

VOICES

INTERNAL

MDGs: The solution is in our hands



VOICES

INTERNAL

ARTICLES

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One year after the last issue of Internal Voices, I am delighted to be writing the Editorial for the 11th edition. First of all let me thank the Editorial Team and all those who have contributed to this issue. Also, our work has been made much easier by the excellent job of the previous Editors, and everything they built, which relieved us from having to start from scratch. And of course, thanks to the contributors, you would not be reading anything without their effort. This magazine is made by interns, its success depend on all of us!

That being said, welcome to Internal Voices. The theme for this edition was somewhat imposed on us by this year's events, and particularly the MDG Summit that took place in September. Ten years after the Millennium Declaration, world leaders met again in New York to reaffirm their commitment to the Millennium Development Goals. This was clearly also the occasion for a review of progress, with only five years left to 2015, and the results are mixed.

Piero Soave
UNRIC Brussels

Much has been done in the past years. The overall poverty rate dropped from 46% in 1990 to 27% in 2005; this translates into around 920 million people living under the international poverty line –half the number in 1990. The number of HIV infections and deaths is stable or declining. Between 2003 and 2008, the number of people receiving antiretroviral therapy increased tenfold—from 400,000 to 4 million—corresponding to 42% of the 8.8 million people who needed HIV treatment. Despite the financial crisis, the core message of the Summit was that the MDGs are within reach.

However, in order to meet the 2015 deadline, more efforts are needed and aid promises have to be kept. Aid remains well below the UN target of 0.7% of gross national income for most donors. In 2009, only 5 countries reached or exceeded the target (Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden). The overall average is only 0.3%.

The 11th edition of Internal Voices touches on several issues related to the MDGs, with a special focus on the human rights perspective. We decided not to reproduce tables and statistics on the 8 Goals; you can find specific information in the [MDG report 2010](#). Instead, we encouraged our contributors to write on specific issues they felt were important in the path towards achieving the Goals.

The Internal Voices Team hopes you enjoy the reading, and remember that you can comment on the articles through our blog at <http://internal-voices.blogspot.com>



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Editor PIERO SOAVE
Deputy editor SEGOLENE JOIRIS
Editorial Team ANDRE COSTA, ALESSANDRA DEVITOFRANCESCO, ANGELIKI KATSOUAKI, ANNE DUPIERREUX, AURELIA VASILE, FRANCISCO SERBETO, ILONA MEURS, NIKITA KENIS, MIRIAM ACED, NADINE WA KALONJI, ALLAN DEONARINE
Contributors LAURA KIRK, PAVEL POTEKHIN, BRIANNE MCGUIRK, ALEXANDRA EARL, JENNY CHING-WEI LEE, IFY OGO, INA MOELLER,

SASKIA KOPPENBERG, PETRA VALILLA, PIERO SOAVE, ANDRE COSTA, ALESSANDRA DEVITOFRANCESCO, ANGELIKI KATSOUAKI, ANNE DUPIERREUX, AURELIA VASILE, ILONA MEURS
Special thanks to FREDERIK BORDON, PHILIPPE CHABOT, GREGORY CORNWELL, JORGE MIHAI VARAS-MARDONES, NENAD VASIC
Cover image (adapted from) THIERRY DEBREUVE
Atomium images ANNE BJØRN

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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!
internalvoices@unric.org
<http://internal-voices.blogspot.com>
<http://www.facebook.com/internalvoices>

MEET THE TEAM



From left to right:
(upper row)



Angeliki Katsoulaki, Greek desk



Anne Dupierreux, Benelux desk



Aura Vasile, UK/Ireland desk



André Costa, Portugal desk



Alessandra Devitofrancesco, Italy desk

(lower row)

Piero Soave, intern to the Director



Nikita Kenis, Benelux desk



Ilona Meurs, Benelux desk



Segolene Joiris, France/Monaco desk



The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)



1 ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY & HUNGER



2 ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION



3 PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN



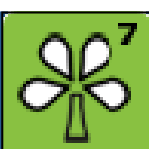
4 REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY



5 IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH



6 COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES



7 ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY



8 DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT



Youth and development in Nigeria

Ify Ogo
UNIC Lagos

With 150 million people, Nigeria has the largest population in Africa. Nestled between the Republic of Benin and the Republic of Cameroon, with its southernmost states lying on the Atlantic Ocean, and its northern states touching the Sahara desert, Nigeria is a geographically, economically, and culturally diverse nation. Like many other developing countries, Nigeria's development process has been fraught with numerous difficulties. Nonetheless, Nigeria has achieved increased, albeit uneven, levels of economic growth as well as social and technological advancement over the last few decades.

[It has been reported](#) that 70% of Nigeria's population is under the age of 30. The Nigerian youth represents a vast and energetic human resource, and should be integrated into development discourse and projects in order to create policies. This is because it would be impossible to achieve any meaningful developmental goals without youth participation.

Firstly, there is a need for a coherent

development action plan; the Nigerian government has committed itself to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The 7 point agenda (Power, Security, Wealth Creation, Land Reform, Mass Transit, and Niger Delta Region) put forward by the late President Musa Yar'Adua clearly outlines the most pressing development challenges and how to overcome them.

Secondly, the Nigerian youth needs to be awakened to developmental goals: sustained awareness campaigns are needed to sensitise and mobilise. Television, radio and online media platforms are crucial in engaging the youth. I remember watching a programme aired by the Nigerian Television Authority in the mid-'90s about health issues. During one episode, in addition to highlighting the dangers of diarrhoea, the programme showed viewers how to prepare oral rehydration therapy to counter the dehydration associated with diarrhoea.

Technology and the media have since evolved and can be effectively utilized to reach large groups of people: with 77 million active subscriptions, Nigeria now [has the largest number](#) of mobile phone users on the African continent. Many young people in Nigeria have

access to mobile phones, the internet and social media platforms. The government, public and private organisations working in development practice can make use of these platforms in order to provide information to, and engage young people in an accessible manner. Similarly, there is no reason why the Nigerian film industry, popularly called Nollywood, cannot provide a platform from which developmental issues can be highlighted. Nollywood is said to produce about 200 movies monthly, and is the third largest in the world after Hollywood and Bollywood. Nollywood films, popularly known as home videos, reach millions of young Nigerians at home and abroad, and can facilitate development discourse

“the Nigerian youth needs to be awakened to developmental goals.”

by presenting issues crucial to Nigeria's development. Furthermore, youth participation is crucial to make any gains in the development process. If young people have a sense of ownership over their country's development, policies and projects will be sustainable and improved upon.

I suggest the creation of a National Development Corps designed to train young people from different professional, educational and vocational backgrounds in development practice. Similar to the National Youth Service Corps, which was created in the aftermath of the 1967-70 civil war to reconstruct and rebuild the country, this Development Corps would engage the youth for up to 3 years, providing education, training and manpower to stimulate development. For example, young engineers joining the develop-

ment corps would learn about development in general, Nigeria's particular development goals, reconstruction goals, and will be assigned to help achieve these goals. In addition to achieving development goals, this corps would turn out highly skilled, well trained, development minded graduates who can move into the mainstream economy, where they would add value.

Finally, Nigeria has already begun the development process and has a long

way to go in achieving its goals. The youth is an under-represented group in development discourse and practice, and should be engaged both formally and informally. Technology and the media provide platforms for information exchange and dissemination. Also, formal schemes such as a development corps will provide the youth with knowledge and equip them to participate in development. The existence of highly skilled, young, vibrant youth interested and working in development cannot have any disadvantages.



The above ad is the winner of the print ad competition « Unleash your creativity against poverty ». The competition was organized by UNRIC Brussels and the UN's 'We Can End Poverty' campaign, and sponsored by the Spanish EU presidency.

The ad was one of the 30 finalists of over 2000 submissions, and was eventually selected by a jury lead by Jacques Séguéla.

The author of the ad, Stefán Einarsson from Reykjavík, Iceland, received the 5000 Euros prize on September 10 in Madrid, at the presence of Her Majesty Queen Sofia of Spain and UN Goodwill Ambassador Antonio Banderas.

To see all the ads, including the one on our cover, visit <http://www.wecanendpoverty.eu>



Agents of Development

How migrants contribute to achieving the MDGs



© IOM 2010 – MPK0418 (Photo: Marco Bottelli)



Saskia Koppenberg
*EC-UN Joint Migration and
Development Initiative, Brussels*

Despite the evident links between migration and development, migration does not feature explicitly in the MDGs. However, in recent years there has been increasing recognition of the multi-dimensional relationship between migration and development. The positive contribution of migrants to the development of their families and communities at home, as well as their countries of origin, is finally being acknowledged. In fact, migrants are increasingly seen as agents of development. Key issues such as remittances, knowledge transfer and entrepreneurship are becoming the focus in discus-

sions of the so called migration-development nexus.

The significance attributed to the contribution of migrants to development is reflected by the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD). Since its creation in 2007, the GFMD is held on an annual basis at different locations - first in Belgium, then in the Philippines, Greece and most recently in Mexico - to discuss the migration-development nexus. The forum's aim is to advance understanding and cooperation and to foster practical and action-oriented outcomes as well as policies which further enhance the positive contribution of migrants to development. The GFMD has become an important platform for dialogue between governments, international organizations and civil society stakeholders. Although the forum does not form part of the United Nations system, it holds strong links with the UN, e.g. through the participation of the UN Secretary-General, the support of both the UN Secretary General's Special Represen-

tative for Migration and Development, and also the inter-UN agency Global Migration Group (GMG).

The different stakeholders participating in the forum base their effort to empower migrants on a common ground, namely the recognition that migrants do make a difference in meeting the MDGs. They furthermore assume that the contribution of migrants to development is closely linked to the protection of their human and labour rights. Thus,

“(...) remittances, knowledge transfer and entrepreneurship are becoming the focus in discussions of the so called migration-development nexus”

stakeholders at the GFMD promote the protection of migrants' rights with the aim of freeing their potential to act as agents for development for their countries of origin, families and communities at home.

The approach of qualifying migrants as agents of development reveals the concept of responsible well-being, introduced by Robert Chambers and influenced by Amartya Sen's capability approach. This concept regards people - and so migrants - as a major engine of development. It puts the personal and the individual ability at the centre of development processes, because it is their ability to act and change the world which drives development. Development in this context is defined as a person's well-being and good quality of life. And it is good quality of life which the MDGs stand for. The term 'responsible' thereby points to an obligation, the obligation to take responsibility for one's own well-being as well as for the well-being of others, just as migrants do through their commitment towards their families, communities and countries of origin. How does this commitment translate in practice?

The most prominent contribution of migrants to development are their financial remittances. Remittances are the sum of migrant workers' earnings sent back to their families and communities in their countries of origin. They are sent either individually or collectively as part of a diaspora organisation. By sending remittances, migrants contribute to the achievement of the MDGs in a variety of ways.

Firstly, remittances provide an additional family income and play therefore a significant role in:

A) eradicating extreme poverty and

hunger (MDG 1), when spent on food, shelter and clothing;

B) achieving universal education (MDG 2), when children either don't need to start working to earn a living for themselves and their families thereby holding them to be in school, or when spent directly on the education of the families' children;

C) reducing child mortality (MDG 4), improving maternal health (MDG 5) and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases (MDG 6), when spent on medicines and on medical help.

“The most prominent contribution of migrants to development are their financial remittances”

Secondly, remittances enable migrants to finance economic activities, which in turn increase the families' income and contribute to the achievement of the MDGs as described above. Thirdly, remittances represent a source of foreign direct investment in real assets including building schools and clinics and thereby contribute to MDGs 2, 4, 5 and 6. Fourthly, remittances finance development projects and philanthropy or charitable activities in the countries of origin. Remittances can thus have a further positive effect on achieving the MDGs, when spent on the right projects.

Stakeholders at the GFMD pointed out a growing number of female migrants who represent almost half of the world's migrants. Women become

senders of remittances, which leads to their empowerment within family structures. As recipients of remittances from a family member abroad, women are empowered because they decide how the money is spent. Migration therefore has the potential to change gender roles and empower women, contributing to the achievement of MDG 3, the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Migrants do not only contribute to the MDGs through financial remittances, but also through 'social remittances'. These include ideas, practices and identities that migrants remit home. Migrants - for example - who familiarize with empowered gender roles in their receiving countries contribute to the transformation of gender relations at home and thereby to the achievement of MDG 3.

A third way of migrants contributing to the achievement of the MDGs is through the transfer of technical knowledge and professional skills acquired abroad. These can be used for business set up and entrepreneurship or - for example - the improvement of the health sector.

It becomes clear, that migrants have the capability to contribute to the achievement of the MDGs, that they do it day-to-day on a small or even bigger scale, and that the international community is able to support them, as the GFMD does when promoting migrants' ability to contribute to development processes.

Want to learn more?

Robert Chambers, [“Ideas for development: reflecting forwards”](#)

Romeo Matsas, [“The Global Forum on Migration and Development. A new path for global governance?”](#)

Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty, [“Making migration work for development”](#)

Development aid and environmental sustainability: a case from Argentina



UN PHOTOS/John Isaac



Alessandra Devitofrancesco
UNRIC Brussels

When I arrived in Buenos Aires in 2006, the conflict around the Uruguay River pulp mills had been going on for a year. A diplomatic crisis between Argentina and Uruguay, the most dramatic one ever, was threatening the historically good relations between the two countries. But, more surprisingly, it was mobilizing thousands of people -- of all social statuses, cultural and ethnic background -- to go into the streets and protest to defend their sovereignty over their land and resources, against a huge "development project",

which would change their lives forever.

In 2003 the Uruguayan President, Julio Batlle announced the construction of two paper mills in the locality of Fray Bentos, on the Uruguay River, which would be owned by two transnational companies, the Finnish Matse Botnia and the Spanish Ence. The project, which was applauded as one of the biggest development investments in Uruguay, was meant to provide economic benefits that would generate 8 percent of the country's export (for about 30 years of production) and create about 2500 jobs in the mill, as well as in local transportation systems.

The World Bank considered it a perfectly suitable project with a long-term development strategy based on foreign investments and export growth; but what were the real reasons behind the choice of locating the pulp mill at the Uruguay River?

Uruguay has been trying to expand its economy through Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs). Thanks to promotional forestry policies, plants can be realized in free-trade zones, where investors do not have to pay taxes on land that has been sold at very low prices in multi-decade contracts. The land in Fray Bentos, where the pulp mills will be built, has only been sold for \$20,000 for 30 years, with promises of no taxation, customs duty on machinery and equipment; and massive infrastructural investments by the national government to facilitate the exportation of the pulp. It seems that the government has allowed economic interests to prevail over environmental concerns. Based on eucalyptus monoculture, the pulp and paper industry is a particularly dangerous type of FDI. It provokes irreversible loss of biodiversity, water and air pollution and the displacement of entire communities of people. The

The project is also affecting the communities of Gualeguaychu, which are found in the Argentinean territory.

These communities launched elementary, non-violent resistance movements called, Asamblea Ciudadana Ambiental de Gualeguaychù ACAG (Citizens' Environmental Assembly of Gualeguaychù), to fight a development model that privileges economic growth, at the expense of local communities' sovereignty over natural resources. The ACAG has questioned the pre-existing socio-economic and political structure. Therefore, its mass mobilization represents a *glocalisation* process regarding concrete territorialities that claim social delimitation and appropriation of the territory; a more sustainable long-term development; and safeguarding the well-being of future generations.

In spite of domination by authorities – such as violence and blockage of all roads connecting Argentina and Uruguay –, the activism of the ACAG has led to a five-year, non-stop protest, comprising of sit-ins and pacific re-

sistance.

The construction of these two paper mills on the Uruguay River is only one of the many cases that provide evidence that numerous FDI strategies and big industry projects, which are implemented in the name of “development”, are not sustainable for local populations, and can turn into acts of environmental depletion, threatening the socio-economic and ecological well-being of future generations.

Furthermore, in the South, counter-hegemonic grassroots resistance movements are rallying to protect their land, cultural identities and autonomy. These movements therefore play a critical role in the contemporary development scenery, vindicating alternative social and moral frameworks for the global society.

Glocalisation is a relatively recent phenomenon, which calls for a new development strategy, that aims to empower local communities – linking them to global resources and facilitating initiatives of peace and development—whilst providing opportuni-

ties for them to direct positive social change in the areas that directly affect them the most (The Glocalisation Manifesto, 2004). In Gualeguaychù, the civil society, Non Government Organizations, grassroots organizations, and ordinary citizens, play a key role in this *glocalisation* process; they contribute to produce a bottom-up answer to a globalized economy. As for the Uruguay-Argentina case, the ACAG is still fully engaged in its protest against Botnia in fighting a questionable campaign, based on acts that threaten the well-being of communities and their environment. As a result, the ACAG has had to reduce its activity, to that of a mere distribution of flyers, to sensitize the local population about the environmental impact of the pulp mills. Nevertheless, this matter is still a pertinent one in Argentina and Uruguay, as well as in regional and international spheres. The most important lesson learnt here is that the awareness about “deterritorialisation” is constantly growing among citizens. The cognizance of this “deterritorialisation” or the



displacement of communities due to land rights violations, pollution, or the need to migrate in search of wage work, has led to a more informed community. A new form of activism unites different parties that are all affected by the same global changes. This creates more parallelisms and strategic alliances such as those among feminist, ecologist and indigenous movements.

The current environmental destruction, often provoked by askew macro-projects aimed at bringing economic growth to developing countries, have been leaving death

and misery in their wake. Environment sustainability must be a primary concern if we are to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals, as maintaining a stable environment with predictable and sufficient resources, will help to stop hunger and poverty, protect people from natural disasters and epidemics, as well as safeguard the world's biodiversity. To achieve this goal, structural changes are also needed in the way the development paradigm is interpreted and translated into aid policies, at a local, national, regional, and global level.

Can grassroots social movements play a key role in switching to a more inclusive and democratic development paradigm? There is not a clear answer, but realistically speaking, the potential of social movements should not be over-estimated. Very often, people that live in extreme poverty and social exclusion, find themselves obliged to seek individual survival strategies, such as finding patrons who can help them in exchange of their votes. Most of the world's citizens are now familiar with the notion that they have "human rights", but many continue to be deprived of them on a daily basis.

Want to learn more?

The Glocal Forum, "The Glocalization Manifesto"

Giarracca N. "The tragedy of development: disputes over natural resources in Argentina"

Di Martino, L. A. (n.d.) "Institutional Deficit for Cross-Border Conflict Resolution: The Conflict over the Construction of the Pulp Mill near the Uruguay River"



Ikon Adv,
Fruits





Reaching the MDGs, one garden at a time



Alexandra Earl
UNIC Pretoria

The first Millennium Development Goal is “The Eradication of Extreme Poverty and Hunger”. The global food crisis which was exacerbated in 2008 has seen the number of people going hungry rise to over 1 billion. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations now predicts that prices will continue to rise in 2011, with global food reserves declining. This hungry billion exists in a world where many millions of others are overweight and obese. The problem lies not in production - there is enough food in the world for everyone to eat enough every day. The problem lies in food distribution and access. People do not have enough to eat because they cannot access it or they cannot afford to buy it. This applies to both the hungry and the obese. New obesity trends indicate that it is primarily located amongst the poor who cannot afford to buy food and who live in areas that have limited access to fresh food. In a world where the

supply chain is becoming more and more complicated, many are turning to self-production and sustainability as a way to provide for themselves. One of the key features of such sustainability is a food garden.

Food gardens have been springing up everywhere you look - from school gardens to the front lawn at the White House to homestead gardens in sprawling townships. They have a long history of triumph in the face of adversity. “Dig for Victory”, “Turn over a New Leaf” and “For their Sake, Grow your own Vegetables” posters encouraged people to plant gardens wherever there was space - in the backyard, on apartment terraces, in allotments - in order to overcome import constraints and rations during World War Two. The Science Newsletter of 1943 says that production from gardens generated 8 000 000 tons in America that year and helped alleviate serious food shortages, particularly in fresh produce. With food prices increasing and the global recession squeezing ordinary people’s pockets, food gardening is once again becoming a viable activity which will help improve your diet and save you money.

Food gardens are also increasingly being used as a development tool. In

South Africa, food gardens are springing up in both urban and rural areas. In Botshabelo Township, in the Free State Province, people have turned their backyards into veritable havens of magical garden loveliness. The gardens feature all kinds of different vegetables, from green beans and spinach to pumpkins, carrots and beetroots. Peach, apricot, fig and plum trees provide shade cover. Fruit and vegetables can be bottled when at peak harvest and stored to tide over the harsh winter months. Seeds can be bought from as little as US\$0.7 per 15ml scoop - a far cheaper option when a head of cabbage is US\$1.4. Gardeners grow a wide diversity of produce which means that they consume a wider diversity than their income would necessarily

“In a world where the supply chain is becoming more and more complicated, many are turning to self-production and sustainability ”

allow. Gardens provide a means of extra income. Bunches of vegetables are sold to others and can earn gardeners up to US\$28 in a good harvest-month.

One gardener in the Botshabelo Township, managed to save enough money for a dining room table and chairs - all with money she had earned from her garden produce. In a place where employment is scarce and most people survive on government grants and remittances, such income is truly invaluable. Having a garden means that in the last week of the month, when money has run out, food is still available and it is rich in micronutrients that prevent non-communicable diseases as well as starvation. Such gardens can also be gender empowering. Women are traditionally food providers and are more likely to be gardeners. Being in charge of the garden is empowering as women can earn extra income and provide food for their families. This also improves child health and wellbeing. They can therefore not only provide essential fruits and vegetables to the diet (as advocated by the WHO) but can also help reach MDG 3 - improving gender equality and empowering women.

And what of those whose access to

land is limited? School and community gardens can also be successful avenues for combating hunger. School gardens can help supply feeding schemes, provide opportunities for on-hand learning, not only of gardening skills but also of biology, the environ-

“Such gardens can also be gender empowering (...) women can earn extra income and provide food for their families.”

ment and cooking. Such gardens rely on community responsibility and participation and can thus also create jobs. A school garden in the outlying areas of Pretoria has had particular success with involving parents in the school garden and using garden produce in afternoon meals and feeding schemes. Alice Waters, instigator of the “Edible Schoolyard” in California, says “A school garden, kitchen, and cafeteria are integral to the core academic mission of the school, so that ecology and gastronomy help bring

alive every subject, from reading and writing to science and art.”

The World Health Organization’s Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health advocates eating 5 fruits and vegetables every day in order to maintain nutrition. Gardens can be made anywhere and allow you the opportunity of watching your food grow. In a world where the production of food is becoming increasingly mechanized, sterilized and chemical, growing your own is becoming something everyone should try. If you don’t have much space, you can grow herbs and tomatoes successfully on the kitchen windowsill. In doing so you will become aware of the joys of local produce, seasonal eating and you will make a small contribution to reducing your carbon footprint.

Want to learn more?

Barbara Kingsolver, “Animal, Vegetable, Miracle”
Alice Waters, “Edible Schoolyard”
Michael Pollan, “The Omnivore’s Dilemma”

And what to do with your produce once it’s grown?

SQUASH AND SAGE RISOTTO, by Alexandra Earl

Ingredients (serves 4):

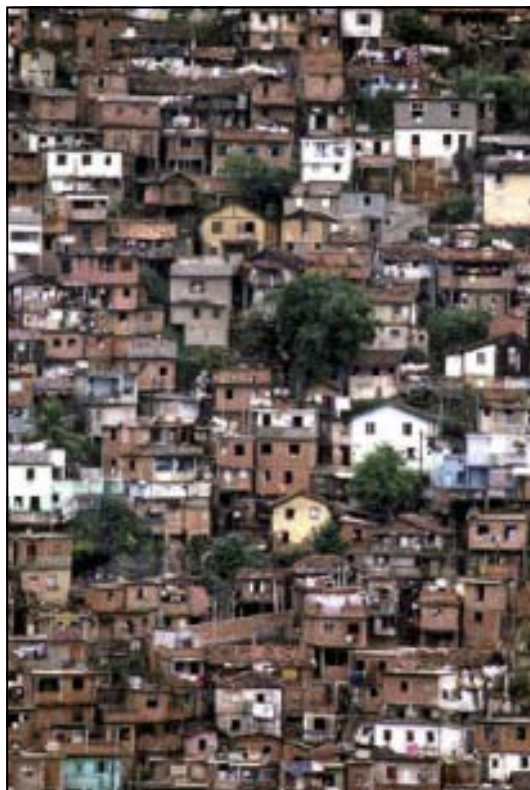
500g butternut/pumpkin
20ml olive oil
3 cloves of garlic
20ml olive oil
15ml butter
1cup risotto rice
1cup white wine
500ml stock + 250ml water
10g sage leaves, chopped
30g parmesan, finely grated
15ml butter
15ml cream

Preheat oven to 180C.

Dice the butternut/pumpkin into cubes and put onto an oiled baking tray. Squash the garlic cloves with the back of a knife but do not remove their skins. Add to the butternut. Grind black pepper over the butternut and bake in the oven for 20-30 minutes until the butternut and garlic are tender. Remove and set aside. In a saucepan, heat the stock and water to simmering.

In a separate, heavy bottomed saucepan, heat the olive oil with butter until the butter is foamy. Remove skins and finely chop the garlic (that you cooked with the butternut). Add the garlic to the saucepan and fry for 2 minutes. Add in the risotto rice and stir to coat with the oil. Fry for 5 minutes, until the rice has become translucent at the ends. Add in the white wine and allow the liquid to boil away rapidly. Start adding the hot stock, one cup at a time. Stir regularly and add in additional stock when the other stock has been absorbed.

After about 20 minutes the mixture should be creamy and the rice should be cooked, al dente. At this point add in the butternut, sage, parmesan, butter and cream. Stir to



Tackling urban slums

The bottom-up approach



Laura Kirk and Pavel Potekhin
UN HABITAT New York

The reduction of slum populations is an important issue affecting almost one billion people globally. In order to formalize the UN approach towards slum reduction Millennium Development Goal 7 (target 4) was introduced in 2000 to improve living standards for one hundred million people living in slum conditions. Close cooperation between various UN bodies, local authorities and the local public is necessary in order to build upon the progress made towards the MDG for slum rehabilitation. If properly organized this interaction allows developing countries to eliminate slums and stay on track for sustainable development. Alternatively, if no actions are taken at the local level, the number of slum dweller may rise to 1.4 billion by 2020.

While considerable progress has been made within Asian and Latin

American states, the Africa Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) region still lacks significant improvement in slum reduction. As a result of slum upgrading projects the number of slum dwellers has decreased by 230 million worldwide; however, 830 million slum habitats remain. The slum prevalence is highest in sub-Saharan Africa, with an estimated 62%; followed by Asia, with 43%; East Asia, with 37%; and Latin America and the Caribbean, with 27% (data taken from UN HABITAT side events to the MDG Summit 2010).

“MDG7 was introduced to improve living standards for one hundred million people living in slum conditions”

It is essential local levels of government be empowered and take leadership. Being closer to the general public they are better placed to deal with

issues at the local level and to deliver. With specific local knowledge, these are the bodies most familiar with local issues; they know the particular development challenges of their area; are more cost effective and efficient; able to identify linkages among sectors and holistic. Moreover, local governments are elected and can be changed if they don't deliver; are equipped to sustain long term participatory planning and financing maintenance of local investments; and operate in ways which take into account issues such as Natural Resource Management, gender and climate change as well as being more responsive to the people.

Let's then analyse successful government projects for slum upgrading in developing countries, focusing on the ACP region.

Before 1985 Senegal experienced the following slum related issues: inappropriate land regulation, urban planning which did not reflect current needs, a lack of land occupancy control, and population growth which was not comparable to wealth growth in cities. Several steps towards slums restructurization, land occupancy deregulation and provision of rights were undertaken. In 1991 a restructuring and land regulation fund was established. In 2005 Senegal's government worked closely together with citizens and established an entity for the supervision and control in order to allow citizens to become owners of their habitats. Several infrastructure projects have been undertaken with participation of private investors. Infrastructure within habitats alongside changes in the legal system

In Jamaica three cities were selected as pilot projects; one based on size and two based on tourism sector development, rapid growth and vulnerability to natural disasters. Moreover, current policies and projects as well as gaps in regulation towards slum elimination were reviewed in order to avoid duplications. Furthermore, understanding and participation of the projects by the public at the community level was

ensured. Participation was defined as feedback provision and suggestion as well as ability to undertake various SWOT analyses for future project development. The next step involved national consultation to finalize different action plans for the future: including over 200 participants representing three communities alongside various stakeholders such as private and public sector agents and NGOs. Finally, with the help of various UN bodies, training for students and local authorities was incorporated in the planning education programmes at the University of Technology of Jamaica and local authorities.

“Action at the local level is best placed to deal with such locality-specific issues”

Kenya faced two main critical issues such as unclear number of people living in slums and inadequate planning regulation. The most recent census in Kenya provided accurate estimations of slum populations. Kibera, the country's most prolific slum settlement, had previously experienced wide variations anywhere between 600 thousand and 2 million people. The census found

that this settlement houses approximately 170 thousand inhabitants. Moreover, there has been a restructuring of politics within the country. A new constitution with the core principles of devolution and decentralization now applies to the 47 counties more specifically decentralization of governance and resources. It also seeks to unleash the capacity of women and now requires that one third of programme staff be female. The new constitution 'Bill of Rights' makes the achievement of MDGs a reality for the average Kenyan citizen.

Slum rehabilitation efforts are a major development issue affecting almost one billion people globally. While MDG targets to reduce slum settlements have been successful, it is clear that substantial efforts are still required to improve the plights of hundreds of millions worldwide. The unequal progress of regions and particular need for improvements in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific States demonstrates a clear necessity to refocus on slum rehabilitation. Action at the local level is best placed to deal with such locality-specific issues and together with best practice efforts is essential for progress to be made in this area.

Want to learn more?

UN HABITAT, “The Challenge of Slums - Global Report on Human Settlements 2003”

UN OCHA, “Tomorrow's Crises Today: The Humanitarian Impact of Urbanisation”

UN HABITAT Slum Upgrading facility: <http://www.unhabitat.org/categories.asp?catid=542>

The changing role of cities

Brianne McGuirk
*Architecture Construction Unit
 DM/FMS New York*



City maps designate political control, geographic boundaries, and biomes. Maps do not demonstrate how cities function. According to UN Habitat, two billion people will be living in slums by 2030. Globalization and the urban condition is the historically unique trend that represents the greatest challenge to policy makers by the borderless and interdependent world, growing slums, and the degradation of human resource.

The way people live has changed through the centuries. In ancient times, people used to visit cities for services and contribute to society by taking part in forums, markets, education, etc. Since then, the Internet has broken this necessity by providing online commerce, school, and forums. Time and space are not relevant to on-line society, and the physical world has lost an integral part of social function further separating production,

consumerism, and cultural identity. Additionally, domestic and international economic policies are entangled in strategies that can only meet a nation's interests part way. This international economic compromise is diminishing the world's wealth and poor, thus effecting communities that may specialize in a certain trade or profession. The invisible borders of economic policy and Internet created a shift in power and stability that alters the way people live. This challenge to re-invent cities is posed by a threat of slums.

"In the past thirty years, consumerism has destroyed what we have known as urban"

No country is immune to slums. Currently in the United States, due to the economic crisis and foreclosures, people have abandoned their homes

to seek employment in the cities. Squatters move into these new "suburban shantytowns." Ironically, the public demands new affordable housing as empty homes are on the rise. In the late nineteenth century, a book called *How the Other Half Lives* (1890) by Jacob Riis, a journalist and photographer, exploits the slums of New York. Slums are not designed, they happen. Slums are not homes where people live, but rather exist. And slums embrace Social Darwinism not civility. The lack of adequate shelter, food, and clean water presents a puss that can spread into the infrastructure of a city contributing to a rise in crime and a destabilizing community.

In the past thirty years, consumerism has destroyed what we have known as urban, by replacing it with the likes of McDonald's (USA), of Nintendo (Japan), Audi (Germany), and other

brands that have proliferated into the global market as soft power and ultimately have rendered cities as dull and conventional machines all over the developing world. So, the city has become generic, which creates an opportunity of identity and renewal. Urban renewal challenges preservationists and policy makers concerning economic development and human resource. In more prosperous nations, cities are changing large areas and instigating massive migration of peoples from rural to urban dreaming of the opportunities of work. The Victorian writer, Charles Dickens, called this risk of moving to the city, “speculation,” and in the nexus of the city poverty and chaos thrived.

For example, the growth in China has moved at such a high rate that new cities are designed by engineers, who

create built environments by altering the natural landscape and old cityscape; and do not respond to the regional identity (landscape, material, and culture) but accommodate production and efficient existence. The most

“Are we headed for a true sustainable future with possibility for humane progress, or a systematic and bureaucratic New World Disorder?”

obvious example is the Three Gorges Dam in the Yangtze River, which displaced millions of people; jeopardized a number of species; and destroyed ancient historical sites.

The concern is that the desire for sustainable development, “[M]eeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations

to meet their own needs,” will indeed be shortchanged by providing the absolute minimum “ability” as though everyone in the future will succumb to the limping slave of a detriment instead of aspiring to the lean Olympian-athlete of possibilities.

The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, “All are born free and have the right to life.” If, “all are born free and have the right to life”, then communities must foster a quality of life. Are we headed for a true sustainable future with possibility for humane progress, or a systematic and bureaucratic New World Disorder? Clearly, the rise in slums and changing city structures makes the architect and the urban planner important partners for the policymaker.



Monika Prus,
Blindness

WE CAN
END POVERTY
UNLEASH YOUR CREATIVITY 

Ciudad Juarez

Women in leading edge of social violence

Ségolène Joiris
UNRIC Brussels

As underlined in the World Health Organization (WHO) report of 2005 on 'Violence against Women and Achieving the Millenium Development Goals', violence against women is a major obstacle for development. Nevertheless, even though they constitute an obvious violation of human rights, some of these cases of violence continue to have an unjustifiably low priority. One of the best examples is the case of the *feminicides* of Ciudad Juarez.

Ciudad Juarez is Mexico's sixth-biggest city and is situated in the border State of Chihuahua just next to the US city of El Paso in Texas. It is known to be the most dangerous city in the world and a center for drug trafficking and corruption.

The city has become commonly known as the world's capital of *feminicides*. This is a theoretical concept developed in the '70s to give a name to a type of crime perpetrated against women. In this article, *feminicides* should thus be understood as an expression of extreme violence against women, based on gender inequality and which involves the responsibility of the State.

Since January 1993 - when the first body of a young woman who had been raped, tortured and killed was discovered - hundreds of women have been killed every year in Ciudad Juarez. In 2009 only, more than 300 women have been victims of *feminicides*. Most of the victims are between the ages of 15 and 30. In addition to this, local au-

“In 2009 only, more than 300 women have been victim of feminicides in Ciudad Juarez.”

thorities have registered more than 2,000 disappearances since 1993.

While hundreds of women killed in Juarez have suffered rape and death by strangulation, others have been killed by firearms or beaten to death, an occurrence more commonly derived from domestic abuse.



In these crimes, a common point must be underlined: they all reflect the will to attack the physical and psychological identity of the victims, all of them women.

At the same time, Ciudad Juarez is also the prime location of *Maquiladoras*, American and Canadian manufacturing factories. Women play an important role in this globalization process: 90% of the *maquiladoras* workers are young women.



Juarez is now faced with economically independent women in a system which used to be mainly patriarchal. Women, previously working in rural areas or in the family, became independent but not respected and thus, directly exposed to society's violence.

The establishment of global industry and the border situation of the city have consequences on the city itself. It has created a spectacular growth in population as well as important changes in the city's infrastructure.

Those who have and will arrive in Ciudad Juarez have to create their own space to live and this space is usually in deserted and generally deprived areas.

This puts the residents of Juarez, especially the women, in a dangerous situation. Either they live in deserted areas or they live in the city centre which has been virtually taken over by drug cartels and is characterized by corruption.

The most striking aspect of the *feminicides* of Juarez is the fact that the perpetrators of these crimes have been living in impunity for nearly 20 years. Two main avenues of reasoning can explain this: Juarez's geographical location on the border of the US and Mexico; and cultural and social factors.

First of all, the border's characteristics cause a failure to establish security in the area. Within the federal system, the articulation between the national

and the local authorities is not coordinated enough to permit transparency



and efficiency of actions. The presence of drug cartels and corruption further limits the police's ability to take action. Moreover, the establishment of international global industries makes the Mexican State's action against *feminicides* even more complicated. The border zone is a cultural, economical and political space which is neither American, nor Mexican. For all of the above reasons there is an absence of safety and lack of control over violence on the border.

Second of all, the impunity is also due to the confrontation between patriarchal, social and cultural historical factors of the country and the new democratic values. Even if reforms at the legal level are taking place, it is very difficult to implement them. Women are not particularly aware of their rights and when they are, their prevailing mentality, education or social backgrounds can easily prevent them from getting access to protection or justice.

Nevertheless, and even if it is still not sufficient, the issue of *feminicides* and the unjustifiable impunity is gaining

visibility at an international level. These headways are mainly due to the pressure of civil and international society.

Unlike Guatemala, which adopted a law against *feminicides*, there is not currently a law in Mexico at the federal level concerning the *feminicides*.

However, Mexico is now part of human rights conventions like the Organization of American States Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women - 'Convention of Belém Do Pará' - or the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court which recognizes the strong need to end impunity for the most serious of crimes.

As a consequence, on the 10th of December 2009, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights held Mexico in violation of obligations set up in the American Convention of Human Rights and the Convention Belém do Pará for the death of three young women in Juarez.

This is a first step towards international recognition of the *feminicides* issue. This may result in the condemnation of Central American states for their failure to guarantee women's right to life.

From now on, all eyes should turn to the application and the practical consequences of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights' sentence.

Want to learn more?

Fernandez M. and Rampal J.C., "Ciudad Juarez: La ville qui tue les femmes"

Coleman M, "U.S statecraft and the U.S Mexico border as security/economy nexus"

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, "The situation of the rights of women in Ciudad Juárez, México: the right to be free from violence and discrimination"

The progress towards ending Female Genital Mutilation



Jenny Ching-Wei Lee
UNICEF Brussels

While sitting in the European Commission Directorate-General Justice's conference on Violence Against Women, I could not help but think back on an episode of the National Geographic hit show, *The Dog Whisperer*, where Cesar Milan suggested to a dog owner that he neuter his dog. The dog owner's response was something along the line of "Would you castrate a man? No. So I'm not going to neuter my dog."

Undoubtedly, extreme measures taken to limit men's sexual urges are rarely seen or heard of anywhere, but sadly, this is not the case for women. Female Genital Mutilation or cutting (FGM/C) is defined by the United Na-

tions Children's Fund (UNICEF) as "all procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons." FGM/C is carried out on girls that are usually under the age of 15. This is mainly due to cultural, religious and social reasons that stem from gender inequality. Families and communities that conduct FGM/C believe that it is a way to prepare girls for adulthood and marriage. FGM/C is presumed to reduce a girl's sexual urges and shows that the girls are "clean".

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that there are currently 100 to 140 million girls and women, globally, whose human rights have been violated as a result of genital mutilation. In Africa alone, about three million girls and women are still

at risk of being dismembered every year.

UNICEF's Innocenti Research Centre found that parents who cut their girl(s) are motivated by doing what they assume to be best for their children: Most of them understand the potential health risks connected to genital mutilations, which include infection, infertility, complications during child birth and death. However, in these cultures and communities, FGM/C is seen as part of the girls' and women's gender identity. Families who choose not to mutilate their female children are usually placed at a low social status, and as a consequence, their un-mutilated girls are shunned in society.

Many families feel that there is no other option; if they want their girls to be honoured and given in marriage,

they have to cut them. For some people, FGM/C is a social norm, where the individual's choices are conditioned by those of others. The Donors Working Group on FGM/C, has therefore provided a solution - collective abandonment. Collective abandonment refers to communities, where FGM/C is a prerequisite for marriage; a group of families agree not to cut their girls, and allow the children in these respective families to marry each other, therefore demonstrating the benefits of abandoning FGM/C. This group does not need to form the majority of the community, but once enough families have joined in the initiative, a "tipping point" will be reached. This "tipping point" is where the people who still consider practicing FGM/C realize that the benefits of cutting their girls no

longer out-weight the risks. Although the "tipping point" has not been reached yet, there has been good progress in the notion of collective abandonment.

"The Dynamics of Social Change: towards the Abandonment of FGM/C in Five African Countries", published by UNICEF's Innocenti Research Centre, shows that in the five countries that formed part of the study (Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal and Sudan), there have been dramatic decreases in the amount of people who encourage FGM/C. Although the prevalence of FGM/C remains high in these countries, this indicates that people are starting to question the merits of this practice - and are slowly, but surely, reaching the tip.

UN Women, the new structure for Women's Rights

Anne Dupierreux

On the 2nd of July 2010, in accordance with its reform and political agenda, the United Nations created UN Women, the new "UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women".

The new structure, which will be operational from January 2011, will merge four previously distinct parts of the UN system which focus exclusively on gender equality and women's empowerment:

- Division for the Advancement of Women ([DAW](#))
- International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women ([INSTRAW](#))
- Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women ([OSAGI](#))
- UN Development Fund for Women ([UNIFEM](#))

The new head of UN Women, former President of Chile, Michelle Bachelet declared that "UN Women will significantly boost UN efforts to expand opportunities for women and girls and tackle discrimination around the globe".

For more information go to: <http://www.unwomen.org>

Sexual violence in conflict

A universal and timeless violation of human rights

“It is cheap, silent, and effective. One does not need bullets or bombs, only individuals with cruel intents.”

Margot Wallström, Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict



UN PHOTOS/R.L. Moyné



Anne Dupierreux
UNRIC Brussels

Important media coverage, in the 1990s, in Kosovo and Rwanda, and the information and denunciation actions - that were led by human rights defenders around the world - have contributed in revealing the consequences exceeding the understanding of rape and other forms of sexual violations in conflict. They have also broken the ancestral silence of millions of civilian victims, and instigated a tremendous breach in the generalized process of impunity.

In times of conflict, sexual violence becomes a powerful “weapon of war” against a defined population within a deliberated, generalized and systematic politico-military strategy. As some historical documents aging back to antiquity proved, this “weapon of war”

constitutes a universal and timeless violation of human rights.

One cannot resort to geographical and cultural explanations to account for this phenomenon, but to strategic use that is adapted according to the nature of conflict and the pursued politico-military plan. These include, among others, terror and political repression (in countries such as Algeria, Colombia and Myanmar); the control of a territory with/without policy of forced eviction in the likes of Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); and the policy of large-scale reproduction (camps of rape in Bosnia and Herzegovina, etc.) until the process of total destruction as part of a policy of ethnic cleansing or genocide has been accomplished (Bangladesh, Rwanda).

During conflict, 70 percent of civilian victims are women; girls and women also make up 70 to 80 percent of displaced persons or refugees. This precarious situation increases the risk of attacks and gender-based violence, as a total of 14 million women and

girls worldwide are considered as primary targets of sexual violence (UNITED NATIONS, “Women and armed conflicts”).

Granting the fact that women and children are the primary targets of sexual violence, men and boys may also be targeted as a means of inflicting humiliation and shattering leadership structures. In the current context of ongoing and internal armed conflicts, characterized by fratricidal fights, the ethnic, religious, national and/or political identity of the women is of utmost importance.

The bodies of women become literal “battlefields” - strategic targets that are used to achieve the execution of large-scale reproduction or total destruction of victims and their community. The multidimensional and collective consequences of sexual violence as a weapon of war are devastating. Beyond the physical and psychological injuries of the victims, it is the whole community which is durably sullied, humiliated and dehumanized. By attacking the women's bodies this

formidable “weapon of war” destroys the entire social fabric of societies and their socio-economic development. It manages to corrupt, in depth, the human and cultural values of the community and its future generations. These crimes also erode all social mechanisms of protection and access to justice, therefore contributing even more to the dehumanization of the society.

Despite the adoption of the Geneva Convention (IV) in 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, it is only in 1998 that the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court recognized rape and other forms of sexual violence (sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy and forced sterilization) as serious violations of international humanitarian law (war crimes and crimes against humanity).

The United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on

Women, Peace and Security (2000), and the other three related Resolutions (1820, 1888, and 1889) all call for a stronger commitment by national and international actors to address the challenges faced by women during



conflict. The United Nations has worked to integrate a gender perspective in its efforts on demobilization and disarmament, security sector reform, economic security issues, and access to education with the objective of preventing sexual violence against women.

If serious efforts are in fact being made, they are far from adequate.

Impunity is still the prescription for culprits of sexual violence both during and after conflict. Survivors still suffer in silence, fearing reprisals from perpetrators and sometimes ostracism from family. The perpetrators are often demobilized combatants who have been reinstated in society without any measure of rehabilitation. Furthermore, in some cases, international assignees themselves, such as peacekeepers and humanitarian workers, have been implicated in committing sexual violence. In post-conflict, the policy of national reconciliation, like that in Colombia, has succeeded in the implementation of a fair and effective justice for victims. United Nations entities can better coordinate their responses to sexual violence across a range of sectors: legal reform; health aid; psychological support and livelihood services for survivors; security sector reform; and support for women’s engagement in peacebuilding.

Want to learn more?

Anne Dupierreux, “Quand le viol devient arme de guerre”
 Stop Rape Now : <http://www.stoprapenow.org/index>
 WomenWatch: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/>
 PeaceWomen: <http://www.peacewomen.org/>

STOP RAPE NOW
 U.N. ACTION AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT

STOP RAPE NOW, GET CROSS!
 UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict
 Add your image on the campaign [website](#)

Human rights in Myanmar



*Ilona Meurs
UNRIC Brussels*

Since the coup of General Ne Win in 1962, Myanmar has been under the control of a military regime. At the moment almost 2,200 political opponents are imprisoned in appalling conditions, including persons with mental and physical health problems. The ethnic minorities (the Government recognizes 135 ethnic groups, with the predominant Bamar representing 68% of the population) are most often the target of the regime's violations of human rights. Ethnic conflicts, dating back to the colonial times (from 1886 to 1948), are an important part of the instability in Myanmar, even more so after the coup. Fights between the regime's army and the ethnic movements

caused serious human right violations and thousands of people fled to neighboring Thailand. The activists of ethnic minorities who were or are involved with different forms of resistance against the government's policies are targeted by the authorities. These minorities lament a process of 'burmanization', an attempt to extend the dominant Bamar culture over others. Even though freedom of religion is officially endorsed in Myanmar, Muslims and Christians are often discriminated.

Myanmar is not party to many international human rights treaties and conventions, which makes control by the International Community harder. Critics of the regime are arrested continuously, and convicted behind closed doors. Mostly, they are transferred to

prisons in remote areas. The media in Myanmar is closely watched. Newspapers and magazines are under the authority of the government and are censored and access to the internet is limited. The junta is using forced labour, for example for the construction of infrastructure. Hundreds of thousands of civilians are obligated to work on bridges, roads, airports and tourist attractions. In the war against the ethnic minorities, civilians are used as bearers for the army or as living minesweepers. The International Labour Organization (ILO) claims that the junta is committing crimes against humanity and is worried about the abundance of forced labourers in Myanmar and the junta's refusal to improve the situation. According to several international organizations

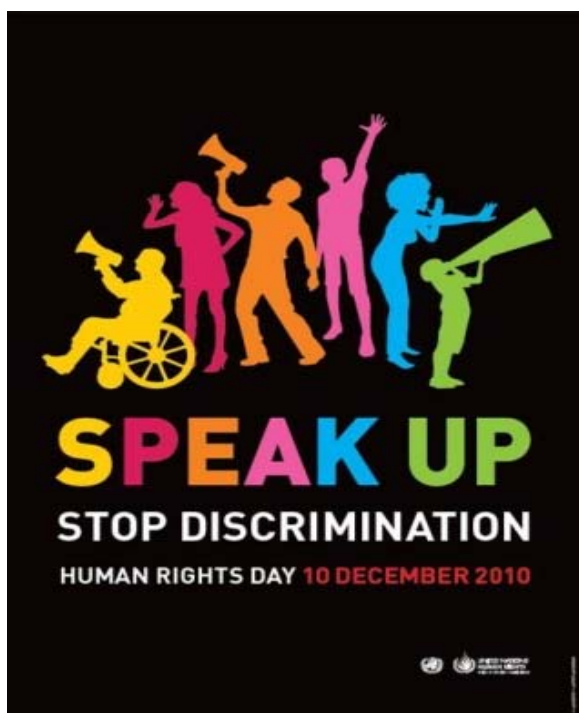
(such as Amnesty International and Refugees International) and Burmese organizations, rape is often used as a weapon in war and conflict. The women of ethnic minorities are mostly the victims of this crime: one example is the Shan State, home to the Shan minority, where many women are raped and murdered.

The recent elections in November did not bring about any change: the ruling Union Solidarity and Development Party claims having received 80% of the votes, although observers and opposition activist have denounced systematic fraud. Nevertheless, as the first election in twenty years, it was a step in the right direction. The regime in Myanmar wants to create the impression, to its citizens and to the outside world, that the time of the military junta is over and that democracy will follow. With the release of Aung San Suu Kyi, an



opposition leader detained under house arrests for over 15 years, the regime is trying to gain credibility. However, although many Western countries have welcomed her release, they remain cautious towards the sudden change of attitude of Myanmar's regime. They have all condemned the outcome of the elections, they keep asking for the release of the remaining 2,200 political prisoners, and they are not likely to withdraw the sanctions against Myanmar. On the other hand, some Asian countries such as China, India, Thailand and Singapore, seem more ready to believe in the prospect of a 'democratic' regime and will not stop their conspicuous investments in the country.

Thus for the moment, it seems unlikely that the elections will produce a change in the human rights situation in Myanmar.



Human Rights Day, 10 December 2010

Human rights defenders acting against discrimination, often at great personal risk to both themselves and their families, are being recognized and acclaimed on this day. Human Rights Day 2010 will highlight and promote the achievements of human rights defenders and it will again emphasize the primary responsibility Governments have to enable and protect their role. The Day is also intended to inspire a new generation of defenders to speak up and take action to end discrimination in all of its forms whenever and wherever it is manifested.

Meet some human rights defenders [here](http://www.un.org/en/events/humanrightsday/2010/profiles.shtml).
(www.un.org/en/events/humanrightsday/2010/profiles.shtml)

EU/UN Partnership

A strategic cooperation to build a better world



André R. Costa
UNRIC Brussels

The EU / UN Partnership is one of the most important partnerships between international organizations. As the first global donor of development aid, the EU has a greater responsibility in the area of aid to poorer countries.

Since its creation, the European Union (EU) has always regarded the United Nations (UN) as a strategic partner, building together several programs to support and aid developing countries.

The EU/UN Partnership is essentially based on three main areas: Peace and Security, Human Rights and Development / Humanitarian Aid (granting

funds to various UN agencies and programs, especially UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF). In this sense, the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are documents which formed the whole basis of this cooperation. A cooperation that began early The EU has maintained a permanent office in New York since 1964, starting

“1,300 meetings take place each year in New York between the EU and the UN”

with an Information office of the Commission. Since 1974 the office has served as the Official Delegation of the European Commission to the United Nations. In 1974 the European Economic Community already had observer status with the UN. With the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Commission Delegation became the "Delegation of the European Union" which is under the author-

ity of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Ms. Catherine Ashton. Around 1,300 meetings take place each year in New York between the EU and the UN, where various subjects are discussed. The US also grants funds to various UN agencies, especially the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). In 2003 the EU and the UN decided to consolidate and strengthen their partnership, by signing a joint statement entitled "The EU and the UN: the choice of multilateralism". In the same year, they also signed the Joint Declaration for Cooperation in Crisis Management.

The EU-UN partnership includes aspects relating to humanitarian assistance, development aid (57% of total aid), and peacekeeping operations (8% of the troops come from EU Member States. The EU amount allocated in

peacekeeping operations, represents 40% of the funds for these missions). In 2009, the EU was present in approximately 100 countries through a variety of support programs. In all, the EU has provided approximately €1.2 billion for the strategic partnership with the UN system.

The action of the EU/UN partnership is divided into:

- Humanitarian assistance
- Conflict and natural disasters
- Crisis prevention
- Fight against hunger
- Just and democratic elections

Humanitarian aid occupies a vast space in the EU-UN partnership. A paper published by the European Commission entitled "European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid" was recently published which recognized the principles and laws that govern humanitarian aid and pointed to the central coordinating role undertaken by the UN. Within this theme the EU-UN partnership puts particular emphasis on helping countries which are emerging from conflict or affected by natural disasters. Recently, the EU allocated approximately €140 million to help flood victims in Pakistan, and has an ongoing (2007-2010) development aid program for Pakistan amounting to €400 million. At the same time, achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 is a fundamental aspect which continues throughout this program implementation.

With the mark of the 10th anniversary of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in October 2010, the EU has also put particular emphasis on the role of women in conflict by encouraging its Member States to take on strategic National Action Plans to improve women's actions, and providing help and protection to women and girls. The EU also has missions on the ground in 44 countries affected by conflicts, for example: Chad, Uganda, Burundi and Sudan. In the context of the MDGs 2015 the EU pays particular attention to combating hunger and improving maternal health. In 2009 the EU has provided food aid to some 14 million people in 50 countries. In terms of health, the EU provided assistance

“The EU-UN partnership is also struggling to build democracy and good governance in poor countries or countries emerging from conflict.”

to about 8 million children in order to ensure maternal health and to provide those most in need. Similarly, and inserted into the MDG 7, the EU-UN partnership holds several programs on the ground to ensure for the construction of water points and drinking water testing kits and to prevent problems during pregnancy and after childbirth. Regarding the environment, the partnership sponsors the implementation of strategic plans in 22 countries in

order to protect wildlife and rural communities.

The EU also advocates the adoption of a post-Kyoto treaty on climate change. The EU-UN partnership is also struggling to build democracy and good governance in poor countries or countries emerging from conflict. In 2009, 22 countries benefited from the partnership's assistance through receiving aid in the preparation and monitoring of elections.

The EU-UN partnership is of great importance because it enables assistance to millions of people around the world. As the first global donor of development aid and humanitarian relief measures, the UN looks with great satisfaction to the strengthening of relations with the EU in order to try to reach the MDGs by 2015 and help in the creation of a fairer world. The recent entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty - which creates the position of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy - promises to be an element that will strengthen and broaden cooperation between the EU and UN.

Earlier this year the High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, met with the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in order to directly discuss the deepening of the partnership. Similarly, the visit of Ban Ki-moon to the European Parliament shows the importance given to the partnership between these two organizations.

Want to learn more?

www.europa-eu-un.org
www.euronion.org/eu



MEXICO

A TRAVEL GUIDE



Angeliki Katsoulaki
UNRIC Brussels

The 2010 United Nations Climate Change Conference was held in Cancun, Mexico from the 29th November to the 10th December. Hundreds of officials from around the world gathered in Mexico to combine their efforts on the important issue of global warming in order to strike an international deal on reducing carbon emissions. From the many debates to the negotiations and workshops ... but wait, Mexico?

I am certain that some of you readers paused for a moment as your mind traveled to this region of the world, with its green-turquoise, Caribbean waters, the astonishing ruins of Mayan civilization surrounded by lush jungle, the colonial cities, haciendas, white sandy beaches and one of the largest coral reefs in the world. Yes! Mexico is an exciting and alluring place to visit. Join me now as I take you on an exciting journey around the famous Yucatan Peninsula for all the “must see” and the “must do’s” when visiting this country.

Suitcases packed? We are off on our adventure. Due to the limited time we have on our hands we can only make stops in specific places along the way.



The climate is usually hot and humid so please do not forget to grab your sunscreen, your newly purchased, oversized sombrero and a good mosquito repellent. The rainy season runs from mid August to mid October. The region is hurricane prone from June to November. Although it is rare for large hurricanes to hit the area, you never know when another Dean or Wilma (hurricanes in 2005-2007) will come back to show Mother Nature’s power. Thus, the best period to visit Mexico is during the dryer months between November and March.

And now let the adventure begin, our first stop is Cancun!

Cancun is a coastal city in the Quintana Roo state on the Yucatan Peninsula. Before 1970, Cancun was nothing more than a little fishing village of one hundred inhabitants! The government of Mexico then decided to turn it into a resort and as such the development began. Today, what I would describe as “the Las Vegas by the sea,” Cancun, is a bustling city with more than four million visitors each year. A city filled with mega-luxurious hotels, dazzling lights, crowded beaches and where everything possible can be bought. While most trips may start and end in Cancun due to its international airport, the city is not the place for you if you are looking for an authentic taste of Mexico or a relaxing sea-side resort. Fortunately, there are other places of this paradise that can be discovered by driving a short distance from Cancun.

As such, our next stop is Tulum!

Tulum is 130 km South of Cancun. It is the most easy-going resort along the Mayan Riviera Coast (Yucatan's East Coast). It has a spectacular, sandy coastline with beach huts, palm trees and the dramatically situated Mayan ruins. The Tulum ruins (meaning in Mayan, the wall) are positioned on a cliff overlooking the Caribbean Sea. It is one of the best-preserved coastal Mayan ruins and a picture favorite. The city was an important port and was at the height of its power around AD 1200. It was eventually abandoned 75 years after the Spanish Conquest. Visit the ruins early in the morning before the large flocks of tourists start to arrive. Stand on the edge of the cliffs, gaze at the horizon and you will certainly feel that you are standing on the edge of the world, the world that the Mayans once saw. Do be on the lookout for the little creatures though, the iguanas, roaming around this site as if they owned the place!



Between Tulum and Playa del Carmen, do not miss the highly advertised Park Xel-Ha. For sixty euros (rather expensive compared to average Mexico prices) you might feel as if you are stepping into a big tourist trap. But after spending one day there, you will be surprised to discover that it was worth every peso. It is the world's largest natural aquarium with an incredible variety of tropical fishes. You will spend the day snorkeling, basking in the sun, swimming or even sleeping in the hammocks. Unlimited cocktails and access to a vast choice of restaurants and mouth-watering buffets will satisfy even the most discerning palate.



Next stop on our journey, Playa del Carmen!

Playa Del Carmen, 68 kilometers from Cancun, is the second biggest resort in the region. It is known for its relaxed atmosphere compared to the bustling atmosphere of Cancun. The main street, Quinta Avenida, is filled with little shops, fresh fish restaurants and cocktail bars. For those you who like diving and snorkeling, take the 25-minute ferry from Playa del Carmen to Isla Cozumel. This island became popular when the late French marine explorer Jean-Jacques Cousteau led an expedition there, only to reveal to the rest of the world the dramatic landscapes with its colorful underwater coral gardens. In one word: fascinating! For your own sake and for the sake of your budget, avoid the guided boat tours that promise to take you to the best snorkeling spots. The best way to visit the island is to rent a scooter. The places to snorkel can be found on the western side of the island, and they can be easily reached from the shore.

If you still haven't had enough of your Robinson Crusoe's island adventures, then Isla Mujeres is the place for you. This island is easy to get to (20 minutes ferry from Puerto Juarez in Cancun) and many people visit just for a day. Only 8 km long, you can discover the island by renting a golf cart! The island remains quaint, contrarily to the building developments taking place in other places of the Mayan Riviera. The rich pirate history and warm waters will not make you want to leave. Playa Norte is the island's main beach with a handful of welcoming beach bars and family restaurants. The daredevil travelers will surely succumb to the calls of swimming with whale sharks! Between May and September, the biggest fish in the world congregate near the island (Isla Holbox as well) to feed on the plankton. This experience of a life-time will lighten your wallet of around 80 euros but you should not think twice. You will journey with a small boat through the crystal clear waters of the Caribbean until you reach the spot where the whale sharks can be found. There is nothing to be afraid of, and these gentle giants will enchant you in a second. Plunge into the waters and discover the magic beneath. If you are lucky enough you might even encounter a few grey mantas scrapping the surface of the sea floor. Finish your day with a delicious Ceviche (traditional Mexican dish with raw fish) prepared for you by the captain. I strongly recommend that you take medication against seasickness before getting on board. The boat ride is long, the sea untamed and your stomach will complain.



Let us now focus on the history of the region by touring around some of the most important archeological sites!

The grandeur of the pyramid of El Castillo rising into the sky is the first thing that will catch your eye while you enter the archeological site of Chichen Itza. Located in the North center of the Yucatan Peninsula, Chichen Itza is one of the most famous and best restored of all the Mayan sites, which righteously make it one of the seven new wonders of the world. Most of the "time temples" situated here enable us to solve the mysteries surrounding the Mayan calendar, with El Castillo being first and foremost a massive calendar with a perfect astronomical design. In Chichen Itza you can walk through the largest and most impressive Ball Court in Mexico (a sport that had a ritual significance during that era) and the sacred natural well, which was used for human sacrifices. The main drawback is that it is flooded with tourists that may distract you from its history of power, fame, decline, slaughter and extraordinary scientific precision. On the way between Chichen Itza and Valladolid, a rather attractive colonial town, you can enjoy a break in one of the several underground *cenotes*. These cavern pools, decorated with impressive limestone formations of stalactites are usually open for swimming and this truly is a one of a kind experience.



Another interesting archeological site worth visiting is Uxmal. Surrounded by lush jungle, it is one of the most harmonious and peaceful sites, and it will surely wake up the sleeping Indiana Jones inside you. Uxmal was an important city although most of its history remains unknown. Tall, steep and with an unusual base, the Magician's Pyramid is the most striking monument. Legend has it that it was built by a dwarf in one night. The scarcity of water in the area was probably one of the main reasons for its decline. It also gives an answer as to why most of the temples are dedicated to the god of water. On the road to Uxmal, also pay a visit to Hacienda Yaxcopoil, where a welcoming old man will open the doors of this enormous estate and tell you the stories of the people who once owned the entire property.



As we come to the end of our journey, let me remind you that Mexico has far more than crime-ridden cities, tequila, mariachis and Cancun. There are hundreds of other secret places that are nothing short of a perfect holiday destination. Add to this the amazing, friendliness and warmth of the Mexican people and you will surely want to return to discover more of what the Yucatan Peninsula has to offer. Chiapas, the Pacific Coast and the enticing Mexico City still awaits you!

INTERview

with Gabriela Flores

WFP Brussels

Piero Soave

UNRIC Brussels



Gabriela, what is your current position?

I am a Public Information officer at the World Food Program (WFP) in Brussels.

Have you been a UN intern before?

No, I have never been a UN intern myself, but I have worked with interns.

How did you get to this job, and was it hard to find a UN position?

Well, I have worked for the UN for several years now. I started soon after graduation as local staff for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Ecuador. Being in the UN House in Quito, I was always up-to-date on the vacancies, which allowed me to successfully apply for a Public Information officer post at WFP in the country. Later I became an international consultant for WFP, and I worked both in the regional office and in several emergencies across Latin America, including the Haiti earthquake.

Can you give us an example of what a communication officer does?

It depends on where you are assigned to. In an emergency, the main activities are media relations, bringing the journalists in; showing what the UN is doing, keeping the press and the locals informed on its activities; coordinating messages with the other actors involved;

ensuring media visibility. After the acute phase of the crisis, when you transition to a development effort, you try to keep the donors involved, make sure the attention of the International Community remains high; you start training the local staff, so that you can hand over responsibility; you engage the local government and NGOs for longer-term strategies. In a regional Headquarters, it is mainly about coordination of the various programs and emergencies, and planning communication strategies for the future.

What does it entail, being a consultant?

Well, it has its ups and downs. On the one hand, you have more freedom and flexibility, as well as a good salary. On the other hand, you don't have the benefits that the international staff has, and your contract is constantly depending on the availability of funds.

Let's go back to your first post for a moment. Did you have a specific background to be a communication officer?

Not exactly, my background was in international development, and Latin American studies. However, my extracurricular activities were all communication-related, involving campaigns, fund raising etc. In a way, it came naturally. Also, the programs and activities I was working on were very much development-oriented, it was communication for development, so it was related to my studies.

How do you think a young graduate could get into the UN system today?

Starting from the field is the most common way, although it is not a rule. A lot of people start as UN Volunteer (UNV) or Junior Professional Officer (JPO). Another way is deploying with an NGO, to gain some direct experience. If you apply in your country of citizenship (or if you are married to a citizen), you can get a position in the local staff, which is easier than having access to the international staff. If you are able to get a local contract, it might be easier to later apply for an international post. But remember that, on the field, you need to have specific skills and expertise, practical ones. It's important that the CV shows and highlights what you can *do*, as opposed to what you studied. You have to know what your skills are, work to develop them.

How important is networking?

It helps a lot. Getting and keeping contacts with people who worked with you, who know your skills, is very important. It allows you to stay in the loop, and to be reached when a position matching your skills becomes available.

Moving continuously, deploying in different countries: what is the impact on one's private life?

It can be hard, you can lose touch with your community, you are not able to see your family that much. You are often alone and counting only on your own strength. And I must say that it can be especially hard for women, if they are the ones moving and their partners have to follow. That being said, it is also very rewarding. If you have the passion and the right motives, it compensates.

For general information on UN employment read the factsheet at:
<http://www.un.org/geninfo/faq/factsheets/fs17.pdf>

For links to recruitment and human resources offices of over 40 organizations in the UN system visit:
<http://icsc.un.org/joblinks.asp>

For information on UN examinations, including National Competitive Recruitment Examinations see:
<http://www.un.org/Depts/OHRM/examin/ets.shtml>

For a directory of UN-wide internship programmes go to:
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/internships.htm>



INTERview

with Mario Giuseppe Varrenti

AEGEE

Petra Vallila

UNRIC Brussels



AEGEE (Association des Etats Généraux des Etudiants de l'Europe / European Students' Forum) is a student organisation that promotes co-operation, communication and integration among young people in Europe. AEGEE counts as its most well-known achievements the establishment of the Erasmus Programme and the Summer University. AEGEE has participatory status in the activities of the Council of Europe, consultative status at the United Nations, operational status at UNESCO and is at the same time a member of the European Youth Forum.



Info: beyondeurope@gmail.com

AEGEE launched in 2009 a one year project called "Beyond Europe - Perspectives for Tomorrow's World". It involved two case study trips, one to India in June-July 2010 and one to South Africa in September. The project involved almost a hundred young participants and it reached out to even more people during the case study trips. The participants were divided into eight groups, which focused on one Millennium Development Goal (MDG) each. The groups were involved in workshops and projects that ranged from raising awareness on the MDGs, for instance presentations or drawing competitions for young kids; to visits with NGOs and development agencies to understand the challenge of poverty in its many dimensions and the measures taken to tackle it.

What triggered AEGEE initially to launch the project?

"The project was aimed at establishing, on a micro level,

the global partnership for development that the MDGs aim to achieve. I learned that in 2009 only 5% of young people in the EU knew about the MDGs - that is nine years after the launch of the goals! Increasing the awareness amongst young Europeans was actually the initial idea behind our project"

So why is it so important to have the youth involved in the work to reach the MDGs by 2015?

"Well, in countries like India and South Africa it is first of all a matter of numbers, young people are actually a very large part of the population, but this is not all. Young people are also more innovative, more open, more interconnected than the older generations. The power of interconnectedness between young people can change the world for the better!"



Looking back on the project, would you consider it to have been a success?

“As for every project, I consider it successful if its outcomes are sustainable and its impact long-lasting. With this project, we invested a lot in the people directly involved in it, those young Europeans, Indians and South Africans who came together four times in one year. We have provided these people with a fertile ground to develop new ideas and work together in the future. They have had the chance to see first hand what poverty means to the lives of many in the developing world, to go beyond just numbers and figures, they have been asking themselves questions. Why in the Don Bosco Institute in Nakurot, India, are there every year more kids who drop out of school than kids who enrol? Why do parents in some villages of Bihar in India refuse to vaccinate their children? How can there be in the same city, Cape Town, a primary school charging a fee of 100 Rands a year and one charging 4000 Rands a month? How likely is it for a student from the first school to study one day at university compared to a student from the second school? The project might not have provided an answer to all these questions, but it has definitely challenged the way its participants used to look at these issues before, and it has opened up their minds and offered them the tools to become effective multipliers and make a little difference, every day, for a fairer and better world.



BOOK Review

Dead Aid

Why aid is not working and how there is another way for Africa

By Dambisa Moyo

Ina Moeller

UNEP Brussels

When working for the United Nations, the term 'aid' and its associates are not uncommon. Humanitarian aid, poverty alleviation, development aid - just to name a few - are subjects which we are confronted with every day.

Money seems sometimes to be the solution to all problems, including to the Millennium Development Goals. No matter which of the eight objectives we look at, in the end it all seems to come down to more cash.

Since the 1940s, providing aid has been the dominant paradigm of Western countries' cooperation with developing states. We march for it, we work for it, we promote it - we even give concerts for it. But summing up the achievements, we see that it hasn't made a big difference. In aid dependant countries, millions are still suffering from poverty and hunger, environmental degradation continues unchecked, governments and bureaucracies are drowning in corruption. And the proposed solution is of course - more aid.

According to rational thought, one would normally abstain from following a solution to a problem which has proved to be faulty for over 60 years. Nevertheless, the subject is so heavily emotionalized and politicized that it is nearly impossible to take a critical stance without running the danger of being stamped off for being cynical and politically incorrect. But if we really want to achieve a better, fairer world with all countries seeing themselves as partners on a mutual level, a change of strategy is called for.

In 154 pages, the Zambian author Dambisa Moyo takes a refreshing stance on the subject, describing not only the problems that we have encountered with distributing unlimited aid money to governments, but also providing a recipe on how to do it differently. Focusing on the continent of her origin, Moyo analyses what many before her have tried to do, asking why Africa remains behind the rest of the world without great prospects for the future. Her answer to this question is very simple: aid. Systematic development aid is the critical catalyst in a vicious cycle of

dependency, corruption and poverty. Destroying all incentives for the creation and support of a working economy, it fosters graft and national inequalities, making the richest even richer and hampering the poor from achieving a sustainable and independent income.

Most of this we already know, although we do not dare speak about it openly. But the added value that Moyo's book provides is a list of alternative solutions on the question of Africa's development. Having studied economics in Harvard and Oxford, working for the World Bank and Goldman Sachs, Moyo puts an impressive CV on the table and brings a comprehensive economic expertise with her. In the main part of her book, she describes different ways of bringing a broken economy on track, ranging from bond markets over foreign direct investment to innovative financial instruments such as micro-credits and better management of national savings. Describing the potentials and the problems, she also gives solutions and methods on how to implement the 'Dead Aid Strategy,

referring to the fictive state of Dongo, which represents a typical aid dependent and bankrupt sub-Saharan African country. Calling on both Western and African governments to finally take responsibility and change the habit of just signing and cashing multi-million dollar cheques, she proposes to stop the systematic flow of development aid within a period of five years. According to her argument, this will not make people poorer or stop children from going to school. On the contrary; it will put pressure on African governments to reform their economy, provide incentives for investment and a working

financial market and therefore create jobs and opportunities for making a sustainable living. Added to this, she says that the private earnings from a thriving economy are much harder to steal than continually flowing aid money - "the capital markets may be forgiving, but not so forgiving as to be fooled by the same culprit twice".

All in all, Dambisa Moyo's book provides us with a new, constructive way to look at the problems of our world and a different approach to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. To quote Niall Ferguson, Professor at Harvard University, "this reader was left wanting a lot

more Moyo and a lot less Bono". As the next generation to take influence on the way we manage our world, it is our turn to show fibre and be courageous enough to use our own, rational mind. Everyone should be given the chance to make a living, independent on the volatile whims of the donors.

Looking at these problems from a different angle, acknowledging alternative paths of development cooperation and thinking twice before calling for the next multi-million dollar aid grant, destination uncertain, it is now our turn to make a difference - for the better.

Sudoku

	4				2		1	9
			3	5	1		8	6
3	1			9	4	7		
	9	4						7
2						8	9	
		9	5	2			4	1
4	2		1	6	9			
1	6		8				7	

Can you answer?

1. Who became the Secretary General of the UN on January 1st 1997?
2. What do the initials UNESCO stand for?
3. How many countries attended the first United Nations General Assembly?
4. The first UN peacekeeping mission was authorized in 1948. Today, it is the longest running UN mission. Due to which conflict was it created?
5. Which countries were the non-permanent members of the first Security Council?
6. What was the last country to join the UN (in 2006)?
7. In which city was the UN created?



Who's who?

A) Navi Pillay is:

- 1 - High Commissioner for Human Rights
- 2- Director of UN Women
- 3- Director-General of UNESCO

B) António Guterres is:

- 1- High Commissioner for Human Rights
- 2- High Commissioner for Refugees
- 3- High Commissioner for Civilizations Dialogue

C) Anthony Lake is

- 1- UNIDO Executive Director
- 2- WFP Executive Director
- 3- UNICEF Executive Director

Where is the HQ of the following UN Agencies?

 <p>UNESCO HQ</p> <p>Rome Paris Madrid</p>	 <p>WHO HQ</p> <p>Geneva Paris New York</p>
 <p>UNICEF HQ</p> <p>San Francisco Nairobi New York</p>	 <p>WFP HQ</p> <p>New York Nairobi Rome</p>

Solutions:
 Crosswords: the surprise word is Ban Ki-moon
 Can you answer? 1. Kofi Annan ; 2. United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization ; 3. 51 ; 4. Israeli/Palestinian ; 5. Brazil, Mexico, Austria, Poland, Egypt and the Netherlands ; 6. Montenegro ; 7. San Francisco
 Who's who? (A) 1 ; (B) 2 ; (C) 3
 City HQ: UNESCO, Paris ; WHO, Geneva ; UNICEF, New York ; WFP, Rome

Find the Security Council member countries in the table below, and discover the hidden word...

A	D	F	T	A	I	R	E	G	I	N	L	Y	A
C	D	R	L	I	Z	A	R	B	T	E	E	G	T
V	A	S	D	A	D	U	R	U	F	D	B	F	R
B	N	C	P	F	C	S	G	O	C	V	A	P	A
N	E	J	H	F	A	T	E	Y	R	B	N	O	A
G	M	A	A	I	R	R	D	E	U	L	O	R	D
A	R	P	E	A	N	I	V	K	S	A	N	T	N
B	F	A	I	O	U	A	O	R	S	N	E	U	A
O	T	N	M	L	E	A	C	U	I	D	A	G	G
N	U	N	I	T	E	D	S	T	A	T	E	S	U
R	A	B	L	A	N	I	E	R	U	S	M	E	M
E	B	O	S	N	I	A	T	S	U	A	E	N	U
C	A	L	L	E	M	A	G	N	R	T	X	U	C
X	M	O	D	G	N	I	K	D	E	T	I	N	U
I	E	B	A	N	K	I	M	O	O	N	C	E	M
N	R	S	R	I	L	A	N	T	R	O	O	O	P
A	R	F	F	R	A	N	C	E	A	R	T	H	I

- France
- China
- Mexico
- Brazil
- Uganda
- Russia
- United States
- Nigeria
- United Kingdom
- Turkey
- Austria
- Bosnia
- Gabon
- Japan
- Lebanon

Surprise word (could you find it?)

Did you know?



Churchill in a Bathtub: The Origin of the Name

The name "United Nations" was proposed by US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to Winston Churchill back in 1942. Churchill was in Washington, D.C. - in fact, he was sitting in a bathtub when FDR was wheeled into the bathroom and proposed that the Allies of World War II be called the United Nations.



The UN Logo Was First Designed for a Lapel Pin

The logo of the United Nations was designed by Donal McLaughlin, who worked for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the precursor of the CIA. Donal described the UN logo as an "azimuthally equidistant projection showing all the countries in one circle, flanked by crossed olive branches." The logo was first designed as a lapel pin.

December Recipes

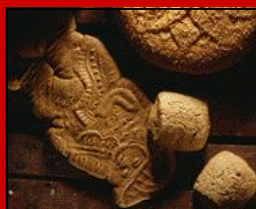
SPECULOOS (Anne Dupierreux)

In Belgium speculoos are eaten all year long as little cookies with herbs that are served with a coffee or at the breakfast table. In the Netherlands they are very popular around Sinterklaas and are called speculaas.

Preparation: 15mn
Cooking: 15mn

Ingredients:

- 1 kg of flour
 - 600g of brown sugar
 - 375g of butter or margarine
 - 1 teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda
 - 15g of cinnamon
 - 10g of 4 spices
 - 150cl of milk
 - 300g of crushed almonds
- Mix all the dry ingredients
- Add the melted butter and then the milk.
- Knead and form dough, cover it and let it rest in the fridge for a few hours.
- Cut the dough into 1cm slices or cut forms
- Place on the baking tray
- Bake at 150°C for 15mn.



PAPERNOTEN (Ilona Meurs)

Pepernoten are typical Dutch sweets eaten during Sinterklaas. They are small, round, spicy cookies that are similar to speculaas.

Preparation: 15mn
Cooking: 15mn

Ingredients:

- 100 g flour
- 100 g self-rising flour
- 60 g brown sugar
- 50 g butter
- 2 teaspoons brown syrup or honey
- Speculaas/speculoos herbs or mix cinnamon, nutmeg, clove, ginger powder and cardamom
- 4 spoons of milk



Sieve the flour through the strainer with the self-rising flour, the brown sugar and butter. Cut the butter in small pieces to mix it better. Add the syrup or honey, the herbs in the milk and mould it into a smooth and consistent dough. Let it rest for a hour in the fridge. Warm the oven to 175° C. Make little balls from the dough and squeeze them a bit flat. Bake in the oven for 20 minutes till they are brown; let them cool down before you eat them.

ROMANIAN COZONAC (Aurelia Vasile)

Ingredients for the dough: 1 kg flour, 300 g sugar, 1 1/2 cups whole milk, 6 eggs, 50 g yeast, 200 g salted butter, 2 tablespoons oil, vanilla stick, salt, egg for washing the dough, grease for the pans.

Make a starter from yeast and a teaspoon of sugar. Mix until it reaches the consistency of sour cream, add 2-3 tablespoons of warm milk, a little flour and mix well; sprinkle some flour on top, cover it and let it sit in a warm place to rise. Boil the milk with the vanilla stick (cut in very small pieces) and leave it on the side of the range, covered, to keep it warm.

Mix the yolks with the sugar and salt, and then slowly pour the warm milk, stirring continuously. Place the risen starter in a large bowl and pour, stirring continuously, the yolk-milk mixture and some flour, a little at a time. Then add 3 whipped egg whites. When you finish this step, start kneading. Knead, adding melted butter combined with oil, a little at a time, until the dough starts to easily come off your palms. Cover with a cloth and leave it in a warm place to triple in bulk. If the dough is too hard, add milk; if too soft, add flour.

Ingredients for the filling: 300 g ground walnuts, 1 cup milk, 3/4 cup sugar, 1/4 cup rum, vanilla, 1/4 cup cocoa

Melt the sugar in the warm milk with vanilla in a pot on the range. When the sugar is melted, add the walnuts and keep stirring. After a few minutes of boiling, and after the filling has thickened, remove from heat and add the rum and the cocoa. When the filling is cold, roll a sheet of dough about one finger thick, uniformly spread the walnut filling on top and roll like a jelly roll.

Grease a bread pan; place the roll inside, let rise for a while. Brush the top of the loaves with a beaten egg and bake at medium heat. Take out of the pan as soon as it is done, place on a cloth and let cool.

Infernal Voices

As a final wish, Fredrick J. Baur, the man who designed the Pringles packing system, will be buried in one of the icon cans. Baur, who was 89, died last month in Cincinnati, was cremated. Part of his remains were placed in a Pringles can and buried in Springfield Township, and the rest was given to his grandson. (About.com: Weird news)

A man who absconded from parole in California 12 years ago has been arrested in northern Montana after disclosing his location in an update on his Facebook page. (Associated Press)

As part of a series of events commemorating the 25th anniversary of its arrival in Japan, Domino's Pizza Japan is set to hire one lucky person at the rate of 2,500,000 yen (\$31,030) for an hour's worth of work in December. (Reuters)

Instead of the two dragons, symbolizing the yin and the yang, a tattoo artist has drawn a huge penis on the back of a client. The client will have to undergo a nine-month treatment, costing thousands of Australian dollars, to remove the obscene tattoo from his back. (Corriere della Sera, Italy)

Her name is Chen Wey-yi, she's 30 years old, and became a Facebook sensation after announcing that she intended to marry with herself. (Jornal de Notícias - Portugal)

A British man filmed while he put a cat in a micro-wave oven, a dryer and a freezer, was sentenced to 126 days in prison and banned from having animals for the next ten years. (Correio da Manhã - Portugal)

Residents of Changsha, China, who may not have passed through the city center recently, risk having a big surprise. In six days, a new 15 floors hotel was born. (Correio da Manhã - Portugal)

A retired 74-year old managed to board a plane with an axe in her hand luggage, without being stopped by airport security. Pat Palmer traveled from Luton to Menorca and only noticed that she was carrying the object when she landed in Spain. (Correio da Manhã - Portugal)

The artist Peter Gronquis has designed a Dolce & Gabbana machine gun. He has also designed a Versace rifle and a hand grenade that can be combined perfectly with evening shoes. (Elmundo.com.bo - Spain)

A young American did not hesitate to call the police to complain about the poor quality of the drugs he had bought on the street. The boy was looking for marijuana but the dealer tricked him into buying another type of herb. (Telecinco - Spain)

The Film Festival Clermont-Ferrand will include in its next edition the first film directed by a nonhuman primate. It's titled "Oedipe", a film made by a capuchin monkey, more specifically a monkey named Capucine. (New Scientist via on Thursday - Spain)

A national siesta competition will take place between the 14th and 23rd of October in Madrid, with eight rounds of "siesta" a day from 12:00 to 19:00. A doctor will check that the participants sleep and for how long. The winner gets \$ 1,000. (El Mundo - Spain)

The most prolific polygamist in Kenya has died. Akuku Danger, who became famous for having married 130 times and having 210 children, has died at age 92 after a long illness, reported by the local media. (Enmemoria.com - Spain)

A drunken passenger cried out demanding to be let out of a Russian plane, flying at 10,000 meters above sea level, believing that he was traveling on a bus. (Via Interfax on Thursday - Spain)

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



internalvoices@unric.org