

**Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office
Report to the UUA General Assembly 2005**

THE UNITED NATIONS IS TRANSFORMING ITSELF

Revisioning, reshaping and building relationship in the Human Family

It is the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations. Unitarian Universalists delegates participate at the discussion table of the United Nations. Voices of Unitarian Universalism are heard in the international community.

2004 November

UN High-Level Panel on Challenges, Threats and Change meets and releases the report (“A More Secure World”) dealing with major threats to global security, such as nuclear proliferation, climate change, infectious disease, and terrorism. The Panel report also advances options for UN reform, especially reform of the Security Council.

2005 January

UN Millennium Project meets and releases the report (“Investing in Development”), outlining a practical strategy for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. A principal recommendation of the report is that developed countries must fulfill their commitment to deliver 0.7% of GNP in development assistance.

2005 September

Millennium+ 5 High-Level Review Summit, New York. World leaders will discuss the findings of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and the Millennium Project, and set out an implementation agenda for reform of international security and development cooperation.

2005 is perhaps the most important year for the United Nations since its founding. Fundamental issues about the UN structure and mandate are under negotiation, as are comprehensive strategies to tackle the persistent problem of global poverty. Major decisions will be taken in virtually every area of global policy this year. Civil society and NGOs (non-governmental organizations) are asked by the UN to play a role.

Within this context, the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office has launched “Every Child is Our Child Program” mobilizing UU congregations and individuals to put faith into action by direct participation in the work of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

As response to MDGoals:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieve universal primary school education
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Develop global partnerships

the UU-UNO offers UUs a direct entry point to send AIDS orphans to primary school in the Manya Krobo District of eastern Ghana. In consultation with UNDP and in on-site discussion and partnership agreement with the Queen Mothers Association of the District, this program is shaped to offer opportunity for as many as 1400 children to receive primary school education, on a two to one ratio of girls to boys.

The UU-UNO Action Alerts concerning loss of life and displacement of peoples in the Darfur region in the Sudan energized many UU congregations in Canada and the US on April 10th to express solidarity through chalice lightings and prayer/meditation. Following the services, social action committees and lay leadership led a call for action via a faxing campaign to respective government officials. The United Nations Security Council resolved this same week that accountability for these crimes against humanity and genocide in the Sudan be referred to the International Criminal Court at The Hague. The United States did not block, but abstained from voting on the issue.

April brought almost one hundred youth and thirty adults to the United Nations in New York City for the Annual Intergenerational Seminar, HIV/AIDS – the Biological Timebomb. Dr. Farid Esack, Islamic scholar of Theology and Ethics from Union Seminary and Xavier University, Cincinnati, was the keynote speaker.

This fall a record number of United Nations Sundays were conducted in UU congregations across the US and Canada – New York, Florida, Kansas, Portland, Ottawa, Kinston and more. We gained new Envoys for our system communication and action, and revenues have increased. The UU-UNO has conducted workshops in congregations on important international issues like the International Criminal Court and grassroots community development in rural communities.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Francis Mercer, UU-UNO Executive Director and UUA Representative to the UN