



"The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens" – Bahá'u'lláh

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Newsletter of the Bahá'í
International Community
July-September 1999
Volume 11, Issue 2



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Focusing on hygiene and vaccination, a health project serving isolated Kumi and Soroti Districts has used overseas funding from Canada to help build a sustainable cadre of grassroots-level volunteers.



The use of deep wells instead of shallow ones has been promoted by the Uganda Bahá'í health project.

TILLING, Kumi District, Uganda — For most people in this remote village some 360 kilometers northeast of Kampala, the long days and nights when their children easily grew sick and frequently died — all without a clear explanation — are not difficult to recall.

"When a child became sick, the community felt the child had been bewitched," said William, a 61-year-old farmer, discussing how only a few years ago the village's children were easy prey for common diarrhea and other killer diseases of childhood, such as whooping cough, measles, tetanus, polio, tuberculosis and diphtheria.

But much has changed since many families here have adopted basic health and sanitation practices. Volunteer community health workers, trained and supported by the Uganda Bahá'í Institute for Development (UBID), have helped significantly to raise immunization rates and increase the awareness of basic hygiene in some 30 villages in Kumi and Soroti Districts in eastern Uganda.

Although preprogram health data for these villages is scant — there were virtually no similar rural health projects serving them before the UBID program — regional health officials, UBID-trained health workers, and the local people themselves say that childhood death rates have fallen greatly and the overall quality of health has improved.

"The Bahá'í project changed the behavior of the community," said Nelson Omudu, coordinator of the Uganda National Expanded Program for Immunization (UNEPI) at Ngora Hospital in Ngora, Kumi District. "It did this several ways. Through the use of the latrine — now many people know the importance of the latrine. Immunization used to have a poor turn-up, but now many people bring their children. With malaria, now people know about the use of nets and the number of cases is reducing. And before, water sources were neglected. Now people know the importance of clean water."

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is published quarterly by the Office of Public Information of the Bahá'í International Community, an international non-governmental organization which encompasses and represents the worldwide membership of the Bahá'í Faith.

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International Community

ISSN 1018-9300

Printed on recycled paper ♻️

The Need for an International Force

Without doubt, peacekeeping has been one of the most important activities of the United Nations. Since 1948, the UN has launched some 50 peacekeeping missions, sending blue-helmeted soldiers and observers to trouble spots around the world.

While not every mission has been successful in stopping the violence it has sought to address, there is little question that UN peacekeeping has significantly acted to slow, stifle, or prevent war in many of the world's most conflict-prone regions.

Yet the peacekeeping regime, forged as a practical response to the political deadlock in the UN Security Council during the Cold War, has severe limitations. All peacekeeping missions begin with the consent of all parties to a conflict, stopping short of the non-consensual military "enforcement" option envisioned in the UN Charter.

As well, every peacekeeping mission to date has been an ad hoc affair, with military units begged and borrowed from UN member nations, a process that often takes from three to six months — during which an exploding conflict can cost thousands of lives.

Recent world events suggest the time has come to reexamine the original vision of the UN's founders and discuss the ways and means by which a ready international force might be assembled and made a credible instrument of international conscience.

The UN's founders understood that the collective and unified use of force might sometimes be necessary to maintain or restore international peace. Chapter VII of the UN Charter states that the Security Council may take "action by air, sea, or land forces" and that "all members of the United Nations" should "make available" to the Security Council "armed forces, assistance, and facilities" for the "purpose of maintaining international peace and security."

While the Charter stops short of explicitly establishing a standing army for the UN, the clear implication is that the nations of the world, acting together, have the unquestioned right and responsibility to "enforce" peace and security.

The concept of collective security was not new in 1945 when the UN was founded.

The Covenant of the League of Nations included provisions for the collective use of force and the concept was widely discussed at the turn of the century.

Indeed, one of the first explicit calls for the institution of collective security at the global level came in the mid-1800s from Bahá'u'lláh, who wrote to world leaders saying: "Be united, O kings of the earth, for thereby will the tempest of discord be stilled amongst you, and your peoples find rest, if ye be of them that comprehend. Should any one among you take up arms against another, rise ye all against him, for this is naught but manifest justice."

The worldwide Bahá'í community has promoted this concept, supporting the efforts of the League of Nations and the United Nations in the view that only through collective security can a sustainable, universal peace be established.

In fits and starts, through various activities ranging from peacekeeping to a handful of actual "enforcement" actions (such as the Korean War and the Gulf War), the international community of nations has likewise pursued the ideal of collective security, even if its execution has been less than perfect or universal.

Over the last decade, in issue areas such as environment, development and human rights, the world community of nations has proved it can forge a global consensus when the needs are great and the principles are clear.

It is time, then, to discuss seriously the ways and means of increasing and institutionalizing the world's capacity to use force when necessary to maintain peace and security or protect the lives of innocent people from violence and the oft-resulting humanitarian catastrophe.

There are a number of critical advantages offered by an international force that is capable of quick, unified and meaningful action to maintain or reestablish peace.

- First and foremost is the increased capacity for rapid deployment in a crisis situation. The problem of slow deployment is widely recognized and the UN is currently working to bolster the readiness of peacekeeping forces by asking states to hold mili-

tary units on a "standby" basis. But it would be better yet to have a force that the UN could call on immediately, without the time-consuming hesitations that the use of national forces, even on a standby basis, entails. In the future even the loss of a single life because the international community did not act quickly enough will be viewed as unconscionable.

- The ability to deploy rapidly would contribute greatly to such a force's credibility. The mere existence of such a force would in itself imply the readiness of the world community to intervene when necessary. Such a mechanism would surely give pause to the agents of aggression, whether a recalcitrant government, a violent rebel group, or an immoral militia.

- Over time, the existence of a credible international force would serve to hasten the processes of general disarmament and promote accompanying cuts in military spending. The peoples of the world, feeling that their borders were safe from external aggression, would need only national police forces – not national armies – for protection.

The disadvantages arising from the creation of an international force lie primarily in the minds of those who dwell on the sorts of political problems that led to limitations of the peacekeeping regime in the first place – or those who cling to outmoded concepts of national sovereignty and security. In our age of interdependence, national security is synonymous with international security, and national interest is synonymous with global human development.

Further, the success of the peacekeeping regime is in many ways the best argument for the establishment of an international force. The UN has proven, through its cautious and carefully negotiated deployment of peacekeeping missions, that it has the capacity to handle with sensitivity the difficult political issues involved in the use of collective military force. Indeed, much of the groundwork for managing military units has been worked out in the peacekeeping regime and an international force could evolve gradually out of existing arrangements for peacekeeping.

Of course, the creation of such a force would need to be carefully thought out and negotiated. Such a force would need to be composed of individuals from as many nations as possible; it would need to be independent of national interests; and it would need to be fully funded to the extent that its missions are not

compromised for lack of money.

To be effective, such a force would need to be backed by a revitalized sense of political will, based on unity. Certain reforms of the UN, such as a restructured Security Council, would also add to the effectiveness of such a force. As well, improved arrangements for peacemaking, social and economic development, human rights education and other efforts to promote international cooperation must go hand-in-hand with any reforms of the current global security regime. Yet all trends point only towards a greater interdependence of nations and the accompanying requirement for a greater level of international institution building.

In the final analysis, the primary argument for the creation of an international force is one of principle. For although international policies must be based in part on practical realities, they must also have a firm basis in moral principle.

The overarching principle of our age is the oneness of humanity; its logical corollary in the political realm is the principle of collective security. And, in the same way, the logical corollary of collective security is that it must be served by a credible and capable instrument of will. That instrument, in our age of interdependence, is an international force capable of enforcing the moral voice and legally construed will of the international community of nations. *

There are a number of critical advantages offered by an international force that is capable of quick, unified and meaningful action to maintain or reestablish peace.

INTERFAITH



In Singapore, President Ong Teng Cheong hosted a reception on 3 June 1999 at his residence for members of the Inter-Religious Organization of Singapore. Representatives of the Bahá'í Faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, Sikhism, Taoism and Zoroastrianism were present. President Cheong is standing front row center, with Selvam Satanam of the Singapore Bahá'í community on his right, second from the left in the front.

In Australia, an International Women's Conference charts new directions

"This conference will be a turning point towards the next level of women's development."

**– Fiona Krautil,
director of the
Australian
Affirmative Action
Agency**

BRISBANE, Australia — Mapping a new path for women in the coming millennium, an international women's conference here focused on forging new partnerships among diverse sectors of society, taking practical measures to promote the advancement of women, and making spiritual and moral values the key to consolidating gains.

Organized by the Office for the Advancement of Women of the Bahá'í community of Australia, the conference was titled "Partnerships for the Next Millennium" and it drew a wide range of speakers and participants from Australasia and beyond.

Held 16-18 September 1999, the conference was attended by more than 450 women and men from at least 15 countries, making it one of the largest and most global women's events ever held in Australia.

It was also among the most diverse of such gatherings; almost one-third of the participants were indigenous Australians, an inclusiveness that was a key goal and major feature of the conference. According to organizers and participants, the variety of individuals, groups and points of view at the gathering broke new ground here.

"This conference will be a turning point

towards the next level of women's development," said Fiona Krautil, director of the Australian Affirmative Action Agency, who was a plenary speaker. Ms. Krautil noted that the conference was not just about diversity but about "valuing diversity," saying the distinctive qualities of women, particularly in relation to men, must be accepted and appreciated at all levels of society.

Forging new partnerships, as the Conference title implies, was a major theme, and accepting and valuing diversity underlies that process, said Ms. Krautil and others. In addresses by some 15 plenary speakers, as well as in 70 or so smaller scheduled workshops and seminars, the advantages, processes and practicalities were outlined for the forming of partnerships between various sectors within the women's movement — and with outside groupings of civil society and government.

The types of partnerships discussed included not only women-to-women and women-to-men, but also alliances with businesses, government, and like-minded non-governmental organizations, as well as different cultures and spiritual groups.

"Partnerships are critical for bringing about lasting and positive change," said Katina Jones, chairperson of the Australian Bahá'í Committee for Advancement of Women and managing director of EQUALS International Pty Ltd, an international training and development company. "We are seeing the increasing need, on a global scale, to form strategic partnerships with our colleagues and counterparts. These partnerships need to be developed in all areas of our lives, politically, socially, culturally, environmentally, and on a business level."

Practical points

Many of the speakers focused on the practical realities of forging partnerships.

Felicity Hill of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) suggested that the building of partnerships needs to begin among women. "We need to



Networking between various organizations was a key feature of the conference.

work in solidarity with each other,” said Ms. Hill, who is director of the WILPF’s United Nations Liaison Office in New York. “We need to recognize our differences and realize that there are economic and political structures in our way that we need to work together to break down.”

Adrienne Ward, Westpac Banking Corporation’s Queensland Manager for its Women in Business program, emphasized the need to develop strategic alliances and partners if women are to climb the corporate ranks. She told of Westpac’s efforts to encourage women in the male-dominated banking industry through its use of a special mentoring program and said that mentoring can be a key means of developing new partners and alliances.

Dale Spender, an adjunct professor at the University of Queensland, spoke of the need for women to become conversant with computers and information technology. “To obtain a more equitable distribution of the world’s resources, everyone, not just a privileged few, must be a digital citizen in a global village,” said Dr. Spender. “While women have the qualities to succeed in this information age and while we are in the best position ever to develop our talents and to share an equal place in the public and private world, we still have to be vigilant, for ourselves and for the global community.”

The conference itself, by virtue of its scope of participants and its organization, encouraged networking among women’s groups, community groups, and among business and spiritual groups. Information booths set up by organizations such as AUSTCARE, Women’s InfoLink and the International Women’s Development Agency, furthered the networking process.

“Due to the conference I have made new partnerships with people in the justice field, women’s interstate services, in private practice and other government areas,” said Cheryl Hastie, a participant.

In addition to Australia, participants and speakers came from Canada, Fiji, France, Japan, Macedonia, Malaysia, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Philippines, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Vanuatu. Speakers included women in senior government appointments, well-known feminists, authors and prominent representatives from non-governmental organizations.

The conference also sought to prepare women for next year’s “Beijing plus Five”



deliberations at the United Nations in New York. A plan to send three young women from Australasia to the New York meeting, scheduled for June 2000, was announced.

An Aboriginal dance group, Jagera Jargum, performed in the opening ceremony.

Aboriginal Reconciliation

As noted, the conference also saw a high level of participation by Aboriginal women — and, indeed, it focused as a major theme on the process of national reconciliation with Australia’s indigenous people.

“This conference was the first time that indigenous women felt truly equal,” said Grace Smallwood, an indigenous health rights activist. “In this conference they have not been treated as tokens, but welcomed as full participants in every session and listened to.”

For decades, Australia’s indigenous people have faced discrimination and more — hundreds if not thousands of Aboriginal children were forcibly removed from their homes for education, at great cost to their culture and heritage. Recently, a process of national reconciliation has been launched, which aims to improve relations between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider community.

Indigenous Australian issues were featured throughout the conference duration. Aboriginal speakers were featured in two plenary sessions and at least five workshops addressed such issues as law and spirituality, education and women’s business from an indigenous point of view.

“This conference was the first time that indigenous women felt truly equal. In this conference they have not been treated as tokens, but welcomed as full participants in every session and listened to.”

– Grace Smallwood



Evelyn Scott, second from left, chairperson of the National Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, made an impromptu appearance at the conference. Shown, left to right, are: Fiona McDonald, chair, Australian Bahá'í community; Scott; Linda Shallcross, of the Australian Bahá'í Office for the Advancement of Women (ABOAW); Jackie Huggins, member of the National Reconciliation Council; Linda Myers of ABOAW; and Pat Levy of ABOAW.

"I hope that women take away the knowledge that we are unique people and have existed in this country for 60,000 years," said Jackie Huggins, a member of the National Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. "We are the first Australians and represent just 2% of the Australian population. We can't do it by ourselves. Indigenous Australians need to form partnerships with women's groups, with faith groups and community groups that can assist us and join us in the true spirit of reconciliation."

Ms. Huggins said she believed the spirit of reconciliation was manifested at the conference. With this spirit, she said, "we can communicate, respect, acknowledge and trust each other as individuals," adding that if everyone appreciated this spirit, "then we wouldn't have the hatred, violence and discrimination that goes with being a member of a minority group."

In addition to featuring speeches and workshops on reconciliation, conference participants were offered the chance to express commitment to a "Draft Document for Reconciliation" — which essentially pledges an end to discrimination and a beginning of respect for each other's cultures.

Because of these efforts, Evelyn Scott, chairperson of the National Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, who made an impromptu appearance at the conference, said she felt that the conference "was an important vehicle to communicate the indigenous agenda not only to Australian women, but to people attending from all

areas of the world."

Many participants said they felt moved by the segments on indigenous issues. Glenys Charlton, herself indigenous, said it was a unique experience to feel valued and to be considered an integral part of such an event. "This conference allows indigenous Australians and Torres Strait Islanders to be heard," she said.

Spiritual energy

Many participants said the conference was also distinctive for its emphasis on spiritual and moral values as they relate to women's issues. For example, more than a dozen of the speeches and workshops explicitly listed spirituality, ethics or religion in their titles. Further, other topics focused on education and communication, rather than political activism, suggesting new strategies for women to consolidate the gains that have been made in the acknowledgment of their rights worldwide.

"The conference had a strong spiritual, practical base," said June Perkins, an indigenous community development officer for the Australian Bahá'í community. "I learned that a lot of spiritual energy is generated when women come together."

Ann Hinton, who gave a workshop entitled "Developing Women's unique capacities — a spiritual quest," said she found the conference quite different from other women's events in that it showed how "the demand for change and justice and the intellectual approach can be tempered with love and spiritual values."

In her closing address, Lyn Lane, director of the Australian Bahá'í Office for the Advancement of Women, said the achievement of full equality between women and men is a prerequisite for world peace. The conference, she said, had been designed to promote equality by sharing new concepts, fostering new partnerships, and promoting the process of reconciliation with Australia's indigenous people.

"These outcomes are based on a new mindset, a new way of looking at issues; a new approach and a renewed commitment to the advancement of the world's women," said Ms. Lane. "The last three days have presented many personal and collective opportunities to connect across boundaries so that the common threads — that we can all work on together — can be woven into the bigger picture." *

— Reported by Marie Chittleborough

Earth Charter process offers a model for global consensus building

SAN JOSÉ, Costa Rica — Working out of an international secretariat based in this lush tropical country, the Earth Council is coordinating what may well be the most extensive document drafting project ever undertaken by civil society.

Since 1995, the Council, among others, has spearheaded the effort to draft an Earth Charter — a statement of ethical principles similar to the UN Declaration on Human Rights that its authors hope will guide the conduct of people and nations towards each other and the earth in order to ensure peace, equity and a sustainable future.

Last April, the Council unveiled an updated draft, known as the Benchmark Draft II, and it is currently soliciting comments on it. The plan is to prepare another draft, based on comments received by early next year. That draft will also be widely distributed for more feedback. The hope is that by 2002 a final version can be presented to the UN General Assembly for possible endorsement as an international declaration.

By creating a document that has been thoroughly reviewed and endorsed by as many groups and sectors of civil society as possible, organizers hope that government policy makers will, in the end, find it impossible to ignore.

"The major difference between the Earth Charter process and other such international documents is that this has been a really broad participatory process," said Mirian Vilela, who is coordinator of the Earth Charter Project for the Council. "We want to assure cultural diversity in the result, not only to have a rich document in the end, but to have people's involvement in terms of a feeling of commitment and ownership."

As other non-governmental organizations consider how to achieve consensus on a variety of international issues, the process used by the drafters of the Earth Charter offers an exceptional example of how to solicit and incorporate ideas and information from civil society groups and prominent individuals worldwide.

Ms. Vilela said that groups of NGOs have established national Earth Charter committees in 40 countries, and that ad hoc groups are working on the Charter in 23 more. In all, she said, hundreds if not thousands of organizations have considered and commented on the Charter, as have thousands of individuals.

The drafting committee is a loose aggregation of some 40 individuals in 20 countries who review the comments and determine whether and how to incorporate them into the final draft, said Steven C. Rockefeller, chair of the Earth Charter drafting Committee.

"There are several things that allow this," said Mr. Rockefeller, explaining how worldwide input is gathered and considered. "One is that with e-mail and the internet, we can all communicate with each other in extraordinary new ways, and we can intensify the process of participatory decision making. We are also travelling all over the world, going to conferences and such, so as to make this as inclusive as possible."

Mr. Rockefeller said the effort to include as many groups as possible has paid off in helping to arrive at a draft that is acceptable to as many people as possible. For example, he said, the drafters have long sought the input of indigenous groups. In consulting with groups representing the Inuit people of the far northern regions, they learned of their objections to a line in the draft Charter that spoke of the need to "treat all beings with compassion."

"The Inuit people, in the circumpolar north, are wholly dependent on animals for food — they don't have any agriculture," said Mr. Rockefeller. "And they objected to the term 'compassion' with reference to animals, saying that they didn't think you could hunt animals with 'compassion.' They also feared that animal rights groups would use the language to force them to abandon traditional hunting practices."

After long consultation with the Inuit —

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As others consider how to achieve consensus on international issues, the process used by the drafters of the Earth Charter offers an example of how to solicit and incorporate ideas from civil society groups and prominent individuals worldwide.



Logo of the Earth Council. For more information on the Earth Charter, go to <http://www.earthcharter.org>

Annual UN DPI Conference becoming an important venue for NGO networking

The role that NGOs can play in stemming the negative effects of globalization is examined.

UNITED NATIONS — Despite the disruptions globalization causes, it can potentially provide great benefits to all humanity — and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have a critical role in ensuring that such positive outcomes are reached.

That was one of the main themes voiced by high-level speakers, ranging from Jordan's Queen Noor to former Costa Rican President Oscar Arias, at the 52nd annual conference for non-governmental organizations at the United Nations in September, which examined the topic of globalization and its impact — good and bad — on the world.

"The emergence of non-governmental organizations as a major international actor is one of the most important developments of the past half-century," said President Arias, who is now head of an NGO, the Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress.

also become an important place for networking among NGOs themselves.

"More and more NGOs are coming to this conference, which indicates a growing interest in the work of the UN — and it also indicates that more and more NGOs want to meet other NGOs and network," said Helene Hoedl, an information officer for the UN's Department of Public Information.

Ms. Hoedl said preregistration for the conference had risen by roughly one-third in the last three years, from 2245 to more than 3000 (with actual attendance this year at around 1,700). "I believe it is now the largest NGO venue on a regular basis," she said.

In addition to plenary sessions featuring well-known figures in international affairs, the event has for the last three years offered midday workshop sessions sponsored entirely by NGOs. Their topics ranged from the Hague Appeal for Peace to the role of ethics in societal transformation.

These sessions have rapidly grown in popularity, said Carl Murrell, who chaired the conference's Planning Committee this year. "This year, for example, we were contacted by some UN agencies, who wanted to host some of these dialogues," said Mr. Murrell, alternate UN representative of the United States Bahá'í community. "But we said, 'No, we want them for NGOs.' So the word is out about the impact of these workshops, and people really see them as an opportunity for dialogue among NGOs and to build networks."

NGOs and Globalization

The main speakers focused on the new possibilities — and responsibilities — that globalization has given to NGOs.

"Globalization has become the essence of modern life," said UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in an opening address. "It must become second nature in our thinking. But as we have seen, this is not an easy task. Many experience globalization not as an agent of progress, but as a disruptive force, almost hurricane-like in its ability to destroy lives, jobs and traditions in the blink of an eye."

Globalization, continued on page 14



Shown left to right, at a panel discussion on "Culture and Communications Technology: Empowerment and Marginalization," are Carl Murrell, chair of the conference planning committee; Meraash Mahajuodeen, senior producer, Young Asia Television; Peter Arnett, chief correspondent, ForeignTV.com; and Victoria Jones, a US television host.

"In the new millennium, non-governmental organizations will have to lead the way in the quest to advance ... security, democracy and peace."

Bringing together some 1,700 representatives of NGOs from 15-17 September 1999, the conference also offered a glimpse of the ongoing and evolving relationship between civil society and the United Nations.

Held each year by the UN's Department of Public Information (DPI), the conference aims mainly to educate representatives about UN activities and points of view. But it has

US Bahá'í community urges strong support for the United Nations – including full US funding

UNITED NATIONS — Among the thousands of NGO representatives at this year's UN DPI/NGO conference were 16 Bahá'ís from local communities in the United States of America.

Their presence at the event represents part of a strong effort within the Bahá'í community of the United States to support the United Nations and its mission of promoting international peace and security.

Since 1947, the American Bahá'í community has been accredited as a non-governmental organization by DPI (Department of Public Information). Further, as a national community, it has over the years been involved in numerous UN-related projects, from the organizing of local UN Day observances to lobbying in the United States Senate for ratification of major UN human rights conventions.

"The Bahá'í teachings explicitly call for the establishment of a world federal system to uphold and maintain world peace," said Jeffery Huffines, the United States Bahá'í representative to the United Nations. "And the United Nations, imperfect though it may be, is the single most important international peace organization in the world."

Most recently, the Bahá'í community of the United States has participated in a major campaign to urge the American Congress to pay its back dues to the UN. According to the UN, the United States owes the organization US\$1.6 billion in assessed contributions.

There are some 130,000 Bahá'ís in the United States, living in more than 7,100 localities in all 50 states. Over the last three years, individuals and groups of American Bahá'ís have been engaged in writing letters to their Congressional representatives — and in some cases holding meetings with them — to urge payment of UN dues.

"Our goal is to encourage the United States to be a leader in the whole international system," said Kit Cosby, director of the Washington-based Office of External Affairs for the American Bahá'í community. "We believe that the United States has a legal and moral obligation, not only to live up to its promise to fund the United Nations, but also to be a leader in human rights and other areas required to build the kind of international institutions that are needed for a true global civilization to emerge."

Since 1994, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the US and Amnesty International USA have co-chaired a Washington-based working group of more than 100 national-level organizations urging the US ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In the past, the US Bahá'í community, working with other US NGOs, has been successful in efforts to urge United States legislators to ratify other UN-

negotiated treaties such as the Genocide Convention, the Convention Against Torture, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Race Convention.

These efforts have been mirrored at the local level throughout the US, where Bahá'ís have long been at the forefront in local observances of events like UN Day, Human Rights Day and International Women's Day.

Last year, for example, Bahá'í communities in the United States were among the main organizers of the 52 state-level "town hall" meetings that were held in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

The willingness of individual Bahá'ís in the United States to support the UN is exemplified by the fact that the 16 Bahá'ís who attended the DPI Conference on globalization paid their own way for the trip to New York.

"I wanted an update on global trends that I can share with colleagues and friends," said Rolando Maddela, a physician from Grand Prairie, Texas. "I've been interested in the UN since the first grade, when our teacher talked about its important role. And as a public health professional, I am aware of the work of the World Health Organization and other UN agencies."

Mark Griffin, an engineer from Oxford, Massachusetts, has been active in the campaign to urge support for the UN. He has asked friends to write letters to their Congressional representatives in support of the UN.

"The UN has an appeal in itself, and I wanted to 'get a flavor' of what it was all about," said Mr. Griffin. "The current importance of the United Nations is that it provides much of an institutional framework for when the world is ready for a world governing body." *



Some of the Bahá'ís who attended the 1999 UN DPI/NGO Conference gathered for an informal group photograph.

Community health workers in Uganda

Hand-washing stations, set up near latrines, are among the sanitation measures that have been promoted by community health workers in the Uganda Bahá'í health project.



Uganda, continued from page one

More than a health education success story, perhaps the real lesson of the Bahá'í project lies in its record of sustainability after major overseas funding ended.

More than a health education success story, perhaps the real lesson of the Bahá'í project lies in its record of sustainability. Started in 1986 by the Bahá'í community of Uganda on a very small scale, the program received a huge boost in 1993 when the Canadian Public Health Association helped to fund a three-year project to expand the training of community health volunteers and establish village health committees.

By the time the Canadian-sponsored funding ended in 1996, some 71 community health workers had been trained and about 65 were actively operating in their home communities. The project has continued its training process, offering courses to 20 more volunteers over the last three years, and managed to support sustained activity by some 53 community workers — despite *a two-thirds reduction in its budget since the end of Canadian funding.*

Further, a relatively high percentage of those trained have been women, reflecting hard-fought success at overcoming the traditional reluctance to allow women to work at such tasks.

Encouraging sustainability was the aim

of the Canadian Public Health Association — and remains a major goal for UBID.

"I'm delighted to hear what has been going on," said Dr. Edward Ragan, who directed the CPHA International Immunization Program during the mid-1990s, discussing the ongoing activity in the UBID health project. "It is in keeping with what we tried to do [with our funding], which was not necessarily just immunize children nor simply train people medically, but to create a context for sustainability, which is the way development will be done in the future."

"A lot that happens within the Bahá'í community is because it has a strong spiritual base to it, and you don't find the same strong degree of fervor in other groups, and that is a plus point," Dr. Ragan added.

Reaching the underserved

The UBID health program operates in *isolated rural areas of two districts in eastern Uganda.* In both Kumi and Soroti Districts, the terrain is mostly flat grassland interrupted sporadically by forests and isolated swamps and served by few paved roads.

The people in the area are Itesos. They are mostly farmers growing cassava, groundnuts, millet and cotton on small plots

ploughed by oxen and weeded by hand. They raise chickens, turkeys and cows. Homes, made mainly from mud bricks with thatch roofs, are scattered over a wide area.

"The strength of the Bahá'í project in Kumi and Soroti was that it was willing to go down to the most underserved areas of the districts and try to make the much needed health services available," said Fred Ssengooba, a lecturer at Makerere University's Institute of Public Health, who has examined the project. "There is a serious shortage of trained health providers ... in distant rural areas."

The project's approach has been simple: to train local volunteers to be community health workers (CHWs) and community vaccinators (CVs) who could teach their fellow villagers the basics of home hygiene and sanitation and administer vaccinations against major childhood diseases.

Since 1993, the program has trained 76 community health workers and another 14 higher-level local health education specialists, known as trainers, who work with the community health workers. It has done this for less than US \$100,000 in overseas assistance, a bargain price for international development programs.

Along the way, the program has struggled with a number of obstacles, from the distrust of villagers over the safety of vaccination to the traditional reluctance of women to "work" outside their homes. There have been internal challenges, as well, as the Ugandan Bahá'í community sought to improve its own administrative capacity to operate such a program.

But the results were a "tremendous success" when measured against the project's initial goals, according to an evaluation done in 1996 by Narathius Asingwire, acting head of the Social Work and Social Administration Department of Makerere University of Kampala. According to Mr. Asingwire's report, written in collaboration with Dr. Ssengooba, the UBID health program:

- More than met its goal of increasing immunization coverage by six percent among children under the age of five, achieving instead an increase of 28 percent.
- Registered "good success" in promoting community health care

practices "as evidenced by high latrine coverage, plate racks, garbage pits and sanitation practices."

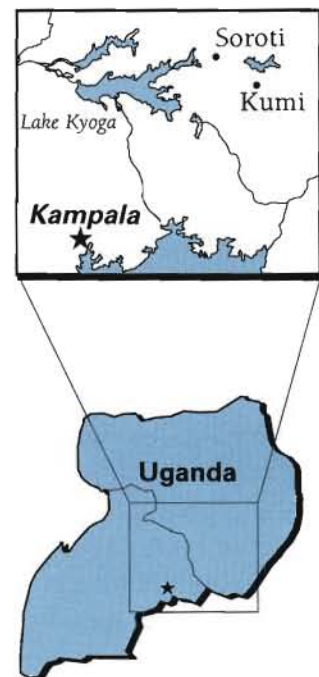
- Achieved a retention rate for its volunteers of more than 90 percent, offering a "clear testimony that manpower trained can make the project survive for a long time."

"What I found unique with the Bahá'í health project was the element of keeping the volunteer staff on board without burning-out," said Mr. Asingwire in a recent interview. "In most projects, volunteers with time tend to burn-out due to lack of incentives, such as remuneration.

"This, however, needs to be appreciated in the context of the Bahá'í principles and values which in a way greatly promote that sense of unselfishness, where the followers can work voluntarily for the common good of the community," added Mr. Asingwire.

Indeed, program managers agree that the project's record of success, both in relation to short term health improvements and longer term sustainability, stems largely from the project's distinctive emphasis on volunteerism and community service, which emerges from the spiritual ideals that underlie the project's conception.

"The principle of service to others as the highest good and the concept of 'work as worship,' along with the equality of women and men, which are all Bahá'í principles, are incorporated completely in our training and our field work," said Vinita Walkup-Gilbert,



Shown at left are members of the Bahá'í local Spiritual Assembly of the village of Kalapata. Here, as in other villages, these local Bahá'í governing councils have been involved in the UBID health program, providing a grassroots-level administrative connection to village life.

"The condition for the selection of the community health workers was that they had to be living in the place where they would work, be married and be accepted by the community. When we heard this, the right thing, we said 'yes.'"

—William Ebetu, farmer in Tilling

who was coordinator of the UBID health project from 1993 through 1997 and who still serves as a consultant. "We feel the emphasis on these principles makes a significant difference in what happens on the ground. It is reflected in the time our people volunteer and in the way they treat the people they serve."

Connecting with the community

Community members say the project has indeed saved many young lives. "Communities were not aware of why their children were dying," said Ketula Arinyi, a 45-year-old mother of 10 who is now a community health worker in Tilling.

And there was reluctance, at first, to the measures proposed by the UBID-trained workers. Some mothers, for example, believed that vaccinations would harm, not help, their children and they hid them during immunization campaigns. The key to stemming those fears lay in the selection and use of volunteers from each community.

"When the program started, an anti-government politician said this was a program of the government to reduce the population," said Mr. Ebetu, the 61-year-old Tilling farmer quoted earlier. He noted that although he had a child who died of measles long before the project, he was still wary. "Because if the program was free, we questioned it. It may be to kill our children."

But, said Mr. Ebetu, once it became clear that the program was community-based and was drawing its volunteers from each village, the attitudes changed. "The condition for the selection of the community health workers was that they had to

be living in the place where they would work, be married and be accepted by the community. When we heard this, the right thing, we said 'yes.'"

Patrick Okanya, a community health worker in Kalapata added: "We would show the difference between our children, who were immunized, and their children who were not. We used ourselves as an example."

Explained Alfred Okello, who is currently coordinator of the project: "Each community health worker has the goal to raise awareness of the people about the prevention of diseases. We use charts on basic health messages with different problems facing the community such as the effects of drinking unclean water."

Encouraging women volunteers

The Ugandan Bahá'í community, as well as its Canadian funding partners, felt it was very important that there be a balance between women and men in the program. Of the total volunteers trained so far, 50 are men and 41 are women.

Much effort was put into recruiting women volunteers into the program and keeping them active in the communities.

"One of the things we did was to encourage women to come to the training with their babies and with baby sitters," said Ms. Gilbert. "This made it possible for many women to take part who otherwise would not have been able to. It made a lot more problems for us — such as having ten babies crying at once — but it was the only way we could ensure more women were involved."

Another issue was the objection of husbands. "At the beginning, my husband was doubting, thinking 'maybe they want to grab my wife away,'" said Margaret Okoboi, a UBID-trained community health worker from Kalapata. "But now the changes made in the family have made him very happy," she added, referring to their use of latrines and drying racks, and access to clean water.

To help overcome such worries, project managers visited husbands early on in the project. "We tried to sensitize the whole community when we went in to select a volunteer worker," said Ms. Gilbert. "We talked about the whole concept of the equality of women and the great value of women as community health workers."

The training given to each volunteer included information on immunization, the prevention and treatment of diarrhea and



The village health committee in Kalapata. Margaret Okoboi, a CHW, is on the right.

worms, rehydration therapy, malaria prevention, nutrition, child health care, pregnancy health, child spacing, first aid and household sanitation. The training is distinctive for its follow-up, with refresher courses offered after three to four months of monitoring in the field.

The project also exemplifies the importance of partnership in international development efforts. The partnership underlying the Uganda project is multilayered: the Canadian Bahá'í community played a key role as a liaison between the CPHA and the Bahá'í community of Uganda, through its Canadian Bahá'í International Development Service (CBIDS). Money was also contributed by the Bahá'í International Community.

"Strengthening institutional capacity was a background theme throughout the entire endeavor," said Andy Tamas, secretary of CBIDS executive committee. "All parties, including ourselves, experienced that as the years and activities went by." Canada's funding for the Uganda project, which was part of a CAN\$30 million campaign to strengthen primary health care and immunization, originated with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). CIDA contracted the Canadian Public Health Association to design and manage the campaign, which worked with 29 partner agencies to support 60 projects in 28 countries.

Certainly, the overseas partnership did much to strengthen the capacity of the Ugandan Bahá'í community to carry on. "When the project began there was no full-time person to look after it," said Brian Burraston, the current director. "There was no reliable administrator or management available. And now since UBID exists it allows other opportunities to be explored."

According to Mr. Burraston of UBID, the majority of the volunteer workers trained during the last six years remain actively involved in health education and care in their communities. "In 1998, 53 were filing reports at least every other month," said Mr. Burraston. "And community health workers are notorious for not sending in reports even when they are working. And what is significant, I think, is that at least one-third of that number have been working for five years without pay."

Such activity is in evidence in many of the villages where the program has operated. In Kalapata, for example, every household has a latrine except where the household is built on hard rock. Almost all houses have



drying racks for dishes. No one uses water from shallow wells for anything but brick making. Most use water from deeper drilled "boreholes"; others use home wells which have been cleaned of debris and fenced. Most of the children are now vaccinated against basic diseases.

Likewise in Tilling. "Most households now have a proper pit latrine, a drying rack for dishes and eating utensils, a clean source of drinking and cooking water, and swept grounds around their houses," said Stephen Opedun, secretary of the local council which serves Tilling. "Perhaps most significantly, nearly 100% of the children in Tilling are fully immunized against the six killer diseases."

Referring to the moral education component of the training given to CHWs, Mr. Opedun added: "People are realizing that the moral values promoted by the program are a good thing."

Mr. Burraston says that much credit for the improvements in hygiene should be shared with the Government, which has recently been making an effort to increase the use of pit latrines. "A cholera epidemic in the country has focused attention on sanitation and produced a positive result in terms of improved sanitation in schools and homes," he said.

But the people here openly attribute such improvements to the adoption of the hygiene and health messages presented by the local community health workers trained by UBID. Said Ginatio Tukei, a farmer in Kalapata: "Now people in other places are demanding for the project to be extended into their villages." *

— With reporting by Steve Worth

To supervise community health volunteers, project managers use a motorcycle and bicycles. Shown above is Alfred Okello, the project's coordinator, with the project's motorcycle.

"People are realizing that the moral values promoted by the program are a good thing."

— Stephen Opedun, secretary of the Tilling local council

Earth Charter a model for global consensus building

Charter, continued from page 7

and other indigenous groups — the drafting committee has come up with new language, said Mr. Rockefeller. “We took out the word ‘compassion’ and put in the phrase ‘treat all living beings with respect and consideration’ — and they were willing to accept that,” he said. The new wording will appear in the next draft, due in early 2000.

Part of the process of inclusion has been a simple matter of taking the time to contact and listen to as many voices as possible. As a concept, the Earth Charter was first proposed in 1987 by the Brundtland Commission, and, for a time, it appeared as if governments might approve an Earth Charter at the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in

1992. When governments could not achieve consensus on a Charter, NGOs decided to continue the drafting process under the coordination of the Earth Council.

Throughout the decade-long process, the Bahá’í International Community has been an active international partner, giving input, hosting and participating in meetings to solicit comments, and serving on various Earth Charter committees.

“The Earth Charter is perhaps the best expression of the principles for sustainable development ever produced in a succinct document,” said Peter Adriance, a Bahá’í representative active in the Earth Charter USA Network. “The Charter upholds Bahá’u’lláh’s pivotal principle of the oneness of humankind. Given increasing circulation and attention in the years ahead, it should serve as an important guide toward living sustainably on Earth in the 21st century and beyond.” *

UN DPI/NGO conference a venue for NGO networking

Globalization, continued from page 8

Grappling with such force, Mr. Annan said, requires help from NGOs. “Governments need non-governmental partners,” he said. “The private sector, as vital and dynamic as it is, cannot by itself give global markets a human face or reach the millions on the margins.”

Queen Noor said that while globalization has raised the fortunes of many, it has also left others behind. “It is time to place the human face at the center of the globalization debate and frame comprehensive approaches to the threats to human security posed by marginalization, poverty and human rights abuses,” she said. “Globalization holds the potential for unprecedented ben-

efits, but these benefits, to be fully realized, have to be shared equitably.”

To do that, she said, will require a new partnership between business, governments and NGOs. “An alliance between governments, NGOs, local firms, and multinational corporations can foster cooperation in the developmental process and promote human welfare everywhere.”

UN Development Programme (UNDP) administrator Mark Malloch Brown said that globalization is causing a dramatic power shift in the international system. “It is not a straightforward shift, from the strong to the weak,” said Mr. Brown. “It is more between different kinds of institutions, from public to private, from profit to non-profit, from nation states to other organizations of people, to NGOs, to community organizations, to global organizations of people.” *

“An alliance between governments, NGOs, local firms, and multinational corporations can foster cooperation in the developmental process and promote human welfare everywhere.”

– Queen Noor

U.S. Bahá’í Leader Appointed to Presidential Commission on Religious Freedom

WASHINGTON — Firuz Kazemzadeh, a long-serving leader in the Bahá’í community of the United States of America, has been appointed by United States President William Clinton to serve on the Commission on International Religious Freedom.

Dr. Kazemzadeh, a professor emeritus of history at Yale University, was one of three Clinton appointees to the nine-member Commission, which was established by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.

Passing it with unanimous approval, Con-

gress signed the Act into law on 27 October 1998. The Commission, which is advisory in nature, will issue an annual report to the US Secretary of State and the President, providing recommendations for US policy responses to international religious freedom violations.

Dr. Kazemzadeh has served on the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States for 35 years and is currently its Secretary for External Affairs. His appointment to the Commission was announced by the White House in May 1999. *

Review: *Groovin' High*

Review, continued from back page

Music was in his blood and he taught himself the trumpet. In the mid-1930s he moved north to Philadelphia and later to New York, where he quickly established himself as a competent young player with a distinctive style. He worked with a number of well-known black bands, including the famed big band of Cab Calloway. Mr. Gillespie's tenure with Mr. Calloway ended when he pulled a knife on the leader and stabbed him in the leg. According to Mr. Shipton, Mr. Calloway had falsely accused Mr. Gillespie of lobbing a spitball at him during a performance—something that was not entirely out of character, inasmuch as Mr. Gillespie was well-known for his high jinks and practical jokes, which was part of the reason for his nickname "Dizzy."

In the 1940s, during late-night jam sessions with Mr. Parker, Mr. Gillespie worked out the new musical ideas that were to become known as bebop and which revolutionized the whole sound of jazz. Mr. Shipton believes that Mr. Gillespie's contributions to bebop have been underestimated.

"By being the one who organized the principal ideas of the beboppers into an intellectual framework, Dizzy was the key figure who allowed the music to progress beyond a small and restricted circle of after-hours enthusiasts," Mr. Shipton writes. "This was a major element in his life, and virtually everyone to whom I spoke stressed Dizzy's exceptional generosity with his time in explaining and exploring musical ideas. Modern jazz might have happened without Dizzy, but it would not have had so clearly articulated a set of harmonic and rhythmic precepts, nor so dramatic a set of recorded examples of these being put into practice."

Throughout the book, Mr. Shipton offers up a careful analysis of Mr. Gillespie's recordings and considerable history and detail about the other musicians who worked with Mr. Gillespie. Inasmuch as Mr. Gillespie played with virtually all of the jazz "greats" of the 1940s through the 1990s, the book thus does double duty as a basic introduction to the history, life-styles and personalities of jazz during its formative years.

As he aged, Mr. Gillespie's contributions to jazz turned more to the social and political realm. In the 1950s, he was sent on a series of world tours by the US State Department, part of a project to showcase

American culture. He proved himself an able ambassador, speaking up not only for jazz and America, but for humanity in general.

At an "invitation-only" concert in a swank club in Turkey, Mr. Gillespie noticed a "gang of ragamuffins outside the wall, peering in," writes Mr. Shipton. Before he started playing, Mr. Gillespie asked that the young people be allowed in. "Man, we're here to play for all the people," said Mr. Gillespie.

In the late 1980s, when Mr. Gillespie was in his seventies, he established his "United Nation Orchestra." It featured a roster of musicians from all over the Americas, proving that jazz had truly become an international musical style.

Concludes Mr. Shipton: "By far Dizzy's greatest achievement in his final years was to bury forever the image of the hothead, quick to draw his knife and stand his corner, and to suppress his childhood mean streak once and for all. From the ideal platform of his United Nation Orchestra, with its pathbreaking fusion of musical styles from North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean, he had demonstrated his commitment to the principles of unity, peace, and brotherhood of which he spoke so often. He ended his autobiography with the wish that he would be remembered as a humanitarian. It is the greatest tribute to him to say that his wish came true." *

From the ideal platform of his United Nation Orchestra, with its pathbreaking fusion of musical styles from North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean, he had demonstrated his commitment to the principles of unity, peace, and brotherhood of which he spoke so often.

DIPLOMACY



In Cameroon, during the Summit of the African Heads of State on Conservation and Management of the Central African Forest, a high-level reception was organized jointly by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Cameroon and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) on 15 March 1999. Pictured above, left to right, are: Ephraime Inoni, assistant secretary-general to the President of Cameroon; Guilda Walker, representative of the Bahá'í International Community; and Naah Ondoua Sylvestre, Cameroon's Minister for Environment and Forestry.

From hothead to world citizen

Over the last century and a half, jazz has evolved from the folk songs of Africans living enslaved in America to a major world musical form, played and appreciated in nearly every nation on the planet.

One of the major figures in this evolution was John Birks "Dizzy" Gillespie, whose harmonic and rhythmic innovations in the 1940s helped transform the musical language of jazz into a modernistic expression that captivated audiences worldwide.

With *Groovin' High: The Life of Dizzy Gillespie*, British jazz reviewer Alyn Shipton has written the first major biography of Mr. Gillespie since his death in 1993. Carefully researched, the book peels back much of the mythology and considerable misinformation that has shrouded important elements of Mr. Gillespie's story — while at the same time reemphasizing and confirming his contributions to the development of jazz and its recognition as a major art form.

Among other things, Mr. Shipton shows that Mr. Gillespie's position in the creation of "bebop" — an original form of jazz that featured fast, complex and asymmetrical melody lines coupled with offbeat rhythms — in many respects outstrips that of saxophonist Charlie Parker, who many jazz historians have previously credited as the major force in that innovation.

Mr. Shipton also outlines Mr. Gillespie's role as the jazz world's ambassador to the world at large. Spreading the message through numerous world-girdling tours, Mr. Gillespie's joyful but hip demeanor, easy-going humor, and style-setting black beret, horn-rimmed spectacles and goatee came to personify the modern jazz musician.

On another level, *Groovin' High* charts the changes in Mr. Gillespie's personal life, as he transformed from a knife-carrying roughneck in his youth to a genuine world citizen whose support for social causes like racial integration ultimately became synonymous with his identity. That transformation, according to Mr. Shipton, was in part effected by Mr. Gillespie's mid-life conversion to and strong practice of the Bahá'í Faith.

Mr. Shipton writes that after Dizzy became a Bahá'í in the late 1960s, "even though

his mean streak would still surface from time to time, those who knew him through the latter part of his life noticed changes. Author Nat Hentoff, for example, wrote: 'I knew Dizzy for some forty years, and he did evolve into a spiritual person. That's a phrase I almost never use, because many of the people who call themselves spiritual would kill for their faith. But Dizzy reached an inner strength and discipline that total pacifists call "soul force." He always had a vivid presence.... He made people feel good, and he was the sound of surprise, even when his horn was in its case.'

Mr. Gillespie's origins certainly did not presage a life of peace. Born in Cheraw,



South Carolina, on 21 October 1917, Mr. Gillespie had a rough childhood. His strict father — a bricklayer and Saturday night musician — often whipped him, and the young Mr. Gillespie was correspondingly pugnacious. "I used to fight anybody, big, small, white or colored," Mr. Gillespie once said. "I was just a devil, a strong devil."

Review, continued on page 15

**Groovin' High: The
Life of Dizzy
Gillespie**

By Alyn Shipton

**Oxford University
Press**

Oxford