



# World Chronicle

UNITED NATIONS

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**GUEST:** Ms. Kathryn Bushkin  
Executive Vice President  
and Chief Operating Officer  
United Nations Foundation

**JOURNALISTS:** Edith Lederer, Associated Press

Ricardo Alday, Notimex/Mexican News Agency

**MODERATOR:** Tony Jenkins

## The UN Foundation

The United Nations Foundation, UNF, is the public charity responsible for administering Ted Turner's historic gift of \$1 billion. UNF works to support UN causes and promote new and innovative partnerships with private sectors and foundations. Since 1998, 300 projects in 121 countries have been funded by UNF.

In this edition of World Chronicle, Kathryn Bushkin, UNF's Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, talks about their work to raise the profile and strengthen support for the United Nations.

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**ANNOUNCER:** From the United Nations in New York, an unedited interview programme on global issues. This is **World Chronicle**. And here is the host of today's **World Chronicle**.

**JENKINS:** Hello, I'm Tony Jenkins.

In September 1997, American businessman Ted Turner pledged \$ 1 billion dollars in support of United Nations causes. The UN Foundation was created to oversee four primary activities: grant-making, strengthening support for UN institutions, raising the UN's profile internationally, and new fundraising efforts.

After seven years, what has been achieved?

Our guest today is **Kathryn Bushkin**, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the UN Foundation.

Joining me to talk to Ms. Bushkin are Edi Lederer of Associated Press...and Ricardo Alday of Notimex.

**JENKINS:** Kathy... Can I call you Kathy?

**BUSHKIN:** Please do.

**JENKINS:** For our viewers, I think a good place to start would be for you to explain how this got off the ground - one man giving one thousand million dollars to the United Nations? Well...one question some people might have is that a good thing? Private philanthropy is very common in the United States. In the rest of the world - they might look at it a little bit askance. Is it a good idea to have a private businessman being that involved in what the UN is doing? Or is this a sign of the failure of countries, such as the United States to contribute as much as they should. Is this a good thing?

**BUSHKIN:** Well I think it is a brilliant thing. It was a bold innovative step by one man to say – there is one institution in the world that can make a better life for everyone and keep peace going – and that's the United Nations. And if I have one thing I can do with my money, it's going to be to support that organization. And so he announced he would give a billion dollars to the UN. It took everyone by surprise, and I think what has happened since then, is that it has raised the bar for philanthropy in this country. It's challenged other donors to think more strategically and more boldly about what they could do and it's brought enormous important attention to the United Nations as an institution. And I don't think it's a failure at all of countries to give – in fact I think its broadened our notion that the United Nations isn't just a body of Member States – although it is a member organization for nations - but it's really a body for the whole world. NGOs are very involved now with the UN and citizens increasingly want to support the UN, but haven't had a mechanism to do so. Now the United Nations has its

own foundation where individuals, particularly in this country can give a donation; it's tax deductible and they can feel like they have a small piece in supporting the good work, the important work that the UN does.

**JENKINS:** So, has it worked as the way you described? In other words, have you been able to leverage that billion dollars to get more money out of other private individuals? One thinks perhaps of Bill Gates's Foundation, have you been able to drag them in and drag money out of them?

**BUSHKIN:** Absolutely! Well they're as big as many governments in terms of their own giving and they certainly give around the world in many places. But they have been actually a tremendous partner of both the UN Foundation and the United Nations...

**JENKINS:** Bill Gates has?

**BUSHKIN:** Bill Gates, his foundation supported the Measles Partnership with us, which has been tremendously successful in vaccinating millions of children throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. They have been a partner with us on buying down loans at the World Bank to convert to grants for polio eradication. I am a big fan of the Gates Foundation. I think they are bold and creative. But we've also had lots of smaller partners. We've had corporations like the Vodafone Corporation in Great Britain, which does business around the world - which is now partnering with us also for major UN programmes. And we help support things like the Global Fund, which individuals can contribute to. So over the past seven years, about five hundred million dollars of Mr. Turner's money has come through the door and gone to support the UN and its causes. And we raised about two hundred and twenty nine million – about half that same amount – from other sources - from individuals, corporations, foundations, and including some governments that like to work with us on some of our partnerships. So, Mr. Turner said at the beginning, "if my money just goes to the UN, it will have been a failure. If it brings in other donors, I'll feel like I've done something really successful."

**JENKINS:** Another quick question before I hand over to Ricardo. If you've given away half a billion dollars already, and there was a billion dollars that was donated, does that mean that there is only half a billion left? Or is the money generating - - is it earning interest and generating new capital – are you depleting your capital?

**BUSHKIN:** We're depleting it actually. It's not an endowment, although we are thinking about whether it ought to be. I think there's a lot of reasons the UN should continue to have a foundation beyond the life of this one. We do a lot of other things that are critical to continue – such as advocacy - .....

**JENKINS:** So half the money has gone?

**BUSHKIN:** Half of the money is gone. But our success in bringing other money to the table means that other money will continue and if we are successful with that, maybe we will even find ways to take some of our money and grow it further. So, we anticipate that the need will go on and we will be there but so will many other partners.

**JENKINS:** Ricardo.

**ALDAY:** Who decides how to spend the money?

**BUSHKIN:** Well, we have a Board of Directors that's quite prestigious. It includes Graça Machel, who is the former first lady of Mozambique, married to Nelson Mandela, Gro Brundlandt, former Prime Minister of Norway, former head of WHO, Andy Young, former US Ambassador to the UN, Ruth Cardoza, former First Lady from Brazil, and on and on, and on. Muhammad Yunis, the Founder of Micro Finance in the Grameen Bank. It's actually a very interesting Board, for two reasons. It's more than half from the developing world and more than half women, which Ted Turner says is, the most important thing he can do - - because if the next hundred years women were in charge, better things might happen. So the Board actually makes all final decisions on grants, the process for finding the appropriate grants, and we try and make innovative grants that might not get support from other places.

**JENKINS:** Such as....

**BUSHKIN:** You know we've done very small grants in areas where we've tried to empower young girls to get access to reproductive health and AIDS information. This is not a popular thing in this country but we know that it is incredibly important in ensuring a young women's life expectancy and her earning power. At the other end of the spectrum we've done a lot to create partnerships – like the Measles Partnership that included lots of other companies or the Polio Partnership, which had as its major partner Rotary International, which contributed six hundred million dollars and we're that close to ending polio. But those grants were all developed in conjunction, in cooperation with the UN Agencies on the ground. We discuss our programme areas. They tell us what they need the money for. We then take it to our board.

**JENKINS:** Edi.

**LEDERER:** Kathy, one of the big issues that Ted Turner has focused on is the whole issue of population and women. I know just last month he was one of the signatories and big sponsors of this global leader's pledge endorsing the population agenda. He was a big supporter of the equality of women, and the Beijing Women Rights Platform. What are you doing now to try and make this a reality because as Ted Turner himself says every time he gives a speech, if the world were run by women the world would be a better place.

**BUSHKIN:** Absolutely. Well its challenging right now in that the Bush administration is as you know has chosen not to fund the UN Population Agency for the third year in a row because of some concerns it supports abortion issues in China; which we know is not true and the State Department has proven is not true, but we continue to have an issue in our country. But we feel that there are growing efforts around the world - - Europe has certainly come through as a major supporter of the work that the UN is doing in this area - -- the world leader's statement alone has garnered over two hundred ninety signatures from people all over the world who are committed to and believe in this notion that it's so important to link reproductive health and AIDS and that we provide it to adolescent girls who are the fastest growing proportion of AIDS victims and certainly if they are the least able to negotiate their own reproductive health choices. And we do know that a girl who marries too early has fewer chances to make it in the future. So we think we have to do two things: we have to make very smart grants in that area; we have to partner with organizations around the world – particularly in Europe, which is so advanced in its thinking on this; and third, we have to really beef up the advocacy and get these issues out there so everyone – not just you and I know how critical this is – but that the world understands there is a basic right to a women's right to protect herself and that we need to support that. So, if we bring it back to rights based protection, I think we will be successful.

**JENKINS:** I should say perhaps in passing that I know many people, including women, who don't necessarily agree that a world run by women would necessarily be any better [ all laugh], they point out that some women when they get into political office are just as tough and mean as any man out there [all laugh],

**BUSHKIN:** Point well taken.

**JENKINS:** But I guess one can say that they can't do any worse than the men have been doing up until now. So why not give them a shot. I want to ask about another area, which is - one of your three principle goals is – what you call telling the story, in other words helping people to understand about the United Nations. And the context I want to put this in is that every time an opinion poll is done of American citizens, a considerable majority of them believe that the United States is donating far, far more, to overseas development programmes than it actually is. In fact, the majority of people in the United States, believe that the largest item in the U.S. budget is overseas aid, and many of them think that that's actually not such a bad thing. So it strikes me that they would be prepared to see the U.S. give more. The other context I want to put it in, is that the United States spends four hundred and fifty billion dollars a year on arms and only fifteen billion dollars on aid, and if it matched its promise, the promise

that every developing country has made to contribute nought point seven percent of its gross domestic product to overseas aid, it would be spending seventy five billion dollars a year instead of fifteen, and you - - organizations such as yours could essentially be put out of business. Should you not be doing more with your money to get out and educate American voters that their money is not being spent in the way that they think it is and that they need to put some pressure on their government to re-dress this imbalance between military spending and overseas aid.

**BUSHKIN:** Well you know, I couldn't agree more that that's the most important thing that we are doing right now....

**JENKINS:** ...You say it is THE most important....

**BUSHKIN:** I would say public education and advocacy of – about this issue – is the most important thing. We've even talked to the Secretary-General about this, and while our grant making is critical and important, it's not unique. But what we do in terms of advocacy and education of the American people, and engaging them on this issue is. So he has encouraged us to continue our work...

**JENKINS:** ....And he agrees?

**BUSHKIN:** And to expand it beyond the U.S. But primarily, yes he totally agrees that – there isn't a basis of understanding – and we see the same thing in polling numbers that you do - that people are – do think that we are far more a generous nation than we are; and so they resent it when someone says we should be doing more – they feel they are already doing a lot – so they don't have a good understanding. Their understanding about the United Nations is stuck in the post cold war context, and it was damaged right after the Iraq war when the Security Council decision appeared to be anti U.S.; it then started to come back up as there was a growing recognition that the Security Council and the United Nations were so critical to a multilateral world. But we have a lot of issues here. When you look at the map of the United States and see the red/blue States which -- I think we have all seen a lot in the election that took place this Fall - - the UN's approval rating is pretty similar to – we're strong in the blue States and we're not as strong in the red States, there's a serious gender gap – women see the UN as a place for communication. Men see it as a place where people just talk, talk, talk. Both sides of the same coin...

**JENKINS:** ...Well the profile that you are describing means that Democrats like the UN and Republicans don't. That's not very healthy is it?

**BUSHKINS:** That's not very healthy, so to your point, we have a big job to do in educating. And what we've found is that the things people appreciate about the UN are its

humanitarian work – around the world - and the fact that it helps the U.S. share its burden for addressing issues around the world. What they haven't liked is a sense that the institution – there is a sense that the institution isn't as effective as it could be and so I think we have a big job to do to deal with that. Two things that could help this year...the UN's role in Iraq could make a big difference as long as people learn what it is. And I think we may see some serious reforms in the institution next year through the high level panel and I hope that's successful.

**ALDAY:** I'm wondering how much does the evolution of politics in the United States has affected or not affected your work over this past seven years. You talked before about reproduction health. Now we have this debate about stem cell research and so on and so forth. Can you talk a little bit about that?

**BUSHKIN:** Right. You know the country has gotten more divisive over the past seven years, probably during the course of our work and people are more split over central issues. However, the church going community, which was so focused on -- in our past election—is actually is on that is very central to a debate around poverty. Many churches in our country support efforts to eradicate poverty and are actually on the front lines of trying to do something about it. So there are some opportunities that go across the party lines. That said, I think we face a really challenging situation in Congress right now: it is a Republican Congress; it has always been hard to get the UN's budget through Congress. Our foundation was started when the U.S. wasn't even paying its dues - - one of our first efforts was to help make the case that a strong country doesn't squelch on its obligations and we got the dues paid but we have to fight that battle every year. The peace-keeping budget's going to go over three billion dollars this year and the U.S. portion is astronomical according to most Americans because they don't understand the total thing. So, we are facing a real challenge. I think our goal is to find a common ground and to start building some platform for discussion because we have not been successful where we've just had to go head-to-head on issues such as UNFPA funding.

**JENKINS:** Hang on a moment...let me say that this is World Chronicle, and we're talking about the UN Foundation with its Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Kathryn Bushkin. Here's a video clip highlighting some of the UN Foundation's supported projects.

#### **VIDEO ROLL-IN**

**NARRATOR:** The most heartbreaking aspect of modern warfare is the participation of child soldiers. At the turn of the century over three hundred thousand children worldwide had been lured or forced into combat. The ten year civil conflict in the West African country of

Sierra Leone, was once called the children's war because at least half the soldiers – perhaps as many as ten thousand – were under sixteen.

This is the end of the road for a boy soldier who happen to run into the wrong person – United Nations General, Daniel O'Panday

**O'PANDAY:** How old are you? Ten years? Well you should not be carrying your weapon, you should not be carrying your weapon. No, no, no. This is not good. You should be going to school.

**NARRATOR #1:** The ten year old was taken to where two thousand boys and girls had gone before him: Saint Michael's Interim Care Center outside the capital, Freetown. Like the others, he was encouraged to become a child again, to go to school, make friends and practice the art of playing. Saint Michael's is supported and monitored by the UN Children's Fund, UNICEF, with assistance from the UN Foundation created by media entrepreneur Ted Turner.

**NARRATOR #2:** Coordinated by the World Health Organization (WHO), the campaign has reduced recorded polio cases worldwide by ninety-nine percent in two years. Only three thousand five hundred new cases have been registered. But the virus continues to exist in twenty countries, mainly in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Children with limited access to vaccines are isolated in war zones are still at risk. UNICEF provided support to the Sierra Leone Health Ministry along with WHO, Rotary, and USAID. Support for the global effort also comes from private donors including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the UN Foundation of American Media entrepreneur, Ted Turner.

**NARRATOR #3:** Spreading the word and not the disease is the mission of PRESIDOR, Angola's new AIDS prevention network. PRESIDOR was created by young people to save other young people from ignorance and death. PRESIDOR's team of active volunteers, have started an intensive campaign to reach as many of their peers as they can. It is made possible through the support of UNICEF and the United Nations Foundation.

**NARRATOR #4:** There has been a dramatic increase in the killing of animals, in the DRC's five wild life sanctuaries all UNESCO World Heritage sites, there's been a serious danger of extinction for many important species. But now, there is new hope for the Congo's wildlife. The country's national conservation institution, zoological societies, non-governmental organizations, UNESCO, and the United Nations Foundation created by media entrepreneur, Ted Turner, have all come together to help save some of the world's most intriguing species.

**JENKINS:** Of course, those are the sorts of programmes that people in this country feel good about and they think they are spending scads of money on...and in fact.they're not,



but this country isn't, and that's what you wanted to do your public advocacy on. I think that is what you wanted to follow up on. Was it Edi?

**LEDERER:** Yeah, I wanted to say that even though we focused on the United States and trying to educate people, but of course, there are a hundred and ninety one nations in the United Nations and there is a really big job to do overseas. Also, I know that one of the big things that the Foundation has done, is try and create partnerships not just in this country but all over the world. How successful have you been and how do you see support for the United Nations in the rest of the world compared to the United States?

**BUSHKIN:** Well I think the rest of the world has tremendous appreciation for and maybe a better understanding of the United Nations than in this country. I think there's a better connection between some of the UN Agencies in the UN and other countries. Because the UN Headquarters is in the United States, sometimes our news is more focused on some of the work out of the Headquarters building and some of the work by WHO, or UNICEF, or UNDP, some of the big agencies within the UN is lost. In fact, some polling show that Americans, more than other countries, don't even know that those are UN Agencies. Now...

**JENKINS:** So, there is nowhere in the world where people resent their contribution to the United Nations as much as in this country?

**BUSHKIN:** Well, I think we need to watch that closely. I think we ought to be aware of what may be going on in Japan and Brazil and some of the other big donor nations, where...

**JENKINS:** ...Why? Have you picked signs, or signals.....

**BUSHKINS:** ...Well..... I think, I think, there is a sense that maybe, some of those countries in particular, that people want to know that they – that their contribution is appreciated as well, although I think the coverage may be better. You know the media coverage is a big challenge everywhere in the world. Getting international coverage of these kinds of issues is hard and in this country, as you know, international stories just don't get the kind of play, and therefore the education role doesn't get that kind of play.

**LEDERER:** But this comes back to this whole idea of public advocacy. How do you really make an impact? I know that one of the programmes that the Foundation was proudest of this year in the election was doing these town hall meetings, where - you know – people really had a chance to talk about issues. But how globally, nationally, do you really put across a message that doesn't come out sounding like propaganda?

**BUSHKIN:** Right. Well in the case of this programme that you are mentioning, The People Speak . This was truly an opportunity for Americans to come together and discuss America's role in the world. We did four thousand of these events this Fall. Some of them

were inter-country exchanges, we did exchanges between American Universities and Muslim Universities, that turned out to be....

**JENKINS:** Weren't you just preaching to the choir there. Or did you get people who already love the UN going to those things?

**BUSHKIN:** You know a lot of the choir came to those things, but I have to say that there were a lot of people who came because they were looking for information. People are very confused to your point. And we're looking for an opportunity to learn a little bit more, all of our panels were totally non-partisan. We had the fellow who had been in Iraq as the Chief Spokesman, as well as Madeline Albright, who had been a former Democratic Secretary of State. So we try to engage people. We're now going to take this concept into a pilot in Brazil because they have expressed an interest in having – I can't say it in Portuguese – but the people speaking Portuguese, and we hope this thing goes forward. Thank you. So we think there is an opportunity for this same approach to go global.

**ALDAY:** How do things like the Oil For Food scandal affect your work or the work of many other organizations trying to bring attention and support for the United Nations?

**BUSHKIN:** It's a big problem. Right now I would say the difficulty of getting a good news story about the UN through the media to the citizens is very difficult. Oil for Food is eating up a lot of the tension and time. It's also colouring people's first reaction to the UN, because they are hearing UN in scandal, UN in incompetency, so we have to work even harder to break through that first image. And also during the election and– and because of the scandal – our pollsters are telling us that the good news stories are just not permeating. People are confused about what's going on. It will be very important when the independent inquiry that's being done by Paul Volker and his two partners, to clear the air on this so that we can change the conversation. So it's had a real impact in this country, and it will very important to get it behind us.

**ALDAY:** Is the UN helping you in – I mean in terms of public relations- do you feel the UN can do a better job for itself?

**BUSHKIN:** I think every institution struggles when it is going through a crisis. And the UN is like every other institution that feels like my story should be understood, and why can't they understand? In the case of Oil for Food, all the benefits of that programme are rarely included in the stories about the controversy over its management. There's so much focus on whether Saddam Hussein, a noted bad guy, did some bad things, and we missed the fact that twenty-five million people were saved from starvation. That's frustrating to the UN.

**JENKINS:** Why is the UN doing such a bad job in telling its story? I mean this is – my own pet theory is that Kofi Annan – this is his last term, he's not running for re-election, he can use his last few years to go out there and talk to the American public. I suspect that might be the best thing that he can possibly do?

**BUSHKIN:** I agree...

**JENKINS:** You do agree... have you been saying this to him?

**BUSHKIN:** And actually, he has been pretty successful at getting out. You know, he did meet the press this year, he's been in Washington as much this year as any year, and is speaking out more and more. I think we need to get frankly, more senior officials of the UN out talking. When they come to Congress and tell their story, they have the microphone and they can make a difference.

**LEDERER:** Yeah but I mean what happens particularly at a time like this, because of the Oil for Food scandal. Everything immediately gets turned into that, so I think that its sort of feeds in negatively. Do you see that the Oil for Food scandal/problem has had the same kind of impact internationally than it had in the United States?

**BUSHKIN:** My understanding is that it isn't playing internationally as intensively as it is here, that it's just another story, even though France is involved, and Russia was involved, companies from those countries were involved, it's not as intense a story as it is here. I think there is a bigger band of people in this country who are looking to discredit the United Nations here as well. So we're up against that.

**JENKINS:** Do you foresee that is going to get worse? I mean we just heard that the Bush administration's proposing freezing all new funding for the Global AIDS programme. There are people in Congress who have expressed irritation that the Secretary-General described the Iraq war as illegal; they say that he's not doing enough to contribute with the elections in Iraq. Do you foresee that this problem, this situation is going to get worse and that we may see a return to the 90's where Congress did not want to pay up what it owed to the United Nations?

**BUSHKIN:** I hope that won't happen, and I think the key to that will be what happens in the next few months. When Americans see how critical the UN's role is in helping with the Iraqi elections, when the story really is told of how significant the contribution was in helping Afghanistan right itself, when we look at some of the actions that the UN plans to take this year with the recommendations for reform coming out of the high-level panel. I think we need to see some action and then I think people will be willing to give the UN the room to improve. You know most people in America want the UN to succeed. They believe it is an important

institution and I think that is true of many Republicans. But they want it to be an institution that's right for the twenty-first century. And frankly, that's exactly what Secretary Annan is saying as well.

**JENKINS:** And that is what you guys are saying?

**BUSHKIN:** That's what we're saying. So we will have to wait and see.

**JENKINS:** Kathryn Bushkin, that is a perfect note on which to end. We have run out of time. Thank you for being with us.

**BUSHKIN:** Thank you.

**JENKINS:** Our guest today has been the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the UN Foundation, Kathy Bushkin. She was interviewed by Edi Lederer of Associated Press and Ricardo Alday of Notimex.

I'm Tony Jenkins. Thank you for joining us. We invite you to be with us for the next edition of **World Chronicle**.

**ANNOUNCER:** Electronic transcripts of this programme may be obtained free of charge by contacting World Chronicle at the address on your screen:

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