



International School



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL FOR MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS ON UNITED NATIONS AFFAIRS

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This publication is distributed to Missions to the United Nations and to Mental Health Clinics throughout the world on a quarterly basis. Its purpose is to inform all about the work of the United Nations in Mental Health and related activities.

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Editor's Note: This part of our publication tells how the United Nations is releasing young soldiers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the psychological aid they provide to Iranian earthquake victims. It is about students visiting the UN to learn about starting their careers in psychology. It tells of the bravery of Muktar Mai with the help of the UN, the UN conference taking place in June in Austria for the aid of the ageing and disabled. It tells of the death of WHO director general Dr. Lee Jong-wook. It covers how peacekeepers and other UN personnel are putting themselves in danger of physical and psychological trauma and what the UN is doing to avoid this and the work on WHO on depression.

Dr of Congo: UN Denounces Re-recruitment, Maltreatment of Child Soldiers

New York, March, 31, 2006 – Denouncing the re-recruitment of child soldiers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), United Nations officials have called for the immediate release of youngsters by the various armed groups in the faction-ridden country.

The DRC is one of the seven countries most affected by the problem of child soldiers.



With appreciation to www.aber.ac.uk

At least 30,000 boys and girls under the age of 18 have been recruited, either willingly or by force, by the army or armed groups since 1998 during a civil and regional fighting, and thus exposed to hostilities, forced labor or sexual servitude, the UN Organization Mission in the DRC (MONUC) said.

So far, 16,800 of them have passed through the demobilization and reintegration programme that the UN is helping to organize as part of the country's transition to peace and democracy.

Earlier this week in Kinshasa, the MONUC official responsible for the protection of children, Danielle Barrot, denounced "cases of re-recruitment of children, harassment, arrest and illegal detention and bad treatment of youngsters who have left the armed forces or armed groups."

With appreciation to UN News, *Dr. of Congo: UN Denounces Re-Recruitment, Maltreatment of Child Soldiers, March 31, 2006* at www.un.org

UN Agency to Provide Aid to Traumatized Quake Victims in Iran

New York, April 7, 2006 – The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which is providing material relief to the victims of last week's earthquake in Iran, today announced plans to offer psychosocial support to traumatized youngsters in the coming weeks.

"Families are sleeping in tents, in their cars and in makeshift shelters wherever they can," UNICEF country representative Christian Salazar said after visiting the Lorestan area, where the agency immediately rushed 10,000 blankets after the March 31 quake.



With appreciation to www.pocketpcmag.com

"The temperature is down to five degrees Celsius," he added, noting that harsh conditions take a strong psychological toll. "For children it's very difficult. Not only have they lost all their possessions, but they are very frightened by all the aftershocks of the earthquakes. They are crying a lot and not sleeping well."

To help address this trauma, UNICEF plans to offer psychosocial support and temporary schools to the community.

After the initial quake, the Government and Iranian Red Crescent responded swiftly, distributing tents, blankets and other supplies almost immediately. UNICEF added to this with the first international aid to reach some of the most affected villages.

Additional supplies, including children's clothes, blankets, dolls and tents, were released by officials in Bam, where they had been donated by UNICEF following the 2003 earthquake there.

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The children and their families will continue to need considerable help. To facilitate recovery and reconstruction, an expert team of two UNICEF child protection officers, an education officer and a UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) staff member arrived on the scene this week to assess damage to education facilities and the psychological status of children.

Based on the team's findings, a plan of action will be developed and implemented with the government and partners. The State Welfare Organization has already agreed with UNICEF to establish 35 rural childcare centres in the hardest-hit villages. These, along with appropriate educational and psychosocial interventions, should help children overcome the psychological stress and trauma caused by the quake.

The agency's actions are part of a coordinated UN effort led by the UN office for the Coordination of Human Affairs. (OCHA.)

With appreciation to UN News, *UN Agency to Provide Psychosocial Aid to Traumatized Quake Victims in Iran, April 7, 2006* at UNNews@un.org

Psychological Considerations Re-enforced at the UN

April 13, 2006 – Opportunities to sit in on a general session of the United Nations and to be briefed by a foreign-service officer of the United States were among the perspective-altering experiences enjoyed by a select group of students who recently were led to New York City by Harvey Langholtz, professor of Psychology at the College.

“While visiting UN Headquarters might not be as good as, say, visiting an actual peace-keeping mission, it was a significant help for me to put a lot of what I read in context,” said William Cline (06), one of the participating students.

Said Eric Reeder (07), another student “Psychology is present in everything dealing with international relations, including conflict, conflict resolution, peace-keeping, humanitarian aid, and more. The class and the trip enable you to see how psychology is applicable in the real world.”

Some of the students were members of an independent-studies class led by Langholtz that was considering the psychologies of peacemaking and of diplomacy, topics that were the subjects of the professor’s two recent books. Others simply wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to see the United Nations with Langholtz, who serves as a consultant to the world body.

“The interesting topic for students is that international relations, which includes both peace and war, have some components that are parallel with psychological relations- the psychological aspects of interpersonal relations I should say,” Langholtz said. Some insights his students reach include the fact that ethnically based conflicts, which are passed from generation to generation, are difficult to resolve due to deep-seated hatreds. Citing the Palestinian-Israeli issue, as well as the situation in Yugoslavia and terrorism, which pits East against West, Langholtz said, “In order to even try to overcome such distances and hatreds, it takes a series of confidence-building measures, which are very difficult to come by, and they easily erode. These ethnically based, long-standing conflicts are very difficult to resolve, whereas conflicts that are more political, or geographic or economic tend sometimes to have a resolution.”



With appreciation to www.wm.edu/news

Concerning the New York trip, Cline said the first highlight was having the opportunity to sit in on a meeting of the Security Council. “Our tour guide wouldn’t take us into the chamber, since regular tourists aren’t permitted inside when the council is in session,” Cline said. “We had official badges as Dr. Langholtz’s companions, however, so the guard let us in when we came back after the end of the standard tour. They were discussing small-arms control, which is not as riveting, as say, the Iranian nuclear program, but it still gave us the chance to see what it actually looks like for global powers to come together and try to find solutions to problems” A second highlight for Cline was a briefing by the U.S. delegation to the United Nations. “We spent about an hour picking the brain of a foreign-service officer who was surprisingly candid and gave us a rather different perspective from the more politically neutral comments of the U.N. staff we encountered,” he said.

Reader came away with a greater resolve to work toward making a difference for other people in the world. “While there, we saw many charts and posters depicting the problems faced all around the world, and that made me realize not only how lucky we really are here in the United States but also that we have a moral obligation to the other countries around the world that are not as fortunate as we are,” he said.

He added, “ I am also hopeful because a lot of the conflicts around the world are caused by social, economic and medical problems, and I see the work that is being done by the students at this school to address these issues. I believe that the College of William and Mary and other liberal-arts universities around the country are hoping to educate young people on the cultures and issues of foreign countries that then gives the students the motivation to act and to make the world a better place.”

Langholtz said that the study of the psychology of international relations is somewhat unique within the broader discipline of psychology.” However, as we see Iraq and terrorism, more and more of these questions of psychological impacts and psychological components on conflict, conflict amelioration and conflict resolution are being given a hearing,” he said.

Several of Langholtz's students have gone on to represent these psychological issues in global forums in recent years, including two who are working for the U.S. Department of State, one who is serving with the U.S. Agency for International Development and several who are working through the Peace Corps.

With appreciation to W & M News, *Psychological Considerations Re-enforced at the U.N., April, 13, 2006* at www.wm.edu/news

Pakistani Rape Survivor Turned Education Crusader Honored at UN

May 2, 2006 – Mukhtar Mai, a Pakistani woman who became a world-renown education and women's rights activist after she was gang raped as clan vengeance in her native village for crimes allegedly committed by her brother, spoke at United Nations Headquarters in New York today, drawing praise from UN officials for her bravery.

"I think it is fair to say that anyone who has the moral courage and internal strength to turn such a brutal attack into a weapon to defend others in a similar position, is a hero indeed, and is worthy of our deepest respect and admiration," Under-Secretary-General for Communications Shashi Tharoor said in introducing Ms. Mukhtar, who was invited to the UN by Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Pakistan's UN Mission.

Mr. Tharoor said that after the horrific crime, which occurred in 2002 in a rural village called Meerwala, Ms. Mukhtar refused to be cowed by traditional strictures under which she was expected to commit suicide out of shame. Instead, with the support of her immediate family, her Imam and some journalists, she took steps to ensure the full force of the law was levied against her attackers.

"Since then, she has demonstrated that she is a woman of enormous courage and conviction, by turning her horrible experience into a rallying cry against the violence and injustice that is perpetrated against disadvantaged women in many parts of the world," Mr. Tharoor said.

Moderating the event, CNN anchor Soledad O'Brian expressed admiration that, after receiving an award from the Pakistani Government of 500,000 rupees, Ms. Mukhtar returned to the village in which she had experienced such pain instead of leaving the region, founding a school that now women and girls threatened by childhood marriage and other practices.

Questioned by Ms. O'Brian and the audience at the UN meeting room, Ms. Mukhtar explained the importance of education for woman's rights. "When I was pursuing justice, the uneducated people tried to stop me and the educated people supported me. So I thought education was important," the soft-spoken woman said through an interpreter. "My slogan is: "End oppression with education," she added, noting that after her efforts in her rural village, attitudes there have changed quite dramatically.



With appreciation to www.ceibenweiber.at

Under-Secretary-General Tharoor, a native of India, recognized the scale of that accomplishment: "As someone who comes from a country that has also struggled to find ways to overcome dire social challenges and to end the often brutal practices of our traditional pasts without surrendering our unique history and identity, I can assure you that the obstacles that Ms. Mukhtar Mai and her fellow Pakistanis face are not small, and that hers is no small achievement," he said.

With appreciation to UN News, *Pakistani Rape Survivor Turned Education Crusader Honored at UN, May 2, 2006* at UNNews@un.org

International Conference on Ageing and Disability, Graz, Austria

Spring, 2006 – Conference June 8 to June 9 in Graz – In the framework of the Austrian EU – Presidency, major European networks have come together with Austrian Umbrella Organizations to organize a European conference.

The number of ageing people and disabled ageing people in Europe is increasing rapidly. The European Commission, is therefore, devoting more and more attention to this topic and have recently published a green paper on demographic change. One thing becomes particularly clear: the efforts of all European member states, need to be stepped up if we are to meet the challenges posed by our increasingly ageing population. This is especially the case for people with disabilities whose needs are not always met by existing services.

The conference is targeted at representatives of persons with a disability and their families, to service providers and qualified personnel, concerned authorities at all levels, researchers and politicians.

The aim of the conference is to give an overview of the state of play in Europe on the topic, to point the way forward, to exchange models of good practice and to launch a declaration of Graz.

The conference will start from a global perspective of ageing and disability and then go more in depth of the situation of people with intellectual disability.

With appreciation to International Institute of Ageing, UN Malta, *International Conference on Ageing and Disability, Graz, Austria, Spring 2006* at www.inia.org



With appreciation to www.inia.org

Dr. Lee Jong-wook, Director General, WHO

May 22, 2006 – Dr. LEE Jong-wook, Director General of the World Health Organization, has died. He had been in the hospital since Saturday afternoon, where he underwent surgery to remove a blood clot on his brain (a subdural hematoma). He remained in intensive care. At 0743 this morning, he was declared dead.



With appreciation to www.who.int

All of the staff of the World Health Organization extend their most sincere condolences to Dr. Lee's family. The sudden loss of our leader, colleague and friend, is devastating.

With appreciation to WHO, *Dr. Lee Jong-wook, Director-General, WHO, May 22, 2006* at www.who.int

Danger at the UN: Can We Protect Those Who Protect?

May, 2006 – Recent history documents a tragic irony. Humanitarian workers, peacekeepers, and others who are dedicated to protecting the most vulnerable among us find their own safety and emotional well being increasingly endangered. The challenge before us is to find ways to provide for their security and well being as they address the needs of devastated populations worldwide.

The challenge is of particular urgency at the United Nations. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) at the UN reports that since

the first peacekeeping operation in 1948, over 2,150 peacekeepers died in the line of duty. In addition to these peacekeepers, the losses of life and threats to the well being of other personnel have also been documented. For example, from 1992 to June 2001, over 200 UN field mission staff were killed and another 242 were taken hostage or kidnapped. In 1999 alone, 292 cases of robbery, rape and physical assault were reported. The bombing of UN headquarters in Baghdad in 2003 led to the loss of life of 24 UN personnel including Sergio Vieira de Mello of Brazil, who, in the view of many at the UN, was poised to become the next Secretary General. Compelling personal stories of the dangers of mission life have been portrayed in both books and in film.

The professional and spiritual satisfaction associated with peacekeeping has been eroded by an atmosphere of danger. Locals are less likely to implicitly trust outsiders; reciprocally, workers in the field are also uncertain whom they can trust. As the risks of mission life have changed, new concerns have emerged regarding the psychological effects of fieldwork. Awareness of increased peril to their own safety, along with continual exposure to the traumatic circumstances of refugees and those displaced by conflict, disaster, and famine threaten the emotional well being of humanitarian personnel. These circumstances have been shown to evoke post-traumatic symptoms, or vicarious traumatization, in those attempting to heal trauma victims. Failure to address the suffering of personnel may lead to the proliferation of other behavioral problems at duty stations, for example, substance abuse, unprotected sex, etc. Symptomatic outcomes for humanitarian personnel may diminish their job effectiveness and may potentially lead to compromising the success of their missions.

At the United Nations, these issues have garnered attention at every level of the organization. Since the end of the Cold War, peacekeeping operations and other missions have increased dramatically adding to the urgency for determined efforts to provide for the safety and security of personnel. UN officials, Member states and non-governmental organizations (NGO's) have recognized that the United Nations has provided insufficient resources to address these concerns. Stress Counselors have been hired in the UN Security Coordinator's Office, in the DPKO, the Secretariat and among some U.N. agencies, including the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Program. Stress Counselors have made impressive progress in crafting meaningful interventions as they travel extensively to duty stations to address crisis on missions as they occur. However, it is widely recognized that in spite of these additional staff, available resources simply fall short of the extensive needs of personnel at headquarters and around the world.

Available resources that might add additional expertise to the efforts of Stress Counselors are members of civil society. The United Nations, led by Secretary General Kofi Annan and the General Assembly, has sought to extend its partnership with civil society. There are more than 2,500 NGO's within the UN system. A partnership between the U.N. and interested NGO's might contribute to diminishing the gap between the needs for counselors and available resources.

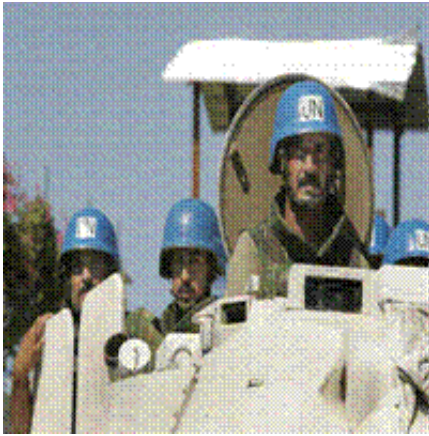
A partnership called the Trauma Stress Support Group has been proposed consisting of two NGO's – Disaster Psychiatry Outreach and the International Psychoanalytic Association – and in conjunction with senior officials in the Department of Public Information and UNSECOORD. This partnership has been designed to offer pre-deployment, mission and post-mission training, education, and counseling. This three-point proposal derives from extensive consultation with UNSECOORD and DPKO staff, Stress Counselors, and others, some of whom assisted UN personnel following the attack on UN Headquarters in Baghdad and others who were involved with establishing the UN mission in Kabul, Afghanistan.

The first component of this plan is to provide pre-assignment mission training. In conjunction with the UN's own briefing program, NGO health professionals would provide education and training for staff and their families to prepare for their adjustment to protracted absence. Mission staff needs to be informed of the dangers they may encounter including risks to their mental health. The development of senior staff from among the mission staff is also proposed in order to have managers who are alert to identifying behavioral problems as they occur. Second, the Trauma Stress Support Group will organize a resource of mental health experts with international emergency experience and with a particular emphasis on post-traumatic stress. This resource would include volunteers available to assist UN staff in the field. Special attention would be given to those professionals with field

experience and those who demonstrate a commitment to cultural sensitivity. Third, post-mission support services would be available to assist the re-entry process. The roster of volunteers around the world, mentioned above, will be available to counsel staff and their families who are adjusting to life post-deployment, since peacekeeping staff often find this adjustment complex and confusing. Mission life can be arduous and dangerous, but it can also be extremely intense and rewarding. Staff functioning under these conditions form meaningful bonds, including intimate relationships. Thus, re-connecting with family may also involve mourning the loss of mission relationships and the sense of urgency of everyday life.

This is a program that, in conjunction with the UN's own mission readiness training, might contribute to enhancing the safety and well being of humanitarian personnel. It is time we protect the protectors – and provide care for those who care for the most vulnerable among us.

With appreciation to Psychology International, *Danger at the UN: Can We Protect Those Who Protect?* May, 2006 at www.apa.org/international



With appreciation to www.aca.org/international

WHO Initiative on Depression in Public Health

WHO has recently launched an initiative on Depression in Public Health. The overall objective is to reduce the impact of depression by closing the substantial 'treatment gap' between available cost-effective treatment and the large number of people not receiving it, worldwide.

Specific objectives:

- To educate patients, family members, providers, and policy makers about depression.
- To reduce the stigma associated with depression.
- To train primary care personnel in the diagnosis and management of depression.
- To improve the capacity of countries to create policies supportive of improving care for depression and to provide effective management of depression in primary care.

Activities:

- Global, regional, and national events to increase awareness of depression.
- Production and dissemination of resources for improving depression care.
- Regional and national workshops to strengthen the capacity to care for depression.
- Multi-site intervention studies to improve the primary care for depression.

With appreciation to www.who.int/mental_health



With appreciation to www.mhca.org.au

