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NEWSLETTER no.

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“WE ARE ENTERING THE NEW MILLENNIUM THROUGH A GATE OF FIRE.”

“I think we all have a sense today of having come to a turning point in history. We felt that with the end of the cold war and the beginning of the new millennium – and then last September 11 – we found ourselves entering that new millennium through a gate of fire, such as none of us ever wished to see. The forces of envy, despair and terror in today’s world are stronger than many of us realized. But they are not invincible. Against them, we must bring a message of solidarity, of mutual respect and, above all, of hope.”

- Kofi Annan

As the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan addressed the 32nd World Economic Forum (WEF) in its closing session, he made a direct reference to global terrorism, warning the forum that unless they did more to alleviate poverty and ill health in the world, they risked provoking further resentment and terrorism.

It was an appropriate message to the group of about 1100 chief executives of the world’s leading corporations, some heads of state, heads of international institutions and agencies, hundreds of academicians and some 300 NGOs. They discussed the theme, “Leadership in Fragile Times: A Vision for a Shared Future.”

The WEF had invited Mr. Kofi Annan, a recognized leader in our fragile times, who with passion, transparency and courage shared the vision and goals of the United Nations. He urged the business leaders at this “turning point in history” to be part of the “solution” in the war against world poverty, and urged them to join the UN Global Compact, a platform for promoting good corporate practices in order to help stem war, disease and technological stagnation in developing countries.

You know well that you are enormously privileged, compared to the great majority of your fellow human beings, both in your standard of living and in the power and influence you wield. You know that you are sharing this planet with well over a billion people who

are denied the very minimum requirements of human dignity, and with four or five billion whose choices in life are narrow compared to yours. Left alone in their poverty, these countries are all too likely to collapse, or relapse, into conflict and anarchy, a menace to their neighbors and potentially—as the events of September 11 so brutally reminded us—a threat to global security.

(full text: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2002/SGSM8115.doc.htm>).

A Season for Nonviolence

Among the many initiatives of NGOs, the Season for Non-violence is highly commendable. It was launched at the United Nations on 30 January 1998. It is also called the Gandhi-King Season for Non-violence, commemorating the two champions of nonviolence of our times. It begins every year with the anniversary of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi on January 30th and goes till the memorial of the death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on April 4th. Log on to www.agnt.org and <http://www.igc.org/habitat/snv-2002/> to discover the motivating force of the Season for Nonviolence. You may want to join or pass it on.

WHAT DOES THE UNITED NATIONS DO ABOUT TERRORISM?

The Security Council, as the principal UN organ dealing with international peace and security, has long been involved in the fight against terrorism. There are 12 major multilateral conventions and protocols related to States responsibilities for combating terrorism. But many States are not yet party to these legal instruments or are not yet implementing them. Here are some of the conventions:

- 1963 Tokyo Convention on offenses and certain other acts committed on board aircraft (171 States parties as of 17 September 2001)
- 1970 The Hague Convention for the suppression of unlawful seizure of aircrafts (174 States parties)
- 1971 Montreal Convention for the suppression of unlawful acts against the safety of civil aviation (175 States parties)
- 1979 New York International Convention against the taking of hostages (96 States parties)
- 1997 New York International Convention for the suppression of terrorist bombings (26 States parties)
- 1999 New York International Convention for the suppression of the financing of terrorism (4 States parties)

In 1999, the UN General Assembly established a Terrorism Prevention Branch, within the Vienna-based United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime prevention. The Branch researches terrorism trends and assists countries in upgrading their capacities to investigate and prevent terrorist attacks. Their website (www.undcp.org/terrorism_conventions.html) provides not only the complete texts of all 12 international instruments relating to terrorism but also on Trafficking in Human beings, Corruption and Organized Crime.

Immediately following the September 11 incident, the Security Council passed the following resolutions: (for more log on to www.un.org/terrorism/securitycouncil)

- Resolution 1368: condemned “unequivocally” the terrorist attack against the United States and called on all States to work together urgently to bring the perpetrators to justice.
- Resolution 1333: demanded that Afghanistan’s Taliban authorities act swiftly to close all camps where terrorists are trained.
- Resolution 1269: condemned all acts of terrorism as criminal and unjustifiable, and called on member States to adopt specific measures.
- Resolution 1267: demanded that the Taliban turn over Usama bin Laden to appropriate authorities so that he could be brought to justice.

Deciding What to Do

The UN General Assembly, at the opening of its 56th session, strongly condemned the “heinous acts of terrorism,” expressed condolences and solidarity with the people and government of the USA, and called for action to enhance international cooperation to eradicate terrorism (see Resolution A/RES56/1, <http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/resguide/r56all1.htm>). During the high level general debate, Member States and observer groups spoke in “one voice” against terrorism and the conditions that spawn it. Secretary General Kofi Annan set the tone with his moving remarks:

When a family is under attack, it is in their common house that its members gather to decide what to do. One is tempted to say that we must focus all our energies on the struggle against

terrorism. Yet if we do so, we should give the terrorists a kind of victory... In short, my friends, the agenda of peace, development and human rights set forth in the Millennium Declaration is no less pressing. If anything, it has taken on a new urgency.

Vivat International (VI) is committed to working to combat terrorism in the aspects of prevention and peace-building. Poverty eradication, sustainable development, promotion of human rights, disarmament, and most of all, making ourselves into personal and community instruments of peace—these are the gateways to lasting freedom, democracy and security.

Here are just a few of the outstanding thoughts and sentiments expressed when 42 Heads of State or Government, 9 Deputy Prime Ministers and 96 Foreign Ministers gathered to decide what to do about terrorism (UN Chronicle No. 4, 2001, pp 7-17).

Mahawa Bangoura Camara, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guinea:

Poverty and illiteracy are fertile ground for the propagation of extremism and fanaticism. The rich countries should listen to the poorer nations and support them in their development efforts.

Abdelaziz Belkhadem, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Algeria

Islam, a religion of peace and tolerance, cannot be associated with terrorism. The anti-terrorist struggle is not aimed at any country, religion or civilization.

Roberto Rojas Lopez, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica:

When faced with cruel fear and hatred, we must raise up the flag of civilization, tolerance and brotherhood. Before irrational violence, we must take up the arms of reason, law and order.

Felipe Perez Roque, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba

Only under the leadership of the UN will we be able to defeat terrorism. Cooperation, and not war, is the way. The coordination of actions, and not imposition, is the method.

P.J. Patterson, Prime Minister and Minister of Defense of Jamaica

In our response to terrorism, we need to be mindful that the time has come for us to inaugurate a new era of peace; not simply through preventing war but by eliminating the causes that give rise to strife and violence.

Jozias Van Aartsen, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

Through our tears, we should discover opportunity. Through our bitterness, necessity. We must turn compassion into solidarity – turn solidarity into common action.

General Hugo Chavez Frias, President of Venezuela

The fight against terrorism should be transformed into a war against war, the achievement of peace.

TOWARDS THE “MONTERREY CONSENSUS”

The International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD)

Monterrey Consensus was the name given to the final draft document of the delegates of the fourth and last FfD PrepCom held at the UN, New York, from January 14 to 27, 2002. It will serve as the basis for the final document of the forthcoming conference to be held in Monterrey, Mexico, from 18 to 22 March 2002. The broadest goals are to halve poverty by 2015 and promote the development of a fully inclusive and equitable global economic system. International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) representatives present at the FfD PrepCom IV assured the delegates that they would actively participate in efforts to reverse the increasing polarization between haves and have-nots.

NGOs’ Voices at FfD PrepCom IV

During the NGO Press Conference on January 22, the spokesperson of the NGOs stated that early commitments to reform the international financial and economic systems are being whittled away as Governments cling to the policies of the Washington Consensus (deregulation, privatization, cutbacks in social services, trade and financial liberalization, etc.). On the most burning issue on the table, the increase of ODA, the NGOs consistently urged the doubling of ODA and underscored the need to increase overall ODA to a minimum of 0.7% of the Gross National Product (GNP) of industrial countries as set by the General Assembly 30 years ago. For the first time, the NGOs were given the

opportunity to intervene on paragraphs contained in the outcome draft. Indeed, partnership in policy-making is becoming more and more a reality within the UN dynamics.

Vivat International FfD Involvements

VI took part in preparing the “talking points” on behalf of the Sub-committee on Eradication of Poverty and joined with CIDSE (Catholic International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity) and Caritas Internationalis in the preparation and submission of a joint state-

ment: “Towards More Coherence in Global Governance.”

In Monterrey, Lawrence Correa will be joined by two representatives of VI-Mexico: Aliciela Cudiamat, SSpS and Donald D’Souza. VI has been accredited to this particular conference by the FfD Accreditation Committee and will be participating in its own right for the first time.

Note: Documents mentioned can be found in the section ‘Financing for Development on the VI homepage: www.vivatinternational.org

WORLD SUMMIT for SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (WSSD)

The UN Headquarters in New York hosted the WSSD PrepCom II, from 28 January to 8 February, 2002. The main agenda was a comprehensive review of progress achieved in the implementation of Agenda 21 and other Rio outcomes.

NGO collaboration in WSSD PrepCom II

For the first time, the NGO Statement was published as an official UN document and distributed to the delegates. Again, this is a step forward towards partnership. Some NGOs who underlined the importance of education for sustainable development received no enthusiasm and the issue was left out of the agenda for the WSSD process.

VIVAT International and the WSSD

VI has obtained accreditation to participate in the forthcoming summit to be held in Johannesburg from 26 August to 4 September 2002, as well as in all the PrepComs. VI members involved in sustainable development or having expertise in the issues to be taken up at the conference are highly encouraged to send their reports and opinions to Lawrence Correa (larry@vivatinternational.org) for advocacy and also to the VI Newsletter.

Note: documents mentioned are available in the section ‘Sustainable Development’ on the VI homepage: www.vivatinternational.org

NEWS ITEMS

VIVAT International endorses “THE EARTH CHARTER”

The Earth Charter is a declaration of fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable and peaceful global society (full text: www.vivatinternational.org, under sustainable development). It is the product of a decade long endeavor by both experts and representatives of grassroots communities. VIVAT International signed the charter on February 5, 2002. VI members and others are highly encouraged to download it and propagate participation in the Earth Charter Initiative.

Committee on Social Development

Lawrence Correa has been elected Chairperson of the Committee on Social Development (CSD), one of the main committees under the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (CONGO) at the UN. He will hold the position for two years.

Upcoming UN Events

3 Mar, New York:	Annual NGO Consultation: “Gender, Peace and Security” (www.congo.org)
4-15 Mar, New York	46 th Session, Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) (www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/46sess.htm)
8-10 May, New York	UN Special Session on Children (www.unicef.org/specialsession/about/index.html)