing. We have given presentations in colleges, private institutions, NGOS, religious groups and more. Since 2003, the Commissioner of Prisons has engaged us to give monthly or biweekly presentations to those incarcerated, particularly youth and women.



Activities Around the World in 2004

Zambia

❖ Food Distribution Program

Distribution of Soya powder for underweight children at Garden Compound Clinic, a government clinic as well as 4 other area clinics. Since the program inception in 1996, 5000 children have been served.



❖ Membership

We have 300 registered members and 20 very active members who are administering the projects.

❖ Seminars and Educational Programs regarding national issues and crises such as:

- Marriage Breakdown and how to avoid it. How to build healthy marriages.

- How to prevent child abuse of street children and how to help them.

❖ HIV/AIDS Prevention Campaign

Matero Boys School (640 pupils), Mambilima Secondary School, Chitanda High School (all pictured) and 8 additional schools received presentations stressing abstinence practices for HIV/AIDS prevention. The students took a pledge of abstinence, the Purity Pledge. The presentations are ongoing and will continue at other area schools.



Mozambique

❖ Hospital Construction Complete

3 years ago, WFP procured two hectares of land that we ultimately donated to the ministry of health. In August of 2004, construction of a hospital was completed. It consists of a consultation building for patients of internal medicine and surgery, a maternity facility and a dining hall.



Guinea Bissau



Sunac Elementary School: 3rd Grade Class



Sunac Elementary School: 2nd Grade Class



Sunac Elementary School



Public Elementary School

Europe



❖ WFP Europe Hosts the 5th WFP International Leaders Workshop in Vienna, Austria September 22-25, 2004.

Negro and were not citizens, yet their labor built America. In addition, British killed countless Native American Indians who graciously welcomed them to their land.

Ms. Abernathy's father, Rev. Abernathy was a close friend of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., civil rights movement leader in the 1960s. Rev. King strongly believed that the only solution to solve prejudice and racial discrimination is a nonviolent one. This year is the 40 year anniversary of the nonviolent civil rights march that began in Montgomery, Alabama. There was a white woman, an ordinary housewife who was killed by the police as she was going to take part in this nonviolent civil rights march in Birmingham, Alabama. Even though she was white, she was killed due to racial hatred. She gave up her life for the sake of civil rights. Ms. Abernathy stressed that we should celebrate diversities, and not hate because it was God who made everyone different. She sees that women's role is to teach man how to love. We women have to believe in ourselves. Women have the power to transform men. Even Hitler needed a woman but this woman failed to teach Hitler not to hate the Jewish people but to love. When women fail in our responsibility to love, men can't succeed in creating a peaceful world. Consequently our children continue to suffer. Therefore, women must come together to save lives through the nonviolent means that the civil rights movement has taught us.



Ms. Sheri Rueter introduced the ISP, "Bridge of Peace" She reflected about how the interracial sisterhood project developed after 20,000 sister pairs of Japanese and American women were matched in 1995 and 1996. The Interracial Sisterhood Project has been held in various situations such as high schools, universities, and racially diverse communities. In July of 1996, the ISP was honored by selection as a "Promising Practice" by President Bill Clinton and included in his initiative on Race, "One America in the 21st Century."

As the Bridge of Peace ceremony began, each sister crossed the bridge from each end of the bridge. First they bowed to each other, then embraced each other and stood together at the center of the bridge, facing the audience and receiving generous applause. Some men



crossed the bridge and happily met a new brother. There were two hundred forum participants and most joined this lovely, joyful ceremony.

After the excitement of the sisterhood bridge ceremony, the forum began, moderated by Ms. Alexa Fish Ward, President of WFWP USA and Vice President of WFWPI.



The first panelist, Ms. Zahra Nuru, Director and Senior Advisor to the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative, UN OHRLS (United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing Countries) spoke on the Perspective of UN Efforts to End Racial Discrimination. Ms. Nuru had participated in the sisterhood ceremony, crossing the Bridge of Peace with her new sister, Ms. Alexa Fish Ward before her presentation. She warmly expressed her joy and excitement about meeting her new sister through the inspirational Bridge of Peace Ceremony. She went on to say that as we commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on March 21 each year, we mark another milestone toward meeting the principles of the charter of the United Nations in promotion and respect for human rights and building the foundation of human dignity. Ms. Nuru quoted from the UN Charter, communicating the principles of UN as well as giving an overview of efforts of the UN General Assembly toward elimination of racial discrimination. In conclusion, she stated that the process of elimination of all forms of racial discrimination is a long term and permanent

effort for individuals, civil society, states and the international community. The objective of ending racial discrimination is imperative and achievable. It is up to the states and the international community to redouble their efforts to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination in the interest of human dignity and human rights, national and international peace and security. (To read Ms. Nuru's whole speech, visit: www.wfwp.org).



The second panelist was Ms. Suzanne Mulcahy, Psychologist, and Director of the Northern California ISP. She spoke on the Perspective of NGOs to End Racial Discrimination. Ms. Mulcahy gave a very insightful presentation. She shared about her experiences with the Youth Forum on Interracial Harmony in California, which transformed the lives of hundreds of young people through a successful series of Interracial Sisterhood Projects. She quoted Ms. Joyce Mungherrera, President of YWCA Uganda, "adult attitude and stories deeply affect the attitudes of all youth around them". Often, even adults with the best of intentions unwittingly pass on prejudices, barriers and concepts to youth and even to small children who are not innately prejudiced. Ms. Mulcahy told how ISP organizers began to focus on youth to offer a positive model for reconciliation to young people, creating the Youth Forum on Interracial Harmony. Middle School, High School and College students as well as teachers were invited to attend. Interactive workshops and lively discussions were held, followed by a reception and the unique Bridge of Peace ceremony.

Ms. Mulcahy explained that after attending one of the Youth Forum events, Dr. Deborah Blue, President of Laney College, said she really appreciated the positive energy in the room at this Forum. Dr. Ray Richardson, Professor of Ethics Studies, at Laney College also made the following comments: "Of the many conferences I have been honored to attend as an administrator and faculty member of the Peralta College District, I cannot recall any that left a more impressive memory than the Youth Forum on Racial Harmony. We need to expand the Youth Forum on other campuses and throughout the nation!" Ms. Mulcahy

Girls Education: A Key to Poverty Eradication

WFWPI Side Event at 49th UN CSW

March 1, 2005 - UN Church Center, NYC

By *Bonnie Berry*,

Panelists: Dr. Lih-Rong Wang, Professor of Social Welfare, National Taiwan University; Ms. Rosellyn Magsaysay, President East Asia Women Peace Award Foundation, Inc; (statement delivered by Ms. Merly Barlaan); Ms. Motoko Sugiyama, VP, WFWPI; Ms. Hui-Jung Chi, CEO, the Garden of Hope Foundation; Moderator: Ms. Bonnie Berry, UN Rep., WFWPI.

Moderator, Bonnie Berry opened the panel discussion to an overflowing room of over 100 CSW participants. Panelists did a highly professional job of focusing on education as a tool for girl's empowerment and poverty eradication. According to their areas of expertise and experience, the speakers highlighted grassroots activities, best practices and strategies to engage partners such as the UN, governments, and NGOs for implementation of programs to improve girl's education.

First panelist, Ms. Magsaysay's statement was delivered by Ms. Merly Barlaan. Ms. Magsaysay's position was from the perspective of a mother and the founder and administrator of numerous charitable foundations in the Philippines. She stated that universal education is a must for all children, reminding us of the commitment of heads of state to the Millennium Development Goal envisioning primary education for all girls and boys by 2015.

Ms. Magsaysay then outlined the rights that children have to survive, develop, be protected and to participate based on the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child. Finally she encourages governments to show with sincerity that availability of quality education matters, World Bank to support projects that empower NGOs, governments and community institutions to form social development strategies, and governments should work shoulder to shoulder with civil society for poverty eradication programs to include both formal and informal education.



Dr. Wang, as researcher and college professor of social welfare, presented a convincing case for the benefits of girls' education in regard to economic realities and poverty eradication. She stated that educated girls reduce social burdens on government, increase family incomes, create greater workplace participation and a larger, better prepared workforce, and greater political and social participation of women. The side effect is a gender sensitive and gender equal society. Dr. Wang quoted from UNICEF, "Quality

basic education for all is vital to society because it produces people who can contribute to the economic and social development that is required to eradicate poverty". An important aspect of Dr. Wang's presentation was her outline of Best Practices in Taiwan that illustrated the importance of enacting laws and mechanisms on the national level in support of gender equality and education for girls. The Chinese Human Rights Assoc. decade long study indicated that education for girls was the most important right for protecting the human rights of girls and women. Taiwan has established an Equal Opportunity Education Policy that includes a parenting education law intending to improve parents' efficacy in having non-gender discriminatory attitudes toward their children. Also, a mandatory education policy has been instigated, entitling children to 9 years of education without gender bias or discrimination. Taiwan Parliament enacted the Gender Equality Employment Act in 2003, advocating nondiscriminatory, women/family friendly and anti-harassment work environments. Many community based women and girls' education programs have been instigated through community colleges and women's groups to raise awareness about gender justice and gender equity. Finally, Dr. Wang emphasized the importance of NGO's playing a role in monitoring the implementation of the Gender Equality Acts, dedicating resources to creating discrimination free learning environments for girls, as well as parent education regarding gender equality.



Ms. Sugiyama shared her wealth of experience and the experiences of WFWPI's overseas volunteers from Japan. She spoke about school construction and maintenance programs, vocational training, micro credit programs, foster parent (child sponsorship) programs, scholarships, literacy, medical and hygiene, farm and food support projects, AIDS prevention and moral education, as well as character education programs. Ms. Sugiyama stressed that even the hygiene and farm/food support programs have education components. Admittedly, WFWPI education programs involve boys as well. But since girls are often at a disadvantage culturally or because of religious perspective, and are most heavily impacted in conflict and post conflict situations, Ms. Sugiyama emphasized the importance of giving more and special attention to the development of educational



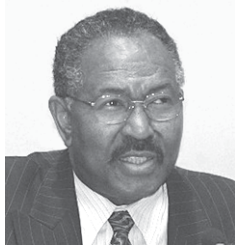
programs serving girls. Ms. Sugiyama continued by delineating WFWPI programs exclusively serving girls, including scholarship programs, foster parenting, the Peace High School for girls in Uganda and the Jamoo Girls Vocational Training School in Senegal. One of the most important issues that Ms. Sugiyama revealed was the problem that girls face in overcoming trauma, such as witnessing civil war and bloody slaughter in the case of girls in Uganda. The Japanese volunteers quickly saw how these children were broken and numb as a result of the trauma they had experienced. This gave rise to the need to address this deep issue through showing consistent care as well as character education, instructing the youth on emotional empowerment, cultivating a caring heart, how to cope with family struggles and how to take responsibility, among others. The children responded readily to the care and instruction they were given in this area. Ms. Sugiyama emphasizes the key role that character education plays in healthy human development. (Complete text of Ms. Sugiyama's speech available at www.wfwp.org)

Our final panelist, **Ms. Chi** has devoted herself to rescue and rehabilitation of girl prostitutes in Taiwan. Recovering girls are placed in special homes where they are taken care of and taught the basic skills of living. They receive care and counseling as well as education about spiritual matters. The girls are also trained in skills that will allow them to be employed and support themselves. Ms. Chi communicated the many ways that her organization, Garden of Hope Foundation is attacking the problem of girl prostitution. She acknowledged that it is a problem of society, and men's image of girls and women. Her organization uses many practical tactics to address the problem. They include; public relations campaigns targeting reeducation of men, public marches, public theatre that illustrates the destructive nature of the problem, art displays and others. It was inspiring to hear of the girl's lives that had been saved and also the many practical methods of raising awareness and creating social change that have been implemented by the Garden of Hope and Ms. Chi.

Thoughtful comments and questions from the audience demonstrated how attentive they had been. One listener emphasized the importance of the way that WFWPI service

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concluded by saying that women can be significant role models as well as be providing leadership during needed transitions in society. The world is not served by our silence when we, as women, hold back our spiritual gifts of the heart. The world is served when we take a stand for peace and use our voices and our heartfelt actions to find the solutions for peaceful coexistence. In closing Ms. Mulcahy stated, "When the heart is brought to the table, war is not an option."



The third and final panelist was **Rev. Lonnie McLeod, President of Exodus Transitional Community**, who spoke from the Perspective of Civil Society to End Racial Discrimination. As Ms. Ward introduced Rev. McLeod, she informed us that his

organization, Exodus Transitional Community was featured by President Bush in his inaugural speech in January 2005 as a best practice of transitional community service. Rev. McLeod began by saying that if a man thinks man is superior to woman; this same man thinks some races are superior to other races. He added that this kind of thinking is the origin of racial discrimination. He used humor to approach to the matter of comparison between men and women. His theory is that the difference between He and She is that He does not have an "S" in the word, which means spirit and soul. It means women have spirit and soul but men don't. Therefore He can't be taken out of woman's world but woman can be taken out of man's world because woman has spirit and soul attached. He stated that to end racial discrimination, everybody should have access to education, economic development and the right to vote equally. Rev. McLeod concluded by stressing that in order to eliminate hate we need to practice love. The only way humankind can live in harmony is through exercising forgiveness and mercy. If we forgive others for past mistakes, things can be changed.

There was some time for questions. The panelists summarized as follows in response to the questions. Since the work of the UN takes

so much time with meetings, talking, writing and reading, it is clear that there is no shortcut to peace. All the issues must be put on the table in this civilized time in order to avoid armed conflict and wars. Also, we must leave our injury and hurt behind and sit at the table, embrace each other as we work toward solutions to difficult problems. As long as we hold on to our own injury and hurt, we can't have peace. Peace will come only through forgiveness. We need to be able to give love and not seek only to be loved.

As Moderator, Ms. Ward closed the forum by expressing appreciation to the distinguished speakers, committed participants, staff and volunteer members of the forum organizing committee for the successful forum. This forum was significant because the day of March 21 is the very day of International Day of Elimination of Racial Discrimination. It was quite an inspirational event as speakers were from beautiful and wide diversities of expertise and practices. All in the conference room shared the sense of a common destiny as one human family in our global home. We reaffirmed our common commitment to work toward the achievement of world peace.

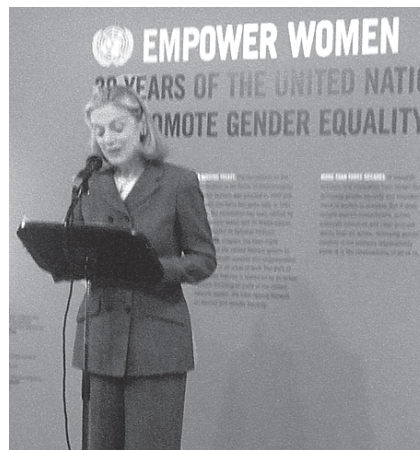


49th CSW, continued from pg. 7

Ms. Bani Dugal, current chair of the NGO Committee gave credit for advancement to NGOs and women's groups who raised their voices and translated their vision into action. She stressed that women's rights are human rights and are key to development. According to Ms. Dugal, Full equality of men and women is not an end in itself but a prerequisite to global peace and justice.

Following the Women's Day celebration, Ms. Nane Annan, wife of Secretary General Kofi Annan, presided over the opening of the photo exhibition, **Empower Women: 30 Years of the United Nations Efforts to Promote Gender Equality** displayed in the UN Visitors Lobby (see photo to right).

I am happy to announce that after much behind-the-scenes discussion and lobbying particularly surrounding the issue of access to abortion and the desire of the US delegation to amend the reaffirmation resolution with specific language stating that right to abortion was not a part of the original language of the Beijing Platform of Action, on Friday March 4th, the US delegation withdrew their amendment and the Beijing Platform of Action was unanimously reaffirmed by the national delegations to the Commission.



Ms. Nane Annan, opening photo exhibit

Girls Education, continued from pg. 11

projects empower girls and women and teach them or provide them with tools to achieve their own financial independence. She was from Africa, and strongly urged against aid projects that created dependency rather than independence. Another was passionate to receive the printed report of Dr. Wang, so she could carefully translate it to her native French and use it as a tool to convince others about the importance of legislative change on behalf of the advancement of girls and women and gender equity in education and society. Following the close of the meeting there was vigorous discussion among the panelists and audience.



Upcoming Events 2005

April 10
13th Anniversary of WFWP

⌘

May 15
International Day of Families

⌘

July 4-29
ECOSOC Substantive Session
UN HQ, Geneva

(*date tentative)

September 7-9
58th DPI/NGO Conference
UN HQ, New York City

⌘

September 13
Opening Day of the 60th Session of
General Assembly
International Day of Peace

⌘

September*
WFWP International Leader's
Workshops in Moscow