
UNA-SF Courier



The voice of the United Nations Association of San Francisco • Spring 2001

UNA-SF Welcomes Visitor from Sweden

We had had the pleasure of receiving Emilia Svenson, a nineteen-year-old student from our partner chapter in Malmo, Sweden, who arrived here in April. Emilia is interested in entering the fields of international law and human rights. A program was created for her to meet her in-



Emilia Svenson (center), with UNA-SF board member Effie Robinson (left) and president Nancy L. Peterson (right).

terests, and show her some aspects of contemporary California life. She met with representatives of ACLU, American Friends Service Committee, the Anti-Defamation League, and the Women's Institute for Leadership Development.

She heard lectures at UC's Boalt Hall, and learned of the Human Rights program there. She visited Glide Memorial Church and other houses of worship. Ethnic celebrations in Japantown, Cinco de Mayo Day, and Norway Day were fun diversions. Emilia has returned, to become an intern at the United Nations Information Center in Copenhagen this summer. Emilia reported regularly by e-mail to her school in Malmo, where she is receiving study credit for this undertaking.

Concluding her visit, Emilia said, "I would like to thank the UNA of San Francisco for

Charter Day is Coming!

Save the date! UNA-SF and the San Francisco Historical Society are co-sponsors of a commemoration of UN Charter Day, Tuesday, June 26, 6 to 8 pm, at the South Light Court of San Francisco's City Hall.

Education Project Moves Forward

Thanks to the generosity of our members, we raised funds in support of the Model UN program at Lowell High School. We received over \$1700 from our member solicitation, making us eligible to receive a matching amount from the Walter and Elise Haas Fund. Thanks to all!

In addition to other activities, the students entered a national UNA essay contest on the topic, "What is the stake of the American People and Government in Efforts of the International Agencies to Control Infectious Disease in Developing Countries?"

To help the students better understand this topic, Grace Kibonak of the San Francisco Department of Public Health addressed the students in February and gave an overview of health services in Uganda. Ahmud (> p. 2)

providing this great opportunity for me. I hope that this exchange between our two chapters also has given you something in return ... I would also like to suggest a joint project in the future, perhaps related to our school's new project on fighting global warming."

UNA-SF Annual Membership Meeting

Thursday, May 31, 7:30 pm

at 3220 Sacramento Street,
third floor, San Francisco

Highlights of the Meeting:

The United States and the International Criminal Court

Prof. Naomi Roht-Arriaza of the Hastings College of the Law will discuss some vital questions:

What developments have occurred since last we addressed the International Criminal Court? What is the present United States position toward the Court?

Women in Afghanistan

Frishtah Afifi will speak briefly on the oppression of Afghan women under the Taliban government.

Creating a Culture of Peace in the Twenty-first Century

UNA-SF is moving in a new direction. We'll explain, and ask for your participation. Elections, and the annual report. Join us for wine and cheese, and meet your fellow members and friends. All are welcome!

UNA–USA PASADENA PRESENTS

A Tour of South Africa and the UN Conference on Racism

UNA's Pasadena (Ca.) chapter announces a tour to South Africa, August 16 to September 2, 2001. The trip will include Cape Town, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Kruger National Park, and Durban. Tour members will attend the UN's NGO Conference on Racism in Durban, August 28 through September 1.

The approximate cost per person is \$4,995; a single-occupancy supplement is \$675. A deposit of \$500 is required when signing up; full payment is due 120 days prior to departure. For further information contact UNA of Pasadena, 272 S. Los Robles Ave., Pasadena, CA 91101, telephone 626-449-1795.

UNA–USA Responds to United States' Departure from Human Rights Commission

It came as a shock and a surprise when the US was not reelected to the United Nations Human Rights Commission recently. The US has served continuously since the time of Eleanor Roosevelt, a founder of the group, and has maintained a strong and forceful presence there.

UNA–USA and its many chapters, ours included, have responded.

As part of the Western European and Others group, the US vied for three open seats with France, Austria and Sweden—they were chosen in a vote within the group—the US was not. This is not a case of the US being displaced by hostile nations; this happened within a group of western de-

mocracies. Ambassador William Luers, chairman and president of UNA–USA, said, our absence "is sure to damage the Commission's credibility and effectiveness" and called for a volunteer to step down from the Commission so the US can continue there.

Ambassador Luers appeared on the Jim Lehrer News Hour on PBS Wednesday night, May 9, stating the UNA's case in a lengthy interview. A press release was broadly distributed from UNA's New York office.

In the Bay area, East Bay Chapter leaders telephoned us, inviting us to join in a Forum for Human Rights, and we jointly issued a letter to the editors of the San Francisco Chronicle and the New York Times. Among other points, we called on the United States to be a more responsive member state, citing our non-payment of dues, and failure to ratify many treaties.

Our advocacy Chair, Tracy Castellano, indicated she would call Congressional Representatives Nancy Pelosi and Tom Lantos and express our concern, and get a clarification of their positions on the matter.

Eleanor Roosevelt, the first chair of the Commission in 1946 said, "The Human Rights Commission...is really the way that human rights will come to be a reality."

We must work to maintain a US presence there.

Education Project (< p. 1)

Abu-Zei, Vice Consul of Egypt, and Tomas Aragon, an epidemiologist from the San Francisco Department of Public Health, also addressed them, and gave generously of their time and efforts. Effie Robinson serves as chair of the Education Committee, ably assisted by Greta Glugowski.

The essay contest judged by a panel of retired teachers. The winners will be announced and will receive prizes at our UN Charter Day program at City Hall June 26 (see p. 1). Join us, and share the pleasure the students feel when their hard-won prizes are awarded!

The UN and Business: a Critical Opinion

By the staff of CorpWatch

[Located in the Thoreau Center for Sustainability at the Presidio of San Francisco, CorpWatch (www.corpwatch.org) was formerly known as the Transnational Resource and Action Center (TRAC). UNA–SF does not necessarily endorse the views expressed here, but encourages discussion of this issue among its members. Opposing views may be presented in future issues of the Courier.]

Do the Nike "swoosh" symbol and the UN olive branch emblem belong together? Are McDonald's and Disney companies that represent universal educational and cultural values? Do giant oil companies like Shell, BP and Chevron hold the keys to sustainable development?

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan thinks the answers might be yes, and he is leading a major effort to form partnerships between the United Nations and the business community. The "business community," in this case is made up of the giant transnational corporations—companies that have increased their power through the process of economic globalization and come under fire for their unjust labor and environmental records.

Annan has encouraged all UN agencies to form these business partnerships, including some of those most respected for their dedication to UN values, like UNICEF, the International Labor Organization, and the UN Development Programme. The Secretary General has personally spearheaded the highest profile corporate collaboration, the Global Compact. At the launch of the Global Compact in July 2000, Annan shared the podium with CEOs of companies like Nike, Shell and Rio Tinto.

What Is Wrong With The Partnerships?

A partnership should be entered between parties that share the same goals. Global corporations do not share the same goals as the United Nations. Therefore, we believe that "partnership" is the wrong relationship between the UN and business.

In some cases, the UN is forming partnerships known human rights violators, or despoilers of the environment. It is not appropriate for the UN to form partnerships with companies like Nike and Shell, companies that violate human rights norms and exploit the worst dynamics of corporate globalization.

In the case of the Global Compact, dozens of corporations, many known for their poor social and environmental records, have agreed to follow nine human rights, labor rights, and environmental principles. But there is no monitoring of corporate adherence to these principles and no enforcement.

The UN should not be picking sides in the active debate over corporate globalization. Allowing the International Chamber of Commerce and its large members to dominate the UN's approach to business means that the UN has effectively endorsed the current dominant version of globalization. The UN should not endorse

the WTO vision of corporate globalization, but rather be a counterbalance to it.

As supporters of the United Nations, we are concerned that corporate partnership programs at the UN will compromise the UN's image, values and integrity.

What is CorpWatch Doing?

Since March 1999, CorpWatch has been leading an international campaign to document and expose the growing number of partnerships between various UN agencies and corporations with poor human rights and environmental records. We've also been proposing an alternative relationship between the UN and corporations-one where the world body serves as a counterbalance to corporate-led globalization.

CorpWatch is the Secretariat for the Alliance for a Corporate-Free United Nations. Alliance members have written to the Secretary General and heads of other UN agencies to ex-

press their concern that the Global Compact and other business partnerships threaten the mission and integrity of the UN.

Detailed critiques of the Global Compact can be found both in our correspondence with the Secretary General, and in our report, Tangled Up In Blue: Corporate Partnerships at the United Nations. Our coalition has called on the Secretary General—both directly and through the news media—to abandon the Global Compact and instead to bolster the UN's ability to hold transnational corporations accountable to environmental, labor and human rights. In this spirit, we have authored and endorsed an alternative: the Citizens Compact.

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United Nations Association of San Francisco

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The United Nations Association of San Francisco (UNA-SF) is the San Francisco chapter of the **United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA)**, a national, nonpartisan, and nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing US participation in the United Nations system and to strengthening that system as it seeks to define and carry out its mission.

UNA-USA, based in New York City, carries out its action agenda through a unique combination of public outreach, policy analysis, and international dialogue.

UNA-USA has over 23,000 members and is the largest foreign policy association in the nation. Its nationwide network of 172 chapters and divisions reaches a broad cross-section of the American public.

UNA-USA provides information and educational services on the work of the UN and on global issues for students, scholars, Congress, and the media. Its publications, including *The InterDependent* are available from its web site <http://www.unausa.org>. Each year UNA-SF coordinates the observance of United Nations Day (October 24) in hundreds of communities across the nation.

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United Nations Association of San Francisco



Membership Application

[Membership in UNA-USA and UNA-SF includes a subscription to UNA-SF Courier, the national UNA-USA newspaper The InterDependent, invitations to special events in the Bay Area, and other benefits.]

Enclosed are my tax-deductible membership dues and contributions for twelve months:

- New membership Renewal
- Individual membership, \$35
- Family or organization membership, \$40
- Student membership, \$10
- Limited income individual, \$20, or family, \$25
- Sponsor, \$100 Patron, \$500
- Additional contribution to support
 - UNA-SF chapter activities, \$ _____
 - UNA-USA national programs, \$ _____
- I would like to volunteer my services.

Special abilities: _____

(Send a copy of this part to UNA-SF)

Name _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City, state, zip _____

Telephone _____

Fax; e-mail _____

Amount paid _____

Signature _____

[Please send a copy of this form with a check to
UNA-USA, 801 Second Avenue; New York, NY 10017.
See also <http://www.unausa.org> or call 212-907-1342.]