

United Nations Academic Impact Newsletter



UNAI observes International Day of Happiness

Speakers attending a lunch-time conversation on “Happiness and Well-being: Essential for Sustainable Future,” organized on 20 March at UN Headquarters, stressed that social, economic and environmental well-being were indivisible. Any conversation on happiness must include inclusive, equitable and balanced approach to economic growth that promoted sustainable development, poverty eradication,

happiness and the well-being of all peoples, they said. The conversation, organized by the United Nations Academic Impact, in association with the Permanent Mission of Bhutan to the United Nations, marked the first ever observance of International Day of Happiness. The United Nations General Assembly, which in resolution 66/281 established the day, recognizes the relevance of happiness and well-being as “universal goals”.

The Secretary-General, in his message for the Day, noted that the pursuit of happiness lay at the core of human endeavours. People around the world aspired to lead happy and fulfilling lives free from fear and want, and in harmony with nature. “Yet, basic material well-being is still elusive for far too many living in extreme poverty. For many more, recurring socio-economic crises, violence and crime, environmental degradation and increasing threats of climate change are an ever-present threat,” he said.

The Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal, who was the keynote speaker, stressed that there was growing consensus on the possibility of meaningful joint action to achieve our basic human needs, such as fighting poverty, promoting health and well-being, safeguarding human rights, and protecting the environment. Taken together, he said, they constituted the global map of human happiness. “In a sense, the United Nations was created as our collective tool to help create such a human happiness map,” he observed.

Other speakers included Ambassador Lhatu Wangchuk, Permanent Representative of Bhutan to the United Nations; Ambassador Dr. Hamid Al-Bayati, Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations; Anwarul Karim Chowdhury, former United Nations Under-Secretary-General; Dr. Judy Kuriansky, Department of Counseling and Clinical Psychology, Columbia University Teachers College; Dr. Jo Anne Murphy, Office of Global Learning, Fairleigh Dickinson University; and Latoya Ferns, a student at Durham University, UK

**“BRING
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The event also included a musical performance by the Jazz Society of the United Nations Staff Recreation Council, led by Miss Moore, and including Tom Caldin, Daniel Christensen, Yuanita Clifford , Robert Mwamba , Bruno Razafindrakato and Finn Summerell.



UNAI hosts “Classroom Conversation” on sexual violence against women in conflict and beyond

(The following article is adapted from Cocorioko, an online newspaper from Sierra Leone)

The subject of the “Classroom Conversation” on 15 March organized at UN Headquarters by UNAI was “*Sexual violence in conflict and beyond: A conspiracy of silence,*”

which focused on what could be done individually and collectively to stop violence against women.

The panel was led by Under-Secretary-General **Zainab Hawa Bangura** (pictured above), Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. She was joined by two experts from UNAI member institutions – Makiko Oku, Program Leader of the Gender Program and Visiting Scholar at the Center for the Study of Genocide, Conflict Resolution; and Human Rights at Rutgers University; and Rekha Datta, Professor of Political Science, Monmouth University, and Founder of Women and Girls’ Education (WAGE)–International.

“My mandate is to lead and coordinate UN and the global effort against sexual violence as well as to be the international advocate to speak for and to campaign to bring an end to sexual violence,” said USG Bangura stressing that no woman should be raped as it is “the most dehumanizing, most humiliating and most degrading thing you can do to a woman.” Drawing from her own experience in Sierra Leone and other conflict zones, USG Bangura made impassioned appeal for collective action against all acts of violence against women, in conflict and beyond.

The conversation event brought the issue of sexual violence in conflict closer to university students who attended and watched the discussion via webcast. Dr. Makiko Oku, in response to a question, observed that sexual violence was a serious and urgent matter, and it needed to be discussed with the younger generation who would likely carry on with the fight to stop the atrocity. Dr Oku also warned that “the silence, invisibility, and erasure of the violence will not go away unless we talk about it and provide students with knowledge and tools to address the issue effectively with a gender-sensitive lens.”

Political scientist and panelist Professor Datta dedicated her presentation to honour all women who face discrimination and brutality for being what she called “daughters”. Professor Datta admitted that even when there were no armed conflicts women were not safe. With the use of technology and social media Professor Datta said, education would prevail in the fight against sexual violence because, as she put it, “If you educate a boy you create a man, if you educate a girl you create a community and if you educate girls, boys, women and men, you create humanity.”

Next “Classroom Conversation” to focus on the status of Arab women

“Classroom Conversations” is an ongoing interactive discussion forum on today’s global issues organized by the United Nations Academic Impact. The next *Classroom Conversation*, on 15 April 2013, will focus on the role and status of Arab women in the wake of the Arab Spring. The conversation will be led by Isobel Coleman, Senior Fellow, The Council on Foreign Relations, USA. Dr. Coleman’s book “Paradise Beneath Her feet,” which will be at the centre of the conversation, discusses how men and women across the region are using more progressive interpretations of Islam to create economic, political, and social opportunities for women. UNAI members interested to attend the event are requested contact UNAI at academicimpact@un.org



Delegation from East China Normal University visits UN Headquarters

Prof. Tong Shijun, Chair of the University Council, and Prof. Ding Shuzhe, Director of International Exchange Division, ECNU, met with the UNAI team at UN Headquarters on 13 March. They briefed UNAI about its ongoing activities in support of the United Nations and discussed some collaborative projects with UNAI. The two areas that interest ECNU most are public health and education. Prof. Shijun noted that his university has a special programme for African students, and a strategic partnership with New York University. The visiting officials underlined that strengthening ties with UNAI would

enable their university to find greater access with the global community of educators and students. “This is a perfect way to internationalize our national initiatives,” Prof. Shijun said. The two sides also discussed the possibility of organizing an international conference in Shanghai in 2014, with a focus on UNAI principles.

J.F. Oberlin’s ASPIRE representatives at UN Headquarters

Dr. Shinichi Yamazaki, UNAI/ASPIRE coordinator, and Junya Ogasawara, ASPIRE President of J.F. Oberlin University, Japan, met with the UNAI team on 20 March at UN Headquarters to discuss a number of their upcoming projects. While still relatively small, the ASPIRE group at J. F. Oberlin plans to liaise with universities in Japan and to encourage them to form their own chapters. The group has already developed collaboration with Handong Global University (Republic of Korea), and plans to further expand their mutually supportive role. The two visiting ASPIRE representatives also attended the special event organized in connection with International Day of Happiness.

Global Citizenship Symposium in San Juan

An “Education for Global Citizenship Symposium” (Simposio Educación para la Ciudadanía Global) was held in San Juan, Puerto Rico, on 30 March 2013, hosted by UNAI member Universidad del Turabo and the Biblioteca Museo Gobernador Pedro Rosselló (BMGPR). The philosophy of the BMGPR is to organize conferences, symposiums, meetings and educational gatherings in order to gain a deeper understanding of current issues that impact our modern society. Keynote speakers included Dr Neal King, President of the International Association of University Presidents (IAUP). and UNAI member Sofia University (USA); Dan Mitchell of the CATO Institute (USA), Francisco Oda Angel of Fundacion Ciudadania y Valores (FUNCIVA), Gibraltar, Pedro Rossello, former Governor of Puerto Rico and: Ramu Damodaran of UNAI.



Handong University’s 2013 Global Entrepreneurship Training in Africa

The Handong Global University, a UNAI member, has successfully completed its 2013 Global Entrepreneurship Training (GET). Held in six West African countries, GET offered a wide range of courses covering such issues as entrepreneurial

mindset, role of entrepreneurship on national economy, financial preparation, legal aspects and more. Prof. George Kim, who led the Handong team, in a message to UNAI, reports that the programme produced as many as 103 new entrepreneurs. Many government workers and university professors participated as trainees. Eighteen Korean students and about the same number of Ghanaian students participated as volunteer helpers. In Ghana, after the week of the regular GET session, the volunteer helpers held a Junior Entrepreneur Training (JET) session for about 70 high-school students in the Wenchi Area. The session was planned and conducted entirely by the volunteer helpers themselves.



The First Dave Brubeck Forum at UN Headquarters, 24 April 2013:

The UN Department of Public Information and the Dave Brubeck Institute will jointly host *Jazz, A Language for Peace: The First Dave Brubeck Forum* in honour of the General Assembly Committee on Information, on Wednesday, 24 April at UN Headquarters. It will feature the Brubeck Institute Quintet, with special guest appearance by Darius Brubeck. This will coincide with the observance of the International Jazz Day, a UN observance, on 30 April.

HEA summer intensive session at the United Nations, 9 – 15 June 2013

The Higher Education Alliance of the Humpty Dumpty Institute, a UNAI member, will organize a week-long summer intensive session for graduate and undergraduate students. Participants will explore, examine and experience the inner workings of the UN firsthand, and attend a series of seminars and lectures led by UN officials, diplomats, leading experts, policymakers and practitioners currently working with the UN to solve global problems. The Session will then move to Washington, D.C, where students will attend meetings and briefings with senior officials of the US Department of State, Congressional staff, the UN Information Center, and representatives of various think tanks, and nongovernmental organizations. Students will also meet with members of the security and intelligence communities on a wide range of global issues. To register, please visit http://thehdi.org/higher_education_alliance.html

IN BRIEF



Rule of law featured in *UN Chronicle*. The latest edition of the *UN Chronicle*, the flagship periodical of the United Nations since 1946, explores the challenges Member States and the United Nations system face in supporting and strengthening the rule of law. The issue, “Delivering Justice,” features articles from leading experts within and outside of the United Nations on how to build upon this foundation. It includes an essay by Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, on the larger role of the United Nations in promoting the rule of law. The High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navanethem Pillay, writes on establishing effective accountability mechanisms for human rights violations. The President of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Sang-Hyun Song, focuses on the role of ICC in ending impunity. Michelle Bachelet, the Executive Director of UN Women, looks at how to increase women’s access to justice in post-conflict

societies. To view the current, as well as past issues, go to the *UN Chronicle’s* website at: www.un.org/chronicle or download the app on your iPhone or iPad.