

# UNA Westchester Global Connection



**United Nations Association of the USA (UNA-USA) Westchester Chapter**

[www.unawestchester.org](http://www.unawestchester.org)

December 2007

## *Come Celebrate the Holiday Season With the United Nations Association*

What Good Is the United Nations? Unveiling Facts You May Not Know!  
Reports on UN Programs that Slip through the Media AND  
A Concert by the Youth Philharmonic for the United Nations

**Sunday, December 9, 2:00–4:00  
Bronxville Public Library  
210 Pondfield Road at Midland Avenue**



Amidst all the clamor about what the United Nations may not be doing, come and learn about what is being accomplished in the areas of global development, democracy promotion, human rights, women's rights, the rights of the disabled, eradication of polio, reducing child mortality, maintaining peace and security, and more. In short presentations, with question-and-answer periods to follow, the audience will learn how the UN fights to make all our lives better each and every day.

After the discussion, enjoy a short performance by the Youth Philharmonic for the United Nations, a project of Friendship Ambassadors Foundation, directed by conductor George Mathew. Mr. Mathew conducted the Requiem for Darfur concert at Carnegie Hall, which featured Mia Farrow, and Beethoven's Ninth for the Pakistani earthquake victims, also at Carnegie Hall. He is also assistant conductor of the Brooklyn Philharmonic and on the conducting staff of the Manhattan School of Music. FAF's youth orchestra is made up of

middle and high school students from the Westchester and Fairfield county areas. The project has been lauded by the U.S. Congress, with particular congratulations from Senator Hillary Clinton and Representative Nita Lowey. The orchestra has had a day named in its honor by Mayor Ray Nagin of New Orleans for its free-to-the-public concerts and development efforts in New Orleans since Hurricane Katrina.

A reception with refreshments follows the concert.

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## ***UNA Westchester President's Letter***

Dear Friends,

When I joined the UN in 1966, the UN presented a very low profile. The euphoria of its creation had passed, and the Cold War effectively precluded UN involvement in major issues like the Vietnam War. Today the involvement of the UN in major issues, like Iraq, shows how the organization is both indispensable and vulnerable. All the while, a dedicated corps of International Civil Servants (now over 50,000) has worked quietly in the agencies of the UN System to promote the health and well-being of Americans and other citizens of the world. It is this story that will be the focus of "What Good Is the United Nations?"—our program of Sunday, 9 December, at the Bronxville Library. Come and share our story by bringing a friend.



As if that were not enough, we will also be treated to a brief concert by the Youth Philharmonic for the United Nations under the Direction of George Mathews, who organized and directed a major concert for Darfur at Carnegie Hall earlier this year. These youthful musicians have committed their time to support the UN—so the UN must be doing something good!

Your Advocacy Committee, headed by Molly Bruce, who was featured in the latest issue of *The InterDependent*, the national magazine of UNA-USA, has been actively reviewing priorities for action at the national and local level. Molly and I recently sent letters to our Representatives and Senators urging them to support a ban on cluster bombs. If you have issues that you believe should be on our list, please contact Molly.

Finally, I am still looking for people to help me with membership. In addition, I would welcome help on publicizing our events.

For March, we are planning a major event on the timely issue of Climate Change. Stay tuned.

In the meantime, the Board and I wish you and yours a joyous holiday season.

*Phil Reynolds*  
*President, UNA Westchester*

## ***Leaders in the United Nations: An Interview with Noeleen Heyzer***

Marcia Brewster, Vice President of UNA Westchester, is on assignment with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in Bangkok, Thailand. While she was there, she had an opportunity to interview Noeleen Heyzer for *UNA Westchester Global Connection*. Heyzer was recently named Executive Director of ESCAP and is the first woman to hold that position. Before that, she was the Executive Director of the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). Here is what they had to say.



**Q:** Just as background information, when was your previous posting at ESCAP? Were you also stationed at the Asian and Pacific Development Centre in Kuala Lumpur? Are you glad to be back in Thailand and to be representing the region?

**A:** I was stationed at ESCAP starting in 1982. I was responsible for preparing the regional inputs to the 3rd World Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985. The topics included migration and trafficking, the cultural dimensions of development, and many other issues. I was also responsible for preparing the regional inputs on youth employment for the International Youth Year, also in 1985. Later, I headed up the successor to the Asia-Pacific Centre on Women and Development, which became part of the Asian and Pacific Development Centre in Kuala Lumpur.

I have been based in New York for the last 12 years, and am very happy to be back in Asia and Thailand. The Asia-Pacific region is the most dynamic in the world and presents great challenges and opportunities. It is a region of unbelievable diversity—62 countries, ranging from Iran to global powerhouses such as China, India, and Japan to the small island states of the Pacific. Of these countries, 34 are considered countries with special needs—least developed states, land-locked countries, and small island countries. Many of them are very vulnerable, having emerged from conflict situations or natural disasters.

Although the Asia-Pacific region has the highest growth rates in the world, there is also increasing inequality here. While the region has pulled the most people out of poverty, it is also home to more than half of the world's poor, at 640 million. How Asia and the Pacific resolve some of their economic and social development problems can affect the other regions.

Q: As you say, the Asia-Pacific region is the most dynamic in the world at the moment. The ESCAP work in the economic and social sectors can be extremely useful for Africa, the Middle East, and even Latin America. Do you think that your global background will be helpful in promoting this type of interregional cooperation?

A: Yes, increasingly people view the regional-global nexus as very important for development. The Asia-Pacific region can play more of a leadership role, as it has the expertise, experience, and resources to assist other developing regions. The collective strength of this region can be very dynamic for South-South cooperation. This is also in line with a revitalization of the regional economic commissions. Although I have only held this position for two months, we have already had a meeting among the Executive Secretaries of all the regional commissions and we are speaking with one voice, especially on the issue of financing for development. I have invited the others to come to ESCAP following the Climate Change Summit in Bali in December.

Q: It must be strange for you to return as Executive Secretary of ESCAP after having been Executive Director of UNIFEM, where you were one of the world's best-known voices on behalf of women. Will you be able to continue to support women's issues and women's rights in Asia and the Pacific in this new role?

A: As Chair of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for the United Nations system, I am able to bring together all the agencies present in the region. I have initiated the idea of a Gender Theme Group, which would bring together the expertise of the UN system and its partners in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment. I envisage a "Gender on Demand" program, which would provide advisory services to countries that need assistance with gender components of their national Millennium Development Goals efforts. For example, maternal mortality rates in the region account for 50 percent of the world's total and have remained stagnant. Our regional group includes the World Health Organization, the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS, the UN Population Fund, the UN Development Programme, the Asian Development Bank, and all the others. There is no reason why we cannot improve that situation.

Q: Many people at ESCAP were very excited to hear about your appointment as Executive Secretary. There is a feeling that this is quite a male-dominated institution and that you will be able to provide a new perspective. Can you give us some more thoughts on that new perspective?

A: It should also be remembered that I am also an Under-Secretary-General of the UN, and that ESCAP's role is as part of the UN family. I am looking at ESCAP as the regional hub for catalyzing inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific. Our regional group will deal with transborder issues, including climate change, energy and water security, migration, and trafficking, among others.

I would like to see a more integrated approach at ESCAP, and I think my global perspective is an asset. I bring in the external view, including that

of women in the communities. And I see tremendous scope for building partnerships and many opportunities to make a difference. To begin with, we can collectively start to tackle what I see as four imbalances that are reflected in widespread inequality—imbalances in economic, social, ecological, and security areas.

Q: I understand from some of the junior staff that you have been having discussions with them and asking them for their ideas. They really appreciate this initiative on your part. Will you continue to hold regular consultations with staff?

A: Yes, indeed, I have very much benefited from the excellent ideas that I have heard in my conversations with the staff. The junior staff are doing a great job, and I want to use some of their ideas in shaping the future of ESCAP. I intend to continue the conversations with them and all staff.

13 November 2007

### ***Peacekeeping: Moving Gently in Darfur***

After years of calamity, there is some tentative hope for progress in Darfur as the year 2007 draws toward a close. With the major world powers failing to take action, the United Nations has begun to play a conspicuous role. The situation, however, is still far from settled. Indeed, at times it seems that new complications arise at every turn.

Darfur, a vast, arid region in the west of Sudan, has been the scene of fighting and atrocities since 2003. In a dispute that began over land use, a rebellion by African farmers has been violently suppressed by government-sponsored militias, known as *janjaweed* (literally, “devils on horseback”), recruited from seminomadic Arab tribes. It is estimated that 200,000 people have died in the fighting, and over 2 million have been displaced and are living in refugee camps. The instability has threatened to spread into neighboring Chad and the Central African Republic.

The worst fighting occurred in 2003–2004. The African Union (AU) brokered a cease-fire in

2004 and introduced 7,000 lightly armed observers, the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), to monitor it. The fighting resumed, however, and AMIS did not have the manpower, the equipment, or the mandate to intervene to stop it.

Under growing pressure from African, American, and European diplomats, Sudan and the largest Darfuri rebel group signed a comprehensive treaty on 5 May 2006. The United Nations offered to take over command of the AMIS force and bolster it to 20,000 troops. Two smaller rebel groups, however, refused to sign the agreement, saying they did not trust the government to comply. More significantly, the rebel movement fractionated into more than a dozen groups, divided by such issues as what the role of Islam in a Darfuri government should be and whether Darfur should seek complete independence from Sudan. Each of these groups, of course, demands to be included in any final political solution.

Meanwhile, the Sudanese government rejected any military role for the UN in Darfur, contending that the UN wished to make a colony of Sudan and threatening that any non-African participation would result in “another Iraq.” In the opinion of regional analysts, the leaders in Khartoum (the capital) may have wanted to avoid a UN presence because they feared UN troops would seize certain Sudanese officials who had been indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for their role in Darfur atrocities. China, which is a permanent member of the UN Security Council and has significant investments in the Sudanese oil industry, acted to prevent any UN action that did not have the prior agreement of Khartoum.

Increased diplomatic pressure was placed on Sudan and to an extent also on the Chinese, who did not want the issue to have a negative impact on the 2008 Beijing Olympics. At the same time, UN diplomats suggested to the Sudanese that a UN peacekeeping force could be created in cooperation with the AU; could be drawn primarily, although not exclusively, from African countries; and could be restricted from enforcing any ICC indictment. In the end, Sudan

and the UN came to an agreement on stationing a new peacekeeping force in Darfur.

On 31 July 2007, the UN Security Council voted to create its first “hybrid” peacekeeping force: the United Nations–African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). With the UN having overall command and the AU having operational command, UNAMID will absorb the AMIS troops and then build the force up to 19,555 military personnel and 6,432 civilian police officers. This will be the largest and most expensive peacekeeping force ever established by the UN. Just organizing and deploying it will require several months. It was not expected to be in place before the end of the year. African countries quickly promised to provide enough infantry personnel to fill the mandate, but they could not provide the necessary specialized troops and equipment. As of mid-November, for example, no country had pledged ground transportation equipment or helicopters. It was estimated that the UNAMID force would require eighteen transport helicopters and six attack helicopters to be able to respond to emergencies in the vast desert expanse. The countries that had such equipment were engaged elsewhere or worried about the hybrid force’s complex command-and-control structure.

The next problem was making sure there was a peace to keep. UN special envoy Jan Eliasson and AU representative Salim Ahmed Salim began by bringing the Darfuri rebel groups together and encouraging them to develop a common negotiating position among themselves before dealing with the Sudanese government. The envoys also elicited promises of support from other countries in the region, including Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, and Libya. Negotiations between the rebels and the government were scheduled to begin on 27 October in Tripoli, Libya.

The complications were far from over. The government proclaimed a cease-fire in September, but the violence only increased. A particularly low point was reached in late September when combatants from a Darfuri splinter group attacked a base of the African Union troops who are there to help protect them.

After killing ten AMIS soldiers and wounding seven, the attackers looted the base for vehicles and ammunition. Some analysts ascribed the assault to growing frustration over the AU’s inability to protect the local population, or to a false belief that the AU was cooperating with the government. Others simply write it off to growing criminality and lawlessness. Most rebel groups and even the Sudanese government deplored the incident.

The peace talks in Libya also proved disappointing. The most prominent rebel leaders failed to show up. Some claimed that the government could not be trusted; others said they had still not been able to devise a common negotiating position among themselves. The president of Sudan went to Libya two days earlier to witness the signing of a peace agreement among factions from Chad but then left before the Sudanese talks were to start. The UN and AU envoys announced a postponement of the negotiations until December and then proceed to Darfur to try to coax the recalcitrant rebel leaders into participating. Some rebel leaders may be holding back in the belief that a UN military presence, when it arrives, will strengthen their position vis-à-vis the government.

Meanwhile, the government in Khartoum, while condemning the rebels, was creating more problems of its own. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon had assembled a list of fifteen countries that had agreed to contribute troops to the UNAMID force. In keeping with Sudan’s wishes, the force was three-quarters African. In accordance with protocol, he submitted the list to Khartoum for approval on 2 October. This was expected to be a pro forma exercise, but Khartoum raised objections to the inclusion of a Thai infantry battalion, a Nepalese special forces unit, and a joint Swedish-Norwegian-Danish engineering unit. By mid-November the Sudanese government had still not submitted a formal response.

While the situation still looks more promising than in the past, issues still keep bubbling to the top. Sudan is demanding UN help with development, water scarcity, and environmental

problems in return for its cooperation. A separate peace treaty between Khartoum and Southern Sudan, which fought a civil war for twenty years until 2004, periodically threatens to fall apart. Luis Moreno-Ocampo, the chief prosecutor of the ICC, has objected to the restriction on seizing indictees. Rebel leaders have suggested that the Sudanese government is insincere, cynically betting that UNAMID will fail to find adequate troops or deploy them successfully. Khartoum has also been losing control of the Arab militias, some of which have become disenchanted and joined the rebels against the government. Other *janjaweed* are said to be fighting each other to settle rival claims to territory before UNAMID arrives. Commitments of specialized troops and equipment for UNAMID must still be obtained, and a final, comprehensive Darfuri peace treaty must still be negotiated and signed.

*Scott C. Monje*

### ***Water for Life and Peace: A Program at Pace University***

Water is the source of life, for without it we could not exist. We use it for drinking, bathing, and cooking, to generate energy, and to grow our food. It gives us peace, a new perspective, tranquility. Mr. Kofi A. Annan, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, has stated that he finds solace and peace when he sits next to a clean flowing river. He likes to listen to the gurgle of the water as it runs through the riverbed. Engaged in the search for peace for humankind, he had to remove himself from the demands of his office and find peace in nature in order to have the strength of mind and spirit to continue his work.

The Pace University class “Keys to Peace: Nonviolent Conflict Resolution and Sustainable Development” was delighted to welcome Marcia Brewster, Vice President of UNA Westchester, on 23 October 2007. She spoke on the topic: “Achieving Peace through Water, Gender, and Sustainable Development.” Marcia was a senior officer in the Sustainable Development Division of the UN’s Department of Economic and Social Affairs until 2006, working in the areas of water

resources and sustainable development for over twenty-five years. She coordinated UN activities for the International “Water for Life” Decade, 2005–2015, and was Task Manager of the Interagency Task Force on Gender and Water. In other words, these are her issues and her passions.

After showing a video on the importance of water in our lives, she astounded the class by noting that the total amount of freshwater available to humankind is less than 1 percent of all the earth’s water. By the year 2025, two-thirds of the world’s nations will be suffering moderate to severe water shortages. In 2004, 1.1 billion people lacked access to safe drinking water and 2.6 billion—or 40 percent of the world’s population—lacked access to basic sanitation. Two hundred thousand people die every month from preventable water-borne diseases, a disaster sometimes referred to as the “Silent Tsunami.” In order to meet the Millennium Development Goals of halving the proportion of people who lack access to safe drinking water and sanitation by 2015, it would cost an estimated \$11–\$30 billion per year over the next decade. Putting that into perspective, the United States spends about \$30 billion every fifteen days in Iraq.

Women bear the brunt of inadequate access to water supply and sanitation. They head one-third of the world’s households and are responsible for producing 60–80 percent of the food in most developing nations. The men are more often engaged in producing cash crops for sale, migrating to cities to find work, or fighting in one of the many conflagrations around the world. Opportunities for girls to get an education and for women to use their time more productively are limited because of the need to walk long distances to fetch water. Women also face the dangers of going out alone at night to relieve themselves in the open after dark. United Nations agencies, governments, and other partners are working together to provide all people with adequate access to safe drinking water and sanitation during the International “Water for Life” Decade, which will end in 2015. Water has become a scarce resource and will become more valuable as its limited

quantities are wasted or polluted. Will the nations of the world cooperate to protect and share it—or will they fight over it? Marcia noted that history shows more evidence of cooperation than conflict over water, and she stressed that nations must learn to share and protect this essential resource, especially in Africa. We in the “Keys to Peace” class hope that they do.

*Joan Katen  
Board Member, UNA Westchester*

***In Case You Missed It...  
The Law of the Sea***

UNA Westchester sponsored an event on the Law of the Sea to celebrate UN Day at Manhattanville College. Ms. Valentina Germani, a Law of the Sea/Ocean Affairs Officer at the United Nations, narrated a PowerPoint presentation on the importance of the oceans and the development of the law governing it. Professor José Álvarez of the Columbia University School of Law discussed some of the political complications that have delayed the US ratification of the law for a quarter of a century.

If you missed it, you can still see Ms. Germani’s slides at the new UNA Westchester web site. Visit us at <<http://www.unawestchester.org>>.

***December Concert for Peace***

In addition to its participation in the UNA Westchester event at the Bronxville Library on 9 December (see page 1), the Youth Philharmonic for the United Nations will be performing a concert in Greenwich, Connecticut, on Saturday,

15 December. The program is dedicated to the people of Burma (Myanmar).

The performance will be at 7:30, on 15 December 2007, in the Greenwich High School Auditorium. The address is 10 Hillside Road, Greenwich, Connecticut. Admission is \$10 for adults and free for students.

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& Committee Chairs***

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***Our Mission:*** *The UNA-USA is dedicated to educating, inspiring and mobilizing Americans to support the principles and vital work of the United Nations, strengthening the United Nations system, promoting constructive United States leadership in that system, and achieving the goals of the UN Charter.*

***Our Vision:*** *A world in which humanity is spared the scourge of war, human rights are honored, the natural environment is protected, and the United States is a constructive member of the United Nations for the well-being of all humankind.*

**MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD! Join UNA-USA Westchester Today!**

Please enroll me as a member of UNA-USA as follows (please circle one):

- Lifetime (one-time dues payment)           \$1,000
- Patron   \$ 500
- Sponsor   \$ 100
- Member    \$ 40
- Introductory (first year only)                 \$ 25
- Student    \$ 10

In addition to my membership dues, I would like to contribute to:

- Westchester Chapter                             \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- National Office                                    \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Total enclosed                                    \$ \_\_\_\_\_
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Areas of interest (circle): Program, Advocacy, Education, Membership, Newsletter

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