



UN-NGO-IRENE UPDATE

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WHAT'S NEW

- The NGO Section has successfully launched phase IV of its **Paperless Committee** timely for the **resumed session 2003 of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations** in New York 15-19 December 2003. During this one week session, the Committee had before it 128 new and deferred applications for consultative status, six requests for reclassification of status and 65 new and deferred quadrennial reports. Of these the Committee recommended 69 organizations for ECOSOC status, decided that upgrades in status were justified for three NGOs and took note of 52 quadrennial reports. A **progress report on the UN-NGO-IRENE activities** was also presented to the Committee focusing on promoting geographically diverse representation and equitable NGO participation in the intergovernmental process to “achieve a just, balanced, effective and genuine involvement from all regions and areas of the world”.
- The deadline for the **Questionnaire to NGOs on their success stories** in implementing the MDGs is extended to 1st March 2004. All details related to the questionnaire and the summary format are available in UN-NGO-IRENE website at : www.unpan.org/NGO.asp
- Intense preparatory work in New York of Ms Hanifa Mezoui, Chief of the NGO Section, and her colleague, Ms Najet Karaborni, UN-NGO-IRENE Project Coordinator, for the **ECOSOC High Level Segment (HLS) and Coordinating Segment (CS) of July 2004**. Several meetings and consultations were held with UN-NGO-IRENE regional coordinators and interested leading NGOs which expressed their will to host and organize preparatory regional or / and national workshops in their respective countries. All necessary documentation is posted at: <http://www.unpan.org/NGO-ECOSOCSession.asp>
- At the invitation of the **UN Special Rapporteur on Disability, Sheikha Hessa K. A. Al-Thani**, Ms Karaborni undertook, in December 2003, a mission to Doha, Qatar to attend the First Experts Meeting on Disabilities to discuss the Monitoring of the implementation of the Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities adopted ten (10) years ago focusing on civil society involvement and the ethical standards in the preparatory process to drafting the “Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection of the Rights and dignity of Persons with disabilities”. She also guided and advised interested leading NGOs on how to actively participate in the work of the ECOSOC.
- Civil Society groups issued their own declaration **"Shaping Information Societies for Human Needs"** at the **World Summit on the Information Society** in Geneva on 11 December 2003, a day before the official Draft Declaration of Principles **"Building the Information Society: a Global Challenge in the New Millennium"** was released.

- The **World Bank and UNAIDS NGO Award for Innovative HIV/AIDS Projects** was announced on 9 December 2003. The US \$ 460,000 Award was given through 2003 Development Marketplace Global Competition to **four NGOs from Brazil, Ethiopia, Kenya and Romania**, all combating HIV/AIDS in innovative ways.
- The **Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET)** was awarded the **United Nations Prize for Human Rights** for 2003. In conjunction with the celebrations of the annual commemoration of the International Human Rights Day on 10 December 2003, the prize was awarded at the Meeting of the General Assembly at UN Headquarters, New York.
- A **Conference on Strengthening the Security – Development Nexus: Conflict, Peace and Development in the 21st Century** was organized by the **International Peace Academy** (Consultative status since 1974) on 5 December 2003. Academics, civil society actors and UN representatives took part in this event.

COMING SOON

- In February 2004, Ms Mezoui and Ms Karaborni will undertake a mission to Canada to launch the UN-NGO-IRENE in Canada with a leading NGO in consultative status with ECOSOC, “Hope for the Nations”, and to conduct a preparatory workshop to the ECOSOC HLS of July 2004 with the Canadian NGO/Civil Society community including Youth.
- The **NGO Section of UNDESA** in cooperation with **CONGO** and **WFUNA** will organize an **NGO/Civil Society Forum** in New York on **18 March 2004**. A **brief questionnaire on civil society's activities for poverty reduction in Least Developed Countries** was already sent to NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC as part of the preparations for the ECOSOC High-Level Segment of July 2004. The findings of this questionnaire will help to draw out useful recommendations that could be considered in drafting the Ministerial Declaration of the ECOSOC HLS of 2004. Please also find this important and friendly Questionnaire in English and French at: <http://www.unpan.org/NGO-ECOSOCSession.asp> , fill it and send it back to the NGO Section (if you didn't do it yet). Thank you very much.

SOURCE OF INSPIRATION / EXAMPLE *To Follow*

- **Success story on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 3 “Promote gender equality and empower women”**: Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network (**LACWHN**) offers a course and training on **Gender Perspectives in Health, as part of its Itinerant University project, focusing on Gender, Globalization and Health Sector Reform** together with a local university and a local women's organization. Over 600 auditors have benefited from this capacity-building and on the spot human resources training in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Peru and Venezuela. The Itinerant University project aims at empowering women with a gender perspective on women's health issues and promotes women's right to live free from violence. Please visit the organization's website at www.reddesalud.org for more information.

UPCOMING EVENTS 2004 *Not to Miss !*

- **Commission for Social Development** will hold its forty first Session from **4 to 13 February 2004**

- The **International Year of Rice 2004 - *Rice is life*** was officially launched on 31 October 2003 by **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations** Director-General Jacques Diouf. Highlighting the vital role rice plays around the world, for more information on *Rice is life*, please visit http://www.fao.org/rice2004/index_en.htm
- Year 2004 is also the **International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition**, as proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly. For more information, please visit: http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php@URL_ID=13974&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

USEFUL LINKS:

- Supporting women's groups that advance human rights of women and girls, the **Global Fund for Women** provides small but flexible grants covering project expenses. The Global Fund also accepts urgent requests to organize or participate in meeting or conference. Please visit www.globalfundforwomen.org/3grant/index.html as recommended by our friend Milena.
- As noted in the **Spatial Data Infrastructure Africa Update No 14**, the **Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme** is currently reviewing submissions for next year round of **Dubai International Awards for Best Practices**. For complete information please visit www.sustainabledevelopment.org/awards/2004/guide_en.html

NGOs' CONTRIBUTION

Submit your contribution

- **Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization** has made a statement that it desires to strengthen its relation and cooperation with other NGOs. For further information, please contact aapso@idsc.gov.eg
- Our friend Milena from "Time Foundation" kindly mentioned to us that contributions to the **Handbook of Sustainability Research** are called for. The publication will present existing leading research projects and initiatives aiming at boosting existing efforts as well as helping and inspiring new ones. It will hence become the first reference source for top quality research on sustainability. Please visit <http://www.projekte.org/handbook/> for all details.

To maintain a dynamic and useful UN-NGO-IRENE Update, we encourage and welcome your contributions. Please submit your comments, remarks and success-stories to share to Karaborni@un.org Should your organization produce an update with information that you would like to share with the IRENE community, kindly add us to your mailing list. Thank you.
We thank very much all those who submitted kind words and contribution to this update.

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