



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Conflict Prevention:
Debate Highlights
DPA Role, Needs ... 1

Letter from the Under-
Secretary-General ... 2

Peacemaking
on the Web ... 7

Nepal: a Turn
for the Better ... 8

Lebanon: the
Political Dimension ... 10

Climate Change
on Cyprus?... 12

UN Democracy Assistance:
Promise and Pitfalls... 14

The UN and Regional
Organizations:
Taking Partnership
to a New Level ... 17

Staff News ... 18

Activities and Events ... 18

Conflict Prevention

Debate Highlights DPA Role, Needs

Conflict prevention: it has been, in all but name, the central purpose of the United Nations since its founding to save succeeding generations from war. Tragedies such as the Rwandan genocide helped hammer home the urgency, spawning soul-searching reports and helping to make prevention part of the vocabulary of international policy makers, scholars and NGOs.

But while the rhetoric of prevention is embraced as never before — and some progress has been made in building capacities within and outside the United Nations — the practice continues to fall short of the ideal.

This is one of the sobering conclusions of a new report by Secretary-General Kofi Annan that urges Member States to invest more generously in prevention — including by helping to

strengthen the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), which plays a leadership role on this issue at the United Nations.

The report, published in July and debated in the General Assembly in early September, cites progress since 2001, when the Secretary-General issued his first comprehensive report on prevention. Two successful cases involving DPA are chronicled here separately, on pages 4-6: UN assistance to Nigeria and Cameroon in resolving their longstanding border conflict; and a DPA-UNDP collaboration in helping to prevent electoral violence in Guyana.

GAP BETWEEN RHETORIC AND REALITY

But while a “culture of prevention” is indeed beginning to take hold at the United Nations, the Secretary-General states, there is still too great a gap between rhetoric and reality. As a result far too much effort and money are spent on putting out “fires” instead of keeping them from igniting in the first place.

“Over the last five years we have spent over \$18 billion on United Nations peacekeeping that was necessary partly because of inadequate preventive measures,” the Secretary General writes.

continued on page 2



UN Photo / Kevin Jordan

UN DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE
A look inside the new
United Nations Democracy Fund

From the Under-Secretary-General

As an eventful year at the United Nations comes to a close, multilateralism appears to be making a comeback. This past year may well be remembered as one in which crises from the Middle East to the Korean Peninsula, and from Darfur to Iran and Iraq reaffirmed the indispensable nature of the United Nations. The appointment of a new Secretary-General, moreover, marks the end of one era and the beginning of another, giving us all an opportunity to assess just how far our organization has come in repositioning itself to meet the global challenges of today.



In this new issue of *Politically Speaking*, DPA is pleased to be able to highlight its own continuing effort at reform and revitalization, and to illustrate a number of important issues and initiatives on which the Department is engaged.

Conflict prevention is back in the spotlight, for example, with a new report of the Secretary-General highlighting DPA's leadership role within the UN system as well as its continuing resource needs. The Bulletin also highlights the new United Nations Democracy Fund, and the launch of UN Peacemaker — a new peacemaking website developed by DPA as part of a broader push to bolster mediation efforts around the world. There is a story on the emerging UN role in peacemaking in Nepal, as well as the work of a DPA-managed political mission in Lebanon which carried out essential diplomacy throughout the crisis of this summer, largely outside of the international spotlight. Featured also in this issue are the results of a recent mission to Cyprus, which provided a new opportunity to gauge the prospects for resolving the protracted conflict on the island.

At times center stage, at others behind the scenes — but always working closely with Member States, civil society and regional organizations — this is the political work of the United Nations. I hope and trust that all who have a stake and interest in the outcome will continue to be informed about, and supportive, of the work of DPA.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I. Gambari'.

Ibrahim A. Gambari
Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs

Debate Highlights DPA Role, Needs

from page 1

“A fraction of that investment in preventive action would surely have saved both lives and money.”

Perhaps the report's most eye-catching recommendation follows directly from that conclusion: a call on Member States to devote annually to prevention a dedicated amount equal to just a small percentage of the UN peacekeeping budget.

NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES, GLOBAL RISKS

The presentation of the report and its debate in the final days of the 60th General Assembly put conflict prevention briefly back in the spotlight. It remains to be seen where the discussion will lead in the months ahead, as a new General Assembly and a new Secretary-General set out their agenda.

A one-day conference at UN headquarters on “Operationalizing Prevention”, hosted by the Minister of State of the Netherlands, Dr. Max van der Stoep, sought to channel the debate onto more practical terrain. USG Gambari and outgoing GA President Jan Eliasson were among the speakers at the event that brought together officials from around the UN system, representatives of regional organizations, Member States and NGOs.

Some of the ideas in the latest report have been heard before: the close link between conflict and social inequality, and the importance of having outlets and institutions through which political grievances can be peacefully resolved. Member States were reminded once again that while the international community can provide them with support, they alone bear the primary responsibility for preventing conflict within their borders.

Governments are also reminded that it is their responsibility to seek to resolve disputes peacefully. It urged them to take greater advantage of the “good offices” of the Secretary-General in mediating disputes that can turn violent.

But the latest report also breaks new ground conceptually in its call for a greater focus on “systemic prevention” — thus linking the prevention debate

more closely to the fight against broader international threats that transcend individual states.

“Global initiatives to reduce the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, to tackle environmental degradation, to regulate industries that are known to fuel conflict and to advance the global development agenda not only are important in and of themselves but also serve to reduce vulnerability to armed conflict,” the Secretary-General writes.

BUILDING UN CAPACITY

A detailed annex to the report maps out existing capacity on prevention across the UN system. Clearly, preventive action extends today well beyond the realm of

conducting preventive diplomacy in the field and its leadership in inter-departmental forums — it is little surprise that the Department’s capabilities were a focus of the new report.

The new Mediation Support Unit established this year within the Department is acknowledged as a welcome innovation for the system. But DPA still needs “substantial additional resources” to be able to provide the UN system with needed “strategic leadership” in prevention. “The critical resource shortage in the Department has left it heavily driven by the exigencies of crisis response and unable to engage in depth at the country level in many cases,” the Secretary-General states.

“If we are serious about conflict prevention, we have to better equip the Organization to fulfill its core mandate,” the Secretary-General concluded.

“If we are serious about conflict prevention, we have to better equip the Organization to fulfill its core mandate,” the Secretary-General concluded.

TIMELY MESSAGE; TOUGH SELL

At a time when conflicts new and old are placing record demands on UN peacekeeping, the prevention message should be resonating strongly. Still, prevention remains a difficult “sell” to Member States, in no small part for the reasons noted by the Deputy Secretary-General, Mark Malloch-Brown, as he presented the new report to the General Assembly in September.

“If prevention is so cheap why are people so reluctant to invest in it?” he asked. “The answer, of course, is that the utility of any given prevention strategy is very difficult to prove. The need for it can always be questioned, until it has already failed; and its success is impossible to prove.”

Put another way, Malloch-Brown stated: “Wars that don’t happen are not news, and it’s always possible that they would not have happened anyway.”

It is a Catch-22 not likely to go away any time soon. But for all of those working on conflict prevention today — Member States, the UN, and civil society included — some fresh ideas and a clarion call for action are on the table. ●

diplomacy to involve a broad constellation of UN entities working across a wide range of disciplines — poverty-eradication and development, human rights and the rule of law, elections and the building of democratic institutions, the control of small arms, to name just a few.

But with DPA playing a strategic role within the system — through its pulse-taking of global developments, its close support for envoys

Strengthening DPA is only one of the prescriptions for enhancing UN capacity. The report urges Member States to back a wide range of activities that contribute to prevention: UNDP’s anti-poverty programs; the Central Emergency Response Fund for humanitarian crises, constitutional and electoral assistance, anti-corruption aid, justice reform initiatives, as well as the work of the new UN Democracy Fund.



USG Gambia briefs reporters on the Secretary-General’s Report on Conflict Prevention. He is joined by Deputy Spokesperson Marie Okabe and David Hamburg, chair of the UN Advisory Committee on the Prevention of Genocide.

UN Photo / Paulo Filgueiras

Averting War Over a Disputed Border in West Africa

Conflict prevention rarely gets the publicity it deserves. But Nigeria and Cameroon's recourse to international law and UN mediation in averting a possible war over borders is being heralded as a model to be studied for years to come.

Since the United Nations got involved in 2002, the Department of Political Affairs has been supporting the high-level diplomacy

which sparked sporadic clashes throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, is actually broader than that name would imply. Resolving it would mean deciding the fate not only of the oil-rich Bakassi peninsula — which had been seized and occupied by Nigerian troops — but of dozens of disputed villages in the Lake Chad area, and on the drawing of definitive land and maritime boundaries.



Secretary-General Kofi Annan with Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo (right) and Cameroonian President Paul Biya (left) at the signing of an agreement regarding their disputed border.

UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, as well as the quieter mediation of his Special Representative for West Africa, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, who presides on the ground over a bilateral commission overseeing a court-ordered settlement.

Referred to often as the “Bakassi conflict”, the dispute,

Cameroon brought a case before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 1994. Eight years later, in October 2002, the court ruled largely in its favor, however implementation of the ruling would depend on the political will of the parties.

Ould-Abdallah, interviewed during a recent visit to New York,

credits the Secretary-General for helping to cement that commitment by hosting a series of summits with the leaders of the two countries.

The first was in September 2002, one month before the ICJ announced its ruling. In the presence of the Secretary-General, Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and Paul Biya of Cameroon pledged publicly to abide by whatever the court decided.

At a follow-up summit held a month after the ruling, the two leaders agreed to create the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission, with Mr. Ould-Abdallah as its chairman. Its job has been to ensure that the ICJ decision is faithfully carried out.

Implementation has come in phases, beginning in December 2003, with the return to Cameroon of nearly three-dozen villages in a disputed area near Lake Chad. Two villages were transferred in the other direction.

Meanwhile, teams of surveyors and cartographers working for the Mixed Commission pressed ahead with demarcating the land and sea borders in accordance with the ruling of the ICJ. The maritime boundary should be drawn by the end of 2006, but the land border could take two more years.

“It’s a purely technical process, but very complex because you have mountains and tropical forests,” Ould-Abdallah said. “You need to place a pillar every 500 meters along a 1,700 kilometer line.”

Local residents have understandably been on edge, and the danger exists of skirmishing

between troops. A small team of UN civilian observers has helped to keep tensions in check.

The biggest remaining hurdle was overcome in August of 2006 with the long-delayed pullout of Nigerian troops from Bakassi. Once again, the Secretary-General's role was critical. At a tripartite summit in Greentree, Long Island in June, the parties agreed to a definitive plan and timetable for withdrawal and

transfer of authority. Two months later, the troops departed.

Sir Kieran Prendergast, the former Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, represented the Secretary-General at the ceremony marking the Bakassi pullout. For years to come, he declared, students of diplomacy and conflict prevention will be studying the novel way this dispute was resolved.

“There are lessons to be drawn and applied far and wide — not just in Africa,” he said.

Ould-Abdallah praises Presidents Obasanjo and Biya for coming to accept that each country had a better alternative to war.

A group of surveyors demarcating the border between Cameroon and Nigeria.



UNOWA

“Cameroon was convinced it could trust that a ruling requiring the cooperation of its bigger and stronger neighbor would actually be carried out. Nigeria found that it could protect its interests and be a strong regional player without invading and humiliating its neighbor.”

Four years into the process, the price tag for implementation has come to about \$25 million thus far. This includes contributions from foreign donors as well as \$3 million apiece from the governments of Cameroon and Nigeria.

But in employing lawyers, diplomats and map-makers to head off a bigger crisis before it erupted, untold numbers of lives and a more costly cleanup were avoided in the long run.

“What’s most interesting of all,” Ould-Abdallah observes, “is it was possible to settle this case without any armed peacekeepers.”

Conflict Prevention

Preventing Violence During Elections in Guyana

Presidential elections held in Guyana in August raised eyebrows mainly for what didn't take place. For the first time in years, the voting was free of violence.

Preventive actions carried out with international support played an important part in keeping tensions in check between supporters of the

country's two main ethnic-based political parties.

The United Nations provided assistance through the “Social Cohesion Programme” established jointly in Guyana three years ago by the Department of Political Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme, in partnership with other UN agencies and donors.

The South American nation is one of more than a half-dozen countries for which DPA and UNDP are teaming up to help Member States manage social and political conflicts peacefully. Assistance is provided through the UN Country Team on the ground, while DPA leads at the level of UN headquarters in forging a common analysis and policy framework.

Guyana, with less than a million inhabitants, poses a big challenge nonetheless for conflict prevention. Politics in the former British possession have long been incendiary — mirroring tense and sometimes violent

continued on page 6

social relations between Afro-Guyanese descendents of slaves and Indo-Guyanese descendants of indentured servants brought from India to work on sugar plantations.

But with elections approaching again this year, the UN was able to support a wide range of groups and institutions that were doing their part to say “no” to violence.

MOBILIZING AGAINST VIOLENCE

The media and political parties adopted codes of conduct pledging responsible behavior. Churches gathered tens of thousands of signatures for peace. Television stations aired documentaries and a soap opera against violence. Thousands of ordinary citizens signed up to be elections observers, and international monitors were deployed as well.

The UN also provided low-key support and advice to a number of institutions working to soothe tensions — including a private sector commission and a national ethnic relations panel. The flurry of initiatives in the run-up to the vote followed on several years of assistance through the project to

strengthening institutions in a way that would contribute to prevention.

National ownership was the watchword of the project, said UN Resident Coordinator Youssef Mahmoud.

“We had to make a concerted effort to always be in the background, behind the scenes, supporting a national institution that is taking the lead,” he recalled.

Of all the activities carried out in the run-up to the August 28 vote, Mahmoud points in particular to a series of more than 145 “conversations” conducted with UN support at the local, regional and then national levels. People from all of the different ethnic groups and parties came together to discuss their differences in a non-confrontational setting.

Even the name of the activity was chosen with great care, so as to offer something new in a country that, due to its history of division, has become something of a laboratory for efforts by well-meaning outsiders to promote unity. “Guyana is a dialogue fatigued country”, notes Mahmoud.

UN assistance is intended to have a lasting effect by building up local capacity. The nationwide “conversations”, for example, were conducted by Guyanese trained in mediation skills through the Programme. The trainees have since become trainers themselves, sharing their know-how at the community level.

Following the 28 August voting, in which the ruling People’s Progressive Party/Civic won its fourth straight term in office, international observers commended Guyana for its most peaceful and orderly election in recent yesterday.

Events remained peaceful in the weeks that followed, and fingers remain crossed that the trend will continue. Only time will tell how far the country has come in learning to resolve its ethnic tensions peacefully.

THE UN CONTRIBUTION

Mahmoud is reluctant to attribute success directly to the UN programme.

He points to other factors that also played a part, including fatigue among the Guyanese with violence itself and the emergence of a non-ethnic-based third party that is now competing for voters’ sympathies.

But surely a determined UN-backed campaign to prevent violence, involving all of the key actors in the country, must have helped?

“We know it contributed, because the Guyanese came and thanked us for our support,” says Mahmoud. “But the credit goes first and foremost to them.”



A Guyanese priest addresses a forum for religious leaders on managing conflict peacefully:

DPA Unveils New Peacemaking Website



For peace envoys working to bring conflicts to an end, a wealth of advice and information are now only a few mouse clicks away thanks to UN Peacemaker, a comprehensive new website on peacemaking developed by the Department of Political Affairs.

DPA unveiled the site (www.un.org/peacemaker) at an event at UN headquarters at the beginning of October. Under-Secretary-General Gambari was joined by Assistant Secretary-General Angela Kane and UN Middle East envoy Alvaro de Soto, who appeared by video-link from Jerusalem.

The site represents a serious effort to synthesize existing UN

knowledge about peace agreements and their negotiation, and to make that know-how available to all of those working in peacemaking today. The project was made possible by generous voluntary donations.

Already, UN Peacemaker contains the most comprehensive indexed database of modern peace agreements available on the Internet, permitting sophisticated research on more than 325 accords.

But the site is more than a database. It contains lessons learned studies and guidance for UN envoys on how to successfully manage a peace process; an exhaustive glossary of terms used in peacemaking; and a peacemaker's toolbox offering

internal and external resources including a handbook for drafting the language of peace accords

UN Peacemaker is also an interactive site. Users will be actively sharing their experiences, ensuring that UN Peacemaker is continually growing and improving.

The site was primarily designed for UN envoys and their staff, as a one-stop source of practical advice and information. However, non-UN mediators and regional organizations, think tanks, universities and NGOs are all also encouraged to make use of this tool.

UN Peacemaker is not intended to be a cookie cutter for making peace accords. Each conflict is different, and each peace process is unique. But a great number of issues arise repeatedly in negotiations.

“UN Peacemaker can help ensure that we are not constantly reinventing the wheel. Even better, that we are not repeating mistakes,” Under-Secretary-General Gambari said, in publicly launching the site.

UN Peacemaker will be managed by DPA's new Mediation Support Unit, and is part of a broader effort, being communicated in these pages and elsewhere, to place UN peacemaking on more solid footing. Initiatives include the bolstering of DPA's regional desks, more systematic training and debriefing of envoys and the establishment of a “standing team” of mediation experts who will be on call at short notice to assist in peace negotiations.

www.un.org/peacemaker

A Turn for the Better in Nepal

In a year when some of the world's conflicts became bloodier, at least one took a dramatic turn for the better.

Events in Nepal hold out hope for an end to more than a decade of bitter fighting, with a role for the United Nations to assist the fragile peace process.

Politically Speaking discussed developments in the Himalayan nation with Ian Martin, who was named by the Secretary-General in August 2006 as his Personal Representative to support the peace process in Nepal. The emerging UN role builds on years of engagement by the Department of Political Affairs that helped position the United Nations to be an honest broker in the process.

A veteran of hotspots, with previous UN assignments in Haiti, Rwanda, Timor-Leste and Eritrea/Ethiopia, Martin's task is to help the Government and Maoist insurgents define the assistance



Ian Martin (at left). "Gradually, all parties [in Nepal] developed a confidence that the UN was not seeking a central or a dominant role, but that it only wanted to help assist in the search for peace."

the United Nations can provide as they convert a series of basic political agreements into a structured peace process.

"This is a vitally important opportunity for the United Nations," he said, noting that Nepal — wedged between giants India and China

— is a sizeable country with great humanitarian and development needs. "The fate of 27 million of the world's poorest people is at stake," he added.

Martin spoke by phone in September from the Nepali capital of Kathmandu. It was only days after his arrival and he was already busy talking to all parties — trying to help defuse a public dispute between the Maoists and the Government over an army movement which aroused suspicions.

The incident showed that distrust still ran high. But the fact that the adversaries were trading volleys in the media — not on the battlefield — also demonstrated how far events had moved in such a very short time.

Only a year earlier, there was seemingly no end in sight to a decade-old conflict that had killed some 13,000 people, driven more than a million into exile and devastated the economy of an already-poor nation.

The conflict had roots in deep inequalities within Nepal's caste-based society. The Maoist insurgency was able to tap into the frustrations of those excluded from power, Martin said. Both sides used brutal tactics, including torture, disappearances and other abuses.

The cloud over the country seemed only to darken when Nepal's monarch, King Gyanendra, moved in February 2005 to cripple political parties and step up repression against human rights activists and the media. All-out war with the insurgents seemed the logical next step.



UN human rights observers in Nepal kept a watch on police during nationwide demonstrations in April 2006.

OHCHR / Nepal / Julia Shephardson

But a surprising result emerged. The King's move ultimately backfired — pushing the former antagonists, the Maoists and political parties, into an alliance to restore Nepal's democracy and put an end to the conflict. Mass popular demonstrations swept the country in April 2006 — forcing the King to back down and to restore the parliament.

Martin had a front-row seat during the so-called “People's Movement”. He was serving at the time as head of the human rights monitoring mission of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. At least 18 people were killed by security forces during the protests. But the presence of blue-vested United Nations observers in Kathmandu and elsewhere likely prevented wider bloodshed.

“In the end, as demonstrators prepared to march on the Palace, it was the possibility that the security forces would have to gun them down that led the King to step back,” recalled Martin.

In the aftermath of the April showdown, the broad outlines of a politically-negotiated settlement emerged. The Maoists would agree to end their armed struggle and rejoin a multi-party democracy via elections for a Constituent Assembly. The United Nations would be asked to support the process, which needed guarantees that elections could take place without fear or intimidation.

The United Nations has been working since that time to maintain goodwill between the parties, while helping them to flesh out the all-important details of the peace process.

*Maoist combatants
at a camp in the
mountains of Nepal,
August 2006.*

A political mission led by another veteran UN envoy, Staffan de Mistura, visited the country at the end of July, engaging in talks with all of the key actors. The mission helped to deepen understanding between the parties, who soon afterwards came to the United Nations with a joint request for assistance in the following areas: the management of arms and armies; cease-fire monitoring; electoral observation and human rights monitoring.

PATIENT DIPLOMACY THROUGH DPA

Martin and a small team of experts will have to build from these broad requests to help define a workable United Nations assistance effort.

Expectations of the United Nations are high — a fact Martin attributes to a special connection between Nepal and the UN, rooted partly in its long tradition of participation in peacekeeping.

But quiet diplomacy was also an important factor in convincing the parties to turn to the United Nations for assistance. A high-level visit by envoy Lakhdar Brahimi in mid-2005 came on the heels of several years of patient contacts carried out by the Department of Political Affairs and one of its senior political officers, Tamrat Samuel, with all of the key actors in the country.

“The Secretary-General rightly saw this as a major conflict that



Staffan de Mistura

would need international efforts and he began exercising his good offices through DPA in a low-key way,” said Martin.


“Gradually, all parties developed a confidence that the UN was not seeking a central or a dominant role in Nepal, but that it only wanted to help assist in the search for peace.”

DISTRUST REMAINS

Martin says distrust remains the biggest barrier to peace, and has grown amid violations of a fragile cease-fire.

As he awaited the arrival of a support staff of military, police, political and electoral experts, some good news came on the political front.

The Government and the Maoists announced they would soon be resuming high-level negotiations to hammer out agreements needed for the peace process to move forward. Whether the Maoists are allowed to remain armed during the lead up to elections has become the biggest single bone of contention.

Few observers fear a return to war, but “this is still a very fragile peace,” said Martin. 

Crisis in Lebanon: the political dimension

When war erupted suddenly in Lebanon this summer, peacekeepers were only the most visible of the UN assets on the ground to be scrambled into action in response to the crisis. The Office of the Personal Representative of the Secretary General for Lebanon, a special political mission managed by the Department of Political Affairs, has been an invaluable set of eyes and ears in Beirut and a key instrument in the UN's diplomacy for peace.

Headed by Geir Pedersen of Norway, OPRSG and its small civilian staff has been in high gear since the fighting first erupted on the 12th of July when Hizbollah crossed into Israel and abducted two of its soldiers in a bloody attack. The office, with its contacts across the entire political spectrum in the country, was in an ideal position not only to provide seasoned political analysis to UN headquarters but also to engage in the most sensitive of diplomacy on behalf of the Secretary-General.

"In the beginning, people were wondering what sort of war this would be, whether it would be over in a few days and limited to the South, or engulf the whole of Lebanon," Pedersen recalls. "We understood early on that it was a very serious development. It was

a very tense period, and we were immediately in touch with all of the different players — including of course Hizbollah."

A special political mission managed by the Department of Political Affairs has been an invaluable set of eyes and ears in Beirut and a key instrument in the UN's diplomacy for peace.

Pedersen was reached by phone from Beirut in early October on a day in which he and the UN Force Commander in Lebanon, General Allain Pellegrini, had been in talks together with senior government and defense officials, including Prime Minister Fouad Siniora.

Political tensions were resurfacing within the country even as daily life began returning to normal for many Lebanese,

and as the security arrangements envisioned in Security Council Resolution 1701 were gradually falling into place.

Israeli troops had nearly completed their withdrawal from the South, with the Lebanese army and UNIFIL filling the void. But a fiery Hizbollah "victory" speech was feeding political strains between pro-and-anti Syrian camps in the country — a fault line that may have widened as a result of the war.

NATIONWIDE MANDATE

Originally established with an eye only on issues in southern Lebanon, OPRSG was given a nationwide mandate in November 2005. The UN support role in Lebanon was growing even before the latest crisis, with developments such as the passage of Security Council Resolution 1559 (2004) on the withdrawal of foreign forces and the disbanding of militias; and the establishment in 2005 of the UN International Independent Investigation Commission to probe the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. Given the growing number of sensitive mandates in the country, it was felt that the Secretary-General needed

Secretary-General Kofi Annan is greeted upon his arrival in Beirut, Lebanon by Geir O. Pedersen, Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for Lebanon.





Marie Claire Peggioni / IRIN

Residents walk through a Beirut suburb heavily damaged in the recent conflict with Israel.

to speak with one single political voice on the ground.

Day by day, since the crisis broke in July, OPRSG has been carrying on what Pedersen refers to modestly as “normal political-diplomatic work.” With war exploding around them, however, there was nothing routine about going out and talking to all sides, conveying and receiving messages discretely and looking for opportunities to bridge differences. He feels the Office was one of the diplomatic players to have an important hand in getting all of the key Lebanese groups to accept a cessation of hostilities.

The ground-level contacts were always in support of the top-tier diplomacy managed by the Secretary-General. OPRSG helped to guide and anchor several high-level visits to the region.

The fighting had halted by the time the Secretary-General arrived in Beirut at the end of August, a

stop on a wider tour of the region. But anger still lingered among some Lebanese who felt the UN should have acted sooner to stop the bloodshed.

Only weeks earlier, a mob attacked the UN compound housing OPRSG and other offices. Frustrations boiled over after Israeli bombs struck an apartment building in the southern village of Qana — killing dozens of civilians, many of them children.

Pedersen’s office sought to counter the public perception that the UN had turned its back on Lebanon — though it was difficult, he says, to reach the man on the street.

“We went public with a message particularly in the Arab media, that the UN is many different things, and that while we all work for the whole of the UN on this particular occasion it was the Secretary-General’s voice that the Security Council was not listening to.”

POLITICAL ISSUES TAKE CENTER STAGE

Looking ahead, Pedersen sees political challenges moving to the forefront, as security stabilizes and a humanitarian crisis gives way to longer-term questions of economic recovery and reconstruction.

“The deployment of the Lebanese army and UNIFIL is a powerful symbol that the international community is committed to the stability of Lebanon, but only a political process can create the long-term solution needed here,” he said.

No political issue looms larger than the disarmament of militia groups. It remains to be seen, however, whether Lebanon’s often quarrelsome “confessional” groups — the same ones that fought a bitter civil war in the 1970s and 1980s — can come to an agreement on how and under what terms that would occur.

Political leaders are being urged to resume a National Dialogue they had begun before the war broke out. OPRSG will be there, if needed, to help them forge consensus, said Pedersen.

But the war, which at first seemed to rally the Lebanese around a sense of common cause, was now producing a more complex reaction.

“There are very different narratives as to what actually happened,” said Pedersen. “Some focus on the fact that Hizbollah was not defeated. But for many, it’s about how unacceptable it is for one group to be able to initiate actions that can lead to war for the whole of the country.”

Climate Change on Cyprus?

For decades tanks and barbed wire have divided the people of Cyprus, home to one of the oldest UN peacekeeping missions. Envoys with dreams of reunifying the island are forewarned they are walking into a “diplomat’s graveyard.”

A visit by Under-Secretary-General Gambari in July of this year yielded rare face-to-face talks between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leadership and an agreement that raised some hope for a thawing of relations.

The last major effort ended two years ago, when a majority of Greek Cypriots rejected by referendum a UN-brokered settlement plan which had been overwhelmingly endorsed by the Turkish Cypriots in the North.

The defeat of the so-called “Annan Plan” dashed hopes that a united Cyprus would join the European Union in 2004. By mid-2006, few were predicting a settlement any time soon, or even clear movement in the direction of new negotiations.

It was to the surprise of many, then, that a visit by Under-Secretary-General Gambari in July of this year yielded something

more: rare face-to-face talks between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leadership and an agreement that raised some hope for a thawing of relations.

From his offices on the 37th floor of the UN Secretariat in New York, Gambari provided a personal account of this latest round of UN diplomacy on Cyprus — its peculiarities and its potential to lead to larger progress toward a settlement.

THE VALUE OF A MEETING

The visit went ahead despite low expectations from veteran Cyprus observers.

The UN had been in monitoring mode since the defeat of the referendum in April 2004. Both the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot leaders continued to urge re-engagement, but the Secretary-General insisted on signs of real political will to move forward before launching another all-out UN negotiating effort.

Gambari, for his part, felt one simple test was whether Greek Cypriot leader Tassos Papadopolous and Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Talat Ali would be willing to meet in public and hold face-to-face discussions. “For two and half years they had not even met for tea,” he said.

Gambari also wanted to see whether a visit could help kick-start the work of the technical committees that were being put forth as a potential bridge to renewed negotiations. Such technical talks, on “day to day” problems affecting the people on both sides, had been proposed by Michael Moller, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative (SRSG) in Cyprus and head of the UN peacekeeping mission, UNFICYP. But despite months of effort, those discussions had not gotten off the ground.

Planning for the Gambari visit went ahead in consultation with the two sides, key regional players and members of the Security Council, whose support would be crucial to any renewed UN effort.

The mission set off for Cyprus on 2 July, stopping en route for high-level meetings in Ankara and Athens — two capitals with strong influence

UNFICYP



Peacekeepers in Cyprus greet USG Gambari and the Secretary-General’s Special Representative, Michael Moller.

Flanked by Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders, USG Gambari reads out the agreement they signed in July 2006, in Nicosia.

on the island. This “outside-in” approach to diplomacy on Cyprus was a departure from past practice. Gambari says it helped to channel important messages to Cyprus in advance of his arrival. “By the time we got there, we already had some wind in our sails,” he said.

The first breeze was felt even before touchdown. On the eve of the arrival of Gambari and his team from the Department of Political Affairs, the two leaders were seen together in public for the first time in years, at a ceremony of the UN-supported Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus.

The encounter at the ceremony was followed by a second one at an ice-breaking social occasion. Cypriot newspapers carried front-page photos of the two leaders sharing a drink and a joke at a reception hosted by Gambari inside the UN buffer zone that separates north and south.

The following day, the 8th of July, direct talks took place under UN auspices for the first time since 2004. Working tête-à-tête behind closed doors, the two leaders engaged in several hours of discussions with USG Gambari. The document they emerged with went further than many observers had expected.

In the 8 July Agreement, Papadopoulos and Talat agreed to a set of principles and some concrete action. They acknowledged the status quo was unacceptable and that a solution was not only possible but desirable. They agreed also to build a better



UNEP/CYP

atmosphere for talks by ending mutual recriminations that had poisoned the atmosphere for talks in the past. At the same time, they pledged to proceed with the long-delayed talks at the technical-level.

Gambari says the head-to-head formula proved useful in freeing the leaders to explore an accord. As the principals conferred inside, staff sat in a waiting room sipping tea served by British UNFICYP officers. When the leaders emerged for a break in the action at one point, one of their assistants joked aloud: “Is it a boy or girl?”

The pivotal moment in the talks, Gambari says, was a personal phone call from the Secretary-General exhorting the two sides to come to an agreement. Reached by phone in Germany while he was readying to attend the World Cup soccer final, Annan helped the two work through a logjam over the wording of the agreement.


TRYING TO MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM

Though limited in scope, the direct meetings and the 8 July Agreement were hailed at the time as a potential breakthrough on the

route to renewed negotiations. But in the time elapsed since, efforts to get the technical discussions underway bogged down.

An Op-Ed published by Gambari in newspapers on both sides of the island at the end of July sought to nudge the parties into action that would demonstrate a true “climate change on Cyprus.” The Security Council issued a statement of its own, urging the parties to implement their commitments without further delay.

By early October, there had been no tangible progress, as it appeared the two sides took different approaches to the process, and wished to move forward at different speeds. Efforts to find a working formula continued, although there was little time left for the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots to take advantage of the good offices of the current Secretary-General.

Gambari said the best the United Nations can do in many circumstances is to open a door for peace. “If the parties want to walk through it, then it will lead somewhere. If they do not, it won’t,” he added. 

A New Fund for Democracy at the United Nations: Progress, Promise and Pitfalls

Backing democracy advocates in Yemen, Jordan and Morocco. Empowering youth in Romania and Liberia. Battling corruption in Namibia, the Russian Federation and Peru. Increasing the role of women in politics in India and Uganda. Supporting independent media in Iraq, Tajikistan and Sierra Leone.

Projects to promote these and other worthy objectives were unveiled recently in New York as the first group of grantees of the UN Democracy Fund: a new and potentially formidable player in the growing field of democracy assistance.

The United Nations has long promoted democratic practices among its Members — free elections and the protection of human rights, for example. However, the decision to establish a fund dedicated to that purpose marks the most explicit UN embrace to date of the democracy promotion agenda, one that some governments have viewed with suspicion in the past.

In an interview with *Politically Speaking*, the Fund's acting director, Magdy Martinez-Soliman of Spain, a former UNDP governance

specialist, described the process of establishing the Democracy Fund, while offering his thoughts on both the promise and potential pitfalls of UN democracy assistance.

GETTING UNDERWAY

When the Secretary-General announced the initial \$36 million in grants at the end of August of this year, it marked the culmination of an extended start-up phase. The Fund was formally created in April of 2005 as part of the Secretary-General's broader package of UN reforms. But a number of steps had to be taken before money could be dispensed.

First was the establishment of what Martinez-Soliman refers to as the "institutional scaffolding" of the Fund: its rules and regulations, its financial controls, a website, a small office composed of staff from several departments including DPA, and a two-tier governance structure involving the major donors and other Member States, UN agencies and departments, as well as number of outside experts on democracy.

The next step was in many ways more difficult: choosing a group of winning projects out of an unexpected "avalanche" of applications. Of the more than 1,300 proposals received, only 125 projects (less than one in ten) made the final cut.

"It was a painful process, knowing that you were leaving behind good ideas, good people, and hopes," Martinez-Soliman recalls.

"We had to choose, say in Liberia, between strengthening the brand new elected parliament



UN Photo / Kevin Jordan



UNDEF

The Fund's acting Director Magdy Martinez-Soliman visiting Afghanistan's National Assembly in April 2006.

or supporting a code of ethical conduct for civil servants. What should be the priority? What does the government say? What do the NGOs say? In the end, we tried to choose the actors and the proposals that would make the biggest dent.”

The Department of Political Affairs has supported the Fund from the outset and played a big part in evaluating the first proposals. Margaret Vogt, a senior DPA official working on African affairs, served as chair of a Programme Consultative Group composed of seven UN departments, agencies and programmes working in areas related to democracy assistance. UN Resident Coordinators and

Special Representatives of the Secretary-General on the ground were also closely consulted throughout the process.

Whereas some projects could be easily weeded out because they had little to do directly with democracy — an agricultural project or a plan to build a road — in most cases the decision was not so cut and dry. It came down to a difficult judgment call requiring an intimate knowledge of the political context within the respective countries and regions.

WHAT ROLE FOR THE MEMBER STATES?

How much say to give Member States in the approval process has

been undoubtedly the toughest question facing the Fund. Martinez-Soliman acknowledges this has been “the issue” between Member States and the Fund’s management.

Giving governments a veto over proposals would defeat the very purpose of the fund, as those with a dubious commitment to democracy could simply stymie any project they felt might threaten the status quo. At the same time, said Martinez-Soliman, the Fund did seek the governments’ views, and looked favorably on projects that could reach across the political spectrum, or work in partnership with the governments and the United Nations actors on the ground.

“Obviously we are playing at the edge and with very sensitive issues,” he said. “That’s why we have been very careful about selecting our partners... well established reputed organizations, grassroots if you will, local if you will, but reasonable people who do reasonable work.”

FOCUS ON CIVIL SOCIETY

The first groups of projects suggests the Fund has not shied away from tough issues. Some 60% of the first grantees are civil society organizations, among them outspoken human rights activists, women’s and indigenous groups who are pressing for democratic change in their countries.

So far, Member States have not raised objections to the first group of grants. Some, such as the recently elected governments in Chile and Liberia, are eagerly supporting the projects put forward,

United Nations Democracy Fund: Priority Areas

- **strengthening democratic dialogue and support for constitutional processes;**
- **civil society empowerment;**
- **civic education,**
- **voter registration and strengthening of political parties;**
- **citizens’ access to information;**
- **human rights and fundamental freedoms;**
- **accountability, transparency and integrity.**

said Martinez-Soliman. “I don’t want to give the wrong impression this has been an adversarial process,” he added.

The Department of Political Affairs has supported the Fund from the outset and played a big part in evaluating the first proposals.

But “the proof in the pudding” will be the period ahead as the grantees begin putting the projects into motion. “There are some governments who are not particularly enthusiastic with what their civil society has proposed,” he added. “There are some difficult environments.”

AN “INDEPENDENT” KIND OF DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE

The UN’s new Democracy Fund is getting off the ground just as democracy assistance more generally has come under fire from its critics. Several commentators have pointed to a growing “backlash” against it from governments and others who depict democracy assistance as a stalking horse for “regime change” or other ulterior agendas.

In such an environment, Martinez-Soliman sees a potential advantage for the United Nations as it can assure Member States that its assistance is “pure” and multilateral in nature — and also mindful that democracy can come in many forms.

“The UN brings to the table a very independent type of democracy assistance, with no other hidden agenda than the universal

declaration of human rights,” he said. “We are not importing or exporting Westminster model or any other blueprint of democratic institutions.”

The Fund was initially proposed by U.S. President George W. Bush at the United Nations in 2004. Martinez-Soliman says it would be a mistake, however, to see it as an initiative driven by only one Member State. Initial contributors included not only the United States but also India, Qatar, Australia, France and Germany. Other traditional UN supporters appear ready to come on board, he said.

JUDGING IMPACT

The Fund will ultimately be judged by its impact. For some, the litmus test will be whether it can work effectively on sensitive issues in the more difficult countries, where authoritarian governments may be resisting demands for change.

Initial grants focus heavily on strengthening the participation of marginalized groups in society, with a particular focus on gender issues and women. Thirty-seven percent of the activities are in Sub-Saharan Africa, though every world region is represented in the portfolio.

SENDING A POLITICAL SIGNAL

Martinez-Soliman cautions against inflated expectations at the outset, saying the most important effect the Fund might have right now is the political signal it sends through its choice of recipients and projects.

“I think it would be too much to ask of us to say that \$50 million will democratize the world,” he said. “What I think we will do with what we have is to provide formal backing for some very brave and very proud people who are fighting for their rights in their countries and trying to make their countries better, freer.”

Democracy Fund — Governing Bodies

Advisory Board: Australia, France, Germany, India, Qatar and the United States (as main contributors); Benin, Chile, Hungary, Indonesia and South Africa (to ensure geographical diversity); representatives of the World Alliance for Citizens Participation (CIVICUS) and the International Commission of Jurists; Professor Michael Doyle of Columbia University, Professor Guillermo O’Donnell of the University of Notre Dame, Dr. Rima Khalaf Hunaidi, former Assistant Secretary-General and Director of the Arab States Bureau, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Mr. Amir A. Dossal, the Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships in an ex-officio capacity.

Programme Consultative Group: Members are the UN Department of Political Affairs; UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations; UN Development Programme; UN Development Group Office; UN Development Fund for Women; UN Office on Drugs and Crime; and the Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The UN and Regional Organizations: Taking Partnership to a New Level

From Darfur to Afghanistan, Haiti to Somalia, Kosovo to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations and regional organizations are working together as never before in responding to the challenges of peace and security around the world.

The Secretary-General's July report, *A Regional-Global Security Partnership: Challenges and Opportunities*, framed the issues for the Ministerial-level meeting of the UN Security Council held on 20 September in New York — the Council's fourth meeting since 2003 on UN-regional cooperation.



UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan with EU High Representative Javier Solana, at a pledging conference for the African Union Mission in Sudan

The UN acknowledges it cannot go it alone, and that regional organizations are at times best positioned to understand and to influence crises close to home.

But just how far has the global-regional partnership come, and what more could be done to make it effective?

These were the questions explored in a major new report of the Secretary-General and two high-level meetings held at UN headquarters in September, with support from the Department of Political Affairs.

Two days later, the Secretary-General hosted the Seventh High-Level Meeting between the United Nations and Regional and other Inter-Governmental organizations, which was attended by the heads and senior officials of two dozen organizations.

DPA, on behalf of the Secretary-General, coordinates the process of high level meeting which since 1994 has been one of the main vehicles for forging more effective cooperation. A secretariat housed in DPA — working with research support from UN University's

Programme in Comparative Regional Integration Studies (UNU-CRIS) — prepares, convenes and follows-up on the decisions of the High Level meetings, while advising more broadly on building UN-regional.

Even as cooperation becomes a day to day reality on the ground, the high-level meetings provide an opportunity to step back and reflect more broadly on both the state of the relationship and the agenda for the future.

Setting the tone for September's deliberations were the Secretary-General's remarks to the Security Council in which he challenged the UN and regional organizations to take their partnership to "a new level of clarity, practicality and seriousness."

While citing many examples of meaningful cooperation, the Secretary-General pointed to two areas where progress is urgently needed: in defining each organization's respective roles and comparative advantage, and in building capacity across the board, in areas including conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, disarmament and non-proliferation.

As a positive example of a major initiative underway, the Secretary-General pointed to the efforts involving DPA, DPKO and several other UN entities to establish a 10-year capacity-building programme for the African Union.

Hand in hand, the Secretary-General said, the UN and regional organizations can create "a global collective security mechanism that protects people and lays the groundwork for lasting peace."

Activities and Events

Under-Secretary-General Gambari's visit to Cyprus in July is described in detail in a feature article in this issue. The Under-Secretary-General also traveled to Moscow and Central Asia in June, visiting the United Nations Peace-building Office in Tajikistan (UNTOP) and then attending, in Kazakhstan, the Second Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building in Asia (CICA). In August, USG Gambari joined other senior officials in high-level consultations in Addis Ababa on developing a 10-year capacity-building programme for the African Union, as called for by the 2005 World Summit.

As this issue went to print, USG Gambari was visiting China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, and preparing to make a second trip this year to Myanmar, continuing with UN efforts to promote democratization, national reconciliation and wider space for humanitarian work in the country.

Amid the crisis in Lebanon and Israel during the summer, USG Gambari briefed the Security Council on the Middle East, urging renewed efforts at resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. At the end of September, he briefed the Council on the situation in Myanmar, the first such briefing by a Secretariat official since the Council placed Myanmar on its formal agenda.

* * *

Tuliameni Kalomoh, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, traveled to Chad in July to take the pulse of developments and to explore a possible UN role

in resolving that country's political crisis. In addition to visiting the capital, N'djamena, and meeting with President Idriss Déby Itno, Mr. Kalomoh visited refugee and IDP camps in eastern and southern Chad. ASG Kalomoh also led the UN delegation to the meeting of the AU Executive Council in Banjul, The Gambia, and attended the AU



Summit in Banjul at the end of June as member of the Secretary-General's delegation. Mr. Kalomoh briefed the Security Council on the situation in Guinea-Bissau and the work of the UN peace-building office there; as well as on Somalia, following the capture of the capital Mogadishu by the Union of Islamic Courts.

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ASG Tuliameni Kalomoh

Staff News

Following the outbreak of fighting this summer in Lebanon and Israel, the Secretary-General appointed **Michael C. Williams**, Director of the Asia and Pacific Division of DPA, as his **Special Advisor on the Situation in the Middle East**. In this capacity, Mr. Williams heads a new Special Interdepartmental Strategy Group on Lebanon and the wider Middle East, based in DPA. Its job is to provide comprehensive analysis and policy options to the Secretary-General and to support his good offices and mediation efforts in the Middle East. The former DPA Director for the Americas and Europe, **John Renninger** returned from retirement to replace Mr. Williams on an interim basis as **Director of the Asia and Pacific Division**.

Horst Heitmann is the new **Director of DPA's Security Council Affairs Division**, replacing the retiring **Linda Perkin**. The Division provides substantive and secretariat support to the UN Security Council. Mr. Heitmann is a veteran DPA official who was previously Chief of the Security Council Secretariat Branch and prior to that Deputy Director in the Asia and Pacific Division.

Linda Perkin is one of several senior DPA officials to retire after many years of dedicated service to the Department. Also departing was **Beng Yong Chew**, Deputy Director in the Asia-Pacific Division and **Maria Maldonado**, Deputy Director for the Americas and Europe, and former Deputy Chief of MINUGUA, the UN mission that verified compliance with the Guatemalan peace accords.

Gregor Boventor is the new **Chief of DPA's Security Council Practices and Charter Research Branch**, replacing **Shola Omoregie**, who departed to take up a new position as the **Secretary-General's Representative for Guinea-Bissau**. Mr. Omoregie will head the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) one of three peace-building support offices managed by DPA. He replaces the former Special Representative **João Honwana**, who left the post in September to return to UN Headquarters.

DPA staff continued to take part in the UN Dialogue with the Global South Project, which links DPA and other departments with universities in developing countries. **Hiroko Miyamura** of the Electoral Assistance Division, was posted to a four-month fellowship at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg.

Angela Kane, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, delivered the opening remarks at the 5th UN-ASEAN Seminar in Kuala Lumpur in May. She accompanied the Secretary General later that month to the Fourth Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Vienna, as well as to Seoul and Tokyo for high-level meetings. In June, Ms. Kane visited Colombia for consultations with government officials and the UN country team. In Vienna, she addressed the UN International

Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, and delivered the keynote address at the working session of the 2006 OSCE Annual Security Review Conference in Vienna. Ms. Kane also accompanied the Secretary-General during his July visit to Germany, Italy and Russia, attending the G8 Summit in St. Petersburg. She briefed the Security Council on 30 June about the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

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Aiding peace talks in Northern Uganda. Welile Nhlapo, Director of DPA's Africa I Division, traveled to Juba, in southern Sudan in August, where he assisted in the mediation effort leading to the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement between the Lords Resistance Army (LRA) and the Government of Uganda. The agreement, brokered by Dr. Riek Machar, Vice President of the Government



ASG Angela Kane

UN Photo

of Southern Sudan, has brought hope to the people of Northern Uganda after two decades of bloodshed. Peace talks towards a comprehensive settlement have continued at Juba, with DPA staff providing ongoing advice to the mediation. The United Nations is the only international body present at the Juba Talks, which aim for a solution to the conflict that reflects the need for accountability for atrocities, as well as reconciliation.

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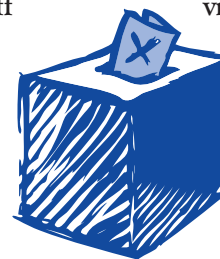
Electoral Assistance: DRC and Bangladesh. Under-Secretary-General Gambari visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo in October, two weeks ahead of the second round of landmark elections. Accompanied by Craig Jenness, Director of DPA's Electoral Assistance Division, USG Gambari met with the presidential

candidates and with the president of the Independent Electoral Commission. He urged a smooth and peaceful vote and called for the results to be accepted by all. The elections in the DRC are among the largest and most complex the UN has ever helped organize and the country's first free polls in 45 years. DPA supported the massive electoral operation carried out on the ground by the UN peacekeeping mission, MONUC, and the UN country team.

* * *

DPA electoral experts traveled to Bangladesh in June to assess the electoral environment ahead of January 2007 parliamentary

polls and to consider possible UN assistance. In a public statement, the Mission noted the country's sound track record in holding elections, but expressed deep concern that political



violence could undermine the vote. Among its recommendations, the Mission urged dialogue between the key political parties to lessen tensions and to build public confidence in the election.

* * *

International Compact with Iraq. Members of the DPA Iraq Team joined Deputy-Secretary-General Mark Malloch-Brown in Abu Dhabi on 10 September for a high-level preparatory meeting of the International Compact with Iraq. The compact, co-chaired by the Government of Iraq and the United Nations, is an initiative of the Government of Iraq for a new partnership with the international community. Based at headquarters in New York, DPA's Iraq Team has been assisting the Deputy Secretary-General in his responsibilities as co-chair of the initiative, working closely, as well, with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI). At the September meeting, participants adopted the Abu Dhabi Declaration in which the international community agreed on the direction and process for the ICI.

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Preventive action in The Gambia. Sammy Kum Buo, Director of DPA's Africa II Division, led a mission to The Gambia in August to assess the political situation following an abortive coup earlier in

the year and ahead of presidential elections in September. Picking up on one of the key recommendations of that mission, the Secretary General dispatched a Special Envoy for the Gambia to encourage peaceful elections, acceptance of the results and implementation of a Memorandum of Understanding among the country's political parties that had been brokered by the Commonwealth. With the encouragement of the Special Envoy, former Nigerian Head of State General Abdulsalami Abubakar, the political parties recommitted themselves to the MoU and its code of conduct. Elections took place peacefully on 22 September.

* * *

Continuing an active program of “brown bag” seminars organized by DPA's Policy Planning Unit, outside experts and DPA officials shared their views with staff on topics from terrorism to human rights to peace-building. Guests included: **Dr. Bruce Hoffman**, RAND's Corporate Chair in Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency, on “Terrorism today and tomorrow”; **Javier Ruperez**, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), on “The United Nations in the Fight against Terrorism”; **Craig Mokhiber**, Deputy Director of the New York Office of the United

USG Gambari with Dr. Adekeye Adebajo, Executive Director of the Center for Conflict Resolution (CCR) of the University of Cape Town, speaking at a seminar on mediation experiences in African conflicts, held jointly by DPA and CCR in Cape Town in October 2006.



Photo: Fanie Jason

Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, on “Human Rights Reform and the Human Rights Council”; **Diego Garcia Sayan**, Judge of the Inter American Court of Human Rights; on “The Role of Inter American System for the Protection of Human Rights and Democracy”; **Mark Kroeker**, Police Adviser, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, on “The Strategic Mission of United Nations Police”; and **Michael von der Schulenburg**, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, on “The Current UN Role in Iraq — A Perspective from the Field.”.

Talks by DPA officers included **Nika Strazisar Teran**, on “The Impact of Organized Crime on Peace-building”; **Anna Theofilopoulou** on “The United Nations and Western Sahara,” **Welile Nhlapo**, on Mediation in Northern Uganda; **Luis Jiménez-McInnis** on

Mexico's 2006 Elections; and **Jack Christofides** on “Darfur: from Peace-making to Peacekeeping?”

* * *

In October, DPA teamed up with a South African NGO, the Center for Conflict Resolution, in convening a major seminar in Cape Town on “Operationalizing Mediation Support in Africa”. Undersecretary-General Gambari gave the event's keynote address, kicking off the first of a series of regional consultations organized by DPA's new Mediation Support Unit in order to build networks with mediators and learn from their experiences. The Cape Town seminar was attended by experienced African mediators including Ambassador Salim Ahmed Salim, the former Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, Ambassador Lansana Kouyate, Special Envoy of La Francophonie to Côte d'Ivoire and former head of ECOWAS, and Ambassador James Jonah, former UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. The event was financed with generous support from the Government of Norway. Subsequent consultations are planned in Asia, Latin America and Europe. ●

POLITICALLY
speaking

Department of Political Affairs

United Nations

New York, NY 10017

Editorial contact:

Jared Kotler
Public Information and External Relations
Dept. of Political Affairs
Tel: 1-917-367-5264
Fax: 1-212-963-5065
Email: kotler@un.org

Designed by Graphic Design Unit, DPI