

May 30, 2008

UNITED NATIONS UNLEARNING INTOLERANCE SEMINAR
Art Changing Attitudes Toward the Environment

Thursday, May 8, 2008, 10:00 AM to 5:30 PM

The United Nations Department of Public Information, The Natural World Museum and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) presented this informational Seminar as part of the Unlearning Intolerance seminar series,

1. The seminar aims to demonstrate the universal language of art can unite people in thought and action, and leaders to incorporate environmental values into social, economic and political realms.

The panelists informed us about their unique and innovative approaches to drawing worldwide attention to the need to care for the environment. As advocates of true global change, these individuals are committed to the effort needed to inspire all individuals, communities and decision makers into becoming active agents for a positive social change.

The United Nations seminars held today on “unlearning intolerance” examined different manifestations on intolerance and explored the means to promote both respect and understanding among peoples. These sessions offered the opportunities to discuss how intolerance can be unlearned through education, inclusion and by example.

SESSION I: 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Confronting Environmental Intolerance: Art, Action and Human Security

Opening remarks and Session I Moderator:

Kiyotaka Akasaka, United Nations Under Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information.

Session I Seminar Panelists

Noor Al-Bastaki

El Anatsui

Ichi Ikerda

Cecilia Paredes

Session I Expert Panelists:

Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Christie Brinkley. Model/Entrepreneur/Activist

SESSION II: 3:00 PM – 5:30 PM

Art for Change: Vehicles for Environmental Action

Session II Moderator:

Eric Falt, Director, Outreach Division, United Nations Department of Public Information

Session II Artist Panelists:

Catherine Chalmers

Subhankar Banerjee

Philip Pastor

Session II Expert Panelists:

Elisabeth Guilbaud-Cox, Deputy Director, UNEP Regional Office for North America

Michael Polsky, President and CEO, Invenergy, LLC

2. Natural World Museum International Art Exhibition:

This all day session consisted of two sessions and an all day Natural World Museum Internal Art Exhibition in the United Nations visitors lobby. The Exhibit, Unlearning Intolerance: Attitudes & Environment, is directly tied to the two sessions. The exhibition complimented and expanded upon the ideologies presented by the speakers at the sessions, such as the connections between art, action and human security, or art as a vehicle for environmental action. Seven artists representing six global regions presented their art to generate dialogue as an alternate approach to strengthen community engagement in conservation and preservation.

3. About the Seminar:

This United Nations Seminar focused on art as a vehicle for changing our attitudes towards the environment. “Art Changing Attitudes toward the Environment is the sixth seminar in the Unlearning Intolerance Series being organized by the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI). Details of the seminar are available at <http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/tolerance>

About the Seminar (Cont'd):

The Seminar focused on the issue of humankind's intolerance of the needs of our earth and the attitudes and behavior changes that must be made in order to protect our environment. This forum was organized by the DPI in cooperation with the Natural World Museum (NWM) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).

4. This Seminar helps keep the spotlight on the issue of climate change that Al Gore keeps bringing up and is also a top priority for the United Nations and Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon. The paintings, photography and sculptures in the main lobby helped bring an awareness from the perspective of artists.

Since 2004, DPI has organized five seminars within the "Unlearning Intolerance" seminar series at the United Nations. These series examined the different manifestations of intolerance. They also offered us in the audience the opportunity to see and discuss how intolerance can be unlearned through education and by example.

5. The Natural World Museum (NWM) is a mobile and global cultural institution that presents art through innovative programs to both inspire and engage the public in environmental awareness and action.

6. The United Nations Environment Program provides both leadership and partnerships for conservation efforts by inspiring, informing and enabling nations to improve the quality of life without compromising the life of future generations.

7. The Department of Public Information (DPI) 's mission is to help fulfill the substantive purposes of the United Nations by communicating both the activities and concerns of the Organization in order to achieve the greatest public impact and generate both public awareness and support for the United Nations.

PDC George Weinstein
National UN Chairman