

Highlights of the 56th Annual DPI/NGO Conference
8 – 10 September 2003

**Human Security and Dignity:
Fulfilling the Promise of the United Nations**

Attendance:

- A record 2,000 Non-Governmental Organization representatives from over 600 UN-related NGOs in 86 countries attended the Conference, in addition to many Mission and UN staff.
- Forty per cent of the NGO representatives were from developing regions, representing organizations in 61 countries. This is double the proportion from previous Conferences.
- Over 3,500 NGOs from 100 countries pre-registered for the Conference. These numbers indicate high interest among UN-related NGOs. The discrepancy between those who wished to attend and those who actually attended indicates the probability of serious visa problems.
- A record number of young persons (ages 16 to 25) participated in the Conference as the result of special outreach through associated NGOs.
- Friday and Sunday pre-registration efforts enabled 1,000 participants to pre-register for the Conference, significantly reducing the congestion on Monday morning despite lengthy security procedures.
- The main Conference Reception on Monday evening was attended by the Secretary-General and over 1,000 guests, the largest attendance ever.

Speakers:

The Conference Chair from the NGO/DPI Executive Committee, Ms. Fannie Munlin, announced at the opening session in the General Assembly Hall that the NGO community wished to dedicate the 56th Conference to those United Staff who had come under attack in Iraq and in other troubled parts of the world where they are at work.

- In addition to the Deputy Secretary-General and the President of the 57th session of the General Assembly, former Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso and former High Commissioner for Refugees Mrs. Sadako Ogata were keynote speakers.
- Over 50 per cent of speakers of the seven plenary sessions were women and 50 per cent were from developing countries.
- The participation of 14 speakers from developing countries was made possible with funds provided by the NGO Section and raised by the NGO/DPI Executive Committee.
- Moderators included Danny Glover, Alfredo Sfeir-Younis, and Barbara Crossette, and speakers included Jeffrey Sachs, Mary Racellis and Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury.
- Thirty-one Midday NGO Workshops featured an additional 140 speakers.
- Over 20 speakers from UN Departments, Funds, Programmes and Specialized Agencies presented at the plenary sessions and workshops.
- The speeches of plenary speakers are available on the NGO Section website.

Innovations:

- All seven plenary sessions were broadcast live on UN TV and webcast (and are archived) on the Internet.
- Webcasts featured interactive capacity whereby Internet participants could access live discussion forums and address questions and comments directly to the panellists.
- An NGO networking session, held in the UN cafeteria as an informal breakfast, provided new opportunity for exchanges among NGO participants.
- A farewell reception, held on the UN Visitors' Plaza and sponsored by New York Wine and Grape Foundation and American Express, was attended by over 1,000 guests, including officials from the government of New York City.
- A youth event was held in the Dag Hammarskjöld Park on Tuesday evening, celebrating the special attendance of young people.
- The DPI/NGO Planning Committee, comprised of over 30 NGO representatives and meeting weekly for nine months, was the largest Planning Committee in the long history of the Conference.

Media coverage:

- In addition to three press releases and press advisories, three press conferences took place during the Conference, featuring the keynote speakers, Danny Glover and Kingsley Moghalu of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and Roland Wiederkehr, member of the Swiss Parliament.
- UN Radio featured interviews with eight Conference speakers in four languages.
- There was significant coverage of the Conference through television, radio, newspapers and press agencies.

Feedback:

- Over 400 Conference surveys were returned to the organizers, or 20 per cent of participants.
- Over 150 surveys on educational activities of participants were returned to the organizers.

Other Opportunities:

In addition to presentations by many representatives of the UN system, the Conference afforded the opportunity for other partners to take advantage of the presence of many NGOs around the world: Mr. Cardoso and other members of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations and Civil Society Relations were able to carry out extensive consultations and WFUNA timed the release of its annual report on civil society and the Millennium Development Goals as well as holding its annual board meeting to coincide with the Conference.

Further information on the Conference, including the programmes, photos, archived webcasts of plenary sessions and speeches, can be accessed at <http://www.un.org/dpi/ngosection/>.

A Final Report of the Conference will be available in December

