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# World Chronicle

UNITED NATIONS

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**PROGRAMME:** Year in Review Special recorded 23 December 2005

**GUEST:** **Stéphane Dujarric**  
Spokesman for the UN Secretary-General

**MODERATOR:** **Tony Jenkins**

**"The UN's 60th year: auspicious, or just very difficult?"**

A sixtieth birthday is an auspicious occasion in some countries. In Korea it marks a full circle of life, so that in reaching 60 you complete one circle, and start a new one – in a different direction. Can the same be said for the 60th year of the United Nations? Are there signs of a new beginning? Has it been an auspicious year for the UN or just a horrible one? These are some of the questions explored with Stéphane Dujarric, Spokesman for the UN Secretary-General, in this special episode of World Chronicle.

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

**JENKINS:** Hello, I'm Tony Jenkins. A sixtieth birthday is an auspicious occasion in some countries. In Korea it marks a full circle of life, so that in reaching 60 you complete one circle, and start a new one – in a different direction. Can the same be said for the 60<sup>th</sup> year of the United Nations? Are there signs of a new beginning? Has it been an auspicious year for the UN – or just a horrible one? That's what we'll be talking about later in the show with today's guest. But first, here's our report.

**INSERT 1**

**VIDEO AND AUDIO IN**

**NARRATION:** The world unites to help the many victims of natural disasters survive and rebuild their lives. The United Nations takes the lead in coordinating relief efforts and in urging donor countries to support reconstruction.

In New York, an unprecedented number of world leaders meet to address chronic problems like poverty and hunger, war and terrorism. 2005 - The UN's 60<sup>th</sup> year - tested the international community and the United Nations as never before. As the UN grappled with issues of war and peace, demand for its reform and renewal grew louder.

**KOFI ANNAN:** Whether our challenge is peacemaking, nation-building, democratization, or responding to natural or man-made disasters - we have seen that even the strongest amongst us cannot succeed alone.

**NARRATION:** In September, world Leaders came to New York with an ambitious agenda. In their hands: The most important decisions for the future of our planet. Will they be able to eliminate poverty? Will they put their efforts and money behind their ambitious promises to reach the Millennium Development Goals, like cutting extreme poverty in half, providing education for all boys and girls and reducing child mortality? Millions of lives will depend on the pledges made in the General Assembly. Participants promised fairer international trade, debt relief for the poorest countries and extra money for development. But at the current rate of action, they warned, eliminating poverty could take 200 years. The glass was "half-full" on some of the most ambitious projects – including the reform of the United Nations itself. On one of the key issues, the

reform and enlargement of the Security Council, no agreement could be reached and the issue was put on hold. At the Security Council Summit, world leaders unanimously condemned terrorism, no matter “by whom, where and when”, but they could not yet agree on a definition of terrorism. Prime Minister of France, Dominique de Villepin.

**VILLEPIN:** Force alone will never defeat terrorism, for force does not address people’s frustration or go to the roots of evil.

**NARRATION:** World Leaders signed the new treaty against nuclear terrorism – but it was a major disappointment that they could not agree on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

The Nobel Peace Prize in 2005 was awarded to the UN’s International Atomic Energy Agency and its director, Mohammed El-Baradei. IAEA is the organization that monitors the safety of nuclear facilities and prevents countries from secretly developing nuclear weapons. The agency is continuing its effort to clarify the nature and extent of Iran’s nuclear programme and to demand assurance that it will only be used for peaceful purposes.

In the Middle East, Israel’s disengagement from Gaza in August was a moment of promise and hope. Yet an upsurge in violence undermined the political developments and dampened the sense of optimism.

Former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and 22 others were killed in a bomb attack that threatened the country’s stability. Days of public outcry were followed by the UN establishing an independent investigation team to find out who was responsible for the attack.

Another major investigation was wrapped up in 2005. Paul Volcker’s independent investigation committee found that the world’s most complex humanitarian programme, Oil-For-Food in Iraq, was successful, but there was serious corruption around the sanctions regime and deficiencies in the UN’s administration of the programme.

**VOLCKER:** To some degree, the Organization has been weakened. The opportunity for reform should not — in my view, must not — be lost.

**NARRATION:** In Iraq, the UN took a lead role in coordinating technical assistance for the country's first free elections. Tons of ballot boxes and polling kits were produced and delivered and local Iraqis were trained to register voters and observe standards of credible elections. With logistical support from the UN, Iraqis also adopted a new Constitution, but the country is still wracked by violence and many people have been killed.

**VIDEO AND AUDIO OUT**

**JENKINS:** We are joined in the studio today by UN Spokesman, Stephen Dujarric. Stephen, Iraq has dominated the news. The Oil-for-Food scandals have caused a long shadow over almost all of the other U.N. activities. Tell me, do you think that the divisions, the allegations, the fighting of the past year are going to continue through 2006, which after all the Secretary-General's last year?

**DUJARRIC:** No, I think the divisions that we saw in the house and in the international community in the run up to the war of Iraq are hopefully behind us. They are the source of the inspiration in a way for a large part of the reform process the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan...

**JENKINS:** I'm going to interrupt quickly. I mean what's makes you think they are over?

**DUJARRIC:** What?

**JENKINS:** I mean is that what you picked up on the grapevine, you've seen the body language in the closed door meetings? What makes you think these...

**DUJARRIC:** You know, I think it is clear that the international community wants to see Iraq succeed on the road to democracy. Various countries are working at different levels in that sense but it is clear that Iraq as it stands today is everyone's problem. I think that the Secretary-General through the work of his Special Envoys and advisors has put the United Nations at the assistance of the Iraqi people in helping them get through the electoral process and well on the road to stability and democracy. And we've seen that the work of the United Nations a few months after the end of the ground war with Sergio Vieira de Mello being sent in. And with Lakhdar Brahimi or

electoral experts or constitutional experts, we've been there with the Iraqi people in helping them all.

**JENKINS:** I know you've got a story to tell. I guess the question is if the rest of the world is buying it. Iraq and the oil-for-food weren't the only issues on the agenda. We mentioned it in the beginning of the programme that this has been the sixtieth anniversary of the UN which is the occasion for renewal for certain cultures. Of course, sixty is also the normal age for retirement for UN officials and that's how you got your job when your predecessor Fred Eckhard retired in 2005. And it has happened at a moment when the relation between the press core and the Secretariat, even the Secretary-General himself, has gotten strained particularly over the coverage of the oil-for-food. The SG took the press to the task the other day. Image, public relations are very important to the UN. Does this make your job more difficult?

**DUJARRIC:** Makes my job more exciting. I think strained and sometimes difficult relations between press core and institution isn't all that bad. They're all legitimate stories to cover within the house. The issue the Secretary-General has, and all of us have, is some of the ways the questions have been posed – the innuendos, the false rumours that are going around. By all means, we must...

**JENKINS:** You think people are deliberately going after the SG personally, on a personal level, in a way that's not justified by the facts?

**DUJARRIC:** There have been allegations about the Secretary-General, about some of the senior officials. There's a recent story about Mark Malloch Brown having two salaries which is patently false but which did not stop one news organization from printing it and others from bringing it up into the press conference.

**JENKINS:** How do you move beyond that? What are you going to do to improve the relationship in an attempt to improve the image of the UN?

**DUJARRIC:** Our job, at least my job as the Spokesman is to have an honest and open relationship with the press. I think our office has had that and I wish to continue that. I'm not looking for a press core that is in love with the United Nations. I'm looking for a press core that keeps us on our toes. But there's respect and there's a line not be crossed on both sides of the aisle. One way to get beyond that, in terms of getting

beyond the negative coverage, is for us to keep plugging at our work and to try and get the press core interested in all the other activities that we are doing. In what the U.N. is doing on the ground throughout the world.

**JENKINS:** Let's talk about some of that. In fact, let's talk about the fact that 2006 is going to be the last year for the Secretary-General, for Kofi Annan. His Deputy Secretary-General, Louise Frechette is retiring in April. And I'm wondering what does that mean for the stewardship of the institution at a time when reform is supposed to be at the top of the agenda. Who will be driving that reform?

**DUJARRIC:** The Secretary-General will continue to push through his agenda and his reform proposal. He is not leaving early...

**JENKINS:** Does he have the power? Is he a lame duck?

**DUJARRIC:** He is not at all a lame duck. I think you see him fully involved in all the reform processes that are going on. He is keeping abreast of the discussions between member-states whether it's on institutional reform or the budget. As for Louise Frechette, she had made it clear that she'll stay on until her management reform proposals, which she is heading, have gone to the General Assembly.

**JENKINS:** Is there any fear do you think in Kofi Annan, amongst his staff, that as soon as he goes this reform process will collapse? I mean. It's not all going to happen in the course of the next 12 months. It's going to take a bit of time.

**DUJARRIC:** Of course it's going to take time. He has put together very bold proposals before the last Summit in September. We've seen that not all the package was approved. We're struggling to get the pieces together.

**JENKINS:** Let's talk about a couple of them specifically, the Peace-building Commission and the Human Rights Council. The Peace-building Commission, the General Assembly has recently approved. Is that going to be the only positive result?

**DUJARRIC:** No, not at all. We saw that they had approved the revolving fund, the humanitarian fund - \$500 million - which is a key, key aspect of the UN's humanitarian work. One of the undiscovered crises that we saw this year was Niger, where for months the U.N. was making very strong appeals for money, which was not coming

through. Had we had that fund, we could have dipped into it without asking for monies and we could have solved the problem much earlier.

**JENKINS:** Perfect... I want to talk about humanitarian disasters especially since 2005 was a bad year for them and how they are shaping the work of the U.N. But first let's look at this report.

## INSERT 2: Year

### VIDEO AND AUDIO IN

**NARRATION:** 2005 was a year of disasters, starting with the tsunami in the Indian Ocean that took 200,000 lives. The whole world reacted, using the UN as the lead for logistics and coordination. The UN and its agencies worked to clear the rubble and start the rebuilding in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and many other affected countries.

**AID WORKER:** They want to get the high schools reopened in this area, if you can believe it, by the end of the month. We are going to help them do that.

**NARRATION:** New schools were built and a large scale reconstruction effort has started. UNESCO plans to have a tsunami early warning system for the Indian Ocean in place by 2006. Bill Clinton, UN special envoy for tsunami relief.

**CLINTON:** We can do more good over the next decade for the world's poor people and the world's emergency areas by doing this right, in proving that we could go from relief to recovery to reconstruction in a seamless way.

**NARRATION:** A record number of storms created a new chain of disasters. Not even the strongest countries were immune, as the destruction of New Orleans showed. Many countries rushed to help the United States, UNICEF sent school supplies for children. Even skeptics had to wonder whether the record number of storms had to do with the larger global environment.

Global warming is continuing at an alarming rate, arctic ice is melting faster and faster and despite the Kyoto agreement finally entering into force in 2005, emissions have only been slightly reduced.

When hurricane Stan hit Guatemala, torrential rains triggered flash floods and mudslides, killing more than 1,400 people. Entire villages were declared mass graves

after it was deemed too dangerous to dig for the missing under 40 feet of mud. The survivors need food aid and long term assistance – but a few days later the spotlight had already moved to the next disaster.

A major earthquake hit South Asia in October, killing more than 80,000 people. The UN sent help immediately, but reaching the remote mountain villages proved to be extremely difficult. In a race against time hundreds of destroyed hospitals had to be replaced with make-shift medical stations, hundreds of thousands of tents had to be sent to remote valleys before the cruel Himalayan winter set in.

**70-YEAR OLD VICTIM:** There is nothing left in my village. Nothing to survive. The only place I can find help is this camp.

**NARRATION:** With winter looming, the relief effort remained desperately under funded. The world's aid warehouses were empty and money also had to be found for the ongoing emergencies in 26 countries. UN Relief Coordinator Jan Egeland.

**EGELAND:** Are we asking for too much? 4.7 billion dollar is a considerable amount of money. I do not believe we are asking too much, we are asking exactly the amount of 48 hours of military spending in this world.

### **VIDEO AND AUDIO OUT**

**JENKINS:** You know, Stephen one of the things that struck me about when watching this is that you see two former U.S. Presidents, Bill Clinton and George Bush Senior, both getting up to bat for the United Nations, for Tsunami Relief, for Earthquake Relief in Pakistan and it's hard to square that with this belief that the Americans are against the United Nations, that they don't appreciate the United Nations. How do you square that? Do you see the involvement of these presidents changing things at all. What's your view on them, the relationship between the United States and the United Nations at the moment?

**DUJARRIC:** I think a good collateral result of having these two gentlemen lead those efforts would hopefully be a better image of the United Nations in the U.S. I think that negative image is partly our fault and I think not the right sort of outreach and public communication within the United States. I think if the Americans knew what the

U.N. was doing in terms of humanitarian and even political work throughout the world, our support within the U.S. might be much higher.

**JENKINS:** The Americans, it has to be said for their part, concerned about something different. They are not concerned so much, I think it's fair to say, the humanitarian thing the United Nations does at least not at the moment. Their top priority is reforming the institution. Does it concern you that the focus on those elements might make greater focus on form rather than substance, and that's one of the reasons people aren't hearing the good stuff, if you like?

**DUJARRIC:** There's a lot of news out there so it is really hard for people to understand what the United Nations is and what it does. As far as reform is concerned, that's at the top of our agenda as well. Creating an organization that's better equipped to react to the crisis that we are seeing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, whether it's humanitarian or political, military crisis.

**JENKINS:** I find that interesting that you say that's on the top of your list of priorities because there are still situations out there that are crying out for the world's attention, for the United Nations' attention, which nevertheless does not seem to be advancing, for example, Darfur...

**DUJARRIC:** But I think the way to see it as the Secretary-General said reform is not our business but it's one of our priorities so we can do our business better and we can address these crisis whether it's Darfur, whether it it's the Avian Flu...

**JENKINS:** Let's talk about Darfur. We'll get to Avian Flu in a moment actually, Darfur is a situation where the Americans say this is an ongoing genocide and yet at the end day, nothing, the world community is not stopping it – the rapes, killings are still going on we speak.

**DUJARRIC:** That's a statement I won't disagree with. It's partly our job to make sure that the world community, the international community knows what's going on. We are also very focused on the humanitarian work we do in Darfur – to bringing help to the internally displaced, to those who suffer from the scourge of war. The Secretary-General has been beating the drums on Darfur, he has been there repeatedly.

**JENKINS:** What's the problem? Why is he meeting resistance? Why isn't there anything happening?

**DUJARRIC:** Well, it's an age-old problem. We've laid out the problem, he has tried his best to drum up support for the African Union force, which is doing a terrific job with the limited resources it has on the ground.

**JENKINS:** There are half as many troops as there are aid workers...

**DUJARRIC:** I'm not disagreeing with you. These are resources that we, the Secretariat, cannot bring to the African Union.

**JENKINS:** I guess the problem is that the Secretariat, the Secretary-General might try and draw attention to these things but if at the end of the day, things don't move, then it is the Secretariat that gets the blame that nothing is happening.

**DUJARRIC:** Again it goes back to the problem of what exactly the United Nations is and what do people understand it to be. Is it the Secretary-General? Is it the Security Council? Is it the general membership as a whole?

**JENKINS:** We were talking a little earlier about the reforms and I mentioned both the new Peace-building Commission but we didn't talk about the Human Rights Council. How do you read the situation there? How do you think it's going?

**DUJARRIC:** It is key, key that we do get a new Human Rights Council, a new Human Rights body that has the credibility that it needs because one of the images, the issues people think about when they think about the United Nations is human rights and we need to have the tools and a council that is equipped to deal with these issues.

**JENKINS:** Does the Secretary-General feel confident on that front? Does he think he'll be able to reform the Human Rights Commission?

**DUJARRIC:** He remains very hopeful. It's not up to him to reform it. He has laid out the proposal, it is up to the membership to act. I understand they will be meeting on this in January.

**JENKINS:** Why don't you talk to me a little bit about some of the peacekeeping work that's going on around the world? We've touched on Darfur. How do you see the

situation in the Congo? It has often been referred to in the past as Africa's world war and yet the rest of the world doesn't really know what's going on down there.

**DUJARRIC:** I think in terms of UN Peacekeeping, if you look at the DRC, Sierra Leone, they show, especially the DRC, they show a much more robust UN Peacekeeping. With our help and assistance, the Congolese have just voted in a referendum, an election on the new constitution, which went off extremely peacefully. In a country, that's the size of many European countries, if not larger, it shows that the U.N. can work, the U.N. Peacekeeping can work when we have a united council behind us, when the international community supports the process as a whole.

**JENKINS:** Well, you bring me what I suspect might be our last question. Just recently the Secretary-General said his biggest regret in the whole of his time as a Secretary-General was that he wasn't able to do more to avoid the war in Iraq. He put everything back to that. Do you think that's going to continue to be a major focus? Is it going to dominate his tenure? Is he going to be judged, is he going to be thought of in terms of the Iraq war?

**DUJARRIC:** It is obviously a momentous event in the young century that we're in and it is clear that it'll always come up when we talk about the Secretary-General's legacy as we move forward. But it'll be the center of it if people make it the center of it. The Secretary-General's tenure up to now is much more than Iraq, it is bringing the United Nations closer to the people. It's bringing civil society in. It's bringing problems that we are seeing such as AIDS and health problems to the forefront.

**JENKINS:** Stephen, I want to break here to look at some other aspects of the U.N.'s work including the looming fight against Avian Influenza. Stephen Dujarric thank you for being with us. I'll be right back.

### **INSERT 3: Year in Review Part 3**

#### **VIDEO AND AUDIO IN**

**NARRATION:** Another disaster is lurking in the shadows: Avian Influenza or Bird Flu. And just like an earthquake, nobody can tell when and where it will happen. More than 150 million birds have died or been killed to prevent the spread of the disease. UN

agencies try to contain bird flu at the farm gate, like here in Cambodia, through constant testing and education.

**DUCK FARMER:** I count my ducks every day. If something happens to them, I will lose everything.

**NARRATION:** So far over 60 people, like this young girl in Indonesia, have died of bird flu. If the virus could get transmitted between humans, an epidemic worse than the Spanish flu of 1918 could spread the world in a matter of days. UN Influenza Coordinator Dr. David Nabarro.

**NABARRO:** I believe that the work we are doing in the next few months on prevention and preparedness will make the difference.

**NARRATION:** The AIDS pandemic has entered a new phase. More people have become infected with HIV or died of AIDS than ever before. But there is hope. In Haiti, Malia Jean's life was shattered when she was diagnosed with HIV. She could not afford anti-retroviral medication to prolong her life. Now she gets free treatment as part of an initiative by the Global Fund to Fight Aids. More than 50 countries have doubled the number of Aids patients in treatment this year – an important step to slow the spread of the disease.

Another sign of hope is the face of Kimani Maruge. At 84 he is the world's oldest elementary school student. He only started to go to school when Kenya provided free education for all a year ago. Now he wants to urge world leaders to fulfill the Millennium Goal to provide education for all children by 2015.

**HEADMISTRESS:** He says he has learned a lot, because he is now able to read and write and count his few shillings.

**NARRATION:** Soon perhaps every school will be able to afford a computer. A laptop that needs no batteries and only costs a hundred dollars made its debut at the World Summit of the Information Society in Tunis. There experts were looking for ways to narrow the technological gap between rich and poor countries. The United Nations at 60 is not a static memorial to the aspirations of an earlier age. It is a work in progress, imperfect, as all human endeavours must be, but rising to the challenges of a complex and changing world.

**VIDEO AND AUDIO OUT**

**JENKINS:** And on that optimistic positive note we are out of time complete today's programme. I'm Tony Jenkins, wishing you all courage, strength and good fortune for the rest of 2006. Thank you for being with us on this special 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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