

Issue #9, October 2009

VOICES

INTERNAL



POVERTY AROUND THE WORLD

VOICES

INTERNAL

ARTICLES

JOURNEYS

EXTRA

Editorial.....	2
The African Woman.....	3
When Chronic Poverty Leads to Acute Emergencies.....	5
Faces of India.....	7
Secretary-General Quiz.....	8
Poverty and Climate Change.....	9
Volunteering in Brazil: Fighting Against Poverty	11
The Global Food Crisis.....	13
Poverty and Education in South Africa.....	15
Faces of India - continued.....	16
Lucknow in a Nutshell.....	18
Agriculture and Poverty in Kenya.....	19
Rejuvenating India's Forests through Action Against Poverty.....	21
Human Development and Poverty.....	23
Music Against Poverty.....	25
Ten Ways to Keep your Fellow Interns Loving you.....	26
Homeless People in Japan.....	27
Cool Planet Corner.....	29
The Politics of Peace – Interview with Fakhri Hamad.....	31
Interns Around the World.....	32
Linking the Environment and Poverty: Key to Achieving the Millennium Development Goals.....	33
Peace and Security - Still a Gender Blind Perspective?.....	35
The New Acropolis Museum: A Glimpse of the Past, A Vision of the Future.....	37
Cultural Voices.....	38
Infernal Voices.....	39
Internal Clichés.....	40
In(tern)ing the Kitchen!.....	41
Calendar.....	42

Editorial

This 9th issue of Internal Voices on poverty highlights a theme which strikes a sensitive chord in each and every one of us. Wherever in the world we may come from, and in whichever UN agency we may be interning, we are all constantly confronted with the fact that there are some who are in dire need of food and shelter.

As UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in his message on the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty 2009, "the global economic crisis has claimed at least 50 million jobs this year. A further 100 million more people are expected to fall below the poverty line in 2009." The fact that the first Millennium Development Goal is the "Eradication of Extreme Poverty and Hunger" reflects the importance this issue has in the minds of world leaders for improving the human condition.



Robert Wrigley

*Intern for the Director,
UNRIC Brussels*

In compiling this issue I was surprised at the wide variety of passions and opinions unleashed. Be it on the theoretical level of defining the concept of poverty, or real-life experiences which you decided to share, each contribution presents a different view, describes a different, grim reality and proposes original solutions. Poverty is always discussed in relation to another defining issue of our time: gender equality, environmental sustainability, universal education, global partnership... In a most exceptional way, the patchwork of articles which emerges, perfectly matches the first Millennium Development Goal with the other seven.

What can we make of this? Your contributions have made it obvious that poverty cannot be treated as a woe of its own; its sources and effects are widespread and it is only by tackling the world's problems together that we can hope to bring an end to extreme poverty and hunger. The Millennium Development

Goals offer this fantastic opportunity to act in a coordinated and global manner. Indeed, they have galvanized the efforts of the world's countries and leading development institutions to meet the needs of the world's poorest.

Yet as interns, what can we do? Can we make a difference? I hope that after reading this issue you will each come to appreciate the importance you can have. The tools for combating poverty around the world go far beyond donations and medical aid. Information, education, everyday acts for the preservation of our planet, respect towards women and children... They are all inter-related. Awareness is a first step, yet individual actions, when they come together, can make a difference. ■



United Nations
Regional Information Centre
for Western Europe

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Internal voices is now online!

<http://internal-voices.blogspot.com>

Got something to say?

Tell us! We welcome your comments and feedback. Feel free to let us what you think of Internal Voices.

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Internal Voices is a 100% UN interns' magazine giving all UN interns the opportunity to network, express opinions and share knowledge, points of view and experiences. Everything from

articles to layout and editing is done by UN interns. If you want to get involved, the intern team at UNRIC in Brussels would love to hear from you!

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The African Woman



Myriam Kabongo
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The African woman: how often has she been portrayed in the media as miserable, abused and at the mercy of a violent and chauvinistic man? There is some truth to that brutal description, based as it is on a number of cases reported by the media as well as on true stories in our lifetime. Take the case of Amina Lawal, a Nigerian woman who was sentenced to death by stoning in October 2001 by a Muslim Sharia court in Northern Nigeria for having a child out of wedlock.

Whereas such cases may be seen to be religiously motivated, the question remains “what is the role of the African woman in perpetuating detrimental cultural practices that are non-developmental, thus maintaining her poverty status?”

When the issue of poverty is raised from an African perspective, it is regrettable that women are seen as the bearers of their fate. Charlayne Hunter-Gault, in her article on “African Women and the Struggle against Poverty”, argues that poverty in Africa has a woman’s face, and its newest companion is not war, but HIV/AIDS. Articles on women and poverty flooding the internet and printed media underline superficial causes including war, HIV/AIDS and natural disasters. It is indeed true that these are contributing factors to her poverty, but I would like to examine the basic upbringing of the African woman. As an African woman, growing up in the dusty Democratic

Republic of Congo, I was often told by the community (this being my mother, aunts, grandmother, sisters and other females in my neighbourhood) that “whatever you do does not have meaning. The emancipation of your mind, by engaging in political debates and academic performance does not have meaning because a real woman is one who gets married, even to an unwanted man.”

Following this argument it is therefore important to remember that the poverty of an African woman is deeply rooted in her upbringing rather than in her lack of formal education, as is the popular belief. She may acquire as many degrees as possible, be the brightest of all academically and even be gifted with some special abilities that could be developed for everyone’s benefit; yet all this means nothing compared to the systematic indoctrination of certain beliefs at home as well as her

The African woman is compelled to be at the same level as her fellow women, else she will be alienated and in addition she must perform certain rituals simply because her great grandmother, or four successive generations of her female ancestors performed these”



revolt by African women since not all aspects of African culture are negative and the continent is witnessing slow but gradual changes with the first female president being elected in Liberia. However, for her development and fulfillment, she needs a systematic re-education as powerful as the values she learns from her mother and grandmother and this must begin with her female role models as these are the best people for her to emulate in realizing her potential.■

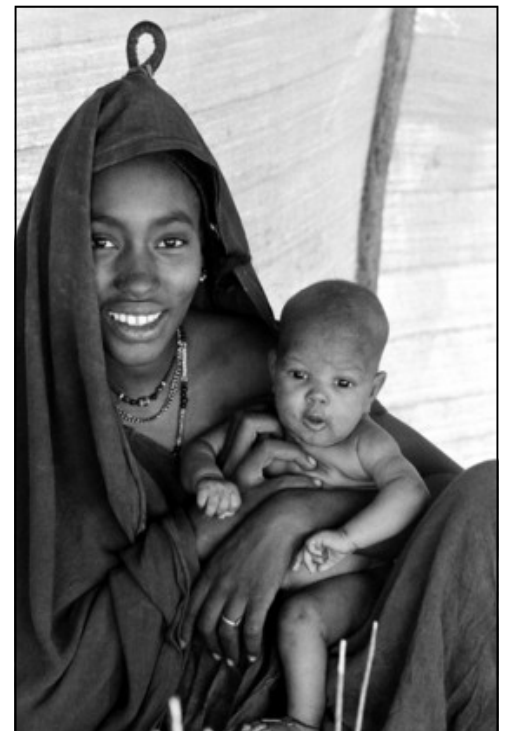
surroundings, by female role models that will transform her into an actress, with the stage being her marital home. She will become a tool to be used by a man. She must live up to her mother's expectations, honour her through marriage, even to a man she doesn't love. Her education is worth nothing and if she does not wed, she must suppress her real self, otherwise her mother will face the wrath of the community. The African woman is compelled to be at the same level as her fellow women, otherwise she will be alienated. In addition she must perform certain rituals simply because her great grandmother, or four successive generations of her female ancestors performed them. When she dares to ask "why?" she is told, "that is the way it should be, because your great grandmother did so." The journey of an African woman is filled with so many threats, reprimands, contempt and reproaches that she will not even understand the reason for her existence.

When she is educated, the African woman is often criticized, chastised, sometimes even treated as an outcast by her fellow women, because her knowledge is comparable to that of their

men. She becomes a threat, as she will be able to take part in debates considered a male domain, in contrast to her European counterpart who is often encouraged and acclaimed for her achievements and as such may reach her full potential. This is not to say that European woman did not face her own

...I was often told by the community (...) "whatever you do does not have meaning. The emancipation of your mind, by engaging in political debates and academic performance does not have meaning because a real woman is one who gets married, even to an unwanted man."

trials and tribulation to reach the freedom and independence she is so enriched with today. Her struggle is also traceable in history through movements such as the suffragettes - a movement for women that began in Britain in 1897 demanding women's right to vote. Many other similar movements can be traced across Europe and America as women understood that if empowered they could effectively contribute to any aspect of society. This is not an incitement to



When Chronic Poverty leads to Acute Emergencies



Mariah Mahmood
*Intern at OCHA,
New York*

Humanitarian assistance is naturally the first response when conflicts or natural disasters strike, however when assistance is required where there is no obvious precursor, it is the sign of a complex and usually slow onset emergency. Rapid onset emergencies, like the Asian Tsunami, have very dramatic and instantly obvious consequences, while slower onset emergencies affect a greater number of people over long periods of time and are very difficult to resolve¹. Although the underlying cause of these kinds of emergencies is chronic poverty, they are perpetuated by various issues including failing crops, poorly functioning markets and protracted conflicts. Chronic poverty is not simply related to very low incomes; it signifies vulnerability to a point where there is a real and present risk of hunger, starvation, destitution or death. In addition, chronic poverty such as this lasts for several years and is frequently inherited². As seen from previous experience, especially in sub-

Saharan Africa, humanitarian assistance commonly wanes after a short period even though the need still exists. Therefore in order to cope more proficiently with chronic poverty and associated acute deteriorations, it becomes essential to address these underlying causes and their potential to lead to acute emergencies.

In the short term, the humanitarian community is limited to dealing with chronic poverty when it reaches a point of catastrophic vulnerability to starvation leading to death. Knowledge and experience gained over the years has led the humanitarian community to form early warning systems to signal an impending deterioration of the situation. At the Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs at the United Nations, the Early Warning and Contingency Planning Section (EWCP) was introduced in 2007 in order to improve response by monitoring trends, thereby allowing time for preparation planning and even potential prevention³. For instance an improved understanding of acute food insecurity and the professionalization of humanitarian response has contributed to a decline in famine worldwide. However emergency food aid and safety nets to ameliorate or prevent acute food insecurity do not address the broader

problem of chronic food insecurity, hunger and poverty, which pose a far greater challenge that can only be effectively addressed as part of a broader development strategy³.

In order to enact a long term solution, the roots of the problem need to be understood. The Chronic Poverty Report has identified five main traps of chronic poverty; insecurity, limited citizenship, spatial disadvantage (remoteness), social discrimination and poor work opportunities. State provided social protection and public services are key to countering chronic poverty. Hulme⁴ suggests that the first steps are to develop an understanding of the problem and identify appropriate policies and necessary practices. This needs to be followed by sustained financial support from wealthier donor countries for development of infrastructure, education and healthcare in order to achieve eventual sustainable economic growth. Engendering and maintaining such support is problematic in a climate that questions the efficacy of foreign aid. Recently the Wall Street Journal⁵, reported that over the past 60 years at least USD\$1 trillion worth of aid has been transferred to Africa, yet real per-capita in-



-come today is lower than it was in the 1970s, and more than 50% of the population (over 350 million people) still live on less than a dollar a day. The most obvious reason for this is the rampant corruption present in these countries. Therefore policies must be geared towards transformative social change focusing on effective political representation².

Although, these solutions are broad, it is imperative to remember that the underlying causes of chronic poverty are challenging and complex and consequently need to be considered on a case by case basis.■



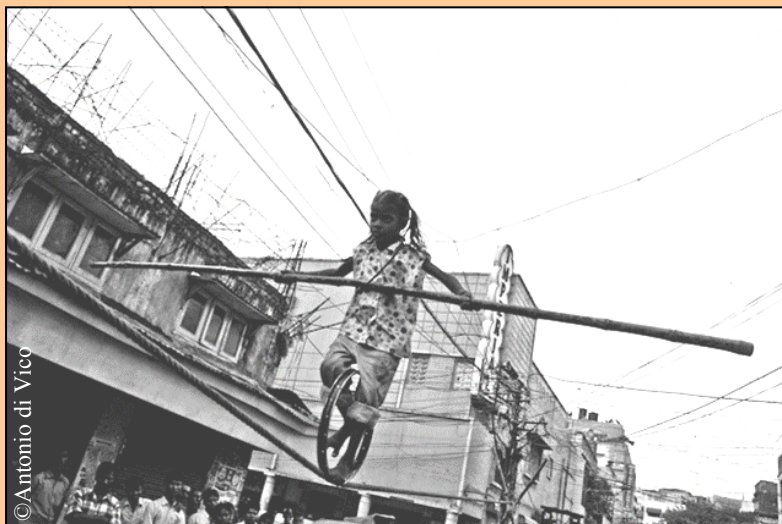
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 2. Chronic Poverty Research Centre. "The Chronic Poverty Report 2008–09 – Escaping Poverty Traps", 2008
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FACES OF INDIA

Stories and photography by:

Antonio di Vico



Delhi, India. Having the chance to spend a long time in India, a country where the World Bank estimates that 456 million Indians (42% of the total population) live under the global poverty line of \$1.25 per day, I came to realize that for a well-fed, well-educated, moderately wealthy westerner, poverty is something impossible to comprehend. A fellow traveller once told me “you can’t understand India (and poverty) with a full stomach”. But this is something you know only after a while. In my first weeks in India I saw this little girl forced by the mother under the threat of a stick to walk on a rope hanging 2.5m from the ground. Back then I was naïve enough to say, with the help of a translator, to her mother “Your daughter should be in a classroom, not working”. Her mother just answered “What do you know?” The words still re-sound in my head, yes, what did I know? What do we know?



Antonio di Vico

Intern at UNDP Communication
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For more wonderful pictures, visit:
www.antoniodivico.com !



Hampi, India. Marriage in many traditional cultures is an important event and in India is no exception. I was in Hampi's temples complex when I came across a colorful, yet very modest, wedding party. Indian friendliness and hospitality did the rest. I instantly became the honoured guest and was served rice with dahl and chapati like I was some maharaja. When I asked to photograph the couple to capture a memory of the day, the bride blushed and politely said “no” because her dress was not the rich, precious saree every Indian girl dreams of for her wedding. But she let me take this photo of her hands, decorated for the occasion. To me, this photo is a reminder of humbleness and dignity.



Test your Knowledge About our Secretary-Generals!

1. Who became the first SG in 1946, and where was he from?
2. Name a former female SG?
3. What was Ban Ki-moon's position at the time of his SG election?
4. Which SG came up with "An Agenda for Peace"?
5. What is the SRSRG?
6. How many honorary degrees did former SG U Thant from Myanmar receive during his lifetime?
7. Which SG died in a plane accident while on a peace mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo September 18 1961?
8. How many countries did Ban Ki-moon (officially) visit in July this year?
9. What does it mean when a SG makes an "Off the Cuff" statement?
10. Last question: If all the former SGs and their wives were gathered on the dance-floor, who would most likely be the last couple to leave?

Come on everyone give yourself a shot at it before going straight to the answers...

1. Trygve Lie, of Norway
2. You can't find one? That's because there hasn't been one yet! What a shame!
3. Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
4. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, of Egypt
5. Special Representative of the Secretary General.
6. 35
7. Dag Hammarskjöld, of Sweden
8. 10
9. Remarks to the press and the public.
10. Kofi and Nane Annan. According to pbs.org's biographical facts about Annan, the couple loves "long, brisk walks. The couple also likes to dance and are often the last to leave the dance floor."

Poverty and Climate Change



Irina Lysenko,
*Partnership & Communications Group, UN
Volunteers, Bonn, Germany*



Scientists tell us that climate change is already a reality. Growing temperatures lead to the shift of climate zones and rising sea levels increase the frequency of storms, floods and droughts. One can easily understand that a changing climate will mostly affect the poor. In developing countries, livelihoods are highly dependent on natural and agricultural resources, and people have a limited capacity to adapt to new climate conditions. Growing crops on arid soil or building a house on flooded grounds is the very concrete future which awaits many people around the world.

What can we do?

We can help to mitigate the effects of climate change by promoting car pooling or taking a bus or a bike to school or work. Reducing the energy and water consumption from time to time will save a lot of resources. Cleaning up the environment locally can also be an issue: people are reluctant to pick up other people's trash but will lend a hand if they see everybody pitching in. If you reside in a developing country, you could support a local community in adapting to climate change. For this, run a survey to find out who is at risk from changing climate and associated natural disasters. Check with local experts what the environmental problems faced by the community are, enquire about peo-

ple already involved, possible sponsors and partners: activists, civil society organizations, the Ministry of Environment, etc. Start campaigning! You can join the United Nations Volunteers programme (UNV).

UNV contributes to peace and development through volunteerism. On International Volunteer Day 2007, Ban Ki-moon said: "We need people everywhere to volunteer for this challenge and to help communities mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change." In support of this statement by the UN Secretary-General, out of 8,000 UNV volunteer assignments per year about 40% are devoted to the improvement of the environment. UNV recruits skilled people to take part in development projects all over the world. In Jakarta, Indonesia, where 63% of the population lives below the poverty line, some project examples include training in agricultural techniques and how to make better use of the natural resources in order to mitigate the effects of climate change. In Nicaragua the connection between poverty and the loss of biodiversity is obvious: the small manufacturers occupying rural communities in protected areas. Through this, beneficiaries gradually realize the importance of taking care of the environment.

Besides, thousands of people contribute to development with the UNV Online Volunteering service. In 2008

about 2,800 professionals, students, expatriates, retirees and people with disabilities volunteered initiatives. Thousands more have registered and would like to contribute in the future. They bring expertise in many fields, from graphic designing and marketing to training, project designing and management.

On 5 December 2009 UNV will celebrate International Volunteer Day (IVD) with the theme: 'Volunteering for our Planet'. UNV encourages each of us to do our part in combating climate change. To learn more, visit:

www.VolunteeringForOurPlanet.org

Useful links

Volunteering for our Planet:
www.VolunteeringForOurPlanet.org

Volunteer ideas online: <http://www.onlinevolunteering.org>

International Volunteer Day:
www.worldvolunteerweb.org/int-l-volunteer-day.html

International Year of Volunteers: <http://bit.ly/Fuvq9>

United Nations Volunteers:
www.unvolunteers.org; <http://www.unv.org>

Seal the Deal: www.sealthedeal2009.org

CoolPlanet (UNRIC, Europe):
www.coolplanet2009.org

UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen: <http://en.cop15.dk>



Kolkata, India. Let's just say this is a family portrait: the father, a taxi driver, waiting for customers and the son, who is taking a break from his games on his dad's shiny car. When I asked the man to take the photo he was proud to show probably his most precious jewels: his son and his car!



Kolkata, India. India is unpredictable, unexpected. Every time you think you figured it out, it surprises you by showing unknown aspects you never imagined. I bumped into a street feast in Kolkata with colorful dancing girls surrounded by a cheering crowd. When I got closer I realized that the dancers were...men! They were hijras: men dressed like women who consider themselves neither women nor men and who have been recently recognized by Indian state of Tamil Nadu as a separate sex.

Volunteering in Brazil: fighting against poverty



Valeria Camarda
Intern at UNRIC Brussels, Italian
Desk

Although Brazil is an important agricultural and industrial power, as the strongest economy in Latin America, the issues of income inequality and social exclusion remain at the root of the country's rural poverty. This is especially true in the Brazilian North-East region, where poor rural communities live in disadvantaged conditions: education and health facilities are not readily available, water supply and sewage systems are generally inadequate and rural populations face severe constraints in accessing technology and infrastructure.

As a volunteer, my time spent in

Brazil lasted for only three weeks but I learned so much it that seemed longer. I stayed in a little town, called Joaquim Gomes, of 24,000 inhabitants located in the north-eastern state of Alagoas. As soon as I arrived at the airport I realized that I had no choice but to open up to, and learn about, a whole new world.

I spent my first week there learning about the projects, the people, and crucially, the culture. My task was to provide support to help the community projects run more efficiently and to give personal attention to children, local students and disadvantaged families. I had the chance to assist teachers with sports activities, art classes, and dance lessons for children, as well as to observe and assist local health professionals who take care of people with disabilities and support women's empowerment.

In Joaquim Gomes, the poorest and most vulnerable groups among Brazil's rural poor people are children, indigenous peoples and women. Indeed, since the majority of men mi-

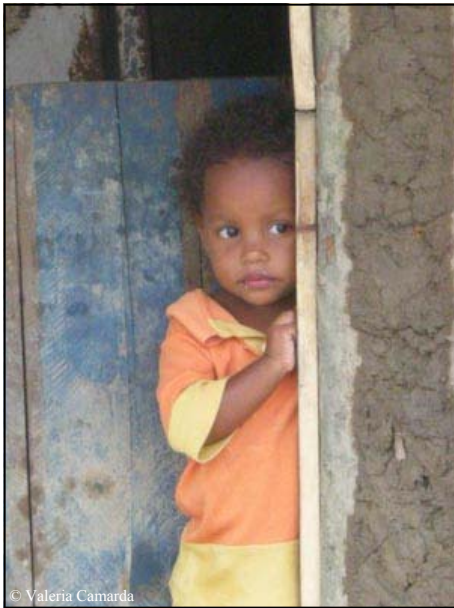
grate to other parts of the country in search of work, in particular in the sugar cane and ethanol industry in the southern state of Mato Grosso incurring debts in order to repay the money they owe for travel, women bear the responsibility for running the family and child labour becomes the rule among poor households. Furthermore, thousands of children live in the streets, abandoned by parents who

"...thousands of children live in the streets, abandoned by parents who can't afford to raise them."

cannot afford to raise them. Confronting starvation and living in deplorable conditions, these children take drugs, commit crimes, and resort to prostitution in order to survive.

Another of the main causes of poverty in Brazil is extreme inequality of land tenure, especially in the North-East region. Rural workers, share-

-croppers or tenant farmers who do not have land, the so-called "Sem Terra", have become a symbol for the dignity of men and women workers



who were once called vagrants, moving around from one place to another. The Landless Workers Movement, or *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* (MST), has peacefully occupied unused land where they have established cooperative farms, constructed houses, schools and clinics, promoted indigenous cultures and a healthy and sustainable environment and gender equality, carrying out a long-overdue agrarian reform in a country mired by unjust land distribution.

Brazilian society also has to face the lack of access to formal education and skills training. This is why, in recent years, the charity mission in Joaquim Gomes has invested large amounts of resources to broaden the scope of technical assistance services and to facilitate access to them. For this reason, one of the most important projects is working with children and teenagers in the *escolinhas*. Apart from the educational programme which includes basic literacy and craft activities, this project provides nutritional meals for some 300

children, often their only meal of the day with either meat or fish with rice, vegetables, fruit and juice.

Another reality I experienced is the *favela* of Sururu de Capote in Maceió, the capital of Alagoas. This *favela* is not a rural or isolated community, but a peripheral urban one excluded from the economic activity of the city, where the inhabitants' lack the opportunity to make enough money to satisfy their basic necessities. As a result, they find themselves in a location lacking even minimal health and hygiene conditions. The State has virtually no presence there, since by taking no action to remove trash or maintain the lagoon for fishing, it is depriving the inhabitants of their right to adequate nourishment. Furthermore, there are no public programs in the community, and existing programs do not provide sufficient funding for families living in Sururu de Capote.

It is also important to underline that everywhere in Brazil the public health care system is inadequate and under funded, especially for those who are not able to afford medical expenses. In Joaquim Gomes, since the health status is mostly related to the lack of canalized water, garbage collection, proper sewage connections and electricity, the charity mission offers a little medical care centre, which has become essential to people in need of injections, medicines, and for treatment for pneumonia or bronchitis. At the emergency centre nurses can reach people who are suffering at home, giving access to appropriate medical care as well as distributing food and water to the poorest.

The work I did in Brazil was the first time that I felt I had accomplished something that I was truly proud of in my life. After I returned home, I realized that Brazil had given me more

than I could have ever asked and though I was warned before my departure, of the possibility of encountering situations that I might find difficult to deal with, I saw the brightest and most sincere smiles I have ever witnessed, and developed a deep admiration for the humility and dignity of the people I met. This was true from the time the coordinator picked me up at the airport, to when new friends waved good-bye to me when I left. After having seen with my own eyes what poverty means, I understood that in life nothing can be taken for granted. *Quem ama a vida busca paz.* ■



« *The most vulnerable group among Brazil's rural poor are children, indigenous people and women.* »

The Global Food Crisis

Vuyo Mkize
*Intern at UNIC Pretoria,
South Africa*



Food shortages and the escalating prices of food have become the overwhelming result of the current global economic recession as well as of climate change. Droughts and floods have become the most common causes of food shortage around the world. Farmers exhaust all their resources in order to make up for low crop produce or livestock losses. In large parts of the developing world this crisis is further compounded by civil and international strife. The food crisis has led to human conflict; as in war-times, food sometimes becomes used as a weapon. What can eventually ensue is what is known as a 'hunger trap' which perpetuates the cycle of poverty. Poverty breeds hunger and hunger can spawn unrest and political

instability. Poverty has become a global pandemic, with the majority of the developing world living below the poverty line.

According to a recent report by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), the total number of undernourished people in the world reached 963 million in 2008, nearly 15 percent of the world's total population. This most certainly calls for a global solution. Organisations such as FAO and the European Union remain at the helm of procuring effective solutions to combat the global food crisis. At the beginning of 2009 the Director-General of the FAO, Mr Jacques Diouf, called for a World Summit on the food crisis, prompted by the organization's reports on the issue. Mr Diouf said that, "the summit should

lead to greater coherence in the global governance of world food security. It will define how we can improve policies and the structural aspects of the international agricultural system by putting forward lasting political, financial and technical solutions to the problem of food insecurity in the world".

Climate change is playing more of a defining role than anticipated. Droughts, floods and various other natural disasters have caused concern over decreasing food production. In areas such as southern Sudan there have been constant disruptions caused by conflicts, dry spells and flooding since 2008. In the Far East, it has been a matter of trying to manage the severe winter drought in the major wheat producing areas of China, but due to

government support, irrigation supplies have been increased, thus improving the situation caused by the drought.

The Gaza strip is one of the places that is severely affected by the food situation. The area is struggling with conflict conditions and is currently being assisted by FAO and the World Food Programme (WFP). An emergency operation was jointly approved by both organizations in January 2009 to provide food assistance to 365 000 people who are strongly affected by the situation. Those included are social hardship cases, vulnerable groups, internally-displaced people and farmers affected over a period of 12 months. Recent reports by the FAO media centre state that the organization has started a major operation in support of small scale farmers in Zimbabwe as part of its joint efforts with the EU to fight hunger this year.



The EU food facility has committed 1 billion Euros over three years to respond rapidly and on a large scale to rising hunger around the world. FAO has received a total of around 200 million Euros for work in 25 countries; these funds are channelled through United Nations agencies and humanitarian organisations. The aim is to bridge the gap between emergency aid and medium to long-term development aid.

It is important, now more than ever, that the developed nations unite with organisations that seek not only to provide food aid to these poor countries but also to implement sustainable development. To eradicate poverty, poverty of the mind should first be abolished. This can be achieved not only by providing seeds to farmers to plant, but also through the seeds of knowledge on how to sustain their crops in the face of climate change as well as the global recession.

I would like to speak of my personal experience, growing up in a rural community in South Africa called the Eastern Cape. This province is riddled with poverty and lack



of proper assistance for farmers. Communities such as these receive minimal mention and attention from the broader world community and that is where the first problem lies: no exposure. It is a province of immense wealth in terms of its natural resources; commercially untapped beaches, beautiful landscapes as well a rich cultural inheritance. Developed nations should not overlook the potential of eradicating poverty in communities such as these, since they have great potential to become economically successful. ■

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

2015

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

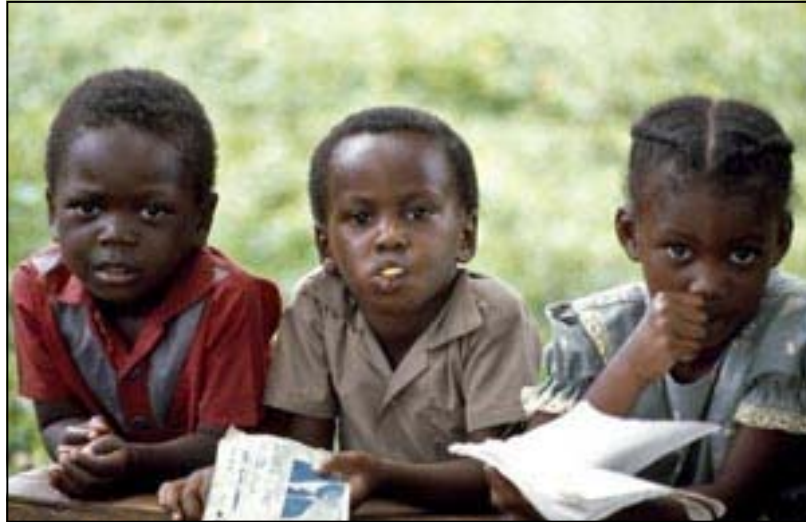
Goal 5: Improve maternal health

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership

Poverty and Education in South Africa



Fred Arthur Fish
*Intern at UNIC Pretoria,
South Africa*

Parents send their children to school to get an education with the hope that this will be a way for them to build a future that is fruitful. Of course, as in any society, parents believe education is the key to a better life. African society is one in which poverty is perpetuated by the inability of many people to access formal education.

The link between poverty and lack of education is very evident in African society and it is detrimental to the continent's ability to develop. Most countries on the continent have constantly preached free education for all,

but those who have been able to deliver on this promise do not always deliver a world class academic excellence. The result of years of political and economic turmoil in Africa echo and manifest themselves through poverty and a lack of education.

This is where the gap between the public school system and the private school system proves to be vast. For many families, finances dictate educational possibilities, leaving those who cannot afford private education to settle for public education. For most children growing up in rural Africa means growing up without decent education. A study conducted in South Africa recently has revealed that a student coming from a public school education moving into a higher learning institution is unable to read or write in a proper academic format. It further revealed that educators at private schools are more devoted to their work as they know they will get paid for it. Their salaries come from the school fees paid by the parents.

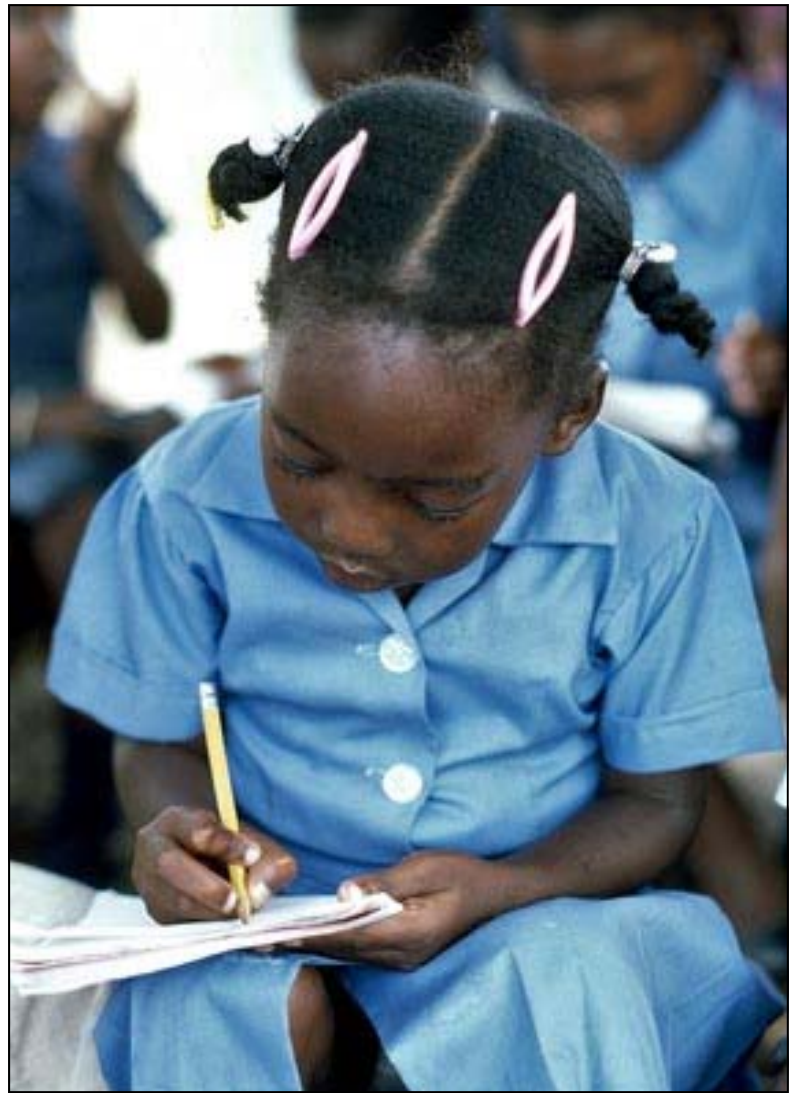
Hence private education is expensive and believed to be of a better quality, whereas public school teachers are paid by government and will get paid regardless of their commitment, often leaving the children to fend for themselves. Research has revealed that 13 percent of children in developing countries have never attended school.

“For most children growing up in rural Africa means growing up without decent education.”

This rate is 32 percent among girls in sub-Saharan Africa and 27 percent of boys. Primary school enrolment in African countries is the lowest in the world. Limited funds and lack of adequate teachers, classrooms and learning material adversely affect the educational environment throughout Africa. Improving the quality of education is particularly critical to ensure that the

learning needs of the disadvantaged are met, and for providing pathways for families and communities out of poverty.

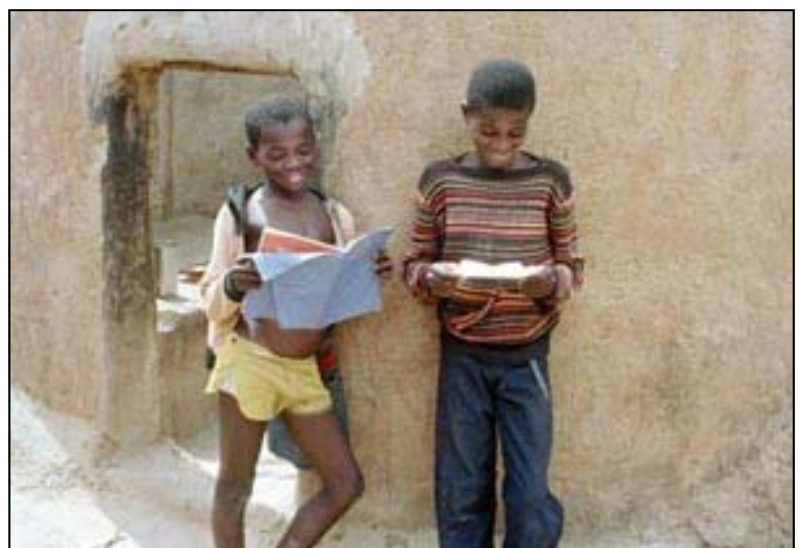
We must salute the organisations that have undertaken the task to fight against poverty and illiteracy. UNICEF works in 158 countries, encouraging and challenging governments and communities to promote education. Most African states are hard at work changing the future, educating societies. We still have a long way to go, but to this day education will remain a child's greatest chance to escape poverty. There is a definite interrelationship between better education, better health and the alleviation of poverty. Each one of these elements has an impact on the other, and without adequate measures being taken to improve education in Africa, we may see a rise of mortality, crime, illness and the continued fall of economic growth. ■



"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world" Nelson Mandela

"Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope. It is a tool for daily life in modern society. It is a bulwark against poverty, and a building block of development, an essential complement to investments in roads, dams, clinics and factories. Literacy is a platform for democratization, and a vehicle for the promotion of cultural and national identity. Especially for girls and women, it is an agent of family health and nutrition. For everyone, everywhere, literacy is, along with education in general, a basic human right.... Literacy is, finally, the road to human progress and the means through which every man, woman and child can realize his or her full potential."

Kofi Annan





Bangalore, India. Bangalore is the Indian city where the IT sector exploded giving life to an authentic "Indian miracle". With its global outsourcing and software companies, Silicon Valley of India, the "new" Bangalore, is growing at vertiginous speed. The other, "old", forgotten Bangalore, the one newspapers talk less and less about, maintains its slow pace, making the gap between "old" and "new" bigger everyday. I took this photo in a slum situated right next to a huge modern company building. The children there were school drop-outs. The NGO, for which I was a volunteer, was trying to enroll them in school again. These children looked at the building with the eyes of someone who already knows, at 5 or 6, that they are not part of the "new" India and are powerless to do much to change the fact.



Amritsar, India. Miss Sonia is an hijras, neither woman nor man. She says she works as a dancer. I managed to take her photo in the 4x4m house she shares with mother, father and five brothers and sisters. The mother agreed to be photographed with Sonia. During the time I spent in their house, despite all the noise, the little sister, the girl you see next to Sonia, kept sleeping

Photography and stories by:
Antonio di Vico

Menka Bihari, intern at the Department of Management in New York, tells us about her hometown:

Lucknow!



Lucknow Universtiry

Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh situated along the banks of the River Gomti rose to prominence as the centre of the Nawabs of Avadh. Legend says that Lucknow derived its name from Lucknau named after Lakshmana (a character in the famous Epic Ramayan) when his elder brother Rama gave away this part of the country to him. The huge mausoleums of the nawabs and the ruins of the Residency which stood witness to one of the most remarkable episodes in the Indian Mutiny in 1857, make it an interesting place to visit. Historically reputed as a city of culture, Lucknow is famous for its gharana (school) of music and chikan kari (shadow-work embroidery on fine muslin cloth). Lucknow is popularly known as the the City of the Nawabs. It is also known as the Golden City of the East, Shiraz-i-Hind and the Constantinople of India as well as the Paris of the East under the Nawabs (rulers), who patronized music, dance, painting and Awadhi cuisine.



Street in Animabad



Holi Festival



Kebab stall in Chowk, Lucknow

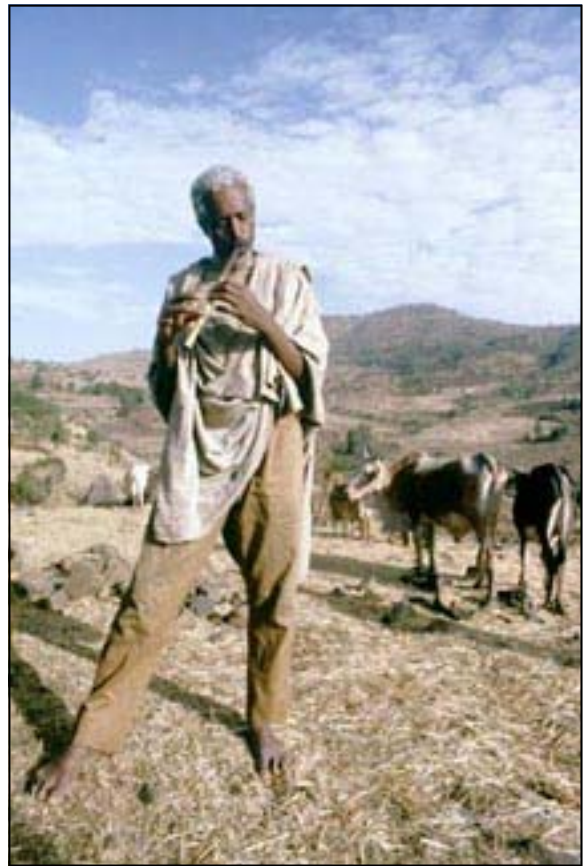
Lucknow in a nutshell...

- The first place I take a visitor from out of town is the Residency. The sense of mystery coupled with the history is simply entralling!
- If I want to eat the most delectable malai paan (a cream pastry stuffed with nuts and covered in sterling silver leaf), and lal peda (caramel-flavored milk fudge), I go to the generations old Chowdhary Sweets!
- For complete quiet, I can hide away the grounds of my beloved school- the majestic and grand...La Martiniere Girls College!
- If you come to my city, get your picture taken with the Rumi Darwaza, an impressive gateway said to represent the heart and soul of the Awadh architecture when it was at its pinnacle!
- 'Shame Avadh' at Hazratganj is my one-stop shop for great, melt-in-your-mouth kebabs!
- Locals know to skip the expensive Chikanwork boutiques at the popular malls and check out Chowk, the center of the old city instead for great bargains.
- When I'm feeling cash-strapped, I go to the quaint and narrow lanes of Aminabad, a market existing from the times of the Nawabs!
- Photo ops in my city include the Chota and the Bara (Asafi) Imambara (Mausoleums), the Vidhan Sabha (State legislative assembly), Charbagh Railway station and the best vantage points are the cemetery at the Residency, Hanuman Setu (bridge over River Gomti) and the Lucknow University.
- My city has the most poetic, cultured, romantic and chivalrous men.
- My city has the most elegant, educated, petite and courteous women.
- In my city, an active day outdoors involves a visit to the Zoo, the National Botanical Research Institute, Kukrail (alligator sanctuary) and Chowk.
- For a night of dancing, go to Clarks Awadh. Or, for live classical Indian music and theatre, check out Rai Umanath Bali Auditorium, Ganna Sansthan Auditorium, or Valmiki Rangshala.
- The bylanes bordering the Tulsi theater complex is the spot for late-night eats.
- You can tell a lot about my city from the etiquette and harmony among the various religious backgrounds residing here!
- In the spring you should celebrate the festival of Holi, an ancient celebration ushering in spring, commemorating elements of Hindu mythology, and a time of general merrymaking and a disregarding of social norms during which people take to the streets and toss colored powders and water on each other. No one will toss the many-hued colors on you without your permission.
- In the summer you should relish kulfi (milk and saffron infused ice cream) and thandai (cooling herb drink) at Chowk!
- In the fall you should visit Lucknow to enjoy the festival of Teej during which married women get together and tattoo their palms with henna, wear green clothes, sing rain songs pertaining to the gods, and celebrate conjugal love.
- In the winter you should come and see the Lucknow Mahotsav which is a gathering of craftsmen and folk arts from around the country.....fun for the entire family!
- Don't miss the Dussehra festival in Lucknow, a spectacle of fireworks commemorating man's victory over evil within, symbolizing the victory of Lord Rama over the demon king Ravana.
- Just outside my city, you can visit the Dudhwa National Park, home to the majestic Bengal tigers...India's national animal!
- The best book about my city is Lucknow: The Fire of Grace by Amresh Misra.

AGRICULTURE AND POVERTY IN KENYA

Benson Mwaniki Kuria

*Intern at UNON Nairobi, Joint Medical Services
Department, Kenya*



According to the Kenyan Government's Economic Recovery Strategy 2003, the agricultural sector is the backbone of the Kenyan economy. It contributes 26% directly to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and a further 27% indirectly through links with other sectors. The sector accounts for 60% of all export earnings besides being the source of nearly all food requirements.

More than three quarters of Kenya's population is rurally based and derives its livelihood mainly from agriculture. More importantly, 56% of this population lives below the poverty line while 51% of those lack any access to adequate food. With such a



dependence on land, focusing on agriculture therefore becomes a fundamental strategy in poverty alleviation.

One major challenge facing Kenya's agriculture is the erratic weather pattern, coupled with pests and disease issues. Since Kenya's agriculture is dependent on rain patterns the destruction of water towers has been a huge blow to agriculture and through it to the fight against poverty. Some of the ways of mitigating these problems are the protection of water catchment areas, the establishment of irrigation schemes along major permanent rivers and also practicing green house agriculture.

Another problem facing rural agriculture in Kenya is poor roads to access markets. This causes delays in the time between harvesting and delivery to the market. It also affects the post-harvest handling during transportation leading to poor quality produce and spoilage. To deal with the problem, the rural infrastructure needs to be improved. It may also be useful for

farmers to form producer organizations in order to market their produce, thus reducing the transportation costs for individual farmers.

Raw products are sold as input to other national industries and not as final products such as leather, tea, cotton and coffee, and this limits the potential of the agricultural sector in Kenya. It limits the price Kenyan products can fetch in the international markets, due to competition from other primary producers, thus yielding low returns to farmers. The viability of this strategy in alleviating poverty issues is consequently reduced. One way to deal with this is to increase capital investments in advanced technology which will enable them to add value to the products and also sell the products as branded final products rather than raw materials for other production processes.

In order to break out of poverty, Kenyan farmers commercialize their practices and move away from subsistence farming. This requires dealing

with the realities of globalization and consumer power. It involves using marketing to get the products in the hands of the consumers. With the right quality and low prices this can be achieved if farmers are part of an integrated value chain. Ken Schwedel defines the agro-food value chain as “a collection of activities or interrelated sequential and parallel functions involved in production, manufacturing and marketing of foods”.

A value chain approach is about engaging and supporting all operators in the value chain including input suppliers, farmers, traders, processors, retailers, up to the final consumer and ensuring that they work in an integrated manner. Kenya’s agriculture must undergo a paradigm shift and adopt a consumer based approach. Farmers must adopt an “it is no good to me if I can’t sell it” approach. Sustainable farming in the future will involve contracts. There are possibilities of contract farming in many areas; with large state marketing agents buying to replenish strategic food reserves, local private supermarket chains, and flower and fruit importers in overseas markets.

Considering the fact that most Kenyans reside in rural areas and live on agriculture, promoting agriculture is imperative for reducing poverty and hunger both key objectives of the Millennium Development Goals. Subsistence farming is no longer a viable option with half the rural population living below the poverty line. Agriculture has to be taken to the next level: commercialization. ■



*"Let there be work,
bread, water and salt
for all",
Nelson Mandela*

Rejuvenating India's Forests through Action Against Poverty



Menka Bihari
*Intern at Architecture and
Engineering Department, UN
Headquarters, New York*

economy by providing commercial wood products as well as non-wood products, and they are an important source of food, fiber and energy for indigenous populations. Nearly half of the world's inhabitants, mainly in developing countries, depend to some extent on forests for consumption goods.

In India, Joint Forest Management (JFM) resolutions have been passed to promote partnerships between state Forest Departments and Forest Protection Committees (FPCs) and associated NGOs. By early 2000, almost 33,000 FPCs had been established across India on 10.2 million hectares of degraded natural forestland. As a result of the protection of forests by villagers, the forest ecology has improved and the biodiversity increased, and income from non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and wages from forest work constitutes almost 43% of the average family income. At the same time these community-

based forest management schemes encourage equitable benefit sharing and women's empowerment. The value of JFM forests was found to be three times higher than forests of neighbouring villages that did not have JFM. Currently, it is estimated that 10.24 million ha. of forestlands are being managed under the JFM

People throughout the world are increasingly recognizing the importance of forests and trees in improving social welfare.

Forests were estimated to cover 3,454 million hectares i.e. 26.6% of the total land area of the world in 1995. People throughout the world are increasingly recognizing the importance of forests and trees in improving social welfare. Both natural and man-made forests have economic, social and environmental benefits. Furthermore, forests play an important role in economic development by providing employment, income and foreign exchange. Forests also provide land for food production and contribute to the

program through 36,075 committees in 22 states. As a follow-up, the Indian Government issued guidelines on 21 February 2000 for the strengthening of the JFM program.

The Forestry Department is responsible for organizing and providing technical and administrative support to the VSS. Villages on the fringe of the degraded forests are carefully selected. To the extent possible, socially homogeneous groups are brought into one VSS fold. People from all households are eligible to become members, but those from the most deprived section of society, the scheduled castes and tribes are *automatically* eligible to be members. Generally, two people from each household become members, and one of them must be a woman. Most VSS range in size from 75 to 150 members. This general body elects a managing committee of 10 to 15 members, 30% of whom must be women, who in turn elect a chairperson to oversee and





manage the affairs of the VSS. The Forestry Department participates on this committee through its field officer, who acts as a secretary. It is proposed to transfer this task to the committee over time. The primary purpose of the VSS is to protect the forest from encroachment, grazing, theft, and fire, and to improve the forest in accordance with an approved joint forest management plan. This local plan, known as a microplan, is formulated in stages. The discussion about what to do with the forest is initiated through a participatory rural appraisal. The works and funds of the VSS are handled in a transparent manner jointly by the chairperson of the VSS and the forester who acts as the secretary. This

transparency helps to ensure the quality and cost-effectiveness of all activities.

As suggested, forestry incorporating the traditional knowledge of the locals has mostly been a missing element in forest planning and application on a global scale. It is argued that environmental security now lies in integration of local knowledge and modern learning. The following reasons sum up why foresters and forest agencies should learn and integrate the indigenous knowledge on forest management with formal forestry:

- Inadequacies and unsuitability of classical forest management strategies.
- Erosion and extinction of cultural diversity and indigenous knowledge.
- Philosophy of sustainability in traditional ecological knowledge.
- International ethics and legal obligations.
- Voices of the indigenous peoples.

WEB REFERENCES:

FAO: <http://www.fao.org/waicent/faoinfo/forestry/ftpp/default.htm>

TERI: <http://static.teriin.org/jfm/jfm.htm>



Human Development and Poverty



Andrea Milan

Intern at DESA, New York

“The objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives” – Mahbub ul Haq, Founder of the Human Development Report.

Development and poverty are key issues in current international politics and economics. The last decades of unprecedented economic growth have not benefited everyone in the world; in other words, development has not allowed *all* people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives.

There is no consensus on the impact of globalization on poverty. From 1980 to 2004, according to the World Bank, the percentage of world population below the poverty line has been decreasing from 40% to 18%; however, almost 1 billion people are still below the poverty line (2004 estimates). On the contrary, countries agree on the urgency of the eradica-

tion of poverty: the heads of State and Government that signed the Millennium Declaration resolved “to halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world’s people whose income is less than one dollar a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger and, by the same date, to halve the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water”.

The current economic and financial is hindering the achievement of these necessary yet insufficient steps towards the eradication of world poverty. Nobel prize Amartya Sen stressed out that development is not only an economic concept and income, per se, is not an accurate measure of development. He stated that development is the freedom for the individual to live the life he wants to live.

Partly following this broader approach, the United Nations developed the idea of human development and the UN now publishes every year the Human Development Reports. The Human Development In-

dex (HDI) was created in 1990 and it takes into consideration three dimensions of development: economic growth, health and education, measured respectively through GDP per capita, life expectancy at birth and a combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary schooling. In 1997, as the HDI was successfully introduced in the world debate, the UN created the Human Poverty Index (HPI). It is formulated differently for developing and developed countries: for the former group, the most affected by poverty, it takes into account three dimensions of poverty: life expectancy (probability at birth of not surviving the age of 40), education (adult illiteracy rate) and the standards of living (unweighted average of the percentage of the population without access to safe water and the percentage of underweight children for their age). These new indexes are widely approved, even though some scholars stress that they lack a social dimension; other scholars point out that

these indexes should include the impact of development on the environment, since the sustainability of development is the main challenge of our century.

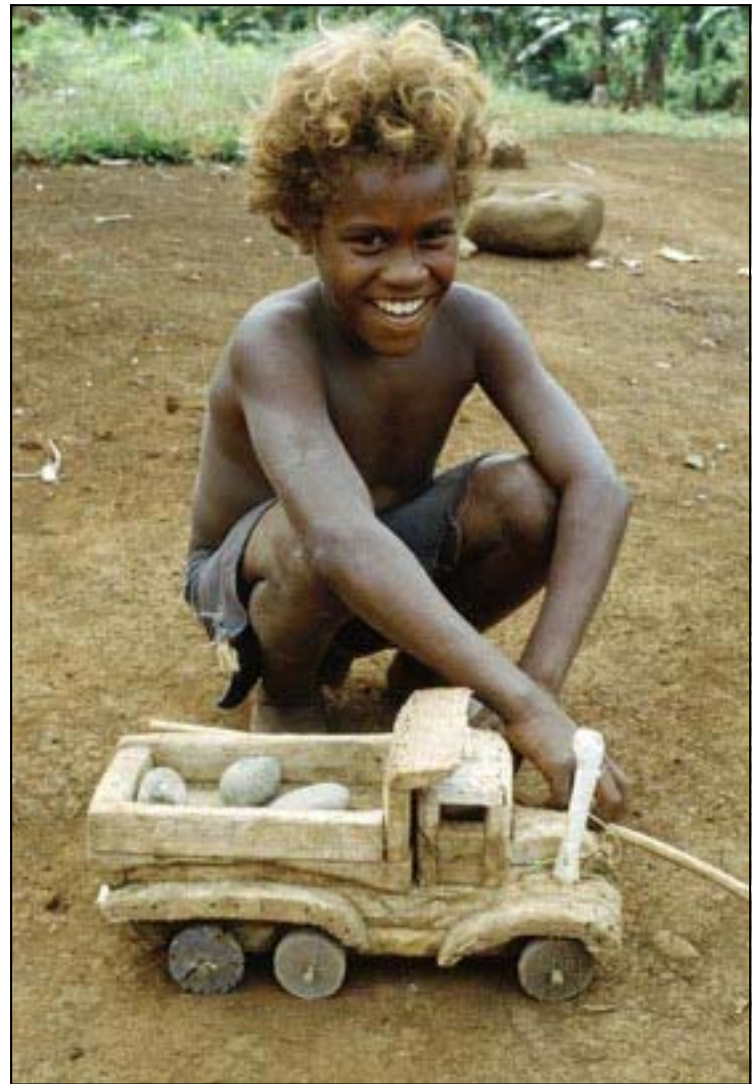
Many different perspectives on poverty coexist but everyone agrees on one pillar: change is needed. People have to be at the heart of development. Firstly, we need to re-conceptualize economics and its priorities: firms should be driven by the willingness to improve their impact on the environment and on poverty rather than only by profit making. From a political perspective, we need specific policies to eradicate poverty: recent history has taught us that economic growth is very important but it does not eradicate poverty by itself. Finally, the most important change has to come from the populations of the North, which have to slow down their rate of consumption and be willing to help poor countries find their way out of poverty. Let's make this world a better place for everyone.■

« Poverty is the worst form of violence »

Mahatma Gandhi

« We have grown literally afraid to be poor. We despise anyone who elects to be poor in order to simplify and save his inner life. If he does not join the general scramble and pant with the money-making street, we deem him spiritless and lacking in ambition. »

William James



Music Against Poverty

Pedro Sousa

Intern at UNRIC Brussels, Portuguese Desk

Organized by the European Commission's co-operation office EuropeAid, and launched in the frame of the 2008 "I fight Poverty" campaign, Music Against Poverty was a music contest that gave an opportunity for young people to compose songs about fighting poverty. It intended to encourage young people to learn more about development aid policy and concrete projects regarding trade, water, food security and health. Through networking websites and music festivals, young people were invited to submit songs related to fighting poverty. Young passionate musicians contributed with over 250 songs from more than 20 countries.

The winning song was "Let's join together" by *Ensemble pour la Paix*. The song was selected based on its relevance, originality and public success. It was written especially for the contest, and it is sung in four languages in order to better convey the notion that poverty is a global issue. The band is made up of nine young university students located in Rome, coming from different parts of Italy as well as Germany and Romania. Founded in the beginning of 2009, the band aims to assemble different musicians from different traditions and with different instruments. Their music influences are eclectic, ranging from pop and rock, folk, classic and traditional Italian

music. In their own words: "This victory means to us that music can still unite different people, carrying a message of peace! We are happy because the European message of peace and fighting poverty, that inspired our song, will reach a great amount of people from the Stockholm stage." The band will have the opportunity to perform during the European Development Days from the 22nd to the 24th October 2009 in Stockholm. Additionally, their song will be professionally recorded.

The Music Against Poverty contest shows that there are young people who are very much aware and concerned with world affairs especially with one of the most shameful problems that mankind faces - Poverty. This action proves that where there is a will by people to give their time and energy to share their message. Music Against Poverty provided the way and opportunity: a music contest. As Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, said: "Music knows no borders, it doesn't distinguish between rich and poor, it energizes and elevates. What better way for young creative musicians in Europe to get active for our joint goal: eradicating poverty on our globe! I am looking forward to many rocking contributions from all over Europe competing for the opportunity to be present in Stockholm".■

"...This victory means to us that music can still unite different people, carrying a message of peace!..."

Ten ways to keep your fellow interns loving you....

By Naazanin Manouchehri

- 1) Always say hello; loud and clear.... Even if you look kind of funny, a big smile would force others to You will bring sunshine to their day
- 2) Try to appreciate the cultural differences.... we as interns come from all over the world and each of us have our own unique spice to share with others.... love it... Appreciate it.... Cherish the flavours.
- 3) Have a potluck for lunch.... a potluck is a term used for when a group of people all bring something to share together.... Eat, laugh and be jolly
- 4) Be interested in other peoples lives... if not they aren't going to be interested in yours... unless you are really cool.... which all of us interns are....
- 5) Listen and learn from other interns... everyone is working on different projects... this is the time to expand and participate... therefore by learning about others work you can either get involved, give them feedback or get help yourself....
- 6) Don't talk the whole time your working.... people actually got work to do... feel the vibe... if no one is interested or in an irritated mood... don't take it personally... just put on your headphones and jam down....
- 7) Share your music and interests with others... unless you listen to spice girls....Music is a great way to communicate and connect with people...
- 8) Don't stick to the interns of your own desk... stretch out to your small community.... remember first the community of interns must be built....make friends... dare to make the initiative step....
- 9) Very importantly go out for drinks... chat about non-work related topics and learn about peoples interests and talents... laugh, giggle, cheers, dance, and party down.... (Then you can all be hung-over together the next day)
- 10) Cookies, chocolate, sweets for the sweet interns is always a great idea.... Cupcakes are my favourite....sweeten each others day... we all love it....



Homeless people in Japan



Claudia Pierdominici
Intern at UNRIC in Brussels

Since its recovery after World War II, Japan has been considered as one of the richest and most industrialized countries, a leader in technology and an example in terms of lifetime employment within the same company. One can hardly imagine that this country, able to reach considerable levels of wealth in few years, is now among the leading nations with the highest poverty rate. The OECD - Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development - placed Japan fourth after Mexico, Turkey and U.S. in 2005.

The global financial crisis and the consequent redundancies have meant that many Japanese people now face severe conditions, sometimes becoming homeless. Irregular workers, such as daily and temporary employees and part-timers, are generally not covered under the Japanese social insurance system and once they lose their job

they can no longer afford the rent on their apartments.

According to the first "National Survey of Homeless People", conducted in 2003, there are 25,296 homeless people in Japan, more than a half living in Osaka (7,757) and Tokyo (6,361). Data shows that most of these people were former irregular employees, often in the construction business, with unstable habitation, as they were living in cheap lodging houses (*doya*) or laborers' lodgings (*hanba*), and without a stable family. Among them, 95.2% are male, usually middle-aged; they live in parks, riverbanks or on the road and many (64.7%) earn an income by collecting and selling waste products such as aluminium cans.

"Although Japanese homeless do not want to depend on others, at the same time they deeply suffer for discrimination and scepticism from the rest of society."

The fact that nearly two-thirds of homeless people have a source of income is a noteworthy characteristic, which is related to the Japanese ethic of "independence by labour". They re-

tain the values of self-sufficiency despite the poor conditions they live in and want to counter criticism from "normal" citizens, who see them as idle and an embarrassment for the country.

The phenomenon began to draw nation-wide attention in the 1990s in Japan, when the number of homeless people began to increase and the previous idea of homelessness as a temporary situation caused by unemployment had to be questioned. In 1999 the "Liaison Conference on Homelessness" was established and "Interim Measures" aimed at encouraging the self-sufficiency of homeless people were formulated for the first time. By the end of 2002 several self-sufficiency support centres were established in Tokyo, Osaka, Yokohama and Nagoya, offering accommodation and meals to homeless people enrolled in the facility. These facilities, which can be used for a limited period only, also offer employment counseling and job placement services, but more than a half of homeless people are reluctant to use them, partly because they are ashamed of asking for help and partly because they mistrust this support system, with its lack of privacy, the impossibility of finding a job and the short-term support provided.

Due to the lack of effective measures from the government, some NGOs in Japan are trying to address the growing poverty and to call media attention to the issue. Makoto Yuasa, Head of the NGO Independent Life Support Centre *Moyai*, and author of *Hinkon Shūrai* ("Assaulted by Poverty") is one of the biggest advocates for poor and homeless people in Japan. He has been involved in anti-poverty work since 1995 and he is spreading his anti-poverty message through rallies and speeches, as well as through concrete actions such as opening a drop-in centre for homeless people in Tokyo, which also provides health checks. According to Mr Yuasa, the mood is changing in Japan, as many people, concerned about their own job security, are finally seeing the homeless more as victims of a failing economy rather than lazy and troubled individuals, unwilling to work.



"According to the first "National Survey of Homeless People" there are 25,296 homeless

In my opinion, challenging prejudices held about homeless people is of paramount importance for all countries, but particularly in Japan where they do not want to depend on others and suffer discrimination and skepticism from the rest of society. These attitudes result in a vicious circle leading to a loss of self-belief and making them unable to fight for a more decent civic life. They need society's support and consideration. ■



©Antonio di Vico

Delhi, India. Lakshmi (fantasy name) is from a rural area of Nepal. She is 21. Lakshmi is a sex worker in a brothel in the red light district of Delhi. The dark room with no windows and the rough wooden bench you see is her workplace. For 150 rupees, about 3 USD, to split between her and the brothel owner, she provides sexual services. She told me she wasn't forced by anyone to do it, just by poverty. Despite everything, she looked happy, because, as she said, at least she had some money to send home. She risked being beaten up by allowing me to take this photo but, as she said, it might help someone else. When I was leaving, perhaps seeing in me the possibility of rescue, she asked me to marry her.

HOW TO BE A



They talk about climate change and COP15. They talk about sealing the deal. They say it's urgent. They say we must do something before it's too late. But here we are, feeling like powerless low-ranking interns. What can we actually do?

You don't have to be a state leader to contribute. We have collected various approaches on how everybody can join the ongoing climate debate. You can...

... SPEAK

Raise your voice in Cyberspace! The "[Raise Your Voice](#)" channel is part of a collaboration between CNN, the Government of Denmark and Google/YouTube to focus on increasing public awareness of climate change. Submit your views and questions on the major environmental questions facing governments, organizations and individuals ahead of COP15. Use the dedicated YouTube channel. The best contributions will be aired during the COP15 CNN/YouTube TV debate on December 15.



...DISCUSS

- [connect2earth](#) is a green online community, where you'll be part of a global discussion on important environmental topics, with online discussions every day. People can also express themselves through images and films.
- [Road to Copenhagen](#) aims at giving business, parliamentarians, NGOs and individual citizens a voice. Prior to COP15, a so-called Wiki technology is launched, where you can directly edit, comment and input to the development of policy contributions which will be circulated to the lead negotiators.
- Discuss with your friends, family and colleagues. Discussing climate change should be just as natural as football talks, fashion and gossiping!

FRIEND OF THE CLIMATE

Cool Girls



Trine, Kristin, Saija
Nordic Desk



... JOIN EVENTS

There are a lot of events going on all over the world - the trouble is finding them. Here are a couple of ways in which you can find out what is going on in your country or town, and how you can make others aware if you are hosting an event:

- Go to [Coolplanet2009's Wall of Events](#) and check what is going on near you or add an event to the wall that you think could be interesting for others to know about.
- At [Avaaz.org](#) you can find your country and see what is going on in a city near you, and how you can be part of it. You can also host an event and add it to the map.

... WRITE

- Express your opinions through blogs and newspaper debates.
- You can also write to the people who decide. How else would they know you are worried?
- Web forums attract the people, who might not be interested – yet.
- Update your Facebook, twitter, messenger and other portals on activism and tips for Cooling the Planet!

... BE A COOL FRIEND OF THE CLIMATE

The Petit Prince, from Antoine de St. Exupery's world famous novel, is the SpokesPrince for the CoolPlanet2009 campaign. He presents a new tip every day, advising how *you* can contribute.

- Recycle your paper, glass, metal, plastics and other waste.
- Buy with consideration; second-hand stores, organic products etc.
- Unplug all chargers when you don't use them. They consume energy even when not in use.
- Wash your laundry and your dishes on a lower temperature.
- Dry clothes on a washing line rather than use a tumble dryer.
- Turn off the tap while doing dishes by hand.



Interview



The New Politics of Peace Interview with Fakhri Hamad



Ioana Leu
*Intern for the UK
& Ireland Desk
at UNRIC, Brus-
sels*

Fakhri Hamad is the Project Manager of the Cinema Jenin Project from the Palestinian refugee camp of Jenin. He was also one of the speakers at UNRIC's monthly event CINE|ONU, 16 September 2009 edition. The film screened on this occasion was "The Heart of Jenin", a moving documentary about the generosity of a Palestinian who donated his killed son's organs to save the lives of five Israeli children.

Could you please mention a few facts about your personal background?

I was born in a refugee camp and then my family moved to Kalkyilia, which is now surrounded by the wall. I was arrested twice because I was active against the occupation. I actually started these activities before I could understand what I was doing...I was so young and I just wanted to do like the others. It was only later that I thought more about it and realised that we are losing more than we are earning by using this kind of resistance. So I started thinking about other alternatives...

Was there a certain event or person that made you change your point of view?

The most important event that made me think about this is the celebration of Israel's 59th anniversary. I put myself in the shoes of an Israeli and thought: if a Palestinian comes to me and tells me to go home, I would say to him: "This is my home". I realised that the Israelis, now, belong to this place and it is impossible to convince a 30-year-old person to go back to Poland or to America or elsewhere.

Then this film ["The Heart of Jenin", n.ed.] also helped me a lot, because it was actually not the decision of Ismael Khatib [the father of the killed Palestin-

ian boy], it was Jenin's decision...and not only Jenin, because the people participating at his decision [to donate the organs] were actually influenced by the way of thinking of the whole West Bank. The highest religious authority of the town supported this decision and I understand that it was not only me and Ismael and X and Y in this process; a lot of people are thinking the same: that the conflicted has lasted enough, that it is time to change our way of fighting, our way of resisting.

Which actor do you think would be more efficient in solving this conflict (the UN, the people themselves, another international body)?

As we all know, there was a peace agreement between the PLO [Palestinian Liberation Organisation, recognized as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people by over 100 states] and the Israeli government, but, in fact, this didn't really influence the people, we didn't actually live in peace. So I believe that peace can only come from the bottom, from the citizens of Israel and Palestine, trying to influence the political decision together. This is what we are trying to do through Cinema Jenin project...we are trying to increase the number of Israeli who believe in our rights to live in peace. We already have the support of Israeli com-

panies, but we still need to obtain an official recognition from the government.

Are you afraid that your project might be boycotted?

Anything is possible, but we are trying our best to explain that, in the end, this project will be useful for everyone. In Jenin, people invested a lot in violence: the town provided about 30% of the side attacks in Israel. What did Jenin gain after that? A lot of poor people were encouraged to make these side attacks, but what was the result? Jenin is poor, out of money, we have a lot of problems... Now we are trying to develop the town, to invest in peace and that is why we are asking everyone to come to Jenin, to visit us. To be honest, when more visitors are coming, it means more money is coming to Jenin. So if they invest in peace, others will come and the people's situation will improve. My dream is to have Jenin as the example of a peaceful town, where Israeli, Palestinians and internationals can talk and live together. And then this model could be applied to other towns, too. ■

More about

→ The CINE-ONU project at: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNRIC>

→ Cinema Jenin at www.cinemajenin.org

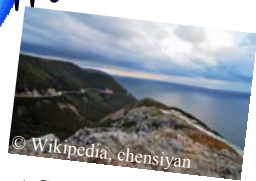
Interns Around the World



Country: USA
Location: Washington

Living in Washington DC is like living in a memorial. On every street corner, there is a history that beckons awe as I consider the famous faces that once crossed those hallow grounds and the famous events they helped transpire. At the same time, it is also very much a city of young people, eager to learn and eager to contribute. More than any other city perhaps, it is a place of contrasts, where hot dog stands and classy hotels share the same sidewalks and powerful senators and lowly interns share the same breathing space. In short, I love living in DC, if not for \$1.35 the metro which will take you to the Smithsonian where you can fantasize about wearing ruby slippers then for the tasty meals you can get at Julia Empanada's on Connecticut Street when you're on the run. Most of all, there are the endless Congressional hearings and think tank conferences where serious people discuss solutions to serious problems. I attend these meetings as part of my internship at the UNIC but anybody and everybody who wants to is welcome to go; the catered food that they sometimes serve is just the icing on the top. The whirl of global events that seem so far away on the news at home is very much in your face in this town. If DC is a memorial, than it is a vibrant, thriving one which is constantly searching for ways to improve its legacy and reshape its future.

Cindy Cheng
UN Information Center, Washington, DC



Country: Canada
Location: West Coast

Travel to the east cost of Canada and experience Mother Nature at her best. Whether you seek wildlife or the sea, one sure thing is that you will not be disappointed once you arrive in this beautiful province surrounded by the sea.

Renowned for the world's highest tides, its award-winning vineyards scattered over the land and its 700-plus annual festivals, the East Coast of Canada has something to offer for everyone. Whether you enjoy the beauty of Peggy's Cove fishing village or take a road trip to Cape Breton's Cabot Trail, you are guaranteed to encounter Nova Scotia's rich culture and wildlife.

Cape Breton's Cabot Trail is awe-inspiring in any season and can be considered one of the most beautiful sceneries in the world. High above the glistening waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence this magnificent road hugs the mountains' sides. Look-offs along the trail offer extraordinary views of Cape Breton's rugged coastline, where often pods of whales can be seen just offshore and bald eagles soar aloft on the ocean breeze.

Cape Breton Highlands National Park is one of Canada's most extraordinary wild territories. The highlands are a colorful tapestry of woodland, tundra and bogs, where wildlife is widespread and moose are often seen grazing in the quiet shallows of lakes and streams. The park has numerous trails ranging from 20-minute family walks to challenging multi-day long hikes through spectacular mountains and coastal landscapes. The Highlands Park offers a full range of visitor services, including award-winning camping infrastructure and initiation to wildlife programmes.

The Nova Scotia license plate reads "Canada's Ocean Playground" and that indeed it is. I promise that if you visit Nova Scotia you will not be disappointed.

Jana Mitchell
intern at Public Information and News Media Division



Country: South Africa
Location: Tshwane

From the day the first soccer ball kicked off on the dusty fields of Port Elizabeth by British soldiers in 1862, the sport has rolled on from strength to strength and pitch to pitch. Soccer is by far South Africa's largest sport with over 54.2% of the population either as an active player or loyal supporter. The world certainly has come a long mile since and South Africa has grown to become one of the world's leading recognised soccer teams, facilitators and nurturers of the sport. South Africa also has a successful track record in terms of hosting some of the biggest international sporting events: the 1995 Rugby World Cup, the Cricket World Cup in 2003 and in January 2006, and S.A managed the

only street race in the inaugural A1 GP World Cup of Motorsport.

The country once again has the privilege and great task to host the upcoming Fifa World Cup in 2010. As South Africa prepares itself for the biggest sporting event to arrive on its shores, one has to consider the implications this international feat will have; not only on the country's soccer culture but on its economy as well. The football World Cup is the biggest sporting event after the Olympic Games and is set to benefit the economies of many South African cities. One is within full right to ask the question, how ready is South African tourism for 2010?

Tshwane, an official 2010 host city, offers a myriad of places to engage visitors who are fond of aesthetic design. Many such destinations take from the racial history inherent to South African history and each have their own accepted description and depiction of that history.



The city of Tshwane, also known as Jakaranda city for its purple blossom trees, hopes to draw many cultural enthusiasts to the old and new sites. A cultural rendition of South African history is made possible in the newly constructed Freedom Park. From the inception of the concept the intent was to assemble a national and international understanding and appreciation of country's struggle for liberation. The intent of this park is to show the proud South African concept of 'Unity in diversity' and teach the public the importance of protecting our heritage. The monumental Union Buildings form the official seat of the South African government and are an architectural marvel. Designed in the English style, they are the visionary work of Sir Herbert Baker. The Union Building and the magnificent gardens are a majestic call for all tourists to visit them.

The city is a rich and colourful reflection of South Africa's national heritage and history; it owes this to the conservation of museums, monuments and zoos which capture the essence of the country's human and animal history. The popularity of the host province is evidenced in the statistics released in 2006, showing that 48% of tourist arrivals visit the Gauteng Province, which is nearly half of the tourist arrivals. The soccer World Cup is no doubt bound to have a positive return on tourism; not only is the country attracting sport-lovers, but amateurs of culture and nature too. As the first kick-off in 2010 draws nearer, South Africa is proving to be ready to showcase just how proud, diverse and beautiful its land and people are.

Vuyo Mkize

Intern at UNIC Pretoria, South Africa



© Saija Ekorre

Linking the Environment and Poverty: Key to Achieving the Millennium Development Goals



Frances (Yu-Chun) Chen
Intern at UNIC in Washington DC

With only six years left, countries and international organizations strive to accelerate their progress to realize promises made in 2000. While many worry about halving the world population living in poverty by 2015 (MDG 1), the ensuring of environmental sustainability has grasped increasing attention (MDG 7). It is now obvious that the poor are the most affected by the effects of environmental degradation. The two issues may seem

independent yet they must be connected: sound environmental management is not only key to alleviating poverty, it is moreover essential to achieving all of the other Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

75% of the world's poor lives in rural areas today. With the lack of access to sophisticated infrastructure and technology, the rural poor rely heavily and directly on nature for their livelihood through agriculture, fishing, logging and other activities. It is only logical that we protect and manage natural resources in these areas, as they are fundamental for rural development. Yet if natural ecosystems are not well-managed, it will precipitate a resort to unsustainable environmental practices that will

disable nature's ability to feed people. Alternatively, poverty also causes negative impacts on the natural systems. To escape poverty, people tend to abuse the environment or migrate from rural to urban areas and create slums; these actions result in the straining of both rural and urban areas. To prevent such a vicious cycle from occurring, the environment needs to become a focal point in all poverty reduction strategies.

Nevertheless, the initial attempts to eradicate poverty did not take into account the significant role that ecosystems play in the lives of poverty-stricken populations as sustainable sources of income. For example, practices have shown that the vast majority of poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs), which are development blueprints proposed by the governments of developing countries to the IMF, have failed to acknowledge the importance of environmental sustainability for development. The PRSPs are not mainstream environmental concerns and lack long-term environmental sustainability strategies; furthermore, there is a general tendency to focus more on large-scale development projects and global-scale issues such as aids and debt reliefs.

...the environment needs to become a focal point in all poverty reduction strategies.

To reverse previous poverty reduction strategies, a UN report, called Environment and Human Well-being: a Practical Strategy, as well as the MDG 7a, urge the incorporation of environmental sustainability into all development project proposals. As enabling the local population to manage natural resources is key to eradicating poverty, national development strategies should take an ecosystem-based approach to environment management. Sound natural resources management will strengthen the resource base, generate income



throughout the management process, and thus decrease the vulnerability of the poor, allowing them to escape poverty. Such re-orientation of strategies need to be adapted by both developing countries as well as international donors.

Today, in recognition of the imperative relation between poverty reduction and environmental management, the UN system continues its poverty reduction efforts through many initiatives, notably the UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI). This joint programme works to bring about better pro-poor environment management by providing financial and technical support to better mainstream the poverty-environment linkages into national development planning processes, such as PRSPs and MDG Achievement Strategies.

For the world to be one step closer to attaining the MDGs, it is crucial that the relevant international actors immediately act with tireless efforts to help implement policies and projects that reflect the vital connection between the poor and their lands. ■

Further Reading:

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- "Millennium Development Goals", *United Nations Development Programme*, available from <http://www.undp.org/mdg/> (accessed 26 September 2009).
- UN Millennium Project Task Force on Environmental Sustainability. *Environment and Human Well-Being: a Practical Strategy* (2005), <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/documents/Environment-complete-lowres.pdf> (accessed September 2009)
- "UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative", *United Nations Environment Programme*, available from <http://www.undp.org/mdg/> (accessed 26 September 2009).

Peace and Security - still a gender blind perspective ?



Manon Letouche, Intern at UNRIC, Benelux and EU Desk

If a few - mainly female - authors have written about women in times of war and conflicts, it was mainly to talk about women as victims of gender based violence. This article will focus on another aspect of sex-specificities of conflicts: the vital role that women can play in times of war and what they can contribute in order to build and maintain peace. This role has largely been ignored but gradually people have started to recognize that women could be proactive in conflict resolution and peace building.

International relations and peace studies are certainly one of the most masculine of the social sciences, and it is fair to say that for a long time theories of security were gender blind. Then, the wars in Rwanda and Yugoslavia brought about a new challenge: *Intersection of gender and communal identities* with gender-based sexual violence used against women as a war strategy. In addition to the fact that women were victims, several studies

have demonstrated that peace forces comprising men and women have a more efficient and “easing” impact. Indeed, local women tend to see female peacekeepers as more approachable and less threatening than male peacekeepers and are more likely to report to a female officer.

Increasingly, the international community has recognized the positive contribution that women can make regarding conflict resolution and peace

“(...) local women tend to see female peacekeepers as more approachable and less threatening...”

building. The United Nations and other international organizations - notably the OECD, the Council of Europe, the G8 and the European Union - have made commitments on this subject. Resolution 1325 from the Security Council of the United Nations requires member states to provide protection for women and girls in war and to ensure the full participation of women in humanitarian, conflict resolution, peace-building and post-conflict recon-

struction initiatives. But so far, only about ten countries have implemented it and almost all are countries of the European Union. The mission in Congo - EUFOR RD Congo- was the first European Union military operation to implement Resolution 1325 in a structured and organised way. Working with a gender perspective contributed to the achievement of the overall operation's objectives and to its effectiveness.

Apart from the importance of having female peacekeepers on the ground, one should not forget the empowerment of local women, another point raised by Resolution 1325. In times of conflict, women have often played a crucial role in helping to preserve social order and keeping society from collapsing. Numerous historical examples show that women have often been peace and democracy protagonists, such as in Brazil, Chile, Peru, Venezuela, Nepal, Philippines or Iran where women's movements have challenged authoritarian regimes. They have also been peace activists witness Sierra Leone, Liberia, Uganda, Burundi, Kenya and in the Balkans.



These women should get the credit they deserve.

Though declarations and resolutions are being taken, their implementation remains to be felt. Generally local women have not had the opportunity to participate equally and their role in peace processes has not been taken into account. From practical experience, notably in the Congo, it is necessary to take gender into account at each stage of a peace-building mission in order to guarantee its (even relative) success. We must put words into actions. The Security Council considered a new resolution on women and security on 30 September. Let's hope that this one will have more practical impact than Resolution 1325 and let's not forget what Mahatmas Gandhi told us: *If non-violence is the law of our being, the future is with women.* ■

UN Security Council resolution 1325

Main points:

- Protection and respect of the human rights of women and girls;
- Equal participation of women in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security;
- Full participation of women in decision-making functions in conflict settlement and peace processes;
- Mainstreaming a gender perspective in all areas of peace missions;
- Particular protection and allowance for the needs of women and girls in IDP and refugee camps;
- Allowance for the different needs of female ex-soldiers;
- Support of local peace initiatives by women;
- Training peacekeeping soldiers in the human rights of women.

“If non-violence is the law of our being, the future is with women”

Mahatma Gandhi



The New Acropolis Museum: a glimpse of the past, a vision of the future



Ioanna Nifli

*Intern at UNRIC Brussels,
Greece and Cyprus Desk*

For more than 2500 years, the Acropolis of Athens, a landmark and symbol for the cradle of European cultures, has towered above the rooftops of the Greek capital. This symbol of the influence and power of ancient Greece constitutes one of the most recognizable monuments of the world and a must-see for people who have an interest in history and archaeological sites. However, what still remains relatively unknown is the brand new construction beside this ancient monument, a stunning modern building which protects and glorifies the past and connects it to the future: the new Acropolis museum.

Located in the shadow of the Acropolis Rock, this new glass and concrete museum forms a fictitious line with the Parthenon and reflects a modern image of the ancient monument. With ideal lighting and heating conditions and acoustic holes in order to absorb noises, the New Museum offers all the amenities one expects to find in an international museum of the 21st century. Its inauguration in June 2009 included some breathtaking digital projections showing sculptures of ancient gods and centaurs coming to life and Caryatid statues tossing their hair.



© Louise Lading Clausen



© Louise Lading Clausen

The exhibition is divided into five theme galleries, including the gallery of The Acropolis Slopes, the Acropolis gallery and the excavation itself. Life-size statues and sculpture fragments from the Parthenon's metope, frieze and pediments are just some of the ancient masterpieces housed in the new museum. At the top floor, with a view towards the actual Parthenon is the gallery housing the Parthenon marbles, where the original sculptures are being displayed alongside plaster casts of the pieces removed from the Acropolis. The museum even has reserved a space in anticipation of the return of the Elgin marbles.

The *New Acropolis Museum* is a crowning achievement of modern Greek culture, a place that embraces the past and looks into the future. The Greeks firmly believe that this new architectural masterpiece will boost their country's bid for the return of the sculptures displayed in the British museum for nearly two centuries. Perhaps the time has come for these ancient treasures to be reunited under one roof: that of the new Acropolis Museum. ■



Cultural Voices

Music album: Dazed and aMused

(Muse)

STARS: ★★★★★

A talented and influential British alternative rock band Muse officially released their new, fifth in count studio album 'The Resistance'. And who would have expected that Matthew Bellamy and the guys could over-do themselves? The album will definitely gain the band a few new fans. Long-time admirers, though, might be anxious to dive into the new tracks after the bands last good but not ravishing creation 'Black Holes and Revelations'. They shouldn't be: 'The Resistance' brilliantly illustrates the 'new old Muse', intertwining newly found maturity and familiar Musesque grandeur. It is drenched with ripe emotion – sultry and intense, yet not quite as dramatic as that of 'Absolution' or 'Origin of Symmetry'.

Muse stay true to themselves. They are still preoccupied with astrophysics and generational destinies ('MK Ultra'), are still epic and exuberant ('United States of Eurasia'), and blow listeners away with signature classical passages ('Exogenesis'). The whole narration of 'The Resistance' comes down to the single subject: love. It's no longer 'me and you' but 'us' all the way, and a declaration that love actually is the answer.

Polina Povarich, Intern at UNODC Co-financing and Partnership Section, Vienna

Café: Kahvila Kauppayhtiö

(Valtakatu 12 Rovaniemi, Finland)

STARS: ★★★★★☆

Close to the city center, the café Kauppayhtiö is a nice and colorful experience in arctic Rovaniemi. The interior has all decoration coming from the past decades—and if you like something a lot, you can buy it and take it home! On the menu you can find several special coffees and teas, as well as smoothies, baguettes, fresh salads etc. During the summer you can enjoy your milkshake or cider outside at a nice patio.

In the evening the café changes into a bar and a club. Often there are young promising DJ's of amateur or professional background, and the music taste is from indie to alternative, from British pop to ethnic folk music. Sometimes you can find a gig of a local band, sometimes an open jam session—of course, with all the fans and friends around, the atmosphere is really hearty and gripping! Take a look at www.kauppayhtio.com.

Saija Ekorre, intern at UNRIC Brussels, Nordic desk

Movie: Dead Poets Society

(Dir. Peter Weir)

STARS: ★★★★★

Pedro Sousa, intern at UNRIC Brussels, Portugese Desk

One of my favourite movies.

I am glad I got the chance to see it when I was young. Immensely inspirational and an enlightening piece of cinema history, this movie provides crucial and important lessons given by Professor Keating (Robin Williams).

It helps you develop freedom of thought and courage to believe in yourself; to develop your ability and knowledge; to act on your dreams and make your lives extraordinary.

Book: Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace...One School at a Time

(Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin)

STARS: ★★★★★

This remarkable true story begins in 1993, when Greg Mortenson, an American mountaineer, stumbled into a small village called Korphe in the shadow of K2 after a failed attempt to summit this peak—the world's second largest. Out of this failure is the story of Mortenson's perseverance in the face of challenge after challenge. Instead of giving up, he continues from his blind promise quickly made to Korphe's leader that he would be back to the village to build a school to, 16 years later, having established 90 schools in rural areas throughout Afghanistan and Pakistan. He has also established and operates a thriving NGO that runs water projects, girls' hostels, and vocational centers throughout the region.

The writing is simple enough for intermediate English readers to understand. Or, if you would like to read it in your native language, the book has been translated into 18 languages. I encourage everyone to read this book to learn more about this region and to gain inspiration to continue your own work even through difficult times. Visit www.threecupsoftea.com to learn more.

Kristina Corvin, Intern at the Population Division of DESA, New York

Infernal Voices

Interesting Headlines, gathered by Ioana Leu, intern at UNRIC Brussels, UK & Ireland Desk

ANGER MANAGEMENT: A Spanish court has ruled that calling your boss a "son of a bitch" is not grounds for sacking. A judge in Barcelona said the slight was so common in arguments that it should not be considered a big insult. The case related to an unnamed worker who directed the comment at his boss during a pay dispute in the northeastern city of Gerona in Jan 2008. (Guardian, London, 16 Sept)

WAR FOR TOURISM: In Cambodia it's golf, in Sri Lanka it's whale-watching, and on the Indonesian island of Bali officials are promoting the benefits of yoga and meditation. In each place, the intention is the same. Across a swath of south and south-east Asia previously wracked by war or strife, officials are carrying out a rebranding exercise to lure back tourists who have long been scared of visiting. In places such as Nepal, it is more like fine-tuning. In others, such as Kashmir, it means a complete overhaul. (Independent, London, 17 Sept)

THE CRAZY KANGOROO: An Australian woman had to be rescued from her office after a 'frantic' kangaroo crashed through the window and leapt around the room, knocking over furniture. "Poor old Suzanne just screamed and went straight up in the air," her colleague Tony Baddock told the Australian Associated Press. "The 'roo was bounding around all over the place, it really was quite frantic." (Telegraph, London, 17 Sept)

THE COLOUR OF CHANGE...OR THE CHANGE OF COLOUR? : President Obama has poked fun at claims that racism was behind fierce opposition to his ambitious political agenda, joking that: "I was actually black before the election." (Times, London, 22 Sept)

THE MONSTER IN YOUR UNDIES: Women have been known to remove their clothes in a hurry after hearing a persistent rumour about the dangers of newly bought underwear. According to a warning that has circulated via e-mail and internet message boards for several years, it is extremely dangerous to put brand-new bras and knickers on straight away, because they can harbour vicious flesh-eating bacteria. (Times, London, 20 Sept)

THE CROC TALE: Italian police have seized a crocodile allegedly used by a suspected Naples Mafia boss to intimidate local businessmen into paying protection money. The suspect, an alleged boss in the Naples-based Camorra crime syndicate, would invite extortion victims to his home and threaten to set the animal on them if they failed to pay or grant him favours. (Telegraph, London, 23 September)

PD FULL MONTY: Five Australian police officers from an elite squad have been suspended after being accused of drunkenly running naked through Brisbane. The men, using an unmarked police van to travel from a stag party, stopped at least four times at traffic lights to run naked around the bus in a prank known as a "Chinese fire drill". (Times, London, 23 Sept)

ONLY NINE LIVES YOU SAID?: An Australian cat called Smokey has survived being shot in the head 13 times with an air rifle. Smokey is not alone in his lucky escape. Earlier this month a cat in America survived an arrow attack and in March a British cat survived being stuffed down a marijuana bong. (Telegraph, London, 23 Sept)

MEN PREFER MEAT: A New Zealand chocolatier insists that her new creation - meat-flavoured chocolate - is actually delicious and is proving to be a hit with men. Shaped like small sausages, the sweets have a salami aftertaste. (Telegraph, London, 16 Sept)

LOVE THY DOG: An Australian man is on the run after he released his dog from a pound where the animal was due to be put down for its aggressive behaviour. Mr. Gilbertson, a former amateur boxing champion, used a pair of pliers to cut Max out of his mesh cage while saying "a final goodbye". He then ran away with the animal, leaving his partner and two children, aged 11 weeks and two years old behind. (Telegraph, London, 14 Sept)

EEEEEEEEK, A MONSTER! A snake with a single clawed foot has been discovered in China, according to reports. Dean Qiongxu, 66, said she discovered the reptile clinging to the wall of her bedroom with its talons in the middle of the night. Mrs. Duan said she was so scared she grabbed a shoe and beat the snake to death before preserving its body in a bottle of alcohol. (Telegraph, London, 14 Sept)

You know you have done an internship in Canada when...

- ...you understand the phrase, "Could you pass me a serviette, I just dropped my poutine, on the chesterfield."
- ...you eat chocolate bars, not candy bars and you drink pop, not soda.
- ...you've eaten German food, Italian food, Chinese food, Armenian food, American food, but never Canadian food.
- ..."Eh?" is a very important part of your vocabulary and is more polite than, "Huh?"

You know you have done an internship in Brussels when...

- ...you think French and Dutch beers taste like cat's pee.
- ...you're used to the smell of warm waffles everywhere.
- ...you still are not able to name 5 well-known Belgians, while you easily can name 5 or 10 Belgian beer brands.
- ...you have already eaten cheese and shrimps croquettes/kroketten, stoemp, américain frites, stoofvlees (carbonnades), and croquettes/kroketten (no, the latest is not dog food).

You know you have done an internship in Washington when...

- ...your Christmas was rainy, not white.
- ...you feel guilty throwing something away that could be recycled.
- ...you know more people who own boats than air conditioners.
- ...you know more than 10 ways to order coffee.
- ...you know someone who works at Boeing or Microsoft.

Internal Clichés

You know you are doing an internship in one of the UN agencies when...

- ...you know everything the Secretary General or the spokesperson has said, on every subject.
- ...you receive one hundred DPI mails a day.
- ...you end up speaking English with people that share your native language
- ...you make a food contest with the other interns to see from which country the best pasta, cup cakes and brownies are.

You know you have done an internship in India when...

- ...the elephants and cows have better jewelry than you do.
- ...you're used to smell of chai tea and jasmine flowers... with just the slightest hint of cow dung and urine.
- ...you bought clothes with brands like Mike, Rebook, Adidaas, Radoo.
- ...you think street food is the tastiest even if you know that is the filth, pollution, sewage water and the cook's sweat which are the decisive factors
- ...you know someone who works at TCS, Infosys or Wipro- either personally or through your neighbour, neighbour's best friend's cousin, brother-in-law's cousin's boss or such other vague connection.

You know you have done an internship in Pretoria when...

- ...you produce a R100 note instead of your driver's license when stopped by a traffic officer.
- ...you're not surprised when the employees dance in front of the building to show how unhappy they are.
- ...you know someone who knows someone who has met Nelson Mandela.
- ...you know that "now now" can mean anything from a minute to a month.

In(terning) the Kitchen!



Naazanin
Manouchehri

Intern for Director, UNRIC Brussels



Fantastic Feta Fun

This is the perfect appetizer.... the rich mixture of olive oil and cumin creates a hypnotizing smell that all you want to do is eat more. Basil and bread... this will be a fabulous flavor to add to the taste buds of your guest.

Depending on how many people you are serving the proportion depend on the chef and you can decide how much of each ingredient you would like to add.

- one block of feta cheese (not crumpled)
- olive oil (the more potent the better)
- cumin (it would be better if it was not powder, but either one works)
- green or black olives
- paprika
- oregano (not necessary)

This is a "1,2,3 Voila" kind of dish.... I promise it will make everyone ask you for the recipe.

- crumple the feta
- add olive oil... it just depends on how much olive oil you want at the bottom of it but that will also be the best part at the end. You can dip bread in the delicious olive oil.
- crush the cumin or add the cumin powder. No less than four tbsp... the beauty of this dish is that you taste it the whole time. It's all about your preference.
- add a bit of oregano. 2tbsp
- add the olives
- decorate the outside of the dish with basil.
- sprinkle some paprika at the end.

Slice some scrumptious bread and Bon Appétit!

Purple Beetroot Goodness

A fabulously colourful salad, perfect for the fall and winter season, which uses the purple, red and orange colors of beetroot. Add some goat cheese and you will be scrumptiously satisfied.

Depending on how many guests you have the amount of beetroots will vary.

- Get a variety of the different colored beetroots.
- Goat cheese
- Onion
- Shallots
- Wine of vinegar
- Salt and pepper

Boil the beet root for ten to fifteen minutes.

- Then steam it for another fifteen this way you can keep the color
- Chop up the onions and shallots to small bits
- Chop up the Beet root
- Crumble the goat cheese
- Add salt and pepper
- Finally add no less then four spoons of vinegar

It will be a great salad to add some color and zest to your meal leaving you all smiling contently with purple lips.

CALENDAR

October

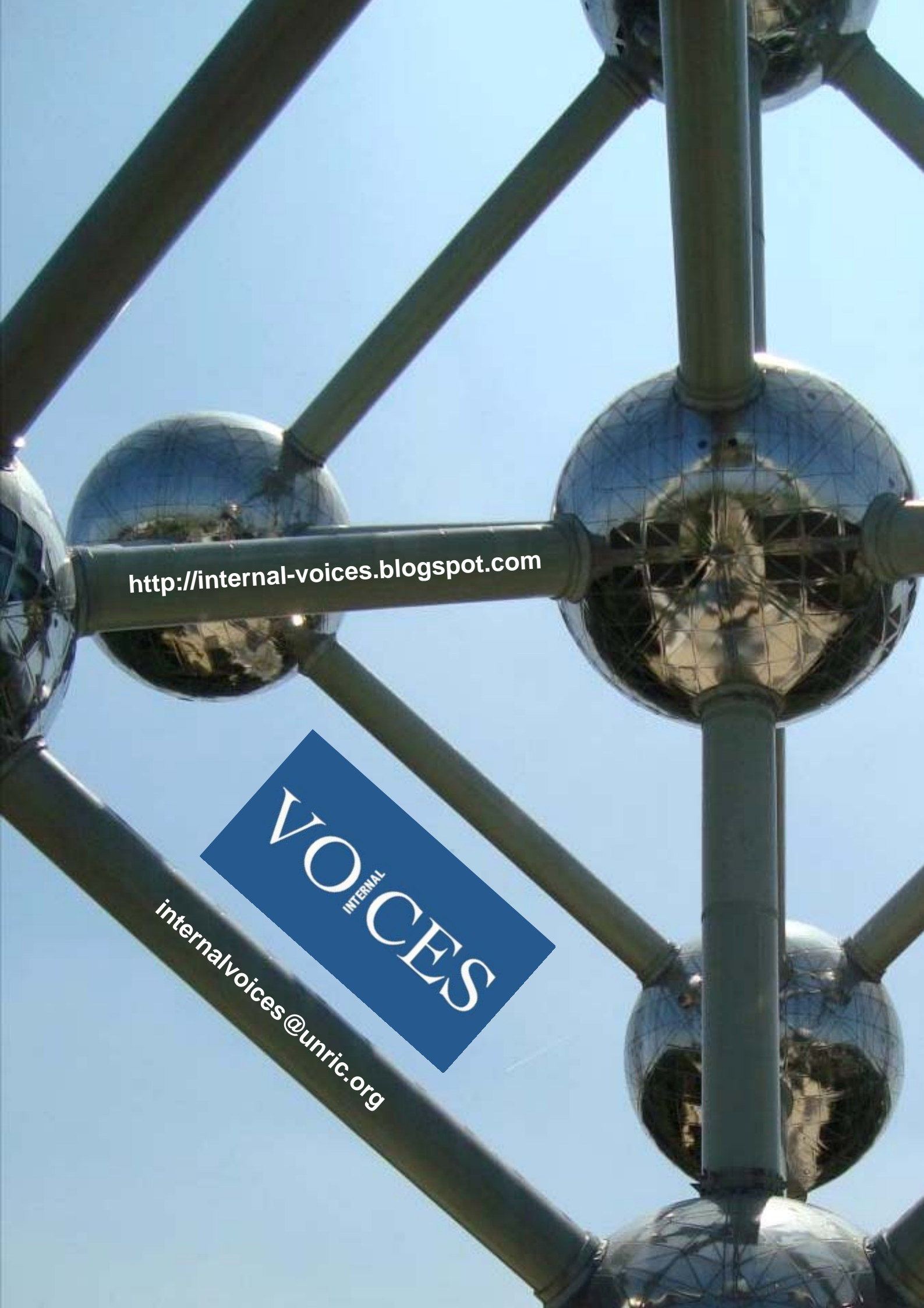
1	
2	Mahatma Gandhi (1869)
3	
4	
5	World Habitat Day
6	
7	
8	
9	Che Guevara †
10	World Mental Health Day
11	
12	Bring Your Teddy Bear to Work Day
13	
14	Be Bald and Free Day
15	Global Hand Washing Day
16	World Food Day
17	International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
18	
19	
20	
21	
22	
23	
24	United Nations Day
25	24-30 Disarmament Week
26	
27	
28	Make A Difference Day
29	
30	
31	Halloween

November

1	All Saint's Day
2	All Soul's Day
3	
4	
5	The Kyoto to Copenhagen jouney
6	
7	
8	
9	20th anniversary Fall of the Berlin Wall
10	
11	Armistice Day
12	
13	World Kindness Day
14	World Diabetes Day
15	
16	International Day of Tolerance
17	
18	
19	World Philosophy Day
20	International Children's Day
21	World Television Day
22	Stop The Violence Day
23	Hajj (until 27/11)
24	
25	International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
26	
27	Id al Adha (Festival of Sacrifice)
28	
29	International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People
30	

December

1	World AIDS Day
2	International Day for the Abolition of Slavery
3	International Day of Disabled Persons
4	
5	International Volunteering Day
6	
7	COP15 (until 18/12)
8	
9	International Anti-Corruption Day
10	Human Rights Day
11	
12	Chanouka (until 19/12)
13	
14	
15	
16	
17	Bake Cookies Day
18	International Migrants Day
19	UN Day for South-South Cooperation
20	International Human Solidarity Day
21	
22	
23	
24	
25	Christmas
26	
27	Achoura
28	
29	
30	Trygve Lie †
31	New Year's Eve



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