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Press Advisory

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56th Annual DPI/NGO Conference
“Human Security and Dignity: Fulfilling the Promise of the United Nations”
8 to 10 September 2003
United Nations Headquarters
New York

Recent events around the globe have jeopardized the spirit of multilateral cooperation and peace-building, causing some voices to question the very relevance of the United Nations. Despite these challenges, the Organization continues to play an essential role in ensuring human security and dignity through common commitment and international solidarity. Secretary-General Kofi Annan has stated that: “Achieving human security requires a dynamic, innovative partnership among the United Nations, Governments and non-state actors.”

The 56th Annual Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), “Human Security and Dignity: Fulfilling the Promise of the United Nations,” to be held at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 8 to 10 September 2003, will highlight these issues and give civil society organizations a forum to express their ideas about human rights, people’s empowerment and global well-being. Featuring everyone from businesswomen in Malawi organizing micro-credit programmes for the disenfranchised to youth peace educators promoting disarmament in Albania to villagers making furniture from local rainforest vines in Guyana, the Conference will bring together diverse actors who advocate dynamic and effective partnerships with the United Nations and its Member States.

“The global village presents us with an ethical challenge: to seek to ensure that human progress is matched by human understanding,” said Shashi Tharoor, Under-Secretary-General of Communications and Public Information and host of the event.

Fannie Munlin, Chair of the Conference and Representative to the United Nations for the National Council of Negro Women, Inc. said: “We wish to dedicate this Conference to the United Nations staff who have come under attack in Iraq and elsewhere. NGO humanitarian and development personnel are working hand-in-hand with UN colleagues. We cannot be deterred.”

The Conference will feature speeches by such notables as: **Fernando Henrique Cardoso**, former President of Brazil, who now chairs a high-level panel to strengthen United Nations partnerships with civil society; **Danny Glover**, the actor and a UNDP Goodwill Ambassador; **Jeffrey Sachs**, world-renowned economist on development issues and a Special Advisor to the United Nations Secretary-General; as well as **Sadako Ogata**, former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Co-Chair of the United Nations Commission on Human Security.

The Conference is the premier NGO event at the United Nations. About 2,000 NGO representatives associated with the Department of Public Information (DPI) and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) from more than 100 countries around the world are expected to attend. Featuring seven plenary sessions and 30 Midday NGO Workshops, the Conference will for the first time be web cast live through an interactive site, <http://www.ngodpiexecom.org>, enabling NGO representatives and the general public worldwide to follow and participate in the proceedings.

A detailed Conference programme and the Midday NGO Workshops Schedule are attached. Media representatives are welcome to attend the Conference and will have access to speakers on request. UNTV will cover both the opening and closing sessions of the Conference. To obtain a live feed or tape, please call UNTV at (212) 963-7650. Updates are available on our web site at: <http://www.un.org/dpi/ngosection>

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