



## Proposed new ways and means to strengthen the United Nations capability for collective action

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**41st GENEVA GRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMME**

**7-25 JULY 2003**

**PROPOSED NEW WAYS AND MEANS TO STRENGTHEN  
THE UNITED NATIONS CAPABILITY FOR  
COLLECTIVE ACTION**



**UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA**

**INFORMATION SERVICE  
PUBLIC RELATIONS SECTION**

# United Nations

## Press release

Information Service

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7 July 2003

### **DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF UNOG ADDRESSES FORTY-FIRST GENEVA GRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMME**

#### **Security Council remains a powerful mechanism for maintaining international peace and security, Director-General says**

Sergei Ordzhonikidze, the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, today welcomed students participating in the forty-first Geneva Graduate Study Programme. This annual three-week programme gathers outstanding young postgraduate students from all over the world to deepen their understanding of the aims and activities of the United Nations system. This year, the programme brings together 90 students from 40 countries throughout the world and will focus on new ways and means to strengthen the United Nations capability for collective action.

Mr. Ordzhonikidze addressed participants at the opening of the programme, underlining the timeliness of discussions on how to reinforce multilateral institutions. He emphasized that the Security Council remains a powerful mechanism for maintaining international peace and security. "Contrary to what a superficial analysis of international politics may conclude", he said, "I believe that recent events have only highlighted the value of the United Nations as the pre-eminent forum for addressing all challenges currently facing the international community. Multilateralism has not become marginalized - it has become further entrenched as the main means of managing international politics."

The Director-General went on to highlight the complex linkages between issues and underlined how "the United Nations Millennium Development Goals are an important recognition of the connections between problems and the need for determined action across the board".

Mr. Ordzhonikidze concluded by underscoring the potential for mutual enrichment between cultures and traditions. "Differences are not necessarily only causes of friction and frustration, but can be fertile ground for innovation and improvement", he said. "The United Nations is built exactly on this understanding of the potential for original solutions when we pool resources and resolve issues. Differences should not be considered obstacles to be overcome but opportunities to be seized."

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## **WORKING GROUP ON DEVELOPMENT**

In September 2000, world leaders from 187 States met for the Millennium Summit in New York to discuss “The Role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century”.<sup>1</sup> Eight time-bound and theoretically measurable Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were agreed upon, aimed at combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women. To guide the achievement of the MDGs more concretely, one or more targets were set for each goal. With the MDGs, Member States sought to establish within the United Nations system a framework uniting the efforts of the different entities towards a common objective.<sup>2</sup> The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) was set to function as a coordinator and help ensure that the MDGs remain a cornerstone of the United Nations collaborative efforts.

The objective of the following report is to analyse efforts undertaken by the United Nations system and its partners as well as progress towards the achievement of the MDGs. The report focuses on the first MDG - poverty eradication - and the eighth - economic development - as well as the second and third goals, grouped under the topic of education. As such, the attainment of the goal, including its various objectives will be analysed in relation to the efforts of several United Nations agencies towards effecting sustainable development through poverty reduction, adequate education, financing activities, information and communication technology advancement and trade.

### **I. POVERTY REDUCTION**

Poverty is more than the lack of income. It is the denial of economic, political, social and physical opportunities that lead to a long, healthy, and creative life. It includes the inability to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom and dignity. As poverty has many dimensions, it has to be analysed taking into consideration a variety of indicators: level of income and consumption as well as social and political indicators.<sup>3</sup> Today it is common to measure poverty in terms of income poverty (measured in purchasing power parity), taking an average per capita income of US\$ 1 per day as the poverty gauge. Another indicator involves the measurement of the people's well-being. This is taken as the basis for the human development index which measures progress in education, health and sanitation. The first MDG - to reduce the number of people living in poverty - was formulated in terms of the former definition of poverty, that is to halve the number of people living on less than US\$ 1 a day by 2015. However, using this measurement it was noted that the number of people living below the international poverty line declined by only 1 per cent per year between 1990 and 1999, decreasing from 1.3 billion people to 1.1 billion people respectively.<sup>4</sup> It is obvious that at this rate the goal to halve poverty is unattainable.

#### **The role of the United Nations agencies**

The main United Nations agencies involved in reducing poverty and hunger are the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Rome Institutions, which include the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), and the World Food Programme (WFP). However, the World Bank is a key player in the fight against poverty, as it provides a large share of the annual US\$ 56 billion Official Development Aid (ODA), mostly in form of loans and credits.

### *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)*

UNDP is working towards reaching the poverty reduction MDG at different levels by way of advocacy: from the grass-roots level - by emphasizing the participatory approach toward the problem; at the national level - by helping to formulate nationally-owned solutions (i.e. they assist countries in formulating their Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, PRSP); and at the international level - by coordinating the work of the United Nations agencies. But throughout their literature, the UNDP always expresses the belief that economic growth is necessary, but not sufficient to meet the MDGs and that development has to be considered in a broader view, as human development, which includes health, education, nutrition, water and sanitation.<sup>5</sup>

### *Rome Institutions*

IFAD, FAO and WFP constitute the Rome Institutions, which are specialized United Nations agencies with mandates towards reducing poverty and hunger. These institutions were working independently until 1999 when they started collaborating. This collaboration is yielding positive results in terms of inter-agency cooperation. However, it has also been noted that aid to agriculture has fallen rapidly in past years. For example IFAD has been working with local populations in order to give them tools to develop their agriculture, technology and access to markets. The main concept of the organization is that poverty reduction is not something that can be done from the outside, but by the population, and IFAD can only help in improving the conditions.

### *The World Bank*

The World Bank's main strategy towards reducing poverty is through the linking of development assistance to PRSPs. The recipient countries have to identify the obstacles to reduce poverty, and describe strategies to overcome them. A large share of Official Development Aid (ODA), not only the money provided by the IMF or World Bank, is conditional and is tied to the implementation of the strategies described in the PRSPs. While the PRSP initiative intended to be a move away from the strategies previously advocated by the World Bank and IMF (in particular full liberalization of financial and other markets), this strategy is not free of criticism. It was noted that by comparing actual PRSPs with the expectation of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), there are often significant inconsistencies between the two. For example, the strategies and policies in PRSPs of most African countries still focus on reducing labour market rigidities, tight fiscal and monetary policies and private sector-led development (privatization), while the poor demand measures that increase employment, expansive macropolicies and cheap credit and non-privatization of key social sectors. In addition, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)<sup>6</sup> notes that many of the PRSPs of the African LDCs still describe the strategies that have become known under the name "Washington Consensus" and are now subject to serious criticism.

Further, it was noted that the PRSPs fall short of identifying the resources to meet the MDGs. The World Bank advises author countries to be realistic and take into account existing levels of donor assistance. Consequently most PRSPs fail to describe the real needs of poor countries.<sup>7</sup>

## **Aid and debt**

Today, the view that LDCs cannot escape the "poverty trap" by themselves is widely accepted, and external assistance from the industrial countries is obligatory. In the Rio de Janeiro Summit, 1992, the adopted programme for action included an aid target of 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) for developed countries. However, this commitment from developed countries has not yet been met. Only five countries - the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Luxembourg reached the said commitment. The United States allocates only 0.1 per cent of GDP to aid, less than half of that which the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) averages, while the European Union average is 0.32 per cent. According to conservative estimates, ODA aid, which currently amounts to US\$ 56.5 billion (or about 0.23 per cent of GDP in donor countries), must be doubled to halve poverty by 2015. The United States and the European Union have committed themselves to an additional US\$ 16 billion, but there remains a shortage of US\$ 36 billion, which needs to be covered.

The poor countries are highly indebted, consequently, high interest rates often undermine ODA. For instance while ODA contributed 7.9 per cent to GDP in LDCs, their debt payments added up to an average of 2.9 per cent of GDP, which is about one third of the ODA received. However, so far only eight countries have had parts of their debt cancelled according to the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. It was found that those countries increased investment in health and education. It is therefore crucial that more countries benefit from this initiative.

## **Commodity goods**

More than 2.5 billion people in developing countries depend on the production of commodities for their livelihood. One billion of them derive a significant share of their income from export commodities. In addition, most of the poor spend a significant part of their income on commodities which are often imported (grains, sugar, and oil products).

The reality is that developing countries are increasingly losing market share as their products are processed and/or branded in developed countries, and re-exported. For instance, in the early 1990s, the annual export earnings from coffee producing countries was US\$ 10-12 billion and the value of retail sales of coffee was about US\$ 30 billion. Currently, the value of retail sales exceeds US\$ 70 billion but coffee producing countries receive only US\$ 5.5 billion (UNCTAD). Further, the subsidized exports from developed countries remain a serious threat, as total agricultural support in OECD countries as of 2000 was US\$ 327 billion. Current estimates hold that halving agricultural support would yield an increase in income in developing countries of around US\$ 150 billion, almost three times the amount of ODA. Also, market access barriers for many commodity exports, in particular processed ones, and commodities with dynamic demand, hinder the expansion and diversification efforts expended by LDCs. Lastly, there is very little interest in commodity issues among donor agencies, as reflected in the declining levels of aid monies provided.

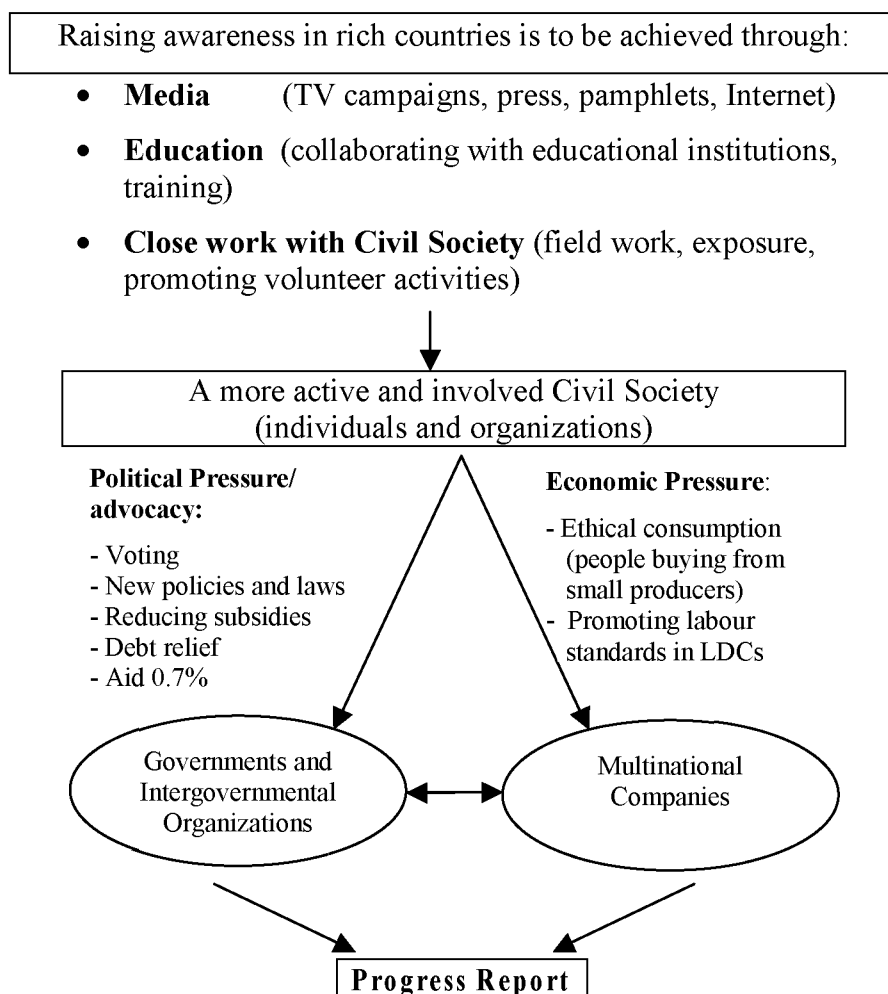
## Suggested solutions

In order to reach the first MDG on poverty we recommend the following:

- In developing countries the United Nations and its agencies should collaborate and continue their work in the field, which includes developing institutes (nationals and NGOs), technology, and access to the market and natural resources.
- In developed countries, more efforts should be put on raising the level of awareness among people.

In light of what is said above it becomes clear that it is essential that the developed countries realize the commitments they made in the Millennium Declaration with respect to the reduction of poverty. In the long run the United Nations should work towards the establishment of a legal commitment to the attainment of this goal. To prepare the ground for a legal commitment the United Nations ought to promote awareness amongst societies in developed countries. The process of combining regular progress reports with the declaration of the MDGs followed by the establishment of a legal commitment, resembles the successful approach adopted towards the worldwide promotion of human rights.

Our proposal is illustrated in the following scheme:





## **REACHING GLOBAL CONVENTION/AGREEMENT TO COMBAT POVERTY**

### **II. EDUCATION**

Education is certainly one of the fundamental components of the larger strategy on sustainable development. Its importance is undisputed and derives from the fact that basic education is eminent for such diverse topics as nation building, democracy, economic growth, poverty reduction, and health care. Education is considered to be the key to unlocking other development goals; there is a close interrelation, even a synergy, to other social and economic development issues. Besides these aspects, education is foremost an end in itself and enables human beings to live up to their full capacity. However, according to Oxfam, 130 million children between the ages of 6 and 11 are currently not in school and another 150 million drop out before completing four years of basic education. Whereas the enrolment rate in primary school increased during the 1990s (except for Western Asia), the figures in 2002 were still rather low depending on the region (the lowest rate, for instance, in Sub-Saharan Africa was 57 per cent).

Particularly striking is the gender disparity in education. Three fifths of the children out of school are girls; two thirds of illiterate adults are women. Due to the social position of women, it is especially important to invest in girls' education. Better education for girls leads to remarkable benefits for the current and the next generation. It lowers maternal and infant mortality rates, promotes sounder management of environmental resources, and affects different economic, social and health matters in a positive way. In the words of Mr. Kofi Annan, "educating girls to build a powerful electorate of women could be the most cost-effective form of defence spending".

Taking into consideration the tremendous significance of education, it is not surprising that the right to education was laid down after World War II in many international conventions and treaties such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Convention on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights, or the Convention on the Equality of Women (CEDAW). Still, one of the main issues with regards to education in an international setting becomes obvious within international legal discourse. Unlike most other development goals, education is predominantly a country-specific responsibility with almost exclusively "intra-national" effects. Defining global policies and strategies on education often interferes with a country's sovereignty and turns out to be politicized. Nevertheless, the international community came up with common views and a shared ambitious agenda. In 2000, 12 strategies on education were formulated at the Dakar World Education Forum; and subsequently, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), two of which target education, were adopted.

The second MDG aims to ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. Furthermore, the third MDG regarding gender equality and empowerment of women aims to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and at all levels of education no later than 2015.

For the fulfilment of these MDGs, many actors are involved from the grass roots to the international level. Besides Governments of donor and recipient countries, several NGOs such as Oxfam, Education International, or the Partnership on Sustainable Strategies for Girls-Education, United Nations agencies and sub-bodies - namely UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, and the ILO are working on achieving these MDGs. These efforts may be seen as a global initiative and are part of a collective action strategy aimed at bringing together the appropriate actors.

The following section focuses solely on the United Nations main project with respect to the MDG for education, UNESCO's "Education for all" (EFA) programme. As one of the integrated projects within this framework and due to its undeniable importance in reaching both of the aforementioned MDGs, we also examine UNICEF's "United Nations Girls Education Initiative" (UNGEI). The goal is to assess these programmes and their respective MDGs, and to subsequently come up with conclusions and recommendations. That said, this section does not address many major topics concerning education. Basic primary education and gender equality within primary education are rather a starting point than an end.

#### *Education For All (EFA)*

UNESCO is the lead United Nations organization responsible for spearheading efforts with regards to the Education For All programme. The EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002, *Education for All: Is the World on Track?* is a general assessment of the work done to date which lays the foundation for a new tradition of reporting; the report is an extensive and comprehensive review of current available data with regard to the last 10 years, in the field of education. The report also serves to point out the projected shortcomings of countries, within the context of a programme that is barely two years into its implementation, at the time of the assessment.

#### *Assessment of EFA*

There are five major actions which are essential to achieving the EFA, which are based on the idea of partnerships at national, regional and international levels. In addition, there are 12 International Strategies which address the implementation of EFA. Governments, bilateral and multilateral agencies, NGOs and civil society networks use the International Strategies as a reference guide to implement the essential elements of the EFA and to the kinds of mutual support that they can expect.

Being that the EFA is only two years into its implementation, there is no assessment of the success or failure of the programme. However, we have noted that although the EFA programme is being implemented based on the unique needs of the country at the national level, the methods by which each country is being evaluated on its success or failure, as well as the programme's accomplishments, are general and equal standards for all. This, from the EFA's inception, sets up many countries for failure which is why the projections are only available for 154 States, 71 of which will not achieve all three of the quantifiable EFA goals by 2015. Therefore, with regard to the second MDG which focuses on education, it is already pre-supposed that some countries will be unable to comply with this MDG.

## **Obstacles and remedies**

“Almost one third of the world’s population lives in countries where achieving the goals will remain a dream ...” Following this observation, three major problem areas might be identified that are potential challenges for meeting EFA goals. The first is the planning and evaluation of the EFA programme which is faced with the lack of reliable and extensive data for each country. Major efforts are needed to improve the coverage of internationally gathered information (i.e. information on public spending on education); and the need for greater and more reliable information points to the fact that monitoring is a task which can hardly be fulfilled in a global arena and may perhaps lead to the duplication of efforts by different agencies at the national level. UNESCO should continue its work at the national level with the Ministries of Education, but at the same time, develop agreements with NGO’s to assist in monitoring and gathering data for the EFA assessment.

Secondly, the costs of the programme are large, but not beyond the means of most States when taking into consideration that to achieve universal primary education it is estimated that US\$ 8 billion are needed, which equals the amount spent on weapons worldwide in one week. Those States that have committed themselves to the MDGs need to ensure that they are allocating sufficient funds to education in order to fulfil the set goals. In addition, developed countries are called upon to allocate additional funds to their and UNESCO’s education budget in order to be able to distribute these funds to help those LDCs which are most in need of aid and cannot succeed in attaining the goals without help. Public spending on education in LDCs was estimated at \$40 per pupil compared with \$5,300 in the most developed countries. Within UNESCO’s budget (which has been given the main responsibility of carrying out the EFA programme), \$90,777,300 (zero nominal growth) were allocated to the programme, which amounts to only 17 per cent of their approximate budget.

The third area of concern is the goals themselves. Taking into account that only three of the six goals, which resulted from the Dakar Framework for action for EFA, are considered measurable by UNESCO, points to the need for a redrafting of the original goals. The attainability of the goals for all of these countries are questionable, indiscriminate of whether or not funding was available. It is of primary importance to mention that the EFA 2002 report already singles out countries destined to fail. It is debatable whether to design a programme which is destined to include failure, especially when those countries expected to fail are the ones that are most in need of improved education. This demonstrates again how important it is that the EFA programme is not only implemented at the national level, but also that it is evaluated at the national level. Each country has agreed to commit itself to the MDG goals, but each country should then be evaluated on an individual basis and be assessed according to what actually is attainable, based on the country’s needs, its current and projected growth and stability. All countries need to be encouraged to achieve at least nominal improvement, rather than classifying all countries on the same terms and expecting that a country such as Liberia will fare as well as Germany. Through positive reinforcement, provided via attainable goals, the successes will without doubt, outnumber the failures.

## **The gender aspect of primary education - the UNGEI**

It is a widely recognized fact that women are important actors for development; indeed women are an untapped resource in many countries. Since the majority of children who are out

of school are girls, their needs must be addressed more specifically. Accordingly, at the Dakar World Education Forum in April 2000, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan launched the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI). The initiative's goal is "to mainstream engendered education within the local policy development and implementation context and within national and local budget and finance structures".

Since the achievement of universal girls' education is a complicated long-term process that cannot be achieved unilaterally, partnerships are a cornerstone of the UNGEI's strategies. The UNGEI involves players at the country level, civil society, national governments, bilateral agencies and NGOs. It is led by the United Nations system and initial efforts, as well as reporting, lie with the United Nations Resident Coordinator of UNDP. As to implementation, it may be delegated to other United Nations agencies or outside actors. UNGEI aims at strengthening existing programmes and avoiding duplication of efforts. It tries to use existing mechanisms as much as possible, i.e. UNDP's Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and Common Country Assessment, the World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, and EFA National Assessment Teams. Apart from conventional partnerships, the UNGEI tries to build increasingly on family and community participation.

The UNGEI strategies aim at addressing both quantity - the enrolment rate of girls' - and quality - such as substantive content, teaching processes and the learning environment. Furthermore, flexible strategies are promoted in order to adapt to the specific needs of the different countries and to grant national ownership. With its "25 by 2005 Initiative" UNICEF makes a particular effort within the UNGEI to maximize the number of girls enrolled in school by 2005 in 25 countries, for example, by concentrating resources and increasing campaigns. Further objectives include the elimination of gender bias from all aspects of education (formal as well as non-formal); the building of learning environments which foster persistence, completion and achievement of girls' education; with a special focus on the most vulnerable girls, for example pregnant girls, girls who have caretaking and household responsibilities or are working outside their home, as well as girls affected by crises, disability or disease.

### **Assessment of UNGEI**

Monitoring and reporting on UNGEI's achievements to date have been very limited. The UNDG has until now only published five country assessments within the framework of UNDAF and CCA. They focus rather on planning and do not include any statistical data on progress concerning girls' education. Provisions on monitoring include, for example, the annual reporting of the UNDP Resident Coordinator in each country. However, in 2001 only 35 out of 123 annual reports mentioned girls' education. Moreover, the report of the UNDP Resident Coordinator only includes projects involving three or more agencies. Thus, it omits the numerous efforts being made concerning girls' education. UNICEF uses household surveys in order to collect data on the qualitative and quantitative aspects of girls' education. This method of evaluation, however, can of course only cover smaller regions. The Guidance Note to United Nations Country Teams concerning UNGEI suggests a four-step evaluation: using existing data to identify the extent of the problem, analysing on the one hand supply-side factors such as availability of education for girls and on the other hand, demand-side factors such as poverty and attitudes dominating a society, and identifying the different stakeholders in girls' education at the different levels.

Particular success has been reported for programmes which provide a special incentive for girls and parents to attend school, such as school meals in cooperation with the WFP. In several countries, the elimination of fees and uniforms has led to a considerably higher enrolment rate.

### **Obstacles and remedies**

An important obstacle to education for girls concerns access. Parents can refuse, for several reasons, to let their daughters attend school: due to stereotypes and patterns of gender discrimination, parents may be unable to see the importance of education for girls and may not believe in the potential success of their daughters. Furthermore, given the traditional division of labour, many girls have caregiving and household functions which might not allow them to attend classes. Another problem related to traditional practices and gender discrimination is early marriage and pregnancy of girls. Parents may be reluctant due to a lack of safety; attending school may for example involve walking a long distance. Schools might not be equipped with proper and separate sanitation.

These problems can be addressed by ensuring that schools are close to girls' homes, that buses are provided in rural areas or that mobile schools exist for nomadic communities; that teachers are educated and selected properly in order to avoid corporal punishment and abuse; that more female teachers are being recruited; and that schools provide proper sanitation for girls. Gender prejudice which keeps girls out of school may be eliminated through campaigns of awareness raising and the sensitizing of parents. Concerning gender discrimination, it is also important to promote gender-responsive schools, which for example allow pregnant girls and teenage mothers to continue their education. Curricula and educational content should be freed from gender stereotypes and made relevant to local cultural and economic contexts so that parents realize the importance of girls' education. The obstacle of girls' responsibilities in the household can be addressed for example by operating double-shifts in schools, by offering evening courses or by opening schools all year long - in order for girls to choose a period to attend.

Education is the foundation of progress in societies around the world for the elimination of discrimination against girls and women. However, there are numerous obstacles to achieving universal girls' education that keep the gender gap wide. UNICEF's "The State of the World's Children 2002" reported 61 countries where the net primary education rate of girls was below 85 per cent. The UNGEI has made a considerable effort to identify these obstacles and their remedies. However, their implementation is often a long and difficult process and suffers from lack of resources. Given the ambitious target of the MDGs - to eliminate gender disparity in primary education by 2005 - and the relatively little progress that has been made since their declaration, it is unlikely that this target will be achieved in the prescribed timeframe.

### **General recommendations on education**

- The long-term success on a large scale depends on national governments and their political will. Looking at the drastically declining social spending worldwide, raising awareness among governments about the importance of education remains the major task.

- Whereas primary education is a global goal, it needs to be realized at the national, and even at the local level. Microprojects could serve as examples for successful implementation and for larger scale projects at the national level.
- A more specific action plan should be adopted following the example of the third United Nations conference in May 2001 on the least developed countries (LDCs). This plan outlines specific strategies for development partners and LDCs, encouraging them to address global issues such as education through international collective action.
- The coordination of the existing aid mechanisms is not satisfactory. It needs an improved cooperation in different ways - within the United Nations as well as on a regional, national and international scale. Governments also need to be more actively engaged, as do NGOs, civil society, media representatives, and multinationals. It might be worthwhile adopting ILO's approach of including representatives from all the involved parties (such as teachers' and students' unions).
- More funds are needed to achieve the MDGs. First of all, respective Governments need to be encouraged to allocate a larger portion of their budget for education, keeping the idea of sustainable development in mind. Moreover, the mutual benefits of better education need to be pointed out to donors and recipients. Additional resources might be generated from multinationals. In order to motivate donors, achievements in the educational sector should be promoted by a worldwide mass media campaign. Additionally, an improved monitoring system will convince donors that the money will be spent efficiently.
- The MDGs as currently targeted are not likely to be met. It might be better to formulate realistic and country specific targets that provide the respective parties with a real incentive to achieve them.

### **III. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The United Nations' eighth Millennium Development Goal (MDG) calls for the creation of a global partnership for development with specific targets for aid, trade and debt relief. In an attempt to achieve this MDG the United Nations held an "International Conference for Finance and Development" in March 2002 (Monterrey Consensus) to define the requirements for the mobilization of private financial capital flows towards the achievement of international development. Although this Conference sought to identify the requisite steps to be taken by developing countries, it failed to adequately specify the role of developed countries in the achievement of the goal. Consequently, it has been difficult to hold the developed countries accountable for the failure of developing countries to reach the set objectives. For instance, ODA will be increased to 0.7 percent of GNP however a date for the implementation of this objective is yet to be set. The Monterrey Consensus also tries to define the role of foreign investment although no targets have been set ("Additional source country measures should also be devised to encourage and facilitate investment flows to developing countries." A/CONF.198/3). This Goal is therefore only realistic and achievable if the developed countries concede to specific, measurable commitments that will in fact foster the development of LDCs.

The indicators for trade address the removal of tariffs and quotas on agricultural products, textiles and clothing exported by developing countries. However, the present situation shows that the “average OECD tariffs on manufactured goods from developing countries are more than four times those on similar products from other OECD countries”. The agricultural subsidies of developed countries total more than \$300 billion a year - nearly six times official development assistance. The indicators mentioned above are therefore heavily dependent on the developed countries’ will. It is thus evident that these countries “need to make progress in some critical areas, with deadlines so that progress can be monitored”. Accordingly, this report aims to analyse the means by which a strong global partnership can be formed, as outlined by the eighth MDG, through financing activities, trade development, as well as technological advancement towards the achievement of sustainable development.

### **The role of finance in development**

While there has been a significant amount of discussion regarding the advantages and disadvantages of foreign direct investment (FDI), it is our aim to simply consider the various means of administering FDI as measured by the relative impact on the host economy. This impact is increasingly important if we consider that global FDI flows represented US\$ 540 billion in 2002, three times as much as in 1990, despite the current sluggishness of the global economy and a fall of more than 60 per cent in FDI flows in the past two years. The disparity in FDI flows is evident in the fact that the United States received more than \$120 billion in 2002 while Africa only received \$17, as the composition going to developing countries continues to change, with an emphasis on service industries (banking and transportation). As a general rule, FDI inflow assists the host country in attaining sustainable development, concomitant to the type of individual investment. For instance, international firms have the liberty of choosing from several options as they consider means of extending their activities overseas, including FDI, exporting, licensing and forming strategic alliances. FDI is largely composed of three entry modes, namely, “greenfield” investment (where a new company is established in the host country), mergers and acquisitions (among them joint ventures and privatization), and cross-border loans between related enterprises. Not surprisingly, the potential benefits of FDI depend heavily on the mode of entry. Accordingly, many developing countries have expressed a strong preference for the Greenfield and joint venture investment schemes over other forms of investment. They have also expressed scepticism towards the takeover of domestic enterprises by foreign investors for political and economic reasons. Also, the host countries want to ensure that such investments will serve as providers of long-term employment and taxation opportunities. Moreover, developing countries continue to avoid the negative consequences caused by rapid divestment, as seen in Argentina. Such divestment warrants the distinction between short and long-term investments. As a tool for promoting development, FDI must remain in the host country long enough to ensure that the benefits of its contribution are truly felt.

Conversely, the efforts to foster long-term investment will prove futile, failing to have the desired impact if developing countries continue to complete the most basic manufacturing and production tasks. Currently, Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) allocate their production schedules to several countries in order to prevent the hosts from gaining control of the

production process. In order to effectively address this issue, a “component outsourcing strategy” is necessary. The growing trend is for developing countries to seek to provide MNCs with finished goods, as the potential benefits to the host economy are greater. Nevertheless, companies in developing countries must correspondingly endeavour to establish fairly advanced technological capabilities.

As aforementioned, the success of increased FDI in promoting sustainable development depends on the qualitative nature of the individual investment. Nevertheless, even the most favourable type of FDI has the potential for drawbacks if wrongly administered.

- The initial effect of FDI on the economy of the host country is the creation of new jobs. Indeed, FDI indirectly contributes to the enhancement of human capital through training and on-the-job learning. However, in many instances, such training is not passed down through top management when companies invest overseas, since manager training is often conducted outside the host country’s domestic market. Managers are subsequently assigned to positions abroad where the local workforce completes the most basic of tasks that rely on unskilled labour.
- Technological transfer constitutes another benefit of FDI. Since MNCs are typically highly technologically advanced, the creation of subsidiaries in developing countries necessitates considerable technological spillovers. However, with the new regulations imposed by WIPO and TRIPS, host countries continue to lose the potential benefits that FDI is able to offer. As seen in the case of South Korea, reverse engineering was a useful means for LDCs to gain technological expertise, a benefit that is no longer available due to the various regulations.
- Contributing to the development of their overall infrastructure (roads, railway systems, reliable electricity, etc.) FDI also gives the host countries the essential foundation upon which to develop. These advantages not only contribute to higher economic growth but also improve environmental and social conditions within the host country. However, there are two growing trends that undermine this positive effect of FDI - first, adequate infrastructure (particularly as it relates to their specific interests) is now required by investors as they consider what countries to enter, and second, when such infrastructures are indeed developed, it is established as a direct line necessary for industrial investment.

### **Debt restructuring**

Developing countries currently face a financial crisis that endangers their economies and the global financial system. Many LDCs are saddled with an enormous amount of public and private debt. Largely due to the global financial turmoil in the past five years, the LDCs’ debt responsibility has grown and the ability of these countries to meet their debt obligation has been severely undermined. Unfortunately, because there is no clear process or body to deal with countries that face the prospect of defaulting on their loans, these countries have no recourse to free themselves from their financial burden. The United Nations has recognized this problem and has included the goal of dealing “comprehensively and effectively with the debt problems of low and middle-income developing countries, through various national and international measures designed to make their debt sustainable in the long run” as part of its MDGs. One of



the integral parts of the financial systems in most nations are bankruptcy courts. When companies are unable to meet their financial obligations, all interest payments are frozen, the companies are protected from litigation, and an independent body is appointed to determine if the company can be guided back to financial health and if not, how its creditors can be compensated. This process is beneficial to both parties, because it removes the prospect of lawsuits for debtors and it provides at least partial compensation to creditors.

The lack of such a mechanism for countries that risk default affects not only LDCs who face economic collapse, but also has a negative impact on the economies of creditor nations as well. The economies of many LDCs have been battered in recent years by various financial crises. These countries' debt burdens are increasing as a result of increasingly unfavourable exchange rates and the countries themselves face the collapse of their currencies, hikes in interest rates, losses in output and employment that all result in a loss of confidence in the market. If these countries default on their loans, creditors may never receive any payment on their investment thus it is in the creditors' best interest to support a sovereign bankruptcy mechanism.

The Paris Club currently deals with most debt restructuring proceedings, but as a group of creditors, decisions are not always impartial and proceedings are unclear and are often non-transparent. In 1986 UNCTAD observed that the "absence of a clear and impartial framework for these problems trapped many developing countries in situations where they suffered the stigma of being de facto bankrupt without protection or relief which comes from de jure insolvency". More recently, the IMF proposed what it refers to as the Sovereign Debt Restructuring Mechanism (SDRM). The SDRM mimics some features of domestic corporate bankruptcy rules and affords heavily indebted countries with temporary relief from their financial obligations. However, there are many obstacles to implementing this system under the auspices of the IMF. A treaty obligation would have to be established and would require broad support and consensus from the international community. This consensus could be difficult to reach because of the many critics of the IMF proposal. First of all the SDRM would not be effective for all developing countries because it is aimed at facilitating bond restructuring and excludes LDCs that cannot issue international bonds. Secondly, according to this initiative, the IMF would implement the SDRM, however, many critics believe that because the IMF is a creditor and because it is a political body, it cannot stand as an impartial judge when it comes to making restructuring decisions.

Certainly, progress has been made in this area, however successful implementation of such a system has been minimal. While the SDRM supports the principles put forward by UNCTAD in 1986, the lack of neutrality is one of its greatest drawbacks. If the SDRM were to gain some support from the international community it could take years to get such a system up and running. Meanwhile LDCs that are facing financial difficulties have no recourse to be relieved from their heavy debt burdens in the interim. UNCTAD believes that an equitable restructuring of debt can be obtained without full-fledged international bankruptcy procedures but that debt relief can come much sooner through the implementation of a few simple principles. First a debt standstill should be put in place to protect debtor countries from litigation, while also halting interest payments. Second would be the provision of debtor-in-possession-financing, which would grant seniority status to debt contracted after the standstill has been imposed. Third, calls for debt restructuring should be made, which could include rollover or write-off. Unless these features of the proposal are implemented or a better proposal is found, there will be very little progress towards reaching the MDG of debt

sustainability and the debt burden will remain an impediment to the development of many developing countries. There must be more support from the greater United Nations body to push forward this goal. Without direction and leadership from the United Nations, it is unlikely that developing countries will be freed from their enormous debt burdens preventing their economic growth and well-being.

### **The role of the United Nations**

What then can the United Nations do to alleviate these problems being experienced by developing as well as less developed countries? It is our belief that the United Nations ought to influence the political will of the developed countries in order to facilitate their assistance to LDCs. The United Nations currently publishes numerous reports that discuss the predicament of LDCs. The organization should instead pursue more active ways of disseminating useful information to developing countries. In declaring the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) the United Nations stated that it would be necessary to increase awareness in developed countries through millennium campaigns that would focus on “galvanizing public opinion as a means to boost development assistance, trade, debt relief, technology and other support needed to achieve the MDGs” (United Nations Fact Sheet on “Implementing the Millennium Declaration”). This campaign has not been developed to the extent necessary to influence public opinion.

Needless to say, development will remain inextricable if developed countries are uncommitted to supporting development initiatives by providing much needed aid. The LDCs continue to change their policies to promote their development, thus meeting the demands set forth by the Washington Consensus. Nevertheless, developed nations have not responded with a corresponding increase in the amount of aid given. As such, the United Nations must further exert itself to stimulate an increase in the provision of aid monies, drawing upon the positive long-term effects that such efforts create, such as the decreased incidence of war and conflict in LDCs, which inevitably impacts the global economy. Additionally, the United Nations should ensure that as LDCs develop they make the necessary transition from financing through aid to financing through investment, irrespective of whether the investment is foreign or domestic.

### **National measures**

Certainly, the developing countries themselves play a significant role in fostering constant and sustainable development. They should thus lobby to promote the creation of clearly defined ODA indicators, so as to strengthen the partnership of the developed countries and ensure that their efforts are measured satisfactorily. Having done that, the developing countries ought to ensure that progress towards the attainment of the said goals is reviewed regularly, while the performance of both the developed and developing countries is monitored. For example, a number of developing countries have already submitted progress reports while their counterparts in developed countries have not undertaken this initiative. Furthermore, they should seek the renegotiation of certain aspects of the Washington Consensus to allow for a more smooth and national liberalization of financial markets and flows. This would enable developing countries to implement some controls on capital flows to grant them tighter control over those market fluctuations that have resulted in the financial disasters experienced by several countries.

Finally, the private sector plays an important role in promoting development, notwithstanding its apparent conflicting interests. Developing countries should therefore insist on the enforcement of regulations on private investment that will facilitate the training of their workforce to promote the transfer of non-proprietary technology and to promote the development of a web of infrastructure. Evidently, the benefits of development are often not visible immediately, which is why private investors do not deem them vital, as they are more concerned with short-term payoffs. As such, all three actors (developing countries, developed countries and United Nations agencies) need to form strong partnerships that will promote the well-being of developing countries and interests of the private sector, as well as developed countries. The United Nations role should be to facilitate the development of this partnership by insisting that the indicators are better defined and are measured regularly.

### **Achieving economic and social development through trade**

Over the past 20 years, the annual growth of world trade has averaged 6 per cent, a rate that is twice as fast as the growth of world output. This is perhaps attributable to the increase in integration, which has impacted economic growth, development and poverty reduction, albeit in an uneven manner. Such progress is impressively evident in a number of Asian developing countries - and Latin American developing countries to a lesser extent - that continue to attract vast amounts of FDI. Conversely, African and Middle Eastern developing countries have not enjoyed similar growth levels. In fact, they have seen their share of world trade decline substantially, a phenomenon that some say is directly linked with the countries' inward looking tendencies.

The most basic policy challenge currently facing most developing countries centres on how best to channel the elemental force of trade and industry to induce wealth creation and satisfy human needs and wants. It is unfortunate that the majority of developing countries are still exporting products that rely on local resources and unskilled labour. In direct response to this on-going issue, a new round of negotiations that build on grass-roots level, action oriented strategies, including the on-going Doha Development Agenda, are required to effectively augment the growth prospects of those disadvantaged developing countries, while strengthening the overall international trading system.

### **A macroeconomic overview: the multilateral trading system**

The opening of regional and local markets, coupled with an active participation in world trade, constitute a crucial driving force towards economic and social development through sustained poverty reduction. However, in order to ensure that developing countries enjoy the benefits of these activities, the countries must also possess equitable and complementary market access. This necessitates the mutual opening of markets by both developing and developed nations. The Bretton Woods institutions currently promote the "forceful" opening of markets in developing countries and consistently fail to address the stringent conditions that essentially deter these developing countries from gaining reciprocal access to markets in developed countries. Moreover, the various production subsidies instituted by developed nations further aggravate the predicament of numerous LDCs who are subsequently reduced to competing in price wars that virtually eliminate whatever financial profits they could have acquired through the sale of their products. In addition, the import quotas imposed by developed countries as a

means of protecting their local industries further impede the trade development efforts of the LDCs. Evidently, new strategies that will address the interest-driven policy and decision-making structure within the United Nations, while inhibiting the prevalence of protectionist tendencies are required.

Accordingly, the will of the international community in implementing a free and fair trading system that is independent of the domination of the United Nations five key member States will thrive in an environment that fosters country specific and grass-roots level activities, thus defying the current neoclassical macroeconomic orthodoxy. UNCTAD plays an important role in training the delegations of developing countries in various aspects of commercial negotiations in the WTO. This training bridges the knowledge and skill gap in negotiations between representatives of developed nations and their counterparts from LDCs. As such, it is a practical - though simple - strategy that is easily implemented and has a lasting impact. Moreover, to ensure that trade is in fact fair, the WTO should create ceiling prices that guarantee that LDCs receive adequate compensation. Suffice it to say that the WTO's power structure is uneven. Whereas LDCs are swiftly and heavily "disciplined" for failing to comply with set regulations, developed countries are often not subject to such harsh treatment. It is therefore necessary to "level the playing field" so that all countries are treated fairly and equally.

It might be useful to encourage "south-south cooperation" where various LDCs partner together to counter the effects of restricted and inequitable market access. For instance, such partnerships would establish "floor prices" and stimulate the development of value-added products, shifting away from the current dependence on commodity goods, thus eliminating the various price wars that result in huge profit losses. Additionally, the IMF should desist from fostering environments where developing countries are dependent on the exportation of a predominant good, product or service. Instead, LDCs should be encouraged to diversify their export base, which will ensure increased self-sufficiency and social and economic prosperity.

That the global trade potential for developing countries is weakening is common knowledge, as seen by the meagre growth rate of 1 per cent in 2001, versus 14 per cent in the previous year. This is perhaps directly linked to the fact that LDCs continue to situate themselves at the lowest level of the production chain, resulting in marginally value-added goods. Consequently, in order to increase their production revenues, it is imperative that these countries ascend to higher levels where they are able to export technologically enhanced products. To that end, the quality of human capital must be correspondingly high in order to ensure continuous technological progress and the strengthening of productive capacity. As such, the labour pool requires adequate training. However, due to the restrictions on intellectual property imposed by the international community, the possibility of knowledge transfer through reverse engineering is effectively eliminated, although this was how most developed nations acquired their expertise. The international community in conjunction with WIPO should therefore further consider the plight of LDCs and loosen these restrictions, thus enabling LDCs to develop their own technical expertise.

#### **A microeconomic overview: the role of MNCs in stimulating national development**

Whereas the traditional model for effecting international development relied heavily on the centralization of power, thought processes and strategy formulation, adequate and sustainable development is better induced through a decentralized system in which such efforts are carried

out at the grass-roots level, where the main beneficiaries are active participants. Indeed, current trends are focused on involving poor people in various aspects of economic and social development. For instance, the Poverty Reduction Strategies Programme (“a thematic framework that contains macroeconomic and structural policy elements that cover various areas in an attempt to have a direct bearing on poverty reduction”) administered by the WTO requires that “the poor should be among the participants in the preparation of the papers” that develop strategies aimed at poverty reduction. However, due to the conditionality attached to aid and debt reduction, a number of LDCs have resorted to a conformist ideology, where they submit reports that are founded on “what the donor expects” and not necessarily on what the country itself desires (this is evidenced in the disparity between the aspirations of the poor and the “successes” of the PRSPs). Additionally, there is an overwhelming reluctance on the part of the United Nations agencies to go beyond merely discussing these issues to actively seeking their implementation. This obviously threatens the efficacy of such a programme as well as the long-term development of LDCs. It is therefore imperative that new and effective strategies are developed, while the United Nations agencies truly collaborate to effect international development. A major criticism of the current organizational structure is that the various agencies work independently of one another, effectively distancing themselves from their common goal of reducing poverty and improving the lives of the world’s poor - also alluding to the United Nations’ deficiency in and lack of true collective action, something that has recently become evident in the United Nations’ key role in collective global security.

Building upon the belief that a “trickle up” approach that begins at the grass-roots level is a more cogent route to development, we are of the opinion that involving local NGOs, regional/transnational organizations, and low income producers in trade and commerce will stimulate economic activity that will in turn result in sustainable economic and social development. Aid monies should be allocated for the vocational training of poor people, the training of trainers in various aspects of trade, entrepreneurship and export development, the cultivation and use of local natural resources, as well as the transfer of technical and business skills (including Internet marketing for increased market access and globalization).

To this end, the United Nations should seek to form alliances with the aforementioned entities who will work closely with poor people to ensure the transfer of knowledge and technology. Accordingly, it is important to allocate funds for practical training programmes, the building of various facilities (training centres for instance) as well as for microlending. There currently exists an overwhelming reluctance by most international banks to extend credit to poor people who possess no collateral and are therefore seen as high credit risks. However, contrary to popular belief the loan repayment rate among these customers is a monumental 98 per cent! Therefore, the establishment of local microlending banks that rely on the “Trust Bank Model” (where groups of people guarantee one another’s loans, are required to save a portion of their earnings, while being taught various financial and accounting skills) is ideal. The International Trade Centre (ITC), has indeed adopted this grass-roots mentality and is truly engaging poor people in various trade related activities that are undoubtedly ensuring their sustainable development as they stimulate local economic activity. Nevertheless, as with any organization, there is room for improvement and as such, we propose certain recommendations for the enhancement of the ITC’s highly effective and commendable contributions to the welfare of various LDCs.

## **Progress in two United Nations programmes: the Export-led Poverty Reduction Programme and the Integrated Framework**

While the ITC's "Export-led Poverty Reduction Programme" (EPRP) possesses a more action oriented, grass-roots level stance, certain aspects of the programme "merely create awareness among decision makers about export potential for poverty reduction ... as part of the overall national development strategy". Certainly, the various reports created as a result of the extensive research conducted by its qualified staff are commendable, however, it would be even more effective to engage the grass-roots community in research, allowing the people to also create their own reports (i.e. training materials passed on by trained trainers, etc.). Also, the various ITC reports should be translated into local languages, and should be readily available to local communities in hard copy.

Another observation centres on the programme's support mentality which could result in the long-term dependence of LDCs on the developed nations. Instead of offering multifarious support services, the EPRP should concern itself with the transfer of skills and knowledge so that the local communities can support themselves. In lieu of developing centres that are fully manned by expatriates, it would be more effective to ensure that the staff is there to train the local people to replace them as managers and trainers. Moreover, these support services include "a national counterpart for programme implementation" which could potentially serve as a middleman, further stripping the locals of any power and effectively guarantees their long-term dependence on the international community (due to the increased distance and the reduction in knowledge transfer). Accordingly, the middleman should be removed to enable true ownership that will ensure knowledge and skill transfer. Finally, the measures of success are quite vague and hardly measurable. Adequate indicators would include:

- The number of jobs created.
- The number of networks established.
- The number of people trained, etc.

The Integrated Framework (IF) appears to truly promote collective action through the participation of its six partners - the World Bank, IMF, UNCTAD, ITC, UNDP and WTO. The IF emerged in 1996 to implement the Uruguay Round of negotiations to assist LDCs in integrating themselves into the world economy. While the World Bank is the designated project lead engaging in diagnostics studies (through extensive needs assessment sessions - particularly since LDCs have a key need for market access), each organization plays an instrumental role in suggesting new means for stimulating international development. Nevertheless, the IF is constrained by a lack of funds to implement its programmes. Moreover, the LDCs it seeks to assist lack the adequate policy frameworks to support the successful implementation of IF programmes. It is therefore imperative that the various organizations seek to adjust their individual budgets to ensure that the available funds are maximized. To that end, the billions of dollars being spent on unnecessary expenses should be saved while the LDCs are assisted in developing the necessary frameworks.

## **Bridging the digital divide**

The swift emergence of a global “information society” is changing the way people live, learn, work and relate. Yet too many of the world’s people remain untouched by this revolution. A “digital divide” threatens to exacerbate already-wide gaps between rich and poor, within and among countries. Simply put, “the digital divide” implies that the existence of a huge gulf that distances the people who have real access to information and communications technology (ICT) and who are using it effectively, and those who do not. Digital divide is a lack of physical connections and training, but at the same time it is a reflection of the lack of basic literacy, poverty and health care. Information and communication technologies are not a final solution to global inequality, however they are a powerful tool that will no doubt aid in the mission of development. ICT is considered to be a cost-effective way of enhancing development especially in poor regions of the world, thus enabling developing countries to bridge the gap created by the agricultural and industrial revolutions.

The classification and ranking of countries as they progress has remained stable, with strong regional influences apparent. As a generalization, African and South Asian countries are classified as falling behind, Latin American and transition economies as keeping up and OECD countries and South-East Asian Tigers are getting ahead. The common policy in bridging the digital gap is a strong cooperation between various governments and the private sector. This view is also incorporated in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The eighth MDG seeks to “develop a global partnership for development”. This goal is comprised of eight targets. One of these addresses the digital divide - “In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications.” Two main indicators measure the progress toward this particular target:

- Telephone lines and cellular subscribers per 100 population (ITU).
- Personal computers in use per 100 population (ITU) and Internet users per 100 population (ITU).

These two indicators are quite general and fail to show the real impact of technological development. However, as basic MDG indicators, they are sufficient. For a deeper analysis, ITU holds a large portfolio of indicators that is frequently updated.

Various United Nations programmes and agencies are enhancing the use of ICT in order to create a global partnership for development. Actions vary from building the infrastructure to voluntary online counselling. Not surprising, building sustainable development through ICT is a complex issue. Direct aid in the form of “western” technology may help to accelerate economic growth, but in the meantime it might create unwanted dependence on developed countries and their products. In order to prevent this kind of “techno colonialism” ICT policy should concentrate on supporting the development within the LDCs. Private and public investments are important for jumpstarting ICT development, but it is just as important to educate people to be digitally competent and convince them that ICT can indeed make a difference. Local content development should be supported, and as such, the Free Software and Open Source Foundation for Africa (FOSSFA) is a promising example of this type of local action. The programme anticipates that Open Source Software (OSS) will provide opportunities to develop local

programmes built by Africans for use in Africa and eventually all over the world. UNESCO and UNDP's International Open Source Network ([www.iosn.net](http://www.iosn.net)) have positively encouraged this kind of local OSS development in various ways. At the grass-roots level, the United Nations voluntary force advice service ([www.netaid.org](http://www.netaid.org)) harnesses the good will of members of the information society in developing countries to assist their peers in other parts of the world. We believe that the United Nations should continue supporting this type of voluntary collective action.

## CONCLUSION

Clearly the United Nations and its various constituencies continue to seek to adopt policies that will effect the sustainable development of developing, as well as least developed countries. As such, the creation of the Millennium Development Goals is truly commendable. However, as seen throughout this report, the organization's efficacy can be further enhanced as it seeks to remove the various obstacles identified, which is admittedly a difficult task. Also, the fact that several of its entities are constrained by a lack of sufficient funds, and the non-commitment of developed nations, effectively renders them incapable of implementing the much-needed programmes. Finally, the general tendency to focus on report writing, almost at the expense of actively seeking project implementation, also undermines the benefits of the vast amount of research and the strategies developed, as these subsequently do not have the envisioned lasting impact on the grass-roots community. It is therefore our hope that the entire United Nations system will take our various recommendations into consideration so as to effectively address the issues and concerns raised, to the establishment of constant, sustainable global development.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The Millennium Development Goals and the United Nations Role, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/MDGs-FACTSHEET1.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Press Release GA/9758, 8 September 2000, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2000/20000908.ga9758.doc.html>.

<sup>3</sup> World Bank, [www.worldbank.org/poverty](http://www.worldbank.org/poverty).

<sup>4</sup> Vandemoortele, Jan, Are we really reducing global poverty? UNDP, Bureau for development policy, New York, July 2002.

<sup>5</sup> Human Development Report 2003, chap. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Economic Development in Africa. From Adjustment to Poverty Reduction. What is New? United Nations Publications, 2002. Sales No. E.02.II.D.18.

<sup>7</sup> Human Development Report 2003, UNDP.



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## **WORKING GROUP ON HUMAN RIGHTS**

### **General introduction**

**The awareness, promotion, and implementation of human rights worldwide remains a fundamental responsibility of the United Nations in the international community today. This global position was intensified by United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan with the First Reform Programme in 1997.** The new and revolutionary perspective removed human rights as an isolated issue and placed it as a fundamental building block in peace, security, and development missions sponsored by the United Nations around the world. Therefore, a significant level of research and United Nations resources has been continuously devoted to universal Human Rights promotion. However, to create a meaningful and substantial improvement in the daily lives of millions efforts need to be intensified.

The topics covered by the Working Group on Human Rights illustrates the facts and realities present in the struggle for basic human rights around the world. The Working Group proposes new ways and means to strengthen United Nations capability for collective action on the issue of discrimination and global peace in order to enhance human rights and help alleviate human suffering worldwide. These proposals also adhere to the United Nations capability of promoting an international community based on peace, security, and universal stability. In order to achieve these vital goals human rights remains an integral development in the security of individuals and the global community on a continuous basis.

### **Overall discrimination in the international community**

Discrimination in the international community among minorities, women, children, and refugees is an occurrence that extends through racial, social, economic, and territorial boundaries across the world today. Instruments to address these problems have been accepted by the vast majority of United Nations Member States, yet, the predominance and consequences of discrimination occur on a consistent and devastating basis. From human trafficking to children forced into hazardous working conditions, and refugees constantly struggling for basic human necessities it is clear that United Nations actions and capability need to be extended on a greater global level. Without these efforts, discrimination on all levels may continuously increase while the most vulnerable segments of society remain suffering within the boundaries placed upon their daily lives.

### **Violence against women**

Violence against women is a silent epidemic that crosses every economic, social, and cultural boundary in existence today. Due to its secretive and suppressive nature, millions of cases go unnoticed and unreported on a daily basis.

### **Domestic violence**

Since an important number of Member States - excluding Western States - disclaim responsibility for violations in the so-called private sphere, it is disputed in the international community whether or not domestic violence should be regarded as a human rights violation.

## **Female genital mutilation**

FGM (or sunna/pharaonic circumcision, excision, infibulation) is a widely practised phenomenon that emotionally and physically deprives women of basic human dignity.<sup>1</sup> International instruments relating to FGM adopted by the United Nations are incapable of reaching the daily lives of these women, particularly when national legislation on the protection of women's rights is either not implemented or lacking completely.

## **Lack of legal protection for women**

Although many countries have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 1979, little has been done to implement it;<sup>2</sup> the Optional Protocol to the Convention entered into force in 2000 but several Governments have yet to ratify it.<sup>3</sup> Several have both signed and ratified the vital instruments but have shown little sign of putting the necessary legal and institutional infrastructure in place for the implementation of the binding principles. Thus States tend to limit themselves to purely declaratory involvement, a behaviour that is generally tolerated within the international community.

## **Recommendations**

### **Societal approach**

- Since women's vulnerability to domestic violence is connected to a wide range of violations of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, a priority for the United Nations should be to reshape societies by bringing profound changes in social structures as well as in basic individual attitudes.
- The United Nations should support civil society in enforcing and enhancing women's rights, especially in the Arab world, through educational programmes for young women, capacity-building and advocacy for the inclusion of women.
- Globalized awareness raising amongst women regarding their own human rights.
- Education of religious and opinion leaders on the need to improve reproductive health.
- Creation of or the initiation of a sharp change in approach towards FGM during education projects wherever they exist - distancing oneself from a moral or sexual approach and favouring a medical one.
- Raising the interest of the media to encourage more in-depth reporting on the subject and concerned regions.
- Creation and promotion of a United Nations correspondence course concerning women's rights to increase awareness and advocacy among young professionals and graduates.

- Creation of an internship programme within the United Nations specifically geared towards women's rights.
- The creation of special individual degree programmes, as opposed to simply mainstreaming gender issues in university faculties and at institutes of higher education should be encouraged.
- Creation of a list of trainers certified by the United Nations to disseminate information about women's rights as a database accessible to institutions.

### **Focal and local approach**

- United Nations agencies should consider possibilities and means to financially support women in need of immediate help, particularly in conflict zones.
- Conceptualization of programmes and incorporation of men in workshops and seminars.
- Deployment of United Nations mediators, at the local level, charged with assisting women who are victims of violence.

### **Discrimination against children**

When discussing discrimination against children, it is imperative to analyse the extent to which different institutions and actors involved in the protection of children at different levels of society have worked to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child (hereinafter CRC).

The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child is considered as a landmark document not only for being the first legally binding child rights treaty but also because it also covers a full range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Only two countries have not ratified: the United States of America and Somalia. Two optional protocols have been attached to the CRC: the Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts; and the Protocol on the Rights of the Child, on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Pornography. Both these Protocols entered into force in 2002.

Problems like socio-economic inequality make children easy targets of abuse. More than 300,000 children worldwide, some younger than 10 years old, are voluntarily or often forcibly engaged in armed conflicts. Also, more than one million children, mainly girls, enter the multi-billion dollar commercial sex trade every year. In addition, State sovereignty makes it harder for the international community to enforce children's rights.

### **Actors working to protect the rights of the child**

#### *States parties*

The CRC requires that States parties submit an initial report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child two years after ratification and a periodic report every

five years thereafter. However, limited budgets, insufficient coordination, bureaucracy, lack of effective monitoring and limited human resources prevent an effective implementation of the CRC.

#### *NGOs*

NGO coalitions have proven to have a greater impact on governments: NGO reports prepared by coalitions rather than individual NGOs are much more difficult to disregard or discredit and therefore tend to lend greater legitimacy to information submitted on rights violations. However, NGOs do not always participate on an equal footing. Generally, issues are addressed from the top down and not from the bottom up. Although it is agreed that there must be child participation in decision-making, there is no agreement on the meaning and modalities of "child participation". The lack of organization in this sector has at times hindered NGOs' ability to respond promptly to crises and confront political situations.

#### *Other actors*

United Nations agencies, research institutions, as well as political parties, and the local community are involved in children's rights protection. However, the lack of coordination hinders their capacity for collective action.

### **Recommendations**

- In the CRC, it is established that children are the direct holders of rights. Therefore, there should be a child-centred approach in all programmes and actions aiming at protecting children's rights. The United Nations should urge all governments to incorporate children rights teaching in their national primary and secondary school curriculum.
- Adopt an Optional Protocol allowing for individual complaints, as, inter alia, under the Convention of the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and the Optional Protocol of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- In the absence of an existing procedure allowing for individual complaints, it is recommended that independent, regional, or local offices are established to receive complaints, and to report to the CRC on trends or particular issues of concern stemming from such complaints.
- Implement action of international organizations, NGOs and the local community: it is necessary to combine top-down and bottom-up methods of implementation of the CRC.
- Channel and share information more efficiently among the different actors. A regular annual summit should be organized to this end.

### **Discrimination against refugees and migrants**

Discrimination against refugees also remains a constant dilemma addressed and combated by the United Nations. In 1951, The *Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* was adopted by United Nations Member States. Since then a number of regional treaties have been added, including the *Cartagena Declaration* in Latin America and the treaty *Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa*. These additions have created different definitions of a “refugee” and thus directly impacted the human rights of refugees in different parts of the world. New classifications of *Internally Displaced Peoples* and *Migrants* have also emerged since the original declaration. Therefore consideration of their rights is often neglected under current legislation.

The themes to be considered are: rights to access and open borders with respect to the situation in the EU, North Korea and Afghanistan; rights of Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs); the right to voluntary return; and the rights of Migrants.

#### **The current situation**

- It has now become very difficult for migrants to enter the EU due to visa requirements, rigorous checks of entry papers by airline staff, and the EU desire to strengthen border controls prior to the accession of new States.
- Because of the mutual agreement on repatriation between North Korea and China, the Chinese Government has taken a rigorous border control and repatriation policy on North Korean refugees.
- The United Kingdom has introduced a policy of forced repatriation of Afghans to their home country in which security, as well as economic and social stability, are not in place. IDPs living within Afghanistan are unable to seek refugee status in the neighbouring countries of Iran and Pakistan due to policies of border closure. The human security of IDPs living on the Afghanistan border areas is still a major concern that is not being adequately addressed.
- The rights of migrant workers were previously protected only in national legal frameworks. The Convention on Protection of Migrant Workers adopted by the United Nations entered into force in July 2003. This placed the human rights of migrant workers on the international agenda.

#### **The contravention of human rights**

Current legislation regarding the stated themes contravenes human rights in the following ways:

- *Article 14 (1) UNDHR*. By effectively preventing migrants from travelling, the people are prevented from seeking asylum.

- *Trafficking protocol*. It has been made so difficult to enter States that migrants resort to “trafficking”. The trafficking protocol to the *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* renders trafficked persons victims of a grievous human rights violation - inhuman and degrading treatment.

### **Recommendations**

- The United Nations should explore ways to promote open borders on a global scale to ensure people a right to enter another country to seek asylum and escape persecution. This will give support to article 14 and reduce the necessity for human trafficking.
- IDPs should be afforded the same rights and security by Member States as those given to refugees under the 1951 Convention. All States should follow the *United Nations Guiding Principles on IDPs*.
- The United Nations should work to make the *Convention on Protection of Migrant Workers* a real instrument for protecting work migrants and should emphasize not just liberties and rights of migrant workers but also their dignity.
- All refugees and IDPs have a right to return solely by voluntary means and forced repatriation should be discouraged by Member States. Financial support should not be used as an incentive for return but to enable reintegration into economic and social stability in the home country.

### **Minorities and discrimination**

Recently there has been heightened interest in issues affecting minorities as ethnic, racial and religious tensions have escalated, threatening the political and social stability of States as well as their territorial integrity.

Sexuality is integral to human beings throughout their existence. Each person has his or her own personal values regarding their view of intimacy, love and sex. Therefore we have another minority - sexual minority.

Homosexuality is in many countries considered a sin, or an illness, an ideological deviation or a betrayal of one's culture. The repression that lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) people face is often defended by governments or individuals in the name of religion, culture, morality, or public health. By dehumanizing gay people and marginalizing them a climate is fostered in which the public will not be concerned about the human rights of LGBT people.

A sizeable minority of the world's population<sup>4</sup> continues to be denied full membership of that “human family”. Lesbian and gay people are imprisoned under laws which police the bedroom and criminalize a kiss; they are tortured to extract confessions of “deviance” and raped to “cure” them of it; they are killed by “death squads” in societies which view them as “disposables”; they are executed by the State which portrays them as a threat to society.<sup>5</sup>



These are violations of some of the fundamental rights, which the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) seeks to protect. We address questions on LGBT issues of: equal right to life; equal freedom from arbitrary arrest; equal freedom from torture and ill-treatment; equal freedom of expression and association; equality before the law; and equality in dignity and rights.

### **Legal survey**

The right to freedom from discrimination is affirmed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in its articles 2 and 7 and by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in its articles 2 and 26. The United Nations Human Rights Committee, in the 1994 case of *Toonen v. Australia*, held that ICCPR protections against discrimination should be interpreted to bar discrimination based on sexual orientation.

### **Recommendations for Governments**

- **Repeal laws criminalizing homosexuality.**
- **Condemn torture, whoever the victim.**
- **Provide safeguards in custody** - Ensure that all law enforcement personnel, prison staff, medical personnel and other relevant officials are trained in how to protect lesbian, homosexual, bisexual and transgender people from torture or ill-treatment.
- **Prohibit forced medical “treatment”** - Medical “treatment” of LGBT people against their will and aimed at changing their sexual orientation or gender identity is cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment which could amount to torture.<sup>6</sup>
- **End impunity** - Ensure that all allegations and reports of torture or ill-treatment on account of real or perceived sexual identity are promptly and impartially investigated and those responsible brought to justice.
- **Protect LGBT people against violence in the community** through police and judicial authorities.
- **Protect refugees fleeing torture based on sexual identity** - Governments should review and amend asylum policies and practices so as to ensure that anyone with a well-founded fear of persecution on account of their real or imputed sexual identity is able to seek and obtain asylum in accordance with the United Nations Refugee Convention.
- **Protect and support LGBT human rights defenders.**
- **Strengthen international protection** - States should ratify relevant international instruments, which provide for the prevention of torture and ill-treatment, without reservations, and consider adopting a resolution on sexual minorities and human rights within the framework of the Commission of Human Rights.

- **Combat discrimination** - Governments should secure greater legal protection against homophobic abuses by adopting constitutional and other provisions prohibiting all forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.<sup>7</sup>

### **Recommendations for intergovernmental organizations**

- United Nations human rights monitoring bodies should seek out information on torture, ill-treatment, and other abuses based on sexual identity. Their work should include an analysis of patterns of torture and ill-treatment and recommendations to address these, building on the work done by the United Nations special rapporteurs and on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; by the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on human rights defenders; and by the United Nations Human Rights Committee<sup>8</sup> and the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These bodies should also promote examples of good practice.
- The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees should issue guidelines on asylum claims based on sexual orientation or gender identity, promoting awareness of best practice in certain jurisdictions.

**“Neutrality always helps the oppressor not the victim!”**

### **Discrimination and the relationship of economic, social and cultural rights**

Economic, social and cultural rights are inherently concerned with equality and non-discrimination, in that these rights seek to ensure equitable<sup>9</sup> distribution of society's resources. In addition, articles 2 (2) and 3 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) expressly provide that States must guarantee these rights without discrimination. The principles of non-discrimination and equality are therefore central to the core concept of economic, social and cultural rights, as stressed by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights when considering States Parties' reports under the ICESCR.<sup>10</sup>

### **A case study - the Gypsies of Romania**

Romania has several laws that prohibit discrimination and seek to guarantee the rights of the Gypsy minority, including the Romanian Constitution.<sup>11</sup> The Government has adopted strategies to improve the situation of Gypsy minorities, including a 10-year programme to improve public administration, social security, health, economy, child protection, education, culture, civic participation, etc.

*In reality, these initiatives are not perfectly implemented and as a result Gypsy minority problems remain a fundamental issue. The majority of these problems concern the economic, social and cultural rights of the Gypsy community. Gypsies are disadvantaged in education, employment, housing, health care, and social services. This involves both direct and indirect discrimination. For example, a lack of flexibility in the Romanian educational system results in a fairly homogenous programme that ignores the needs of children from different backgrounds.*

*In spite of governmental strategies and legislation against discrimination, the marginalization and discrimination of the Gypsy community continues because the economic, social and cultural rights of this community are not fully realized.<sup>12</sup>*

### **The relationship with civil and political rights**

*In the absence of adequate fulfilment of economic and social rights, people cannot fully participate in democratic activities and the process of elections.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the absence of adequate realization of economic rights, in particular, may lead people to elect authoritarian regimes, thereby limiting their civil and political rights, as has been seen in some of the “new democracies” of Eastern Europe.*

However, within the current United Nations system, there is significantly more attention given to civil and political rights and certainly a better mechanism for the enforcement of these rights. The Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) allows the Human Rights Committee to hear individual complaints regarding violations of civil and political rights. However, no such mechanism exists under the ICESCR. Although suggestions have been made for an Optional Protocol draft to the ICESCR, the development of an individual complaints procedure for this Convention still appears a long way off.

### **The role of other institutions**

Another way in which a human rights approach can be implemented into the process of economic development is by “tying” human rights to economic assistance and economic agreements. One way of doing this is by making financial assistance from international institutions, such as the World Bank, IMF, etc. conditional on certain human rights issues being addressed. At the same time, the negative effect on sovereignty of States and the potential influence of international economic institutions on the development of the content of human rights, has to be closely monitored. However, such an approach is desirable as long as it is based on human rights criteria, and involves transparency and accountability by lenders.

Another possibility would be to encourage the insertion of human rights clauses in economic agreements (bilateral or multilateral). This could be a useful mechanism to promote a human rights approach to globalization. Such a clause would provide that the agreement could be suspended, or not performed by the other party, where one party fails to uphold fundamental human rights.

### **Recommendations**

- Legal reform - reforming the treaty bodies and the treaties themselves, to ensure they provide better protection of these rights. The Working Group notes that various moves have been made within the United Nations system to reform the treaty bodies.<sup>14</sup> The Working Group welcomes these proposals, but also suggests that considerations should be given to more radical reforms to the treaty body procedure, for example, combining all the existing United Nations human rights treaties, in particular the ICCPR and ICESCR into one treaty with an enforcement mechanism of the kind currently used by the ICCPR, provided that the current content of the treaties is not amended.

- Extralegal approaches, including utilizing the process of economic development to enforce human rights. The experience of the 1980s and 1990s demonstrated that the United Nations human rights bodies had a limited impact on debates and discussions taking place within and outside the United Nations system regarding global economic development and global economic governance.<sup>15</sup> Although this situation is changing, the Working Group notes that if economic development is to be harnessed to improve economic, social, and cultural rights, there is a need for the United Nations human rights bodies to become further involved in this process and to insert a “human rights perspective” into global economic governance. This is particularly the case given that the work of NGOs in the area of economic, social and cultural rights is not as well developed when compared to NGOs’ work for the promotion of civil and political rights.
- Encourage the linkage of economic assistance to human rights conditions, and the insertion of human rights clauses in economic agreements.

### **Human rights’ peace and security issues**

*“We are building a society that is consistent with the idea of human rights. The norms are applicable to all societies regardless of the political/cultural background.”*

Bertrand Ramcharan, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights

The lack of implementation of human rights principles in many parts of the world remains an issue of great concern to the United Nations and other relevant organizations, for it has been widely believed that denying human rights is at the root of most conflicts in the world. It is therefore viewed that in order to prevent conflicts, greater emphasis should be placed on early warning mechanisms regarding the respect of human rights, and on enhancing national human rights institutional capacities. As Mr. Archibald MacLeish has stated: *“Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that defences of peace must be constructed.”*

The United Nations could do more than it has done historically to educate the public as to the necessity and possibilities of resolving conflicts without violence.

### **Conflict resolution**

Conflict prevention can be achieved by transmitting human rights values to all levels of society. In this sense human rights awareness should be recognized as a crucial tool to promote conflict prevention and the culture of peace around the world. Nowadays insufficient financial resources are allocated both to the area of awareness-raising and to the monitoring of actions which have been implemented. Apart from these two factors, there is a lack of worldwide cooperation to achieve an effective human rights education system.

Conflict prevention also includes other aspects such as diplomatic initiatives, preventive deployment of United Nations forces, economic measures and transmitting knowledge.

Nowadays the nature of conflicts has changed. International conflicts have given way to conflicts at the national level. The role of central government in many countries is weakening.

Most of the conflicts arise in less developed countries, which are often characterized by poverty and a low level of development, low level of education, health and access to food and adequate housing, weaker or non-existent institutions, poor governance and violations of human rights. Conflicts destroy development both at the micro and macrolevel.

The ideal way to avoid conflicts is to turn the culture of reaction into a culture of prevention, targeting the root causes of a conflict. Since the chances of prevention being successful are greater in the early stages (the conflict is more manageable, costs are lower), human rights education should be recognized as a vital component of the prevention process.

The conflict resolution process depends on the realities and challenges of the existing period of the international system, which greatly influences its goals, forms and methods. Taking into account the fact that the nature of conflicts has changed from being inter-State to intra-State new global problems have appeared, which are connected primarily with human rights violations. Nowadays human rights are perceived as core universal values and their violation is considered a major threat to international peace and security. The United Nations Charter reaffirms faith in fundamental human rights. They are no longer considered the exclusive concern of individual Member States.

The modern conflict resolution process includes three main forms - peacekeeping, peace enforcement and peace-building, use of which depends on the characteristics of the conflict.

### **Peacekeeping**

**Definition of peacekeeping:** "United Nations presence in the field (normally including both military and civilian personnel), with the consent of the parties, to implement (or monitor the implementation of) arrangements relating to the control of conflicts (ceasefires, separation of forces, etc.), to the resolution of conflicts (partial or comprehensive settlements), to protect the delivery of humanitarian relief situations of conflict, and to alleviate human suffering and create conditions and build institutions for self-sustaining peace."<sup>16</sup>

**Need for change:** The United Nations was founded, in the words of its Charter, in order to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". Meeting this task is the most important challenge of the Organization, and, to a very significant degree, the measure by which it is judged by the peoples it exists to serve. In 2001, the United Nations and in particular the DPKO has been faced with the challenge of providing guidance and support to 15 active peacekeeping operations with a total of 35,000 military troops and 8,000 civilian police staff mainly to control intra-States conflicts, while at the same time conceptualizing and implementing its internal reform process. Without significant institutional change, increased financial support and renewed commitment on the part of its Member States, the United Nations will not be capable of executing the critical peacekeeping operations that the Member States assign it in the coming months or years.

The third generation of Peacekeeping Operations: **These operations are trying to find a multidimensional approach that connects the classical need of maintaining peace with the promotion of human rights instruments and standards.**

**Peacekeeping and human rights: the Brahimi Report and the Programme for Reform.**<sup>17</sup> The report drafted by Mr. Lakdhar Brahimi, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to Afghanistan, recognized that the human rights components within peacekeeping operations have not always received the political and administrative support that they required. The Secretary-General's Programme for Reform stressed that the United Nations human rights programme should be enhanced and fully integrated into the broad range of peacekeeping activities.

### **Peace enforcement**

At the present time the emergence of human rights as the central item on the world policy agenda has generated support for peace enforcement operations, including the so-called humanitarian interventions.<sup>18</sup> The international community is recognizing the interdependence of the preservation of international peace and security and the protection of human rights. Hence, there is an increasing trend towards intervention in the affairs of other States in response to grave and systematic human rights violations.

The Security Council's authority to use force under the Charter has been primarily limited to two different types of collective use of force: enforcement actions and humanitarian interventions. Peace enforcement, which derives clearly from Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, permits the Security Council to decide on mandatory sanctions or military operations to enforce peace when there is a perceived threat to international peace and security.<sup>19</sup> The United Nations Charter Articles 1, 55 and 56 specifically refer to the violation of human rights as a potential threat to international peace and security. Peace enforcement, which was rarely used during the cold war period because of the extensive use of the veto-power of the Permanent Members of the Security Council, is being used more frequently nowadays. One of the forms of peace enforcement is the concept of humanitarian intervention,<sup>20</sup> which is based on the primacy of human rights over the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity. It presupposes that gross and widespread human rights violations cannot remain the internal affair of any State. Therefore, peace enforcement operations and humanitarian interventions differ from any peacekeeping mission by two factors: they do not require the agreement of the government as to where military action will take place and they include the use of military force.

**Legal basis:** The case for humanitarian intervention by the United Nations is grounded in the duty and responsibility of the Security Council to take every measure necessary to maintain international peace and security. It is on the basis of Article 39 that the Security Council decides if a threat to peace exists. The principle of non-intervention in the domestic or international affairs of States is grounded in Article 2 (7) of the Charter. While the principle of non-intervention certainly exists today it has been weakened by norms and conventions as well as by the growing idea that through collective United Nations authorization, governments have the right to intervene when human rights violation might threaten international peace.<sup>21</sup>

**Historical perspective:** In the post-cold war period the international community has increasingly intervened in conflicts where violations of human rights were a major component. These were the cases of Iraq (1991), Somalia (1992), Rwanda (1994), Bosnia-Herzegovina (1991-1995), Kosovo (1999) and East Timor (1999). Indeed, there are strong moral and political arguments for legitimizing collective military intervention in the name of "humane" purposes: a

moral necessity, the failure of peaceful means of resolving the conflict. On the other hand, there are arguments against such operations: the question of legality, the use of force potentially constituting an even worse human rights violation: the absence of a clear definition of humanitarian catastrophe, the problem of abuses, the unwillingness of the international community to undertake the same measures in all conflict zones across the world where widespread human rights violations occur.

### **Peace-building**

Post-conflict peace-building is the continuation and necessary conclusion of peacemaking and peacekeeping. It means more than the mere stopping of violence via the signing of a peace agreement; based on the Supplement to former Secretary-General Boutros Ghali's "*Agenda for Peace*",<sup>22</sup> post-conflict peace-building rather "*seeks to prevent the resurgence of conflict and to create the conditions necessary for a sustainable peace in war-torn societies*".<sup>23</sup> In order to achieve the aim of people living peacefully together after conflict, peace-building encompasses a wide range of political, developmental, humanitarian and human rights programmes, in short a multi-agency approach that operates at all levels within the communities. This requires short and long-term action.

(Re-)establishment of a civil society through respect for human rights. **As respect for human rights is the prerequisite for sustainable peace, human rights must be infused throughout all peace-building activities and they are not separable from other reconstruction efforts (namely democratization or reconstruction of police forces).**

### **Resettlement of refugees**

The United Nations plays an important role in facilitating the voluntary and safe repatriation of refugees not only because they have the right to return to their country but also because they can contribute to rebuilding the nation. Repatriation is not enough; the United Nations and other international organizations are also responsible for providing a balanced distribution of humanitarian assistance (food, water, medicine, and other assistance) that displaced human beings were deprived of throughout the war.<sup>24</sup> This aspect is quite complicated because of the bureaucracy of the international organizations system and the lengthy negotiations and communication process between the various protagonists. This is one of the reasons for the failure of African peace-building missions.

### **The role of women**

Women and girls are particularly affected by conflicts. From sexual violence and displacement to the denial of the right to food and health care, situations faced by women in wartime are often unique. On the other hand, women have an essential influence within the communities, which is so powerful that it brings groups to reconciliation. According to the Secretary-General, women "have proved instrumental in building bridges rather than walls. They have been crucial in preserving social order when communities have collapsed".<sup>25</sup> Yet, public opinion simply fails to appreciate the potential contribution of women to peace and security. Therefore strengthening the role of women in grass-roots peace-building should be put on political agendas in order to raise international and national political awareness.

## **Rebuilding a culture of human rights through education**

It is widely accepted that Human Rights Education (HRE) significantly contributes to reducing the risk that a conflict be re-ignited. Within peace-building, the concept includes both the training of teachers and the retraining of the trainers; it also includes the training of government officials and of government-related groups that are exposed to human rights violations such as judges, State prosecutors, policemen and advocates. This is because international staff usually has a limited amount of time in a country, so it is vital to find local institutions that can take the responsibility for sustaining and developing the programme. Certainly, human rights education should also be undertaken in schools and universities. Education also encompasses the development of new democratic networks to promote information, social and professional support and continuous learning. Via monitoring, the United Nations can ensure that human rights education becomes an integrated part of education as a whole. In this way the United Nations will have accomplished an important step in the promotion of human rights awareness.

## **Case studies: Peace-building efforts in West Africa and in Tajikistan**

Whereas peace-building missions in West Africa (Guinea-Bissau, Great Lakes Region) have widely been perceived as unsuccessful, the Tajikistan mission implemented after its civil war with the former Soviet Union has been largely successful. In order to avoid a relapse into war, the United Nations Tajikistan Office of Peace Building (UNTOP) was established following the withdrawal of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in May 2000. The presence of UNTOP, the promotion of peace-building concepts via a series of peace-building public forums called the "political discussion club", open channels of communication and the successful employment of ex-combatants have all contributed to the success of the Tajikistan mission. On the other hand, African peace-building missions tend to fail for a number of reasons. Many countries are too vulnerable to implement decisive peace-building measures and many governments lack resources for former soldiers that have not been paid, which can aggravate the situation. Leaders have often had little previous experience of democracy and a huge portion of the population is desperately poor.<sup>26</sup> In this situation a committed involvement of all international organizations to promote long-term missions is required. They have the responsibility of helping a new government in its first steps if they want to reach their goals.

## **Recommendations**

### **Conflict prevention**

1. The United Nations should conduct studies of Human Rights programmes to be implemented in schools, with the aim of elaborating a global programme of peace education at all levels. Diminishing ethnocentric/religious distinctions might be included in the school curricula for the younger generation. Prevention of excessively nationalistic behaviour should be cultivated through school programmes centred on the history of populations. The interchange of students of different ethnic groups should be encouraged.
2. A UNESCO study shows that there is no clear correlation between the knowledge level of students and their attitudes. More important are other changes in the classroom situation



which have significant effects on the social attitudes and values of schoolchildren. Peace education is thus linked to character formation. For example, schools could experiment with democracy in class, and children could define the duties and rights of each member of the class.

Subsidies could be provided for school programmes elaborated in collaboration with the United Nations and its work on “peace education”.

Educational methods must be adopted in order to teach the child how to judge without being influenced by personal, religious or social prejudices. UNESCO should intensify study programmes, seminars and missions to transmit human rights values to students.

3. Community service should be proposed to youth so that they learn the values of altruism, responsibility and tolerance.
4. The United Nations should intensify its communication policy in order to illustrate its work in the field. School conferences and presentations about United Nations work would instil human rights values in minds and young hearts of young people.
5. Better cooperation is required within the United Nations and with those NGOs that also intervene in the field of education.
6. Member States should pay more attention to the study of foreign languages in order to stimulate interest in different cultures - “to read the world as an open book”.
7. The United Nations and Member States should promote the concept of volunteerism. They should facilitate information to young people regarding opportunities to become engaged in field actions among their own or other communities.
8. Member States and the United Nations should work to avoid “desensitization” by the mass media, (i.e. the recurrent depiction of violence and sexual contents).
9. The United Nations should sponsor international educational programmes for the future leaders and policy makers of developing countries, at every level, in all possible fields, in order to fulfil the needs of the State as well as of civil society.
10. The United Nations should pay special attention to the training of local journalists, who play an important role in the development of a democratic State.
11. The United Nations should finance reintegration projects for former rebels.
12. Economic support should be provided to those developing countries where there is a higher probability of conflict occurring.
13. All relevant actors, including religious leaders and representatives from women’s organizations, ethnic and national minorities, should be encouraged and enabled to participate in conflict prevention negotiations.
14. In order to predict a possible conflict at the earliest possible stages, coordination between the local State security services and the Security Council should be improved.

## **PEACEKEEPING**

### **1. A legal framework for peacekeeping**

An additional Protocol to the Charter should be drafted to define peacekeeping operations and their legal basis.

- The United Nations Standby Arrangements System should be included in the Protocol. Member States should pledge to update information on the resources they can make available for the standby system every three months, as opposed to every year. More accurate information on resources would significantly speed up planning and implementation of peacekeeping operations, as well as contributing to their success.
- Member States should pay their peacekeeping contributions on time and in full. If they fail to do so, the rotation of non-permanent members on the Security Council should be slowed down.

### **2. Better organization led jointly by DPKO and OHCHR**

- If human rights are to form a bigger part of the mandate of the peacekeeping operations, OHCHR must be involved right from the start. The DPKO and the OHCHR should have the joint responsibility of investigating conflict zones and should advise the Secretary-General on the necessity of PKO. The Secretary-General should then advise the Security Council on the nature of the mandate. This will improve the adaptability of the operation.
- DPKO and OHCHR should be jointly responsible for the implementation of a mandate.
- Tasks should be delegated wherever possible to United Nations field agencies, which report to both OHCHR and DPKO, who then report to the Security Council.

### **3. Earlier involvement of civil society and NGOs**

- NGOs should be involved higher up in the decision-making structure of the United Nations: they should be consulted within the framework of the Fourth Committee. Security Council “leads”(responsible for particular countries) should be in regular contact with relevant NGOs.
- NGO representatives should accompany PKOs to monitor HR as independent observers. These representatives should issue a public report based on their observations. This should reduce the infringement of human rights by United Nations peacekeepers.<sup>27</sup>
- Official documents should be distributed to United Nations peacekeepers on how to interact with civil society organizations and NGOs.

#### 4. Financing of peacekeeping operations

The budget approval procedure is very protracted. The Secretariat must first prepare a mission budget, which can take weeks. This must then be submitted to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). If approved, it is then sent to the General Assembly's Fifth Committee and then to the General Assembly. Finally, letters are sent to Member States for their approval. Within the framework of the present system rapid deployment of troops is difficult. Although we believe that the main problem is the lack of political will, it is necessary to streamline the administrative process.

- A Rapid Deployment Fund for Peacekeeping Operations should be established to finance the preparations and first stage of the operation until the corresponding committees approve the budget.
- Borrowing from peacekeeping funds to cover Regular Budget Deficit should not be continued.

#### Peace enforcement

1. **Realistic mandates:** peacekeeping and peace enforcement need clear definitions and should be separated. Each peace enforcement operation should have a precise mandate on its substance, duration, organization and place.

2. **Creation of codes** that should be applied to each peace enforcement action in order to eliminate its negative effects include:

- Motives and goals - the basis of the right to intervention: internal conflicts and civil wars which can have international repercussions such as regional destabilization and refugees; massive violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. The main goal of peace enforcement actions must always be the normalization or improvement of the human rights situation in the target country.
- Conditions: Incapability or unwillingness of a State to prevent or to end the sufferings of its own population.
- Criteria: justice of intervention, existing level of danger, legal basis, proof, neutrality, impartiality, transparency and consensus.
- Intervening actors: The primary role and responsibility of the Security Council must be recognized. Action must be collective or collectively legitimized. There must be a clear code of distribution of functions and responsibilities between the United Nations and regional structures.
- Instruments - using military force as a last resort: Before resorting to force the international community must exhaust every other alternative means of settling a conflict.

- Sufficient resources and independent financing that can allow the United Nations to fulfil its responsibility. Independence in financing of peace enforcement operations can be assured via an annual assessment. Money should be collected before operations start and not after.
  - The principle of proportionality: a given military action for humanitarian purposes should produce more good than harm.
3. **Political will of the Member States**: the United Nations should show Member States its capacity to coordinate peace enforcement operations efficiently and must increase transparency within the Organization. These changes will increase trust among the Member States and its internal structures.
4. **Reforming peace enforcement structures**: the United Nations should create new structures or adapt the existing ones to the needs of this kind of operations. For a more successful peace enforcement operation the political and humanitarian aspects should be brought together. It is necessary to strengthen the peace enforcement units and to create an independent peace enforcement structure, an international voluntary army force and a department for humanitarian aspects. Better coordination of DPKO is also necessary.
5. **Respect for international humanitarian law**: peace enforcement operations are armed actions even if they do not fall within the framework of international or internal armed conflicts. International humanitarian law should be applied in United Nations peace enforcement operations.
6. **Education of United Nations personnel and troops**: the United Nations should ensure a better education of peacekeepers in order to make them less vulnerable and more flexible when the situation changes from peacekeeping to peace enforcement.
7. **Strengthening early warning mechanisms and the appointment of a special representative for peace-building and peace enforcement**: it is necessary that the United Nations strengthen the early warning mechanisms and appoint a Special Representative on peacekeeping and peace enforcement to intervene before the conflicts reach a dangerous level.

### **Peace-building**

Collective action requires a needs assessment jointly undertaken by all relevant specialized agencies of the United Nations. These missions should determine the requirement of external assistance to support the affected country's economic and social recovery, as well as the reconstruction of a civil society which respects universal human rights principles over the short and medium term.<sup>28</sup> The process of building solid foundations for peace may take a long time. This has to be considered from the very beginning of a conflict in the affected country when diplomats take up their work. Thus, a long-term strategy has to be planned ahead of all further steps that are to be taken.

Measures to strengthen the role of the peace-building offices of the international community and ensure long-term planning strategies include:

1. **Coordination and tailoring of programmes to fit the specific conflict.**
2. **Collaboration between the United Nations, Member States and civil societies, other United Nations agencies (UNDP) and non-governmental/regional organizations:** it is important that there is coordination between the United Nations and the international financial institutions (World Bank and IMF) to help the Government of the affected country generate the required revenue. Even more significant is the dialogue between international actors, local government and civil society.
3. **Enabling discourse between the different ethnic and secessionist movements:** the aim of such constructive discourses should be the development of a deepened awareness of how we can enhance the quality of life for all peoples. All levels of society should be included in the post-conflict strategy.
4. **Civil-military cooperation in order to create a durable peaceful environment:** the military should guarantee a secure environment so that civilians can restore an effective and legitimate government and build a pluralistic civil society.
5. **Continue commitment to the issue of human rights, especially indigenous rights and ensure the protection and promotion of human rights by the newly inaugurated Government:** the Department of Political Affairs, in its capacity as central authority for post-conflict peace-building, has to make sure that the Government strengthens civil society organizations and conforms to international human rights standards. A National Commission on Human Rights should be created with the power to investigate human rights violations and to implement legal action against abusers.<sup>29</sup> It moreover should be composed of national and international human rights observers.
6. **Ensure the inclusion of women at higher levels in the peace-building process:** given the potentially significant role of women in peace-building activities, the international community should take collective action in order to enable a stronger presence of women at formal peace negotiations. By including women at official conferences and in the decision-making processes they may influence the ongoing debate.

## **WORKING GROUP ON ENVIRONMENT**

Increasingly, the international community views environmental concerns as inextricably related to poverty, human rights, and sustainable human development. The Working Group on Environment considers these linkages, focusing on three aspects of environmental concern. Each section provides a brief introduction to the issue and makes recommendations for strengthening the United Nations capacity for collective action addressing it.

The first section deals explicitly with the links between poverty and the environment, highlighting the role of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and the importance of energy in improving the livelihood of the poor. Providing energy to a growing number of people will have a negative impact on the environment and must be addressed by policies that would minimize these effects.

The second section turns to the Global Compact, recommending that it more fully institutionalize multilevel partnerships based on corporate social responsibility (CSR) into all areas of the United Nations mandate. A proposed Medical Waste Management Initiative (MWMI) is discussed in detail.

Finally, issues of environmental and human security are considered and recommendations are made for creating an international body called the "green helmets" to monitor compliance to environmental security conventions and protocols.

## **I. POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **Energy and poverty**

Energy management has a crucial role to play in achieving sustainable development. Even though access to energy is seen by poor people as a priority, it must be recognized that the demand for energy is a derived demand. That is, people consume energy in order to benefit from the services that it provides them with, i.e. for cooking, heating, lighting, water pumping, etc. In the effort to make energy available to all so as to meet their basic needs or for commercial purposes, all energy carriers and all energy converting technologies need to be weighed up against each other and considered as potential ways of supplying the energy requirements of the population. These include conventional biomass fuels and the cleanest, most efficient energy technologies available.

Energy is a major factor contributing to the supply side of a national economy, and lack of energy services can create bottlenecks and restrict development considerably. Since commerce is seen more and more as a catalyst for development, providing an energy infrastructure to the poor will be an important achievement in empowering poor people and giving them the capabilities to rise out of poverty.

It is inevitable that the world will continue to rely on fossil fuels and biomass for many years to come, and the introduction of cleaner energy sources will have to be done in a way that complements these other energy sources in a national energy-mix package. The energy-mix chosen will have to take into consideration local needs and local supply of energy sources, as well as national circumstances. But as we look towards the long-term future, if we wish to

achieve sustainable development in the strong sense of the term then our energy focus should lie with an environmentally benign energy sector. Against common assumption, we can start moving in this direction in poverty-stricken areas immediately in a cost-effective way, using pro-poor win-win policies.

### **Energy and poverty links**

All people need access to a range of energy sources in order to satisfy their energy service needs: cooking, heating, lighting, transport and communication. Indeed, equity of access to basic energy services could be considered a human right. However, the number of people currently without access to energy services is two billion, most of them living in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

Most poor people currently meet the bulk of their inanimate energy needs by collecting fuel wood and other biomass. For example, in South Indian villages, typical families spend two to six hours a day collecting wood. Poor people need to dedicate a large portion of their time and effort in order to gather such resources. Modern energy services will relieve populations that live under the poverty threshold from physical stress and provide increased access to goods and services that will allow poor households to focus instead on productive activities that generate income.

Poor people often have a limited choice of technologies that convert energy to useful services, and the technologies most readily available to them are typically inefficient or of low quality, as well as a hazard to their health. Indeed, traditional use of biomass for household and rural purposes is inefficient and detrimental to the environment and human health. The combustion of biomass in poorly aerated spaces generates harmful pollutants such as particulates and carbon monoxide that directly affect humans and are among the greatest causes of death and ill health among the poor. In Asia and sub-Saharan Africa the health impact magnitude is comparable to that from inadequate water supply and sanitation.

To halve the proportion of people living on less than \$1 a day by 2015, access to affordable energy services is a prerequisite.

### **Energy and the promotion of sustainable development**

The absence of adequate, affordable, reliable, safe and environmentally benign energy services can be a severe constraint on sustainable economic and human development. Access to clean, efficient energy services can promote development through increasing health care by powering transport to health clinics, ensuring reliable heating, lighting, sterilization and refrigeration of medication; facilitating the expansion of locally owned businesses that will create employment opportunities, and increasing the possibility of microenterprise start-up; allowing an improved agricultural sector, with much increased productivity; allowing an increase in the working day and studying beyond daylight hours, etc.

The links between energy and poverty reduction run both vertically (policy level to local level) and horizontally (cross-sectorally), and are not all yet understood.

## **The UNDP's approach to sustainable energy**

This outlines four energy priorities, but due to lack of space we will solely focus on two: (1) promoting clean energy technology; (2) increasing access to financing for energy.

### **Strategies for increasing clean energy access to the poor**

Improved energy efficiency and use of cleaner alternatives can help to achieve sustainable use of natural resources, as well as reducing emissions, which protects the local and global environment. Only a minimum amount of energy will be required to satisfy basic consumption needs. Currently, very poor people are getting their energy supply from firewood, crop residues, manure and animal and human energy. Medium poor households are getting their energy supply from diesel, coal, charcoal, kerosene, biogas and wood. These, however, are not currently being used in the most efficient manner, or even at sustainable consumption levels, and are not the cleanest energy sources.

With regard to climate change, by 2020, carbon dioxide emissions in the developing world are expected to surpass those in the industrialized countries, even though developing countries are projected to use less energy than industrialized countries at that time [EIA-DOE]. The large rise in GHG emissions is mainly a result of an increasing reliance on coal, the most carbon-intensive of the fossil fuels. Coal is abundant and therefore inexpensive in many of the developing countries, which have the highest expected rate of economic and energy growth.

Currently, there is almost a 1:1 correlation between GNP per capita increase and primary energy use. Models predict that with current growth rates energy consumption in the developing world will increase from 140 Quad BTU in 2001 to ~1,000 Quad BTU by 2025 [EIA-DOE] if no measures are taken.

Although oil and coal will continue to dominate the transport and electricity generation sectors respectively, increased use of cleaner energy carriers such as Natural Gas and Hydropower, in addition to newer and more efficient conversion technologies, will lower the carbon intensity of the economies of developing countries. Increased R&D in innovative ways of meeting energy needs for the poor using these cleaner options is badly needed.

Nevertheless, even in the best case scenario, forecasters predict a substantial increase in GHG emissions, which will greatly aggravate the climate change problem. LDCs need to take better advantage of the renewable energy options available to them. Use of indigenous renewable resources, combined with efficient supply and use of fossil fuels, and with cleaner technologies, can help reduce the environmental effects of energy use and help LDCs make a technology leap that avoids lock-in to more polluting fossil fuel technologies. At the same time, careful management of energy resources, such as forests for fuel wood and water for hydropower, is important to promote economic growth, protect ecosystems and provide sustainable natural resources. Each LDC should find the energy-mix that fits best with its country's resources, whilst increasing the share of cleaner technologies within this energy-mix. It is the responsibility of more developed countries, however, to transfer and promote knowledge of clean technologies to less developed countries.



## **Financing decentralized energy options**

Most poor people live in areas that lack any access to energy infrastructure, so that the provision of energy services will involve very ambitious and costly infrastructural projects. This situation is worsened by the fact that most public and private investments concentrate on large-scale projects and centralized energy options which offer better profit possibilities, so that the capital requirements will be difficult to meet. Furthermore, expansive energy distribution systems particularly bypass the poor in remote rural areas since urban areas can be connected to grid systems, whilst rural areas are more difficult to be covered by centralized energy systems. In order to overcome this inequality between urban and rural energy supply, there is the need to introduce decentralized energy options which provide sustainable energy services for the rural poor and which exploit local resources in a more efficient way.

The problem with these decentralized energy options, especially those using renewable energy sources, is that these technologies have high initial capital cost and low recurrent (fuel) costs relative to fossil fuel based technologies. This poses a particular barrier for poor people to acquire them and reduces the incentives for large energy companies to invest in them.

One way around this large need for capital finance, and its lack of supply would be to set up a multilateral international fund that pools finance from more developed countries, geared towards clean energy projects in less developed countries. Existing private renewable energy investment funds, such as the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Fund (REEF), however, are likely to prefer investing in short-term centralized energy options rather than in decentralized small scale ones. Therefore, to promote investments in sustainable small scale projects for the rural poor there is a need to set up special funds for this kind of high risk and low profit projects which have no access to commercial financing. The UNDP Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (GEF-SGP) was originally designed for these kind of projects aimed at energy conservation, energy efficiency and adoption of renewable energy up to a maximum grant amount of US\$ 50,000 per project. Yet, the percentage of projects related to climate change funded to date only account for 16 per cent.

In addition, finance for energy infrastructure building for the poor can be attracted through the Kyoto Protocol, which provides the right incentives for private firms in more developed countries to finance projects that reduce carbon dioxide emissions in less developed countries. Some of these private-public partnerships or private-private partnerships can be geared towards converting dirty energy technologies to cleaner energy technologies through the Clean Development Mechanism or the Joint Implementation tools. The Kyoto Protocol will also provide the right incentives for increased R&D in cleaner technologies, which will eventually lower their costs and make them more accessible and a special provision could be added which includes providing clean energy as another way for firms to reduce their carbon dioxide emission statistics.

## **Other requirements**

Interventions need to be tailored to the specific local environmental, social, economic and institutional contexts. This requires local plans and actions driven by local demands and priorities and implementing initiatives. Put differently, policies that support the positive aspects of poverty eradication and development and reduce their negative impacts on the environment

need to be based on strengthening local democracy and civil society, on making local governments accountable, and on making sure that the needs and priorities of both rural and urban poor groups are taken into consideration. Indeed, clear guidelines have to be provided to Governments on how to promote the conditions that make it possible for the poor to reduce their own poverty.

Experimenting with innovative approaches is a very important issue to reach different MDGs, including the energy and poverty aspects, but it is also very important to draw lessons from all of these approaches. Countries must have possibilities to learn from each other, and this is where the UNEP can play a mediating role.

Governments and communities must have access to modern information and communication technology via the reduction of the digital divide. Information about the most energy efficient technology needs to be disseminated to LDCs, and these countries need to understand the options available to them. Maybe the establishment of a computer-based data system with data on all energy related projects, including purpose, region, costs, methods and outcome will be needed for the environment agencies to work more comprehensively. This would need to be accessible to all United Nations agencies, NGOs and Governments to avoid overlapping and repeat of failed programmes.

### **Biosafety and developing countries**

Developing countries are particularly affected by agricultural biotechnology for two reasons. Firstly, the agriculture sector is often the biggest sector of their economies and therefore the basis for economic development, and secondly, a large percentage of their populations directly depend on farming for their livelihood.

The utilization of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in agriculture has the potential to reduce both poverty and the negative impact of agriculture on the environment. Potential benefits of genetically modified (GM) crops include increased tolerance to stress factors like poor soils and droughts; a reduction in the amount of pesticides and herbicides needed; and an improvement in the nutritional value of certain crops (e.g. vitamin A rice). The introduction of GMOs therefore will allow developing countries to provide food for growing populations, through higher crop yields, without the need to increase arable land. This higher productivity and enhanced crop quality could enable developing countries to compete more effectively on international markets. In essence therefore, the use of biotechnology could contribute to securing and improving the livelihood of people living in rural areas, and to ensuring food security for the entire population.

In spite of these potential benefits, it is important to acknowledge that a number of risks are also associated with GMOs. These include:

- GMO varieties may transfer genetic material and associated traits to conventional crops, develop aggressive weeds, displace conventional varieties and harm biological diversity.
- GMO varieties may not be adapted to unexpected climatic conditions and therefore threaten food security.

- GMOs are covered by specific patents, and hence the system of food production may be altered as farmers are required to buy new seeds every season. Certain seeds therefore may be too expensive for poorer farmers. In a situation where food shortages are not caused by insufficient production levels but rather by inequity, concentration of food production and inadequate access to resources by the poor, this might lead to further deterioration of food security.
- Human health can be affected by changes in toxicity, allergenicity and antibiotic resistance.

Developing countries are particularly concerned by the risks of GMOs because they lack the legislation and local expertise on biosafety and food labelling. In this regard, it is noteworthy that a recent Multilateral Environment Agreement (MEA), the Cartagena Protocol addresses this issue of biosafety and hence is particularly relevant to developing countries. This Protocol will now be addressed in some detail.

### **The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety**

The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity will come into effect on 11 September 2003. The Protocol aims to ensure that there is adequate safety in the transboundary movement and use of living modified organisms (LMOs) - the result of modern biological technology, which may have adverse effects on biological diversity and human health. This Protocol is internationally regarded as a vital tool for sustainable development and the safeguarding of biodiversity. The Cartagena Protocol will ensure that the development and the use of biotechnology are subject to adequate and transparent safety measures, known collectively as biosafety.

The backbone of the Protocol is an approval procedure - the Advanced Information Agreement (AIA). It also facilitates the exchange of information on LMOs. It is noteworthy that five types of LMOs are not subject to the AIA: most pharmaceuticals for humans, LMO-FFPs (Food or Feed or for Processing), LMOs destined for contained use, LMOs that have been declared safe by a meeting of the parties, and LMOs in transit to a third country. In effect therefore, these exclusions, particularly the exclusion of LMO-FFPs mean that the AIA covers only a small percentage of traded LMOs. That is, only those that are destined for direct introduction into the environment of the importer such as seeds and micro-organisms. It is important to note that LMO-FFPs are covered by a separate, less restrictive procedure in article 11 of the Protocol.

The Protocol contains reference to a "precautionary approach", which states that preventative action can be taken even without full scientific certainty regarding the particular LMO under question. In addition to this, a BioSafety Clearing House was established in order to facilitate the relaying of all decisions. Although the Protocol acknowledged the potential benefits of modern biotechnology, it reaffirmed the precautionary language in principle 15 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. This is largely because these countries are bereft of the capabilities to both assess the risk and to deal with any harmful situations should they arise.

Negotiations for the Cartagena Protocol took almost five years, and during this process there were three main negotiating positions. Firstly, the Miami group (Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, United States, Uruguay) which was composed mainly of the exporters of GM products were opposed to bureaucratic approval procedures, arguing that in effect these represented a barrier to trade. The Like-Minded group, composed of developing countries, supported a strong Protocol, largely because of both the unknown effects of LMOs on the environment and human health, and their inadequate regulatory and institutional capabilities to deal with LMO imports. Finally, the third main negotiating group was the European Union, which argued for a strong Protocol including the coverage of risks to human health. This stance was largely in response to strong pressure from both the public and the press.

From our case study we conclude that collective action is needed and must be encouraged especially regarding the following issues:

### **Recommendations**

- Urgently work towards the establishment of capacity-building machinery at the national, regional and subregional levels. This will involve determining the information requirements at all levels in order to ensure that technological transfer is efficient, in order to promote and facilitate scientific and technical cooperation activities under the clearing-house mechanism.
- Support efforts to improve the functioning, transparency and information flow regarding economically important organisms that pose environmental or health concerns via development of international centres for genomic databases for example, and reference laboratories.
- Some developing countries fear that international standards of environmental protection (e.g. the Cartagena Protocol) could be used by developed countries as a means of disguised protectionism. The EU being the most fervent advocate of environmental regulations should, in order to increase the credibility of its stance, revise its agricultural policy and commit itself to reduce domestic subsidies that are based on quantity of production. This measure would significantly improve market access for developing countries producing according to these standards.
- It is crucial that the Special Rapporteur on the right to food and the Special Rapporteur on the right to health, both of whom were nominated by the Commission on Human Rights, address the issue of GMOs and their impact on food safety and human health. In this regard, it is paramount that a separate procedure be established to deal specifically with the issue of food safety.
- The WTO should adopt Sustainable Impact Assessments (SIAs) as efficient tools to ensure that trade agreements simultaneously benefit poverty eradication policies and environmental protection.

- Given the fact that there is an inherent tension between the provisions of the Protocol and the World Trade Organization (WTO) rules, it is imperative that there is agreement with respect to the primacy of this Protocol and the WTO agreement, with regard to trade and the environment.
- A formalized procedure must be established for dispute settlement of cases dealing with the Cartagena Protocol. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity must be involved in negotiating bodies that are responsible for implementation and development of trade agreements.
- Efforts should be directed towards achieving better coordination and communication between environmental actors and trade negotiators. Financial measures should be aimed at ensuring that negotiators of all parties are on a level playing field.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> FGM is practised in about 40 countries (28 alone on the African continent), mostly in East and West Africa and parts of the Arabian Peninsula, with variations of 5 per cent to 98 per cent. Circa 6,000 girls are circumcised on a daily basis, in order to attenuate sexual desire and preserve chastity and fidelity, for psychosexual, sociological, “hygienic and aesthetic”, religious and mythical reasons. Today, an estimated 100 to 140 million girls and women have undergone FGM, with a further 2 million at risk every year.

<sup>2</sup> Ninety-seven signatures, 174 ratifications, accessions and successions (90 per cent of United Nations Member States) as of 1 July 2003 - Luxembourg.

<sup>3</sup> Seventy-five signatures, 53 ratifications and accessions, as of 3 June 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Gay people are 3-10 per cent of Earth’s population, meaning the human family contains 185.5 million-618.4 million gay men, women, and children. If gay individuals united to create a country, it would be the fifth to third largest nation on Earth (note: current studies so far indicate 6-8 per cent, meaning 371 million-494.7 million human beings, or the third largest nation on Earth).

<sup>5</sup> There are still some countries where homosexual acts are subject to the death penalty (Mauritania, Sudan, Yemen, Pakistan, Chechen Republic, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan). The three last mentioned are known as countries where homosexuals have been executed in the past 10 years.

<sup>6</sup> In 1992 the World Health Organization (WHO) erased “homosexuality” from its diagnosis list. It was also erased from Diagnostic and Statistic Manual No. 10, because “homosexuality” is considered to be a discriminatory diagnosis.

<sup>7</sup> In the United States, the debate over gays in the military does not hinge on whether gay people can and do serve their country well, but whether gay people can serve openly. Elsewhere around

the world this debate has already concluded - gay soldiers now serve openly in countries such as Israel, Spain, Austria, Belgium, Ireland, Denmark, France, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

<sup>8</sup> This year a draft resolution on human rights and sexual minorities was for the first time ever tabled at the Commission on Human Rights (by Brazil who had tried to push the issue also at the 2001 World Conference against Racism). The resolution was rejected, or rather the discussion was “postponed” until next year.

<sup>9</sup> As to the meaning of “equity” see United Nations document E/CN.4/2003/25, which concludes that while there is no definition of “equity” in any of the human rights instruments, there is nonetheless a collective responsibility to ensure equity at the global level, and a corresponding separate responsibility to ensure equity within individual societies.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, the Committee’s consideration of the second periodic report by Israel in May 2003 (E/C.12/2003/SR.18), in which the Committee expressed concern that Arabs and other minority groups did not enjoy economic, social and cultural rights to the same extent as other citizens of Israel.

<sup>11</sup> Also Law 48/2002, incriminating all forms of discrimination; and laws ratifying many international conventions.

<sup>12</sup> See E/CN.4/2003/5/Add.2, 3 February 2003.

<sup>13</sup> See, in relation to education, general comment No. 13 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: “Education is both a human right in itself and an indispensable means of realizing other human rights. As an empowerment right, education is the primary vehicle by which economically and socially marginalized adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty and obtain the means to participate fully in their communities.”

<sup>14</sup> See, in particular, the Secretary-General’s reform proposals and subsequent work, including that of the Second Inter-Committee meeting and the 15th meeting of Chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies, which have suggested amendments to the reporting process and follow-up procedures.

<sup>15</sup> See the Report of the Independent Expert on Structural Adjustment.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.un.org/chinese/work/peace/rapid/sys.htm>.

<sup>17</sup> Report of the Panel on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations A55/305-S/2000/809, released on 23 August 2000.

<sup>18</sup> The unacceptability of gross and systematic human rights abuses, civil wars leading to genocide, severe oppression of the minority groups represent the strong compulsions for the international community to undertake peace enforcement operations and humanitarian interventions.

<sup>19</sup> The question of United Nations intervention in modern intra-State conflicts, which endanger global peace and security, has been answered positively in “An Agenda for Peace”.

<sup>20</sup> Humanitarian intervention may be defined as the injection of military power by the international community in the internal affairs of a State which has as its purpose the relieving of grave human sufferings.

<sup>21</sup> B. Ramcharan, *Strategies for the international protection of human rights in the 1990s*, in *Human Rights in the World Community, Issues and Action*, p. 275.

<sup>22</sup> United Nations document A/50/60-S/1995/1.

<sup>23</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 1 (A/54/1).

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.una-uk.org/UN&C/peacebuilding.html>.

<sup>25</sup> Press Release SG/SM/7598 of 24 October 2000, available at <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2000/20001024.sgsm7598.doc.html>.

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.una-uk.org/UN&C/peacebuilding.html>.

<sup>27</sup> See Peace Women report on the rape and murder of a 12-year old Kosovo-Albanian girl by a United Nations peacekeeper; also reports on violations committed by United Nations peacekeepers in Somalia and Haiti. <http://www.peacewomen.org/un/pkwatch/pkwatch.html>.

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/Rwb.nsf/0/748E9C42622856FBC1256B430045B74C?OpenDocument>.

<sup>29</sup> Abdul Tejan-Cole, “Human Rights under the AFRC in Sierra Leone”, 10 *African Journal of International and Comparative Law* (1998), p. 494.

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<http://www.biowatch.org>; <http://www.europaworld.org>.



## II. MEDICAL WASTE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE: A MODEL FOR MULTILEVEL COLLECTIVE ACTION

*"Let us choose to unite the power of the markets with the authority of universal ideals. Let us choose to reconcile the creative forces of private entrepreneurship with the needs of the disadvantaged and the requirements of future generations."*

Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations

Unsound management of medical waste poses risks to human health and the environment. Burgeoning populations and improved access to medical care are resulting in massive increases in the volume of medical waste and are leading to death and disease, particularly among the poor.

In countries that have not yet adopted incineration or waste treatment measures, bandages, instruments, syringes, and other potentially infectious items are disposed of in landfills or oceans, exposing adults and children in contact with garbage to infection and serious diseases. While there are documented cases of such infections and deaths in the developing world, more developed countries also face risks to their environment and human health because of waste disposal into oceans.

The need for responsible management of medical waste, although a significant problem, is tractable when addressed by a multilevel strategy of collective action. Medical supply firms can play a key role by cooperating more extensively with the United Nations and its organizations, including the WHO and UNEP, Governments, and health-care facilities in reducing harmful waste and improving disposal methods.

The Global Compact, a programme of the United Nations for public-private sector cooperation, is an appropriate body for creating, in cooperation with the WHO and UNEP, a Medical Waste Management Initiative (MWMI). More generally, however, the Global Compact should harness more extensively inherent private sector incentives for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by institutionalizing the multilevel approach to collective action within the United Nations system and initiating new partnerships with precise, issue-specific goals and targets. Using the MWMI as a model, this report makes generalized recommendations for strengthening the Global Compact.

### **What is medical waste?**

Although a variety of definitions exist, this report uses a broad formulation of medical waste that includes two components originating from public and private healthcare. Eighty-five per cent constitutes general waste (e.g. administrative office waste), while 15 per cent is hazardous (e.g. used sharps). Hazardous or potentially infectious waste includes sharps, dressings and instruments, blood and body parts, radioactive waste from X-rays and chemotherapy, chemical and pharmaceutical waste, and other by-products of medical treatment.

### **Health and environmental threats posed by medical waste**

Contact with infectious surgical instruments and syringes, usually by medical professionals and support staff, waste management workers, and impoverished adults and

children who earn their living scavenging in garbage, is the most common means of exposure. Accidental contact by inappropriately disposed medical waste has the most significant direct impact on human health. Indirect effects on health through environmental degradation are also widespread and include the pollution of air, water and soil as a result of incineration and disposal of waste in landfills. These effects can be transboundary in nature.

Research indicates that significant ill effects are created by medical waste. In 2001, scientists discovered that the release of dioxins into the air through incineration affected the sexual development of children living near plants in India. A survey by the Japanese public health authorities in 1986 showed that 67 per cent of waste handlers in hospitals and 44 per cent of waste disposal workers outside hospitals had reported injuries from sharps. In 2000 it was estimated that throughout the world, 8 to 16 million hepatitis B, 2.3 to 4.7 million hepatitis C, and 80,000 to 160,000 HIV infections occur yearly from re-use of syringe needles without sterilization.

### **Methods for sound medical waste management**

In order to decrease the impacts of medical waste on human health and the environment, the principle of “environmentally sound management” should be employed. The Basel Convention defines the concept as taking “all practicable steps to ensure that hazardous wastes are managed in a manner which protects human health and the environment against the adverse effects which may result from such wastes” (art. 2.8). A more widespread use of alternatives to incineration, which is currently the most common way to treat medical waste, is needed. Five alternatives to incineration have been developed: autoclaving, chemical disinfection, microwave irradiation, encapsulation, and special engineering landfills.

Where untreated waste is disposed of in landfills and oceans, the cost effectiveness and environmental impact of incineration or its alternatives can be improved through the separation of waste upon disposal. According to UNEP and WHO guidelines, training, motivation, and supervision of staff, as well as the provision of resources for segregating and labelling hazardous waste and the encouragement of recycling are important components to sound medical waste management.

Despite efforts to promote these guidelines, however, lack of financial resources and technical expertise hamper effective management of medical waste in most developing countries and is unlikely to be adequately addressed by their governments in the near future, unless the international community takes action.

### **Corporate Social Responsibility for collective action**

In recent years, many large corporations, including medical supply companies, have begun to recognize the need to operate in a more responsible and environmentally sustainable manner. This trend, known as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), is gaining momentum and visibility. Formed a decade ago, one industry group, *Business for Social Responsibility*, has nearly 450 corporate members including Wal-Mart, Microsoft, Sony, Pfizer and Shell. Although the majority of CEOs in the private sector focus primarily on the bottom line and shareholder wealth, behaving responsibly is not incongruent with adding value to a firm. “If reputation and brand matter as much as experts say, companies with a mission that

goes beyond making money will do better when it comes to engaging their workers and attracting loyal customers”, according to one expert.

The concept behind sustainable growth is to build an economy that generates wealth while helping the environment and human development. Several frontrunners in this movement include FedEx, which recently announced plans to convert its fleet of trucks to hybrid-electric diesel engines, Starbucks, which is buying coffee that is less disruptive to rain forests, and Citigroup and Barclays who have agreed to meet environmental and social impact standards when financing public works projects, particularly in developing nations. As far back as the late 1980s, McDonalds began reducing waste by 300 million pounds per years. Multinational firms are in a powerful position not only to set an example for all players in their respective industries, they can also make a difference in the countries in which they have a presence.

### **Capitalizing on CSR**

The Global Compact is well suited to capitalize more intentionally upon the incentives of CSR in order to assist United Nations organizations in fulfilling their mandates. Although WHO and UNEP are already active partners with the private sector in a number of health and environmental projects, several features of the Global Compact give it a comparative advantage for institutionalizing CSR and multilevel collective action in all United Nations activities across issues and sectors. With nearly 1,000 companies already participating in the framework, the Global Compact embodies well-established networks for cooperation with the private sector. Furthermore, the Global Compact has already invested considerable resources into publicizing its efforts and those of its corporate partners.

The principle of proportionality and an analysis of the issue suggest that strengthening the Global Compact is an effective and efficient way to increase the use of CSR by United Nations agencies. Because business representatives have extremely limited time, it is recommended that the Global Compact hire individuals on specific initiatives, such as the proposed MWMI, to serve as facilitators, bringing needs to the attention of corporations and facilitating their dialogue, often in the most pragmatic sense of arranging meetings, with United Nations agencies.

### **Medical Waste Management Initiative**

The MWMI serves as a model for Global Compact initiation of multilevel cooperation on a single, well-specified issue, that of medical waste management. The first task of the MWMI is to create an expert working group under the auspices of the United Nations Global Compact, including key medical supply companies, WHO, UNEP, and other actors, to formulate a framework of action for the growing risks presented by unsound practices.

Global Compact principles seven, eight, and nine, which originate from the Rio Declaration, and principle one, based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, serve as a foundation for sound management of medical waste.

### **Incentives for private sector participation in the MWMI**

There are several key reasons why firms, especially the first few partners, may wish to become associated with the MWMI and participate in life-cycle responsibility for their products.

**Reputation:** By participating, companies stand to gain or improve their reputation as conscientious safe guardians of human dignity and ecology. Potential expected returns include increased patronage by environment-sensitive clientele and growing market share. For the first-movers in the MWMI, there may be added advantages in terms of improved reputation and leverage in agenda setting.

**Protecting the environment:** The MWMI addresses degradation of the environment and human health before it becomes more unmanageable and costly.

**Long-term impacts:** By showing foresight and a long-term perspective, companies are demonstrating to the market and their clientele their commitment to building lasting relationships and to preserving the earth for future generations, not only on an environmental level, but also in the process of human capital formation and technology transfer.

**Opportunity for continuous improvement:** Many businesses answer to both internal and external performance measures. By implementing environmental responsibility, companies add another dimension to evaluating their success. The drive for better performance, increased efficiency, and lower cost can also include more ecologically responsible waste management.

**Why this programme is different from others:** Many firms have emerged to offer environmental management services and consulting. Because MWMI harnesses the expertise and the internationally recognized reputation of United Nations bodies, companies can show they are taking their commitment to the highest level possible. The MWMI also allows participants, instead of outside sources, to define the scope and agenda of the Initiative.

## **The Initiative**

The Global Compact will identify key stakeholders and create a working group for which a select number of representatives from government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), hospital or health associations, medical supply and management companies, WHO and UNEP will be invited to discuss the first initiative and formulate a concrete action plan. The first informal meeting could be organized under the Global Compact and jointly funded by WHO and UNEP. If one of these organizations, or the Basel Convention expresses interest, it may assume the responsibility for coordinating future actions of the Initiative.

Once the working group establishes a forum for action, four key goals should characterize its orientation:

1. To develop, in cooperation with participants, a concrete plan with clear priorities and quantified targets, taking into account different interests and resources of the stakeholders.
2. To work in a transparent way by making information and reports available to the parties and the public using the Global Compact homepage, as well as engaging in active marketing and publicity campaigns recognizing the contributions of participants.
3. To identify potential funding sources outside the United Nations system and ideally from a single donor country particularly interested in sound medical waste management.
4. To support self-monitoring by participants, aided by the knowledge and expertise of NGOs.

## Conclusion

This report proposes that the Global Compact should harness more extensively inherent private sector incentives for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by institutionalizing the multilevel approach to collective action within the United Nations system and initiating new partnerships, such as the MWMI, with precise, issue-specific goals and targets.

By identifying well-specified, tractable issues, the Global Compact can engage collective action in a given sector or industry to find efficient and effective solutions to a range of human development issues. Other problems, such as recycling of computers, might be addressed with a model of the multi-stakeholder forum between the United Nations Global Compact and the private sector.

## III. ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

The ecologically destructive nature of the modern world provides a backdrop for discussing the relationship between the environment and security. Studies of Environmental Security (ES) show how environmental degradation and resource scarcity can be a source of tension, threatening international security.

### Definition of ES

The report uses the definition adopted by the American Council for the United Nations University (AC/UNU) Millennium Project, which defines ES as environmental viability for life support. Based on this definition the issue of environmental security has been divided into two clusters. The first cluster focuses on environmental damage that is directly or indirectly caused by military sources. The second cluster pertains to conflicts and environmental degradation as a result of non-military sources such as resource scarcity, natural disasters, etc.

### Cluster I: Environmental damage caused by military sources

The world's militaries are a large institutional source of environmental degradation. The environmental damage is caused by the *direct impact of warfare* on the environment as well as by the impact that results from the *preparation for warfare*.

#### Direct impact of warfare

Deliberate degradation of the environment as a military strategy involves targeting strategic facilities such as nuclear power plants, dams, or oil pipes or intentionally destabilizing the environment and natural capital with the use of bombs, landmines, chemical and biological weapons or environmental modifications that cause earthquakes or tsunamis. Some examples of unintended degradation of the environment include the side effects of armament, accidents in research facilities or in the extreme, a nuclear winter resulting from nuclear arms use.

#### Preparation for warfare

Preparation for war causes environmental damage as a result of weapons testing (e.g. nuclear bomb tests in South Pacific), manufacturing and storage of weapons, and maintenance of military installations and gear, all generating toxic waste and pollution.

Apart from regular armies, there are paramilitary and terrorist groups posing an immense threat not only to human society but also to the environment, especially if they gain access to weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

### **Global tools**

Disarmament, especially in the field of weapons of mass destruction, is one way to effectively reduce actual environmental damage caused by military sources, as well as the potential for catastrophes. In order to reach this goal, the international community has adopted several conventions, protocols, and treaties and continues to negotiate new ones.

### **Recommendations**

In order to achieve States' acceptance and compliance of treaties dealing with ES, efficient verification mechanisms must be implemented:

- International verification organization: following the model of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its function as a verification body for nuclear arms control, similar organizations should be created in order to control the production of biological and chemical weapons based on the BTWC and the CWC. We suggest naming them BTWCO and CWCOC. Any other treaties dealing with weapons should implement a very strict, efficient verification and monitoring system. Moreover, monitoring should be extended to private researchers by national law.
- Following the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty, which adopted the goal of total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, (even the consideration of) the use of small tactical nuclear weapons and weapons containing radioactive material such as depleted uranium should be banned. In addition, a fixed time schedule should be adopted in which to do so.

To ensure more efficient cooperation among different actors within the United Nations we strongly recommend an overall reform of the United Nations agencies dealing with environmental security issues concerning:

- Overlapping mandates: the United Nations agencies charged with the environment agenda should redefine and clarify their mandates in order to avoid duplication of work in certain areas. The character of UNEP as a programme should be changed to that of an international organization (WEO - World Environmental Organization) with a clear mandate uniting the environmental agenda that is currently divided among various United Nations agencies.
- Funding: the competitive character of fundraising, not only for environmental projects, is an obstacle to closer cooperation among United Nations agencies.
- Feedback: implemented projects lack a stronger final assessment system built on knowledge management. We propose the creation of an evaluation unit inside WEO to collect information on current projects, provide efficient feedback, spread best practices, and make reports publicly accessible.

## The role of the United Nations Security Council

- The United Nations Security Council should adopt a resolution that would identify environmental insecurity as a threat to international peace. In order to enforce this resolution, a new type of United Nations force “green helmets” should be created. These could be controlled by the WEO using a multi-party committee for environmental security dialogue.
- The United Nations Security Council should adopt a resolution that would explicitly identify the responsibility of States involved in a conflict for an environmental degradation caused by this conflict. States should also be held responsible for the environmental damage caused by military training and exercises.

We support the ratification of the International Criminal Court (ICC) statute that identifies environmental damage as a crime. In addition, we propose the broadening of the concept of environmental responsibility from military personnel to non-state actors such as terrorist groups. Any fines collected from environmental crimes would contribute to sources of revenue for the WEO.

We propose that the WEO also deal with terrorism and create a unit that would gather information from Member States, Europol, and Interpol, as well as IAEA, BTWCO, and CWCO, in order to identify environmental security threats from non-State military actors. This unit would provide information and recommendations to the Security Council, which can then take action on them.

## **Cluster II: conflicts caused by environmental degradation**

In terms of security, professional institutions and specialized agencies are trying to find ways to link the scarcity of certain basic resources needed for human survival to conflict, violence, and resource wars over issues such as expanding and migrating populations, water access, arable land, and other environmental scarcities. On the other hand, when wealth depends on state or territorial control of certain resources, conflict, non-cooperation, and violence often appear. This phenomenon is caused by resource abundance, rather than scarcity. During the 1990s, significant concentrations of resources with a high market value influenced the stability and security of the region or a particular country. In many of these cases, the revenues from resource exploitation are contributing significantly to insecurity, providing strong financial means to acquire armaments and prolong conflict.

## **Water: collective action tools**

Worldwide, there have been many actions creating and improving collective action in the area of water resource management and conflict prevention. *The Dialogue on Water, Food and Environmental Security*, created by a coalition of international organizations, NGOs, and specialized United Nations agencies, is one of the most important recent steps.

These organizations, represented by experts from around the globe, agreed to set up and promote dialogues to reduce water conflict and find innovative approaches to water

management. In many countries and river basins, participants together with stakeholders work together to find solutions for conflicts about water and environment.

### **Recommendations**

- New ways and means to strengthen collective action in this field could be based on the water dialogue approach. Dialogue between experts will serve as a basis for changes at the political level. We recommend that these actions be extended to other resources such as forests and fisheries, which also have an impact on environmental and human security.
- The global community must improve its ability to identify emerging environmental problems and assess alternative responses. The role of the WEO would be to cooperate with international actors such as NGOs, governments, the scientific community, and civil society in order to recommend and formulate effective global, regional, and national policies on matters vital for the future stability of environmental security.

### **Environment-related collective action tools**

There are many global-scale attempts to address problems related to environmental security. Many of these approaches consider the issues either directly or indirectly, focusing on improved resource management or implementation of measures that will reduce and mitigate environmental degradation and damage to commodities.

### **Recommendations**

- Establish a follow-up mechanism led by the WEO to measure and publish the advancements and performance by each country in adopting and implementing the conventions related to environmental security.
- Ensure the participation of “green helmets” in the areas where regional conflicts might occur due to resource scarcity.

Web sites: <http://acunu.org/millennium>; <http://www.grip.org>; <http://www.iucn.org>; <http://disarmament.un.org>; <http://disarm.igc.org>; [http://www.oneworld.org/ips2/mar98/05\\_01\\_012.html](http://www.oneworld.org/ips2/mar98/05_01_012.html).



## PROGRAMME

### Monday, 7 July

- 10.30 a.m.      Welcome Address: Room VII
- Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze  
Director-General
- Ms. M. Heuze, Director, Information Service
- 11 a.m.      Information About the Graduate Study Programme: Room VII
- Ms. E. Ponomareva-Piquier, Coordinator of the Programme**
- Ms. P. Baigrie, Public Information Assistant
- 2 p.m.      Guided Tour of the Palais des Nations
- 3 p.m.      Visit to the United Nations Library and League of Nations Museum
- Ms. Ruth Hahn-Weinert, Chief, Users Services Section  
Ms. B. Blukacz-Louisferet, Chief, League of Nations Museum

### Tuesday, 8 July

- 9.30 a.m.      Introduction to Moderators and Set-up of Working Groups: Room VII
1. Environment
2. Human Rights
3. Development
- 2.30 p.m.      Working Groups

### Wednesday, 9 July

- 9.30 a.m.      **United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)**
- Mr. N. Gerard, Programme Manager**
- 11 a.m.      **United Nations Volunteers (UNV)**
- Ms. D. Verzuu**
- 2.30 p.m.      Working Groups

**Thursday, 10 July**

9.30 a.m. **Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**

**Mr. Alfonse Munyaneza, Public Affairs Officer**

11 a.m. **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)**

**Ms. G. Lung, Legal Officer, Copyright Law Division**

2.30 p.m. **Working Groups**

**Friday, 11 July**

9.30 a.m. **Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)**

**Mr. P. Garonna, Deputy Executive Secretary**

11 a.m. **Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA)**

**Mr. Sergio Piazzzi, Chief of Advocacy and External Relations Section**

2.30 p.m. **Working Groups**

**Monday, 14 July**

9.30 a.m. **United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)**

**Mr. B. Calzadilla-Sarmiento, Senior Advisor, UNIDO Geneva**

11 a.m. **International Trade Centre (ITC)**

**Mr. F. Von Kirchbach, Chief, Market Analysis Section**

2.30 p.m. **Working Groups**

**Tuesday, 15 July**

9.30 a.m. **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)**

**Mr. J. Forster, Vice-President**

2.30 p.m. **Working Groups**

**Wednesday, 16 July**

9.30 a.m. **Association of correspondents accredited to the United Nations Office at Geneva (ACANU)**

**Ms. Hedayat Abdel Nabi, President**

11 a.m. **UN/AIDS**

**Mr. M. Mahalingam, Communication Advisor  
Communication and Public Information Unit**

2.30 p.m. **Working Groups**

**Thursday, 17 July**

9.30 a.m. **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)**

**Mr. G. Magazzeni, Senior Human Rights Officer**

11 a.m. **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)**

**Mr. C. Fortin, Deputy Director**

2.30 p.m. **Working Groups**

**Friday, 18 July**

9.30 a.m. **International Organization for Migration (IOM)**

**Mr. J-P. Chauzy, Spokesman**

11 a.m. **United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR):  
“Rethinking The United Nations System: Prospects for a World  
Federation of Nations”**

**Mr. T. Murithi, Programme Officer**

2.30 p.m. **Working Groups**

**Monday, 21 July**

2.30 p.m. **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)**

**Mr. V. Parathian, Chief of Protocol**

**Tuesday, 22 July**

9.30 a.m.

**International Labour Organization (ILO)**

**Ms. A. Nesporova, Head of Employment Policy Unit**

2.30 p.m.

Working Groups

**Wednesday, 23 July**

2.30 p.m.

Working Groups

**Thursday, 24 July**

11 a.m.

Plenary: Discussion of Working Groups' proposals. Adoption of the final document

Debate coordinated by Moderators of Working Groups

2.30 a.m.

Ad hoc drafting group to edit final document

**Friday, 25 July**

9.30 a.m.

Closing ceremony, Room VII. Presentation and adoption of the final document, concluding remarks and distribution of certificates

Ms. E. Ponomareva-Piquier, Coordinator of the Programme

Ms. P. Baigrie, Public Information Assistant

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