


**United Nations Affairs-Syrian Orthodox Church in America.**

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# Holy Wisdom

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**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S  
STATEMENT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
New York, 21 March 2005**

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,

Thank you for allowing me to present to you, in person, the five-year progress report that you requested from me, on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration.

The main message of that report is that the aims of the Declaration can be achieved, but only if you, the member states, are willing to adopt a package of specific, concrete decisions this year.

Some of those decisions are so important that they need to be taken at the level of heads of state and government.

It is therefore very fortunate that your heads of state and government have agreed to come here for a summit meeting in September.

I am giving you my report six months ahead of that meeting, so that your governments have ample time to consider it.

My hope is that world leaders, when they arrive here in September, will be ready to take the decisions that are needed.

And I hope they will adopt them as a package.

In any such list of proposals, there are items which seem more important to some than to others, and items about which some have reservations, while others consider them essential.

The temptation is to treat the list as an à la carte menu, and select only those that you especially fancy.

In this case, that approach will not work. What I am proposing amounts to a comprehensive strategy.

It gives equal weight and attention to the three great purposes of this Organization: development, security and human rights, all of which must be underpinned by the rule of law.

Some states may think that we should give priority to one of those purposes over the others; and within each of them, many states will have their particular preferences.

But I do not need to remind you that this is an Organization of 191 member states.

We all know that global problems can best be solved if all states work together.

We must also accept that that will only happen if, within the common strategy, all states see their specific concerns addressed.

I argue in the report, and I am profoundly convinced, that the threats which face us are of equal concern to all.

I have called the report "Larger Freedom", because I believe those words from our Charter convey the idea that development, security and human rights go hand in hand.

In a world of inter-connected threats and opportunities, it is in each country's self-interest that all of these challenges are addressed effectively.

The cause of larger freedom can only be advanced if nations work together; and the United Nations can only help if it is remoulded as an effective instrument of their common purpose.

You may or may not find my argument convincing.

But please remember, in any event, that if you need the help of other states to achieve your objectives, you must also be willing to help them achieve their objectives.

That is why I urge you to treat my proposals as a single package.

Excellencies,

Let me now briefly describe what I propose.

The report is divided into four main sections.

The first three set out priorities for action in the fields of development, security and human rights, respectively, while the last deals with global institutions – mainly the United Nations itself, which must be, as the Millennium Declaration says, "a more effective instrument" for pursuing those priorities.

The first part, entitled "Freedom from Want", proposes specific decisions for implementing the bargain struck three years ago, in Monterrey, between developed and developing countries.

I ask every developing country to adopt and begin to implement, by next year, a comprehensive national strategy bold enough to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015; and to mobilise all its resources behind that strategy.

Specifically, I ask developing countries to improve their governance, uphold the rule of law, combat corruption and adopt an inclusive approach to development, making space for civil society and the private sector to play their full part.

The challenge of development is too big for governments to face it alone.

And I ask every developed country to support these strategies, by increasing the amount it spends on development and debt relief, and doing whatever it can to level the playing-field for world trade.

Specifically, I ask developed countries to commit themselves, this year, to complete the Doha round of trade negotiations no later than 2006, and as a first step to give immediate duty-free and quota-free market access to all exports from the Least Developed Countries.

I also ask them to commit themselves to reach, by 2015, the target of spending 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product on official development assistance. T

his increase must be "front-loaded" through an international finance facility, since if we are to reach the Goals by 2015 we need the increased spending right away.

For the longer term, other innovative sources of finance must be considered.

All governments must be accountable for fulfilling their part of this bargain, both to their own peoples and to each other.

I stress that development must be sustainable.

All our efforts will be in vain if their results are reversed by continued degradation of the environment and depletion of our natural resources.

I am glad that the Kyoto Protocol has now entered into force, albeit three years after the deadline set by the Millennium Declaration, but I also note that it extends only until 2012, and that some major emitters of carbon remain outside it.

I ask all states to agree that scientific advances and technological innovation must be mobilised now to develop tools for mitigating climate change, and that a more inclusive international framework must be developed for stabilising greenhouse gas emissions beyond 2012, with broader participation by all major emitters and both developed and developing countries.

And I recommend that member states consider building on one of this Organization's clear strengths, by setting up a \$1 billion voluntary fund to allow us to bring rapid and effective relief to the victims of sudden disasters, whether natural or man-made.

We were able to do this after the recent tsunami thanks to the rapid response from donors, but we should be ready to do it whenever and wherever an emergency occurs.

### **Annan Welcomes US Task Force Report on UN Reform**

15 June -- Secretary-General Kofi Annan welcomes the release of the final report the US Institute for Peace task force on UN Reform and its conclusion that the United States has much to gain from a strong and effective United Nations. He supports many of the recommendations and believes that the task-force's call for a US commitment to work with other member-states and the UN staff is the best basis on which to pursue and achieve lasting reform.

### **Secretary-General: Dialogue on Korean Peninsula Is Important**

15 June -- On the fifth anniversary of the Joint Declaration, signed on 15 June 2000 at the historic inter-Korean summit in Pyongyang, the Secretary-General reiterates the importance of continuing dialogue, exchanges and cooperation in all areas between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK). This is one of the guarantees for durable peace in the Peninsula, which he wishes to see as a united, prosperous and democratic region free of nuclear weapons.

## **Annan Applauds Start of Bougainville Government**

15 June -- In a statement issued earlier today, the Secretary-General applauded the people and the leaders of Papua New Guinea for achieving a major milestone in the Bougainville peace process, with the inauguration today of the first Autonomous Bougainville Government, following the internationally observed elections held in Bougainville over the course of the past few weeks.

## **Secretary-General Concerned About Forced Return of Rwandans**

14 June -- The Secretary-General, in a statement issued today, said he is seriously concerned about the forcible return of some 5,000 Rwandan asylum seekers to Rwanda, in violation of international conventions regulating the treatment of asylum seekers.

## **Annan Seeks Business Help for Millennium Goals**

14 June -- In Paris today, Secretary-General Kofi Annan attended a meeting of international business leaders focused on the business community's contributions to the Millennium Development Goals, telling them that the fight against extreme poverty, as enshrined in the Millennium Development Goals, is no longer a job for governments alone. That meeting was organized by the Global Compact.

## **Secretary-General Encouraged by Envoy's Meeting with Syrian President**

13 June -- Secretary-General Kofi Annan arrived in Paris this morning. Shortly after his arrival, he met with his Special Envoy Terje Roed-Larsen who briefed him on his meeting with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, which took place on Sunday. The Secretary-General issued a statement from Paris saying that Larsen had told him that his discussion with the Syrian President was constructive and helpful. The Secretary-General was encouraged by Roed-Larsen's report

## **Anti-Semitism a threat to people everywhere – Annan**

At UN seminar, Secretary-General issues a strong call for vigilance against anti-Semitism.

### **THROUGHOUT HISTORY ANTI-SEMITISM UNIQUE MANIFESTATION OF HATRED, INTOLERANCE, PERSECUTION SAYS SECRETARY-GENERAL IN REMARKS TO HEADQUARTERS SEMINAR**

Following are Secretary-General Kofi Annan's opening remarks at the Department of Public Information (DPI) Seminar on Anti-Semitism, in New York, 21 June:

Welcome to United Nations Headquarters.

In holding this series of seminars, the United Nations is true to one of the most sacred purposes of the world's peoples in whose name the Organization was founded: "to practise tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours".

No Muslim, no Jew, no Christian, no Hindu, no Buddhist -- no one who is true to the principles of any of the world's faiths, no one who claims a cultural, national or religious identity based on values such as truth, decency and justice -- can be neutral in the fight against intolerance.

Clearly, our success in this struggle depends on the effort we make to educate ourselves and our children. Intolerance can be unlearned. Tolerance and mutual respect have to be learnt.

Future seminars will deal with other specific groups against whom intolerance is directed in many parts of the world, notably Muslims and migrants -- groups which overlap, but each of which, sadly, encounters prejudice in its own right.

Yet anti-Semitism is certainly a good place to start because, throughout history, it has been a unique manifestation of hatred, intolerance and persecution. Anti-Semitism has flourished even in communities where Jews have never lived, and it has been a harbinger of discrimination against others. The rise of anti-Semitism anywhere is a threat to people everywhere. Thus, in fighting anti-Semitism we fight for the future of all humanity.

The Shoah, or Holocaust, was the epitome of this evil. Germany in the 1930s was a modern society, at the cutting edge of human technical advance and cultural achievement. Yet the Nazi regime that took power set out to exterminate Jews from the face of the earth.

We know -- and yet we still cannot really comprehend -- that six million innocent Jewish men, women and children were murdered, just because they were Jews. That is a crime against humanity which defies imagination.

The name "United Nations" was coined to describe the alliance fighting to end that barbarous regime, and our Organization came into being when the world had just learnt the full horror of the concentration and extermination camps. It is therefore rightly said that the United Nations emerged from the ashes of the Holocaust. And a human rights agenda that fails to address anti-Semitism denies its own history.

Worldwide revulsion at this terrible genocide was the driving force behind the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As the Preamble to the Declaration says, "disregard and contempt for human

rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind". And it was no coincidence that, on the day before it adopted the Declaration in 1948, the General Assembly had adopted the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

It is hard to believe that, 60 years after the tragedy of the Holocaust, anti-Semitism is once again rearing its head. But it is clear that we are witnessing an alarming resurgence of this phenomenon in new forms and manifestations. This time, the world must not, cannot be silent.

We owe it to ourselves, as well as to our Jewish brothers and sisters, to stand firmly against the particular tide of hatred that anti-Semitism represents. And that means we must be prepared to examine the nature of today's manifestations of anti-Semitism more closely, which is the purpose of your seminar.

Let us acknowledge that the United Nations' record on anti-Semitism has at times fallen short of our ideals. The General Assembly resolution of 1975, equating Zionism with racism, was an especially unfortunate decision. I am glad that it has since been rescinded.

But there remains a need for constant vigilance. So let us actively and uncompromisingly refute those who seek to deny the fact of the Holocaust or its uniqueness, or who continue to spread lies and vile stereotypes about Jews and Judaism.

When we seek justice for the Palestinians -- as we must -- let us firmly disavow anyone who tries to use that cause to incite hatred against Jews, in Israel or elsewhere.

The human rights machinery of the United Nations has been mobilized in the battle against anti-Semitism, and this must continue. I urge the special rapporteurs on religious freedom and on contemporary racism, working with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (which has recently strengthened its

anti-discrimination unit), to actively explore ways of combating anti-Semitism more effectively in the future. All parts of the Secretariat should be vigilant. And of course -- as always -- we look to our friends in civil society to keep us up to the mark.

To read the whole document please go to <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2004/sgsm9375.doc.htm>.

## **Annan congratulates new Iraqi president; offers UN help in writing constitution**

Annan (R) with Jalal Talabani (file photo)

6 April 2005 – Congratulating Iraq's new President Jalal Talabani on his election today, Secretary-General Kofi Annan today stressed the need for national unity, a goal the United Nations has been seeking with redoubled resolve since elections in January, and pledged the world body's help in writing a constitution that cements reconciliation.

"The Secretary-General welcomes the commitment of Iraq's new leadership to working towards national unity through peaceful democratic means," a [statement](#) issued by a spokesperson for Mr. Annan said of Mr. Talabani's election, and that of Vice-Presidents Sheikh Ghazi Al-Yawar and Adil Abdul Mahdi, by the Transitional National Assembly.

"The United Nations stands ready to support the reconstruction of Iraq, including by providing any needed assistance to its constitution-making process," the statement added. "To that end, the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Ashraf Qazi, look forward to working with Iraq's newly-elected leaders and other representatives, with a view to further promoting dialogue and national reconciliation."

Virtually from the moment polling booths closed in the 30 January elections, from which Iraq's Sunni Arabs largely stayed away, Mr. Qazi has been meeting almost daily across the political spectrum to ensure that all sectors take part in the transition process, including the drafting of a new constitution, which is the main task of the new Assembly.

But by not voting, either due to boycott calls, intimidation or fear of violence, Sunni Arabs, the dominant political force in the regime of ousted Saddam Hussein, have very little presence in the new Assembly, hence Mr. Qazi's continual appeals for a way to ensure the participation of all in writing the constitution and completing the political transition.

Shiite Arabs, who voted enthusiastically, represent about 60 per cent of the population, while Sunni Arabs and mainly Sunni Kurds, who also turned out en masse, represent about 20 per cent each.

### **What the UN does for Peace**

Preserving world peace is a central purpose of the United Nations. Under the [Charter](#), Member States agree to settle disputes by peaceful means and refrain from threatening or using force against other States.

Over the years, the UN has played a major role in helping defuse international crises and in resolving protracted

conflicts. It has undertaken complex operations involving [peacemaking](#), [peacekeeping](#) and [humanitarian assistance](#). It has worked to prevent conflicts from breaking out. And after a conflict, it has increasingly undertaken action to address the root causes of war and lay the foundation for durable peace.

UN efforts have produced dramatic results. The UN helped defuse the Cuban missile crisis in 1962 and the Middle East crisis in 1973. In 1988, a UN-sponsored peace settlement ended the Iran-Iraq war, and the following year UN-sponsored negotiations led to the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. In the 1990s, the UN was instrumental in restoring sovereignty to Kuwait and played a major role in ending civil wars in Cambodia, El Salvador, Guatemala and Mozambique, restoring the democratically elected government in Haiti, and resolving or containing conflict in various other countries.

When, in September 1999, a campaign of violence forced some 200,000 East Timorese to flee their homes following a vote on self-determination, the UN authorized the dispatch of an international security force, which helped restore order. In October, the Council established a UN Transitional Administration which, with the protection of the multinational force, began overseeing the territory's transition to independence. And when [terrorists](#) attacked the United States on 11 September 2001, the Security Council acted quickly – adopting a wide-ranging resolution which obligates States to ensure that any person who participates in financing, planning, preparing, perpetrating or supporting terrorist acts is brought to justice, as well as to establish such acts as serious criminal offences under domestic law.

## Disarmament

Halting the spread of arms and reducing and eventually eliminating all weapons of mass destruction are major goals of the United Nations. The UN has been an ongoing forum for [disarmament](#) negotiations, making recommendations and initiating studies. It supports multilateral negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament and in other international bodies. These negotiations have produced such agreements as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (1968), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (1996) and treaties establishing nuclear-free zones.

Other treaties prohibit the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons (1992) and bacteriological weapons (1972); ban nuclear weapons from the seabed and ocean floor (1971) and outer space (1967); and ban or restrict other types of weapons. By 2001, more than 120 countries had become parties to the 1997 Ottawa Convention outlawing landmines. The UN encourages all nations to adhere to this and other treaties banning destructive weapons of war. The UN is also supporting efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons — the weapons of choice in 46 of 49 major conflicts since 1990. The UN Register of Conventional Arms and the system for standardized reporting of military expenditures help promote greater transparency in military matters.

The Vienna-based [International Atomic Energy Agency](#), through a system of safeguards agreements, ensures that nuclear materials and equipment intended for peaceful uses are not diverted for military purposes. And in The Hague, the [Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons](#) collects information on chemical facilities worldwide and conducts routine inspections to ensure adherence to the chemical weapons convention.

## Peacemaking

UN [peacemaking](#) brings hostile parties to agreement through diplomatic means. The [Security Council](#), in its efforts to maintain international peace and security, may recommend ways to avoid conflict or restore or secure peace — through negotiation, for example, or recourse to the [International Court of Justice](#).

The [Secretary-General](#) plays an important role in peacemaking. The Secretary-General may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter that appears to threaten international peace and security, use good offices to carry out mediation or exercise quiet diplomacy behind the scenes — either personally or through special envoys. The Secretary-General also undertakes preventive diplomacy aimed at resolving disputes before they escalate.

## Peace-building

The UN is increasingly undertaking activities that address the underlying causes of conflict.

Development assistance is a key element of [peace-building](#). In cooperation with UN agencies, donor countries, host governments and NGOs, the United Nations works to support good governance, civil law and order, elections and human rights in countries struggling to deal with the aftermath of conflict. At the same time, it helps these countries rebuild administrative, health, educational and other services disrupted by war.

Some of these activities, such as the UN's supervision of the 1989 elections in Namibia, [mine-clearance](#) programmes in Mozambique and police training in Haiti, take place within the framework of a UN peacekeeping operation and may continue when the operation withdraws. Others are requested by governments — as in Cambodia, where the UN maintains a human rights office, or in Guatemala, where the UN is helping to implement peace agreements which affect virtually all aspects of national life.

## Peacekeeping

The Security Council sets up UN [peacekeeping](#) operations and defines their scope and mandate in its efforts to maintain peace and international security. Most operations involve military duties, such as observing a ceasefire or establishing a buffer zone while negotiators seek a long-term solution. Others may require civilian police or other civilian personnel to help organize [elections](#) or monitor [human rights](#). Operations have also been deployed to monitor peace agreements in cooperation with the peacekeeping forces of regional organizations.

Peacekeeping operations may last for a few months or continue for many years. The UN's operation at the ceasefire line between India and Pakistan in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, for example, was established in 1949, and UN peacekeepers have been in Cyprus since 1964. In contrast, the UN was able to complete its 1994 mission in the Aouzou Strip between Libya and Chad in a little over a month.

Since the UN first deployed peacekeepers in 1948, some 123 countries have voluntarily provided more than 750,000 military and civilian police personnel. They have served, along with thousands of civilians, in 54 peacekeeping operations.

## UN action for peace.....[In Africa](#)

UN [peace efforts](#) have taken many forms over the years, including the long campaign against apartheid in South Africa, active support for Namibian independence, a number of electoral support missions and some 20 peacekeeping operations. The most recent operations — in Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Ethiopia and Eritrea — were established in 1999 and 2000. The UN has helped repatriate refugees to Mozambique, provided humanitarian assistance in Somalia and Sudan, and undertaken diplomatic efforts to restore peace in the Great Lakes region. It has helped prevent new unrest in the Central African Republic, and it is helping to prepare for a referendum on the future of Western Sahara.

Elsewhere in Africa, UN field missions continue their [peace-building](#) activities in Guinea-Bissau and Liberia, and remain in Angola and Burundi to support various initiatives aimed at promoting peace and reconciliation. At the request of the Security Council, the Secretary-General has provided a comprehensive analysis of conflicts in Africa along with recommendations on how to promote durable peace.

## Un Specialized Agencies

If you want to help in a certain area or need information. Please contact the following agencies:[the UN special agreements:](#)

[ILO \(International Labour Organization\)](#): Formulates policies and programmes to improve working conditions and employment opphe world.

[FAO \(Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN\)](#): Works to

[UNESCO \(UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization\)](#):

[WHO \(World Health Organization\)](#): the provision of essential drugs.

[World Bank Group](#): economic growth.

[IMF \(International Monetary Fund\)](#): financial stability and provides a permanent forum for consultation, advice and assistance o

[ICAO \(International Civil Aviation Organization\)](#):

[UPU \(Universal Postal Union\)](#):

[ITU \(International Telecommunication Union\)](#):

[WMO \(World Meteorological Organization\)](#):

[IMO \(International Maritime Organization\)](#):

[WIPO \(World Intellectual Property Organization\)](#):

[IFAD \(International Fund for Agricultural Development\)](#):

[UNIDO \(UN Industrial Development Organization\)](#):

[IAEA \(International Atomic Energy Agency\)](#): An

## FROM ECUMENICAL NEWS INTERNATIONAL intergovernmental organization under the aegis of the UN, it works for the safe and peaceful uses of atomic energy.

Asian rights group sought to probe army link in Philippine killings

Manila (ENI). Alarmed by killings of church human rights workers in the Philippines, senior clerics have called on the help of an independent human rights group to pressure President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's government to probe the alleged involvement of the country's military in the slayings. "We urge your immediate intervention [to ask] the [Philippine] government to initiate urgent measures to address the phenomenon of unrestrained killings of political and human rights activists," the Hong Kong-based Asian Human Rights Commission has appealed. [340 words, ENI-05-0375]

Pius Ncube dedicates Scottish peace award to Zimbabwe people

Canterbury, England (ENI). Archbishop Pius Ncube has received Scotland's Robert Burns International Humanitarian Award and has dedicated it to the suffering people of his country Zimbabwe while urging Britain not to send exiles from the southern African nation back to what he says is certain death. "I didn't deserve this award but I accept it on behalf of those in Zimbabwe whose suffering is unabated and whose struggle continues," said Ncube, the Roman Catholic archbishop of Bulawayo. [396 words, ENI-05-0378]

Polish church leader deplors amnesia of Russia's Putin about war

Warsaw (ENI). A Polish Roman Catholic archbishop has urged citizens "not to sink to the level of President Putin" by succumbing to anti-Russian feeling after controversial Second World War commemorations in Moscow. "Let's not be provoked", Jozef Zycinski, the archbishop of Lublin in eastern Poland, said about calls for a boycott of Russian culture because of the failure of Russia's President Vladimir Putin to recognise Poland's wartime role, in a speech to mark the 60th anniversary of the end of the war in Europe. [389 words, ENI-05-0376]

Book tells how churches helped write UN human rights script

London (ENI). As the world this year celebrates the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, a new book has retrieved the almost forgotten story of how churches helped to create one of the key achievements to emerge from the wreckage of the conflict, the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). "They saw themselves as midwives at work in a period of change that would be as far-reaching as Luther's Reformation," says author John Nurser of the team mobilised through the then newly born World Council of Churches and its Churches' Commission on International Affairs. [438 words, ENI-05-0377]

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Indian churches question reprieve for killer of Baptist missionary

Thrissur, India (ENI). Church leaders in India have expressed concern after a court reduced the death sentence on the killer of an Australian missionary to life imprisonment and ordered the acquittal of 11 others previously convicted for involvement in the murder. "We are really concerned about this judgement. It gives a wrong signal," said Bishop B. K. Sahu, general secretary of the National Council of Churches in India, which groups 29 Orthodox and Protestant Churches, after the court judgement.

N meeting seeks interfaith dialogue to rebuild Asia ecosystems

Baguio City, Philippines (ENI). Interfaith dialogue is needed to remedy harm inflicted over centuries by religions to traditional knowledge systems in Asia, say delegates at a United Nations' meeting on biological diversity, held in the Philippines.

"Foreign and introduced religions have damaged traditional knowledge systems and an inter-faith dialogue should be promoted to encourage \* mutual respect and to repair centuries of damage to the traditional knowledge systems of indigenous and local communities," delegates from Asia said after the meeting in Baguio City, northern Philippines.

Orthodox leaders hope for ecumenical progress under new pope

Rome (ENI). Orthodox church leaders have praised the theological achievements of the newly elected Pope Benedict XVI and predicted inter-church ties would improve during his pontificate. "John Paul II's initiatives for bringing the churches closer in dialogue and peace have aroused hope," said Patriarch Bartholomeos I of Constantinople.

**Palestinians urge Pope Benedict to strengthen Christian-Muslim ties**

Jerusalem (ENI). Palestinians who have seen Israeli leaders praise the new pontiff have urged Pope Benedict XVI to make the establishment of a Palestinian state and stronger Christian-Muslim ties priorities of his papacy. "The Palestinian cause is a humanitarian issue. The Pope needs to give this issue special attention and support it," said Sheikh Taysir al-Tamimi, a top Palestinian Muslim cleric. Palestinian Roman Catholics attending mass at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem expressed hope that Pope Benedict would follow in the footsteps of his predecessor Pope John Paul II.

**World Council of Churches' Kobia queries Annan's security plan**

Geneva (ENI). The leader of the world's largest grouping of churches, the Rev. Samuel Kobia, has told UN Secretary General Kofi Annan that he disagrees with some of his security proposals to reform the United Nations. Kobia said the World Council of Churches of which he is general secretary was concerned about suggestions that the UN charter allowed countries to take pre-emptive military action without reference to the UN Security Council.

**European churches mark end of WW2 with warning on racism**

Geneva (ENI). Leaders of the Conference of European Churches on Tuesday, in a message to mark the 60th anniversary in May of the end of the Second World War, called on churches in Europe to remain vigilant against the threat of militarism and racism. "On 8 May we shall recall how 60 years ago, Europe found itself at last delivered from a war of unparalleled bloodshed and destruction," said the presidium of the grouping, which has more than 120 churches from Anglican, Protestant and Orthodox traditions.

**Greek Orthodox Archbishop Iakovos dies in US at 93**

New York (ENI). Archbishop Iakovos, the long-time spiritual leader of Greek Orthodox Christians in North and South America, who helped his denomination become an established part of the US religious landscape, has died at the age of 93. As Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in the Americas in 1959 he became the leader of a largely immigrant church. But from the Greek Orthodox headquarters in New York until his retirement in 1996, Archbishop Iakovos led his archdiocese to the heart of national life in the United States.

**India honours widow of murdered Australian missionary**

New Delhi (ENI). Gladys Staines, the widow of an Australian missionary, Graham Staines, who was murdered in India in 1999, has been honoured with one of India's highest civilian awards.

"This is not a recognition for me alone, it is an honour for those who have worked with Graham and those whom we all have served," Gladys Staines told Ecumenical News International after receiving the award, called the Padma Shree, from Indian President Abdul Kalam.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY PAYS TRIBUTE TO POPE JOHN PAUL II** New York, Apr 6 2005 5:00PM

The United Nations General Assembly today paid tribute to Pope John Paul II, standing in a minute of silence after its President, Jean Ping of Gabon, extended his condolences to the Vatican community, all Catholics and all throughout the world who had been touched and inspired by the life of the late pontiff.

Representatives of the regional groupings at the UN then took the floor to deliver encomiums for the man whom Ambassador Brown Beswick Chiphamba of Malawi, speaking for Africa, called the embodiment of compassion who had represented the poor, the voiceless, the marginalized, the desperate and the oppressed.

On behalf of the Asian States, Ambassador Daw Penjo of Bhutan called the Pope not only the spiritual leader of the Catholic Church but a true leader for all, who had devoted his life to the cause of peace, harmony and justice.

Ambassador Tiina Intelmann of Estonia, on behalf of Eastern European States, said John Paul had been a great humanist and protector of morality, who had dedicated his whole life to spiritual liberation, moral self-betterment and tolerance.

Speaking for the Latin American and Caribbean States, Ambassador Philip Sealy of Trinidad and Tobago called the pontiff a genuinely charismatic figure and an enormous force for good in the world, whose influence had gone far beyond his own congregation.

Ambassador Anders Lidén of Sweden, on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States, said the Pope would be particularly remembered for his role in ending the division of Europe.

Speaking on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Ambassador Baki Ilkin of Turkey said that the international community would remember the late Pope as a man of peace, humanity and compassion who personified brotherhood, tolerance, righteousness and the coexistence of all religions.

Ambassador Jean-Marc Hoscheit of Luxembourg, speaking on behalf of the European Union and associated countries, recalled that almost 10 years ago the late Pope stood at the General Assembly rostrum and spoke about the human principles of dignity, liberty, respect for others and solidarity, with the UN as the moral centre of the world.

Polish Ambassador Andrzej Towpik said his country was bidding farewell not only to a great man, but also to the greatest Pole in human history, whose words and deeds should remain a great guidance in efforts to make the UN a better organization.

Celestino Migliore, Observer for the Holy See, recalled that during his first visit to the UN in 1979, the late Pope attached great importance to collaboration with the UN as the place best suited to addressing all the challenges facing mankind and had wanted dearly to see it develop more effective



...communication with the UN as the peace overtures to addressing the challenges facing humanity and that instead every... to see it develop more effective strategies than war to solve humankind's problems.

Orthodox Church leaders look to improved relations with Vatican

Warsaw (ENI). The head of the Russian Orthodox Church has said after the death of Pope John Paul II that he hopes for improved relations with the Roman Catholic Church. "A new period is now opening in the Catholic church's life, in which there is a possibility of mutually respectful relations and brotherly Christian love between our churches," Patriarch Alexei II said in a letter sent to Cardinal Josef Ratzinger, who under John Paul II was dean of the College of Cardinals.

Churches decry Easter Sunday shooting at Pakistan Christians

New Delhi (ENI). Church officials in Pakistan say the firing on a Christian congregation during Easter Sunday that killed one worshipper and injured seven others shows the vulnerability of the Christian community in the Muslim-majority nation. Armed assailants fired bullets at the Christians on Easter Sunday when about 50 worshippers in Khahamba village near Lahore were leaving a service at the New Apostolic Church in the locality.

World's political leaders pay tribute to peace-loving John Paul II

Rome/Geneva (ENI). Tributes to the Polish-born Pope, who died on 2 April, came from political leaders of every faith and denomination for a man who took the world stage, travelling more than one million kilometres in visits to some 130 countries. During his more than 26-year-long papacy he held general audiences in the Vatican with almost 18 million people and met face to face 776 heads of state and about 1600 political leaders.

Leaders of Christian denominations praise Pope; rue missed chances

Geneva (ENI). Tributes to Pope John Paul II poured in from heads of many Christian denominations mourning his 2 April death, most of them united in praising the Pope's stand for justice and human dignity, but some wishing for more efforts at promoting unity between churches. [1036 words, ENI-05-0232]

John Paul II and the papacy of paradox

John Paul II's papacy was one of notable firsts. The first non-Italian to lead the Roman Catholic Church for 455 years. The first Slav to sit on the throne of Saint Peter. The first pontiff in modern times to emerge from the citadel of the Vatican to claim a place among the world's political leaders. Such a remarkable and very public break with tradition inevitably created an anticipation that John Paul II who was, when elected, the youngest holder of the office for more than 130 years, would be a champion of renewal.]

Next Pope - 'rumours are legion but none carries imprimatur'

With an electoral college of 117, it should be a relatively simple matter to work out which cardinal will gain the majority of the votes and succeed Pope John Paul II. In many other organisations, the runners declare themselves long ahead of time, the voters are thoroughly canvassed, and the incumbent strives to ensure the succession for his or her chosen candidate. Yet, as with most things to do with the papacy, the gathering of the conclave of cardinals that follows the death of a Pope and chooses his successor, is not as straightforward as it at first appears.]

Bulgarian Orthodox showed ambivalence to Pope in final days

Sofia (ENI). All over the world Christians and members of other faiths were praying and sending messages of support for ailing Pope John Paul II in his final days, but in mainly Orthodox Bulgaria there was ambivalence about the pontiff despite support for him from other Orthodox churches.

Indian court ruling on discrimination against Christian dalits hailed

New Delhi (ENI). Churches and Christian activists in India are elated over the notice the federal supreme court has issued to the central government that it will accept hearings on the question of discrimination against low castes embracing Christianity. "This is a very positive development. We see a ray of hope," said Y. Moses, an executive secretary of the National Council of Churches in India, which groups 29 Orthodox and Protestant churches.

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