



UNDEF BOARD

ENDORSES SHORT LIST OF 73 NEW PROJECTS

UNDEF's Sixth Round of Funding comes as momentous efforts for democratization continue to unfold in countries around the world, while challenges old and new evolve in others. The UNDEF Advisory Board met on 19 April and endorsed a short list of 73 projects in Africa, the Arab world, Asia, the Americas and Eastern Europe, estimated at a total of approximately 15 million dollars. The list is now subject to approval by the Secretary-General, and to the successful negotiation of a project document between UNDEF and each short-listed applicant. Due to the high volume of proposals -- 2,868 for the Sixth Round, the second highest number in the history of the Fund -- UNDEF is able to contact, in mid-2012, only those applicants whose proposals are short-listed.

The proposals originate from organizations in 105 countries, the vast majority local civil society groups in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean. This response will add further to the considerable growth the Fund has experienced since its creation in 2005. In its first five Rounds of Funding, UNDEF supported more than 400 projects in a total of some 150 countries. The initiatives all reflect a focus on strengthening the voice of civil society, thus concentrating on the demand side of democracy, rather than the supply side. With 73 countries on the short list, the total number of projects funded by UNDEF will rise to about 480.

The short list is the product of a thorough process of assessment, quality vetting, due diligence and lessons learned from previous Rounds. The proposals were first vetted by a team of six independent international assessors, combining some 60 years of programme and project experience.

Each proposal was scored against 10 set criteria:

- Promotes the objectives of UNDEF
- Draws on the United Nations comparative advantage
- Will have a significant impact
- Will encourage inclusiveness
- Will enhance gender equality
- Has strong prospects for successful implementation
- Has a strong track record
- Is technically sound in conception and presentation
- Represents good value for money
- Has strong prospects of sustainability beyond the project duration.

JEFFREY WRIGHT MAKES OPENING STATEMENT PAGE 2

This assessment narrowed down the list to about 240 proposals. To narrow down the list further, comments were sought by Experts of the UNDEF Advisory Board, UN Resident Coordinators, and the UNDEF

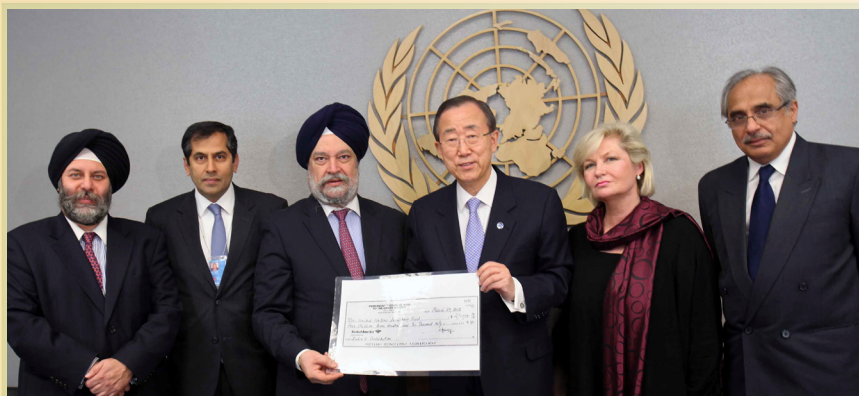
Programme Consultative Group: the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Peacebuilding Support Office, the UN Development Programme, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and UN Women.

Based on this collective input, the UNDEF Secretariat produced a short-list of 73 project proposals. 31 per cent are in Africa, followed by 27 per cent in Asia. The Arab world has an unprecedented 15 per cent -- even more than the year before.

Broken down by key activity, 27 per cent are in the area of community development, followed by 22 per cent in youth; 18 per cent in women's empowerment; 15 per cent in media; 15 per cent in rule of law and human rights; and 3 per cent in strengthening instrumentalities of Government. Once the short list is approved by the Secretary-General, the proposal moves into the final stage in the selection process: the negotiation of a project document, in effect the contract between UNDEF and the grantee. This negotiation requires the applicant to provide a more elaborated project design, and involves detailed input from both UNDEF and the applicant, as well as scrutiny and due diligence enquiries by UNDEF. Only upon successful conclusion of the project document, and its approval by the UN Controller, will the project proposal formally be approved for funds disbursement.

The UNDEF Board for 2012-2013 brings together UNDEF's seven biggest donors -- the United States, India, Sweden, Germany, Australia, Spain and France; six countries reflecting geographical diversity and a commitment to democratic principles -- Jamaica, Lithuania, Tanzania, Timor-Leste, Tunisia and Uruguay; three individuals -- Professor Michael Doyle (Chair of the Board), of Columbia University, Ms. Shazia Rafi, Secretary-General of Parliamentarians for Global Action, and Mr. Jeffrey Wright, Actor and Founder of Taia Peace Foundation; and two civil society organizations -- Third World Network and Women's Environment and Development Organization.

INSIDE UNDEF



INDIA'S AMBASSADOR
PRESENTS
UN SECRETARY-GENERAL
WITH CHECK OF ALMOST
FIVE MILLION FOR
UNDEF

India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Hardeep Singh Puri, presented the Secretary-General with a cheque for 4.71 million dollars for the UN Democracy Fund on 30 March 2012, bringing to nearly 30 million dollars India's total contribution since the Fund's inception seven years ago. As the world's largest democracy and one of the original founders of UNDEF, India thus remains UNDEF's second largest donor.

Also present at the handover were Manjeev Singh Puri, India's Deputy Permanent Representative, Pavan Kapoor, Director-General of the UN Department at India's Ministry of External Affairs, Vijay Nambiar, outgoing Chef de Cabinet to the Secretary-General, and Annika Savill, Deputy Executive Head of UNDEF.

The Secretary-General thanked India for its consistent support to UNDEF, including its constructive work as a member of the Fund's Advisory Board, UNDEF's main governing body. He said he was delighted to receive the contribution from "the world's greatest democracy", noting: "Such a level of contributions is easy to pledge, but very difficult to implement.". He noted the added importance of supporting UNDEF at this crucial time for democratization efforts in the Arab world and elsewhere.

Ambassador Singh said UNDEF's "fame is spreading far and wide" and India was proud to have been "first through the gate" in supporting the Fund as an effective instrument for promoting democratic values and processes. The Fund, which was initiated through a partnership between India and the United States, was launched by then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in 2005.

JEFFREY WRIGHT MAKES OPENING STATEMENT AS UNDEF BOARD MEMBER

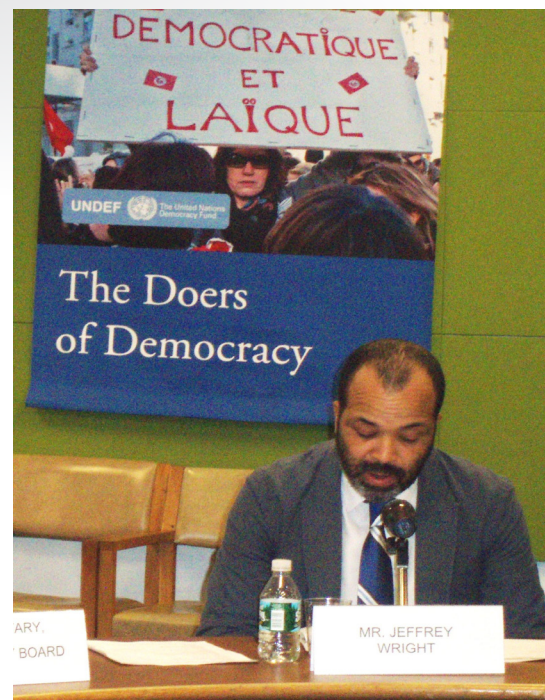
Award-winning actor and activist Jeffrey Wright, who joined the UNDEF Advisory Board in 2012, [spoke](#) at the Board meeting of 19 April, highlighting the role of UNDEF in nurturing the seeds of democracy from inside.

"My work in Sierra Leone over the past 10 years has led me here," Mr. Wright said in reference to his more than 10 years of engagement in Sierra Leone, including the creation of the Taia Peace Foundation, and his experience of traditional

forms of local democracy there. "The relevance to my UNDEF involvement was born out of this initial interaction with rural civil society and with the subsequent interactions that have become central to the endeavors of our group." He noted that "the role of an entity like UNDEF need not be to impose or introduce new ideas but to nurture and enable the democratic manifestations of old ones, just as it would be more insightful, useful and sustainable to augment the existing skills of local farmers than to import foodstuffs in response to food insecurity."

"Recent events in the Maghreb and elsewhere suggest that in many parts of the world, there exists a pent-up democratic impulse waiting to be unleashed", Mr. Wright added "UNDEF's role must be to facilitate scope for that transition before a sense of hopelessness pushes courageous civilians like the late Mohammed Bouazizi to take matters into their own hands in tragic and desperate ways. UNDEF's establishment could not have been better timed."

Other Board members, including the Governments of Germany, Jamaica, Sweden, and Uruguay welcomed Mr. Wright's role on the Board and looked forward to his work to raise the profile of UNDEF's work. Widely acclaimed for his versatility on stage, screen and television, Mr. Wright has played prominent roles in productions ranging from James Bond movies and *Angels in America* to the electoral thriller *Ides of March* and the Academy Award-nominated *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*.



[Click here for full speech](#)
[Click here for video](#)

NEWS FROM THE FIELD



EMPOWERING LIBERIA'S YOUTH AND WOMEN IN THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

Although recent Liberian elections have generally been pronounced free and fair by the international community, studies show that even more than a decade after the end of armed conflict, some citizens vote out of fear and ignorance. This is particularly true of rural women and youth, many of whom are illiterate and have no access to civic or voter education. This, in turn, contributes to wider governance challenges and corruption.

This is why UNDEF funds a project to provide voters' education and capacity building among rural women and youth while training them in advocacy, leadership, communication and lobbying. The initiative, implemented by Volunteers to Support International Efforts in Developing Africa, works with local civil society groups in each county of Liberia to build strong grass-root coalitions, and works to support young elected officials youths and women members of parliament in influencing legislation. In this way, the project strives to open up the process of law-making to public scrutiny, and promote overall citizen participation in the democratic process.

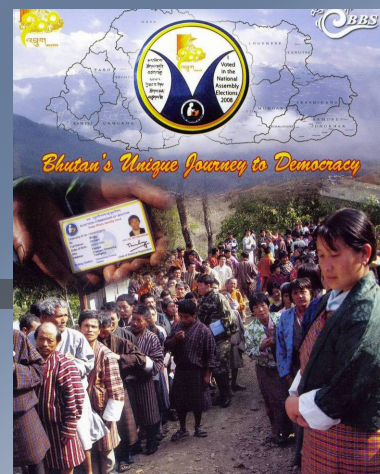
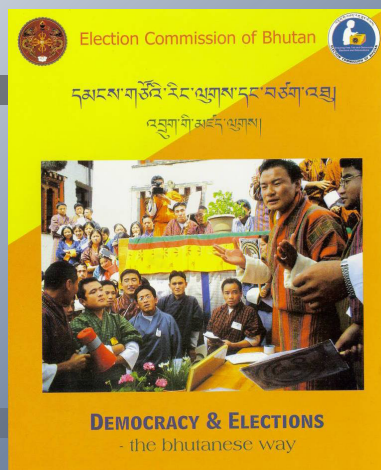
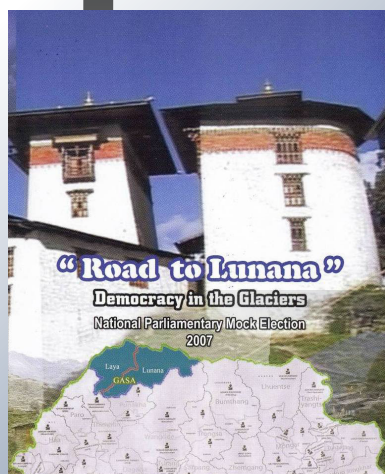
Dialogue pour la réconciliation au Burundi

Le conseil interconfessionnel du Burundi (CICB), avec l'appui du Fond des Nations Unies pour la Démocratie, est en train de mettre en œuvre un projet visant à promouvoir le dialogue démocratique pour une réconciliation durable, en faisant référence aux causes et conséquences de l'instabilité démocratique et des conflits violents du pays. Le projet s'intitule « Surmonter les obstacles à une gouvernance démocratique et la réconciliation au Burundi », et s'efforce de consolider la démocratie et la capacité de gouvernance; promouvoir l'éducation civique et les valeurs démocratiques ; et soutenir les processus de réconciliation qui encourage la coexistence pacifique.

Religions for Peace 



NEWS FROM THE FIELD

BUILDING A CULTURE OF
DEMOCRACY IN BHUTAN

How to engage young people in one of the world's youngest democracies? Bhutan, a nation of 650,000 people, elected a new government in 2008 to replace a century-old monarchy. It is now striving to develop a democratic culture underpinned by a public educated in democratic concepts. This requires an independent media, a public space for debate, and an understanding among citizens of their own role in a democracy. UNDEF funds a project to strengthen civil society discourse, enhance the role of media, and conduct research, seminars, publications and activities to educate all sections of society in the culture of democracy. It strives to introduce media literacy to build critical thinking skills. One key activity is training students to use film to tell stories of social and political change on topics ranging from poverty and climate change to the life of migrant workers. The project is implemented by the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy.

EMPOWERING

BLOGGERS AND CITIZEN JOURNALISTS
IN THE ARAB WORLD

In nine Arab countries, UNDEF funds a project to train and support bloggers and citizen journalists to advance freedom of expression and human rights. The initiative, implemented by the Tunis-based Institut Arabe des Droits de l'Homme, works with writers in Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, and Yemen, by holding regional workshops and online training in human rights instruments and national legislation on press freedom. This is to be followed by the creation of a network of bloggers and citizen journalists for internet coverage of developments in human rights and democratization, with an emphasis on vulnerable and marginalized groups. A public event will be organized to present the 10 best products, with awards for the top three. In parallel, research will be conducted to analyze cause and effect in the emergence of bloggers and citizen journalists as triggers of the Arab spring, as well as their role in ongoing democratic transition.



NEWS FROM THE FIELD

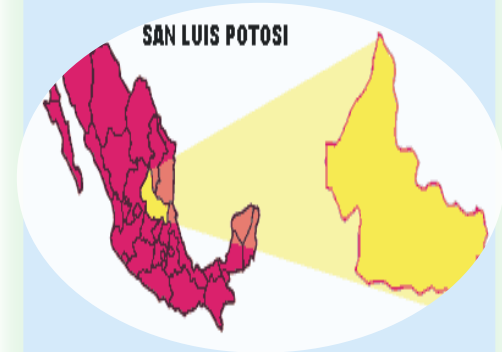


TRAINING JUSTICE PROFESSIONALS TO DEFEND HUMAN RIGHTS BEFORE THE INTER-AMERICAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights recently underwent extensive reform, including new rules of procedure to improve victims' access to legal representation. The new rules facilitate procedural equality between parties, increase transparency, and advance more consolidated participation by the alleged victims. Those without access to legal representation are represented by pro bono justice professionals rather than, as before, by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights or by civil society organizations with specific agendas.

Against this background, UNDEF funds a project to train justice professionals to litigate before the Court. Implemented by the [Human Rights Centre](#) of the Law School at the University of Chile, the project enables professionals to act as Inter-American defenders, offering training, procedural manuals, and ongoing support. So far 60 the project has trained 60 professionals, with continuing advice from the Human Rights Centre; published a manual of the Inter-American System's new rules of procedure; and conducted a study assessing more than 500 cases of victims' legal representation, by evaluating the access to justice within the system, its relationship with the levels of transparency, and access to information.

BUILDING LOCAL CITIZENSHIP FOR WOMEN AND YOUTH IN MEXICO



In the Mexican state of San Luis Potosí, UNDEF funds a project to build civic participation to promote democracy and human rights, with an emphasis on youth, women and civil society.

The project works to establish observatories for youth and women's rights; draft and lobby in State Congress for legislation to develop youth and civil society activities; hold a state forum for building a citizenship agenda; conduct workshops to generate and strengthen citizenship capacity; publish a handbook on participatory citizenship; publish a diagnosis of youth to elaborate legislative state framework; and hold a state forum for women's rights open to academics, civil society, the Commission of Human Rights and Gender Equity of the State Congress and others.

Mikiko Sawanishi, UNDEF Deputy Executive Head for Programmes, visited the initiative in April 2012 to meet with local leaders, exchange best practices and monitor project activities, which are implemented by the local civil society organization Educación y Ciudadanía.

LES JEUNES DE PROVINCE POUR LA RECONSTRUCTION POLITIQUE HAÏTI



Il est aujourd'hui admis que la reconstruction d'Haïti -- après le terrible séisme que le pays a connu en 2010 -- ne peut pas être que physique. Elle doit être aussi et surtout intellectuelle, psychique. Mieux encore, il incombe à chacun des acteurs de travailler à la refondation de l'Etat-Nation. C'est dans cette perspective que s'inscrit le projet "Education civique des jeunes de province pour la reconstruction d'Haïti" financé par le FNUD.

Mis en place par l'Association des Parents et des Professeurs d'Ecole de Liancourt, APPEL, le projet a pour but de redynamiser l'éducation civique des jeunes vivant en milieu rural et ceux victimes du séisme qui sont de retour dans leur village du département de l'Artibonite en Haïti. Le projet entend contribuer à la reconstruction politique d'Haïti en utilisant les canaux de communication existant comme les radios et télévisions communautaires, les magazines culturels et les murs de façades. Il s'attardera à impliquer des enseignants évoluant en milieu rural, des leaders religieux, des parents d'élèves et aménagera des espaces de rencontres et de débats avec des élus locaux, des parlementaires, des représentants du pouvoir exécutif. Il mettra en place des séminaires de formation sur des thèmes tels que la gestion de conflits, la santé et l'hygiène, l'environnement et les droits de l'homme et intégrera l'éducation civique dans les grilles de programmation des médias locaux. Le projet souhaite augmenter la participation des jeunes ruraux aux processus électoraux locaux et nationaux et aussi renforcer l'offre de séminaires de formation pour des formateurs en éducation civique au niveau du département de l'Artibonite.



WORTH READING



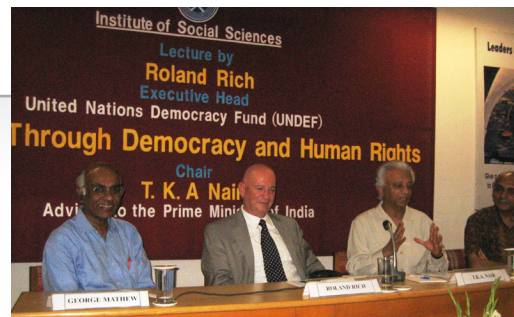
UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's [spoke](#) at Jamia Millia Islamia University in New Delhi in April, highlighting India's role as the world's largest democracy, as an emerging economic leader, and as a superpower on the information superhighway. "You are a beacon for the world — proving that democracy and development are one and the same path... You are a co-founder and second-largest contributor to the United Nations Democracy Fund."

BAN KI-MOON

HIGHLIGHTS

INDIA'S ROLE IN DEMOCRACY AND IN UNDEF

'HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY ARE THE MEANS BY WHICH PEOPLE GAIN DIGNITY'



UNDEF Executive Head Roland Rich gave a [lecture](#) in New Delhi in March 2012 on "Dignity Through Democracy And Human Rights". Hosted by the Institute of Social Sciences, the session was led by Mr. T.K.A. Nair, Advisor to the Prime Minister's Secretariat and former Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, with the participation of Institute's Chairman George Mathew and Director Ash Narain Roy. "The concept of human rights and the universalisation of democracy are not aims in themselves," Mr. Rich argued. "We do not worship human rights, we do not worship democracy. We believe they offer the means by which every individual will attain dignity. Dignity allows people to pursue their freedom and also have economic opportunity. We need to make human rights relevant to people by arguing that this is the means for them to achieve dignity. It applies to people all over the world – whether they are Chinese peasants who do not want their land to be confiscated by corrupt officials, or Roma people in Europe who want to have their voices heard and not be marginalized. Human rights and democracy are the means by which people gain dignity."

KEEPING UP WITH UNDEF IN LAOS

UNDEF's first project in Laos works to empower civil social organizations to contribute meaningfully to the country's development and good governance. The project, implemented by the Kenan Institute Asia, publishes a [newsletter](#) every two months during the project cycle to keep participants informed about the training timetable and overall progress of the project.



At an UNDEF-funded conference in Yemen on the occasion of International Day for Women, Prime Minister Mohammed Salim Baseundwah [said](#). "The most efficient leaders of Yemen were women, and I know that Yemen will be better off with a woman leader." He added: "I am saying this not as a compliment but because I have seen how much Yemeni women have suffered and yet handled the challenges with strength and wisdom." The conference was held as part of an UNDEF-funded project implemented by the Yemeni Women's Union which works to engage women and young people in advancing Yemen's democratic experiment, and measurably increase women's voting participation and candidacies local and parliamentary elections.

FOR WOMEN AND CHANGE IN YEMEN