



newsletter

of the Maine Chapter of the United Nations Association

Autumn 2007, Vol. XVI, No. 4
Editors: Thesil Morlan
& Al Niese

11 Columbia Street, Augusta, ME 04330
www.unamaine.org

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Anne Brautigam, Brunswick
Wendy Hazard, Belgrade
Suzanne Hedrick, Nobleboro
Ernestine King, Topsham
Thesil Morlan, Waldoboro
Al Niese, Woolwich
Mary Lee Rushmore, New Harbor

ADVISORS

Thomas Deford, Spruce Head
Lynn Kuzma, Portland
Victoria Mares-Hershey, Portland
Bruce Stedman, Westport Island
Sarah Walton, Augusta

LIAISONS

- Global Energy Security Coalition
Wendy Hazard, Belgrade
- Maine Alliance for the International Criminal Court (MAICC)
Patrick Downey, Bangor
- Maine Model UN (MEMUNC)
Suzanne Hedrick, Nobleboro
Thurston Holt, Cape Elizabeth
Mary Lee Rushmore, New Harbor
Trudi Schneider, Georgetown

TREASURER

Robert Howe, Harpswell

HISTORIAN

Thurston Holt, Cape Elizabeth

ARCHIVIST

Anne Morlan, Waldoboro

A few days after the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change shared the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts to spread awareness of human-influenced climate change and lay the foundations for counteracting it, UNA-Maine and Maine Audubon observed UN Day 2007 by offering to the public a presentation by Dr Paul Mayewski, scientist, explorer, director of the world-renowned Climate Change Institute at the University of Maine, Orono (climatechange.umaine.edu), and co-author of *The Ice Chronicles*.

UN Day Ice Chronicles

(based on notes by Sarah Walton)

Over 80 people (on a Red Sox ballgame night!) gathered to hear Professor Mayewski's lucid explanations of decades of research showing dramatic recent alterations of interconnected planetary systems. He noted that rapid change in the past, with little opportunity to prepare, has meant great civil upheaval, but expressed hope that, because of the huge impact human behavior has had on the current pattern of change, alterations in our behavior — if we don't delay any longer — could make huge positive differences in the current trend. This will depend in part, he said, on better lifestyle-adjustment advertising based on the increasing corporate interest in exporting related technology, avoiding monetary liabilities, and coping with effects of climate change on health — a burgeoning concern of insurance companies. Affirming that a global response is needed, Dr Mayewski praised the work of the UN International Panel on Climate Change.

Many thanks to Wendy Hazard for organizing our UN Day event.

Dr Mayewski returned to Antarctica two days after his UN Day in Falmouth.

Web Portal for UN's Work on Climate Change

After the opening of the Ibero-American summit in Santiago, Ban Ki-moon's "eco-trip" with Chile President Michelle Bachelet, to meet with scientists and emphasize global climate issues, makes him the first UN Secretary-General to visit the Antarctic. Then he proceeds to Spain for a meeting of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

The United Nations has opened a new internet "Gateway to the UN System's Work on Climate Change" (www.un.org/climatechange) that provides fact sheets, reports, press releases, webcasts, and links to UN system agencies working on climate change, including the Nobel Prize-winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

From Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's address to the UN high-level event on climate change, New York, 24 September:

Today, the effects of climate change are being felt around the world. But they are being felt most by those who are the least able to cope. Indeed, the terrible irony for many developing countries is that, though they have contributed the least to the process of climate change, they are the ones most at risk from its consequences. ... [T]he adverse impacts of climate change could undo much of the investment made to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. ... No nation can address this challenge on its own. No region can insulate itself from these climate changes. That is why we need to confront climate change within a global framework, one that guarantees the highest level of international cooperation that is necessary. This is precisely the kind of global challenge that the United Nations is best suited to address.

MEMUNC Goes Green!

A First for Maine Model UN Conference

by Lynn Kuzma

With ever-increasing concerns about the status of the global environment and in the spirit of the The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, last spring the Model United Nations Organization (MUNO) at the University of Southern Maine decided to do their part in promoting responsible practices that will lead to a healthier planet and held their first "green" MEMUNC which produced a zero carbon footprint!

Being mindful of the topics discussed in our Special Session on the Environment, we powered the conference with clean and efficient wind power from a wind farm here in Maine (this included the power used in the dorms, dining facility, and meeting spaces). We purchased carbon off-sets to take into account the emissions produced by participants traveling to the conference. We also printed on recycled paper and used food from producers who run socially responsible businesses. We emphasized the need to recycle, asking all high school students to put waste in the appropriate bins located in every committee room. During the lunch hour on the second day of the conference, the teacher workshop focused on practicing sustainability. Dudley Greely, USM's sustainability officer, gave a presentation on how teachers can introduce best practices in their schools. Finally, we distributed efficient compact florescent light bulbs to every conference participant (567 in total) with tips on how to conserve energy at home and school. Our conference motto was "Change a light bulb to change the world. Everyone can make a difference no matter how small!"

UNA Essay Contest

The topic of UNA's nationally coordinated essay contest, based on Millennium Development Goal #6, is: "What can the US do to help combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases around the world?". The winning entry in Maine, selected by two chapter leaders, will earn a prize and be forwarded for consideration for national honors. Deadline: January 5, 2008. Please refer interested students (grades 9-12) or teachers to <www.unausa.org> for details.

**Ban Ki-moon and wife,
King George Island, Antarctica**



UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

Political Developments

NGO Letter to Congress - A letter signed by more than two dozen organizations, including UNA-USA, was sent on 4 October to Congressional leaders, urging full funding of US contributions to the United Nations. Although both the House and Senate versions of the FY08 spending bill increase the President's budget request for UN peacekeeping, they fall far short of estimated peacekeeping funding requirements.

House Support of IAEA and Security Council Work on Iran - The House of Representatives has passed by an overwhelming margin legislation that, among other things, endorses continued US support for the work of the IAEA and the Security Council concerning Iran's nuclear program.

Foreign Relations Committee Approves LoS Treaty - On 31 October, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea by a strong bipartisan vote of 17 to 4. At this point, however, it is uncertain when (or even if) the treaty will be considered by the full Senate, where a two-thirds majority vote would be required.

Election 2008 - UNA-USA and the Better World Campaign have sent a joint questionnaire to all the presidential candidates, requesting their views on pressing issues in US-UN relations. Meanwhile, the lengthy election season will "provide many opportunities for initiating debate about the proper role of the United Nations and multilateralism in US foreign policy," says UNA. "Members across the country can help spark this debate by asking questions of congressional and presidential candidates at local townhall meetings, candidate forums, and talk radio programs." UNA-USA's website provides sample questions.

News Bites from UN Wire

(www.smartbrief.com/un_wire/) selected by **Bruce Stedman**

08/10/2007 • Security Council votes for bigger Iraq role. The United Nations Security Council unanimously approved a resolution to expand the world body's presence in Iraq. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon lauded the vote on the plan, which was sponsored by the US and the UK and will increase the number of UN staffers in Iraq from 65 to 95 and allow the UN to do more to assist the struggling government (BBC).

8/20 • Kudos for UN's all-woman peace unit in Liberia. The Indian women in Liberia who make up the UN's only all-female peacekeeping unit are winning high praise from the world body for their performance and contribution to gender equality in peacekeeping. The UN's peace mission in the West African country that is still recovering from civil war is now trying to attract more female troops (The Hindu/Press Trust of India).

9/17 • UN passes declaration on indigenous rights. After 20 years of debate, the General Assembly adopted a nonbinding declaration aimed at protecting the land and resource rights of the world's indigenous people. The declaration also sets global human rights standards for indigenous people and recognizes their right to self-determination (Agence France-Presse).

9/28 • Britain struggles to clarify stance on Security Council reform. Britain has been on the defensive this week since its foreign secretary, David Miliband, identified Brazil, India, Japan and South Africa as four "very clear" candidates for permanent membership on a potentially enlarged Security Council. Germany, Egypt and Nigeria reportedly were upset, as his comments during an interview strayed from the UK's earlier policy of backing Germany and not identifying a specific African country that ought to represent that continent (*The Independent* – London).

10 /12 • UN climate panel, Gore share Nobel Peace Prize. Although most headlines will read the other way around, it's

important not to overlook that the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has been central to coalescing the "scientific consensus" (UN Dispatch).

10/25 • FAO: Bird flu could become endemic in Europe. Bird flu might become endemic in parts of Europe, as ducks and geese have proved to be more of a factor in spreading the disease than previously thought, the UN Food and Agriculture Organizations said. "Europe should prepare for further waves of avian influenza outbreaks, most probably in an east-west direction, if the virus succeeds in persisting throughout the year in domestic waterfowl," said Joseph Domenech, chief veterinary officer of the FAO (Alternet.org/ Reuters).

10/28 • Cautious voices try to rein in US rhetoric on Iran. International Atomic Energy Agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei has called on Washington to tone down its rhetoric toward Iran, whose nuclear program it views as a growing threat to world peace. Recent comments from US President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney indicating that the US may respond to the crisis with force should diplomacy fail have raised eyebrows in international circles and drawn criticism from Democrats on Capitol Hill (*International Herald Tribune*).

10/30 • Climate change link probed as malaria rises in Peru. Though Malaria was virtually eradicated in Peru more than 30 years ago, the disease has made a serious comeback in the country's Amazon region. Tens of thousands of cases are now reported annually officials say, with loggers and others contemplating the role of climate change, which has led to abnormal rain patterns (*The Guardian* – London).

10/29 • More than 4.4 million people have been displaced in Iraq due to violence. according to the UNHCR, the UN refugee agency (UN Dispatch).

ANNUAL MEETING LUNCHEON RESERVATION - Saturday, December 8, 2007

The Highlands is offering a choice of entrée for the annual meeting luncheon, so we need a head count. Non-member guests are welcome.

___ Chicken Piccata @ \$20.00

or

___ Spinach Quiche @ \$20.00

NAME #1 _____

NAME #2 _____

Plus _____ other guest(s)

RSVP by November 30
to Trudi Schneider

• 63 Robinhood Road
Georgetown, ME 04548

or

• trudis@gwi.net

or

• 371-2152,

specifying menu choice.

Payment may be made in advance (check made out to UNA-Maine) or at the door.

CALENDAR

DECEMBER 8 - UNA-Maine Annual Meeting:

talk by John Washburn, Convener of the American NGOs Alliance for the International Criminal Court; The Highlands (Main Lodge, 2nd floor diningroom), Topsham

11:00 am - gathering of members & friends

11:30 am - general meeting of chapter

12:00 noon - luncheon

1:00 pm - talk (public welcome; invite friends)

RSVP (reverse of page)

* Looking for a speaker on a UN-related topic for a school, civic club, political meeting, or religious gathering?
E-mail <thesil@midcoast.com>

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon:

The unprecedented challenge of climate change demands unprecedented action. I am convinced that climate change, and what we do about it, will define us, our era, and ultimately the global legacy we leave for future generations.

Former US Vice President Al Gore:

I am deeply honored to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. This award is even more meaningful because I have the honor of sharing it with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change — the world's pre-eminent scientific body devoted to improving our understanding of the climate crisis — a group whose members have worked tirelessly and selflessly for many years. We face a true planetary emergency. The climate crisis is not a political issue, it is a moral and spiritual challenge to all of humanity. It is also our greatest opportunity to lift global consciousness to a higher level.

My wife and I will donate 100 percent of the proceeds of the award to the Alliance for Climate Protection, a bipartisan non-profit organization that is devoted to changing public opinion in the U.S. and around the world about the urgency of solving the climate crisis.



Maine Chapter of the UNA-USA

11 Columbia Street
Augusta, ME 04330