

Saving the giant panda from extinction is a concern of Chinese scientists but the question of whether to clone a panda has touched off a major debate among biologists. **Special report by** **Audrey Ronning Topping** **17**



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'Population' facing crisis: Nafis Sadik **11**

On the 30th anniversary of the United Nations Population Fund, there is bad news. Overall funding for the acclaimed agency has declined significantly over the last two years, and now key programs promoting reproductive health and the wellbeing of mothers and children are being jeopardized. **By RESHMA PRAKASH**

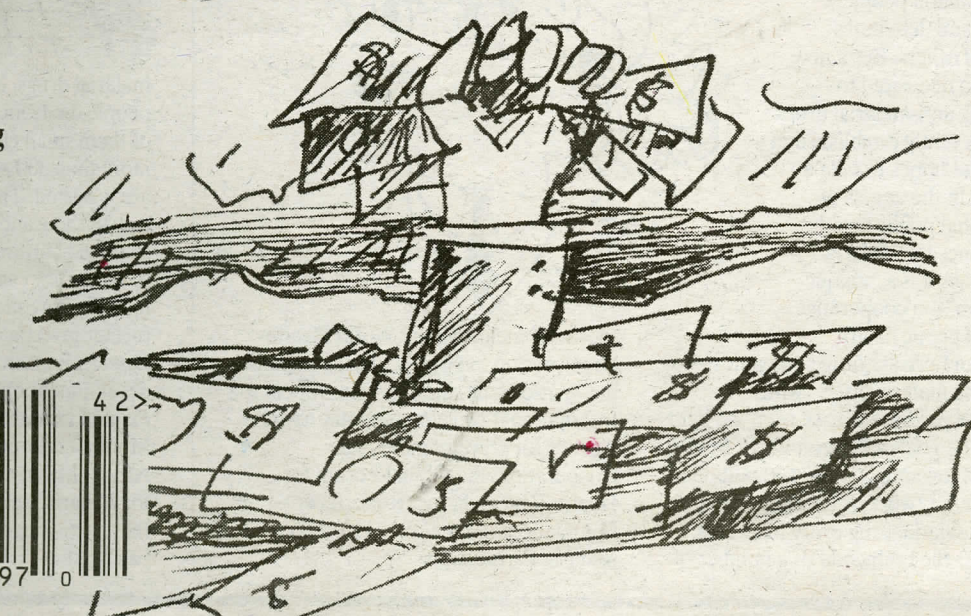
Peacekeeping gets complicated at UN **14**



Campaign against tobacco stepped up in face of resistance **7**

Transparency International issues a stinging report on what nations do to obtain business.

19



INSIDE:

MICHAEL LITTLEJOHNS

MARK MURO

SOON-YOUNG YOON

FRANK VOGL

TOM WICKER

FIELDS WICKER-MIURIN

IMMUNIZATION

Polio in Iraq

Three and a half million Iraqi children will receive polio immunizations in an effort to combat a recent outbreak of the disease that not only threatens the nation but the region as well.

The World Health Organization with Unicef and the Iraqi government will target children five and under during the upcoming round of vaccinations scheduled for November 8-10. The first round took place in October, and two more rounds are scheduled for the spring.

Cross-border transmission of polio is one of the most difficult obstacles facing the campaign to eradicate the disease by the end of the year 2000, according to WHO officials. "It is crucial ... to control the outbreak in Iraq and prevent polio spreading to neighboring polio-free countries," said Dr. Harry Hull of WHO's Expanded Programme on Immunization.

Since May, 16 cases of polio have been confirmed, 19 cases are being investigated. Nine of the original 16 confirmed cases—most children, two and younger—were found among nomadic cattle-herding families. Declining routine immunization coverage in Iraq is a major factor contributing to the eruption of the disease, according to WHO. Migratory patterns, civil war and poor immunization systems have created the perfect conditions for polio virus transmission.

QUOTES



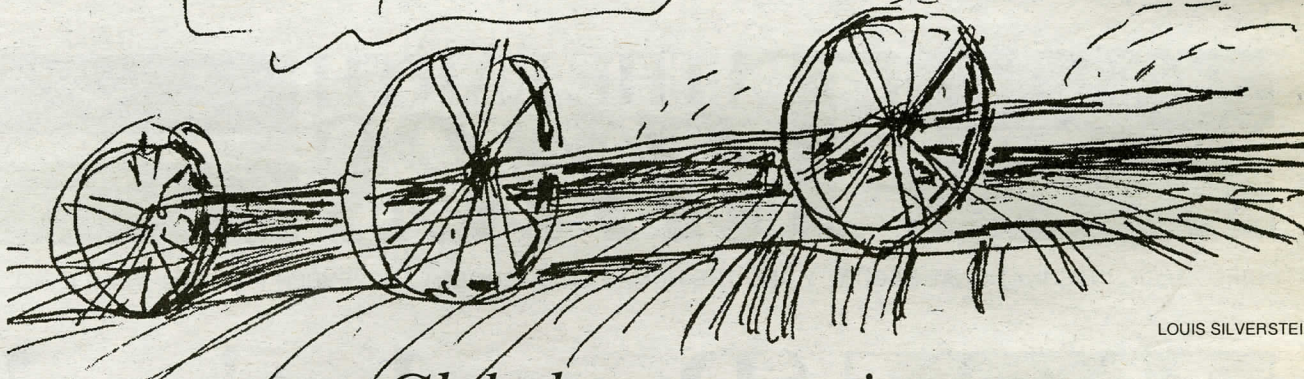
■ Conservation is getting nowhere because it is incompatible with our Abrahamic concept of land. We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.—Aldo Leopold, from the foreword to *A Sand County Almanac*, 1948

■ Protection of coral reef ecosystems is a priority and we will continue to use the best scientific evidence, local knowledge and public input to protect the corals, preserve critical coral reef habitats and spawning grounds and enhance economic opportunities within the Tortugas.—Sally Yozell, an official with the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's, speaking in favor of the establishment of an ecological preserve to protect the best remaining coral reef habitat in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

■ Tolerance, fundamentally, is a personal decision...a belief that every other person on earth is a treasure.—The Southern Poverty Law Center, an organization based in Alabama, that tracks US hate crimes and racist organizations as well as promotes tolerance as a curriculum item in schools.

Newsbreaks

By Anne Silverstein



LOUIS SILVERSTEIN

Global over-pumping

■ Every year, nations around the world are using water from underground aquifers at an unsustainable rate; collectively, annual water depletion in India, China, the US, North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula adds up to about 160 billion cubic meters, which is equal to the annual flow of two Nile Rivers. Water depletion occurs when more water is pumped from underground aquifers than is replenished from natural sources.

■ Nine Indian states are running major water deficits of more than 100 billion cubic meters a year.

■ In 1995, the world irrigated about 250 million hectares, or more than 600 million acres. In 1950, the world irrigated 100 million hectares. In 1900, 40 million hectares.

■ Africa's northern nations are depleting their water reserves at a rate of 10 billion cubic meters a year. Forty percent of this depletion occurs in Libya, which has been building a man-made river about 900 miles long to bring water from

the south to the north. It will ultimately deliver 2.2 billion cubic meters a year, the vast majority of it destined for irrigation. But some water engineers say the wells could dry up as soon as in 40 years.

■ In Pakistan's Punjab province, the nation's leading agricultural region, ground water is being pumped 27 percent faster than the aquifer can recharge itself.

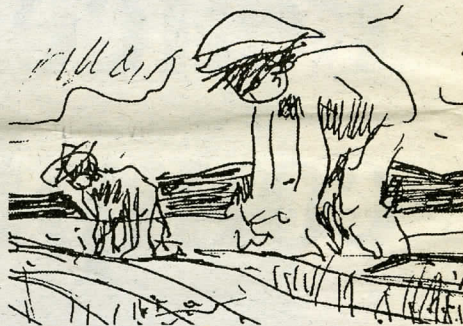
■ In Bangladesh, although ground water use is about half the rate of natural replenishment annually, during the dry season, heavy pumping causes many wells to dry up.

■ Northern China is over pumping about 30 billion cubic meters a year. Through Northern and Central China, the water table is dropping between one to 1.5 meters a year.

■ In the US, farmers are depleting aquifers in several important crop-producing areas. The Ogallala aquifer, an enormous underground reservoir that is one of the earth's largest, is

responsible for the productivity of America's breadbasket region. More than 5.2 million hectares were irrigated by the Ogallala in 1978. But over pumping is draining this vast underground supply; by 1998, the number of hectares irrigated there had dropped to 4.2 million.

■ Most underground water that is pumped up and out is used to irrigate grain, the staple of mankind's diet. It takes about 1,000 tons of water to produce one ton of grain. About 10 percent of the world's current grain harvest is now grown using underground water that is not replenished.



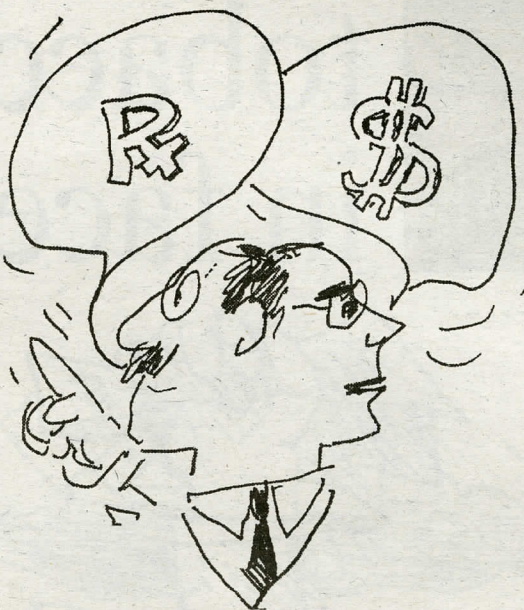
FIGHTING DISEASE

High cost of drugs

The rocketing costs of research and development of new drugs to fight diseases around the world has hampered the discovery of new compounds that could save millions of lives and improve the lives of millions of others. More specifically, anti-malarial drugs have not kept pace with this scourge which kills one million people annually, and debilitates millions of others. But a new foundation dedicated to developing anti-malarial drugs that was recently established in Switzerland hopes to take a giant leap in the annals of international public health.

Medicines for Malaria Venture says it is a "unique mechanism"—a cooperative venture of public health agencies and private drug companies—for researching malaria drugs "which otherwise would never have seen the light of day." The goal of the non-profit MMV, which must eventually raise \$30 million a year to fund its work, is to register one new anti-malarial drug every five years.

MMV is the brainchild of a number of



sponsors, including the World Health Organization, pharmaceutical companies, the World Bank, the UK Department for International Development, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the Global Forum for Health Research, the Rockefeller Foundation and the global Roll Back Malaria Partnership.

MALARIA

New health partnerships



A new alliance launched recently between the World Health Organization, the Japanese Ministry of Health and Welfare (MHW) and 12 Japanese pharmaceutical companies will seek to discover new anti-malarial drugs. More than one million people die from malaria each year, most of them small children in Africa, and more than 300 million cases of malaria are reported. The new partnership will test 10 thousand molecules in the chemical libraries of the 12 companies to see if they can be used against malaria. Any successful "hits" will be further investigated by WHO's Tropical Disease Research Program drug development operation. Other recent malaria initiatives include the Multilateral Initiative on Malaria in Africa (MIM) and the New Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV). Both of these activities complement the new partnership.

NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Activists meet in Seoul to plan new strategies

Governments and the UN asked to make good on their commitments

BY RESHMA PRAKASH

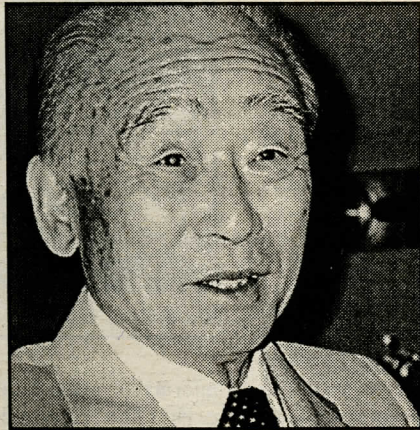
It wasn't one of those larger-than-life United Nations conferences, but its scope and attendance was just as ambitious. While the UN was very much present, it wasn't in charge here. It was the nongovernmental organizations who occupied center-stage last month in Seoul, Korea, for what was billed as one of the largest ever gathering of NGOs.

The 1999 Seoul International Conference of NGOs, held from October 10-16, was attended by more than 7,000 NGO members from around the world, far more than the initial numbers expected by the organizers. Though the majority of them were from South Korea itself, reflecting the strong NGO movement in the country, as many as 1,600 participants from the rest of Asia, Europe, Africa and the Americas attended the conference.

South Korea has had a rich tradition of activism, displayed proudly at the conference. These activists have come a long way from being seen as rabble-rousers and trouble-makers to respected opinion-makers and partners in making policy. After years of focusing on domestic politics, the conference was seen as a coming-out party for their presence on the international stage.

Kim Dae-jung, the President of South Korea, opened the week-long conference by referring to his own days of activism fighting against a repressive military regime.

"Over 40 years of persecution, during which I escaped an attempt on my life four times and was imprisoned for six years, many domestic and foreign human rights



Young Seek Choue: Asking for Pax UN.

organizations undertook dedicated campaigns to save my life. I still remember them vividly and have never lost my sense of gratitude," he said. "That is why I am deeply moved and extremely happy to be able to attend the opening of this conference not only as President but also as an NGO activist," he added.

The purpose of the conference was to gather the NGO community, local, regional as well as international, and chart out a common path and strategy to follow in the new millennium. It was meant to be a time for networking and exchanging experiences. Calling themselves the "frontline actors in the struggle for peace, justice and the eradication of poverty," the NGOs gathered in Seoul said that governments and international agencies could not hope to get their work done without enlisting the active participation and contribution of the NGO community.

These activists have often been

considered as gadflies by their respective governments, and have often locked horns with governments on various issues. But their role as providers of essential services—from health care to schooling to conservation—in an era where the role of governments and resources was shrinking, is indispensable, say NGOs.

"They so often do what others cannot—because they are closer to individuals and communities; they are freer of constraints and can mobilize volunteer effort and additional funds," said Afaf Mahfouz, President of the conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations, or CONGO for short. CONGO was one of the three conveners of the conference.

Calling NGOs the primary players in civil society, Young Seek Choue, known as the inspiration behind the conference, called upon the community to play by the rules of the UN. "We have to achieve a permanent peace for human society under the spirit of Pax UN," said Choue, who is the founder and chancellor of the Kyung Hee University. He is said to have invested over a million dollars of his own money into organizing the conference. The University and the Global Cooperation Society International, an NGO set up by Choue, were the main organizers of the conference. The UN NGO/DPI Committee was the third co-convenor of the conference.

"We call upon all governments to strengthen the UN as the only global intergovernmental forum for addressing the challenges of the new century," said the Seoul Millennium Declaration, adopted at the end of the conference.

Governments were also called upon to fulfill the commitments made at the major UN conferences of the 1990s. Governments are still dragging their feet in fulfilling all the promises they made at various global meetings, and there were many international agreements, conventions and instruments that needed signing and implementation, said participants.

The UN, in turn, was asked to play a more proactive role in securing world peace and development. While they may have called for an increase in support of the UN, the relationship of NGOs with the international body has not always been a smooth one. Many NGOs have over the years expressed their frustration with what they see as continuing blocks to participation within the UN system.

"Our relationship with the UN has its ups and downs," said Mahfouz to The Earth Times. "We are in a down right now, especially those NGOs who are around UN headquarters. Our freedom to do our work has been declining over the past few years because we have been singled out as a security hazard and our movement and access restricted. Security is not a convincing reason to do this."

The declaration called on the UN to provide every opportunity for NGOs to participate in the work of the UN and to deepen its partnership with NGOs.

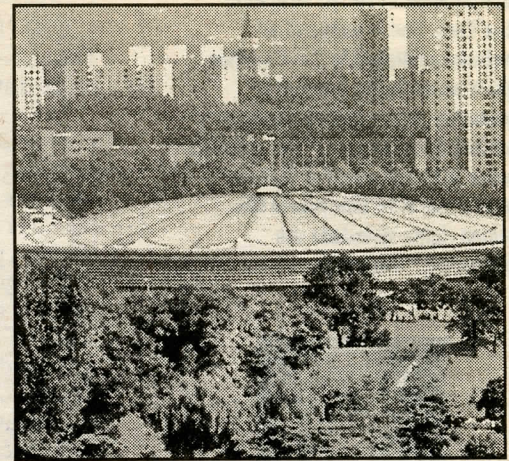
The Earth Times (ISSN 1077-1921) is distributed on Air Canada, Continental, Delta and USAirways shuttles, and also at newsstands in New York, Canada and Geneva.



Over 7,000 participants, mostly from South Korea, attended the meeting.



Lively discussions at the Youth Peace village.



The Seoul Olympic Park served as the venue.



Flowers and fruits creatively used to welcome delegates.



Plenary: Hei-soo Shin, Sudha Acharya, Rachel Kyte.



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PEOPLE

*At work in the fields
of development***GOURI SADHWANI****Director, Hague Appeal for Peace-International Coalition**

Gouri Sadhwani, director of the Hague Appeal for Peace-International Coalition, located in New York, says that her organization has a mission to eliminate war in the 21st Century. The Hague Appeal works with other nongovernmental organizations in an effort to educate people on how to achieve worldwide peace. "If apartheid and slavery can be abolished, then so can war," Sadhwani said.

**MEGAN BURK****Program coordinator, Hague Appeal for Peace International Coalition**

Megan Burk, is program coordinator for the Hague Appeal for Peace-International Coalition located in New York. She is editor of all material published by the Coalition, which works in the interest of promoting peace and eliminating conflict in the world. "The umbrella cause is to end war. For that we must make sure that issues like human rights violations are eliminated," Burk said.

**ANN WALTER****Executive director of the International Women's Tribune Centre**

Ann Walter, is executive director of the International Women's Tribune Centre (IWTC). She says she is dedicated to educating women around the world on what their rights are and working for their recognition in development. "Women are crucial in every community but often they are not recognized," Walter said. IWTC has several publications distributed internationally, attempting to reach and inform every woman in the world.

New evidence on drug use in Asia

In addition to traditional drugs like opium, misuse of pain medications.

BY VIR SINGH

NEW DELHI—Local newspapers, magazines and TV programs report the occasional drug bust at the airport. And there is a general awareness that drugs are abused. Less is known, however, about what drugs are being abused and by whom.

A report compiled by the UN Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) presents disturbing evidence from India and some of its neighboring countries, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

The list of intoxicants goes far beyond traditional drugs such as those derived from opium and cannabis, although policymakers are most concerned by the growing use of highly processed drugs such as heroin, which is derived from opium. But the fastest-rising threat, they say, comes from the growing abuse of cheap, easily available drugs for ailments such as body aches or coughs. So they have called for greater regulation of those drugs.

Young people are especially vulnerable. A 1990 survey by the

Indian government revealed that people between 16 and 30 were the worst-affected group. Substantial numbers of children below 16 were also abusing drugs, the survey found, and people with lower incomes were more susceptible. Of the entire group, one out of five had used heroin.

Between 32 and 45 percent of people in the countries studied in the South Asia Drug Demand Reduction Report are below 15 years, the age group most likely to start abusing drugs. In fact, the report's authors say the majority of users are young males from all walks of life. Many of them are illiterate, unemployed and sexually active.

Just what are these countries doing to tackle the menace? This report is the first attempt to comprehensively list various drug demand policies and programs in the six countries in a single document. Governments, private organizations and others need better information if they are to reduce the demand for drugs, said the former UNDCP Representative for South Asia, Dr. Abdul Latif. "A complete

*India alone is said to have 2.2 million addicts.*

information network does not yet exist. The countries are at different stages of drug control capability."

The UN has helped governments conduct rapid assessment surveys to gather basic information about the extent and pattern of drug use. But for programs and institutions to work more effectively, the report's authors say, attitudes must change.

They say drug abusers should not be regarded as being immoral, and decisions to fund rehabilitation and prevention programs should not be viewed as money flushed down the drain. Yes, these programs cost money, but governments should

think of how much more useful these people could be to society if they worked, said Dr. Latif. "If you lose someone to drugs, you lose someone from the general work force. Many of these people in their prime are not productive." India alone is estimated to have 2.2 million addicts, which is almost 2.2 percent of the population.

Serious as the problem may be, Dr. Latif says that trying to scare young people away from drugs is not the answer. "Instead, you should provide information about the consequences in a factual manner." The report on drug demand reduction calls for a "shift from anti-drug to pro-health messages."

UN vows to stop deaths in childbirth

BY C. GERALD FRASER

UNITED NATIONS—There's bad news and good news on the maternal mortality front.

The bad news: the death of women due to childbirth or pregnancy-related complications continues to be rampant—more than one every minute, almost 600,000 a year.

The good news: four UN agencies have determined what action is necessary to halt the worldwide flood of maternal deaths. And, speaking in agreement at a news conference, top officials of the agencies explained that "key interventions" and not "a country's overall wealth" can save the lives of women and children.

The four agencies were: the World Health Organization, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund, and the World Bank. Speaking for WHO was its director-general, Gro Harlem Brundtland; for Unicef, Carol Bellamy, executive director; for UNFPA, Nafis Sadik, executive director; and for the Bank, Eduardo Doryan. Two, Brundtland and Sadik are medical doctors.

Sadik said, "Of the 133 million births each year, 50 percent are

*Bellamy, Doryan, Brundtland and Sadik at press conference.*

unplanned and 50 percent are unattended by a qualified health worker. Fifteen percent of pregnant women, experience some complication—hemorrhage, infection—and need access of a 'skilled' attendant," a competent, compassionate care provider.

Maternal deaths, said Bellamy, are often responsible for deaths of three million infants in the first week after birth, not including stillbirths.

As Brundtland and Sadik had done, Bellamy emphasized that "We have learned a great deal about how to promote safe motherhood, using methods that are as cost-effective as they are straightforward and logical."

The Bank's representative, Doryan, vice-president for human development, noted that the agencies had met in Washington in 1998 to "take stock of our efforts to reduce the high maternal mortality." He said the Bank and the other agencies must make pregnancy safer for three reasons: Maternal health is a human right, there are collateral individual, social, and economic benefits, and, at the cost of only \$3 a person "well targeted interventions can prevent the majority of maternal deaths."

Brundtland said what is required for women to go through pregnancy safely is "a series of multisectoral, social,

cultural, behavioral, economic, and biomedical changes."

A joint statement by the quartet is in the form of a 40-page booklet, "Reduction of Maternal Mortality," prepared by WHO. What causes maternal mortality? The statements says: "The low social and economic status of girls and women is a fundamental determinant of maternal mortality in many countries." Two other significant factors are the absence of a skilled birth attendant and poor nutrition.

Maternal deaths can be prevented by a prevention of pregnancy, prevention of complications during pregnancy or appropriate management of complications that may arise. The key to safe childbirth, the booklet says, is "the institution of fully professional maternity care." A skilled attendant should be at every birth, the booklet says, referring to people with midwifery skills—midwives, nurses and doctors.

The booklet noted that a US strategy focusing on hospital delivery by doctors failed to ensure quality care. The presence in the US of women with low social and economic status results in a maternal mortality rate higher than those in most highly developed nations.

Orissa's poor say they have received no help after worst cyclone this century hits India

BY VIR SINGH

Editor's note: Our correspondent was in Orissa, India when the cyclone hit and provided this firsthand account of how residents of the state capital, Bhubaneswar, were affected.

BHUBANESHWAR, India—The mud walls and thatch roofs of Gautam Nagar, a slum overlooking the railway line in Orissa's capital were no match for the pounding wind and rain. About a quarter of the huts here were completely destroyed. "Come and see what has happened to us," said Shiba Sahoo, who makes a living by painting buildings. Other residents joined in the chorus of complaints. "People have lost their homes, their belongings, everything, yet the government is doing nothing for us. Nobody has come here since the cyclone."

Later, some of them admitted that a relief truck had come to a nearby area to distribute essential food items such as flour, sugar and rice. But these people knew all too well that the bulk of the struggle to get back on their feet would be theirs alone. Officials are calling



AP WIDEWORLD PHOTO

Army helicopter patrols damage near train station in Bhubaneswar.

the cyclone that hit the eastern Indian states of Orissa and West Bengal last weekend the storm of the century.

It was reportedly much stronger than the last such disaster, which occurred in 1971 and killed about 10,000 people. Local media reports say at least 5,000 people are already known to have died. The final death toll is expected to be much higher. More than 10 million people have been affected,

of which more than a million are homeless.

"Look, that's my neighbor's house," said Narasingh Charan Lenka, pointing to the remains of a mud hut. A string cot in one corner held what few possessions remained—a few rubber tires, plastic sheets, two folded mattresses, cooking utensils and some small boxes.

The owner, a vegetable vendor, had to be carried to hospital after

the roof fell in on him. Lenka said the menfolk had sent their wives and children away to shelter in concrete homes across the road. "I didn't know how much longer my home would hold up," he said. "It's the grace of God that has allowed us to keep a roof over our heads." Not far from the battered huts, an earth mover roared as it tried to clear trees from a major thoroughfare. Some 25 police cadets, in white T-shirts and khaki shorts, moved in to clear what the machine had missed.

All over the city, street lamps and telephone and electricity poles had been dragged to the ground, their wires splayed among the foliage. Away from the official clearing operations, groups of locals harvested what wood they could. Huge billboards lining the roads were bent out of shape, some of them almost free of their concrete moorings. Here and there, pieces of smashed asbestos roof tiles lay strewn about. Home owners spent the better part of a day clearing their driveways of trees, wires and other debris.

Less affluent citizens queued up outside government-run shops to buy kerosene for lamps and kitchen stoves. The word on the

street was that it would take at least 10 days for Bhubaneswar's power supply to be restored.

Vehicle owners, meanwhile, thronged the few functioning filling stations where petrol was being rationed. Scooter owners complained of having to wait for up to 45 minutes to buy petrol at more than 20 percent above the normal price. A scooter rickshaw driver claimed black marketeers were selling the stuff for a 100 percent profit. "What to do?" he shrugged. "Cyclone prices."

The city's homeless were camped at the railway station. No trains were running, yet it was one of the few places where people were able to meet and trade tales of what was happening around them.

Bhubaneswar had received two days of heavy rains. But the power failure led, ironically, to major water shortages. Many of those unable to pump water into overhead tanks were forced to buy the stuff from private vendors. And even this had to be rationed. One resident, standing in pitch darkness outside his gate, said he had not had a proper bath in two days. "So I don't mind this rain, I suppose it's the next best thing."

THE CONFERENCE OF NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
IN CONSULTATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED NATIONS



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- ❑ CONGO – is an international membership association of NGOs that facilitates collective efforts by NGOs to participate in the work of the United Nations.
- ❑ CONGO – sponsors international and regional NGO conferences that benefit NGOs worldwide, and helps to improve public understanding of the NGO sector.
- ❑ CONGO – co-convened the 1999 Seoul International Conference of NGOs, held from 10–15 October, when over 6,000 NGO representatives addressed the future of their role and work in the new Millennium.

Approved by acclamation at the Seoul Conference were the Seoul Millennium Declaration of NGOs, and a draft Programme of Action. Both the Declaration and Plan of Action are on the CONGO website, which can be found at www.conferenceofngos.org.

Join CONGO, and help us ensure a future where NGOs can make a difference.

"The Conference of NGOs'... job is to ensure that there are representative NGO voices at the table whenever substantive issues are being discussed."
—CONGO At Fifty: A Reaffirmation of Commitment (page 6)

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Tracking the international flow of funds for projects big and small around the world

DEVELOPMENT Dollars

Edited by Reshma Prakash

BURKINA FASO GETS HELP IN STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT

The International Monetary Fund will be providing Burkina Faso with a three-year loan worth \$53.7 million to support the government's structural adjustment program. According to Shigemitsu Sugisaki, Deputy Managing Director of the IMF, the authorities in Burkina Faso have been urged to "press ahead with diversification of the economy, privatization of the telecommunications and energy sectors, opening up of the cotton sector to private operators, further strengthening of the legal and judicial system, and improving the overall environment for private sector development." According to the IMF, Burkina Faso's outstanding use of IMF financing currently amounts to about \$116.51 million.

HELPING HAND FOR SIERRA LEONE'S CHILDREN

Canada's International Development Agency (CIDA) has announced an additional \$340,000 to help reintegrate children affected by war back into their communities in Sierra Leone, bringing Canada's total contribution to the region to \$7.1 million.

The money will be used to help rebuild the lives of former child soldiers, orphans and children who have been physically or psychologically handicapped, says the agency. In addition to providing physical therapy and counselling services for children suffering from post-traumatic

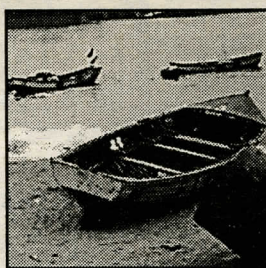
stress, a vocational training program for the children will also be established. As part of the project, children will manufacture physiotherapy aids, such as wheelchairs and crutches, farm tools and household items to be given to other civilian victims, says CIDA.

"Almost 5,000 children in Sierra Leone between the ages of seven and 14 have been forced to serve as soldiers, child laborers, or sex slaves," said Maria Minna, Canada's Minister for International Cooperation. According to the agency, the civil war in Sierra Leone has claimed more than 50,000 lives and forced more than two million people from their homes.

SCHOOLING GETS BOOST IN MOROCCO FROM UNDP

According to UN Development Programme, the private sector in Morocco is, for the first time, emerging as a full-fledged partner with the UN in its development efforts. The Banque Marocaine du Commerce Extérieur Foundation is providing \$2 million towards a three-year program for the promotion of schooling and community development in Morocco in partnership with the UNDP.

According to the UNDP, the Foundation will undertake the construction of rural community schools in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the country. The UNDP, on its part, will provide technical assistance to promote the implementation of these projects. The projects will also provide



UK provides \$34 million to help fishing communities reduce poverty.



IMF says it will help with structural adjustment policies in Burkina Faso.

safe drinking water, sanitation and health services for neighboring communities.

FORD FOUNDATION PROMOTES HUMAN RIGHTS

The Ford Foundation has provided \$245,000 to three organizations to promote human rights in West Africa. The El Taller Foundation in Tunisia has received \$100,000 over one year to conduct workshops on minorities and economic, social and cultural rights, and for a capacity-building program in the Arab regions. Human Rights Watch of New York has received \$100,000 over one year for a working group on human rights in the Arab world. The third organization, the Middle East Council of Churches of Cyprus, has received \$45,000 to promote legitimacy of human rights and their relevance to contemporary Christianity.

PROTECT FOREST IN HAWAII

The Seacology Foundation, a nongovernmental organization seeking to preserve the environments and cultures of islands, has made a \$25,000 grant to protect the Pu'u o kali forest on Maui, Hawaii. The forest, which is located below the Haleakula crater, is "arguably the best remaining stand of native wiliwili forest in the world." This dryland forest is home to several endangered plant species and is rapidly being degraded by feral axis deer. To protect the forest, the grant will be used to construct a fence to exclude animals from the forest.



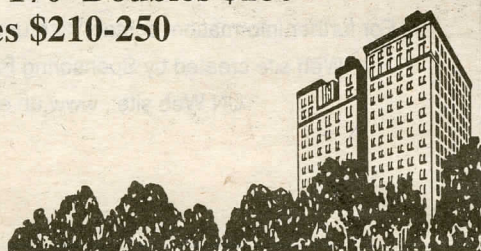
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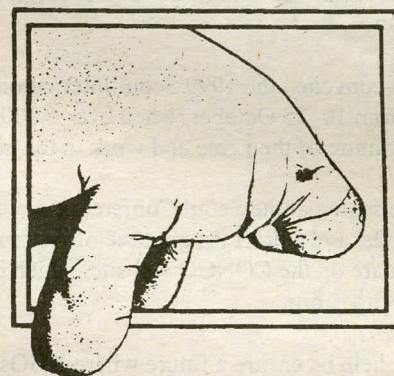
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NON SMOKING CONFERENCE

Activists gather in Kobe, Japan, to discuss impact of tobacco on women and youth

By Reshma Prakash

KOBE, Japan—The use of tobacco now constitutes a public health crisis in Japan, say authorities. It's the first such admission for Japan, a country long considered a smoker's haven.

It may no longer continue to be so if activists gathering in Kobe have anything to do with it. Far from being a fringe group associated with die-hard conservatives, people against smoking and other uses of tobacco now have the backing of the World Health Organization (WHO) and Japan's Ministry of Health and Welfare in their battle to reduce the consumption of tobacco.

It's been no easy task. Until the mid-1980s, Japan Tobacco, the country's leading tobacco company, was a government monopoly, giving the authorities little incentive to impose any restrictions on the sale and consumption of tobacco. Though the company was privatized as part of an effort to open up markets, Japan's all-powerful ministry of finance still retains a significant interest in Japan Tobacco. The company has recently expanded its presence in the international market by buying the foreign operations of RJ Reynolds, maker of brands such as Camel, Salem and Winston cigarettes and one of the world's largest tobacco manufacturers.

Given these circumstances, to have the ministry of health come out openly against tobacco and point to unacceptable costs of tobacco use is considered highly significant by observers of Japanese politics. Activists applauded the ministry and agreed that action on tobacco has been long overdue.

Worldwide, about 1.1 billion people smoke, a number expected to rise to more than 1.6 billion by 2025. The number of smokers has declined in high-income countries, while it continues to rise in lower-and middle-income countries. Contrary to the trend, Japan has some of the highest smoking rates in the industrialized world. There were 33 million smokers under the age of 20 in Japan in 1998. According to the health ministry, the economic costs of tobacco-related problems amounts to \$52 billion every year, \$12 billion of which are for medical costs alone. Lung cancer, a disease associated with smoking, is one of the leading causes of death for adults.

As part of its efforts to get the momentum going on tobacco control, the ministry is supporting, and financing, a WHO conference on "Avoiding the

Tobacco Epidemic on Women and Youth" to be held in Kobe from November 14 to 18. Participants from around 150 countries will be attending the conference, and organizers say it will be largest gathering of international women leaders concerned about tobacco. The conference will be supported by Hyogo Prefecture and Kobe city, and hosted by the WHO Center in Kobe.

"Tobacco kills four million people every year," Derek Yach, project manager of WHO's Tobacco Free Initiative, told The Earth Times. "This number is expected to rise to 10 million by 2030, and 70 percent of these deaths will be in developing countries. Yet, given the size of the deaths and the extent of the problem, the level of commitment to combat it is still very low. Many developing countries don't have even a single person from the government working on tobacco," he added.

WHO's Tobacco Free Initiative is a new project initiated by its director general, Gro Harlem Brundtland, when she first took office in 1998. Its express aim is to focus international attention and resources on what it says is a "global tobacco epidemic."

According to Yach, a large part of the problem stems from policies adopted by the tobacco industry. The industry has long insisted that nicotine is not addictive or that tobacco did not cause lung cancer or other diseases. Litigation in the US has recently made public the internal documents of the tobacco industry showing that the industry has been aware of the health effects of nicotine since the 1950s. Millions of pages released as a result of numerous court cases have yet to be fully analyzed by tobacco control advocates.

Activists wanting to take their agenda worldwide advocate using these documents to formulate legal strategies outside the US, as well to design health education and communication programs. Participants at the Kobe conference intend to discuss ways in which to use the information revealed in these documents.

"The information received by people over the years has been one-sided," said Yach. "It's been information controlled by the industry and truth about tobacco has had a problem getting out because of the marketing and advertisement blitz. Young people and people in developing countries are still unaware of what tobacco can do to



Vending machines provide an easy source of cigarettes for young people in Japan.

Asia's the new frontier for tobacco, say the experts. Are governments and people prepared for the onslaught?



CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

TOBACCO CONFERENCE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

them." Other strategies used by the industry will also be discussed at the conference. For instance, the industry has argued that controlling the use of tobacco would hurt the economies and livelihoods of countries and farmers growing tobacco. Many policy makers have been swayed by



Dr. Derek Yach of WHO.

these arguments, fearing that measures to control smoking—such as imposing higher taxes on tobacco, bans on advertising and restrictions on smoking in public places—would have negative economic consequences.

According to the World Bank, most countries would see no net job losses if tobacco consumption falls. Higher tax

rates would, in fact, bring higher tax revenues. A 10 percent increase in cigarette tax in China for example, says the World Bank, would reduce consumption by five percent and increase revenue by five percent. The increase in revenue would be sufficient to finance a package of essential health services for one-third of China's poorest 100 million citizens.

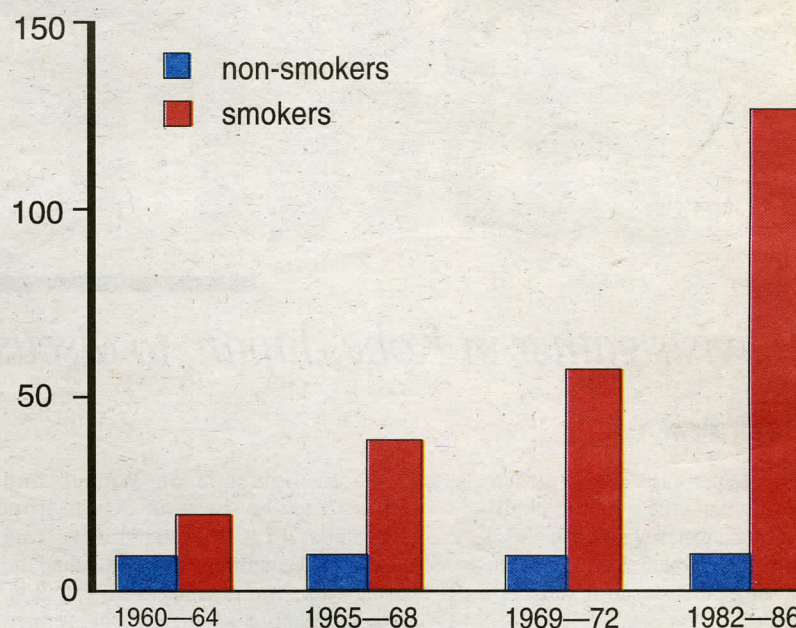
Those who may be affected by a reduction in global demand are the few countries, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa, whose economies are heavily dependant on tobacco farming. But there will always be people who smoke. The Bank's economists say that reduction in demand will be so slow that the current generation of farmers will not be affected. But policy makers will eventually have to consider switching over to alternative crops in 30 or 40 years, and international agencies will no doubt have to provide assistance to help them do so.

Activists at the Kobe conference will be focusing on policies within Asia and pushing for an increase in tobacco taxes, a global ban on tobacco advertising, uniform and prominent warning labels on tobacco products, restrictions on smoking in workplaces and public places, introducing education programs on the effects of tobacco and widening access to nicotine replacement and cessation therapies.

They will in particular push forward WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, the first international

Death rates from lung cancer among women in the United States

Death rate per 100,000 women



Source: World Health Organization

convention to be initiated by the organization. The convention addresses diverse issues such as tobacco advertising and promotion, agricultural diversification to help tobacco farmers shift cultivation to another crop, taxes,

subsidies and smuggling. WHO says that 50 nations, both tobacco growing and tobacco consuming countries, have pledged support for the Convention—including Japan. The Convention is expected to be adopted by 2003.

'If the men can do it, why can't women?'

BEATING THE APPEAL OF TOBACCO ADVERTISING

TOKYO—Asking young women in one of Tokyo's leading women's universities why they smoke was a revelation. A liberated woman smokes. Why not, men do it. Smoking is cool, modern, makes a fashion statement.

"I want a boyfriend who smokes," said one 18-year-old. "I think a man who smokes is independent and strong, someone who makes up his own mind. I'd be attracted to someone like that."

A professor from the women's studies department pointed out that women in Asia, at least the urban educated, smoked to prove that they were equal to men, to combat traditional views of femininity. Smoking is a sign of the equality of the sexes, she said—a view that the tobacco industry has actively fostered through its advertising.

As smoking levels decline in developed countries, tobacco activists say that women and youth, and developing countries, are the latest frontier for the tobacco industry. Between 1990 and 1995, cigarette sales fell by about five percent in North America but increased by eight percent in the Asia-Pacific region. Smoking levels among women and youth in Asia are rising slowly but surely. In 1996, smoking prevalence among Japanese women in their twenties increased, in one decade, from 16 percent to 20 percent. Smoking among teenage girls rose from five percent in 1990 to 15 percent in 1996, while it rose from 26



Of concern is the rising rate of smoking among Asia's women and youth.

percent to 40 percent among adolescent males, according to researchers. It is estimated that overall sales in Asia will increase by 35 percent by the year 2000.

If activists and policy-makers hope to make a dent on the smoking prevalence among these groups, they will have to creatively combat the popular images and ideas that accompany smoking. Merely saying smoking is bad may not work for groups who see such attitudes as conservative or coercive attempts to control behavior. Gender-sensitive and age-sensitive programs will have to be developed to target specific groups, say activists.

"School programs that tell young

people not to smoke are not working. The smoking rates for these groups are on the rise everywhere," said Judith Mackey, a veteran activist and director of the Asian Consultancy on Tobacco Control. "The tobacco industry spends millions on cultivating certain images through advertising and marketing. We don't have that kind of money so we have to be creative in finding a way to reach them. The problem is there is a critical gap in knowledge as to why people take up smoking and what can be done to reach them at that critical age when they do."

That women take up smoking for different reasons than men do, and that tobacco affects women's bodies in

different ways are areas that are still new for researchers. One of the biggest reasons why women smoke is to maintain or lose weight. Beliefs about being able to quit easily, lack of knowledge about health consequences, peer influence, access or affordability are other reasons influencing women to take up smoking, say researchers.

Marketing and advertising that focuses on women will be a major topic of discussion at the Kobe conference. Cigarettes for women such as Virginia Slims and other "slim" brands are pointed to as prime examples of target marketing.

"Not uncommonly, women's brands in Asia feature Western models," say Nancy J. Koufman and Mimi Nichter in the paper they are presenting on the impact marketing has on women's tobacco use. Caucasian models lend a sense of foreignness to products, serving as symbols of prestige, quality and modernity, say the researchers.

"We need to teach women media literacy skills that will help them evaluate how the industry is targeting them," said Nancy J. Koufman, vice president of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. "We need counter campaigns to reach people at the stage when they start smoking. Perhaps if we can delay initiation we can prevent them from taking up smoking altogether. The focus so far has been on treating the problem medically, we need to focus more on prevention."

‘We are now in a state of crisis’

Q&A: MASAHARU ITO

Masaharu Ito is Director General of the Health Insurance Bureau, Ministry of Health and Welfare of Japan.

Why is Japan supporting the Kobe conference on tobacco?

Tobacco has become more and more important for the Ministry of Health and Welfare. Dr. Brundtland, the new leader of the World Health Organization, also asked for our support when she came here for a visit and the ministry supports her programs fully. The tobacco issue is one which not only the health ministry but all other ministries should be involved. But it's not an easy task for the Ministry of Health to persuade other ministries to cooperate with it. I think the conference is a very good opportunity to pave the way for creating a favorable environment domestically.

How would you characterize the tobacco problem in Japan?

We are in a crisis. Let me explain why. First, the rise in smoking didn't happen very early compared to the United States for example. So the efforts to cut down, unfortunately, have not produced significant results.

Secondly, until recently the tobacco company, Japan Tobacco, was government owned. You can imagine why under such a system tobacco control measures have been very difficult to implement. If I combine all the deaths from so-called lifestyle causes, including smoking, and that covers cancer, cardiovascular diseases and strokes, the number of deaths from these diseases

constitutes up to two-thirds of the total deaths of Japanese people. Even if we start very vigorous measures at controlling it at this moment, we can see the effects only ten or 15 years in the future. Under such a situation, I can say that we are now in a state of crisis.

Why are smoking rates in Japan still rising?

Until the end of the World War II the smoking rate was relatively low. Then we had very rapid economic development after the war and especially in the 1970's, we had a very rapid rise in smoking. At that time, new types of tobacco, for example the filtered cigarette and also the so called low tar American blend cigarette were introduced and the rates increased. Another reason is that efforts were made to remove the trade barriers and customs tax on tobacco have been lowered. We see the so-called flood of foreign tobacco. Also, it has been very difficult for the health ministry to do something about smoking because the law which governs Japanese tobacco is not under the jurisdiction of this ministry. The only thing which the Ministry of Health can do is disseminate information on tobacco to the general public and try to change the behavior of the people.

What is the situation with Japan Tobacco now, is it still a problem?

Although Japan Tobacco has now been privatized, more than 50 percent of its stocks are still owned by the Ministry of Finance. Japan Tobacco is a wealthy company. What is relevant is that the



Ito: Seeking domestic support.

company owns a foundation fund which provides a lot of money to medical experts, especially pathologists. Many of the experts in pathology publish data or papers that the harmful effects of tobacco have not yet been fully proved or delineated as such. This is an additional problem we face.

What programs are in place right now to educate the people about tobacco?

The first is of course information dissemination. The ministry has been working very hard to provide the relevant information to the general public by means of holding symposiums, producing many types of pamphlets and publishing many articles in the ministry's magazine. For the medical experts we have produced review papers and a White Paper on Tobacco. The intention is to give people up-to-date scientific information on tobacco and health by collecting not only domestic data but global data as well. Giving the message

that tobacco is harmful to your health is of course important. But we need something beyond that. We have to give the strong message that tobacco is not only bad for health but that tobacco is also addictive. We have to establish messages not only for the general public but messages that suit different populations, for example, the younger generation.

What is the level of political support for measures such as raising the tax on cigarettes or banning advertising?

I think that if the tax can be raised the consumption will be reduced. But such measures are not under the authority of the Ministry of Health. At the moment, it's unfortunately not realistic to discuss these kinds of issues.

Concerning advertising, we do not have any legal mechanisms now to control advertisements. We have only voluntary measures from the domestic and foreign tobacco companies. At this moment, it's not easy to establish any legislation to control advertising quickly.

But from now on I would like to see an environment established where all the different ministries, including health, finance, even agriculture for example, can discuss these very important issues frankly.

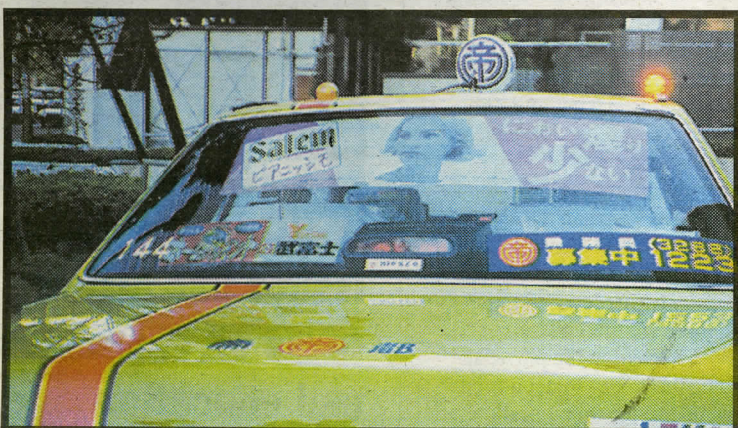
In this context, I think that WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and this conference are very important. I think that by really making use of this kind of occasion, such an environment will become realistic in our country for the near future.



Item for sale in Tokyo's leading toy store.



Kobe city officials in a preparatory meeting with WHO officials. Kobe city and Hyogo Prefecture are the hosts.



With no restrictions on advertising, the presense of tobacco is everywhere.

With the help of posters and pamphlets, the health ministry is educating people about the risks of tobacco.



Taking on big tobacco while reaching out to the private sector: Brundtland's first year

Q&A: GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND

BY JACK FREEMAN
AND NICOLE SCHWAB

Gro Harlem Brundtland of Norway met with The Earth Times recently in Geneva, not long after marking the first anniversary of her election as Director General of the World Health Organization. Excerpts from an interview:

Looking back at your first year in office, what do you see as the problems and the satisfactions?

I set about asking questions such as: How can we increase our ability to serve member states and civil society? Are we able to do our best in development? What are the comparative advantages of WHO, and how do we develop the core functions of our mandate, so that we help others doing what they can do in the health field? That means working more efficiently with the World Bank, and the other financial institutions, with Unicef, with UNDP, and of course, with countries—member states and donors. We've also tried to highlight the links between health and development—the fact that health is a key factor in development. To achieve a healthy population, you need to fight poverty.

You have to say that investment in health is part of the answer to how you fight poverty. Because people who are not healthy will not be able to get out of the poverty trap. So, investing in health is also good economics. That's one of the things that I try to convey.



'Investing in health is also good economics.'

Can WHO reach out more effectively to the private sector, especially pharmaceutical companies?

Absolutely. In the field of pharmaceuticals, we're trying to build a basis on which to work with pharmaceutical companies and foundations, to promote research and development of drugs which are necessary to treat the diseases of the poor—like malaria, where there is really a big



GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND:

'The tobacco companies have fought against the reality of addiction.'

problem. Why a problem? Because the markets—where the big firms look at the market situation—that are burdened with malaria are the ones who have no paying power. And so there's little investment, in malaria treatment. And that's an example where a public body, like the WHO, has to take a leadership role and try to work together with those who can be stimulated to make an effort. Our role as a lead agency in health mandates that we have to serve the poor and the vulnerable, to see that as much as possible, technological advances can benefit everyone, not only those who can pay. So that's an important role, and we have to draw on the private sector to be able to do it.

Why have you made the tobacco-free campaign one of your major initiatives?

Well, for me, it's natural to look at what is the situation in the world today, and how is it going to look ten years or 20 years from now. What are the trends? So what do we have to prepare and develop in order to make a difference in the trends that are negative? Now, the most dramatic negative trend with regard to mortality each year is the tobacco epidemic. The trend is being driven by strong advertising and economic forces, to open the markets in the developing world for tobacco, for higher tobacco consumption, when activities in the rich part of the world are geared at trying to curb the epidemic. So there was no question that this was something we had to take seriously. The tobacco companies have fought terribly against the reality of addiction to tobacco. They are looking so actively to get hold of the 14-and-16-year-

olds, because they are the ones most easily hooked.

What, specifically, is WHO doing?

We are trying to mobilize people who are interested—the civil society, NGOs, universities, young people, there's an alliance building to try to work on the issue. Member states have agreed that we should work for a framework convention to fight tobacco. And that means working on issues like higher taxation on cigarettes, non-advertisement, education campaigns, to take some examples. It is essential that countries agree on policies and guidelines, because if countries don't support one another in this international burden, each country is going to be more helpless along. So you have to have international conventions. It's the first time that WHO has used its mandate to make a real binding, legally binding, convention.

What about your focus on poverty eradication?

A billion people in the world live below the poverty level—on less than one dollar a day. There has been such an enormous advance in health in this century, life expectancy has increased by 20, 30 years. But you have the excluded billion, who don't have access to the knowledge base that has been created, and the technology level that we have. And that is a challenge. It's not that you have to invest, you know, enormous amounts in order to give people a decent starting point of basic health services, and bringing people to a nutritional status and immunization status, and with access to health services. It's not out of our reach.

You know, it's not impossible to think that in 10 or 15 years, we can really bring most of that billion up, to a level which is acceptable. You have to have some kind of basic community care, even in those areas where there are few children. It doesn't have to mean that the physician has to be going there. But somebody has to know how to give the immunization. You can really train community people to do a lot of things. But you have to have a

systematic approach to reaching people, to build that kind of capacity.

How is your work at WHO significantly different from the work you did as Prime Minister of Norway?

Well, I find it very stimulating. To do it, from this point of view, because here, you are really trying to be a capitalist, and somebody assembling, analyzing, spreading the knowledge, and giving opportunities for people to make decisions. In a national setting, as a national politician, you do the gathering of the evidence, you do the analysis of what is possible, and feasible, and then you make your decision about what you think is right, and then you push that. Here, as an internationally elected representative to all the countries of the world, you help them make their decisions.

But you can give them the analytical evidence on which to move, and where they can—they can share the knowledge that makes them able to make the best decisions. But you have to be able to formulate goals, and visions—not only your own, but based on common efforts of many people, and listening to others, being able to manage knowledge and manage processes of change. And have people on board to try to make a difference.

What do you think will be said by historians about your stewardship of WHO?

Well, they'll probably say that she made some change, and continued the kind of systematic work that she did as leader of the World Commission on Sustainable Development and that of her country. That she really helped move the international agenda ahead. I think they will say that.



'WHO is working on issues like higher taxes on cigarettes and education campaigns.'

ON 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF UN POPULATION FUND

Big trouble

BY RESHMA PRAKASH

UNITED NATIONS—The 30th anniversary of the United Nations Population Fund, marked on October 27, has not been a happy occasion for the agency. While UNFPA has been internationally lauded for the efficiency and timeliness of its support of national programs in reproductive health, UN officials say that these programs are facing dangerous cutbacks due to a four-year decline in donor contributions.

There is not enough money to cover all the activities it has planned, says UNFPA. The agency says it faces a \$72 million shortfall in funds as available resources for 1999 will cover only two-thirds of the Fund's commitments to country programs. UNFPA says its income has been steadily falling over the last few years. The agency expects its general income in 1999 will be \$248 million, \$29 million less than in 1998 and \$42 million less than in 1997—a 14 percent drop in two years. This shortfall will have a chilling effect on women's lives because vital programs needed by them will have to be cut back, leading to an additional 1.4 million unwanted pregnancies, 570,000 induced abortions and over 670,000 unwanted births, say officials.

"It is ironic and tragic that a shortage of funds is tying our hands now," said Dr. Nafis Sadik, UNFPA's Executive Director. "We have three decades of proof that reproductive health and population programs are effective, a global consensus that such efforts are essential to social development, and a clear plan of action that will save lives and protect human rights. This is no time for donors to cut back their support."

Officials said that "most significant" in 1999 was the loss of all funding from the United States, which provided \$20 million last year. The US funding—although earmarked by the Clinton Administration—has been held up in Congress because a controversy derailing the foreign-aid bill. Opponents of the bill want the US to remove all funding for international programs that support abortion. UNFPA has repeatedly said that it does not promote such programs.

UNFPA was established in 1969 to



Nafis Sadik, UNFPA Executive Director: "This is no time for donors to cut back."

support population programs in developing countries. It is funded wholly by voluntary contributions from donor governments and is not part of the regular UN budget. A majority of the donors are from developing countries. Japan, the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Sweden, the UK, Finland, Switzerland and Canada are some of UNFPA's biggest donors.

The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) provided a new impetus for the agency. Contributions increased considerably in 1995, reaching an all-time high of \$312.6 million, enabling the UNFPA to expand its program to meet countries' increasing reproductive health needs. But contributions declined slightly in 1996 and 1997 and then fell sharply in 1998 and 1999.

"The decline in resources could not have come at a worse time," Dr. Sadik said. "The UN's recent review of progress in carrying out the Cairo agreement showed that the ICPD approach has taken hold and generated considerable momentum: government policies are changing and national programs are being redesigned to reflect the ICPD Program of Action. Just when these programs are being effectively

implemented, the brakes are being put on and resources are being cut. This leads to a stop-and-go process that impedes progress, prevents economies of scale and disrupts the efficient management of programs and resources."

UNFPA says that the \$72 million shortfall will have a severe impact on the lives of women and their families all over the world. Due to a shortage of funds, over 1 million people who might have used modern contraceptive methods will instead use less-effective traditional methods; and 1.5 million will continue to use no method of family planning. One likely result will be 1.4 million additional unwanted pregnancies each year.

The UNFPA predicts other dire results unfolding from its inability to fund programs around the world. Unwanted pregnancies will lead to hundreds of thousands of induced abortions and unwanted births, says the agency. Over 3,300 maternal deaths, more than 43,000 cases of serious illness consequent to delivery, nearly 41,000 infant deaths and about 15,000 child deaths will also flow from these unwanted pregnancies, says UNFPA. Efforts to combat sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS and to curtail harmful traditional practices such as female genital

mutilation will also be curtailed.

UNFPA cites the following as examples of how the funding crisis has already affected UNFPA-supported activities:

- Tanzania: Plans to include family life education in the school curricula have been delayed; the census has been postponed to August 2002; and the supply of contraceptives may be disrupted.

- Burundi: An innovative initiative to improve referrals for emergency obstetric care has been temporarily suspended. Preparatory activities for the 2001 census have been postponed.

- Morocco: Midway through the four-year country program, several key activities to strengthen management and technical skills within the health system have been postponed.

- Algeria: Funds to train midwives and health workers, to upgrade health facilities and to expand reproductive health services following the easing of civil strife have been reduced.

- India: Plans to provide delivery facilities in inaccessible villages have been postponed; efforts to establish an emergency obstetric care system have been disrupted; and a program providing subsidized contraceptives to men and women in rural areas has been suspended.

- Vietnam: Training of health workers and the dissemination of already developed educational materials have been suspended; condom supplies cover just 50 per cent of the anticipated demand; and provision of HIV/AIDS test kits and equipment for safe blood transfusion has been delayed despite rising infection rates.

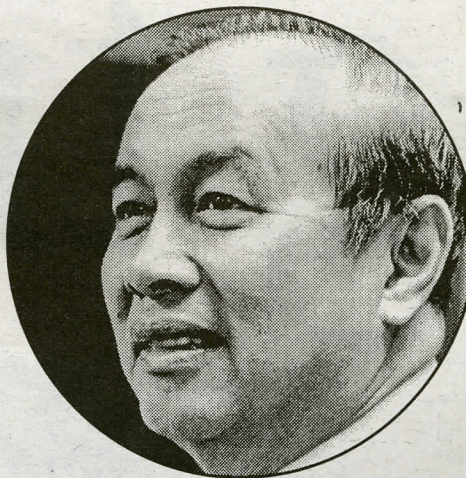
- Ecuador: Contraceptive procurement for five provinces has been canceled, affecting some 200,000 women; over 180,000 adolescents will not receive reproductive health education or counselling.

- Haiti: Support to the main center for HIV/AIDS prevention, where more than 100,000 people a year seek and receive advice and treatment, has been suspended; and adolescent peer education programs aimed at reducing high rates of teenage pregnancy and HIV infection have been curtailed.

Just when its work is being widely lauded for effectiveness and efficiency, one of the UN's major agencies is victimized by the politics of ideology

Highlights: Thirty years of promoting

There have been many positive changes since the UN Population Fund first started: In 1969, women in developing countries had an average of five children each. Today, they have fewer than three. Then, 30 percent of couples used family planning. Today, about 60 percent do—and the vast majority of governments support it. Then, an estimated 40 million or 8 to 10 percent of married women in developing countries, aged 15-49, used modern contraceptives. Today, 430 million or 55 percent do. Then, 140 out of every thousand babies born alive would die during childhood. Now, 80 do. Then, average life expectancy was 59 years. Now, it is 66.



Rafael M. Salas of the Philippines was the first Executive Director of UNFPA. He died in 1987, while still in office.

1967—The United Nations Secretary-General, U Thant, creates a small Trust Fund for Population for pilot experiments to help developing countries set up and expand their own population programs.

1969—The trust fund evolves in two years into the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA). It has seven donors and gets \$3.9 million in core voluntary contributions.

1971—General Assembly designates UNFPA as the leading United Nations agency in promoting population programs.

1971-77—First financial assistance to census programs in 22 African countries, mostly newly independent states that never had complete population censuses before. A few years later, another 24 sub-Saharan national census programs get UNFPA support for the 1980 round of censuses.

1976—The General Assembly notes UNFPA has become the most effective and viable United Nations entity in the population field.

1978—UNFPA issues first "State of World Population" report to raise awareness of the need to address population issues.

1981—General Assembly sets up the annual United Nations Population Award, first of its kind and only Assembly-authorized United Nations award. Since it was first issued in 1983, the Award—a certificate, a gold medal and monetary prize—has gone to 33 laureates: 14 organizations and 19 persons.

1969

1975

1980

1985

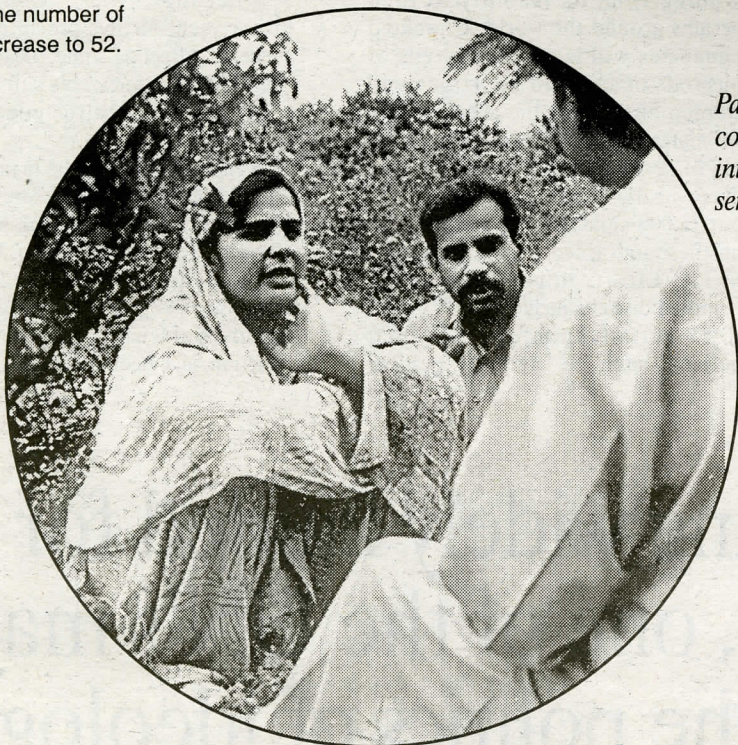
1970—Contributions rise to \$14 million. UNFPA's first Executive Director, Rafael Salas of the Philippines, signs the Fund's first country agreement with Pakistan's Government. The second and third, with Mauritius and Egypt, respectively, signed in 1971.

1972—The number of donors increase to 52.

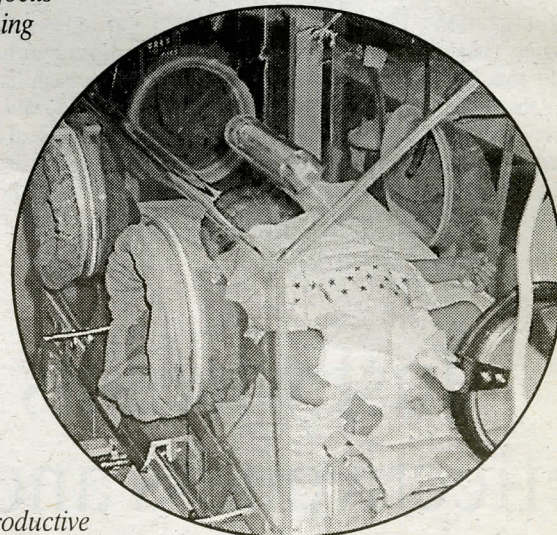
1974—UNFPA helps finance 1974 World Population Conference in Bucharest, Romania. By now UNFPA had established its global presence, with \$52 million in resources and programs in 97 countries.

1979—Contributions rise to \$112 million. Assembly affirms UNFPA as its subsidiary organ, under the terms of article 22 of the United Nations Charter.

1984—UNFPA helps organize the International Conference on Population in Mexico City. Salas, the Conference's Secretary General, describes it as one of the briefest, most economical and best-attended United Nations conferences. It attracts about 3,500 participants, including representatives from about 146 states and 800 accredited journalists.



Pakistan was the first country to sign a country agreement with UNFPA. The focus initially was on providing family planning services.



Comprehensive reproductive health, not just providing contraceptives, slowly became the focus of the agency.

population issues at the United Nations

UNFPA is the largest internationally funded source of population assistance to developing countries.

World population reaches five billion in 1987. In 1999, world population reaches six billion.



1987—World Population passed five billion.

1987—Salas dies in March. Dr. Nafis Sadik of Pakistan named his successor in April; the first woman to head one of the United Nations major voluntarily financed bodies.

1987—UNFPA created the Rafael M. Salas Lecture Series, at the request of developed and developing countries, to commemorate Salas' contributions. Speakers have included Prince Philip; the Duke of Edinburgh; Robert McNamara; Jacques-Yves Cousteau; Gro Harlem Brundtland; and Fidel Ramos.

1994—UNFPA celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary and crosses the \$3 billion mark in voluntary contributions. Pledged assistance has risen by 18 percent.

1998—UNFPA has 93 donors by the end of 1998.

1985

1990

1995

2000

1987—Assembly approves UNFPA name change to United Nations Population Fund. The Fund retains its acronym, UNFPA, and its mandate.

1989—the 79 states taking part in the Amsterdam Forum approve the consensus Amsterdam Declaration whose Call to Action asked nations to double spending on family planning and major population activities from \$4.5 billion in 1987 to \$9 billion in the year 2000.

1994—UNFPA helps organize the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo. About 179 countries and entities adopt the plan of action. The conference changes how the international community views population: no longer seen in isolation, but as integral to all development efforts. It calls for a quantum shift in strategies from demographic goals towards more individual human welfare and development objectives.

1999—The Hague Forum and the General Assembly's special session on the implementation of the Program of Action are organized and held in February and June-July, respectively. New benchmarks adopted.



Nafis Sadik and media mogul Ted Turner at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo.

Anwarul Chowdhury, Ambassador of Bangladesh, and First Lady Hillary Clinton at the opening session of the Hague Forum.



UNFILE

Inside the world of
global diplomacy.
Edited by
Michael Littlejohns:

UN steps up peacekeeping efforts

BY MICHAEL LITTLEJOHNS

UNITED NATIONS—After a relatively fallow period in the wake of the Somalia and Rwanda debacles and serious problems in Bosnia, the United Nations has returned big time to its principal business of peacekeeping, more than doubling in the space of a few days in late October the number of international troops mandated for field duty.

East Timor alone will account for a force of about 9,000 plus 200 military observers and more than 1,600 police officers, along with civil administrative personnel in the hundreds who will run the former Portuguese colony for at least three years on its road to total independence from Indonesia.

Operations also are in prospect in the Congo and the Central African Republic, following a Security Council decision to deploy several thousand UN troops in Sierra Leone. Bernard Miyet, the French official in charge of UN peacekeeping operations, says "the pendulum has swung back" and the number of UN peacekeeping operations has risen to 18, with consequent financial demands on the severely strapped organization. He estimates that the one in East Timor, where UN troops are taking over from the Australian-led multinational force known as Interfet, will cost the international community \$1 billion, for just the first 12 months.

Secretary General Kofi Annan, who headed up the peacekeeping department before ascending to the top UN post, has created a voluntary trust fund to raise the bulk of the money, since there is little hope that the US Congress will release cash for what would normally be America's 31 percent assessed contribution toward the total cost. The US has already, arbitrarily and unilaterally, declared a ceiling of 26 per cent for its assessment. Washington wants cuts also in its assessment of 25 percent for the regular UN budget. Peacekeeping is represented in a veritable alphabet soup of acronyms that includes UNTSO (Middle East truce supervisors), UNIFIL (Lebanon) and UNFICYP (Cyprus), to name only three.

The operation in Angola was terminated earlier this year. Not because it was no longer needed (the civil war rages on), but because the Angolan government wanted the UN out, believing the troops were not doing enough to deter the rebel forces of Jonas Savimbi, who also was happy to see the force disbanded.

Peacekeeping operations normally are established by the Security Council, the UN organ with primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, and it mandates size, overall objectives and a time frame. Having no troops constantly in readiness, the UN



must rely on member states to volunteer military personnel. Since 1948, some 110 countries answered the UN call at one time or another and virtually all member states have offered civilian support staff.

Despite the UN's financial problems created by the failure of many member states but chiefly the US to pay UN dues, few troop donor nations can expect timely reimbursement, which in normal circumstances would amount to about \$1,000 per soldier per month. It is estimated that troop contributing countries now are owed more than \$725 million. That number is bound to increase with the sharp rise in operations and the continued failure of the US and other debtors to meet their financial obligations.

Still, Miyet says that so many countries believe in the merits of UN peacekeeping that there is seldom any lack of volunteers,

despite the risks to life and limb. Since 1948, more than 1,600 uniformed and civilian peacekeepers have lost their lives on UN assignments. Mounting and deploying a force takes time, which is why NATO acted independently in Bosnia. West African troops entered Liberia and Sierra Leone, and Indonesia agreed to allow a multinational force into East Timor. That force received Security Council blessing prior to its deployment.

In recent years internal conflicts rather than wars between sovereign states have caused most UN military interventions. Interestingly, there is no mention of peacekeeping in the UN Charter, an omission that was observed by Secretary General Annan in an address celebrating the 50th anniversary last year of the first such operation. "Peacekeeping from the start has been an improvisation," he said. "To my mind, that is one of its great merits." At that time, the trend was against increased peacekeeping, but Annan insisted. "The mission of United Nations peacekeeping must continue. Too much remains to be done, too many innocents are dying as we speak, for us to think of leaving the field now..."

"Above all, it gives time and space for conflict resolution: it gives peace a chance. If the chance is not taken, the peacekeepers are not to blame."

UNESCO

Matsuura named head



In what was called a fierce contest, Koichiro Matsuura of Japan has been nominated to head Unesco. The

agency's 58-member executive board chose to nominate Matsuura over 11 other contenders. His nomination will be submitted to Unesco's General Conference for confirmation on November 12. If approved, Matsuura will replace Federico Mayor, Unesco's current director general. Mayor's second six-year term ends this November.

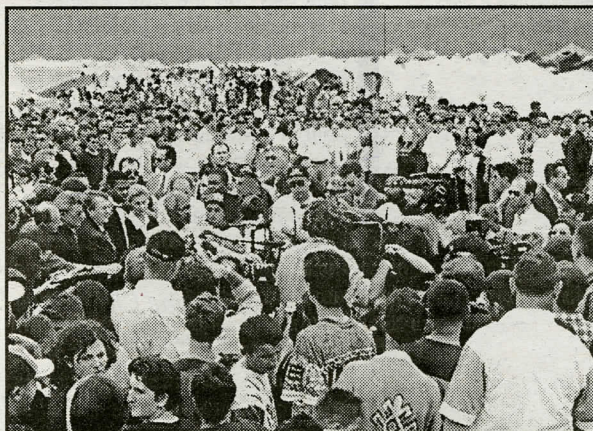
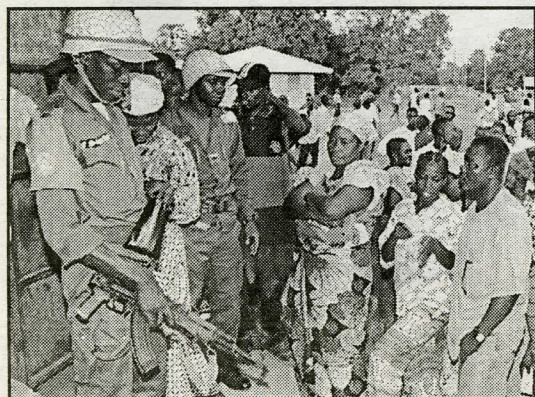
Matsuura is currently chair of Unesco's World Heritage Committee, and has held various posts in the Japanese government. He has also served as Japan's Ambassador to France, Andorra and Djibouti. Seeking a greater presence and influence in international diplomacy, observers say the Japanese government campaigned aggressively on behalf of Matsuura. Like many UN agencies, Unesco hasn't been immune to the crunch in resources and one of Matsuura's first tasks on assuming his new post will be to figure out how to augment the agency's dwindling finances. The agency lost 30 percent of its budget and staff subsequent to the departure of the United States and United Kingdom in 1987, partly over objections to Unesco's support for politically risky initiatives such as the new information order.

—RESHMA PRAKASH

UN SCENES

One of the newest UN peace missions is in Kosovo, where the world body faces serious challenges. Illustrative of the risks that mission staff there face was a recent tragic incident in which Valentin S. Krumov, a foreign service officer from Queens, New York, was shot and killed on his first day of duty. Bulgarian-born and familiar therefore with the Slavic languages, he made the mistake of answering a question in passable Serbo-Croat. The killer, allegedly an ethnic Albanian, perhaps wanted to settle a score and the UN man got caught in the ethnic mess.

Secretary General Kofi Annan also risked life and limb during a recent visit to Kosovo, his first there.



Above left: Kofi Annan speaks with correspondents at the Stenkovci I refugee camp.

Above: Sweden's King, Karl Gustav XVI greeting UN peacekeepers on Yugoslav border.

Far left and left: Peacekeepers from Mali on mission in the Central African Republic in Bangui.

UNFILE | IN THE MARGINS

Presidential contenders speak up for UN

Political notes. It was too much to expect that **Patrick Buchanan** would ever pass up half a chance to knock the United Nations. True to form as he announced he was bolting the Republican party to run for President on the Reform party ticket, Buchanan offered these fighting words to 300 cheering adherents. "It is time for a new patriotism, where America's sovereignty is wholly and fully restored. And if, as Secretary General **Kofi Annan** has threatened us, we will lose our vote in the United Nations if we don't give him the \$1 billion he says we owe him, I would give Mr. Kofi this word of advice: Sir, don't go there. Because if our vote in the UN is in jeopardy, your lease on Turtle Bay is in jeopardy." Through **Fred Eckhard**, his spokesman, Annan replied, "For the record, Pat, this Secretary General has nothing to do with it. The United Nations Charter says in Article 19 that the loss of vote is automatic once a member state falls behind by two years or more. And as for the lease, there is none. We own this land, thanks to a gift by **John D. Rockefeller, Jr.** and land transfers from the City of New York." Case closed.

Al Gore says 'Pay.' What was billed in some quarters as a debate between **Bill Bradley** and Vice President **Al Gore**, at a town meeting in Hanover, New Hampshire, but was really the two of them fielding fairly soft questions from a mostly polite Dartmouth College audience (while not being too hard on each other) gave the Democratic hopefuls a chance to voice support for the UN. That must have gratified **Kofi Annan** after Buchanan's aforesaid unwelcome remarks. Bradley mentioned what he sees as the importance of the UN for American foreign policy



AP WIDEWORLD PHOTO

Bradley (l), and Gore give UN a chance.

and Gore called on the Congress to free up those frozen funds and pay US arrears.

Meanwhile back in Washington, **Ambassador Richard Holbrooke** has been spending two or three days a week on Capitol Hill lobbying House members on the arrears issue, feeling this is more important at this time than anything he might do in New York. Although Gore's appeal reflects the view of most Americans that Washington should pay—even the conservative *Wall Street Journal* agrees, since an article of faith for good business is that you try to pay your bills in full and on time—the Neanderthal element in Congress may still prevail and come up with terms **President Clinton** will find impossible to accept, thus making another veto likely.

Some legal advice. **Stephen Schwabel**, the American chief justice of the World Court, who was in New York the other day, recalled for reporters that it was the US that initiated a case in 1962 over UN arrears which resulted in the high tribunal's handing down a landmark opinion that payment of UN assessments is mandatory. At the time there was a cold war and the Soviet Union was the debtor, owing millions for peacekeeping in the Congo and Sinai. The shoe now being on the other foot, Washington has changed course, conveniently ignoring that 1962 ruling and arbitrarily deciding its own



Kofi Annan (c), and Bernard Kouchner (l), special representative for Kosovo, stroll through the ruins in Pec.

assessments at a discount to the UN numbers. Schwabel observed that what was true 37 years ago is just as true today: the court's opinion still stands. However, he also recalled that in 1986 the US reversed itself on accepting World Court decisions, after being sued by Nicaragua. According to Schwabel, if any government now wants to sue UN debtors the court is a proper place to do it. But don't hold your breath.

A tardy committee? The so-called 661 committee, the Security Council body that reviews proposed contracts for purchases by Iraq for humanitarian purposes and the repair of its devastated infrastructure including the oil fields, is alleged to have held up some \$700 million worth of purchases and now to be taking an average 34 days to rule on requests. The charge comes from **Benon Sevan**, head of the oil-for-food program. It was relayed to the Security Council by **Kofi Annan**, who spoke of "the resultant serious implications for the implementation" of that program. Irritated Western officials rejected the complaint, saying that more than 95 percent of contracts have been approved. Some blame a mind set in the upper echelons of the UN secretariat, perhaps including Annan, that all sanctions are blunt instruments and therefore bad. Officials say the US has blocked 5 percent of contract requests; the UK, 1 percent. Both governments insist that careful scrutiny is necessary if the Security Council is to avoid a possibility that Iraqi imports have less benign end uses than appearances might indicate. Since 1996, sanctions waivers have enabled Iraq to import goods worth \$9 billion.

The Security Council agreed to defer action on a proposal by Annan to increase Iraqi sales. France was among those members who felt that obtaining agreement on a system to resume weapons inspections was more important and wished to avoid another knock down-drag out fight with the Americans and British that might sour the mood for compromise on that issue. Also, the French have done their own blocking, striking down an attempt to ship to Iraq equipment sought by the British media giant Reuters for its Baghdad office.

Musical flop. This year's UN Day concert in the General Assembly hall was billed also as a tribute to **Duke Ellington**, whose centennial is being celebrated this year. It proved a flop according to several unhappy jazz buffs. Anticipating a rare treat, they were bitterly disappointed by what they felt was the low caliber of the performance.

Apparently, stars expected to be part of the entertainment failed to show. Earlier the same day, the scene was mucho magnifico in Conference Room 4, which echoed to the cheers of a delighted SRO audience clapping hands to the music as the critically acclaimed Buena Vista Social Club from Havana, world-class musicians all, kept up a solid Latin beat, compliments of the Cuban mission. Channel surfers who stumbled on

Channel 78, where the Cuban all-stars were televised live, were in luck. The musical score: Fidel 1; Duke 0.

Ethics in business. **Kofi Annan** has reached out to business far more than any of his predecessors did, having had his own brief experience as an employee of the Pillsbury Company after graduating from Macalester College. Many CEOs have responded in kind, including a major drug company that donated millions of dollars worth of medicine for the UN fight against AIDS in developing countries. But corruption has always worried the UN. Now comes word that leaders of the Colgate-Palmolive Company, Shell and General Motors were among those invited to join the Secretary General, the **Reverend Leon Sullivan**, originator of the Sullivan Principles for South Africa, and **Richard Howitt**, a member of the European Parliament, at the unveiling of a new set of a new code of ethics for international business. Sullivan was the one who shamed major corporations into elevating employment and other standards during South Africa's apartheid era or to withdraw from business there altogether. Credit for the new principles is due to Howitt, a British Laborite, who piloted through the European Parliament resolutions on a European code of conduct, the first time in 20 years that an international forum voted to impose binding rules for multinational companies, whose contribution to third world development greatly exceeds the total of official direct aid. Bowing to Sullivan's historic initiative, Howitt calls the new code The Global Sullivan Principles. Sullivan, a priest from Philadelphia, is a former aide to the **Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

Stadium Peacemaker? Soccer fan (and former player) **Kofi Annan** was invited to throw out the first ball at Yankee Stadium for the Series-clincher. As is well known, the luster of the Yankee victory was tarnished a mite by a pre-game and post-game controversy twist players and an NBC reporter, who upset them by just doing his job, which is not the massaging of bruised egos. Annan's contribution was ignored in the TV coverage—which also passed up the shot when he threw out the ball for the Women's World Cup opener—but the reporter ought to be grateful to the Secretary General. A day later he said at the UN that he was willing to help make peace between the Yankees and the NBC man, who upset them by asking some pointed questions of **Pete Rose**, the baseball great whose claim to Hall of Fame status seems unlikely ever to be rewarded, because of a little matter of heavy gambling on the outcome of games, a serious violation of the rules of the game.

"Would you offer your services? Do you think a little diplomacy is needed?" Annan was asked later.

The UN record of his response is as follows: "SG. (Chuckles). If they need a bit of peacemaking, this is what we are here for. I will give them whatever help we can." The 38th floor is still waiting for the call.

pachamama

An environmental message for youth

BY DAVID FREDDOSO

Pachamama is the Incan word for "Mother Earth," and the title of a new children's environmental book published by the UN Environment Programme. This colorfully illustrated book explains the environmental problems that face various parts of the world. It draws most of its factual content from UNEP's Global Environmental Outlook-2000 report, but it also includes poems, local environmental anecdotes, and excellent illustrations by children all around the world.

Pachamama tries to convince young people that their parents have failed at environmental conservation, creating problems for the atmosphere, agricultural land, rainforests, and the water supply. UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer writes in his brief foreword, "Adults have acted irresponsibly in caring for the environment. But young people are also enthusiastically dedicated to the future."

The editors include a very concrete presentation of the problems. The accounts written by children are probably the best part of Pachamama. Daniel Onyi of Nigeria writes about brown water flowing from the taps in his province. Andrew Hobbs details the disastrous introduction of cane frogs by



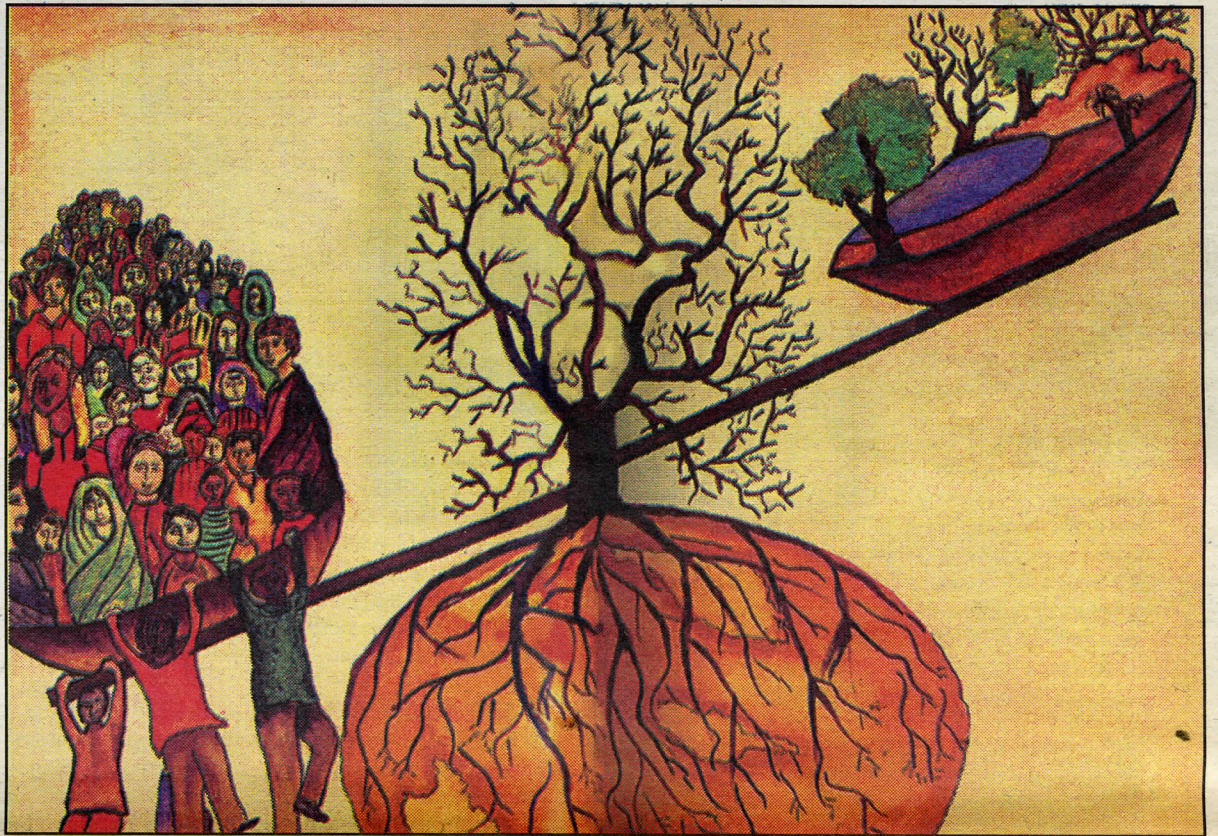
farmers in northern Australia. These personal accounts give a face to environmental problems around the world, making them much more accessible to children than if they were packed in heavy statistical reports or even described in textbook fashion. But Pachamama sets out to more than simply explain "why the world's environment is being degraded and

how our Mother Earth is doing today." It also suggests specific ways for young people to become involved and lists environmental groups they can join, since "the fate of the Earth lies not in government hands but in ours."

The editors give a list of "Commitments" for children to make. Some of these are useful suggestions that most young people can actually take up, such as "Don't leave rubbish lying around," and "Plant trees." Others are vague, impractical or unrealistic for young people, such as "Get traffic out of residential areas!" and "Get your family and school thinking of about environmental issues daily!"

It would be nice to see many more suggestions that are thoroughly practical, like "Take showers, not baths," or "Use cold water instead of hot," or "Turn down the heat by four degrees." After they have seen all the serious problems mentioned in Pachamama, children will probably want to do something about them, but they need more concrete advice about how they can. It is well and good to encourage broad and general ideals, but children tend to take more interest in the local and concrete, where they see that they can have a real effect. Without personal advice that hits home, a book like Pachamama can be reduced to vivid but depressing propaganda filled with "environmental" buzzwords, and conservation of the environment can become an airy and abstract ideology. Still, Pachamama is a fun book that is likely to engage children. Some parts are slightly alarmist—a poem written by four British children describes the earth as "a living hell," which doesn't seem to be true yet. Also somewhat controversial is a very brief Neo-Malthusian shortage prediction by the editors. But for the most part, the book avoids doomsday rhetoric and sticks to facts that are neatly backed up by the children's personal accounts. Pachamama's message is all the more powerful for giving voices to problems that otherwise seem very distant.

One more thing: the production quality is excellent. No wonder—UNEP donated \$30,000 for the project; the UN Foundation (created by media mogul Ted Turner) gave another \$350,000. Most commercial books don't cost that kind of money, and so the producers of this volume should consider themselves very fortunate indeed to have been the beneficiaries of such largesse.



LAND AND FOOD: Soil degradation affects a third of the planet and diminishes food production. By Sanjay Sinha, India



SMOG IN THE MIND: A result of smoke, dust, gas and water vapor smog is a part of many big cities.

By Marisol Garcia Ochoa, Mexico

'People love cars, most of us want one! What can we do to end this love affair with the car before it ends us?'

—ALFRED KAMARA
SIERRA LEONE



URBANIZATION: Half the world's population live in cities, drawing on resources from surrounding rural areas. By Foundation for Global Peace and the Environment, Japan

Pachamama, Various Authors, 96 pp., Evans Brothers Ltd., £ 7.99

Black market sales, **destruction** of habitat and cloning the giant panda

By Audrey Ronning Topping

Scientists in China debate over ethics and conservation in effort to save the panda from extinction

Saving the giant panda from extinction is a common aspiration among Chinese scientists but the question whether to clone or not to clone a panda has fired a big debate among them. Biologists believe there are less than 1,000 of these unique animals, who have existed in China for hundreds of thousands of years, still living in the wild. Two of the leading Chinese scientists involved in preserving them are now divided on the scientific and ethical issues involved in cloning China's beloved "National Treasure."

Pandas have been pushed towards extinction by China's unchecked destruction of the panda's natural forest habitats, the limited supply of their natural food, poor propagation capability and their solitary nature. But maybe man's greed is the main cause. As the panda population diminishes the animal has become a lucrative commodity and illegal poaching for the export of live animals and skins as well as accidental snaring in traps set for other animals makes protecting it in the wild almost impossible.

A live panda can sell for \$112,000 on the Chinese black-market. In Taiwan, Hong Kong and Japan, black marketers are getting \$10,000 or more for dead pandas sold as grisly trophies. Western Zoos pay several millions to rent a panda for exhibit.

World Wild Life, which uses the panda in its logo, reports that the bears suitable habitat has shrunk by about 50 percent in the last 15 years. Where for millennia they could roam of huge coniferous forests they now have only six isolated areas where they can find the rare bamboo they eat to survive. Without the ability to move to new areas when the bamboo they need dies out, they succumb to starvation.

The Chinese are experimenting with cloning to save the panda from extinction but this approach has been highly criticized. Chen Dayuan, a biologist who heads a research group specializing in artificial insemination and panda breeding at the Chinese Academy of Science, has already started the process of cloning a panda but Pan Wenshi, a zoology professor with the Peking University, also devoted to protecting the panda, is strongly opposed to the procedure. The debate has attracted wide public attention in China. Chen, reported recently in China Science magazine that his group implanted a panda's body cell into a denucleated rabbit ovum to create a panda's embryo. The second step is to implant the embryo into another animal's matrix and getting

it to grow, thus producing a complete new being. At present, which animal will be the "surrogate mother" is being kept secret. Bear? Or dog? Both are possible.

According to the Beijing Review, Pan Wenshi has protested because cloning is still in the experimental stage and should not be used on such a noble animal. He conceded that general cloning technology should not stop. "But so far, the success rate of cloning is very poor," he said. "The choices are many—pigs, cattle, sheep and rabbit. Why must it be the panda?" Pan pointed to the results, recently made public by British scientists,

of the analysis of the cells and chromosomes of Dolly, the first cloned sheep. They show that clones age prematurely. Three-year-old Dolly, according to cytology, the science of living organisms, has the body of a nine-year-old.

They do not yet know if clones can reproduce naturally. Other studies show that deformity, still birth and early death are regular occurrences in cloned animals. Statistics show that abnormal embryo genes are found in less than 1 percent of natural births, 15 percent in test tube babies but 50 percent of cloned

animals have abnormal embryo genes. Pan says that since the embryo was produced in the rabbit's ovum the rabbit should be the "mother". However the rabbit's matrix is too small for a baby panda. If a panda is cloned, it only has the DNA of the panda that provided the body cell. Therefore, to a certain extent, cloning does nothing to protect the animal.

Chen says "Panda cloning is not meant to replace natural propagation. On the contrary, cloning is complementary to natural and current artificial methods. Even if we get a cloned panda," he said, "we still need to do more experiments to perfect the technology." A Beijing ethics expert contends: "Panda cloning has its merits, because when animals are near extinction, their population is the important thing and then can we talk about the species and its existence in the wild."

Pan still worries about long range panda cloning. "Nowadays, somebody asks why not freeze the panda's embryo and gene, and make a copy whenever we need it? Then it can be saved forever. However, we can't imagine that in the future we may live in a steel and glass "forest" with no trees, birds, and no pandas in the wild: we preserve animals in the refrigerator, take a look at the genes in the glasses and guess which animal it is. Is this the earth?"

Although most naturalists agree that the giant panda belongs to the bear family, the Chinese name for the giant panda "Da xiong mao" means "great bear cat" and at birth giant pandas are no bigger than kittens and like kittens they are born blind and toothless. However, they open their eyes in three weeks and soon shed their cat characteristics. They grow rapidly but cannot crawl until they are three to four months old, when they are about 30 inches long and weigh 12 to 13 pounds. In a year they are up to 80 pounds and, when full-grown at age 14 they weigh about 240 pounds and measure 6 feet from the tip of their glossy black noses to the end of their short white tails. In the wild the cubs stay with their mother for 18 months. Males grow larger than females.

According to Professor Pan the female panda usually gives birth to twins, but often abandons the weaker and raises only one. Over the years, scientists have tried to raise the abandoned babies, but failed because they need very tender care that only a female panda can give. Zoologists involved in the cloning controversy worry that if a baby panda lives with the "surrogate mother" and thus learns her behavior and habits, it will



Cloning the panda in order to save it has been one option explored.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

Cloning the giant panda

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

simply become a dog or a bear with a panda's body. Then, they ask, what is the point of panda cloning? They could never live in the wild.

Since Pandas became widely known in the 1970's animal lovers all over the world have fallen in love with these furry creatures that resemble black and white teddy bears with large heads and mournful eyes. They have startlingly human-like attributes that children of all ages find irresistible. A baby panda has an appealing child-like cry, like those of the chimpanzee. While nursing, a mother panda sits up and cradles her suckling baby to her breast with one forepaw while caressing it with the other.

The panda's powerful jaws can sever a stalk of crisp umbrella bamboo in one mighty crunch; then, rather than lower its mouth to food like most other four legged animals, the panda will lean nonchalantly against a tree, peel the bamboo with its thumb and fingers and bring it up to its

mouth in a remarkable human manner.

When the panda seeks water it does not drink from a communal stream with other animals, instead it digs a hole of its own by scooping out soil with one front paw and waits for the water to drain in. When the belly is tight as a drum with the water, the panda rubs its eyes like a sleepy child and ambles off in a rolling sailor's gait to have another snooze. In the winter they lift the snow to their mouths and sleep supported against a tree, their lush coats make them impervious to the elements.

For centuries, the Chinese have held the giant panda in special esteem. They were kept in captivity as pets of ancient Chinese Emperors. Chinese books, written over 3,000 years ago, refer to the giant panda. It was believed to be endowed with mystical powers capable of warding off natural disasters and evil spirits. For thousands of years local farmers have considered them lucky charms or even divine and have refrained from killing



Naturalists estimate 15 percent of all pandas have starved to death.

the pandas that entered their fields or raided their beehives.

The black and white patterned fur of the panda actually personifies the two great Chinese forces of separation and unity that constitute and balance the universe: the Yin and Yang, black and white, dark and light, sun and moon, life and death.

In the wild, giant pandas live deep in the remote mountain forests of central China. The

forbidden world of the giant panda is known in China as Hsifan, the Land of Western Barbarians.

Pandas have roamed free amidst the fog shrouded forests of bamboo, dragon spruce and spider pine for millions of years. But in 1975, some farmers in Gansu noticed a number of thin pandas wandering into their cornfields. They soon found dozens of emaciated carcasses and reported the disaster to local officials who sent rescue teams. Equipped with ropes and nets they managed to capture dozens of live pandas but saw dozens more who had pathetically propped themselves against trees, with their front paws over their ears, to die.

The rescued pandas were brought to collecting posts and fed sweet potatoes and rice gruel contributed by the local people, chiefly Tibetans who had lived in the area for centuries. Younger Tibetans scaled the snow covered mountains to cut and bring back umbrella bamboo, the staple food of the panda diet, but the foragers found it surprisingly scarce. They fed what they could find to orphaned cubs.

The rescued animals were returned to the forests when the snow melted, except for about 10 that were donated to zoos in China and abroad. Since then over 100 pandas have been sold or loaned, including Ling-Ling and Hsing-Hsing to the National Zoo, Washington, D.C. Unfortunately the rescuers were not aware that the returned pandas had nothing to eat.

Although numerous types of bamboo exist in China, only two kinds, the fountain and the umbrella bamboo, are hardy enough to grow on both the humid ravine floors and the cold mountain slopes where the giant panda live. Both species appear to follow a 100 year cycle. Roughly once in a century they bloom, drop their seeds and die. In 1975 the entire generation of bamboo died off en masse leaving the panda without their main food source and no place to go.

Since 1975 hundreds of carcasses have been found but because of the inaccessibility of panda terrain the precise death

toll cannot be ascertained. Chinese naturalists estimate that from 10 to 50 percent of all giant pandas have starved to death. It is estimated today that there are only 700 to 1,000 giant pandas still alive in the wild.

The origins of the giant panda still remain a mystery. In 1874, the German zoologist Max Weber pronounced it a living fossil descended from Hyenarctos, a Miocene carnivore. In 1915, A.S. Woodward published a report declaring that a prehistoric giant panda lived two million years ago

'Ancients have long known giant panda is unique.'

in the Pleistocene Epoch. The first record of the giant panda in Chinese chronicles says that a "beishung" or white bear as they called it in those days, was included in the tribute of the Kingdom of Yu from the Kingdom of Chin (Sichuan) in 2000 B.C. Japanese imperial annals record that on October 22, A.D. 685, the Emperor of China sent the Tenno of Japan two live beishung and 70 skins.

Naturalists have now had ample time to study the giant panda in captivity, but they still cannot agree on whether it belongs to the bear family or the raccoon family or whether it is a pandalike bear or a bearlike panda. Unable to resolve the dispute, some scientists have put the giant panda and its cousin the lesser, or red, panda in a taxonomic family of their own. Recent chromosome studies appear to confirm what the ancients have long known. The giant panda is unique.

Pan Wenshi said the main threat to the panda comes from mankind's destruction of their natural habitat not, as Chen claims, their poor propagation ability. He calls for the public's never ending attention to protect wildlife, which can't be compensated by cloning technology.

Environmental Nobel awarded

Volvo Prize given to Swaminathan, Indian scientist, environmentalist

BY C. GERALD FRASER

It is sometimes called the "environmental Nobel." Its formal title is the Volvo Environmental Prize. This year it is worth almost \$250,000 and it was won by M.S. Swaminathan, who was referred to in news releases as an ecotechnologist and an economic ecologist.

Volvo honored him with its 10th annual award "because of his achievements as a plant breeder and administrator which led to dramatic increases in crop yields, his international leadership in agriculture and resource conservation, his deep concern for the poor and disadvantaged, and his continuing research and leadership to ensure that they get the opportunities needed to develop in ways that enhance the natural environment on which they depend."

The award was presented at Columbia University. In his acceptance speech in a crowded auditorium-style classroom in Havemeyer Hall, an old university building, Swaminathan told the audience threats to biodiversity from habitat destruction, alien species invasion, and genetic homogeneity were increasing.

However, he added, "genomic and molecular breeding have opened up uncommon opportunities for creating novel genetic combinations which can help humankind face new

challenges arising from population increase and potential adverse changes in temperature, precipitation, ultraviolet-B radiation and sea level."

Throughout his comments, Swaminathan stressed the need to involve forest dwellers and forest-dependent communities; rural, farming, and tribal families; and especially women, in the management of habitats rich in biodiversity, in the cultivation of medicinal plants, and in community conservation.

Research priorities dictated by "market opportunities" will have little meaning for the poor and the public, he said.

Swaminathan's basic field is plant genetics. His breeding of potato, wheat and rice strains played a key scientific role in the farm revolution movement in his native India. In 1988, he founded the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, dedicated to integrating the principles of ecological sustainability with economic efficiency and social equity.

The award ceremonies at Columbia University, at which most of the Volvo Laureates were present, came at the close of a two day conference, "A Planet at Risk...a Partnership at Work."

One partnership at work, a reflection of the corporatization of civil life, is the eight-month-old marriage between Volvo and Columbia University.



M.S. Swaminathan.

Columbia's president, George Rupp, told the conference, he anticipated "a productive partnership between a university and a company that share fundamental commitments to addressing pressing and environmental issues."

Rupp acknowledge that "some decry our Volvo-Columbia collaboration as a seduction of the academy into providing only public relations advantages to commercial enterprises."

The collaboration, Rupp said, offers continued and expanded basic research, more applied studies that model the scientific and policy implications of a variety of approaches to remediation, and concrete actions aimed at reducing the magnitude of human impacts that are demonstrably adverse."

Columbia's Biosphere 2 Center reflects the partnership, Rupp said. A 250-acre "campus" 30 miles south of Tucson, Arizona, the biosphere is a site for the study of, among other things, ecophysiology of wilderness plants and soils.

CORRUPTION

And Global
Business

Making the bribers pay

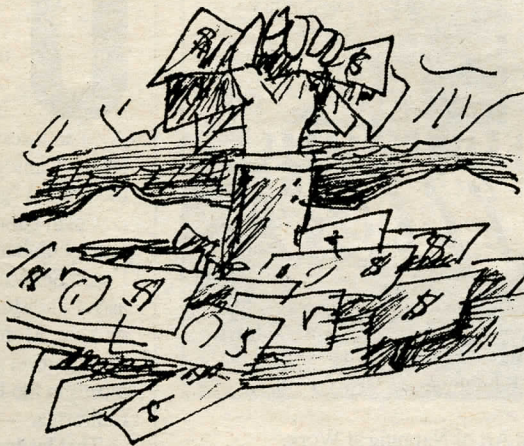
BY FRANK VOGL

New data on global corruption forces a disconcerting conclusion: bribery is a massive global epidemic. It embraces many companies from the leading exporting nations, just as it involves senior officials and politicians in the majority of the world's developing nations.

Tracking the corruption conspiracy is frequently frustrating. Corruption thrives in secret when the two sides in the conspiracy—the bribe-payers and the bribe-takers—have scant fear of detection. Quantifying the volume of loot that is pocketed by the corrupt is difficult. But, indicators of the extent of the conspiracy are vital if the issue is not just to be an academic pursuit. This is the background against which Transparency International (TI), the anti-corruption NGO, has just published two sets of opinion poll findings that correspond to the two sides of the conspiracy coin. The brand new Bribe Payers Index (BPI) ranks 19 leading exporting countries in terms of the degree to which their corporations are perceived to be paying bribes to senior government officials in developing countries and in Eastern Europe.

The BPI shows that exporters from Sweden, Australia, Canada, Austria, Switzerland, Netherlands and the UK appear to be the least corrupt. Meanwhile, exporters from China, South Korea, Taiwan, Italy and Malaysia have the dubious privilege of being seen as the most corrupt. Deeply disturbing is the fact that exporters from the world's largest countries rank in the middle of the BPI, which suggests that they are frequently prone to using bribes—Belgium, Germany, US, Singapore, Spain, France and Japan. The BPI, undertaken by Gallup International, is a TI commissioned survey, involving detailed individual interviews of 770 business executives in 14 leading emerging market countries.

For the fifth year TI has published a Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), which reflects perceptions of corruption in 99 countries of public officials and politicians, with corruption defined as the abuse of public office for private gain. This is a poll of polls, where 17 different surveys involving questions on bribery are analyzed by TI. In contrast to the 1998 ranking there are few surprises. Denmark again tops the list as the cleanest, while Cameroon just edges out Nigeria with the lowest CPI score, indicating perceptions of very high corruption.



An official statement by the Government of Nigeria declared: "President (Olusegun) Obasanjo has no objections to the results shown in the poll. In his view, the poll shows the magnitude of the challenge the present administration is facing and addressing energetically. It should also draw further attention to the need for Nigerians to collectively support the Federal Government's efforts to stem corruption and redeem Nigeria's image with the international community."

Meanwhile, Cameroon's Prime Minister Peter Mafany Musonge expressed surprise and deep frustration at the report. He said on radio in his country that TI appeared to have ignored efforts by his government to uphold accountability. "I must say it has come as a great surprise," Musonge said. "Ours is one of the rare governments in Africa to have launched an anti-corruption campaign which was heavily carried by the media. We have a feeling that our quest for transparency has been misunderstood."

And, in Honduras, which was the lowest of all Latin American countries, presidential chief of staff Gustavo Alfore told Reuters: "This really surprised us a lot because it's precisely during the government of President (Carlos) Flores that we have made great efforts to combat corruption. There's a culture of suspicion in Honduras which is a legacy from the sort of impunity there has been in this country."

The depressing news from the CPI is that 50 of the 99 countries on the list have scores of 5 or below (10 is an excellent score suggesting little corruption, while 1 indicates very high corruption). One-third of the countries have scores in the 3 range or below. The CPI is getting noticed. According to TI officials, it is raising public awareness and forcing governments to respond. It not

only makes national governments more sensitive to how their countries are being perceived, but it raises alarm bells in aid agencies that support many of the countries on the list and it sends warning signals to corporations that are contemplating investments in some of the lowest ranked countries. The BPI is likely to have an equally significant impact. "We are in a new era where 34 countries, including all leading exporting countries, have agreed to an OECD convention to make the bribery of foreign officials a criminal offense. We want to keep

track of enforcement and change in global bribery as a result of these new laws. The 1999 BPI is a new TI instrument whose data will be used as a benchmark against which we can seek to measure progress in coming years," said Peter Eigen.

So far, 18 of the 34 countries have fully ratified the new OECD pact. Two major countries that do badly on the BPI rankings and which have not ratified yet are France and Italy. According to officials, the BPI, which received considerable publicity in both countries, will add pressures on the governments to get into line with the new agreement that makes the foreign payments of bribes by corporations a criminal offense.

There will also be a lot of soul searching in the United States. The US has been alone in having a tough Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), criminalizing foreign bribery, for the last 22 years and yet the US ranking in the BPI was the same as that of Germany in the middle of the pack. Germany, until this year, did not have laws in line with the FCPA and it allowed its firms to deduct from their German taxes the bribes they used in their foreign business.

Bribery Rankings 19 leading exporters

Country	Rank	Score
SWEDEN	1	8.3
AUSTRALIA	2	8.1
CANADA	2	8.1
AUSTRIA	4	7.8
SWITZERLAND	5	7.7
NETHERLANDS	6	7.4
UNITED KINGDOM	7	7.2
BELGIUM	8	6.8
GERMANY	9	6.2
UNITED STATES	9	6.2
SINGAPORE	11	5.7
SPAIN	12	5.3
FRANCE	13	5.2
JAPAN	14	5.1
MALAYSIA	15	3.9
ITALY	16	3.7
TAIWAN	17	3.5
SOUTH KOREA	18	3.4
CHINA	19	3.1

Corruption Rankings 'Cleanest' countries

Country	Rank	Score	Standard Deviation	Surveys Used
DENMARK	1	10.0	0.8	9
FINLAND	2	9.8	0.5	10
NEW ZEALAND	3	9.4	0.8	9
SWEDEN	3	9.4	0.6	10
CANADA	5	9.2	0.5	10
ICELAND	5	9.2	1.2	6
SINGAPORE	7	9.1	0.9	12
NETHERLANDS	8	9.0	0.5	10
NORWAY	9	8.9	0.8	9
SWITZERLAND	9	8.9	0.6	11
LUXEMBOURG	11	8.8	0.9	8
AUSTRALIA	12	8.7	0.7	8
UNITED KINGDOM	13	8.6	0.5	11
GERMANY	14	8.0	0.5	10
HONG KONG	15	7.7	1.6	13
IRELAND	15	7.7	1.9	10
AUSTRIA	17	7.6	0.8	11
UNITED STATES	18	7.5	0.8	10
CHILE	19	6.9	1.0	9
ISRAEL	20	6.8	1.3	9
PORTUGAL	21	6.7	1.0	10
FRANCE	22	6.6	1.0	10
SPAIN	22	6.6	0.7	10
BOTSWANA	24	6.1	1.7	4
JAPAN	25	6.0	1.6	12
SLOVENIA	25	6.0	1.3	6

Most corrupt countries

Country	Rank	Score	Standard Deviation	Surveys Used
COLOMBIA	72	2.9	0.5	11
INDIA	72	2.9	0.6	14
CROATIA	74	2.7	0.9	5
COTE D'IVOIRE	75	2.6	1.0	4
MOLDOVA	75	2.6	0.8	5
UKRAINE	75	2.6	1.4	10
VENEZUELA	75	2.6	0.8	9
VIETNAM	75	2.6	0.5	8
ARMENIA	80	2.5	0.4	4
BOLIVIA	80	2.5	1.1	6
ECUADOR	82	2.4	1.3	4
RUSSIA	82	2.4	1.0	13
ALBANIA	84	2.3	0.3	5
GEORGIA	84	2.3	0.7	4
KAZAKHSTAN	84	2.3	1.3	5
KYRGYZ REPUBLIC	87	2.2	0.4	4
PAKISTAN	87	2.2	0.7	3
UGANDA	87	2.2	0.7	5
KENYA	90	2.0	0.5	4
PARAGUAY	90	2.0	0.8	4
YUGOSLAVIA	90	2.0	1.1	8
TANZANIA	93	1.9	1.1	4
HONDURAS	94	1.8	0.5	3
UZBEKISTAN	94	1.8	0.4	4
AZERBAIJAN	96	1.7	0.6	5
INDONESIA	96	1.7	0.9	12
NIGERIA	98	1.6	0.8	5
CAMEROON	99	1.5	0.5	4

Reading the rankings

1999 Corruption Perceptions Index Score relates to perceptions of the degree of corruption as seen by business people, risk analysts and the general public and ranges between 10 (highly clean) and 0 (highly corrupt).

Surveys Used refers to the number of surveys that assessed a country's performance. Seventeen surveys from 10 independent organizations were used in total and least 3 surveys were required for a country to be included into the 1999 CPI.

Standard Deviation indicates differences in the values of the sources: the greater the standard deviation, the greater the differences of perceptions of a country among the sources.

The questions of the **Bribery Index** related to leading exporters paying bribes to senior public officials. The standard error in the results was 0.2 or less. In the scoring of the Bribery Index, 10 represents a perceived level of negligible bribery, while 0 represents responses indicating very high levels of bribery.

EDITORIALS

1. Should the UN recognize the right to rest for its weary employees?

UNITED NATIONS—Coke is the pause that refreshes, according to the ads. Now experts say a better refresher for the discharged human battery is a midday nap. Impressed by medical evidence, some health-conscious employers are encouraging dozing by setting aside a room for just that purpose. Not, alas, the UN, which is taking the opposite route of discouraging exhausted workers from nodding off. An area to which staff used to repair to stretch out, in not too comfortable chairs—but at least a bit more comfortable than the average office stool—is off limits. Reportedly, an important ambassador declared that his work ethic was seriously offended; in response to his complaint a security post was set up to bar any further access to the easy chairs by would-be workaday noddies.

Perhaps this is something that Juan O. Somavia, the new head of the International Labor Organization, ought to look into: the human right to rest. Serious sleep deprivation may be an international problem. In America alone the average adult is said to get by on an hour's less sleep than experts believe is necessary for good health. Not surprisingly, therefore, that a survey found that 38 percent of them nap for an hour on average in daytime, in the office or at home.

As has been mentioned before in this space, establishing UN headquarters in New York was not necessarily a work-friendly act. A relatively small percentage of staff, including those in diplomatic missions, can afford to live in Manhattan; thus, early to bed and early to rise and a lengthy commute is the typical way of life for thousands of men and women. Some are already aboard a train by 7 AM or bucking traffic on the thruway in a daily battle to be at the office on time. How can job efficiency not be affected?

These reflections are not as flippant as you may think. The whole question of lack of sleep is the subject of a



forthcoming book "The Art of Napping at Work." Moreover, The New York Times reports that a former NASA researcher makes a living advising employers on how to combat worker fatigue, while a New Jersey company sells an "executive napping kit." (Naturally, dozing on the job is easier for the tired executive, who only has to order, "Hold all my calls for the next hour," then lock the office door and put his or her feet up.) UN speeches are notoriously sleep-inducing, which may be a further reason why workers in these hallowed halls ought to be entitled to sleeping time out. But the way things are, getting caught napping can do permanent damage to a career.

Some time ago two quite senior diplomats were caught in the act by an alert news photographer whose picture was duly reproduced by a local newspaper unfriendly to the prevailing government. Assurances that "everybody does it" failed to impress the authorities.

For various reasons, Secretary General Kofi Annan has been unwilling or unable to declare the UN a smoke-free zone, as Gro Harlem Brundtland, head of the World Health Organization, recommends. However, a no-smoking rule within offices is generally honored, judging from the available evidence. The obstacles raised against healthful napping deserve to be reconsidered. Lying down on the job is no sin. We have the experts' word for it.

—MICHAEL LITTLEJOHNS

3. An appreciation: Robert Schiffer, diplomat, scholar and columnist

In the mid-eighties, when I was Director of Information and External Relations Division at the United Nations Population Fund, Bob Schiffer came to us with a proposal to prepare an illustrated volume on great cities of the world, focusing on the population angle. We were then preparing for an international conference of mayors of metropolitan cities on population and development, to take place in Barcelona (Spain) in 1986 at the invitation of Mayor Pascual Maragall. The proposal was warmly endorsed by Rafael M. Salas, then UNFPA Executive Director, and we funded it. For the next couple of years, Bob traveled around the world with a well-known photographer, to prepare profiles of selected major cities around the world and of their people. The book could not come out in time for the mayors' conference; but when it did, it received high praise both for its text and for its photographs.

My last professional association with Bob was early this year at the UNFPA-sponsored Hague Forum of which I was the Secretary. He was there as a member of The Earth Times team that produced a daily newspaper. We met frequently to discuss developments at the Forum and he would occasionally consult with me on who he could interview for his columns.



Robert L. Schiffer (1920-1999)

columns and articles as models of perceptive and logical analysis and clear headed thinking. He was an internationalist and a liberal, in the great tradition of his mentor Adlai Stevenson; and in recent years he wrote on many issues concerning the US foreign policy and development assistance, arguing for and advocating strong US support for international causes, including the United Nations. At the personal level, he was always warm, witty and generous and I have fond memories of many happy and convivial hours we spent together.

Bob died on November 2, of complications following a stroke. He leaves behind his wife Selma, daughter Suzi Parrasch, and son Michael, and two grandchildren, Madeline and Alexander. And he leaves behind legions of friends at the UN, in diplomacy, in journalism, and the global community at large. In his death, we have lost a truly great internationalist, a superb writer and columnist and a member of The Earth Times family who cannot be replaced.

—JYOTI SHANKAR SINGH

2. By protecting forests, Clinton could create genuine legacy

US President Bill Clinton, whose record on the environment still remains spindly, pushed closer to leaving out this month by moving to make permanent his administration's moratorium on new roads in national forests. If only the president would now add a crucial Alaskan forest to his initiative he would create a genuine legacy. Clinton proposes much more than just an extension of the present "go slow" period of reevaluation. Instead, his new plan pursues nothing less than a total redirection of federal timber policy. At the most practical level, the US Forest Service would bar the construction of new roads in as-yet-undisturbed parcels of federal timber of 5,000 acres or more. More broadly, the new policy would effectively block forever new logging and mining in those areas, mostly in the Rocky Mountains of the West and populous California.

That by itself enacts a major reform by readjusting the government's servicing of voracious timber companies and heedless mines. But it also announces a more positive greening of forest management. In short, the government seems at last ready to elevate water conservation, recreation, wildlife protection and poetic values to the equality with the old mandate to "get the timber out." One stipulation appears necessary, however. This involves Alaska's stupendous 17-million-acre Tongass National Forest, the nation's largest. In recent months, the White House—fearing the anger of Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska—has undercut its drive to protect the roadless areas by exempting the Tongass (as well as key forests in the Pacific Northwest) from the preliminary moratorium. Now, the Northwest lands seem headed for protection, but the Tongass still looks doubtful—and that's wrong.

Leaving the Tongass out makes no sense except political sense, given the powerful Stevens' reactionary advocacy for exploitation. The administration should therefore complete one of the greatest forest conservation measures ever by including America's greatest forest—the Tongass. Clinton and the Forest Service really do stand poised on the brink of a historic reform. In grand fashion, they are surveying the permanent protection of some 40 million acres of the last, best vulnerable wildlands in America. They should follow through.

—MARK MURO

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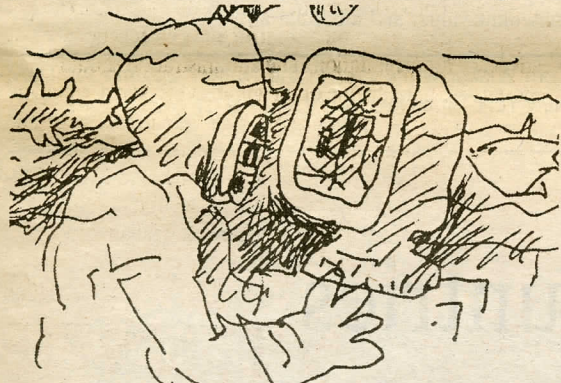
ESSAYS

FIELDS WICKER-MIURIN

The new meaning of being 'connected'

It's great to be connected, but when do we have time to think? Up until a few weeks ago, I thought I was the odd man out. I thought I was the only person who felt totally incapable of dealing with the bombardment of communication that pounds down on me relentlessly, whether I ask for it or not, like a heavy, persistent rain that goes on and on and on, and just won't stop. And you feel as if there is no escape.

It took me years to get an answering machine at home. I did not see why I needed to have a machine for someone else's convenience. Finally, my friends took up a collection and bought one for me: I was traveling so much I was never there, and they wanted me to know if they had called. I still refuse to have a fax at home, even though I am challenged almost weekly by colleagues and clients as to why, in this information age, I don't have a fax at home. For their convenience, not mine. I even dislike mobile phones—especially when other people use them in quiet spaces, whether on trains or in restaurants. Imagine the scene—you don't need to; it happens every day—where a person at a restaurant table spends more time talking on



the phone to someone distant than talking to the person(s) sitting with him at the table. Regularly on flights a phone rings the moment we park at the gate, and walking up the gangway at least every other businessman is talking on his mobile phone.

People get angry if they can't reach you on your mobile ("What, you mean you did not turn it on?"). I was even asked yesterday if I could be reached on my mobile during a meeting I was getting ready to attend. "No," I answered, "I am going to be talking to the people in the room."

If it were only a question of dealing with answering machines, phones and faxes, I could handle it. I have devised my own portcullises; I know how to protect some of my private, thinking space. But the office environment is harder. E-mails have arrived and they are overwhelming my capacity to deal with them. They are truly the invaders of space and time. My backlog of e-mails mounts daily, supplemented by my firm's internal system telling me at least 10 times a day that my own e-mail system has reached its limit and I must delete some e-mails. But, for that to happen, I need to have read and responded to them. And that takes time. Of course, the e-mails do not replace mail; they are in addition to the mail I get anyway. And they do not replace phone calls. No, I have a voice mail system that I can tap into from anywhere in the world to pick up my messages. And although I manage to clear my voice mails (from taxis, airports, my home), I never quite manage to clear my e-mails, no matter how many I delegate to my assistant, don't read or delete.

My Puritan, Protestant upbringing means it is natural for me to feel guilty that I haven't responded to all the e-mails I have waiting for me (some 250 as I write). I feel a sense of accomplishment when I get the waiting list (like a



SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

National Health Service hospital) down to below 50. And then I think—how absurd, that I should feel guilty about these e-mails. Most of them I did not ask for. Many of them are 'for information' and not for action. And I wonder: Why am I getting all this information? If it were more difficult to send it to me 'for my information,' would the sender still go to the trouble to get the information to me? In other words, how important is it for me to know this information that is being sent?

And this is where my serious worry begins: How much time do people now spend sorting through what they need to know versus what others want them to know? And how much quality thinking time is being lost as a result? Too much, I think. Much too much.

These thoughts and frustrations were in the back of my mind as I sat at a working breakfast in Paris a few weeks ago with other members of the Global Leaders for Tomorrow Group of the World Economic Forum. We had been asked to consider what were the issues taxing us as we thought about our future and the future of leadership. Almost unanimously came the answer from around the table: "information overload; too many emails; not enough time to think; communication for the sake of communication rather than for a justified purpose."

These people were not technophobes; they weren't Luddites; they weren't out-of-date industrialists who might not have been comfortable with computers. On the contrary, they were young (30 to 40 years old), totally computer-literate with mobile phones, Psion Palm III, slimline, lightweight PCs, etc., on a strong upward curve of their careers—and they were overloaded with other people's communication and information downloads.

I was personally relieved to learn that I was not the only one feeling the trap. But the relief was short-lived when I thought about the implications for our future: If we are all spending more and more time responding to communications and information downloads, when do we have time to think? To reflect and ponder? To put together disparate thoughts and perspectives and come up with great insights? That kind of connection is more valuable than the technological one.

Of course it is fantastic to be able to reach out to people—long-lost friends, distant family, people with shared interests—by e-mail and to connect and communicate in a way and speed we never thought possible. It is great. It brings us together. Makes the world a smaller place and all that. Truly. But let us not forget that we have this technology because someone had time to think. Deeply. Perhaps even quietly. If we don't give ourselves time to reflect, we won't have a future, regardless of the information and communication revolution we are enjoying today.

Fields Wicker-Miurin is a Vice President in the Financial Institutions Group of AT Kearney. A former director of the London Stock Exchange, she is also a Director of the London International Festival of Theatre, the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts.

SOON-YOUNG YOON

Gearing up for Beijing+5

Beijing Plus Five, a Special Session of the General Assembly that will be held in June 2000, caps an extraordinary century of UN women's conferences. Everyone is rushing to register for the event. Standing in line at the Division for the Advancement of Women, two sisters, Kwit and Nawe, struck up a conversation with a Vietnamese woman, Mme. Ngo.

"Hi," said Kwit to Mme. Ngo, a veteran leader. "Can I park my backpack here for a while? It's full of documents and ready to burst. Are you planning on going to the Beijing Plus Five meeting? Isn't it cool that they are letting so many young people in?"

Before Mme. Ngo could answer, Nawe chimed in, "Like, I never thought that I would ever be able to even attend another world conference on women. My mom went in 1995 to Beijing, and she said there wasn't going to be any more." Mme. Ngo immediately corrected them by saying that Beijing Plus Five was not another women's conference, but a review of progress since 1995. Seeing the disappointment on their faces, she asked them why they



YIN AND YANG

wanted to be there. "We are part of a global youth and environment network called YEDO," answered Kwit. "We must learn to respect Mother Nature and work for a healthy environment. That includes getting rid of all this smoking at the UN. I just came from Kobe, Japan where we had the most fabulous time at a WHO meeting on women and tobacco. Experts, like, talked about how nicotine gets into your skin and your lungs and Ms. Sweden showed up and the sushi was fabulous."

Mme. Ngo became even more interested since she had not attended the Kobe meeting. She was a well-known feminist and had written many articles about how the Beijing women's conference raised issues on violence against women, human rights and the girl-child. "The Beijing Platform for Action was a very forward-looking strategy," she explained. "Our women's groups finished this shadow report, and we are tracking progress at five regional preparatory meetings. We plan to present our findings at the next CSW prep-com."

This string of jargon was too much. Mme. Ngo clarified, "A shadow report is the best tool we have to monitor governments." Her organization had sent out questionnaires to local groups asking if their provinces had delivered on the promises made in Beijing. Then, they posted a national scoreboard to rank the performance of provincial officials. "Great idea!" said the sisters in unison. "But what are the regional preparatory meetings, and what is a prep-com?" asked Kwit. Mme. Ngo said that five regional meetings of governments—convened by the UN regional commissions—had already begun and would be completed early next year. The results would be reported at the final Commission on the Status of Women preparatory committee meeting (the "prep-com") in March 2000. "You should try to come to New York in March because that is when most of the negotiations will take place," said Mme. Ngo.

Since the young women were interested in action and in putting tobacco and environmental issues on the Beijing Plus Five agenda, they decided to organize a youth and health shadow report of their own network. They were resolved to show up in March.

"Thanks for all this information," said Kwit as she stuffed a copy of the Vietnamese report into her backpack. Smiling, the sisters left the UN, feeling very lucky that they had met someone as cool and wise as Mme. Ngo.

Soon-Young Yoon is an anthropologist.

TOM WICKER

Are Americans ready for a woman as President?

Many Americans had pinned their hopes on Elizabeth Dole as the first woman to be a "serious" candidate for President of the United States. Some believed she could and would be elected. But her withdrawal even before the primaries begin to demonstrate that she was not a strong candidate and had little chance to be elected President.

Indeed, the end of her campaign may have vindicated those who had thought all along that Dole might more likely be the vice presidential choice of some more successful Republican candidate—a man. And she might still be.

Even if she is, however, her early withdrawal from the race for the top of the ticket is likely to be cited as evidence that Americans are not yet ready for a woman as President. And maybe they aren't. But the fate of Dole raises a more profound question: would a woman as President offer us only more of the same?

Dole, in fact, was a "serious" candidate only in the sense that she had held the kind of position—in the Cabinet, in Congress, as a Governor or a wartime General—that traditionally has caused men to be "mentioned" or considered experienced enough to aspire to the presidency.

Even repeatedly having filled such positions—Dole had held two Cabinet offices—proves very little, however, about someone's political or personal capacity to be elected President, much less to serve capably in that office. Harold Stassen was experienced at the Cabinet level, too; Nelson Rockefeller was four times Governor of New York, Douglas MacArthur was a victorious general in two wars. Beyond her record of impressive appointments, Dole had never been put to the test before voters and she was known to be formidably rigid and demanding in personal appearances. There was little reason, save sentimentality, to consider her a strong contender.

Perhaps more importantly, as Dole's presidential campaign unfolded, it proved in no notable instance to be



OPINION

different from one that might have been waged by a man with a similar experience and political resume.

Was that the crucial problem? American voters of both sexes surely want a woman running for office, particularly for the presidency, to show that she is "as good as a man"—as strong, as able, as experienced. Dole probably was. But might not voters want something else, too? A woman "as good as a man" but with an extra dimension that could be derived only from the female experience, the feminine view, from life as lived by more than half the world's population and all its mothers. Or, in what is still hierarchically a "man's world," is that asking too much?

Perhaps Americans, however ready they may be for a woman as President, are not ready for a distinctively female President. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was renowned as a "tough guy," both in British politics and in world affairs. When Senator Diane Feinstein of California was running for the Democratic nomination to be Governor of that state, she won much press coverage (though she ultimately lost that race) for favoring the death penalty, as any male contender might have. Madeleine Albright and Janet Reno in the Clinton Cabinet have conducted their important offices not much differently from the way those offices were run in the past, always by males.

For any woman to carry on a different, identifiably female kind of campaign would not be entirely a matter of stressing "women's issues" nor could she make such issues exclusively her own. Numerous males including

some of her opponents, take a sympathetic and supportive view of, say, child care, abortion, early education and other matters traditionally—but not always accurately—considered of greatest interest to women. "Family values," whatever they are, obviously should concern fathers as well as mothers.

Nor would it be correct to say that a different kind of campaign necessarily would win the solid support of other American women. Polls and common experience often have shown that in their political views—on matters like abortion, crime, social and cultural change—women are not monolithically different from men or even unanimous (and in some cases take even more punitive attitudes).

In today's election atmosphere, substantial political courage—even daring—would be required for any woman seeking office to take certain positions that might be regarded by men as "womanish" or even by women as conventionally "weak". To attack, for example, the disgraceful gap between the vast amounts the US spends on "defense"—actually on military preparations—and the relative pittance it expends on alleviating child poverty would be a natural thing for a wise, caring and politically mature woman to do. Whether it would win her more votes than it lost, even among other women, is highly debatable.

There's little doubt that for an aspiring woman in American politics, even today, the most profitable way to get along is to go along with the world as it is, proving herself "as good as a man"—but not very different in anything other than dress and hair style. Which is why the forced departure of Elizabeth Dole from the 2000 campaign (though she may yet be vice president) may be a setback for the prospect of a woman's election as President—but not necessarily for those of us who think the presidency too solidly and too long in the grip of masculine values and muscular attitudes.

Tom Wicker wrote the "In the Nation" column for The New York Times for many years.

FRANK VOGL

Busting the bribers of countries

The international anti-corruption movement has reached a critical point in its evolution. Over the last few years its prime focus has been to raise public awareness across the world of the corruption issue, its impact on human rights, poverty, democracy and international commerce. It has succeeded. Public awareness has been raised and governments, businesses and international organizations are announcing constructive approaches. Now, the central focus for the movement must be to make public officials and business leaders accountable for their rhetoric.

The state of the global movement and the dawning of a more complex phase in its work was in evidence recently at a major conference in Durban, South Africa, sponsored by the Government of South Africa and the International Anti-Corruption Conference (IACC) and organized by Transparency International (TI). The meeting, opened by South African President Thabo Mbeki, attracted more than 1,600 people from 135 countries.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and US Vice President Al Gore sent special messages to the conference. Top government and business leaders, courageous NGO leaders and such international officials as World Bank President James Wolfensohn and UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown, actively participated in Durban. The UNDP chief announced the launch of a major Partnership Fund for Transparency, to be run by TI and funded by UNDP and others to finance independent expert consultants in anti-corruption projects in developing countries. Yes, the anti-corruption cause is genuinely on the map.

At such conferences the rhetoric flows in massive tidal



BUSINESS ETHICS

waves and the most articulate speakers bring tears to the eyes of their listeners. The Durban event was rich in eloquent oratory. It was great. It was also the scene of more than 40 workshops on everything from African, Asian, East European and other regional approaches to fighting corruption, to money laundering, transparency in public procurement, investigative journalism, business ethics, anti-corruption treaties, security and political party finance. Detailed knowledge was brilliantly shared, as networking was in high gear.

Now, the crucial test is to see that all the new ideas and boldly declared initiatives, alongside the promises of reform, are more than just hot air. It will be uniquely a civil society's role to hold the business and government leaders to account.

For example, Wolfensohn described in intense detail a series of key initiatives being undertaken by the World Bank to secure major reforms in some of the poorest African countries. His speech was followed-up by a series of briefings by Daniel Kaufmann, the World Bank Institute's manager for governance, regulation and finance. But Wolfensohn and Kaufmann failed to detail just how their progress should be evaluated over time. Their bold course needs to be independently measured

and monitored to determine if it is meaningful. The same holds true for the programs announced by other multilateral agencies and national governments. Businessmen claimed that the new OECD Anti-Bribery Convention will make a major difference in curbing bribery by international firms of public officials. The challenge to civil society now is to see if it is enforced and if there is compliance by corporations.

The global anti-corruption movement was the brainchild of Peter Eigen, a German lawyer who had spent 25 years with the World Bank and who became increasingly concerned about the massive waste of resources caused by corruption and the lack of concern about the issue by governments and aid agencies. He created TI, he pushed the World Bank and other organizations to the point where they competed with each other in Durban to demonstrate their anti-corruption zeal. TI today has 77 national chapters around the world. There are also dozens of other anti-corruption organizations that are having an impact, while many NGOs engaged in environmental and human rights causes have embraced the anti-corruption issue in recognition of how central it is to their prime concerns.

Now, the NGO army across the world has to enter the new phase in curbing corruption: it has to develop thoroughly professional approaches to evaluating progress, to benchmarking developments and to publicly reporting on the successes and the failures. If it can do this, then the bold talk in Durban will have been most worthwhile.

Frank Vogl is President of Vogl Communications, Inc., a corporate communications and management consulting firm that works in the business ethics area.

LETTERS

In support of Unesco

To the Editor: In his "Capital Thoughts," (Earth Times August 1-15, 1999 issue) John Bolton says, in effect, "Rejoin Unesco? Never!" Something must be worrying him that he repeats his old refrain—that cooperation in the fields of education, science, culture, and communication is not important. His distaste for Unesco suggests a fear of cooperating in matters of the head, the heart and the spirit in learning, the advancement of knowledge, the free flow of information and mutual appreciation of cultures. At the end of 1984, when the US withdrew membership from Unesco, a former Secretary of State, Charles William Maynes, correctly diagnosed the move. It was a sign from the Reagan administration that America was unhappy with the United Nations. The White House decided to give a signal that this country could show its discontent not only by reducing financial support but by withdrawing from an agency in the UN family.

Now, 15 years later, Bolton has decided to use Unesco as a "stalking horse" to attack once more the basic idea and ideal of the UN system. He fears that developments are about to "heat up" so that the US will not only pay its arrears of contributions but is preparing to resume membership in Unesco. The "heat" comes from the diplomatic arena where the other players expect reciprocity and the honoring of community obligations. They feel strongly that the world situation requires agreeing on policy through the UN followed up by cooperative action. Bolton doesn't like the signs of that "heat" and thinks that he must build "backfires" to prevent the spread of partnership in dealing with problems which effect all human kind.

Bolton is not an isolationist, although he provides little evidence of awareness of what is happening around the world. Rather, he is a prime example of a unilateralist. He likes hegemony. He wants the US to be involved in cooperative regimes only where we make the diagnosis and "call the shots."

Such a position exposes a lack of knowledge about and an insensitivity to the magnitude and complexity of the human predicament. Moreover, Bolton apparently knows very little of the accomplishments or current programs of agencies such as Unesco. Nor does he reflect the supportive attitude of the informed public as

to Unesco's goals and its work. In his article, he cites as his authority a "comprehensive report" submitted to the Congress by Secretary of State Baker "explaining at length why Unesco still did not measure up." In fact, the "Baker report" was the solo work of Bolton and conveniently ignored that other government agencies favored resumption of membership in that organization—an action they had recommended in 1984 at the time of withdrawal and have continued to favor since.

Bolton not only ignores opinion in this country. He implies that other countries have little reason to continue as members of Unesco. True, they may voice criticisms of the organization, but there is daily evidence of their active involvement in its work. Dramatic proof was given at Unesco's World Conference on Science for the 21st Century, held in Budapest this June. Last year, moreover, governments, foundations, professional and civic bodies and international business representatives turned out in record numbers for a Unesco conference on culture and development and another on higher education. American higher education institutions sent a record number of representatives to the latter gathering.

Bolton's virulent antagonism toward the UN and Unesco provides no vision or guide for the future. Nor does it reflect what a recent analysis found was an American public capable of long-term thinking. "Americans do appear to have a sense of history, a recognition of global interdependence and a desire to see their nation make a meaningful contribution both for selfish and altruistic reasons." (Misreading the Public: The Myth of a New Isolationism by Steven Kull and I.M. Destler, published by the Brookings Institution Press)

The 30th Unesco General Conference (Paris, October 26- November 17) will not only elect a Director-General for six years. It will agree on strategies for cooperation in the next 8-10 years. The need and the desire for a full American partnership will be evident and should be forthcoming. Politics doesn't like a vacuum.

—JOHN E. FORBES
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Forbes served in the US Foreign Service and was Deputy Director-General of UNESCO. He is currently Chair of Americans for the University of Unesco, a non-profit organization.

Helping AIDS victims with love and support

To the Editor: I write in reference to the story on AIDS and the Countess Albina du Boisrouvray and the Bagnoud Foundation's proposal that the world's richest donate 2 percent of their wealth in the search for a cure (Earth Times Web Edition, October 31, 1999). I live in the USA and have been infected with the HIV virus since the early '80s. My partner is in a similar situation. I now, according to the current criteria, have full blown AIDS.

However both of us are not on any medications and have no desire to be. My partner spent a short time on Pro-tease inhibitors but hated how they made him feel. Here is the irony—we are healthy and well despite having low T-cell counts, lower for me and sometimes with a high viral load. So what does this tell us? That we are flukes? No, because I know others like us, though they are few.

It tells us that medicine alone will not heal nor cure. People need social support, love and adequate nutrition. I believe the death sentence is poverty and despair, not the virus. I was once drug-addicted and homeless, I have had good friends die in prison from lack of care. I know I am lucky. I would like to help. I was pleased to read your article because the truth is so seldom spoken. Many people feel overwhelmed by the enormity of the problem and do nothing. It is the epitome of courage and compassion to take on the task of the disenfranchised and my prayers are with you. I would like to know if there is an address where donations can be sent. It would be a good world if the wealthy would give their 2 percent but I believe it is more likely that those who know the reality of poverty and disease are the ones willing to give.

—CHRISTINA CAHILL-OSORIO
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Tiger still in danger

To the Editor: Well, I think your story on recent advances on saving the tiger is far too upbeat and ignores the still widespread use of tiger products (Earth Times Web Edition, October 8, 1999) in China. There still seems to be many stories coming from Laos and Cambodia of shipping tiger products into China. I'm doubtful whether the trade sanctions that were imposed by the global community can do much at all for these countries—despite China's membership of the endangered species treaty.

—GORDON CLARIDGE
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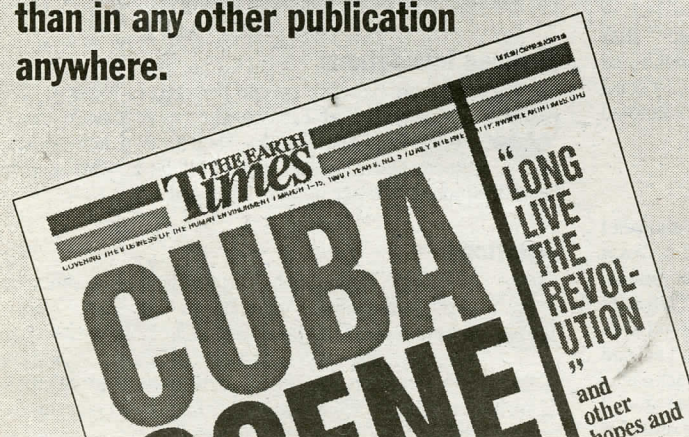


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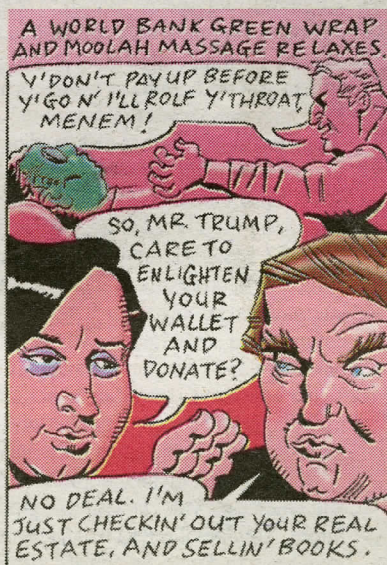
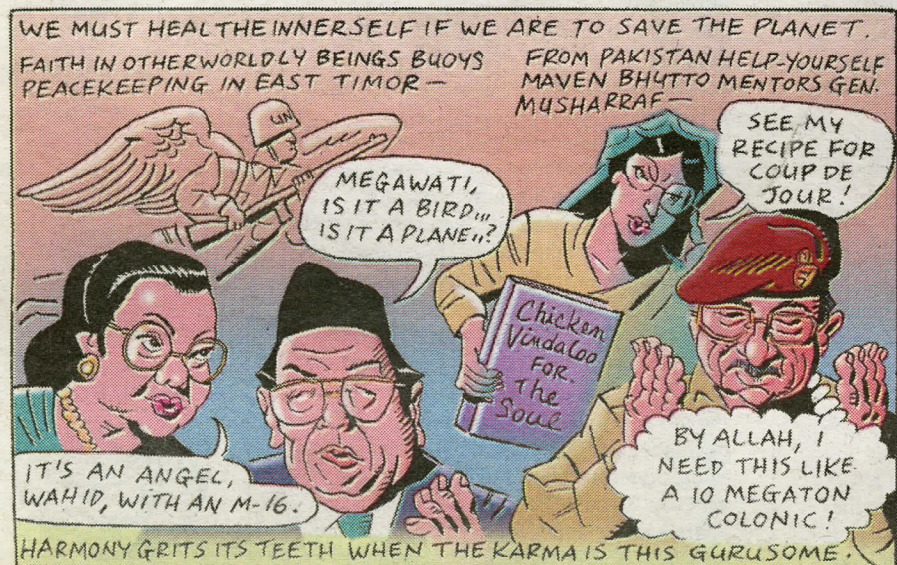
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MARTIN KOZLOWSKI for The Earth Times

LIVING EARTH

Construction gets Kenyans irradiated

Au Revoir to Wolves

The decision by the French government to remove wild wolves from the country's Alpine region brought cheers of celebration from farmers in the southeast. Officials issued a report recommending that all of the approximately 40 wolves be either caged or destroyed, due to complaints that roaming packs of wolves were massacring flocks of sheep. Wolves in the French Alps were hunted to near extinction by the 1930s. Small numbers began to reappear in the early '90s, migrating from the Italian Alps into a wilderness area north of Nice. Local shepherds blamed the predators for the deaths of 1,250 sheep last year. Environmentalists contradicted the claims, saying that feral dogs are far more responsible for ravaging the sheep.

Kenyan Contamination

Thousands of Kenya's residents are feared to have been exposed to radioactivity from contaminated construction materials used in building roadways in the city of Msambweni. The irradiation was caused by a thorium compound in the construction material that was obtained from an undisclosed source. One of the medical authorities sent to the scene told reporters, "This is a natural radioactive agent, which causes ailments that can occur after a long period."

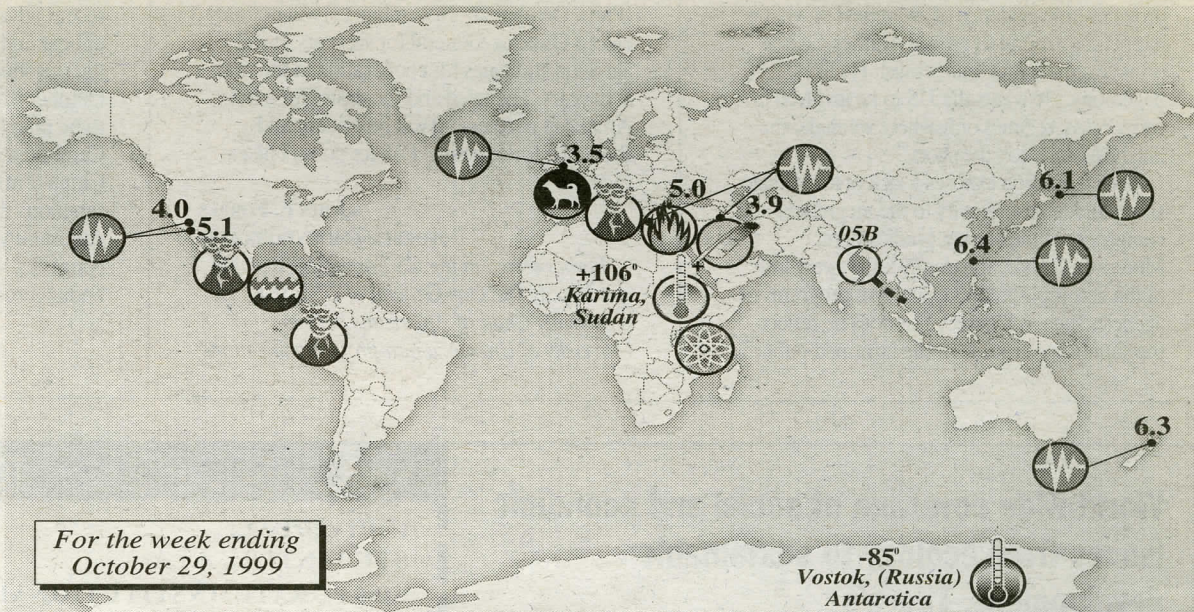
Choking Smoke

A massive cloud of choking smoke descended over northern Egypt, causing panicked residents to jam phone lines to police and fire stations. The giant cloud, which covered the city of Cairo and four northern districts, left Egyptians short of breath and with irritated eyes. The smoke came from seasonal fires set by farmers burning straw from their rice harvests. Unusual atmospheric conditions trapped the smoke and kept the cloud close to the ground.

Earthquakes

At least one person was killed and hundreds of others were injured when a magnitude 6.4 temblor struck the city of Chiayi in quake-ravaged Taiwan, one month after the island's worst earthquake in recent history.

• Earth movements were also felt in the Kuril Islands, northern New Zealand, southeastern Turkey, southern Greece, Wales, and in California's Mojave Desert and Owens Valley.



Tropical Cyclone

At least eight people died in flooding, and thousands of others were forced to evacuate their homes, after tropical cyclone 05B drenched parts of Thailand and northern Malaysia before taking aim on the east coast of India. The storm was packing winds of 120 mph as it made landfall near Calcutta late in the week.

Girthy Griffin Flies Again

An overweight griffin vulture was put on a starvation diet by Jordanian conservationists until the bird of prey was once again able to return to the skies. The animal specialists at the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature began caring for the raptor last month when it was brought to the center after having been captured by hunters and domesticated. The predatory bird, known in Arabic as a black eagle, is regionally threatened and has protected status. Mohammed Yusef, head of research at the Society, said the bird had probably

been in captivity for more than a year and was so fat it couldn't fly but was able to do so after only two days of fasting.

Mexican Inundations

At least six more people perished in Mexico's flood-ravaged state of Tabasco when emergency releases of water from the Penoles Dam caused new surges of floodwater. Dams upstream from the flooded areas have been filled to the bursting point by incessant rains.

Eruptions

Ecuador's Tungurahua Volcano sent up another huge mushroom-shaped column of ash and gas as volcanologists kept the crater under close scrutiny for an imminent, explosive eruption. At least 23,000 nearby residents were evacuated during the previous week in anticipation of such an explosion. Sicily's Mount Etna spewed glowing rocks hundreds of feet into the Mediterranean sky.