UNA-USA Nationwide Conference Call: Is Paris Burning? How the US Withdrawal from UNESCO is Affecting the Agency

- With Ambassador David T. Killion, United States Permanent Representative to UNESCO, US Department of State
- Moderated by Peter Yeo, Vice President of Public Policy, UN Foundation and Executive Director, Better World Campaign
- Date: Tuesday, March 13, 7:30 p.m. ET
- Number to Call: 888-600-4866
- Passcode: 424386
- Please RSVP via email to membership@unausa.org

In late 2011, in accordance with two laws passed by Congress in the 1990s, the US was obliged to withdraw from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) after the agency admitted the Palestinian state as a member. UNESCO lost 22% of its budget as a result of the US cutting off its funding. Join UNA-USA's March Nationwide Conference Call, "Is Paris Burning?" to discuss how the US exit from the organization has affected staffing and programs at one of the UN's most important agencies.

Ambassador David T. Killion was sworn into office by President Obama as US Permanent Representative to UNESCO with the rank of Ambassador on August 12, 2009. Prior to his appointment, Killion served as a Senior Professional Staff member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and was the Committee’s top expert on International Organizations and State Department Operations. He managed the drafting of the State Department Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 2010 and 2011 on behalf of Committee Chairman Howard Berman (D-CA), which passed the House on June 10, 2009. He also coordinated the Committee’s
Volunteers Needed for the Shot@Life Vaccination Campaign

One in five children lacks access to the life-saving immunizations that keep children healthy. Approximately 1.7 million children in developing countries die each year of a preventable disease such as pneumonia, diarrhea, measles, tetanus, or polio.

Coordinated worldwide vaccination efforts have made significant progress, but still, one in five children in developing countries does not receive life-saving immunizations.

Vaccines work. Immunization has saved the lives of more children than any other medical intervention in the last fifty years. Vaccines are safe, simple and one of the most cost-effective ways to save and improve the lives of children worldwide.

Shot@Life educates, connects and empowers Americans to champion vaccines as one of the most cost-effective ways to save the lives of children in developing countries. A national call to action for this global cause needs your support and efforts. Join the campaign and help us save the children!

How you can help us: Raise awareness; Fundraise; Educate the community; Help launch preliminary Shot@Life campaign activities; Help with 2012 National Public Health Week activities in conjunction with Shot@Life; and Support efforts to save children in developing countries.

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Dr. Edna Adan Ismail Event

On Monday, February 27, 2012, Dr. Edna Adan Ismail addressed the Global Nursing Club of Philadelphia at the American Friends Center. Dr. Ismail is a nurse midwife from Somaliland who has served as both the first lady and foreign minister of her country. During her years of service, she has always advocated strongly for women's rights, and in 2002 she opened the Edan Adan Maternity hospital. The Edna Adan Maternity Hospital is a non-profit hospital which has raised the standard of maternity care in Somaliland by providing low-cost and high-quality care to pregnant women which was previously unattainable in Somaliland. Her conversation with our group centered on the history of her country Somaliland and her unique approach to increasing maternity care in that nation. The Global Nursing Club of Philadelphia greatly appreciated this opportunity to interact with such a dynamic and well-accomplished nurse working in global health.

To learn more or to support her efforts, visit the hospital's website here.
A Dictator’s Fate: Efraín Ríos Montt

Our attention today is on the Arab uprisings and the daily atrocities occurring in Syria. Here we focus on a very important neglected development, one among many, in Central America, long ruled under the brutal fists of Cold War dictators and US puppet figureheads. Today in Guatemala, thousands of indigenous Mayans and displaced farmers glare in disgust during the trial of the former US-backed dictator Efraín Ríos Montt.

On Thursday, January 26, Efrain Rios Montt appeared before a Guatemalan tribunal for crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity during his 17th month of rule in 1982 and 1983. The Guatemalan judge declared that there was enough evidence to bring Efrain Rios Montt to trial for at least 1,771 deaths, 1,445 rapes and the displacement of nearly 30,000 Guatemalans during his Frijoles y Fusiles (beans and guns) campaign in the countryside. According to Amnesty International, 10,000 indigenous Guatemalans and peasant farmers were killed from March to July and 100,000 villagers were displaced from the countryside. Montt’s firing squads and massive population encampments, integrating and nationalizing indigenous farmers, employed fear-mongering tactics straight from Hitler’s SS, the Schutzstaffel. In 1982, Montt had the support of the Reagan administration for his pro-capitalistic views, and Washington DC turned a blind eye to the mass murders. Currently, Montt is under house-arrest awaiting his genocide trial in March along with three other generals. When Saddam Hussein was tried by the Iraqi people, he was put to death and I am very much sure that Guatemalan farmers would have the same suggestion for Montt. However, due to our existing international legal institutions, and because ethically correct capital punishment is a taboo, the sentence, which needs to fit the crime, will come in accordance to decisions made by tribunals or The Hague. It is often the case that dictators such as Baby Doc or Assad attempt to hide behind the corrupt legal frameworks of their country, but inevitably, in the need to seek closure on injustices, even committed long ago, the common people will have to find...
support through tribunals and legal means, not by revenge and class-based blood feuds. I hope that Montt will be convicted. I hope that other beasts among this world’s politicians will take notice. I mostly hope that the work of the tribunal will be accepted by the loved ones of the victims in Guatemala as the proper way to meet our justice.

By Talha Malik

UNA-USA Updates

National Advocacy Week
Feb. 18th – 29th was National Advocacy Week. UNA-USA urged its members to schedule in-district meetings with their representatives to protect US funding for the United Nations. Did you talk to your representative? It is never too late to let him or her know that their constituents support the UN. For more information on advocacy and to find out why funding for the UN is so important, visit the advocacy resources page here.

UNA-USA Nationwide Conference Call
UN Foundation Senior Vice President Melinda Kimble spoke with members nationwide on Thursday, February 16, on the UN and climate change. A summary and a transcript of the call, as well as the audio, are available here.

Nominations for Council of Chapters and Regions Steering Committee
The UNA-USA is holding elections for Regional Representatives to the CCR-SC in 2012. Nominations were held from January 3 – February 29. You can find more information on voting, which begins on April 1, here.

Members Day
February 10 saw more than 850 UNA-USA members and guests at the United Nations Headquarters for the Mid-Atlantic Regional Members Day. Panelists discussed topics ranging from peacekeeping to sustainable development. View highlights and read more here.

Keynote Address on Global Literacy to be Delivered by Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO

The University of Pennsylvania is proud to present Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Irina Bokova, as the Keynote Speaker for a symposium exploring, “Global Literacy in the 21st Century: Problems and Prospects.” This premiere event is in recognition of the inauguration of the UNESCO -- Penn Chair in Learning and Literacy. Mrs. Bokova has served as Director-General of UNESCO since November 2009. She is the first woman to

-> Event Information
- “Global Literacy in the 21st Century: Problems and Prospects”
- March 15, 2012 (4 - 5:30pm)
- Jon M. Huntsman Hall, UPenn
(3730 Walnut Street, Philadelphia)
have been elected head of the Organization. She also served as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Ambassador of Bulgaria, where she was responsible for human rights issues. Later, as a deputy of the Bulgarian Socialist Party (1990-1991 and 2001-2005), she participated in the drafting of Bulgaria’s new Constitution, which contributed significantly to the country’s accession to the European Union.

7th Annual United Nations Conference on Teaching Peace and Human Rights

This conference is an event hosted by the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI) initiative. Teachers, administrators, future teachers and representatives from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) will have the rich opportunity to both acquire knowledge and engage in a global dialogue about integrating peace and human rights education into the learning experiences of young people. Educators will interact with their colleagues from different parts of the world via video conferencing about current approaches to teaching peace and human rights within a multicultural, global context.

Philadelphia Global Water Initiative: 5th Annual Conference

The Philadelphia Global Water Initiative (PGWI) is hosting its 5th annual conference, entitled “Performance Indicators for Sustainable Water and Sanitation Projects in Developing Countries”, on April 3rd, 2012 in Houston Hall, University of Pennsylvania. The conference will bring together worldwide experts on water and sanitation issues. It will feature findings from UNICEF, World Bank and USEPA representatives, panel discussions from leaders of other national/international organizations as well as voices from experienced members and students in the PGWI network. The conference will start at 8am with a breakfast in Houston Hall and will end with a reception (5pm - 7pm) at the Philadelphia Fairmount Water Works Interpretive Center. Check out the PGWI home page here.

Please visit here to purchase tickets. The conference will be $15.00 for the General Public, free for students with valid ID.

Interesting Articles to Read

Syria Bars UN Humanitarian Chief from Visiting. Read here.

UN’s Popularity in Haiti Hits New Low. Read here.

--> Event Information

- Special Focus: Teaching Peace & Human Rights in a Multicultural World
- March 29 (9:30am - 4pm): Chestnut Hill College, Philadelphia
- March 30 (9:30am - 5pm): United Nations Headquarters, NY
- For more information, contact: Global Education Motivators at 1-877-451-7925 or gem@chc.edu, or visit www.gem-ngo.org
Drexel Student Alliance to Host His Excellence Marwan Muasher

The Drexel Student Alliance of the UNA-USA will host His Excellency Marwan Muasher, Vice President of Studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, as the keynote speaker at “2011: A Year of Promise or Peril for the Middle East?” It will be held on April 10, 2012, from 6-8 pm in Mitchell Auditorium (3140 Market St.).

Among other high profile responsibilities, H.E. Muasher served as Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Jordan, and as the ambassador who opened Jordan's first embassy in Israel. He negotiated the first free trade agreement between the United States and an Arab nation, and played a central role in developing the Arab Peace Initiative and the Middle East Road Map. The event is free and open to the public. Please email dsa.una@drexel.edu to register for this event, or to make inquiries. The Drexel Student Alliance of the United Nations Association is a unique student organization aimed at giving Drexel University and the Philadelphia community a chance to participate in insightful dialogue and thoughtful analysis about pertinent national and global issues through guest speakers, panel discussions, and various other programs.

Young Professionals for International Cooperation

The Young Professional division (YPIC) of the United Nations Association of Greater Philadelphia’s (UNA-GP) is restructuring. The YPIC-GP is a group of young individuals that bond together, covering a wide array of global interests and professional disciplines, with the purpose of advancing global citizenry through thought and action. I would like to introduce James Johnson, a new member of UNA-GP who will be playing a pivotal role in YPIC’s progress.

James Johnson is a Temple University alumnus who recently returned from the California bay area. His interests are in the areas of green and sustainable environmental planning. He has lived in Philadelphia previously and is married to Tammy Murphy, a UNA-GP volunteer and our representative at the NW Park High School.

Within the next few weeks James and I will be hosting a gathering at Fergie’s Bar in Center City (12th and Samson Street). While a final date is pending, be sure to stay tuned for further news about this 2012 YPIC kick off gathering. Get ready to get acquainted (again) with the YPIC model and start making plans to brainstorm about YPIC’s future. A formal announcement, with a final date and time will be released soon and posted on our Listserv, Facebook and Twitter.

By Labaron Palmer

Congratulations to the World!

Paraphrased from BBC news article “UN Meets Millennium Development Goal on Drinking Water”:

Just Days ago UN secretary General Ban Ki-moon hailed those who helped bring this dream to a reality. Now 89% of the world population, and rising, have access to clean drinking water. As of 1990, when the millennium goals were set only 76% had access to clean drinking water. However, this is not enough. Though he is happy with the progress Ban Ki-moon encourages us to keep pushing until 100% of the world population can drink their water without worry of disease.

To read the original article and to learn more please visit the BBC news site here.
Meet a Member

Public Health Student goes global with UNAGP

As a Master of Public Health (MPH) student at Thomas Jefferson University here in Philadelphia, Pavan Ganapathiraju could not decide what he wanted to do for his clerkship. When Pavan heard a guest lecture in his global health class by the President of UNAGP, Christiaan Morssink, he found the answer. Pavan quickly expressed interest to Christiaan that he wanted to work with UNAGP.

The clerkship is a required field training experience for all nationally accredited graduate public health programs by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). At Jefferson, public health students are required to complete a minimum of 120 hours of this experience. At many universities, the clerkship may be noted differently, such as a practicum. However, being that Jefferson is a predominately health science university, the field experience is referred to as a clerkship. In medical education, the term clerkship refers to the hands-on medical experiences students participate in during their later years of medical school.

While working with UNAGP under the direction of his preceptor, Christiaan, Pavan will be assigned to be either project leader or assistant on various projects. Projects may include vaccination projects, policy assessments, education, advocacy for the UNAGP and community service. Currently, Pavan is part of the steering committee for the launch of the United Nations Foundation's Shot@Life vaccination campaign to raise awareness in Philadelphia.

Pavan received his BA in Anthropology from the University of Illinois. After completing his MPH requirements this June, Pavan will be studying medicine at Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine in Manhattan, New York.

UNA-USA Mid-East Regional Conference in Washington, DC

On Monday, March 12, 2012, UNA-GP members visited Washington, DC to urge full funding for the UN. Here are a couple of photos from the conference.

"Always time for some fun."