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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF
THE DELTA KAPPA GAMMA SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL
TO THE UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION AND
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As members throughout the Society make plans for their trip to this summer's International Convention in New York, we open with a spotlight on the UN-related events now scheduled. This is followed by an overview of CTAUN conferences already held or now being planned for the year 2012. Next there are articles by two of our NGO representatives who have written summaries of briefings at the UN they have attended. And finally, we provide updates on various topics that have appeared in past issues, as well as suggestions for global education resources.

UN-RELATED EVENTS AT THE DKG INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

Three UN-related events have been scheduled for Wednesday July 25 and Thursday July 26 at the International Convention in New York. Ramu Damodaran, Deputy Director for Partnerships and Public Engagement in the United Nations Department of Public Information's Outreach Division, will speak on Wednesday at 10 a.m. Many Society members have commented enthusiastically on Mr. Damodaran's earlier presentations at CTAUN conferences in New Jersey, Atlanta and Austin. A workshop session on Schools for Africa is scheduled for Wednesday afternoon, and a workshop by the Society's NGO representatives is scheduled for Thursday afternoon.

OVERVIEW OF CTAUN CONFERENCES

The thirteenth CTAUN Conference at the UN was held on February 3, 2012. The conference summary is now available on the CTAUN website (teachun.org). On March 17 the fifth Atlanta conference—"Water: Global and Local Challenges"—was held, and that summary will soon be available on the CTAUN website as well. A second conference to be held in Austin, co-sponsored by Delta Kappa Gamma, is scheduled for Saturday, September 22, 2012. The theme of that conference will be "Promoting Tolerance: Solutions for Change."

Two personal responses to the February 3 conference held at the UN are presented below. The first of these was written by Dr. Linda Dix of New Jersey, who has attended many CTAUN conferences and was a former Best Practices Award winner in 2009. The second article was written by a new DKG member and first-time CTAUN conference attendee, Kristeena Batesko, who accompanied her grandmother, Dr. Mary Lee Batesko, a former New Jersey state president.

To Teach for Peace: My Experiences at the CTAUN Conference at the United Nations By Dr. Linda Dix, New Jersey State UN Liaison

Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro, the first woman to be Deputy Secretary-General of the UN, presented the opening address for the annual CTAUN Conference at the United Nations on Friday, February 3, 2012. Three hundred eighty-eight educators attended. The largest representation from a single

organization was Delta Kappa Gamma's 58 members present. Dr. Migiro stressed that education is integral to peace and the development of democracy. "Education is a tool," she said, "to human development, social and economic growth. It brings a sense of normalcy during crisis, and the UN emergency operations now include educational tools to enable children to feel a sense of belonging, safety, and structure in crisis situations, ...to relate to each other and grow into responsible citizens."

The 2012 theme--"Education IS a Human Right"--brought forth a myriad of educational issues from the speakers and panels of assembled presenters. Foday Soko Sackar, a graduate student from Columbia University and a Liberian refugee survivor, spoke to the issues of schools in Africa, particularly Zimbabwe, stating that in crisis "schools can lose their souls." He cited several approaches that can improve schools in the African countries. These include: outcome-based approaches and curriculum development, training and re-training of teachers, knowledge-based systems, which would include libraries and internet access, and adequate teaching materials and textbooks. UNICEF circulated information on "Child-Friendly Schools" (CFS), among which those established by the Schools for Africa project (in which DKG participates) were cited. CFS fosters "equality, respect for human rights and participation of all children along with instructional programs that promote relevant life skills, such as HIV/AIDS prevention, community involvement and participation, and a child-centered style of teaching and learning."

Meg Gardinier, as the chair of the United States Campaign to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child, asked participants to see themselves "as human rights defenders who have the right to persuade the United States Senate to ratify *The Convention on the Rights of the Child* with all deliberate speed." (See childrightscampaign.org for further information.)

"To reach peace, we must teach peace," proclaimed Cora Weiss, President of the Hague Appeal for Peace, in her closing address, which was greeted amid a thundering applause. This was followed by a feature that was new this year, "Inspirations," in which those in attendance were encouraged to share their insights from the conference. These were not only inspiring but also helpful to those working in the field.

As a member of DKG, I certainly felt the responsibility to return to the vineyard of my influence, work harder in raising money for Schools for Africa, and share what I learned from the CTAUN conference. Each person has a role in establishing education as a human right for all. We are ambassadors, promoting critical, collaborative, and creative thinking not only in the classroom but beyond those walls and into the world, focusing not only on access to education for the 69 million children not in school but also on the quality of education that is presently provided in order to improve the education experience for all learners.

My First Visit to the United Nations By Kristeena Batesko, New Jersey

As a new initiate to Alpha Zeta State, I had the privilege of attending the CTAUN conference at the United Nations on February 3, 2012. The opening speaker was Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro, who welcomed us to the UN. She was the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, and it is her job to strengthen the role of the UN in economic and social theaters of the world.

There were many other speakers but I was most impressed with Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, the Bangladesh Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN in New York. He spoke about his movement to end trafficking and abuse of women and children. He told a story about a school

being built on the outskirts of a village on an island. For four months, students were able to cross over to the school but when the monsoon season came, the waves were so high it was impassable and the children of the village could not go to school for eight months.

It was interesting to know that in 1989 only two countries, Somalia and the United States, did not sign the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. This year a movement has begun to get the U.S. Senate and President Obama to ratify the CRC. Support is needed from the public to join the campaign. Following the meeting, we went on a tour and I saw one way the UN was supporting education in countries that had low literacy rates and were in need. *School in a Box* and *Sports in a Box* were sent to these countries, which provided the essentials for teaching children.

REPORTS ON UNITED NATIONS BRIEFINGS ATTENDED BY YOUR NGO REPS

Mr. Antonio Guterres, UN High Commissioner for Refugees

By Joan Goldstein, New York

On October 27th, 2011 the DPI/NGO briefings team presented, “May I Ask a Question, Mr. UN Commissioner for Refugees?” Mr. Antonio Guterres was the sole speaker, and he held the audience captive with his knowledge and candor. At the briefing, he discussed the work of the organization and the challenges it now faces.

The UNHCR emerged in the wake of World War II to help Europeans displaced by that conflict. It was established on December 14, 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly. In 1956 the UNHCR was faced with the outpouring of refugees during the Hungarian Revolution. In the 1960s, the de-colonization of Africa produced the first of that continent’s numerous refugee crises. Over the following decades, UNHCR helped with displacement crises in Asia, Latin America, the Balkans, and at the start of the 21st century it has had major involvement in many countries in Africa. UNHCR has won the Nobel Peace Prize twice. Its more than 7,190 staff members work in 123 countries providing protection and assistance to millions of refugees, returnees, internally displaced people and stateless persons. Mr. Guterres spoke of the 43 million people today who are in need of assistance, adding that the 21st century has presented more complex problems. As a result of conflict, natural disaster, and/or climate change, refugees are impoverished, malnourished, and in a constant struggle for safety. There is a need for protection of women and children refugees, including the prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence. There has also been an increase in attacks on humanitarian workers. In 2011 there were a number of instances where native refugee workers were kidnapped, and UN staff members of the NGO community were killed because of their humanitarian activities.

The consequences of statelessness for refugees are devastating: social exclusion, denial of human rights, barriers to education, and heightened vulnerability to abuse and trafficking. UNHCR recognizes the growing importance of urban refugee populations, their insecure status, abuse in the workplace and their need for healthcare. Education and vocational training are key to finding solutions for refugees. Mr. Guterres stressed that these gaps that exist need to be addressed publicly. There is a need for the international community to come together, for member states, civil society and NGOs to address these gaps and find solutions. These solutions need to combine humanitarian action with political initiatives and economic and social development.

In response to questions asked by members of the audience concerning the exploitation of refugees, the loss of individual and community identity, and children who were born in refugee camps, Mr. Guterres reminded the audience that the UNHCR cannot exercise political action. Its

mandate, the protection of refugees, is one of neutrality and impartiality. The alliance of NGOs of many countries can impact governments to make certain that the most vulnerable and marginalized in society enjoy human security and the human rights to which they are entitled.

Readers who would like to know more about the UNHCR's work in the field of education may go to the website unhcr.org and type in "education" under "advanced search." Among other documents available there is the "2012-2016 Education Strategy Summary." In line with the need for education for refugees, see also the article "Nicholas Kristof's Blog" on p. 5.

**“Did You Know...?” A Report on a UN Briefing on “Women, Sanitation and Water”
By Grace Murphy, New York, NGO Primary Representative**

Did you know that more people in the world own cell phones than have access to a working toilet? This fact, plus more sobering information, was presented at the DPI/NGO Briefing at United Nations Headquarters on 15 March, 2012; it was entitled "Women, Sanitation and Water: Access, Equity, Sustainability," and was presented as part of World Water Day celebrations.

Speakers pointed out that in many of the developing nations, women and girls are responsible for finding and fetching water for the entire family; some must travel as far as 6 kilometers per day; some face threats to their personal safety. When efforts are made to improve these conditions, women are usually excluded from the decision-making and planning. Changing this water-gathering process would increase the number of hours girls could spend in school and ultimately reduce poverty, increase economic growth and help to realize the MDGs.

In the Question and Answer part of the program, NGO reps pointed out that community education programs must be both linguistically and culturally correct. Governments, especially in developing countries, must develop a water plan and respect water as a human right. Water should not be a "market commodity." Water-related diseases are the cause of 50% of the world's hospitalizations on any given day, and as many as one million people will die from diseases linked to the lack of clean water by 2020. Packaging water in certain plastic containers causes additional contamination.

This aim of this Briefing was to emphasize that safe drinking water and basic sanitation are essential for achieving gender equality, poverty alleviation and educational reform.

SCHOOLS FOR AFRICA UPDATE

The SFA Newsettes, Issues 1-12 are now posted on the International website. The latest issue provides a focus on the country of Zimbabwe, and also spotlights ideas for chapter activities to support SFA. Cathy Daugherty, the project's facilitator, reports that so far over \$70,800 has been contributed to Schools for Africa by Delta Kappa Gamma members and chapters, and it her hope that we will be able to celebrate reaching the goal of \$75,000 by the end of this biennium.

RESOURCES FOR GLOBAL UNDERSTANDING

United Nations Academic Impact Initiative. There are now over 750 institutions enrolled in the UN's Academic Impact Initiative. Academic Impact activities have been or are now being sponsored by universities in all parts of the world. Many events (such as those recently held in the

Philippines, Japan and Korea) are regional conferences. Some are co-sponsored by universities in different countries, and others are e-conferences or video conferences on various global issues.

Institutions wishing to join Academic Impact can find its purpose and principles, list of members and enrollment information at www.academicimpact.org. Announcements about AI activities are available at <http://outreach.un.org/unai>. In addition, several issues of *The United Nations Academic Impact Newsletter* have now been published. To be put on the mailing list, write to: academicimpact@un.org. **See issue 7, May 2012, of the Newsletter for an announcement of an essay contest for university students in which they would imagine a speech to be made by the Secretary-General of the UN on the importance of working together in this time of global interdependence**

Nicholas Kristof's Blog. The New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof was an enthusiastically received keynote speaker for the 2011 CTAUN Conference at the United Nations, and his columns continue to bring to the attention of readers many UN-related issues. On March 29 he told the story of a young man from South Sudan, Paul Lorem, who as a child lived in a refugee camp where he learned to read and write, sitting outdoors with 300 other refugee children, writing with their fingers in the dust. He was a brilliant student, however, and his teachers arranged for him to leave the camp and attend boarding schools. Between his junior and senior years of high school he walked many miles back to his native village to bring his orphaned younger brother and sister to the camp so that they, too, could receive an education. After graduating from high school, he was helped to apply to and is now a freshman at Yale.

Kristof's blog (nytimes.com/ontheground) provides background information about many of his columns, including several recent ones about a website in the U.S. for the trafficking of women and girls. See his blog also for information about his "Travel with Kristof 2012" contest.

The Asia Society. Go to the website for The Asia Society (asiasociety.org) and click on "education" to locate a list of resources for educators, including curriculum materials for teaching global understanding. Those interested may sign on for the online newsletter of the Partnership for Global Learning, which is listed as a "member network" for those involved in education. The Partnership for Global Learning also sponsors an annual conference to present "educational approaches in elementary, secondary and after school programs" to prepare students with "global knowledge and skills." This year's conference will take place on June 29 and 30 in New York City, and will feature as the opening keynote speaker journalist and author Dan Rather, who has recently produced a video series on school systems around the world.

YOUR UN REPRESENTATIVES

The members of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International listed below are your official representatives at the United Nations Department of Public Information and the Economic and Social Council. Most of them also work with CTAUN. You can email us for further information.

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