

UNA-Westchester Global Connection



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

<http://www.unawestchester.org>

October 2010

Celebrate the United Nations 65th Anniversary! Meeting the Millennium Development Goals: **Westchester's Contributions**

UN DAY: Sunday, October 24, 2010; 3:00–5:00 P.M.

Community Unitarian Church*
468 Rosedale Avenue
White Plains, NY 10605

The panel discussion will be followed by a Q and A session and a reception.

United Nations Day 2010 focuses on engaging Americans in contributing to the UN's efforts, particularly in meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in developing countries by 2015. Our speakers bring a vast amount of experience with social and economic development, and will address their personal contributions to meeting several of the MDGs. They will suggest how Westchester residents may contribute to improving the lives of people worldwide.

Featuring: Outstanding Westchester citizens dedicated to meeting the MDGs:

- Dr. Susan Stukes, President of International Health Professionals Network, will speak on maternal health in Africa;
- Hon. J. Yuhanna Edwards, President of the Mt. Vernon City Council, will discuss a program in Rwanda aimed at gender equality and empowering women;
- Doris Benson, President of Bronxville Rotary, will discuss Rotary's sustainability projects.

Moderator: Reverend Carol A. Huston, Chair, Westchester Coalition on Worldwide Poverty and AIDS.

Co-sponsored by: Rotary Club Bronxville, Westchester County Human Rights Commission, the League of Women Voters, Community Unitarian Church, and World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women.

For more information, contact: Brenda Smith at bsmith0825@aol.com (914) 428-6008 or Claire Heskestad at claryenne@aol.com (845) 629-8971.

*Directions: Take the Hutchinson Parkway to Exit 25; Follow the sign to White Plains onto North St. At first light, turn LEFT onto Rosedale Ave. Go one block and look for sign. Turn RIGHT onto Sycamore Lane.

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Editors: Marcia Brewster, Scott Monje

Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

I am very pleased to be writing my first letter as president, as I just took over from Phil Reynolds at our annual meeting in May. Phil has moved to Maryland, and we miss him terribly. He did a wonderful job as president of the Westchester chapter, and we wish him well in the next phase of his life. I appreciate the confidence shown in me and am very happy to be working with such a cooperative and enthusiastic Board of Directors.



At our annual meeting on May 16, we elected a new board member, Claire Heskestad, who is a history teacher at Sleepy Hollow Middle and High Schools and an adviser to the Model UN Club. We are delighted that she and Brenda Smith have agreed to be cochairs of the program committee. Mr. Narinder Kakar will take over the position of vice president for the coming year, and he will continue as chair of the membership committee. Joan Katen, the new chair of the advocacy committee, and Karen Rockwell El-Badry were elected to a second term on the board. We are also happy to have John Lloyd and Peter Mook on the nominating committee. While John had previously been on the board, Peter is a new member and a development economist who spent many years with the World Bank. I hope you will join me in welcoming them.

The big news at UNA-USA is the impending alliance between our organization and the UN Foundation. While we are assured that the alliance will not change much at the chapter level, at the national level it will mean a consolidation of the boards of UNA-USA and the Better World Fund. There will be a virtual UNA-USA convention on October 12, when all the delegates will vote on the proposed alliance.

We are not sure what effect the merger will have on staffing of UNA at the national level, but people are already moving from their old offices. UNA-USA will certainly gain from the Better World Fund's advocacy and outreach, and the Fund will benefit from UNA-USA's grassroots membership. Scott Monje examines this issue in more depth below, and more information can be found at www.unausa.org.

The leaders of our Young Professionals for International Cooperation (YPIC) have moved on, so we are looking for some similarly dynamic young people (between 20 and 35) who might be interested in reviving this group. If you know someone, please have them contact me at mmbrewsterny@aol.com.

We are looking forward to a very exciting chapter program that will be held on UN Day, October 24, with special guests from the governor's office and other prominent Westchester citizens. The theme is Engaging Americans in the Millennium Development Goals. Please come and bring your friends (details on cover page). We look forward to seeing you on UN Day.

Marcia Brewster, President

Join Us for Advocacy Action — UN Week, October 2010!

As we celebrate the 65th anniversary of the United Nations this October 24, the Advocacy Committee of UNA-Westchester would like to ask you to help us inform the American people about all the wonderful work the United Nations does. Unfortunately, much of that work goes unnoticed and therefore unappreciated by the American public. It is up to those who advocate for the United Nations to remedy that situation. If at all possible, we would request that you ask those in charge of your place of worship whether you could speak for five minutes during UN week (between October 16 and October 24) in honor

of the United Nations anniversary to tell the parishioners about the UN and its struggle for peace and human rights. It would be wonderful to think that every synagogue, church, and mosque would welcome us as we tell about the beneficial work done by the United Nations.

Here are some talking points you may wish to include:

1. United Nations **peacekeeping and observer operations** in the world's hot spots have numbered 63 since 1948. There are 16 currently in place.
2. The United Nations has monitored elections to help keep them free and fair and thus support the growth of **democracy**. It supported elections in Cambodia, El Salvador, Kosovo, Mozambique, Nicaragua, and South Africa to name a few and provided advice and support in over 90 countries.
3. The United Nations **aids development** in the world, distributing more than \$10 billion per year to help those in need.
4. The United Nations has sent medical personnel throughout the world and has essentially eradicated smallpox and polio. Its **health initiatives** are currently centered on reducing the impact of malaria and HIV/AIDS and improving the health of children and women around the world.
5. The United Nations stands at the ready to provide **relief in case of emergencies** and disasters throughout the world. In Haiti in 2010—within 24 hours of the earthquake—UN teams were on the ground distributing food and providing shelter and clean drinking water to a million people.
6. **International standards and rules** may not always be obvious, but set by the UN, they regulate a large part of international economic life. UN agencies regulate international mail, set standards for air travel, and help make the seas more secure.

So if we didn't already have the UN, we would have to invent it!

Happy Birthday United Nations!

Please remind everyone you speak to about **UNA-Westchester's special program on October 24**, which is open to the public.

Information for this article was acquired from "Eight Areas Where the United States Benefits by Working with the UN," created by UNA-Westchester and the UNA Southern New York State Division.

Joan Katen

UNA Announces Strategic Alliance with UN Foundation

Hard economic times have compelled many of the world's institutions to adapt to new circumstances. Among them, the United Nations Association of the United States of America is making adjustments to assure a solid future. The key change is its new strategic alliance with the United Nations Foundation and the foundation's sister organization, the Better World Fund. This measure joins the financial stability and advocacy expertise of the UN Foundation with the traditions, credibility, and grassroots membership of UNA-USA.

Many of you may recall the birth of the UN Foundation in 1998. It was established by the noted entrepreneur and philanthropist Ted Turner to administer a \$1 billion donation he had announced the previous year to support UN causes and activities. The foundation's president is Timothy E. Wirth, former Democratic senator from the state of Colorado. Initially, Turner expected the foundation to operate for about ten years and then shut down. It has, however, found a niche for itself and now expects to continue operating as long as there is a need. After relying solely on the original Turner donation for a while, it now also raises outside funds on behalf of its programs.

UN Foundation programs often take the form of partnerships with other public and private institutions. This approach prompted the UN to establish the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships to manage its relationship with the foundation. That, in turn, created a ready venue for other private groups to collaborate with UN programs and led to a general increase in cooperative activities.

Many of the foundation's programs deal with issues touching on health, climate, energy, and development. Examples include the UN Foundation's collaboration with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Rotary International, the UN's World Health Organization (WHO), and other institutions in an effort to eradicate the scourge of polio. (Instances of polio fell from 350,000 a year in the mid-1990s to 2,000 in 2007.) The foundation's collaboration with the Red Cross, WHO, and UNICEF contributed to a 90 percent decline in deaths from measles in Africa. In another partnership it has helped purchase and distribute millions of bed nets treated with insecticide, which has proven to be one of the simplest, cheapest, and most effective means of preventing the spread of malaria, a disease that threatens nearly half the world's population.

Another function of the UN Foundation is advocacy and outreach within the United States on behalf of the United Nations. This is conducted primarily through the foundation's sister organization, the Better World Fund (BWF). Among other things, the BWF encourages and facilitates the engagement of U.S.-based corporations, nongovernmental organizations, and individuals in the work of the UN. UNA-USA, of course, is dedicated to building understanding of, and support for, the ideals and work of the UN among the American people. Because of their shared focus on advocacy, BWF is UNA-USA's natural partner within the UN Foundation network. While the BWF has considerable professional expertise in the field of advocacy,

it lacks a direct connection to the people, a grassroots presence. That's where UNA-USA and its national network of chapters and divisions fit into the larger picture.

At the national level, the changes at UNA-USA will be significant. The association, in essence, will become a division of the Better World Fund and will be administered by an executive director hired by that group. At the local level, the changes, if any, will be negligible. UNA chapters and divisions will function just as they have before, and they will continue to have the autonomy and freedom of action to which they are accustomed. Together, the UN Foundation, the BWF, and UNA-USA will form a formidable alliance supporting peace, cooperation, and development through the United Nations. We hope you will join us in greeting this new collaborative effort in the name of better understanding of the UN and the ideals that it works for.

Scott C. Monje

MDG Summit Concludes with Global Action Plan

Amid concerns that the historic commitments made ten years ago to free millions of people from extreme poverty, hunger, and disease would ring hollow without a renewed political action for success, world leaders concluded the UN Summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on September 22, 2010, with a solemn pledge to take concerted actions to unleash transformational change.

The world leaders representing 192 member states adopted a declaration, *Keeping the Promise: United to Achieve Millennium Development Goals*, aimed at achieving the eight antipoverty goals by the original 2015 deadline. They also announced new commitments, especially for women's and children's health, and other initiatives against poverty, hunger, and disease. Based on

examples of success and lessons learned over the past ten years, the document spells out specific steps to be taken by all stakeholders to accelerate progress on each of the eight goals. Despite setbacks due to the economic and financial crises, the declaration reaffirmed that progress has been made on fighting poverty, increasing school enrollment, and improving health in many countries, and that the goals remain achievable.

In a major push to accelerate progress on women's and children's health, a number of leaders from developed and developing countries, along with the private sector, philanthropic foundations, international organizations, civil society, and others, pledged more than \$40 billion over the next five years. The Global Strategy for Women's and Children's health—a concerted worldwide effort initiated by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon—has the potential, between 2011 and 2015, of: saving the lives of more than 16 million women and children; preventing 33 million unwanted pregnancies; protecting 120 million children from pneumonia and 88 million children from stunting due to malnutrition; advancing the control of deadly diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS; and ensuring access for women and children to quality health facilities and skilled health workers.

Underscoring the importance of Goal 8, which calls for creating a global partnership for development, the leaders expressed deep concern that efforts had fallen far short of what was needed. They emphasized that the goals were achievable, even in the poorest countries, with renewed commitment, effective implementation, and intensified collective action by all member states and other relevant stakeholders.

Apart from pledges for resources for women's and children's health, a number of other significant commitments on each of the eight goals were made by governments,

international organizations, and partners as well as by business representatives at the private-sector forum organized by the UN Global Compact. "The financial commitments made by Governments, corporations and foundations to development, and the media coverage on such issues during the MDGs Summit had surpassed United Nations expectations," said Robert C. Orr, the assistant secretary-general for policy planning. "In this environment where Governments are tightening belts at home, to be making additional investments outside their borders is really quite a significant development," he said.

During the summit, the secretary-general aimed to increase awareness and renew political commitment to the goals, secure agreement on a concrete action plan for the next five years, and give member states a chance to make specific investment commitments in several key strategic areas. "Our best estimate on those three fronts is that we did in fact meet the objectives and even exceeded them in some specific cases," he said.

Among the week's major announcements, the European Union had committed €1 billion to a fund for the poorest countries to achieve the millennium targets, China had eliminated import tariffs on more products from the least-developed countries, and Japan said it would spend \$3.5 billion over the next five years on education, Mr. Orr said.

But the biggest gain was in an area significantly lagging behind, women's and children's health, which received more than \$40 billion in concrete policy and financial commitments from a broad array of actors, including traditional donors, developing countries, corporations, nonprofit groups, and philanthropists, he said.

With fresh commitments announced during the summit, the world was on track to achieve the

millennium target on malaria, one of the leading causes of death worldwide, he said. “The fact that we can see our way to the finish line by 2015 to end deaths from malaria could be one of those major stories of the early twenty-first century,” he added.

On October 6, the secretary-general was to co-chair a meeting for the Third Replenishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. The previous week, France, Canada, Norway, and Japan had already jumpstarted that process with announcements of major funding increases, while the United Kingdom had signaled that by 2014 it would triple to £500 million its commitment to wipe out malaria.

Journalists had produced more than 28,000 stories during the week on those announcements and other aspects of the Millennium Development Goals, which traditionally received lukewarm press coverage, Mr. Orr said. They also had shed light on the plethora of mini-summits and side events that had led to concrete action.

For example, on food security, governments were more determined than ever to find ways to prevent malnutrition from unraveling huge gains in children’s health, he said. After the “1,000 Days: Change a Life, Change the Future” campaign to bolster nutrition from the time of conception to a child’s second birthday, seven countries had issued a joint statement on coordinating efforts in that area.

On climate change, more than 50 ministers had agreed on the need to hammer out during the December 2010 conference in Cancún a balanced package to foster adaptation, technology, fast-start finance, deforestation, and appropriate policy. Nicholas Haysom, director for political, peacekeeping, and humanitarian affairs in the executive office of the secretary-general, said that, during the some 100 bilateral meetings with the secretary-general last week, many

heads of state and government had lauded that and other high-level summits for being particularly timely and well targeted.

In order to stay engaged over the next five years, member states requested the Assembly to review progress made towards achieving the MDGs annually. The president of the Assembly’s 68th session was requested to organize a special event in 2013 to follow up on those efforts.

Narinder Kakar

Teaching Across Borders: A Cambodian Experience

One of the Millennium Development Goals is to improve education in the developing world. This past July, I was able to make a difference by joining Teachers Across Borders in Cambodia.

Teachers Across Borders (TAB) is a nongovernmental organization (NGO) that was set up by Australian and American educators to help train fellow teachers. It is currently active in New Delhi, India, and in four locations throughout Cambodia. In Cambodia, the ten-year program is sponsored by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports and will be phased out when Cambodian teachers are in a position to take the lead. The program is staffed by volunteers who pay for their own transportation and accommodations. In addition, it provides a stipend to the local teachers and translators who participate.

Cambodia is a relatively stable country these days, despite minor border tensions with Thailand and Vietnam. However, it harbors widespread corruption and a poor human rights record. During the genocide that took place between 1975 and 1979, when the Khmer Rouge exterminated two million people, the nation lost about 85 percent of its educators and intelligentsia. It did not stabilize until the early 1990s, when the United Nations Transitional Authority stepped in to oversee

the first democratic elections. Since then, aid has been pouring in through many international agencies and NGOs that support a variety of causes, from the preservation of ancient Khmer cultural sites to environmental concerns and the welfare of women and children.

What started as an educational interest on my part became a commitment when a colleague suggested traveling to Cambodia to train teachers. This was an opportunity to get involved personally and to make a tangible difference. In a country where classrooms hold up to 60 students in elementary schools and about 110 in high schools, textbooks and reading materials are largely nonexistent, and training is often limited to a middle- or high-school education, teachers face serious challenges.

Kampong Thom, the third-largest city in Cambodia, is located halfway between Phnom Penh, the capital, and Siem Reap with its famous Angkor temples. This past July, at the local Teacher Training Center, TAB held ten workshops led by one Cambodian, seven Americans, and 13 Australians who reached out to almost 200 Cambodian teachers, the largest number since the program's inception three years ago.

Elizabeth Graham and I headed the Secondary Social Studies workshop. Having anticipated limited access to amenities except for the use of a local shop owner's copy machine, we brought our own supplies for the activities we had planned. The room had no electricity and offered only a single whiteboard. We discovered that the ability of Cambodian teachers to acquire and practice interactive team-based learning skills and assessments was hindered by their lack of basic tools, such as scissors and glue, a world map, or paper to create a simple jeopardy board. Producing materials that could be brought back to our trainees' classrooms and used in a multitude of ways became our main focus. We also donated

every last pen and piece of paper that we had brought. This was quite a challenging situation, but the eagerness and flexibility of our trainees as well as the dynamism of our two translators helped insure the success of our mission. We are planning on going back next July and hope to get our students, colleagues, and school community involved in raising funds and supplies that will help improve education half a world away.

Claire Heskestad

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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____ Please enroll me as a member of UNA-USA at the following level:

- | | | | |
|--|---------|---|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime (one-time payment) | \$1,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Member | \$40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron | \$ 500 | <input type="checkbox"/> Introductory (first year only) | \$25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor | \$ 100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Student | \$10 |

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

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- National Office \$ _____
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- My company matches employee contributions. (My company's matching form is attached.)
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Name _____ (Please print)

Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

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Please make your check payable to UNA-USA.

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