

## Economic and Social Affairs

### Economic and Development Issues

#### Development Bodies and Programs

##### UN Development Program (UNDP)

Headquartered in New York, the UN Development Program (UNDP) is the leading development agency of the United Nations, with presence in over 130 developing countries. The United States is a member of its 36-state governing body, the Executive Board.

Promoting democracy and prosperity around the world is a U.S. foreign policy priority. Through participation in the UNDP, the United States ensures that the organization's policies and activities reflect this priority, and that UNDP is transparent and accountable in its work.

In 2006, the United States continued to encourage UNDP to improve its management through results-based strategic planning and an enhanced transparency and accountability framework. The United States worked in concert with other Executive Board members to pass a Board decision requesting UNDP to report its country program performance information.

The UNDP's strategic framework for 2004-2007 includes the following five goals: reducing poverty, fostering democratic governance, managing energy and environment for sustainable development, supporting crisis prevention and recovery, and responding to HIV/AIDS.

UNDP is a partner in promoting democratic governance and consolidating democracy in many parts of the world. For example, the United States worked with UNDP and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in launching the Partnership for Democratic Governance, a multilateral initiative designed to assist developing countries to improve governance, strengthen capacity and accountability and deliver essential services -- such as efficient customs, judicial and tax services -- effectively. UNDP continues to work closely with the United States on the Good Governance for Development Initiative in the Middle East to promote reforms in administrative, financial, and judicial sectors.

The United States has also worked closely with UNDP in post-conflict reconstruction situations. UNDP plays a useful role in international community-led efforts to assist countries emerging from conflict or natural disaster.

For example, in 2006, UNDP helped to mobilize \$229 million to support Afghanistan, where UNDP's programs focus mainly on three areas: state building, poverty reduction, and empowering democracy and civil society. The United States, Japan, the United Kingdom, and Canada have provided

funding to and have worked together with UNDP on many of these programs. UNDP is playing an important role and has been a valuable partner to the United States in assisting Liberia's recovery. UNDP delivered over \$50 million of assistance in 2006. It has worked closely with the Liberian government in these important areas: disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation of combatants, community-based recovery, human rights protection, and fighting HIV/AIDS.

UNDP receives its funding through voluntary contributions.

### **UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)**

The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), a permanent forum for discussions on trade and development issues, functions through a variety of intergovernmental groups. These include its governing body, the Trade and Development Board, and Commissions on Trade, Investment, and Enterprise. Based in Geneva, UNCTAD has 192 member states. Supachai Panitchpakdi (Thailand) assumed his position as Secretary-General on September 1, 2005.

In October, UNCTAD held its 53<sup>rd</sup> annual session of the Trade and Development Board, at which members discussed the findings of the expert groups and Commissions. During 2006, UNCTAD held three meetings to complete the mid-term review of progress since the 2004 Conference in Sao Paulo. Members agreed that UNCTAD should enhance the integration of its three pillars (research, policy analysis, and technical assistance), while placing more emphasis on concrete results and impact. Also during 2006, the Commission on Trade in Goods and Services and Commodities held five meetings, including its annual session; the Commission on Investment, Technology and related Financial Issues held six meetings, including its annual session; the Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation, and Development held five meetings, including its annual session; and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, serviced by UNCTAD, held its ninth session. At each of the meetings, delegates discussed the activities of the relevant Commission, including advisory and technical missions to developing countries; work on databases to provide information on tariffs, export markets, rules of origin, and other regulations; assistance in the creation of commodity exchanges; research and technical assistance in the areas of transport/trade facilitation; and joint work with the World Trade Organization on the Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance for the least developed countries.

The United States has been an active participant in UNCTAD since its founding in 1964. The United States believes that free trade is a vital avenue for development and has strongly encouraged UNCTAD's work on trade and investment facilitation. In 2006, the United States led efforts to convince other member states to urge UNCTAD to increase its technical assistance in areas that can help to ensure that developing countries benefit from processes of globalization. The United States also supports UNCTAD's work in investment

policy reviews and in development of databases that enable countries to find markets for their products and to search investment agreements and tariff data.

### **Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)**

In December 1992, the Economic and Social Council established the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) as a functional commission to follow up implementation of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the Rio Earth Summit. Based at UN Headquarters in New York, it is composed of 53 UN members, elected to three-year terms. During its first decade, the CSD met formally four weeks annually to consider specific sustainable development issues and to promote implementation of internationally agreed development goals. At the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, governments called for specific reforms of the CSD, including limiting negotiations in the sessions of the Commission to every two years, limiting the number of themes addressed at each session, and having CSD serve as a focal point for the discussion of partnerships that promote sustainable development, including sharing lessons learned, progress made, and best practices.

The United States has been a member of the Commission since its inception. Following the WSSD, the United States actively advanced ideas for how the CSD could implement reforms to serve as a stronger catalyst for action. At the CSD's 11<sup>th</sup> Session ("CSD 11," held April-May 2003), the United States worked closely with other CSD members to develop a multi-year program of work that addresses a series of "thematic clusters" and cross-cutting issues in two-year "implementation cycles." The first cycle (2003-2005) focused on water, sanitation, and human settlement issues. The second cycle (2005-2007) focused on energy-related issues: energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere, and climate change. Each two-year cycle includes a non-negotiating "review year" to assess the state of implementation and to provide a venue to focus on sustainable development partnerships and capacity-building activities. The second half of each cycle is a "policy year" to discuss policy options and possible actions to address the constraints and obstacles in the process of implementation identified during the review year.

Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs Paula Dobriansky led the U.S. delegation to the May 2006 CSD 15 "Policy Session." The delegation included representatives from a wide range of U.S. government agencies, including the State Department, the White House Council on Environmental Quality, the Agency for International Development, the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Department of Agriculture.

Key outcomes of the 2005-2007 CSD Energy Cycle include:

- Several multilateral public-private partnerships announced concrete results and ambitious future actions. For example, the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles assisted Sub-Saharan

African countries in phasing out leaded gasoline by the end of 2005. This partnership has now set its sights on a global phase-out of leaded gasoline by 2008.

- Key new partnerships were launched, including the International Biofuels Forum, the Global Bioenergy Partnership, and the UN Environmental Program's Global Partnership for Reduction of Mercury Emissions from Coal-Fired Utilities.
- CSD participants submitted more than 200 case studies to the CSD Matrix, a practical knowledge-sharing tool with lessons learned and best practices from all corners of the globe. (<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/matrix.htm>)

The CSD Learning Center again showcased an innovative way of doing business at the United Nations, providing capacity-building training to nearly 1,000 CSD participants.

### **UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)**

The UN General Assembly created the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 1946 to meet the emergency needs of children after World War II. UNICEF has broadened its efforts to help children by providing both humanitarian assistance and long-term development aid targeted at children and families. UNICEF works in 157 countries, with programs addressing children's health, sanitation, nutrition, basic education, and protection needs, wherever possible through low-cost interventions at the family and community levels. In 2006, 90 percent of UNICEF's total expenditures of \$2.4 billion went to program assistance. In humanitarian crises UNICEF normally takes the lead in water and sanitation, data communications, supplemental nutrition, education, and protection issues.

As a respected authority on children and their well-being, UNICEF typically works through broad partnerships with developing countries, bilateral donors, and non-governmental organizations. UNICEF programs target vulnerable and marginalized children and their families, and are intended to improve the capacity of national governments to respond to their needs. The United States has worked to ensure that UNICEF maintains strong operational capabilities. A significant proportion of UNICEF's work, however, is tied to capacity-building, piloting and disseminating best practices, and conducting research on the problems affecting children.

The United States has been a member of UNICEF's Executive Board, now comprised of 36 members serving three-year terms, since the Fund's inception. In 2003, the United States began another term running until 2006. Former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman has served as UNICEF's Executive Director since 2005.

UNICEF has capabilities to provide rapid and cost-effective delivery of medicines and materials in support of national and international efforts. In 2006, UNICEF procured vaccines for 40 percent of children in developing countries – over three billion doses – and worked to ensure not only the

distribution, but also the development and availability of life-saving vaccines and drugs for children. For example, in support of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (of which the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are a partner), UNICEF procured 2.4 billion doses of Oral Polio Vaccines. Also in 2006, UNICEF procured 181 million doses of measles vaccine, 106 million doses of tuberculosis vaccine, and 92 million doses of tetanus vaccine.

UNICEF's programming is guided by its Medium-Term Strategic Plan for 2006-2009. This plan anchored UNICEF around five focal areas: child survival; education; HIV/AIDS; child protection; and policy support. In line with U.S. concerns, UNICEF increased malaria prevention efforts and procured 25 million insecticide-treated bed nets. Also in 2006, the United Nations released the "UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence Against Children," which UNICEF co-sponsored. Re-establishing a learning environment using "school-in-a-box" kits is a central element of UNICEF's humanitarian response, since gathering children in a fixed location facilitates complementary efforts in basic health and child protection, and contributes to a restoration of normalcy.

The United States continued to push UNICEF to play a leadership role in efforts to harmonize and simplify UN development activities, particularly at the national level. In dealing with joint programming between UNICEF and other UN agencies, UNICEF's collaboration will be based on evidence of efficiency gains in programming, will take account of the need to maintain distinct lines of financial accountability to donors, and will recognize the separate identities and roles of UN agencies.

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) established a "clustered" approach to improve the UN's response to humanitarian disasters. Under this approach, UNICEF is responsible for the water and sanitation, nutrition and feeding, and protection sectors. UNICEF is also an active participant in the UN Consolidated Appeal (CAP) process, a mechanism through which humanitarian organizations plan, implement, and monitor their activities as well as appeal for donor support of humanitarian assistance programs. UNICEF is strengthening its emergency response capacity, including by reinforcing its Core Commitments for Children (CCCs) in Emergencies. The United States has supported UNICEF's role in emergencies, particularly following the tsunami and South Asian earthquake.

### **UN Human Settlements Program (UN-HABITAT)**

In 2001, the UN General Assembly converted the 58-member UN Center on Human Settlements to a full program of the General Assembly: the UN Human Settlements Program (UN-HABITAT). UN-HABITAT's work focuses on the development of sustainable human settlements with access to basic services, such as water and sanitation. UN-HABITAT is also the UN focal point for efforts to achieve the Millennium Declaration goal of significantly improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. The creation of the new UN-HABITAT program marked a significant achievement in the U.S. reform agenda. The United States had pressed for an

overhaul of the former Center after the 1996 Habitat II Conference in Istanbul and had cut off voluntary contributions to the Center. Following the complete restructuring of the organization by new management, the United States supported the granting of program status and resumed voluntary contributions.

UN-HABITAT is headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, and is led by Executive Director Anna Tibaijuka (Tanzania). Mrs. Tibaijuka was re-elected by the General Assembly to a second four-year term in 2006 after having served since September 2000 as Director of the Center on Human Settlements. UN-HABITAT's Governing Council meets every two years, most recently in April 2005, and UN-HABITAT sponsors the World Urban Forum in the intervening years. States are elected to the Governing Council through regional groups for four-year terms. The United States was re-elected in 2006 for another term by the Western Europe and Other Group.

UN-HABITAT's activities in 2006 were aligned with U.S. foreign policy objectives pertaining to economic freedom, good governance, democracy building (through decentralization of power to local authorities), gender equality, and the mobilization of domestic resources. The United States worked to clarify UN-HABITAT's role as a catalyst that advances work on human settlements through normative (research and data-collection) and capacity-building work, supplemented by operational activities including pilot projects. Overall, UN-HABITAT performed its roll as a catalyst well, and it continued to focus more on consolidating many small programs, trust funds, and other mechanisms into a coherent whole.

In June 2006, UN-HABITAT and the Government of Canada sponsored the third session of the World Urban Forum (WUF). Held in Vancouver on the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Habitat I Conference, WUF brought together over 10,000 participants from national and local governments, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to discuss urban issues and possible solutions. Secretary Alphonso Jackson of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) led the U.S. delegation, and the U.S. government sponsored or co-sponsored over a dozen events within the forum. The fourth session of the World Urban Forum will be held in 2008 in Nanjing, China.

In order to assist developing countries in managing urbanization, UN-HABITAT gathers data on cities and promotes best practices in fields related to human settlements and the role of local authorities. Its technical arm works with local authorities and national governments to develop and decentralize services. For example, in 2006 UN-HABITAT, HUD, and the Government of Ghana collaborated on a peer exchange on housing financing, which followed a similar event held in Uganda in 2005. This event was technical in nature, with participants from West African governments, U.S. Government agencies, and other multilateral and non-governmental organizations. This highly successful peer exchange covered analysis of the current housing financing situation in West Africa, emerging trends, viable tools, policy options, and future steps. UN-HABITAT and HUD plan to replicate this peer exchange in Central America in 2007.

UN-HABITAT also conducted global campaigns to promote improved urban governance, and to promote secure tenure (of housing and land). These campaigns aimed to facilitate access to credit, and advocated the rights of women to equal treatment, including property inheritance. These campaigns were conducted through advocacy, research publications, and technical cooperation on legislative and policy reform.

## **Environment**

### **United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)**

The UN Environment Program (UNEP), founded in 1972, is headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, and has six regional offices (Europe, Africa, North America, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and West Asia). Its Governing Council consists of 58 member states, including the United States. The UN General Assembly elects members from different regional groupings for four-year terms. UNEP's Executive Director Klaus Töpfer (Germany) retired after his second four-year term in 2006. Achim Steiner (Germany) of the World Conservation Union was elected Executive Director of UNEP by the General Assembly in June 2006 after being nominated by the UN Secretary-General.

UNEP addresses environmental problems that transcend borders and potentially affect the health and prosperity of U.S. citizens. Active involvement in UNEP helps the United States to promote sustainable development and protect the environment by combating global environmental degradation. Our involvement in UNEP also promotes the interests of U.S. industry, which is directly affected by evolving international environmental standards. Chemicals are an area of particular interest. In 2006, the United States negotiated the Strategic Approach for International Chemicals Management (SAICM), establishing broad voluntary standards for producing and transporting chemicals worldwide. The United States has also provided funding to support operation of the Secretariats of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, and the Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent. In addition, the United States is the main supporter of the UNEP Mercury Program, which is aimed at helping countries to reduce global mercury. UNEP also contributes to regional stability through work in areas affected by conflict.

The United States strongly supports work done in UNEP core programs, such as early warning and assessment of environmental threats, the regional seas program, capacity-building for domestic environmental governance in developing countries, and the global program of action to combat land-based sources of marine pollution. The United States values UNEP's monitoring, assessing, and publicizing of emerging environmental trends, especially in regional fora where national responsibilities do not take precedence.

The United States was instrumental in the negotiations culminating in the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building, and is working with UNEP and its members to mainstream capacity-building within the regular programs of UNEP. As a part of this effort to focus UNEP's programs on implementation, the United States has encouraged UNEP to strengthen its linkages with scientific institutions, and is assisting in developing nations to improve their ability to monitor and assess environmental change and implement multilateral environmental agreements. As prescribed by paragraph 169 of the World Summit Outcome Document of September 2005, the United Nations in 2006 initiated a two-track review to improve coordination and efficiency of its environmental activities.

### **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)**

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) entered into force in March 1994. The ultimate objective of the UNFCCC is to achieve stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system. The United States ratified the UNFCCC in 1992; today, 191 countries have ratified the Convention. The Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC entered into force in February 2005. This Protocol requires developed nations to reduce their collective greenhouse gas emissions by an average of 5.2 percent below 1990 levels during the period 2008–2012 (7 percent below 1990 levels for the United States). The Kyoto Protocol exempts developing countries from binding emission targets, including some of the world's largest emitters of greenhouse gases, and would harm the U.S. economy. President Bush therefore announced in March 2001 that the United States would not ratify the Protocol. This decision is consistent with the recommendation of Senate Resolution 98, approved in July 1997, by a vote of 95-0.

The United States is engaged in extensive international efforts on climate change, both through bilateral and multilateral activities. Our 15 bilateral climate change partnerships encompass over 450 activities with countries and regional organizations that, together with us, represent over 80 percent of the world's emissions. Since 2002, the U.S. government has initiated multiple international partnerships to promote development and deployment of key climate change-related energy technologies. These include the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate, the Carbon Sequestration Leadership Forum, the International Partnership for the Hydrogen Economy, the Methane to Markets Partnership, and Gen IV International Forum. Continued U.S. participation in and support for the UNFCCC helps to advance U.S. approaches to climate change issues.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was created in 1988 as a joint effort of the World Meteorological Organization and the UN Environment Program. The IPCC conducts periodic assessments of studies on the science of climate change, its potential impacts, and ways countries adapt and seek to mitigate climate change. In 2006, drafts of the IPCC Fourth



Assessment Report (AR4), involving contributions from several hundred experts, underwent government and expert review. The Fourth Assessment Report will be issued in 2007.

## **Population**

### **UN Population Fund (UNFPA)**

The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) provides funding for population and reproductive health care programs in over 140 countries. UNFPA supports maternal, child, and reproductive health care and family planning programs worldwide and works on the issues of gender empowerment, child marriage, and violence against women. UNFPA provides assistance in the framework of three-to-five-year country plans, which are developed jointly with the recipient country and approved by the Executive Board.

Thoraya Ahmed Obaid (Saudi Arabia), the Executive Director of UNFPA, was appointed in 2001 by the UN Secretary-General. The Secretary-General extended her tenure for another term, which will end in December 2008. The United States is a member of UNFPA's Executive Board and participates actively in the decision-making processes to safeguard U.S. interests.

In recent years, the United States has determined that UNFPA's support of and involvement in China's birth-planning activities has facilitated the practice of coercive abortions, and that, therefore, the Kemp-Kasten Amendment precluded U.S. funding for UNFPA.

### **UN Commission on Population and Development (CPD)**

The UN Commission on Population and Development (CPD) advises the UN Economic and Social Council on population changes, including migration, and their effects on economic and social conditions. It is also charged by the General Assembly to monitor, review, and assess implementation of the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo in 1994.

The CPD held its 39<sup>th</sup> session in New York April 3-7, 2006. The central theme of the session was international migration and development. The United States emphasized that immigration has played an important and defining role in shaping the history and success of the United States. While the U.S. delegation noted that orderly migration, when managed effectively, is a positive phenomenon, migration is a complex issue that has proven extremely difficult to address at the international level. The United States joined consensus on the two resolutions concerning the central theme and the Commission's program of work. The United States also delivered an Explanation of Position emphasizing that the United States does not recognize abortion as a method of family planning or support abortion in its reproductive health assistance, nor do the resolutions create international legal rights or legally binding obligations on states under international law.

## **Regional Economic Commissions**

The UN regional economic commissions include the Economic Commission for Africa, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. These bodies are charged with “raising the level of economic activity” within their respective regions and “maintaining and strengthening the economic relations” of the countries within their scopes, “both among themselves and with other countries of the world.” The regional commissions are funded out of the regular UN budget, of which the United States pays 22 percent. Many of their activities are financed by extra-budgetary grants from bilateral and multilateral donors. The United States is a member of ECE, ECLAC, and ESCAP. U.S. participation in regional commissions advances and safeguards U.S. foreign policy and commercial interests in these regions.

### **Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)**

The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), headquartered in Geneva, was established in 1947 to encourage economic cooperation within Europe and between Europe and other countries with close trade and business ties. At the end of December 2006, ECE membership consisted of 56 countries, including those of Western Europe, as well as the United States, Canada, Israel, Turkey, and the Central Asian and Caucasian states of the former Soviet Union. In December 2005, the UN Secretary-General appointed Marek Belka (Poland) as Executive Secretary.

The ECE is traditionally a “standards-setting” and coordination body in many technical fields, such as in e-commerce, energy, the environment, vehicle construction, road safety, timber and agricultural produce, border crossing, and statistical collection. Many ECE standards are adopted around the world. U.S. government agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency and Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Energy, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, and Transportation, regularly participate in working groups and chair committees. The U.S. Chief Statistician is the chair of the Conference of European Statisticians, a group that coordinates statistical methodology across the region and serves as a forum for international harmonization in statistics.

At its 61<sup>st</sup> Plenary, February 21-24, 2006, the ECE agreed to changes proposed by the Negotiating Committee on ECE reform, based on the external evaluation report prepared in 2005. These changes included simplifying the governance structure by merging two governing bodies into one, an Executive Committee that meets monthly; eliminating two sub-programs (Economic Analysis and Industrial Restructuring); creating a new one (Economic Cooperation and Integration); and re-assigning 30 staff members to functions in line with member state priorities.

## **Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)**

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) was established in 1948 and had 43 member states as of December 2006. The United States is a full member with voting privileges. ECLAC also has eight Associate Members, including the U.S. territories of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Commission is headquartered in Santiago, Chile, with two sub-regional offices for Mexico and for the Caribbean (Trinidad and Tobago). It also has offices in Bogota, Brasilia, Buenos Aires, Montevideo, and Washington. Executive Secretary Jose Luis Machinea (Argentina) has headed the organization since December 2003.

ECLAC's mission is to improve cooperation among member states and international entities to advance economic and social development in the region. Although it previously advocated closed markets and state-run economies, ECLAC has come to recognize some of the benefits of trade liberalization and privatization. ECLAC produced a well-respected manual for post-disaster needs assessment that was useful in its coordinating role in assistance to Guatemala after the deadly mudslides caused by Tropical Storm Stan in October 2005.

ECLAC held its biennial plenary session in Montevideo, Uruguay, March 20-24, 2006, including an *ad hoc* meeting of its Committee on Population and Development. The program of work for 2008-2009 was adopted. The centerpiece of the conference was the document "Shaping the Future of Social Protection;" it generated a discussion of labor markets, health systems, pension systems, and education. The United States countered those delegates supporting a rights-based social protection system by emphasizing that no long-term solution to the problem of inequality will happen without both linking obligations to rights and ensuring that participants in any protection scheme have a vested interest in contributing. Delegates also approved the admission of Japan as a member state and Turks and Caicos as an associate member, and welcomed the Dominican Republic's offer to host the 2008 plenary. During 2006, ECLAC also held its second fair at which it awarded prizes for the best Experiences in Social Innovation.

## **Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)**

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) was established in 1947, and is headquartered in Bangkok, Thailand. Fifty-three nations are members of ESCAP; nine non-self-governing territories hold associate member status, three of which are U.S. territories in the Asia and Pacific region: American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands. The United States is a full ESCAP member.

ESCAP provides technical support to member governments on a wide array of socio-economic development issues. ESCAP's activities include providing direct advisory services; training and sharing of regional experiences;

and disseminating knowledge and data through meetings, seminars, publications, and inter-country networks.

Since his appointment in July 2000, Executive Secretary Dr. Kim Hak-Su (Republic of Korea) focused ESCAP on poverty alleviation, which was a dominant concern for many countries. Dr. Kim's institutional reforms went into effect in January 2003, outlining a new structure with the following three main thematic committees: Poverty Reduction, Managing Globalization, and Emerging Social Issues. The United States continued to be a strong supporter of these reform initiatives.

ESCAP met for its annual session in Jakarta, April 6-12, 2006. The conference agenda focused on implementing the Millennium Development Goals in the region; increasing economic growth in Pacific island countries through greater cooperation in the areas of trade and investment, infrastructure, and information and communication technology; and meeting the needs for improved disaster management.

## **Social Issues**

### **Commission for Social Development (CSocD)**

The Commission for Social Development (CSocD) held its annual meeting (44<sup>th</sup> session) in New York from February 8-to-17, 2006. CSocD, a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations, consists of 46 member states elected by ECOSOC.

The Commission for Social Development is the UN body in charge of the follow-up and implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Program of Action, adopted at the World Summit for Social Development in 1995. In 2006, CSocD adopted resolutions titled: "Social Dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development;" "Modalities for the First Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Aging, Promoting Youth Employment;" and "Comprehensive and Integral International Convention to Protect and Promote the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities." The U.S. delegation made an explanation of position (EOP) on the resolution on the "Social Dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development," explaining that the United States understood the term "right to development," found in Operative Paragraph 4 of that resolution, to mean that each individual should enjoy the right to develop her or his intellectual or other capabilities to the maximum extent possible through the exercise of the full range of civil and political rights.

Discussions on the priority theme of the 44<sup>th</sup> session, Review of the First UN Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, did not result in agreed conclusions. The United States delegation, as well as the delegation of the European Union and delegations of several other countries, resisted efforts to divert the work of the Commission from its mandated responsibility to focus on the social dimensions of development into issues of economic development which are normally treated in other fora within the United Nations.

The Commission adopted a resolution on the Future Organization and Methods of Work of the Commission for Social Development that established a two-year cycle in which one year's work will consist of a review to result in a chairperson's summary, while the other year's work will consist of a policy segment whose outcome shall be negotiated, with action-oriented strategies. It was also decided that the theme for the 2007-2008 review and policy cycle would be "promoting full employment and decent work for all."

The Netherlands and the Dominican Republic were elected upon the conclusion of the 44<sup>th</sup> Session as vice-chairs to serve on the Bureau of the 45<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission. Subsequently, Iran was elected as chair, and Tanzania and Ukraine were elected as the two other vice-chairs of the Commission for the next session.

## **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

Since the beginning of the negotiations in 2003 on the draft Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities ("Disabilities Convention"), the United States has maintained that, given the complexity of regulations and enforcement mechanisms needed to ensure equal opportunity for persons with disabilities (PWDs), it would be more productive for nations to strengthen their domestic legal frameworks related to non-discrimination and equality than to negotiate a new UN convention. For this reason, the United States had no intention of becoming a party to the treaty. Ralph Boyd, who was Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the time, stated the U.S. position early in the negotiations.

An *Ad Hoc* Committee on Disabilities was established to negotiate a Convention. Although the Committee consisted of member states, there was extensive civil society participation during the negotiations, with opportunities reserved for representatives from NGOs and disabled persons organizations (DPOs) to speak.

In 2003, the U.S. delegation intervened during negotiations only to give technical advice on U.S. disability law and practice. In 2004, the delegation expanded its engagement to make interventions on issues or articles in the draft text involving international law or practice. In the January-February 2005 and August 2005 negotiations, the United States engaged on a number of key issues, such as establishment of a treaty monitoring body, family issues, and support for the overarching principle of non-discrimination. During the fall of 2005, the United States expanded its engagement to other issues.

The concluding five weeks of negotiations on the draft Disabilities Convention took place in January-February and in August 2006. At the August 2006 session, the United States called for a vote on a preamble paragraph, forced into the text by the Arab Group, containing a reference to foreign occupation. The vote was 102 – 5(U.S.) – 8. Australia, Canada, Israel, and Japan voted with the United States, while Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Kenya, Korea, Niger, Nigeria, and Serbia abstained. The United States then

joined consensus on moving the text forward to the fall 2006 UN General Assembly for action. At the UN General Assembly on December 13, 2006, the United States joined consensus on adopting the Convention with an Explanation of Position on the preamble paragraph citing foreign occupation and the article on health containing the term “reproductive health.”

The active U.S. role in the disabilities negotiations has been aimed at advancing U.S. policy interests, including advancing democracy; promoting democratic values such as non-discrimination and equal treatment; condemning torture; and promoting health and U.S. values on social issues. Member states and the disabilities community have welcomed increased involvement.

### **UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (Crime Commission) and UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)**

The UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (Crime Commission) is the principal UN policy-making body on criminal justice issues. The 40-member Commission convenes annually at the UN Office in Vienna. Many decisions from these annual sessions are forwarded to the UN Economic and Social Council (or occasionally to the UN General Assembly) for endorsement. The United States is an active member of the Crime Commission and is highly engaged in the plenary and Committee of the Whole.

Support given by the United States during the year greatly assisted UN anti-crime programs and policy. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) used funds provided by the United States to support global programs to strengthen the legal framework and operations of countries with organized crime cases, fortify the legal regime against terrorism, and increase implementation of the UN corruption convention. Country-specific U.S. funds were also used to enhance law enforcement response to trafficking in persons in India.

The 15<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Crime Commission convened April 24-28, 2006, in Vienna. The thematic discussion of the Commission was “maximizing the effectiveness of technical assistance in crime prevention and criminal justice.” The Commission negotiated 12 resolutions, including several U.S. co-sponsored resolutions in the areas of trafficking in persons, corruption, security at major events, and the Africa Round Table Program of Action. These resolutions direct the work of the UNODC toward areas where it has relevant expertise and can best complement U.S. bilateral assistance efforts.

The United States played a crucial role in brokering compromises on a number of resolutions, such as a proposal to develop a potentially cumbersome follow-up mechanism for the 11<sup>th</sup> Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (Crime Congress) held in Bangkok in 2005. The U.S. delegation was able to intervene and to promote a modified framework for a working group that would instead examine lessons learned from the Crime Congresses. The United States also worked assiduously with the Indonesian delegation on a

resolution regarding trafficking in timber resulting from illegal logging. However, the Brazilian delegation ultimately blocked consensus.

The United States was instrumental in jump-starting Crime Commission reform both on procedural and substantive grounds. U.S. delegates introduced a streamlined agenda for the upcoming session that compressed the Commission's agenda and avoided duplication between the work of the Commission and the work of the Conference of Parties for the two UN crime conventions: the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (TOC), and the UN Convention Against Corruption (CAC).

The United States voiced its strong support for implementation and ratification of the TOC and the CAC, as well as the counterterrorism instruments, and urged other states to join it in contributing resources for technical assistance in implementing the Conventions.

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) entered into force on September 29, 2003. As a party to the Convention and participant in the 2006 Conference of Parties (COP), the United States supported collecting information to implement the Convention and its protocols; it also actively facilitated donor-recipient dialogue on UNODC's delivery of technical assistance to implement the TOC and its Protocols and the identification of priority needs. The Conference of Parties also endorsed UNODC's creation of an online directory of central authorities to help implement mutual legal assistance and extradition. The U.S. delegation reached agreement with other states parties on the way forward in reviewing implementation of the TOC, prevented the adoption of an overly burdensome implementation monitoring mechanism, and secured consensus that the first two rounds of questionnaires must be completed before moving to additional phases of information gathering.

Throughout 2006, this convention and its three protocols have helped to raise international awareness of pressing issues – such as trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling – that previously were not widely recognized. For example, in 2006, the United States, for the first time ever, successfully utilized the migrant smuggling protocol as the basis for an extradition case with Bulgaria. U.S. authorities also used the TOC as the basis for provisional arrest warrants and a pending mutual legal assistance request.

The United Nations Convention against Corruption (CAC), adopted in 2003, is the first truly globally negotiated anticorruption treaty and the most comprehensive existing anticorruption instrument. The CAC entered into force on December 14, 2006, and its Conference of the States Parties (COSP) convened its first meeting in December 2006 in Jordan. At the first COSP, member states agreed on the necessity of creating a mechanism for reviewing implementation of CAC. To achieve this goal, the United States created a self-assessment checklist as a model for soliciting and gathering such information that member states agreed to use. The COSP also created experts' working groups tasked with discussing how to move forward on the issues of asset recovery and technical assistance. With strong support from the U.S.

delegation, the COSP also appealed for states party to expedite compliance with the mandatory criminalization provisions, to increase steps to address bribery of international organization officials, and to consider a case study examination of prevention as an activity at the next COSP to be held in Indonesia in 2007.

Throughout 2006, the United States encouraged UNODC to continue to improve its strategic management through the development of its overarching strategy and the creation and implementation of performance-based indicators in project and standard evaluations. The United States participated in numerous negotiations on the new UNODC Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2011, during which the United States emphasized the need for UNODC to prioritize its projects and establish performance indicators that accurately measure the impact of UNODC's assistance. The Strategy would be finalized in early 2007 and sent both to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs for approval. The United States expects that the final product will set forth useful distinctions (on HIV/AIDS, terrorism and the issue of the Conventions vice standards/norms), assist UNODC in long-term planning, and increase donor confidence in the organization.

## **Drug Control**

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), both based in Vienna, support U.S. drug control objectives. The UN drug control conventions (the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs as amended by the 1972 Protocol, the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and the 1988 UN Convention Against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances) provide the framework for international drug control. This framework includes initiatives prohibiting the cultivation of opium, coca and marijuana; targeting drug traffickers and their proceeds; promoting national campaigns on drug abuse prevention and treatment; and regulating precursor chemicals used in the production of many illicit drugs.

U.S. support during 2006 had significant impact on the operations and expansion of UN counter-narcotics programs and policy. UNODC used funds provided by the United States to enhance global programs that work to: reduce precursor chemical control; combat money laundering and terrorist financing; provide legal advice on treaty implementation of the UN drug conventions, drug abuse and HIV/AIDS prevention; and augment an international network of treatment and rehabilitation centers. U.S. funds also supported numerous regional projects, including strengthening precursor control in East Asia and increasing border control in Central Asia. U.S. funds also supported country-specific programs in Afghanistan, providing for eradication verification activities; in Venezuela, implementing a legal advisory program; in Peru, monitoring illicit drug crops; and in South Africa, preventing drug abuse and raising awareness of HIV/AIDS.



## **Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)**

The 53-member UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), of which the United States has been a member since 1946, is the central policy-making body within the UN system for dealing with drug-related matters. The CND held its 49<sup>th</sup> session in Vienna March 13-17, 2006. During the regular CND session, delegates reviewed the worldwide activities and management of the UNODC, and received briefings on various aspects of the global narcotics situation. Delegates also debated UNODC's role in the provision of alternative development during the thematic debate. The United States emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach to alternative development that included eradication of illicit crops as a condition for alternative development assistance, and the importance of mainstreaming alternative development and other drug control strategies into broader development goals.

The United States achieved its major goals during the CND session, including the adoption of the U.S.-sponsored resolution on control of precursor chemicals used in the manufacture of synthetic drugs, in particular methamphetamine. This resolution was critical to fostering international cooperation on halting the diversion of chemicals and was widely supported by the other Commission members. As a result of this resolution, hundreds of tons of precursors for methamphetamine, that feed the epidemic in the United States, were stopped or seized. The United States also co-sponsored several resolutions related to controlled substances and chemicals, as well as a resolution promoting international cooperation among law enforcement at the operational level, another on the Paris Pact Initiative (a 2003 French-led effort for stronger multilateral action against Afghan heroin trafficking), and one proposed by Afghanistan seeking support for its National Drug Control Strategy. U.S. delegates worked to mitigate problematic text contained in resolutions on drug abuse enabling "harm reduction" and "preventive alternative development."

## **International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)**

The 13-member International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) is an independent quasi-judicial control body that has a mandate to promote governments' compliance with the provisions of the international drug control treaties, and to assist governments in this effort. The Board meets periodically to monitor the implementation of the drug control treaties and the international movement of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

The INCB presented its annual report to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in March 2006. The report called upon governments to estimate their legitimate requirements for precursors which may be used in the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants, and urged governments to control pharmaceutical products containing scheduled substances in the same way they control the scheduled substances themselves. These comments directly supported the U.S. aforementioned precursor resolution at the CND. In addition, the United States was pleased with the report's first chapter on alternative development and legitimate livelihoods that contains helpful

statements linking alternative development to eradication and law enforcement. The report again expressed frustration with the misuse of the Internet to obtain prescription narcotic drugs from illegal Internet pharmacies, and also criticized non-governmental organization advocacy in favor of the legalization of opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan. All of these statements helped to reinforce U.S. drug policy internationally.

In May 2006, the U.S. candidate to the INCB, former Ambassador Melvyn Levitsky, was successfully re-elected to the Board. Ambassador Levitsky will serve in his private capacity on the Board for an additional five-year term, which will extend from 2007-2012.

## **Human Rights**

### **Status of Women**

The UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), established in 1946 as a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), seeks to improve the situation of women in the areas of political participation, economic opportunity, social development, health, and education. Following the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing Women's Conference), the General Assembly mandated that the CSW institute a follow-up process to the Conference by regularly reviewing the 12 critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action, and mainstreaming a gender perspective in UN activities. The United States regards the CSW favorably and is active in the Commission's work, and has successfully used the annual CSW meetings to highlight U.S. activities to improve conditions for women throughout the world.

The CSW convened its 2006 session in New York from February 27-March 10, 2006, with a brief wrap-up session on March 16. At the conclusion of the two-week session, member states adopted the following resolutions by consensus: "Situation of Women and Girls in Afghanistan" (EU resolution, U.S. co-sponsor); "Release of Women and Children Taken Hostage, Including those Subsequently Imprisoned, in Armed Conflict" (Azerbaijan resolution); "Women, the Girl Child, and HIV/AIDS" (SADC resolution; U.S. joined consensus with an EOP); and a procedural resolution on "Advisability of the Appointment of a Special Rapporteur on Laws that Discriminate Against Women" (Slovenia / Rwanda resolution).

The United States called for a vote on and voted against the resolution on "Situation of and Assistance to Palestinian Women." Each year the United States opposes this unbalanced and one-sided resolution that criticizes Israel while failing to note that the Palestinian side and Arab states also have responsibilities to meet in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The resolution addresses a number of issues, including territory and refugees, which must be resolved by negotiations between the parties. The vote was 41-2 (U.S. and Canada)-1 (Nicaragua).

During the March 16 resumed session, member states adopted by consensus one resolution and two sets of Agreed Conclusions. The UK

resolution on “Future Organization and Methods of Work of the Commission on the Status of Women” set the CSW work program for 2007-2009, with the following themes: Eliminating Discrimination and Violence Against the Girl Child (2007); Financing for Gender Equality and Empowerment (2008); and “Equal Sharing of Responsibilities Between Women and Men, Including in the Context of HIV/AIDS” (2009). On the Agreed Conclusions on “Equal Participation of Women and Men in Decision-Making Processes at All Levels,” Cuba, Sudan, and Syria called for inserting wording on foreign occupation, while the United States opposed it. Because those three countries did not want to be perceived as blocking consensus on this text, they eventually substituted wording on the obstacles women faced that affected their participation in decision-making processes, “including, *inter alia*, ... armed conflict ....” For the Agreed Conclusions on “Enhanced Participation of Women in Development,” Egypt withdrew language on foreign occupation largely because of U.S. opposition.

The U.S. held a side event on the situation of women in Darfur, which U.S. Representative to the CSW Ambassador Patricia Brister moderated.

## **Commission on Human Rights**

During 2006, there was a major change in the UN human rights framework with the elimination of the UN Commission on Human Rights (which reported to the UN General Assembly (UNGA) via the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)), and the creation of the UN Human Rights Council (which reports directly to UNGA). While the United States supported the Secretary-General’s 2005 initiative to replace the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) with a smaller, action-oriented Human Rights Council (HRC), negotiations to establish the Council resulted in weak standards for membership and a low threshold for calling Special Sessions. The United States did not vote for the resolution creating the HRC (UNGA Resolution 60/251), which was approved 170-4(U.S)-3. The United States disassociated from consensus in the Fifth Committee on a vote that called for \$4.3 million to be designated for the UN Human Rights Council. The United States also did not run for membership in 2006, yet nevertheless engaged with the body as an active observer.

The Council’s initial 47 members were elected in May 2006 for one-, two- and three-year terms. Subsequent elections will be for three-year terms only. In contrast to the Commission on Human Rights, which met for one six-week session per year, the Human Rights Council meets throughout the year for a minimum of 10 weeks of plenary meetings in Geneva, but for many more weeks in practice when working groups and other HRC-related bodies are considered. In addition, the Council frequently called Special Sessions, since only one-third of the members were needed to do so. Three regular sessions (June 19–30, September 18–October 6 -- continued November 27–29, and November 29–December 8) and four Special Sessions (July 5-6, August 11, November 15, and December 12–13) were held in 2006. Three of the Special Sessions focused exclusively on Israel and the fourth on Sudan. None of the U.S. goals for the new HRC was achieved during 2006, save the calling of the

Special Session on Sudan, but the principal institutional matters concerning the Council will not be resolved until mid-2007 at the earliest.

### **UNGA Third Committee**

The United States succeeded in accomplishing several key objectives in the Third Committee in 2006. With active lobbying and global demarches on the part of the United States and its allies, four significant country-specific resolutions passed, some defeating associated procedural no-action motions in the process. A top U.S. priority, the Canada-sponsored resolution on the human rights situation in Iran, passed in a vote of 70(U.S.)-48-55. The EU-sponsored DPRK and Burma resolutions passed by 91(U.S.)-21-60 and 79(U.S.)-28-63, respectively. The U.S.-sponsored resolution on Belarus was adopted (70(U.S.)-31-67), but the Uzbekistan resolution was withdrawn from consideration when a procedural no-action motion passed by a margin of only five votes. Retaliatory resolutions condemning the human rights record of the United States and Canada were tabled by Belarus and Iran respectively; neither passed.

A politically biased resolution blaming Israel for human rights violations in Lebanon passed by a vote of 109-7(U.S.)-59. The resolutions on the Right to Development and the Rights of the Child passed again by a large majority, although the EU voted against the development resolution when Cuba, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, insisted on maintaining a reference to the need for a convention. The United States was able to join consensus on Denmark's resolution against torture and on the resolution on the protection of migrants, after successfully resisting language proposed by Mexico that challenged U.S. border protection measures. The United States worked extensively on negotiating resolutions regarding international cooperation against the scourges of drugs and crime. Ultimately, the United States co-sponsored both the Mexican-sponsored resolution strengthening international drug control and the Italian-sponsored resolution strengthening the UN crime prevention and criminal justice program. The United States joined consensus on Res. 61/144, "Trafficking in Women and Girls," and Res. 61/143, "Intensification of Efforts to Eliminate All Forms of Violence Against Women." The United States joined consensus with an EOP on Res. 61/106, "Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities." The resolution on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance was adopted by consensus – preserving important language on anti-Semitism over calls from some other countries to eliminate any references to specific religions.

### **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights**

The High Commissioner for Human Rights is the principal UN official responsible for advancing UN human rights activities and is responsible to the Secretary-General. Under the High Commissioner's leadership, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) works to ensure the practical implementation of universally recognized human rights norms, including carrying out the tasks assigned by UN human rights bodies. The

United States, through its mission to the United Nations in Geneva, has worked with the new High Commissioner to build a strong cooperative relationship.

OHCHR's operations in 2006 included these activities: monitoring the human rights situation in Darfur; assisting the governments of Nepal, Colombia and Guatemala; and pressing the government of Sri Lanka to accept assistance. OHCHR also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the government of Togo, and established a new country office in Lome.

OHCHR provided staff for the secretariat of the UN Human Rights Council and for the independent UN special procedures, including special rapporteurs. OHCHR does not control or have great influence over the HRC nor the special procedures.

## **UN Democracy Fund**

The UN Democracy Fund (UNDEF), growing out of an idea presented by President Bush at the United Nations in 2004 and established in 2005, had a successful first year. UNDEF is funded completely voluntarily, with 22 countries pledging and contributing some \$50 million. The 17-member (including the United States) UNDEF Advisory Board selected 125 projects for funding from more than 1,300 proposals by over 100 countries. The grants, totaling \$36 million, are now being disbursed, with the majority going to pro-democracy civil-society organizations.

Among the 125 approved projects, particular attention was given to NGOs in emerging democracies. Many U.S. priority projects received funding, among which were: Hungary's International Center for Democratic Transition (ICDT), an NGO that provides guidance on the transition to democracy based upon lessons learned by countries that have undergone the process; and the strengthening of civil society participation in the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative (BMENA). Although some of the approved projects already receive bilateral support from the United States and others, the direct support of NGOs is a new development. At the Board meeting, the United States insisted that no more than 20 percent of the funded projects be administered by UN agencies. Seventy percent went to NGOs, with the remainder going to government, regional, and international organizations.

The Fund is an expression of President Bush's vision for introducing the benefits of democracy to people all over the world. By empowering civil society organizations, democracy can grow naturally from culturally resonant institutions within the citizenry of emerging democracies. As an outcome of UN reform, the fund truly represents the possibility for new thinking on the use of technical assistance to build democratic institutions. While the political climate in the UN human rights institutions worsens, the Democracy Fund stands out as a symbol of what the United Nations can do when properly mobilized. The United States has been integral in the formation of this innovative institution and, with continued participation, can help to sustain its achievements over the long term.

## **Democracy Caucus**

The UN Democracy Caucus (DC) is a network of democratic nations through which the United States can advance the work of the United Nations in areas such as human rights, good governance, and the rule of law. The United States believes that democratic nations must work more closely together in order to help the United Nations to live up to its founding principles. The Democracy Caucus is comprised of the approximately 130 countries that participate in the Community of Democracies, whose participants meet standards set out in the Warsaw Declaration of June 27, 2000. The Democracy Caucus is not intended to supplant long-standing regional or other groupings, but rather to provide an added mechanism for like-minded democratic nations to cooperate. It serves as a supplementary network that countries use to cooperate on resolutions and alternatives. The United States participates on the Convening Group, comprised of 16 countries and chaired by Mali, which provides leadership for the Caucus.

Democracy Caucus work is done regularly in Geneva and New York, and an initiative is under consideration in Paris. In May, the Community of Democracies Convening Group issued a statement, which the United States supported, encouraging participating states to support candidates with good human rights records in the Human Rights Council election. In Geneva, Ambassador Tichenor met regularly with Convening Group ambassadors to discuss initiatives to advance the various ways to express the common commitment to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. In New York, the CD Ministerial during the UN General Assembly focused on furthering democracy, development, and poverty reduction. The U.S. delegation to the Ministerial Conference, led by Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs Paula Dobriansky, also highlighted the need to support the UN Democracy Fund and urged that the Community face the global challenge posed by the restrictions imposed by some undemocratic and borderline democratic regimes on civil society organizations. In Paris, a discussion was held among several Caucus participants to explore establishing a group to focus on initiatives such as civic education.

The Democracy Caucus continued its institution-building work. Efforts to establish a Secretariat for the Democracy Caucus began to gain momentum. In preparation for the Community of Democracies Ministerial Meeting in Mali in November 2007, working groups were established to focus on tangible activities that could be accomplished before the conference. Members of the 16-member Convening Group began to meet in Washington, and in Bamako, Mali, to determine the invitation list for the upcoming Ministerial.

## **Committee on Non-governmental Organizations**

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Committee on Non-governmental Organizations (CONGO) is the UN body that adjudicates requests by non-governmental organizations for accreditation to participate in ECOSOC and its subsidiaries' meetings. The 19 members of CONGO in 2006 were Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, France, Germany,

India, Iran, Pakistan, Peru, Romania, Russia, Senegal, Sudan, Turkey, the United States, and Zimbabwe. The terms of committee members are four years; the U.S. term was renewed when it ended on December 31, 2006.

At its regular session, which met January 19-27, 2006, the NGO Committee had before it 144 applications for consultative status, including applications deferred from earlier sessions dating back to 1999. CONGO recommended 97 applications for consultative status with ECOSOC; 18 were U.S.-based NGOs. The committee deferred 39 NGOs for further consideration, closed consideration of two NGOs, reclassified 2 NGOs, and reviewed 52 quadrennial reports. It also decided not to recommend consultative status with ECOSOC for three NGOs: the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA); the Danish National Association for Gays and Lesbians (LBL); and People in Need. CONGO withdrew the consultative status of one NGO, the Islamic African Relief Agency (IARA), based on a complaint submitted by the U.S. delegation.

U.S. delegates participated in discussions both on accreditation and on deferral of applications to future sessions. In the case of ILGA and LBL, the Iranian and Pakistani delegations submitted the motions to the committee to decide not to recommend granting consultative status with ECOSOC based on concerns about the organizations' policies regarding pedophilia. The decisions were approved by roll call votes of 10 in favour (Cameroon, China, Cuba, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, Senegal, Sudan, United States, and Zimbabwe); 5 against (Chile, France, Germany, Peru, and Romania); 3 abstentions (Colombia, India, and Turkey). In the case of People in Need, a Czech-based NGO, Cuba submitted the motion not to grant consultative status with ECOSOC, alleging that the NGO was involved in political activity contrary to Resolution 1996/31 and the UN charter. Cuba alleged that the NGO receives millions of Euros from the Czech government and U.S. institutions -- USAID and the National Endowment for Democracy -- and that it has been used to illegally introduce in Cuba material and money sent to mercenaries paid by the U.S. and Czech governments to overthrow the Cuban constitutional order. Cuba's motion not to grant consultative status to People in Need was approved by a roll call vote of 9 for (China, Colombia, Cuba, India, Iran, Senegal, Sudan, Russian Federation, Zimbabwe), 4 against (France, Germany, Romania, United States) and 4 abstaining (Chile, Pakistan, Peru, Turkey).

In the case of IARA, the U.S. delegation provided information to the committee via the complaint regarding the known affiliation of this NGO with terrorist financing, and the inclusion of this organization on terrorist lists of the United States and the European Union. The withdrawal decision was achieved by consensus. The U.S. delegation also requested the closure of the application of World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMMY) based on current indictment and searches by federal authorities in the United States of the NGO's U.S. locations and activities.

CONGO held its resumed session May 10-19, 2006, in New York. It reviewed 96 applications for consultative status, including applications deferred

from earlier sessions dating back to 1999. The committee recommended 55 applications for consultative status: 14 were U.S.-based NGOs. It deferred 37 NGOs for further consideration, took note of 33 quadrennial reports, and reclassified the status of one NGO. On a proposal made by the delegation of Iran, the committee also decided not to grant consultative status to two NGOs: the Lesbian and Gay Federation in Germany and ILGA-Europe. The proposal was adopted by roll call vote of 9 in favor (Cameroon, China, Cote d'Ivoire, Iran, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Senegal, Sudan, and Zimbabwe); 7 against (Chile, Colombia, France, Germany, Peru, Romania, and United States); and 2 abstentions (India and Turkey.)

The NGO Committee also considered a proposal by the delegation of Sudan to re-open the withdrawal decision taken in the regular session of the committee on the organization IARA. The delegation of Sudan claimed that the NGO is a legal organization with no links to terrorism, and that its government is very familiar with its work, contrary to the allegations presented with the U.S. complaint during the previous session of the committee. The U.S. delegation challenged the veracity of the delegation of Sudan, noting that during the previous session Sudan had supported the withdrawal and had stated that it was unaware of the organization. The motion to re-open the case was rejected by roll call vote of 8 in favor (China, Cuba, India, Iran, Pakistan, Senegal, Sudan and Zimbabwe); 9 against (Chile, Colombia, France, Germany, Peru, Romania, Turkey, Russian Federation, and the United States); and two abstentions (Cameroon and Cote d'Ivoire.)

During consideration of strengthening the Department of Economic and Social Affairs' (DESA) NGO Section, the U.S. delegation, supported by Germany and other delegations, raised its concern regarding the expansion of certain activities by the Secretariat and the effect on its work as a supporting unit for the committee. The U.S. delegation noted that the NGO Section could not undertake additional work and projects that would interfere with or diminish the capacity of the Secretariat to address its primary mandate as stated in Resolution 1996/31, which entails providing a clear channel of communication between NGOs and ECOSOC, particularly regarding new application for accreditation, submission of quadrennial reports, documentation of withdrawals and suspensions, and overall questions and answers from NGOs regarding the application process and accreditation status. In this regard, the U.S. delegation requested that the NGO Section submit to the committee a document containing the composition and assignment of duties of its personnel.

Overall, the NGO Committee is a highly politicized technical committee. As such, the most frequently attacked and scrutinized NGOs are those working in the fields of human rights, the rule of law, and democracy. The U.S. presence and participation in the NGO Committee allows these NGOs to obtain and keep accreditation with ECOSOC. The U.S. delegation also plays a crucial oversight role for the administration and control of DESA's NGO Section.



## **Holocaust Remembrance**

On January 27, 2006, the UN General Assembly observed the first International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. UN General Assembly President Jan Eliasson of Sweden cited in particular the resolution's language that "the General Assembly unequivocally rejects any denial of the Holocaust as an historic event, either in full or in part."

The resolution establishing the International Day of Commemoration was introduced by Israel during the 60<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly and adopted by consensus on November 1, 2005, with 104 Member states co-sponsoring. This resolution built on the successful December 2004 request of the United States, the European Union, Australia, Canada, Israel, New Zealand, and the Russian Federation to convene a special session of the General Assembly in January 2005 to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps.

In December 2006, in direct contravention of the 2005 resolution, the Iranian government sponsored an international conference titled, "Review of the Holocaust: Global Vision," specifically aimed at denying the existence of the Holocaust as a historical event. Reflecting the widespread condemnation by the international community, the United States pressed for a UN General Assembly resolution reiterating the General Assembly's rejection of Holocaust denial. As of the end of 2006, the draft resolution, which condemned without reservation any denial of the Holocaust, had attracted widespread support and numerous co-sponsors, and was expected to be presented for General Assembly consideration on January 26, 2007, the eve of the second annual International Day of Commemoration.

## **Humanitarian Affairs**

### **World Food Program (WFP)**

The World Food Program (WFP) is the United Nations' front-line agency in the fight against global hunger. In 2006, WFP distributed 4.0 million metric tons of food aid to 87.8 million people in 78 countries. James T. Morris (United States) served as WFP's 10<sup>th</sup> Executive Director, from 2002-2006. In November 2006, Josette Sheeran (United States) was selected to become WFP's 11<sup>th</sup> Executive Director. WFP's governing body, the Executive Board, has 36 members, including the United States.

WFP's Strategic Plan for 2004–2007 contains the following five strategic priorities: to save lives in crisis situations; to protect livelihoods in crisis situations and enhance resilience to shocks; to support improved nutrition and health for children, mothers, and other vulnerable people; to support access to education and reduce gender disparity in access to education and skills training; and to help governments establish and manage national food-assistance programs.

In 2006, WFP helped the United States to achieve its humanitarian and development goals, carrying out programs in Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Bolivia, Ecuador, Nepal, and Indonesia among other locations. Sudan was the largest single-country operation in 2006, receiving 64 percent of direct emergency expenditures and targeting 6.1 million beneficiaries. Kenya and Ethiopia were the second- and third-largest beneficiaries, respectively.

The Immediate Response Account (IRA) received the highest amount of external funding since its creation in 1991. This allowed the IRA to respond quickly and effectively to 58 relief projects, among them 14 sudden natural disasters and many civil crises. Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Lebanon, Colombia, Indonesia, Iraq, and Philippines were among those aided by IRA funds.

In 2006, WFP had schoolchildren feeding operations in 71 countries and provided school meals and/or take-home rations to 20.2 million children. Working with national governments, local authorities, and other aid groups, WFP uses food to attract children to school in areas where enrollment ratios are lowest and where feeding schoolchildren will have the greatest impact. Since 2001, the United States has been the largest single donor to WFP schoolchildren feeding activities. U.S. contributions to WFP's global schoolchildren feeding programs come from the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program. This program provides for donations of U.S. agricultural products, as well as financial and technical assistance, for feeding schoolchildren and maternal and child nutrition projects in low-income, food-deficit countries that are committed to universal education. In 2006, WFP was the implementing partner for McGovern-Dole programs in Bangladesh, Chad, Kenya, and Pakistan.

Throughout 2006, WFP continued to focus on ways to become more effective, efficient, and responsive. WFP continued to: improve its internal business process review so that it can feed more people in crisis on time; strengthen its ability to assess vulnerability and emergency needs; and expand its donor base by attracting new donors, including from the private sector. WFP carried out an analysis of its eight largest operations to determine effectiveness and timeliness of internal advance funding mechanisms. Donations from the private sector have increased since 2003, reaching \$55 million in cash, commodities, and services from nearly 100 organizations.

In 2006, WFP increased its work with other UN organizations to a record level. UNICEF remained WFP's largest UN partner, primarily in projects to overcome child hunger, reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS, and improve education. FAO was WFP's second largest partner, primarily on food security assessments. WFP also developed close working relations with WHO (on health, nutrition, and HIV/AIDS), and with UNHCR (to ensure the distribution of food rations for 1.9 million refugees, and 2 million returnees in 30 countries). Partnerships with NGOs also increased, as 3,264 NGOs handled half of all WFP food in 2006.

WFP operates exclusively from voluntary contributions of commodities and cash donated by governments and other donors. WFP's overhead is one of the lowest among aid agencies (7 percent), which means that 93 cents of every dollar goes to feed the hungry. In 2006, WFP had 10,587 employees and had \$2.9 billion in direct expenditure.

## **UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**

Since its inauguration January 1, 1951, the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), based in Geneva, Switzerland, has led and coordinated international efforts to protect and provide durable solutions for the world's refugees. It also plays a key role in providing for refugees' basic needs, such as food, shelter, health care, and education. Since June 15, 2005, Antonio Guterres (Portugal) has served as High Commissioner.

During 2005 the total number of "persons of concern" to UNHCR, which includes refugee returnees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and a portion of the world's internally displaced persons (IDPs), increased from 19.5 million to 20.8 million persons, an increase of over 6 percent. The primary reason for the increase was a result of UNHCR caring for an increased number of IDPs, stateless persons, and others in a similar situation. At the end of 2005, refugees constituted 40 percent of the total population of concern to UNHCR, down from 49 percent at the start of 2005. Internally displaced persons protected or assisted by UNHCR are the second-largest group under UNHCR's mandate, accounting for 32 percent, followed by stateless persons with 11 percent. Some 6,689 international and national employees and short-term staff, in 116 countries, carried out UNHCR operations.

In 2006, the UN regular budget accounted for approximately 3 percent of the UNHCR annual budget of \$1,146.8 million; the remaining 97 percent came from voluntary sources. In addition, UNHCR issued supplementary appeals, totaling some \$288 million, for emergency assistance to: Sudanese refugees in eastern Chad and Darfur, protection and assistance to refugees and IDPs in Darfur, the return and reintegration of Sudanese refugees to Southern Sudan, the return and reintegration of Burundian refugees, the repatriation and reintegration of Congolese refugees, the Iraq Operation, the tsunami emergency, the Western Sahara Operation, and the South Asia earthquake emergency. The IDP Supplementary Appeals covered operations in Liberia, Somalia, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nepal, Colombia, East Timor, Chad, and headquarters costs for IDP operations.

In late 2005, UNHCR predicted a funding shortfall for 2006 and instituted a 20-percent cap on the 2006 Executive Committee-approved program budgets and non-staff administrative cost budgets. Subsequently, an additional \$20 million in targeted budgetary reductions were identified in the second quarter of the year, half of which were at headquarters. Although these measures were deemed necessary, they have resulted in refugee care falling below accepted standards. As a result of the steps UNHCR took in

2006, the organization is predicting a favorable carryover of an estimated \$58.8 million. The High Commissioner was cautiously optimistic that no capping of refugee assistance programs will be required in 2007.

About half (52 percent) of all refugees benefit from UNHCR assistance programs, with the vast majority located in countries covered by the UNHCR Bureaus for Central Asia, South-West Asia, and the Middle East (CASWANAME, 47 percent) and for Africa (41 percent). By the end of 2005, the number of refugees directly assisted by or through UNHCR fell to 4.4 million refugees.

Due to continued repatriation, the number of Afghan refugees dropped by 21 percent during the year. Significant decreases in the refugee population, often as a result of durable solutions or revised refugee estimates following registration exercises, were also recorded for refugees originating from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Western Sahara, and Sudan. Other major countries of origin experiencing important refugee decreases were Burundi, Liberia, Serbia, and Montenegro. Virtually all regions reported a decrease in the refugee population, with the largest reductions recorded in West Africa and CASWANAME, followed by Europe. The only region that experienced a marginal increase was East Africa and the Horn of Africa. Afghans constituted the largest group among UNHCR's total population of concern (2.9 million). Colombians were the second largest, made up primarily of IDPs, followed by Iraqis, Sudanese, and Somalis. These five nationalities alone accounted for 9.6 million or almost half (46 percent) of all populations of concern to UNHCR.

The UNHCR Executive Committee (EXCOM), which is responsible for approving UNHCR's budget and advising UNHCR on issues of concern, is comprised of 68 member states, including the United States. In October 2006, the 57<sup>th</sup> Session of EXCOM met to discuss protection programs and policy, management and oversight, finance, and human resource issues. UNHCR noted that despite progress in some situations, the desperate need for protection and assistance of the internally displaced in Sudan's Darfur region reflected the need for a clear framework for the exercise of the "responsibility to protect." The High Commissioner cited the central importance of preserving the institution of asylum in a rapidly changing world, opposing all forms of forced return, and ensuring respect for international refugee law. He acknowledged efforts by governments and other partners in addressing the protection needs of refugees.

During the week of EXCOM, the U.S. delegation worked to advance a number of U.S. interests. These included: strengthening efforts by the international community to address protection and the pursuit of durable solutions for refugees; maximizing UNHCR's operational performance; increasing coordination and strengthening partnerships among UNHCR, its donors, refugee hosting countries, and UNHCR's implementing and operational partners; and improving emergency preparedness and response capacity. The United States also focused on security issues, the protection of

refugee women and children, improving UNHCR's approach to durable solutions, management reform, emergency response and camp management, and clarifying UNHCR's role with IDPs.

In addition to the annual Executive Committee meeting, UNHCR holds three Standing Committee meetings each year. At all meetings and in bilateral negotiations with relevant governments, the United States reiterated the need for greater information-sharing and transparency in areas of human resources, management, and operations. The United States stressed the need to support the High Commissioner's management reforms and called for increased donor support for the work of UNHCR.

Domestic and overseas personnel of State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) worked in concert with UNHCR field and headquarters staff to ensure UNHCR's effective and comprehensive execution of its mandate. The importance the United States placed on refugee protection was reflected in its funding of UNHCR through its targeted support for the special needs of refugee women and refugee children, a Surge Protection project, and additional protection staffing.

The United Nations and its humanitarian partners in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) agreed in 2005 to a cluster lead approach to sector responsibilities in order to improve international response to humanitarian disasters, particularly for IDPs. Given its expertise with mass movements of people in crisis situations and the fact that the internally displaced are often in a "refugee-like situation," UNHCR has often provided protection and assistance, including return and reintegration when possible, to certain groups of IDPs. Following a review of the UN humanitarian response in 2005 and the introduction of the new cluster lead approach, UNHCR assumed responsibility for protection (including return), camp coordination and emergency shelter under the UN system-wide response mechanism led by the Emergency Relief Coordinator. These new responsibilities will have serious financial implications for all UN agencies involved, including UNHCR. The United States is following this issue very closely.

Since 2001, the relationship between PRM and UNHCR has been governed by a Framework of Cooperation in which priorities and shared goals are laid out. In 2006, Framework priorities included better protection of refugees, with special focus on enhancing refugee protection by strengthening UNHCR's operational protection capacity and by promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, including through the continued rollout of the Age, Gender, and Diversity Mainstreaming initiative. Another Framework priority was increasing and improving the level and quality of registration of persons of concern, including through rollout of Project Profile to all UNHCR operations registering refugees and others of concern. Still a third priority was enhancing resettlement as a protection tool and durable solution. Other Framework priorities were: strengthening UNHCR's preparedness and response capacity, strengthening UNHCR's support for collaborative efforts to address situations of internal displacement comprehensively and implement

the agreed pilot projects, and initiating implementation of a workforce management strategy aiming to enhance the efficiency of the organization.

As UNHCR's largest donor, the U.S. Government has a significant interest in the success of UNHCR in meeting the protection and assistance needs of refugees and other persons of concern to the organization. State/PRM's monitoring of international organizations (IOs) derives directly from its mission statement: "To act through the multilateral system to achieve operational productivity on behalf of victims and burden-sharing performance on behalf of the American taxpayer."

It is important to match the proportion of State/PRM's resources provided to IOs (over 85 percent) with rigorous monitoring and evaluation. Therefore, in order to ensure accountability and effectiveness in the field, State/PRM provides annual monitoring and evaluation (M&E) training of both IOs and NGOs for incoming officers in Washington and refugee coordinators posted overseas, as well as for a limited number of IOs and NGOs. PRM also provides expanded M&E sessions for Washington staff in order to enhance and strengthen M&E concepts throughout the year. In addition, refugee coordinators are requested to participate and report on UNHCR's Country Operations Plans (COPs) for the coming year, which occur every spring. UNHCR's COP process provides an ideal opportunity for the U.S. Government to gain valuable insight into UNHCR's planning process as well as the overall direction of its program. It also provides an opportunity to influence policy and resource decisions in the field and to monitor and evaluate UNHCR's progress toward its goals and objectives, as well as those agreed to in the USG-UNHCR Framework for Cooperation.

### **UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)**

Since 1950, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has provided education, health, and social services to Palestinian refugees and their descendants who reside in the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. These refugees now number over 4.4 million. UNRWA, led by Commissioner-General Karen AbuZayd (United States), has approximately 27,000 employees, almost 80 percent of whom are teachers.

In 2006, UNRWA spent about 48 percent of its regular budget on education, including schools and teachers. UNRWA allocated 19 percent of its 2006 regular budget on health services, and another 8 percent on relief and social services. UNRWA spent nearly 30 percent of its budget in Gaza and 18 percent in the West Bank. The United States believes that UNRWA has done a good job under very difficult circumstances in providing for the basic human needs of Palestinian refugees.

In 2006, the United States continued to fund UNRWA's corps of independent inspectors, known as Operation Support Officers (OSO), through our contribution to UNRWA's Emergency Appeal. Operation Support

Officers systematically monitor UNRWA's operations and help to ensure that its facilities are not being used for political purposes or militant activity. Also in 2006, UNRWA expanded its highly regarded tolerance education program to include vocational training centers, teacher training centers, and educational science facilities. As a result, UNRWA's 666 schools, 8 vocational training centers, and 3 educational sciences faculties participated in the tolerance education, conflict resolution, and democracy training programs.

Following Hamas' victory in the January 25, 2006, Palestinian Legislative Council elections and the subsequent cutoff of international funding for the Palestinian Authority, Israel and the international community increasingly judged UNRWA as one of the most appropriate agencies for the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people.

As socio-economic conditions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip deteriorated during the year, UNRWA increased the amount of its 2006 Emergency Appeal from \$95 million to \$171 million to meet rapidly expanding needs for food, temporary employment, and relief. Through the Emergency Appeal UNRWA provided food assistance to 240,000 refugee families (approximately 1.2 million individuals) and created over 3 million workdays for 50,000 unemployed refugees.

In 2006, UNRWA launched its Organizational Development Plan (ODP), a three-year initiative to implement reforms in service delivery and program management, including strategic planning, resource management, and accountability. In 2006, UNRWA also launched a four-year campaign to rehabilitate all 12 Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. The project is tied to the Lebanese government's "National Dialogue," which includes the demilitarization of armed Palestinian groups and concrete improvement in living conditions, civil rights, and employment opportunities for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The United States earmarked \$500,000 to the ODP and \$2.56 million to the Lebanon camp initiative in 2006.

On December 8, 2005, the General Assembly adopted a decision that expanded the membership of UNRWA's Advisory Commission and gave observer status to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the European Union, and the League of Arab States. In 2006, the expanded Advisory Commission adopted a work plan, tied to UNRWA's budgetary cycle, which involves closer oversight of UNRWA's expenditures and operations, including monitoring progress on UNRWA's Organizational Development Plan and implementation of recommendations made by the UN Board of Auditors. The Commission includes two subcommittees, comprised of both donor and host countries, that provide recommendations to UNRWA on technical issues related to reform, audit implementation, budgeting, and management oversight. The U.S. Government was the first chair of the Subcommittee on Finance and Budget and played a large role in establishing this subcommittee.

The UN Board of Auditors, Board of Examiners, and the Office of Internal Oversight Services scrutinize UNRWA's operations and fiscal

practices to ensure accountability. In July 2006, the UN Board of Auditors (BOA) released the results of its UNRWA audit led by the Auditor-General of the Republic of South Africa for the biennium ending 2005. The BOA issued an unqualified audit opinion for UNRWA's 2004-2005 financial statements, which signifies that the auditors performed an extensive examination of UNRWA's financial records and have no reservations regarding the accuracy and fairness of its presentation. The BOA made 34 recommendations in multiple areas of UNRWA's programming, including procurement, human resources, program management, and information technology. UNRWA developed an implementation work plan and is in the process of implementing these recommendations. UNRWA is fully in line with other UN agencies in implementing BOA recommendations. UNRWA's 78 percent implementation rate for the audit covering 2002-2003 was one of the highest for any UN body.

## **Disaster and Humanitarian Relief Activities**

In 2006, the United States and the United Nations cooperated extensively on disaster response and humanitarian relief activities. The United States provided leadership as a member of UN agency governing bodies and support groups, including the Donor Support Group for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The United States also continued to be actively engaged in initiatives to reform the U.N. humanitarian system, including through the participation on the Advisory Group of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and in providing funding and guidance to the UN cluster initiative as well as to strengthen the Humanitarian Coordinator system.

While 2006 was notable for the absence of grand-scale natural disasters, the United States provided substantial support to UN humanitarian operations throughout the world for smaller-scale disasters, as well as ongoing relief efforts to protracted crises such as Sudan, DRC, and the Horn of Africa.

Following the outbreak of conflict between the Israeli Defense Forces and Hezbollah in July 2006, the United States immediately deployed a Disaster Assistance Response Team to the region, which coordinated closely with UN-led coordination and response activities. The United States provided \$7 million to support the UN Flash Appeal for Lebanon to the World Food Program (WFP) and the UN Joint Logistics Center for logistics and coordination, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) for water and sanitation activities, OCHA, and OCHA's Humanitarian Information Center (HIC) for coordination and information management. In addition, the United States provided \$7.5 million to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the UN Relief Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) for protection, shelter, and emergency relief supplies, to the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) for safety and security activities, and to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for transportation of third-country nationals.

As the humanitarian crisis in Darfur continued, the United States remained the largest bilateral donor. A significant portion of U.S. assistance



was channeled through UN operational agencies such as WFP, UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the UN Department of Safety and Security to address emergency needs. The United States contributed more than \$300 million in food commodities to WFP for distribution in Darfur and for refugees from Darfur in eastern Chad. More than \$13 million was contributed to UNICEF to support the provision of safe water, as well as emergency health and nutrition services.

The United States actively engaged the United Nations and its member states on a wide range of humanitarian and disaster-related resolutions in the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The United States supported resolutions on improving the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), strengthening UN coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance, improving the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of UN personnel, and several country-specific resolutions pertaining to humanitarian situations.