



Women's Federation for World Peace International

Federation for World Peace International

United Nations Office Newsletter

Spring 2009

Global Public Health and the Eradication of Poverty WFWPI 4th Forum on the Eradication of Poverty

November 25, 2008 - Conference Room 4, United Nations HQ, New York



By *Motoko Sugiyama*

The WFWPI Fourth Forum on the Eradication of Poverty supported the 2009 ECOSOC AMR Theme: Implementing the Internationally agreed Goals and Commitments in regard to Global Public Health. It was sponsored by UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) NGO Section and co-sponsored and organized by WFWPI. The Forum title was Global Public Health and the Eradication of Poverty.

Permanent Missions to the UN of the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan were supporting Missions to this event. "Living as a Global Family" video presentation began the forum. Panel moderator, **Ms. Motoko Sugiyama**, VP and Director of WFWPI UN Office introduced the opening session.

Prof. Lan Young Moon Park, President of WFWPI International's worldwide organization delivered warm and heartfelt welcoming



remarks. She emphasized that expanding participation of women in decision making positions will accelerate achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The different regional problems such as starvation and disease in Africa, conflicts in the Middle East and nuclear warhead issues of North Korea are interconnected within the entire global village. Therefore the UN's role and responsibility as the conscience and peacekeeper of the world is more crucial than ever.

Dr. Hanifa Mezoui, Chief of UN DESA NGO Section expressed her gratitude for the decade long partnership between NGO Section and WFWPI in her opening remarks. She clearly stated how much she has enjoyed working together with WFWPI on many important occasions at the UN, including this forum.



She also presented an overview of gender issues that the UN is working to address. Her message served to remind us that November 25th is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

Forum topics included:

1. Perspectives of Government,

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2. Contributions from Civil Society and NGOs,
3. Perspectives of UN Organizations and
4. Comprehensive Family Health and Security.

H.E. Madam Purificacion

Angue Ondo, Ambassador of Equatorial Guinea to the US spoke on the first topic. She explained the general health issues in Africa. For instance, 90% of malaria cases occur in



Africa. More than a million people die of the disease every year. Malaria is the main cause of mortality in children under the age of five years. Madam Ondo explained the successful strategy that reduced malaria in Equatorial Guinea, which was made possible through a partnership between government and the private sector. She added that WFWPI has contributed to poverty eradication in EG by building and managing schools beginning in 1999. As President of WFWPI EG, prior to coming to the U.S. as an Ambassador, Madame Ondo was proud to collaborate on WFWPI schools development and management efforts in Equatorial Guinea.

Dr. Christine Durbak, Chair and CEO of World Information Transfer (WIT) and Mr. Michihito Sano,



4th Forum, 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.

WFWPI International is a non-profit, non-governmental international organization in General Consultative Status of ECOSOC and DPI Associates with the United Nations

Motoko Sugiyama

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At the UN in New York...

Reports of NGO Briefings

Millennium Villages

A New Approach to Fighting Poverty in Africa

November 6, 2008 - UN HQ, New York

By Motoko Sugiyama

Ms. Gail Bindley-Taylor Sainte, Information Officer of NGO Relations, DPI moderated the briefing. She introduced the concept of Millennium Villages, a new model for helping rural African communities lift themselves out of extreme poverty.

Mr. Erick Kashamubuzi, Liaison and Principal Advisor to the CEO of Millennium Promise provided the background for the Millennium Villages (MVs) concept and explained its relationship to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The idea began in 2005 with the 70 page report, "Investing in Development; A Practical Plan to Achieve the MDGs" by Dr. Jeffery Sachs. Then UN SG Kofi Anan commissioned Dr. Sachs to head a task force that would review progress toward the MDGs five years after the Millennium Declaration in 2001.

A core recommendation in the report was Quick Impact Initiatives to accelerate the

implementation of MDGs. Quick Impact Initiatives are projects that make an immediate difference toward the MDGs such as school feeding programs that get more children into primary school, programs that increase agricultural productivity to improve access to food or products to sell, access to health services that can lower infant and maternal mortality rates or prevent the spread of disease, as well as provision of water, transportation and access to communication. Implementation of Quick Impact Initiatives was endorsed in the September 2005 UN World Summit outcome document. Coordination and implementation of multiple Quick Impact Initiatives became the concept for MVs following Dr. Sachs' consultation with member states, members of the UN system and NGOs. This was endorsed by the General Assembly. MV programs were established in 2005 in ten African countries selected by member states: Ethiopia, Ghana,

Millennium Villages, continued on pg. 7

Violence Against Women - 16 Days to Make a Difference

November 20, 2008 - UN HQ, New York

By Cynthia Shibuya

This very powerful session had a standing room only audience of 80% women. Moderator, Eric Fault, Director of Outreach Division, DPI explained context. The 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence is an international campaign, started by the Center for Women's Global Leadership during their 10th anniversary celebration. Participants chose the schedule from November 25, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women to December 10, Human Rights Day, to link the issue of violence against women with human rights. Since its inception in 1991, over 2000 organizations in 154 countries have participated in the 16 Days Campaign. The campaign will

continue until 2015. Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon has also committed to end violence against women and girls.

Newly-appointed UN Messenger of Peace, Ms. Charlize Theron presented via video about her project, the Africa Outreach Project. She plans to travel the world advocating for the end to violence against women. Her focus is educating men and boys about the value of women. Her goal is to change social attitudes and influence future generations. She will seek governments' support as well. She had personal experience with domestic violence in her family as a young girl.

Violence Against Women, contd. on pg. 4

"May I Ask a Question, Mr. President?"

January 15, 2009 - Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium, UN HQ, New York

By Merly Barrete-Barlaan

One hundred fifty NGO representatives attended this first briefing of 2009. Ms. Maria Luisa Chavez, Chief, NGO Relations Clusters, DPI introduced the new series, "May I Ask a Question?" Rather than the usual panel discussion at briefings, this format allows NGO reps to ask questions openly of influential UN leaders.

Mr. Kiyo Akasaka, UnderSecretary General for Communications and Public Information listed priority UN issues this year: the economic crisis, the food crisis, climate change, peace and security and the MDGs. He stated that

the work of NGOs on these problems will be important to the world's people and the UN.

Ms. Chavez explained that H.E. Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, President of the 63rd Session of the UN General Assembly (GA) had agreed to speak today but was unable to attend due to a Special Emergency GA session. Her Excellency Sophia Clark, the Deputy Chief de Cabinet in the office of the President and Mr. Michael Clark, Senior Advisor to the President on Nuclear Disarmament and International Security spoke on his behalf.

May I Ask?, continued on pg. 9

A Focus on Prevention

October 29, 2008 - John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York

By Karen Judd Smith

Women's Federation for World Peace International is an active member of the New York Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. Since 2000, WFWPI has supported the work of the Alliance and is committed to support NGO efforts at the 12th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice to be held in Salvador, Brazil from April 12th - 19th, 2010.

The Crime Congress is historically one of the few international conferences that integrate NGOs and expert working groups into the Congress alongside Member States. This is because the work of criminal justice and crime prevention is not the jurisdiction of governments per se. Therefore the UNODC relies considerably on the cooperation of governments and experts in the area of criminal justice, crime prevention, policing, corrections, community prevention initiatives and more. Historically NGOs play significant roles in these areas. A prime example of this collaboration is the instigators and midwives of what is now the International Criminal Court. NGOs continue to play a significant role in shaping international affairs in this area through their activity and involvement.


The 12th UN Congress on Crime is the next major international conference in the arena of criminal justice and crime prevention.

A broad range of themes for the conference are forming. WFWPI is lobbying to keep some focus on preventive approaches and the unique components to this common sense approach that NGOs can provide. Toward this end, WFWPI is active in the Alliance and our representative chairs the Alliance's Working Party on Prevention.

In preparation for the Crime Congress, the Alliance's working party held two events in October and November 2008 and is planning to support an upcoming UNHQ event, "Forum@Four" in April that will focus on the tragic and shameful issue of human trafficking.

On October 29, 2008, the Alliance's "Forum@Four" convened at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York for an event that examined what the UN is doing about crime prevention. Students, diplomats from the UN and members of the Alliance gathered at John Jay. Dr. Rosemary Barberet, Associate Professor, Sociology Department, John Jay College of Criminal Justice moderated. The main address was given by Slawomir Redo of the UNODC's Division for Operations, Justice and Integrity Unit in Vienna. He spoke in depth about "Making the UN's Crime Prevention Guidelines Work." Karen Judd Smith, WFWPI and Chair of the Working Party of the Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice addressed the


topic of "What is Missing?" She outlined what is needed from NGOs to augment the work of the UN and Member States.

The event ended with questions and answers and the opportunity for interaction among the participants and John Jay students. For more information about the Alliance, you can visit their website at: www.cpcjalliance.org 

Working Party on Prevention: Educating and Informing

December 14, 2008 - 777 UN Plaza, NY

By Karen Judd Smith

Dr. Afaf Mahfouz, a former President of the Conference of NGOs (CONGO) and Alliance Member-at-Large invited Ms. Sana Kahn, a Political Affairs Officer in the Security Council Affairs Division of the UN Department of Political Affairs to speak to the Alliance and Member States on November 14, 2008. Ms. Kahn is an expert on Security Council practices and procedures, particularly Security Council sanctions. We heard how the UN deals with its "black list," how people get on the list, how they are removed and how the work of the Committee on Counter Terrorism has evolved since its formation in 2001. It provided an insightful glimpse into the "on the ground" challenges and decisions that are being made as the international community seeks to improve methods to deal with complexity and resistance involved with terrorism and violence perpetrated by non-state actors. 

Launch of the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons

February 12, 2009 - UN HQ, New York

By Karen Judd Smith

A Global Report on Trafficking in Persons was launched by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). It provides new information on a crime that shames us all.

Based on data gathered from 155 countries, the report offers the first global assessment of the scope of human trafficking and what is being done to fight it. The report includes: an overview of trafficking patterns; legal steps taken in response; and country-specific information on reported cases of trafficking in persons, victims, and prosecutions.

At the launch of the report in New York, the Executive Director of UNODC, Antonio Maria Costa said that "many governments are still in denial. There is even neglect when it comes to either reporting on or prosecuting cases of human trafficking". He pointed out that while the number of convictions for human trafficking is increasing; two out of every five countries covered by the UNODC Report had not recorded a single conviction.

According to the report, the most common form of human trafficking (79%) is sexual exploitation. Victims of sexual exploitation are predominantly women and girls. Surprisingly, in 30% of the countries that provided information on the gender of traffickers, women make up

the largest proportion of traffickers. In some parts of the world, women trafficking women is the norm.

The second most common form of human trafficking is forced labor (18%), although this may be a misrepresentation because forced labor is less frequently detected and reported than trafficking for sexual exploitation.


Worldwide, almost 20% of all trafficking victims are children. However, in some parts of Africa and the Mekong region, children are the majority (up to 100% in parts of West Africa). Although trafficking seems to imply people moving across continents, most exploitation takes place close to home. Data shows intra-regional and domestic trafficking represents the majority of trafficking in persons.

The United Nations Protocol against Trafficking in Persons, the foremost international agreement for trafficking, entered into force in 2003. The Global Report shows that in the past few years the number of Member States seriously implementing the Protocol has more than doubled (from 54 to 125 out of the 155 States covered). However, there are still many countries that lack the necessary legal instruments or political will.

"This report increases our understanding of modern slave markets, yet it also exposes

our ignorance", said Mr. Costa. "We have a big picture, but it is impressionistic and lacks depth. We fear the problem is getting worse, but we cannot prove it for lack of data, and many governments are obstructing", he admitted. The head of UNODC therefore called on governments and social scientists to improve information gathering and sharing on human trafficking. "If we do not overcome this knowledge crisis we will be fighting the problem blindfolded", he warned.

In a panel discussion on "Exposing Denial and Benign Neglect", Mr. Costa called on governments, the private sector, and the public at large to step up the fight against trafficking in persons. "More must be done to reduce the vulnerability of victims, increase the risks to traffickers, and lower demand for the goods and services of modern day slaves", he said. To increase public awareness of human trafficking and rally the world to fight it, Mr. Costa appointed Academy Award-winning actress Mira Sorvino as a Goodwill Ambassador to Combat Human Trafficking. "We know that Mira's commitment to the plight of trafficking victims will move people to take action against modern day slavery", said the Executive Director of UNODC.

Women's Federation for World Peace International joined the Member States' representatives and many other NGOs in the Trusteeship Council for this launch. 

Report from the Ninth Session of the Human Rights Council

September 8-24, 2008 - UN HQ, Geneva



By Elisabeth Larsson

The Human Rights Council's (HRC's) ninth session opened by welcoming the new High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms Navanethem Pillay. In her opening address to the Council, she made remarks on the 60th anniversaries of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Genocide Convention, the 10th anniversaries of the Declaration of Human Rights Defenders and the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, and the 15th anniversary of the Vienna Conference.

Ms Pillay stressed the importance of impartiality in implementing human rights "with no tolerance for double standards or selective application" and the importance of active participation and accommodation of diversity. She stressed the interdependence of human rights and expressed her wish to promote a holistic human rights agenda, especially through the means of practical cooperation, field operations and preventive work. She also recognized the important work of civil society in upholding and striving for human rights.

The High Commissioner drew on her own experiences from apartheid in South Africa and as a judge on the Rwanda Tribunal when she spoke about gender discrimination and genocide. She recognized that there is a link between discrimination and violence against women on the one hand, and security, peace and development on the other. "Genocide is the ultimate form of discrimination", Ms Pillay stated. She then urged States to take part in the forthcoming anti-racism Durban Review Conference, which will take place in Geneva from April 20-24, 2009.

In its follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (VDPA), the Human Rights Council adopted Resolution 6/30 on December 14, 2007. In this resolution, the HRC incorporated into its programme of work, an annual discussion on the integration of a gender perspective throughout its work and mechanisms. This discussion took place at the seventh meeting of the ninth session on September 12, 2008 as a panel discussion focusing on the work of the UN Special Procedures.

In the same resolution, the Council requested the OHCHR to submit a report in 2008 on the obstacles and challenges to the implementation of that resolution and to make concrete recommendations for action to address such obstacles and challenges. The report, entitled: "Integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system" was,


however, not submitted to the ninth session of the Council. In order to allow the stakeholders to benefit from the annual panel discussion, the report will be submitted to the HRC during its tenth session in Geneva from March 2-27, 2009 instead.

The panel, consisting of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, three Special Rapporteurs and one NGO gender expert, was moderated by Ambassador Clemencia Forero Ucos, Permanent Representative of Colombia. The discussion examined the extent that a gender perspective is being integrated into the work of the HRC, identifying progress since the Council's last gender integration discussion (September 20-21, 2007) and current challenges. Each panelist made a presentation on progress made and challenges experienced in their own work. They also offered views on how to improve integration of a gender perspective into the work of the Council. Ms Gulnara Shahinian, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, talked about the importance of gender mainstreaming and how her mandate specifically requests the full integration of a gender perspective in her work. In order to develop well tailored recommendations and strategies, Ms Shahinian described how structural factors like poverty and discrimination are being analyzed through their impact on men and women. The Special Rapporteur stated that discrimination against women is one of the key root causes to women slavery. Women form a majority of victims of slavery in all its forms; forced labour, forced marriages, human trafficking or child labour. According to a 2005 ILO study, women and girls represent 56% of victims of economic exploitation and 98% of forced sexual exploitation.

Panelist Mr Sandeep Prasad, gender expert from ACPD (Action Canada for Population and Development), provided a thorough list of concrete proposals for improvements:

- Encourage mandate-holders to seek information from a wide variety of sources (e.g. NGOs) and to seek out and report gender disaggregated data.
- Include women experts and female interpreters in field teams for country visits and encouraging local actors to consider a gender perspective.
- Establish a focal group within the HRC to ensure that gender-related questions are raised.
- Ask mandate-holders to carry out self-assessment on the integration of a gender perspective in their annual and country mission reports.
- Assess what fundamental protection gaps currently exist through a solutions-oriented debate on the topic.

- Create a special mechanism on laws and policies which discriminate against women.
- Assess whether selected mandate-holders have demonstrated experience with and are committed to addressing gender issues in their work.
- Monitor the implementation of recommendations through follow-up mechanisms, as a complement to the UPR (Universal Periodic Review).

The final statement was made by Ms. Conchita Poncini, on behalf of the Geneva NGO Committee on the Status of Women, (which WFWPI is a member of). She asked the Advisory Committee to undertake the task of evaluation, including gender-disaggregated indicators and benchmarks, to assess how women's right to development is incorporated in law and practice. She also urged that women's rights, gender equality and discrimination be addressed using CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women). The interconnection between human rights mechanisms and the Commission on the Status of Women should be strengthened, opportunities and financial resources to promote human rights education for women and girls be expanded, all human rights principles and instruments apply a life span perspective for women and girls, and that complaint mechanisms and monitoring procedures be implemented and used. 

Violence Against Women, contd from pg. 2

Nanette Braun, Communication Specialist for UNIFEM, launched an internet campaign last year to end violence against women, titled "Say No to Violence" (saynotoviolence.org) to raise public awareness and advocacy to end violence against women. The campaign contributes to the Secretary General's campaign "Unite to End Violence against Women". Braun uses social networking tools to reach young people. Over 50 government representatives and 25 Heads of State have signed on. This worldwide show of support is encouraging to victims of violence. It has also resulted in global networking to find solutions and support organizations addressing this issue.

A film about the tradition of "honor" killings was shown. There are about 5000 honor killings each year. Primarily a tradition in the Middle East, male family members murder women in their family suspected of engaging in sexual relationships outside of marriage. The interviewed men expressed pride in their role of preserving family honor in this way.

Malika Dutt, Founder and Executive Director of Breakthrough explained one of the greatest challenges in addressing violence against women; it is not considered a global crisis. This prevents the issue from receiving the urgent action it needs. Breakthrough uses mass media to reach large audiences and college-age youth and community leaders are educated to

Violence Against Women, contd. on pg. 12

At the UN in Vienna ...

Focus on Trafficking Prevention through Dignity Awareness Campaign

By Elisabeth Reidl and Carolyn Handschin

Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWPI) Europe has taken on trafficking in the last two years through the Dignity Awareness Campaign, claiming that this form of violence against women, men and children is in flagrant denial of norms that recognize "the dignity and worth of the human person" as well as the guarantees for "equal rights of men and women". Following up their conference on trafficking last year in Vienna, WFWP Europe is preparing a meeting at UNESCO in Paris on June 5 -7, 2009. "UNESCO Decade of a Culture of Peace: New Alliances to fulfill MDG 3", will focus strengthening partnerships to prevent trafficking.


UN Office on Drugs and Crime has its global headquarters in Vienna. The NGO Committee on Drugs and Crime is active in Vienna. WFWPI Representatives in Vienna, Lilly Gundacher and Elisabeth Reidl are involved

in this committee that follows the work of the UNODC. Ms. Gundacher was recently elected Secretary to the NGO Committee on Drugs and Crime. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) issued a Global Report on February 12, 2009 on Trafficking in Persons. This report gives thorough, country by country specific data about the crime of trafficking. (Please see report on pg. 3)

Last year, Elizabeth Riedl and Lilly Gundacker, participated in the "Vienna Forum to Fight Human Trafficking". Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak, First Lady of Egypt, keynote speaker said that "despite efforts of so many individuals and organizations around the world, who are working tirelessly to combat this illicit trade, the problem keeps growing in severity and magnitude, breaking the spirit and burning the lives of all those that it touches". She named the absence of human security and human dignity that provides perpetrators of trafficking

with an "endless reservoir of disadvantaged, disenfranchised and disillusioned people from which to draw profit".

Women's Federation's approach to trafficking is prophylactic. WFWP members see their role as educators about root causes of this problem, exposing the impact of failures in family and society to meet standards of dignity. WFWP members present character education curriculum that promotes mutual respect between women and men.

Prostitution and human trafficking for sexual exploitation constitute extreme forms of violence against women, but more pervasive are the rising instances of domestic violence and the prevalence of violence against women found in the denigration of femininity in public advertising. WFWP Europe's ongoing "Dignity Awareness Campaign" appeals to women and men to understand that depreciation of women in advertising and media is linked to violence at home and that, in turn is a contributing factor to the strategies of organized crime. Most citizens feel helpless about trafficking or prostitution, but WFWP members in Europe demonstrate that anyone can influence their families and communities for the better. 

Reports of NGO Briefings (continued...)

Sustainable Peace through Reconciliation

International Year of Reconciliation 2009 - February 2, 2009

By Cynthia Shibuya

This was a particularly exciting briefing in that there was more than usual interaction, resulting in action steps. Each report contained positive development and hope, stirring the desire for increased activity. 2009 has been designated as the Year of Reconciliation. By the end of the briefing a petition was passed around for all the sign asking the General Assembly to make this not only the Year of Reconciliation, but the Decade of Reconciliation.

The session opened with a performance by Jackie Tice and Dar Khabbaz, and a video on the school, "Hand in Hand," a Jewish/Arab school launched in Jerusalem in 1998 to foster appreciation and pride in both cultures in an effort to avoid war in the future. The school teaches children age three to eighteen. Each class has two teachers – one Jewish and one Palestinian. They teach academics and their cultures and languages. Students learn and grow together, respecting the different cultures and having pride in their own. The school has now expanded to three sites, two in Israel and one in Palestine, with plans to expand further. This is a hopeful model.

The first speaker, Amb. Maria Chamorro, spoke on growth and development of Nicaragua. Nicaragua first proposed that 2009 be the Year of Reconciliation. She explained that from the 1950's Latin America and the Caribbean were ruled by dictators, but between the 1960's to the 1980's the dictatorships were largely overthrown. From the 1980's a new history


is being written in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Judge Hoffman then spoke about reconciliation, mostly addressing the issue of indigenous cultural reconciliation efforts in post-conflict time. She quoted Kofi Annan saying "Reconciliation is the highest form of dialogue." She stressed the need to prolong the "Year of Reconciliation" to the "Decade of Reconciliation" from 2010 to 2020, because reconciliation is a long-term process requiring implementation in all fields. She closed with the statement that reconciliation must become a global movement.

Jacqueline Murekatete, a Rwanda Genocide survivor opened with the statement that the Rwanda genocide destroyed the entire social fabric. She was a small girl at that time. The genocide was carried out not by the government but by civilians. They were running from their neighbors. Trust among each other was completely destroyed. The genocide was a result of education of hate. The Hutu and Tutsi both taught hate towards one another when the children were small. The government now is taking measures towards reconciliation and has made reconciliation a policy. The children are being taught the identity of being Rwandans instead of Hutu or Tutsi. Healing is ongoing, not only in victims but also in the perpetrators. Many were small children that killed others, their classmates, etc. and now the victims and perpetrators are living with each other. NGO's and individuals coming to Rwanda has helped a lot towards healing and reconciliation.

After Ms. Murekatete's presentation two videos were shown. The first was about development of a complex in Rwanda with a school, radio station, preschool, catering service for trade education and a library pending. The second video, titled "Burundi – Once Enemies, now Friends," was a documentary about two teenage boys from different ethnic backgrounds forced to work together to survive in post-war Burundi. They were interviewed about their experience as children during the war. The film showed them first as enemies, but then as close friends.

The final speaker, Claudia Abate, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister, Timore Leste, has been active in the Timor-Leste development project begun in 2002. She joined them in 2004. Since its inception, a maternity clinic has been opened, reforestation, development of agriculture and community based programs, such as youth center to address the issue of teen gangs have been established.

The questions and answer session opened with an activist insisting a petition be circulated for immediate signing to establish the Decade of Reconciliation. The audience was excited to be involved. This set the tone for questions about how to accomplish this goal. One very good question was how to have long lasting impact in reconciliation work. Networking is an important component. WFWPI's Bridge of Peace Sisterhood Projects that helps women establish one to one relationships with others of different cultures is also a good tool for long lasting reconciliation. The session ended with the petition signing and inspired spirits. 

The Role of NGOs for Intensifying HIV/AIDS Prevention

Luncheon to Commemorate the 53rd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women
March 4, 2009 - UNHQ New York

By Bonnie Berry

WFWPI's delegation to the 53rd Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and distinguished guests met in Delegates Dining Room 6 for a luncheon cosponsored by WFWPI and WFWP Japan. There were sixty in attendance. Ms. Motoko Sugiyama, VP and Director of WFWPI UN Office served graciously as mistress of ceremonies.

President of WFWPI, Professor Lan Young Moon Park welcomed and encouraged the group to continue their efforts toward peace and development, particularly global HIV/AIDS prevention. Following Professor Park's remarks, Ms. Reiko Sakai and Ms. Yoko Watase serenaded with lovely songs.

Ms. Kaori Ishii, Officer-in-Charge of Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), UNDP, expressed happiness at the sizable delegation from Japan and other countries. Ms. Ishii explained the work of TICAD in both English and Japanese. The first TICAD summit was in 1993 in Tokyo and has been held every five years. The summits are for policy dialog among African and International leaders to promote African development. Ms. Ishii defined twin priorities of TICAD as African ownership and international partnership. The summit last May was co-organized by Japan, UNOCHA (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), World Bank and UNDP (UN Development Program). The theme was A Vibrant African Continent of Hope and Opportunity. Focuses of the summit were economic development, human security and the effects of climate change. 41 African heads of state, 3000 individuals and 1300 journalists attended. The summit outcome was taken to the G8 Summit in Hokkaido. Ms. Ishii announced that Japan continues its commitment to aid previously agreed upon, in spite of the economic crisis. Japan will boost support to Africa for community development, water, health and the environment. UNDP began four projects resulting from the recent TICAD 4. One project that UNDP, Japan and partners are working on is fostering support for HIV/AIDS research, policy dialog and care. A pilot project establishes an enabling policy and institutional framework for effective home based care of HIV/AIDS patients. Ms. Ishii reminded us that Africa is 20% of world land that holds 30% of global natural resources but it is still fragile, with millions below the poverty level, the pandemics of HIV/AIDS, malaria etc, and the effects of climate change. The continent is better poised for prosperity than ever but the economic crisis' impact is unknown.

Ms. Ishii concluded with her observation in her six years with TICAD. She noticed African

tribal chiefs ponder difficult decisions by "sleeping on it" and asking input of their wives. Similar to their Japanese counterpart, wives often have a final say. But this is not set into legislation; it depends on individuals' wisdom and respect. In this context, Ms. Ishii expressed appreciation for the mission and achievements of WFWPI to seek equal partnership of men and women at home, work, schools and society. She committed to seek partnership between TICAD and WFWPI.

Ms. Kate Weber, Director of the US Fund for UNICEF was presented a donation of \$6,700 by Ms. Yoshie Tsuboi, Vice President of WFWP Japan, raised by WFWP Japan to assist Gaza children. Ms. Weber thanked WFWP Japan for the gift, noting that UNICEF is dedicates efforts in Gaza to children's health, education, access to water, sanitation and psycho-social support.

UN Under-Secretary-General for Communication and Public Information, **Mr. Kiyataka Akasaka** was the guest speaker. Mr. Akasaka has a long, distinguished career serving the international community and UN. He is a published author and co-author of books and articles. Mr. Akasaka explained the main priorities of the UN: to maintain peace and security (first priority), promote environmental, economic and social development, preserve and promote human rights. Climate change is an emerging priority. Problems continue in Darfur, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cote de Ivoire, Liberia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, and Gaza. Since last December the Middle East is a hot zone. Iran, Iraq, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, North Korea, Haiti. The list goes on. Mr. Akasaka explained today's announcement from the International Criminal Court (ICC). The ICC issued an arrest warrant for Sudan's President. This is the first time an incumbent president of any country has been indicted. In Sudan the political and humanitarian situation is very difficult. The UN expects Sudan's government to address peace and security in accordance with Security Council resolutions. The conflict between Hamas and Israel continues. People of Gaza, schools, factories, buildings and trees were bombed. They need to reconstruct their lives. The situation is delicate in Iraq still, worsening in Afghanistan. We are worried about the situation in Myanmar, Burma. The human rights situation is not what we would like to see. Mr. Akasaka continued; North Korea is a problem. Many Japanese people are worried that North Korea will launch a missile. At any moment tensions could worsen in that part of



Presentation to UNICEF

the world. Mr. Akasaka explained that the UN worries about all these problems to maintain peace and security. The world is getting safer, more prosperous. But we still have to face the problems. According to Mr. Akasaka, the UN needs NGOs' help to raise awareness. Are the Japanese people aware of the people suffering in these places? He wondered. NGOs need to raise awareness about these situations. The second UN priority is development. The financial crisis is deteriorating development progress everywhere. The UN leadership worries about achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. We have less than six years to reduce the number of people living on less than one dollar a day by half. Mr. Akasaka asked how anyone can live on a dollar or less a day. Access to primary education is improving but in Africa 70 million children are not in school. The number is staggering. The third objective, to maintain gender equality is improving, but girls are discriminated against. In many African countries the targets will not be reached. The other objectives: infant mortality, maternal mortality the situation is really serious. Half a million pregnant women die every year. And infant mortality, in Africa many children die of diarrhea, malaria, measles. All are preventable. In many countries clean water is not available; one in six people cannot get clean water. Two billion people have no access to sanitation. Currently 33 million people are living with HIV. In 2007, more than 2.7 million people were newly infected by AIDS. 20 ml people have died. AIDS is among the Top 10 killers in world and one of top killers in Africa. 67% of AIDS cases are in Africa. Mr. Akasaka stressed, we must address all those goals. Third priority is human rights. Last year the UN celebrated the 60th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights, raising awareness. Still, terrible human rights violations continue. In DRC, women

HIV/AIDS Prevention, continued on pg. 11



Women and Men United to End Violence Against Women & Girls

Commemoration of International Women's Day


March 5, 2009 - Conference Room 2, UN HQ, New York

Women and men from around the world gathered to honor and commemorate International Women's Day during the 53rd Commission on the Status of Women. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon addressed the audience emphasizing the one year anniversary of the launch of his campaign to end violence against women and girls. Secretary General Ban exhorted us to unite around this cause. He said women are the weavers, they bear and care for children, plant crops and weave the fabric of society. SG Ban emphasized that violence against women is an attack on society. He quoted horrifying statistics that in some countries, one in five women and girls are a victim of rape, in some countries, one in three women and girls are beaten. Having recently returned from Congo, where rape is used as a weapon in armed conflict, the Secretary General told of his conversation with Democratic Republic of Congo President Kabila. He insisted that President Kabila be responsible to STOP the rape, no matter whose side was perpetrating. He emphasized that rape on women and girls is a crime against society. Rape also contributes to the spread of HIV.

Secretary General Ban was encouraged to see that even some older men in rural Africa, who are often more culturally traditional in their thinking about gender roles are embracing the mindset that women deserve to be respected equally to men. SG Ban reflected that women have been speaking out for a long time, but recently men are also speaking out. Men are teaching other men that real men don't hit or rape women. There is no doubt that the Secretary General's global campaign has raised the visibility of the problem around the world.

In addition to the Secretary General, a host of distinguished speakers encouraged us to celebrate successes in advancement for women, reminded us of the importance of changing laws to protect women from violence. Only half the nations in the world have laws against domestic violence. Partnerships among government, NGOs, all agencies including police are needed to improve services for victims of both domestic and sexual violence. Moderator Pam Falk, Professor of International Relations at Hunter College and CBS Correspondent explained that violence against women jeopardizes their ability

to exercise her human rights. The consequences are long lasting and far reaching. She also informed the audience that recently the UN Security Council approved Resolution 1820, which condemns the use of sexual violence as an act of war. This is an encouraging step.

Speakers included H.E. Aja Isatou Njie Saidu, Vice President and Secretary of State for Women's Affairs of the Republic of Gambia, H.E. Laura Albornoz, Minister of Women's Affairs of Chile, H.E. Tanya Plibersek, Minister for the Status of Women of Australia. Panelists included Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict; Ms. Yakin Erturk, UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women; Mr. William Lucy, International Secretary-Treasurer of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; Ms. Imrana Jalal, Human Rights Lawyer and Advisor for Pacific Regional Rights Resource Team. It was difficult to hear the honest descriptions of difficulties that women and girls bear in the worst of circumstances. But shedding light on the realities and acknowledging them is a beginning point to facing and solving them. 

Millennium Villages, contd from pg. 2

Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda.

Mr. Patrick Haverman, Project Manager of MVs, Regional Bureau for Africa, UN Development Program (UNDP), reported on the status of MVs in Africa. The four main interventions that MVs address are: agriculture, health, water and the environment, and infrastructure. Each intervention is linked to the MDGs.

The key elements of the MVs program are: first, an integrated, multi-sector approach; second, success is dependent upon community participation; third, the driver is a vision for rural economic transformation, backed by capacity building. Finally, the plan emphasized a sustainable exit strategy. Millennium Promise, Earth Institute, and UNDP are the three primary sponsors for the MVs. Mr. Haverman noted that in the first three years, MVs had achieved 98% primary school enrollment and a decrease in the rate of malaria infection from 37% to 7%. Mr. Haverman explained that MVs became possible due to innovative partnerships between corporations, bi-lateral partners, members of the UN system and NGOs.

Ms. Rebbie Harawa, Coordinator of MVs in Malawi, reported via videoconference on the current status of the MVs Project in Malawi. Begun in September 2005, the project's positive impact is growing. The agriculture intervention resulted in higher production of crops, due to subsidized fertilizer, distribution of maize


feed and training on new farming techniques. The impact of this increase in agricultural yield resulted in higher school attendance because meals were provided in school. A new family planning clinic is reducing the pace of population growth. The clinic has assisted 6000 Women with family planning so far. Other improvements include new treatment programs for patients with HIV/AIDS, de-worming of children, infrastructure improvements such as water supplies and bridges, microfinance initiatives and mobile banking units. Ms. Harawa concluded that after three years, the quality of life transformations are occurring and the impact of the new approach is being experienced.

Mr. Philippe Poinot, Deputy Program Officer, UNDP presented status of the two MVs projects in Mali. The government of Mali is extremely supportive of the project, the working partnership with UNDP and the new initiatives to accelerate progress toward achievement of MDGs. The hope is that the two MV Projects, which have focused on food security, can be expanded to include other activities and then replicated nationally. Mr. Poinot concluded by highlighting current efforts by Mali's government to establish a consortium with the private sector to fund the proposed expansion and scale up efforts to achieve the MDGs.

Dr. George Atitney, Professor of Economics at American University was the final speaker. He stressed that MVs are steps in the right direction. But he called for attention to the

traditionally neglected informal sector of the African economy. He listed the three sectors of the African economy: the modern sector, traditional sector and informal sector. In his view, the traditional sector and informal sector are "where the real people of Africa" were neglected in post-colonial development. He urged that traditional village chiefs' leadership roles in decision-making not be ignored during implementation of projects like the MVs. He discussed his work with Free Africa Foundation, helping some 50,000 farmers create malaria-free zones and use palm fruit in a successful palm oil milling operation. The project was structured as a cooperative, funded by investors from abroad. This model is sustainable because it focuses on using resources that are readily available in these villages.

A concern was raised about what would happen to MVs After 2015. Mr. Haverman explained plans for a new phase in 2015. Each government is expected to operate the MVs completely. He also urged the NGO community and the UN to continue lobbying governments to maintain their Official Development Assistance (ODA) levels despite these difficult financial times.

This new approach of Millennium Villages has given great hope to these villages struggling with extreme poverty. The idea should be expanded and replicated in other parts of the world as well. In this very challenging time, we can see once again that there is a way to face and solve the world problems if we do not give up. 

Activities Around the World in 2008

WFWP Australia



9th WFWP
International
Leaders' Conference

Sydney
October 22 - 26, 2008

"The Role of Women in
Building a Culture of Peace"



International UN Day

By Jynene Helland

Sydney - October 24, 2008. On International United Nations Day 2008 a Reception was held in Sydney at the State Parliament as part of the 9th WFWPI conference. Hon. David Clarke MP NSW Parliament hosted the event. He warmly and enthusiastically welcomed and praised WFWP International for good work fostering peace, support of the family and promotion of family values. Hon. Penny Sharpe MP, representing the Office of Women welcomed everyone to the Parliament. Penny Sharpe spoke about the founding of the UN and offered best wishes to WFWP for our work throughout the world.

After a short DVD on the United Nations and the work of WFWPI, Prof. Lan Young Moon Park, WFWP International President addressed the gathering. She spoke about the importance of WFWP's General Consultative Status with the UN. "Women," she said "are playing an increasingly important and more active role in the world".

The guest speaker Mrs Ruth Lini, wife of the Deputy Prime Minister from the Republic of Vanuatu, reaffirmed Vanuatu's commitment to the UN. She touched on the issue of global warming and the vulnerable position of the Pacific Islands nations. Mrs. Lini concluded by saying "A culture of peace can only come when we serve others." She commended WFWP's worldwide efforts.



Hon. Marie Ficarra, Hon. David Clarke,
Prof. Moon Park, Mrs. Lini, Mrs. Cullwick, Jynene Helland



United Nations Day 2008, Sydney



At the close of the program Prof. Lan Young Moon Park asked to say a few more words. She spoke from her heart about her experience in 1950 when the Korean War broke out. Her father was captured as her family fled. She never saw him again. She has been to North Korea eighteen times but has never been to her home town. She testified about WFWPI's founder's message of creating peace by loving our enemy. She invited us all to come to Korea to celebrate when the unification of her homeland takes place. She shared openly from her heart. Those present couldn't help but be moved.

The reception was very successful. It brought together around 150 community leaders, members of State Parliament and WFWP representatives.

International Women's Day 2008

By Jynene Helland

Sydney - March 7, 2008. WFWP members of Sydney, Australia participated in the International Women's Day (IWD) march and rally. Many women's groups joined in celebrating the 100th anniversary of IWD, first celebrated in 1908. The march weaved its way through the streets of downtown Sydney and ended in Hyde Park where there were information booths offering information on women's health support groups, various women's organizations and more.



Activities Around the World in 2008

WFWPAustralia

Activities with Drug Free Australia

By Mamiko Rattley

A forum against illicit drug use

On Saturday June 28, 2008 WFWP Australia sponsored a forum in Sydney, to commemorate United Nations International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, in partnership with Drug Free Australia (DFA).

In her talk "The Important Role of Drug Prevention" Ms Josephine Baxter, Chief Executive Officer of DFA explained that Australia's illicit drug use is the highest of all nations in the world. She emphasized that a person addicted to drugs affects not only himself or herself but also family and community. She urged each one of us to become DFA representatives and to promote the UN's approach to illicit drug use: harm prevention to protect our youth.

Major Brian Watters, a director of DFA, former chairman of the Australian National Council on Drugs and Australia's representative to the UN International Narcotics Control Board, presented a very informative address on the topic "Drug Control – an International Perspective". He gave eye opening details on drug production, trafficking and drug use in many nations.

Enrique Ledesma, Secretary General Universal Peace Federation of Oceania, in his address, "The Phenomena of Substance Abuse and its Underlying Causes," asserted that a key factor in substance abuse is family breakdown. "Somebody well supported by a good family," he said "is better placed to resist peer pressure, and more likely to enjoy natural highs".

About 40 people attended the event, many of them University students and young people interested in the topic. The afternoon concluded with productive discussion over coffee.

Petition campaign to support the UN's Fight against Drugs

In 2008 WFWP Australia partnered with DFA to support the current UN policy of harm prevention by promoting a petition campaign through WFWP network of women, the media and universities. The petition is at the website www.ungasdrugs.org and click 'Project Sundal'



"May I Ask?", contd from pg. 2

Question: Were there any points of convergence uncovered during recent discussions in Doha, and how is the UN addressing the financial crisis?

Answer by Mr. Michael Clark: The GA President consulted experts from different regions of the world. This group was expanded into a formal Commission of experts, known as the Commission of Experts of the President of the UN General Assembly on Reform of the International Monetary and Financial System. Objectives of the Commission are to examine impact of the financial crisis on developing countries and the poor, to seek creative ideas for addressing it and to evaluate needed system changes. According to Mr. Clark, the Commission is due to release a report late in March. They will seek NGO input. GA President is planning a major conference with heads of state on the financial crisis for May or June that would produce recommendations for immediate action. Mr. Clark stressed that the GA President is making every effort address this crisis.

Question: Does the financial crisis intersect with concerns about climate change?

Answer: Mr. Clark said the President appointed special observers to monitor this. The economic crisis impacts climate change, food, and even trade agreements. The GA President welcomes help from NGOs. Ambassador Clark remarked that priorities of the GA President include Small Island Developing States, especially those in the Pacific, and individual rights to food and intellectual property.

Comment: Adding carbon accounts to the balance of payments was suggested. Every individual would have carbon permits that could be expressed in monetary units. Mr. Clark said such pertinent suggestions were welcome. He said the Commission of Experts had to work fast and needed firm ideas like this. He hoped this and similar innovative ideas would be expressed in the work of the Commission.

Question: What steps to reduce military spending and advance disarmament are being undertaken, as the UN was mandated to do?

Answer: Mr. Clark answered that disarmament is a high priority for the President. The GA's efforts on disarmament have been eclipsed by the financial crisis. A new global nuclear disarmament movement is emerging

and is embraced by Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the United Kingdom, President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, President-Elect Barack Obama of the United States and the Prime Minister of India. The goal is to have nuclear states commit to zero nuclear warheads.

Question: Many in the NGO community see the Security Council as the most dysfunctional part of the UN system. Does the Office of the President have any ideas on Security Council reform?

Answer: Ambassador Clark assured that the GA President agrees the Council is dysfunctional and is outspoken about this. According to the Ambassador, Security Council reform is one of the top three priorities of the GA President but it is the most difficult.

Ms. Chavez concluded the briefing by thanking the speakers for an enriching and informative meeting and for breaking down the invisible barrier between the Office of the President and the NGO community.



4th WFWPI Forum, contd from pg. 1

Vice President of Foundation for Sustainable Development in North and South America (FSD-NSA) in Paraguay were the panelists on the second topic. Dr. Durbak stated that the MDGs will never be accomplished by governments without the support of thousands of focused NGOs. Neither will they be accomplished without adequate financial mechanisms because without funding, agreements have no strength.

Mr. Sano gave a Power-Point presentation on the Leda Project of Paraguay for the Pantanal, the world's largest wetland. The Leda project is dedicated to preserving this wetland and introducing it to the world. In addition, the Leda project helps indigenous people and creates community economic development by providing jobs, job training and building of primary schools for the children of the villages. Mr. Sano explained the tree planting project that identified several possible natural oil producing trees which will have great positive impact on human health and the environment.



Ms. Deborah Saïdy, Director of the UN World Food Program (WFP) in NY and Mr. Bertil Lindblad, Director of UNAIDS in NY were panelists for topic three. Ms Saïdy stressed that even though progress has been made toward solving world hunger, there is no room for complacency. Nearly 36 % of the world population in 1960s withstood hunger. Today, 15 % of the world's people are still undernourished. Because of continuing poverty exacerbated by high food and fuel prices and effects of climate change, people's vulnerability and hunger have deepened in many countries. One of the WFP's effective programs to solve hunger-linked problems is the school food program. This program feeds 20 million children while at school. Still, sixty million children go to school hungry. Poor health and hunger are strongly linked. We must work together to end hunger and improve health.



Mr. Lindblad presented an overview of UN efforts to address HIV/AIDS. He explained that UNAIDS is a family of several UN Organizations. He



emphasized that the issue is no longer an African issue because current reports show that a developed country had the most new AIDS infections in a certain time period. Though treatment is crucial, the most important matter with AIDS is prevention. The good news is that there is now a Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS, which involves partners including governments, UN organizations, civil society, and NGOs.



Ms. Karen Smith, UN Representative of WFWPI was the final panelist and addressed the fourth topic. She recommended how we as human beings, as members of our own families and how national/international institutions can be more effective in implementing change. She reintroduced the UN charter as our guiding light and reminded us that every effort begins from our love and compassion.

There were 200 forum participants from the UN system, UN NGOs, UN Missions, WFP members and guests including fifteen students and their professor from a NY college. This grand finale event of 2008 for WFWPI was well organized and very informative. It was a significant pre- event in support of the ECOSOC 2009 theme.



53rd Commission on the Status of Women: Equal Sharing of Responsibilities

March 1-13, 2009 - UNHQ NYC, New York

By Bonnie Berry

Over 5000 representatives from NGOs around the world attended the 53rd Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) along with the official delegations to the CSW from forty six nations. This year's priority theme was "The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men including care giving in the context of HIV/AIDS". The emerging issue was "The gender perspectives of the financial crisis". A theme from the 50th CSW, "Equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels" was reviewed by this year's CSW. The CSW is a distinct aspect of the UN agenda, as it is entirely devoted to examining the state of progress for women.

During the opening session of the CSW, the official delegations and NGO representatives heard from ECOSOC President, Sylvie Lucas of Luxembourg, UN Assistant Secretary General Special Advisor on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, Rachel Mayanja and Under Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Sha ZuKang. Ms. Mayanja emphasized the commitment that both the Secretary General Ban Ki Moon and she have for achieving gender equality and the advancement of women. She was upfront that the challenges are daunting, including the current economic crisis but that there are many good practices to build upon. Ms. Mayanja also reaffirmed the Secretary General's determination to eliminate violence against

women and girls. Ms. Lucas, only the second woman to be elected President of ECOSOC, pledged the full support of ECOSOC to achievement of gender equality. She promised that the agreed conclusions of CSW will inform the policies of ECOSOC and the work of the Annual Ministerial Review this year. Mr. Sha stated firmly that equal sharing of responsibility between women and men is critical to gender equality.

On the second evening of the CSW, the annual reception hosted by the NGO Committee on the Status of Women NY was held. During the reception, Ms. Rachel Mayanja was honored with the NGO Committee's Woman of Distinction Award. During her acceptance speech, Ms. Mayanja emphasized the importance of educating, encouraging and empowering young women to take leadership of the advancement of women's status everywhere. She reminded us how important it is to disseminate the history of women striving for equality so younger women don't take the advancements for granted. Following her talk, Ms. Mayanja very graciously spoke individually to each woman who approached and greeted her and gave special time and attention to the young women. What a great example to emulate!

Each day of the ten day CSW, the schedule was full with NGO sponsored parallel events. WFWPI and partner Bridgeport International Academy cosponsored a panel on the first day

that highlighted several character based HIV/AIDS prevention curriculums and stories of loving best practice in caring for terminally ill AIDS patients. (A full report is in this newsletter.) A very inspiring panel sponsored by OXFAM was on the topic, "Red Ribbons and Women's Rights: Raising the Voice of African Women on Realizing Continental Freedoms and Rights in the Context of HIV/AIDS in Africa". The speakers on this panel were African women, two of whom are HIV positive. These women, Christine Butegwa, Ma Rose Thamae, Daphne Serumaga, all representing NGOs and Winnie Byanyima, Director of UNDP Gender Team, Bureau for Development Policy told the stories of their homes and communities. They reminded that HIV/AIDS is a disease of the poor and marginalized. The cultural stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS was explained. The difficulty of abstinence programs was brought to light. These programs do not address the gender inequity and power issues surrounding sexual activity in many communities. In cases of forced sex and rape, women are vulnerable to HIV/AIDS infection. Ma Rose explained the lack of information about HIV/AIDS when she was diagnosed in 1990. She started support groups for women living with the virus. Social change that redistributes care giving responsibilities more equally between men and women was called for by the women panelists. Legislative changes have been made but more work needs to be done because old

53rd CSW, continued on pg. 12

Successful Strategies for Prevention of HIV/AIDS, a Responsibility Shared Equally Between Women and Men

Parallel Event at the 53rd Commission on the Status of Women

Cosponsored by WFWPI and Bridgeport International Academy

March 2, 2009 - UN Church Center - 11th Floor, New York

By Bonnie Berry

WFWPI and cosponsor, Bridgeport International Academy presented several model HIV/AIDS prevention programs and best practices in care of terminally ill AIDS patients at their parallel event on the occasion of the 53rd CSW. Moderator, Bonnie Berry welcomed the standing room only crowd and introduced



special guests, WFWP International President, Prof. Lan Young Moon Park and the WFWP Japan delegation led by Ms. Yoshie Tsuboi.

Ms. Motoko Sugiyama, Director of UN Office and WFWPI Vice President presented WFWP Japan's HIV/AIDS prevention program. The program was developed in Japan by mothers and housewives who were concerned about prevalence of casual sex among youth and increases in HIV/AIDS cases in Japan

HIV/AIDS Prevention, contd from pg. 6

and girls are being raped, gang raped as a tool of war. 30% of these rape victims are infected by HIV/AIDS. How can this stop? The UN issues statements condemning these acts. The SG campaigns against violence against women. NGOs need to help. This violence must stop. Attention needs to be brought to these terrible violations of human rights. The other priority is climate change. Mr. Akasaka informed the group that Kyoto 2 will meet in December in Copenhagen. An international agreement will be reached. To get countries to live up to their agreements, NGOs, Civil Society and media must hold countries accountable for their commitments. Next year there will be a review of NPT, nonproliferation treaty. It's a dream to live without nuclear warheads, but actually, even Dr. Henry Kissinger emphasizes the importance of this. Mr. Akasaka stressed that our help is needed to bring world peace and to make the UN stronger. (See full text of speeches by Ms. Ishii and Mr. Akasaka at www.wfwp.org)

The luncheon meeting closed as all in attendance joined in singing, "Let There Be Peace on Earth".



when antiretroviral drugs curbed new AIDS cases in all other developed nations. WFWP Japan members understood that factors in society such as sex education in schools that only gives biological facts and no moral context for sexual activity, ready and casual availability of pornography in the media and public places, increasing numbers of teachers involved in sex crimes and parents who are either permissive or not comfortable discussing the appropriate boundaries and context for a healthy sexual relationship all set a tone for young people that casual sex is normal, acceptable and to be expected. WFWP Japan's curriculum focuses on character education and helps youth understand the damaging consequences of casual sex: damage to self-esteem, difficulty finding intimacy in marriage and sexually transmitted diseases, particularly HIV/AIDS. The curriculum called "Living in the Era of AIDS" is presented in high schools and middle schools. The program encourages youth to abstain from sexual activity prior to a committed marriage relationship. The youth are given a survey prior to the presentation to check their knowledge. A powerful PowerPoint presentation is shown by a certified presenter. Following the presentation, students are given the opportunity to redo the survey and provide feedback on how the presentation has impacted their thinking and their choices about sexual activity and the facts on HIV/AIDS. Students consistently express a better understanding of the importance of making wise choices about sex once they hear the program. WFWP Japan members use this curriculum in developing nations where they serve as volunteers, creating culturally appropriate presentations for youth people in nations such as Trinidad, Tobago and others.

A trio of high school students who are members of WAIT, a performing arts group from USA spoke next. WAIT presents a message about HIV/AIDS through dance, music and theatrics. The WAIT team also gives a factual PowerPoint on HIV/AIDS prevention that communicates abstinence from sexual activity outside of marriage is the only 100% effective method of prevention. It was inspiring to hear Mathew Breland, Insung Harbour and Wendy Wang share their experiences as high schoolers, observing their peers and experiencing firsthand the pressures to participate in risky behaviors. Mathew, Insung and Wendy all articulated in their own unique ways,

the value of having a peer group support system who help each other make healthy choices, and the fun and freedom from the pain and heartbreak associated with high risk behavior of youth, like casual sex, experimenting with drugs and so on. It was very refreshing to see the focus and determination of these young people to spread the word about the dangers of casual sex in a way that their peers can understand and appreciate.

Ms. Li Shu Chang, Chairwoman of Garden of Mercy Foundation in Taiwan gave a moving presentation about the work of Garden of Mercy Foundation in caring for terminally ill AIDS patients. As she oversees operations of the Garden of Mercy Foundation, she has witnessed many situations. She cared for an AIDS patient with such love and tenderness, this patient lived much longer than doctors predicted. Ms. Chang was sure it was due to love. Ms. Chang told of many infants born to drug addicted and HIV positive mothers. Somehow as these babies who were not supposed to survive received tender loving care of volunteers at Garden of Mercy, they overcame difficult early days. Many show no signs of HIV and were adopted by the families of the loving volunteers. She explained that initially, the only volunteers at the center were people from other countries, including Christian missionaries. There was a stigma in Taiwan toward HIV positive people. Ultimately, more natives of Taiwan have come to volunteer. Garden of Mercy volunteers also travel to remote indigenous villages to educate the villagers about HIV/AIDS and help them understand prevention strategies.

The final panelist, Mr. Alan Saunders, chair of the NGO Committee on HIV/AIDS in UNHQ NY, and Director of the Office of Character Education and the Office of HIV/AIDS prevention for the Universal Peace Federation presented his work training teachers, giving seminars and conferences aimed at empowering NGO leaders, teachers, social workers, community leaders, and parents to teach character education, relationship skills building, marriage preparation and enhancement, conflict resolution, and parenting education. Mr. Saunders has traveled the world to share tools and information that helps adults educate one another and young people how to prevent HIV/AIDS, strengthen relationships and families in many cultural contexts and traditions.



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53rd CSW, contd from pg. 10

cultural practices govern actions. HIV/AIDS widows and their children are often driven out of their homes by other family members as a result of cultural stigmas and taboos. Equal access to information and resources is crucial to ease women's burden. Increases in information and knowledge have resulted in more people getting tested, better care giving, acceptance of those with HIV/AIDS and awareness of rights. African women need to know their rights so they can stand up for them.

A panel sponsored by UNIFEM (United Nations Fund for Women) gave voice to several prominent Afghan women NGO leaders and included the new US Ambassador to the UN, Susan Rice, UNIFEM Executive Director, Joanne Sandler and the Permanent Representative from Afghanistan to the UN, Zahir Tanin. Ms. Rice affirmed the support of the U.S. for Afghan women to the Afghan women leaders, Suriya Paksad, 2008 U.S. State Dept. Woman of Courage; Wajima Farooq, 2009 U.S. State Dept. Woman of Courage and Naja Wazari, Gender and Justice Mgr. for UNIFEM Afghanistan. These panelists told the truth of women's predicament in Afghanistan. In the 1960s, Kabul was considered the "Paris of the East" but all that has been lost. Since 2001, even though the Taliban fell from power, security issues overshadow the urge for peace. Women in Afghanistan need a much stronger voice; they need to be at the table when important deliberations and decision-making are taking place for the nation. Ms. Wazari shared a story of a young girl who was kidnapped and raped. The police investigators so mishandled this situation that the young girl was transported in the back seat of a car sitting next to the perpetrator. At one point authorities decided the only way to rectify the situation was to insist that the girl MARRY the perpetrator. This was a very tragic portrayal of the justice system and its treatment of women in Afghanistan.

The Sudanese Women Parliamentarian Caucus in cooperation with the Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Sudan hosted the "Women Protection during Conflict:

Sudan Experience" on March 12, 2009. Since the outset of the conflict, "the government of Sudan has showed high commitment to combat violence against women," affirmed the chief panelist. The government of Sudan has "also organized workshops in the areas of Nyala and Al Fasher on violence against women; trained law enforcement officials, tribal leaders, police and NGOs on providing psychological and social support to victims; and worked towards revising laws addressing women's rights", added a second panelist. Educational initiatives were also undertaken. "We worked with students in high level and primary level addressing them about violence against women and how to combat violence. Despite seeming efforts to raise the profile of violence against women and children in Sudan, there was uncertainty among the audience that real progress was being made. However, representation of Sudanese women leaders at the CSW is a constructive step forward.

A promising development surrounding this CSW was the availability of the official US delegation to the CSW. The delegation scheduled four meetings for U.S. NGO representatives. This access was a great opportunity to meet, give statements to and interact with the US delegation. The extent of the access was unprecedented compared to the past seven years. The delegation was a diverse group of women with a variety of professional backgrounds. It was very refreshing to experience this advancement in strength of connection between the U.S. government and the NGO representatives from the U.S.

The 53rd Commission on the Status of Women proved to be a great opportunity for sharing stories of women from around the world. These stories are often tragic, but it is truly inspiring to see the strength of women who have faced difficulties head on and worked to transcend those difficulties by empowering themselves through education, serving others and asserting themselves to make a difference in the situation for their families, their communities, their nations and the world. (Special thanks to Hannah Alexander for her contribution to this article.)

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become rights advocates. Ms. Dutt also focuses on encouraging boys and men to become involved in stopping violence against women. Two commercials aired in India were shown. In these commercials, bystanders intervened in domestic violence by simply ringing the doorbell. These short films were very powerful because they illustrated that a simple action can have so much effect.

Laurel Eisner, Executive Director of Sanctuary for Families, Inc. helps women victims of domestic violence and sex trafficking. The organization provides legal, educational and counseling services, helping women to gain skills to live independently. Sanctuary for Families influenced New York State to pass the Safe Harbor Act for Sexually Exploited Children in 2007 which prohibits youth forced into prostitution from being prosecuted and requires these young people to be treated as victims instead of perpetrators. Ms. Eisner told the heart-wrenching story of how the organization helped a Columbian woman regain her children that had been kidnapped by a sex-trafficker. It is very inspiring to know the effectiveness of the organization.

Tanya McLeod and Yasuko Noguchi spoke as survivors of both physical and emotional domestic abuse. Both help others as advocates. Tanya works with Voices of Women Organizing Project and assists other battered women. Yasuko finds platforms to share her experience publicly so she can encourage other women.



Upcoming Events

- ❖ April 10: 17th WFWP Anniversary
- ❖ May 15: International Day of Families
- ❖ July 6-31: ECOSOC Substantive Session in Geneva
- ❖ Aug 12: International Youth Day
- ❖ Sep 9-11: 62nd DPI/NGO Conference, Mexico City
- ❖ Sep 15: Opening Day of 64th Session of the General Assembly
- ❖ Sept 21: Int'l Day of Peace
- ❖ October*: WFWP 10th International Leaders' Workshop
*tentative