

March 22, 2007

DPI/NGO COMMUNICATIONS WORKSHOP

Thursday, March 22, 2007, 10:00 AM – 11:30 PM

Moderator:

Juan Carlos Brandt, Chief, DPI/NGO

Speakers:

Mr. Clarence Pugh, Inspector of Operations, Operations
Department of Safety and Security at the United Nations

Mr. Michael Cassandra, Political Affairs Officer, Monitoring,
Database and Information Branch, Department Disarmament
Affairs at the United Nations

Ms. Patience Stephens, Chief, Program on Youth Division for
Social Policy and Development Department of Economic and
Social Affairs (DESA) at the United Nations

Yao N'Goran, Chief of NGO Unit (DSPD), Division for Social
Policy and Development Department of Economic and Social
Affairs (DESA) at the United Nations
a the United Nations

Ms. Carolyn Hanerau, Director, Division of Advancement
of Women at the United Nations

This was the 5th and 6th session of eight sessions held over two days for
new DPI/NGOs. I have been thru this before. I selected these that would
be most interesting to us.

1. The moderator, Juan Carlos Brandt welcomed everybody and introduced each of the speakers with their backgrounds.
2. The first Speaker, Mr. Clarence Pugh, explained the United Nations Security System now in place. He indicated that they have installed a new elaborate fire alarm system. He also went into detail as to how they handle the disabled and the assistance provided by United Nations inspectors.

3. The next speaker, Mr. Michael Cassandra stated that his office, the Department of Disarmament was approved by General Assembly Resolution 61/257 on March 15 where it was turned into an office of the Secretary-General. The head of this new office will now be called the Secretary for Disarmament Affairs. This change was supported by Civil Society.

The head of this new office is leading the push for disarmament. Their goals are the elimination of Weapons of Mass Destruction, and Conventional Weapons. They also want to establish Regional/Branch Offices. He also indicated that the Disarmament Times is looking for a new editor.

His new office is setting up a new Web site to address the small arms issues and to take initial action on small arms issues. He discussed meetings that will be taking place in Vienna, and elsewhere, to monitor and work with local NGOs on these issues. He expects that these groups will be opening up to Civil Society in those areas.

The new Web site will keep us all informed. The subjects will be divided. The Web site will be open to the public.

4. The next speaker was Ms. Patience Stephens. She is very involved in the youth program at the United Nations. It is a small program that focus on youth fifteen to twenty-four years of age. The youth involved consist of thirteen to twenty-one percent of the population in many countries.

She indicated that youth are trying to establish themselves. This United Nations program promotes this and works with member states and civil society in those areas to do this. Ms. Stephens stated that the issue of youth was very important.

A resolution was passed in 1995 establishing ten areas of the world for this effort. Five more areas were added in 2005. Her office works in these local areas with youth and NGOs, and then reports back to the General Assembly. She indicated that we can help by keeping informed and staying current. We can also help by obtaining advocacy from government officials.

She closed with the statement that August 12 is Youth Day.

5. Mr. Yao Ngoran, the next speaker, indicated that Division for Social Policy And Development is the second unit in the Department of Economic and Social Development. They deal with social issues. They produce and release technical documents of their work.

He stated that the sixth session of the “Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues of Territories, Lands and Natural Resources” will take place May 14 – 25, 2007 at the United Nations. He works with member states, Civil Society, and NGO groups. His office acts as a gateway for knowledge and experience.

6. The last speaker for this session was Ms. Carolyn Hannau, Director of the Division of Advancement of Women. This office is part of the Division Economic Affairs. The main body that they work with is the Division of Women.

Since the Beijing Conference in 1995, the Commission is trying to implement the recommendations made in 1995. With interactive panels that were setup in 1996, they have asked member states to comment on and take action on the issues. In 2005, the Commission asked member states to accelerate their response.

In 2010 member states will come back on the status and advancements of the girl child. NGOs are very active lobbying on these important issues. At the United Nations they are allowed to intervene in debates held on these issues. The Commission also works with the Economics and Social Council.

Ms. Hannau explained how her office works with the General Assembly and their committees on the issue of violence upon women. She gave examples of publications they put out on these issues.

She ended by stating that last year was the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations.

7. Questions/Answers:

7.1 Ms. Carolyn Hanerau; Accountability at the United Nations holds member states accountable.

7.2 Mr. Yao Ngoran; NGOs should get in touch with member states on these Subjects with them.

7.3 Ms. Patience Stephens; Her office is working on how to make changes on these critical issues.

NGO SUPPORT TO UNITED NATIONS CAMPAIGNS:
THE STOP TUBERCULOSIS EXAMPLE

Thursday, March 22, 2007, 11:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Moderator:

Juan Carlos Brandt, Chief, DPI/NGO

Speakers:

Jim Natchtuey, United Nations Photographer

Dr. Mario Raviglione, Director, Stop TB Campaign
World Health Organization (WHO)
Member of Stop TB Partnership Coordinating Board

Dr. Lee B. Reichman, Director, National Coalition
TB

Ms. Anna Cataldi, Member of the Messenger of Peace.

1. The moderator, Juan Carlos Brandt continued with this session and introduced each of the speakers, their organizations and their backgrounds.

2. Mr. Jim Natchtuey, the first speaker, is a documentary photographer who became aware of HIV/AIDs when he did his first photography in South Africa. He saw the connection between HIV and AIDs there and what it was doing to the people.

He stated that people are suffering but there are people helping.

3. The second speaker Dr. Mario Raviglione indicated that four thousand people die of TB everyday. At the United Nations and other organizations ninety People are working on this problem. During the 1990s new programs were started for TB in Africa. At the end of the 1990s, a coalition was formed to try to do the job of curing the TB problem.

In 2001, the Global was formed to help fight this issue together with local farmers, NGOs, and local governments. After five years they are now represented by 500 individual groups. They now have uniformity on how cases are defined and what systems are used by medical professionals.

The role of the NGO has been paramount on this issue. They have mobilized local society and local governments. Educating the public is very important in order to succeed.

4. The next speaker was Dr. Lee B. Reichman. He stated that NGOs have been very critical to this effort. TB in the United States has been going down by five percent in 1995. Since then, the rates rose. One of the reasons are the lack of adequate funding.

A National Coalition of TB was formed in 1995 to fight TB in the United States. The Coalition was able to raise national funding from fifty million dollars to one hundred and fifty million dollars to fight this successfully. We need to fight for more funding to fight TB.

5. The last speaker, Ms. Anne Cataldi, stated that five thousand people die every day from TB. As other speakers have said she stated that the work of the NGO is very important on this issue.

6. Questions/Answers:

6.1 Mr. Jim Natchtuey; The pictures shown at the United Nations on this subject were taken in Africa at the cemetery as is. There was no posing.

6.2 Dr. Lee B. Reichman; Education is the key to solving this problem. The lack of sufficient money hinders the care needed in undeveloped countries. Education is also important.

TRANSBOUNDARY WATER: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Thursday, March 22, 2007, 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

Moderator:

Mr. Terry Miller, United States Representative to ECOSOC

Speakers:

Mr. Aaron Salzberg, Senior Advisor,
United States Department of State on Water Initiatives

Mr. Dennis Schornack, Chair, United States Section,
International Joint Commission (IJC), Canada and the United States

Speakers (Cont'd):

Mr. Chris E. Williams, Manager,
World Wide Fund (WWF)

Ms. Tanya Heikkila, Professor, Columbia University

1. Mr. Tarry Miller, the Moderator, welcomed everyone and introduced each of speakers with their backgrounds. He indicated that the United States is actively supporting these Trans Boundary water issues around the world (i.e. Africa, etc). Even if parties agree, it still takes a long time to address the culture, political and functional issues.

2. The first speaker, Mr. Dennis Schornack, indicated that the treaty of 1909 by both countries serves as an example for the world. Six Commissions, three from each country were involved in the preparation.

Trans boundary water disputes between the United States and Canada has been treated by both parties amicably. Both countries treat the water requirements fairly and follow it carefully with no pollution. Both nations review any problems that arise and resolve them jointly on key policy and Commission actions. All agreements on water follow these agreements.

The Commission acts on structures or dams that may effect water (i.e. impacts, interests, etc). This is redone concurrently to review the status and and upgrades over the last one hundred years.

The International Joint Commission (IJC) has been very successful. People have learned to share water. There is no alternative. Over the past century there have been only seven conflicts with over one hundred and fifty agreements. The abundance of water makes it easier. Geography is important for the social and economical cooperation between two countries.

Climate change, however, can aggravate relationships between the worlds countries. The United States and Canada do not have this problem. Next year is the one hundred anniversary of the IJC and the treaty between the United States and Canada.

3. The second speaker was Mr. Chris E. Williams of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). His organization has a mutual concern on water. WWF believes that the things water provide heal the economic and social concerns of the worlds population.

In many African countries they can only set aside water reserves for only specific potential ecological problems. These African countries have water protocols for trans boundary issues. Organic requirements in Africa are far ahead of what is being done between the United States and Canada.

In the Southwest part of the United States, the United States and Mexico have a water scarcity problem, (i.e. New Mexico and Rio Grande, etc). Great Lakes authorities moved out on water pollution issues but the problem In Mexico is different. It was not picked up until 1944 and not till the 1970s did water issues progress there.

The ground water issue is not covered in the Mexican treaty with the United States. The problem in Mexico is that most of their water comes from leakage. We, NGOs and Civil Society, must persuade government officials to review and revise the treaties between Mexico and the United States to manage trans boundary water equitably. NGOs and Civil Society in these must review and look at and come up with requirements for trans boundary issues on water.

4. The last speaker was Ms. Tania Heikkila of Columbia University. She indicated that institutions have become critical in the management of water issues. It is important to do an analysis of those institutions that manage water. Conflicts emerge and influence the management of water around the world.

She stated that hopefully we can continue to improve on the institutional arrangement for sharing water resources. We need to have clearly defined boundaries and need to have rules that are well managed to address any changes such as Climate Change that may occur.

Each of the users of this water must have collective responsibilities for effecting changes such as a public input to the decision making process. The enforcement issue is critical. You will need highly trained negotiators.

5. Questions/Answers:

5.1 Mr. Chris E. Williams; Water has been a source of conflict. There have been tremendous conflicts between Mexico and the United States even though not a shooting conflict. In the African countries of Kenya and Tanzania the same conflicts have occurred. We need to integrate water supply between countries for equitable usage.

5. Questions/Answers (Cont'd):

5.2 Mr. Dennis Schornack; They are engaging in the processing initiatives of water management using the United States Commission on water expertise with African countries.

5.3 Mr. Aaron Salzberg; He believes that we can capture water from other sources such as salt water. Water that has been used can be used again. But these initiatives require capital. Agriculture usage right now in Africa is between seventy-five and eighty percent. They must become more efficient.

5.4 Mr. Dennis Schornack; The treaty between the United States and Canada set aside tribal interests temporarily.

5.5 Mr. Aaron Salzberg; How do we get these best practices to developing countries? We should use publications and the Web, etc. It is now beginning to happen.

5.6 Mr. Chris E. Williams; Resources have been developed to disseminate this critical information on what has been done. But we must work with local institutions and people to do this in order to implement local solutions.

5.7 Ms Tania Heikkila; We cannot ignore the global aspects anymore. We must determine what crops require in these areas and where.

PDC George Weinstein
National UN Chairman