UNA-GP President’s Message

2012

It is a new year. Hope, new energy, new resolutions!! Nay, at first glance all we see is the same old routine, in politics, in the economy, in the schools. No money, belt tightening, public entities going bankrupt, Euro faltering, war crimes still being committed, bah humbug. Torn between the weary of winter (again) and the weird hope that this year things are going to be different, I ponder what to write. Where are we going with our city, just declared one of the more rude cities in the US? A city where we observed a shocking display of murders and abject brutality in the first three weeks of the year; a city where the schools are in a budgetary crisis and the city government is confronted with deep structural problems for which it cannot find much help in Harrisburg.

But then we take a step back and look at the other side. This is also the city where we will celebrate 225 years of the birth of the US constitution, where we will see a strong “green” policy implementation that attracts attention from around the globe; where mural arts and innovative architecture are nurtured and promoted to a global audience. Indeed, Philadelphia is a city that more and more young professionals call home, where arts and science are combined with global empathy towards many programs by many organizations for the greater good. And we at UNA-GP do our share with our plans for raising global awareness. See elsewhere in this newsletter.

In the last 5 or so weeks I interviewed many Drexel students for our coop employment program at the UNA-GP. I like to ask them why they would want to work for free for the UNA-GP. The motivations are often similar, all indicating interest in a global career, or learning more on how to become successful internationally and know your way around. One student however, made me look again at the UN in a different way. She had the chance to visit the UN as a high school student. Looking back to that visit and the impact it had on her life, young as it is, she said: “The United Nations makes me happy”.

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I cannot think of a better way to express why we need to keep working for a well functioning, well funded, well respected, United Nations System. Indeed, a visit to the UN instills hope for humanity, when you see the impact of scientific reasoning in international policy debates and international politics; The UN is becoming the agent of change, where many non-governmental organizations can express their opinions to the combined body or representatives of all sovereign states. In 2012, many big programs will be discussed, many problems will be encountered, road blocks are to be expected, ill will cannot be wished away; it will be a year as many years before and many years in the future, a year where incremental change is happening. Yet, let’s all make it also a year, when we not only pursue happiness, but when each of us actually can say: “I am happy, I am happy because I support the United Nations, I support humanity.”

**Shot@Life**

In the coming year, preventable diseases such as polio, measles, tetanus, and many others, though eliminated or greatly reduced in the United States and other developed countries, will kill 1.7 million children worldwide, and disable many others. Why will this happen? Because 20% of children around the world do not have access to the life-saving vaccinations that are readily available in countries such as ours. Pneumonia and diarrhea alone are responsible for 1/3 of the childhood deaths worldwide. Shot@Life is a non-profit organization that aims at vaccinating children and eliminating these deadly illnesses.

By immunizing children who would otherwise be left exposed, Shot@Life is giving these children a “shot at life.” It provides them with a better chance of reaching the milestones that children in the US regularly achieve. Thanks to Shot@Life and the global vaccination effort, the number of new cases of polio, a disease which used to paralyze 1000 children a day, has dropped by 99%. They have had similar success with measles, reducing the death rate by 78% through vaccinations in 60 developing countries. How does this affect us? By vaccinating children around the world, Shot@Life is also decreasing the risk of cases reoccurring in the US and promoting a healthier world.

In order to support the work of this organization, the United Nations Association of Greater Philadelphia will be sending a volunteer to be trained to speak on behalf of the importance of vaccines. We will also be holding a fundraiser and vaccine related event this spring. For more information, visit [www.shotatlife.org](http://www.shotatlife.org) where you will find out more on how Shot@Life has made a difference in the world and how you can contribute to supplying children around the world with vaccinations that will change their lives.

*Kelsey Heath*

**UNA-USA Update**

Help the UNA-USA tell the United States government to find an alternative to cutting UNESCO and other UN funding. Sign the petition [here](http://www.shotatlife.org).

**UN News**

On January 11, Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General, urged the bloc of countries known as the “group of 77”, as well as China, to ensure that action will be taken to adhere to new environmental codes that may arise in this years Rio+20. Read the original article [here](http://www.shotatlife.org).

**UN Day for UNA Members**

Friday, February 10th, is UN Day for UNA members. The activities will begin at 9 am on Friday. It is suggested that you arrive a bit early. Many of the members who have already decided to go are planning on using Mega or Bolt bus, so travel will not cost much and is rather reliable.

**Shot@Life**

A non-profit organization that aims at vaccinating children and eliminating deadly illnesses.
Chinese Investments in Africa and Two Theories of Development

As the world reflects on President Obama's decision to tactically shift military efforts towards the Asia-Pacific region, several policy analysts have started worrying about a possible new cold war, this time with China, not in the least because of the rumor mills that whisper about China's secret build up of its nuclear arsenal and overall increase in military spending, along with the launch of a first new modern aircraft carrier. While all this may be true, China on the other hand, seems to be using the current contraction of Western economies to enhance development and trade in Africa. Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Nigeria, the Republic of Congo, and Sudan have been more than compliant in trading oil and natural resources in exchange for China's foreign direct investments. By 2007, China's trade with Africa had already reached $73 billion, thereby making it the second-highest trading partner of Africa behind the United States. Out of China's total $316 billion in outward investment, 13.8% has gone towards sub-Saharan Africa. Infrastructure deals have also been signed by the Chinese Commerce Ministry that are worth more than $50 billion each year.

The question remains, however, whether China is truly interested in partner development or is simply out to make a profit and obtain scarce energy (oil) resources where Western companies have a pretty bad track record. Furthermore, the other big question that many policy watchers are asking is whether Chinese economic relations with Africa are leading to an increase or a decrease in First (civil & political) and Second (social, economic, & cultural) generation human rights.

Although there are numerous theories discussing the role of corporations towards social and economic development, two theories stand out; the Engines of Development Thesis and the Dual Development Thesis. The Engines of Development Thesis essentially argues that multinational corporations are a positive indicator for development and eventually lead to better First and Second generation rights. On the other hand, the Dual Development Thesis, as described by Stephen Hymer, stipulates that multinational corporations create "Dual Development" pathways, which inevitably causes a reduction in

Changing the World

In 2001, at the African Summit on AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Infectious Diseases in Abuja, Nigeria, Kofi Annan called for the creation of a Global Fund to help cure AIDS and other diseases in third world countries where the diseases were rampant but citizens did not have the money for treatment. Ten years ago when Annan called for this Global fund, or "War Chest", there was very little known about AIDS and treating it. In fact, at that time it was almost as if it was dangerous to speak of the disease. However, Annan worked towards raising awareness about AIDS and other diseases that ran wild in third world and developing countries, such as tuberculosis and malaria.

For years it seemed that no pharmaceutical firm would make it possible to provide treatment to the millions of people dying of these diseases, at least at a price that third world nations could afford. However, in 2001 everything changed. Pharmaceutical companies dropped legal action against South Africa, whose government was fighting to lower the price of AIDS medication, and prices dropped. At one time it cost over $10,000 a year for the medication necessary to take care of one AIDS patient, but now the cost has dropped to only $100 per patient per year. Since Kofi Annan has began to raise awareness about the issue of pandemic diseases, the number of victims has been
1st and 2nd generation rights in the peripheral countries. 'Dual development' essentially describes a developing economy where many people become impoverished and some are made immensely wealthier, thereby increasing the gap between the poor and the rich. In regards to China, theorists warn that China itself should be careful in the development process by instituting regulations so that workers have basic rights against corporations. In an era when we see income inequality increasing in most nations and middle classes eroding, governments, and especially democratic governments, should be cautious in allowing dominance of their economies by multinational corporations, because private industries often like to dominate the process and intensity of regulations. 'A lack of regulations' is what Stephen Hymer asserts as a vital reason for dual development in his thesis, thereby creating an enormous poverty gap and loss of jobs. When analyzing China's investment impact in African countries, the data are not clear as to whether Chinese corporations are seeking (to create) a "lack of regulations". For that matter, we are not at all clear with what world vision and modi operandi the Chinese multinational corporations intend to flex their muscle and compete on the world market. Indeed, for global human rights activists this is the time to become better informed and to roll out a plan of advocacy for the new global players from China. How does one say "Greenpeace" in Mandarin?

Talha Malik

Letters in Support of the National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline

The December 2011 UNA-GP newsletter described the disturbing problem posed by human trafficking in the US and in our local area. One specific effort is underway to help fight trafficking. These letters (below), one sent by the UNA-GP, and one you can send yourself, are self-explanatory and describe what the goal of the effort is.

Note that the legislation is for Pennsylvania, and not for the US. So, at this time only Pennsylvania residents have an opportunity to write to their Senator. A similar bill is in committee in New Jersey.

Here is a version of the letter sent on behalf of the UNA-GP by President Morssink:

Dear Senator:

I am writing as the president of the United Nations Association of Greater Philadelphia (UNAGP), an organization which aims to build support for the United Nations and raise awareness of transnational issues at the local level. As an organization committed to promoting the accords of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we abhor the idea of slavery anywhere, let alone in our own city. Yet slavery is here.
It is estimated that in Philadelphia there are over 100 locations serve as underground brothels where kidnapped women and children are forced into sexual servitude. Recently, the 3rd Circuit Federal Court convicted two Ukrainian traffickers who smuggled young men into the United States and enslaved them. These activities devastate the physical and emotional health of the victims, fuel organized crime known as the "sex trade", and threaten public health and safety.

January is National Slavery and Human Trafficking Awareness Month. The UNAGP urges you to support a state law known as the “National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline Act” (SB 338/HB 235). If signed into law, this act would require certain establishments -such as adult entertainment venues, massage parlors, and other places where trafficking victims are typically held-- to display signs posting the Trafficking Hotline number. The hotline provides confidential assistance to victims, many of whom have no other means of reaching out for help. As our Senator, we deem it your duty to take action. We are not asking much, only for you to support a bill already drafted. Requiring establishments to post this hotline will not cost Pennsylvania money. Please increase the accessibility of this hotline by supporting this legislation. It may free some slaves.

Sincerely,

Christiaan Morssink, PhD, MPH

If you feel moved to take action, take the letter below and send it to your Pennsylvania state Senator. You can find your Senator and PA House member by entering your address here. Or visit www.legis.state.pa.us/index.cfm.

Download the editable version of the letter here. Modify as necessary, print, and mail or email it to your senator.

Find your senator’s email here.

Dear Senator:

Are you aware that modern day slavery is happening right here in Pennsylvania? In Philadelphia alone, it is estimated that over 100 locations serve as underground brothels where kidnapped women and children are forced into sexual servitude. Recently, the 3rd Circuit Federal Court convicted two Ukrainian traffickers who smuggled young men into the United States and enslaved them. These activities devastate the physical and emotional health of the victims, fuel organized crime known as the "sex trade", and threaten public health and safety.

January is National Slavery and Human Trafficking Awareness Month. As a Pennsylvanian and a constituent in your district, I urge you to support the “National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline Act” (SB 338/HB 235). If signed into law, this Pennsylvania legislation would require certain establishments in this state (such as adult entertainment venues, massage parlors, and other places where trafficking victims are commonly held) to display signs posting the National Trafficking Hotline number. The national hotline provides confidential assistance to victims, many of whom have no other means of reaching out for help.

As our Senator, it is your duty to take action. I am not asking much, only for you to support a bill already drafted. Requiring establishments to post this hotline will not cost Pennsylvania money. Please increase the accessibility of this hotline by supporting this legislation. It may free some slaves.

Sincerely,

My name is Kiahana Brooks and I am a student in the accelerated BSN/MSN program at the University of Pennsylvania. After a year of working with community health and microfinance programs in Uganda, I have returned to UNAGP to work on some health related initiatives including the Global Nursing Club of Philadelphia and Shot@Life programs.
Event: Action Against Human Trafficking

Join us on Wednesday, February 8, 2012, for a screening of the documentary “Very Young Girls” and a discussion led by Mr. Hugh Organ of the Covenant House of Philadelphia.

Again, we encourage you to write to your senator regarding this disturbing problem that is occurring right in our neighborhoods. A pre-written letter is available on the last page of this newsletter for you to print or copy-paste into an email. Please see page 4 for more information. An editable version of the letter is available for download here.

Learn More

An interesting and informative blog post on human trafficking with a New Jersey angle (but worth reading for everyone) is available here.

TRAFFICKED IN OUR OWN BACKYARD OF PHILLY

> wednesday, february 8, 2012 @ 4:30pm
> chestnut hill college, redmond room
> film screening: Very Young Girls, a documentary
> a panel discussion with mr. hugh organ of the covenant house of philadelphia
> for more info: MConn@chc.edu
Looking Forward

For more information on any of these events, please visit www.una-gp.org or contact Media@una-gp.org

February 8: Film showing at Chestnut Hill College. Topic: Sex Trafficking
February 10: UN Day for United Nations Association members
February 13-17: The Global Poverty Project. Location and date TBD

March 8: International Women’s Day. Collaboration with International House and others
March 11-12: Mid-east region colleagues meeting in DC. More information TBA
March 29: Haas Peace Award. Lead sponsors: Project for Nuclear Awareness and Physicians for Social Responsibility

April 3: PGWI Annual Conference
April 10: Drexel Student Alliance of the United Nations Association (DSA-UNA). Topic: The Tunisian Elections
April 16-20: Youth Building Roots Tree Planting, “A Maathay Tree at Each School”
April 22: Earth Day & Philly Peace Day 2012 kick-off event. Topic TBA.

May 8: Red Cross/Crescent Day. Topic TBA

June 2-5: UNA-USA Membership Day in DC & Day on the Hill

July 17: International Justice Day. Event topic TBA

August 8-19: Intern Conference on Anti-Trafficking. Collaboration with UCheyney.
August 11: International Day of the World’s Indigenous People & Annual Garden Party

September 21: International Day of Peace. Collaboration with others. Events TBA

October 16: World Food Day. Topic TBA
October 24: UN Day. Topic TBA

November 17: World Toilet Day. Topic TBA

December 10: Universal Declaration of Human Rights Day. Topic TBA

Every month the UNA-GP tries to produce a newsletter, one that contains not only information about upcoming events hosted by the UNA-GP but news from around the world.

If you want to have more information about an event or submit something you have written please contact Patrick Medeo at Media@una-gp.org. Please know that all pieces are subject to change and may not be accepted dependent on the size and date of submission.