



Women's Division Washington Office

Issue Briefing - The World

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Climate Change

Last week I participated in the United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA) Council of Organizations Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. The topic, "The Global Challenge of Climate Change" featured; James B. Greene, Senior Policy Advisor, Office of Senator Joseph R. Biden, William Mansfield III, Senior Advisor to the Executive Director, United Nations Environment Program, Regional Office for North America, and Edward W. Stowe III, Senior Legislative Secretary, Friends Committee on National Legislation

As noted by Jessica A. Hartl, Coordinator of Council of Organizations, UNA-USA:

With three major reports issued by the Intergovernmental Panel on climate Change in the last six months; with the recent agreement by major international banks and corporations to help 15 of the world's largest and most polluted cities tackle climate change, through the Clinton Energy Efficiency Building Retrofit Program; and with the G-8 Summit [which took] place June 6-8, much attention has been focused on climate change.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has brought even more attention to the issue by making it one of his priority issues during his term. The Secretary General [has noted that]: "The resources of civil society and the private sector must be brought in. And this [Security] Council has a role to play in working with other competent intergovernmental bodies to address the possible root causes of conflict discussed today."

The UN and the international community will be under public scrutiny as they work to achieve global consensus on a response to climate change.

Visit the United Nations Association of the United States of America website at www.unausa.org



Trafficking in Persons Report

The United States Department of State released its annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* (TIP) which informs "Congress on foreign governments' efforts to eliminate severe forms of trafficking in persons." Countries are rated based upon their efforts to prevent trafficking. They are rated as Tier 1, countries that are doing the best job of controlling human trafficking, Tier 2, governments making significant efforts to bring themselves to compliance, or Tier 3, countries that have shown no commitment to abolishing trafficking. Advocates have expressed concern that India, which some believe is the location of the worst problem in human trafficking is cited as a Tier 2 country.

–Information from USINFO <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=June&x=200706121538261xeneerg0.3716089>

To read the complete *2007 Trafficking Persons Report* visit the U.S State Department website at <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2007/> or call them at (202) 647-4000.





Africa Matters

In early June Congressman Donald Payne, Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health convened a joint summit with members of the European Union (EU) Parliament. The day long summit speakers included Ana Maria Gomes of the EU Parliament, Mia Farrow, Susan Rice, former Assistant Secretary of State, and other experts on Darfur, Ethiopia, Somalia. This was the first of a series of meetings to chart collaborative Congress-EU Parliament responses to Africa's challenges. Congressman Payne stated, "African countries that support America's global war on terror have been the recipient of military assistance and training in order to build their capacity to assist with our efforts to fight extremists, and prevent another attack on U.S. soil. I fully support efforts to combat terrorism, but not at the expense of respect for human rights and rule of law."

For further information visit the House Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health website at http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/sub_africa.asp



Giving Up Female Genital Mutilation

A colorful ceremony was held earlier this month in the National Football Stadium of the small West African nation of Gambia to celebrate something unique: eighteen Gambian women 'dropped the knife' and agreed to give up the traditional practice of female circumcision. The May 4 ceremony was possible thanks to the work of a local organization that combines culturally sensitive community education with the creation of alternative employment for traditional circumcisers to create an effective, practical, and poverty-reducing model for protecting women's health. The Gambia Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (GAMCOTRAP) has used a rights-and empowerment-based approach to combating FGM [female genital mutilation] and other medical practices that hurt women and children. Stressing the value of traditional practices that are healthy for women, it educates communities and professionals through public information campaigns and grassroots mobilization. Most effectively, it connects circumcisers, such as the 18 honored this month, with skills training and small-scale enterprise work, enabling them to succeed in fields that don't hurt women. According to Dr. Nestor Shivute of the World Health Organization, who spoke at a May 4 GAMCOTRAP event, it is estimated that about 100 to 140 million women and girls have undergone some form of genital cutting.

–*Update from the Field: Taking a Stand Against Female Genital Mutilation* by Musa S. Sheriff.
Excerpt taken from *Notes from the Edge*, June 2007, Women's EDGE Coalition, www.womensedge.org
(A collaborative partner of the Women's Division)



Global Peace Index

A new *Global Peace Index*, researched by the Economist Intelligence Unit and based on 24 indicators of both international and domestic "peacefulness," includes 121 countries, 21 of them in Africa, for which data was available. The United States ranked 96th, between Yemen and Iran, while South Africa ranked 99th, between Honduras and the Philippines. The five top ranked African countries were Tunisia, Ghana, Madagascar, Botswana, and Morocco; while the lowest five included were Sudan, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, Angola, and Algeria. African countries not ranked included a number with serious internal conflict, including Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The ten top-ranked countries on the Global Peace Index were Norway, New Zealand, Denmark, Ireland, Japan, Finland, Sweden, Canada, Portugal and Austria. The ten lowest-ranked countries, beginning with the lowest, were Iraq, Sudan, Israel, Russia, Nigeria, Colombia, Pakistan, Lebanon, Cote d'Ivoire and Angola. Only 21 African countries were included because of lack of data for others.

The ranking of those countries that were included, compared to the rankings of the G-8 group of rich countries, is as follows:

5. Japan, 8. Canada, 12. Germany, 33. Italy, 34. France, 39. Tunisia, 40. Ghana, 41, Madagascar, 42. Botswana, 48. Morocco, 49. United Kingdom, 50. Mozambique, 53. Zambia, 56. Gabon, 57. Tanzania, 58. Libya, 64. Namibia, 65. Senegal, 68. Malawi, 71. Equatorial Guinea, 73. Egypt, 76. Cameroon, 91. Kenya, 96. United States of America, 103. Ethiopia, 104. Uganda, 106. Zimbabwe, 107. Algeria, 112. Angola, 113. Cote d'Ivoire, 117. Nigeria, 118. Russia, 120. Sudan –*Excerpt taken from infoserve@africafiles.org*

For more information on the Global Peace Index visit www.visionofhumanity.com



Trade Promotion Authority

Congress is currently considering reauthorization of “fast track” Trade Promotion Authority (TPA). Congressional members in the House of Representatives and the Administration have agreed to the inclusion of language regarding discrimination, the environment and other labor standards in U.S. trade agreements. The final bill is still in committee and upcoming agreements with Peru and Panama will test U.S. commitment to a just trade policy.

Last month I joined other NGO representatives at a forum on “Fostering the Rule of Law in Developing Countries” hosted by the Woodrow Wilson Center. Participants included Sam Fried, EVP and General Counsel for the Limited Brands and chairman of the Business Coalition for Capacity Building (BCCB), and Jeffery Lehman, Esq., a Senior Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center and advisor to the Chinese government. BCCB is a private coalition of companies that work with the governments of developing countries, international organizations, and NGO’s to develop capacity building in the developing world. BCCB’s eight “trustee companies” include The Gap, Inc., Microsoft, the Limited Brands, and Intel. These private sector companies *collaborate* with stakeholders in developing countries to strengthen the governments’ institutions and infrastructure in order to increase those countries ability to participate in the global economy. In its work, BCCB focuses on the rule of law and good governance—norms by which companies engage in activities with each other and enforcement, labor standards, economic development, education, and environmental stewardship. Mr. Lehman defined rule of law as “a social system that leads public and private actors to abide by a comprehensive set of public norms that are legitimate and just.” BCCB said it intends to enhance a developing country’s ability to participate in the global economy and reduce poverty.

The International Gender and Trade Network (IGTN) has pointed out that 1.2 billion of the world’s 2.9 billion workers (40%) were women. The percentage of women in poor countries working in light manufacturing and in export agriculture sectors, sectors most affected by trade agreements, is even higher. IGTN cautions that “only a few stakeholders within Congress and civil society” are really participating in discussions. While some women focused NGO’s have decided to engage in conversations with BCCB, their potential to have an impact on the “trustee companies” has been questioned. –*From IGTN letter to Congress, June 7, 2007*

For further information about the Business Coalition for Capacity Building visit their website at <http://www.bccb.info/index.htm>

For further information about the International Gender and Trade Network visit their website at www.igtn.org

Follow developments of TPA. Go to <http://thomas.loc.gov/> and search H.R. 1042.



Jubilee USA Grassroots Action

A 40 day rolling “Cancel Debt Fast” will be taking place from September 6-October 15. Free outreach brochures are now available to order from Jubilee USA. See a sample at <http://canceldebtfast.org/rollingfastbrochure.pdf> Contact Nathan Fisherman at Jubilee USA to order yours today - Nathan@jubileeusa.org or call (202) 783-3566.