



# UN BULLETIN

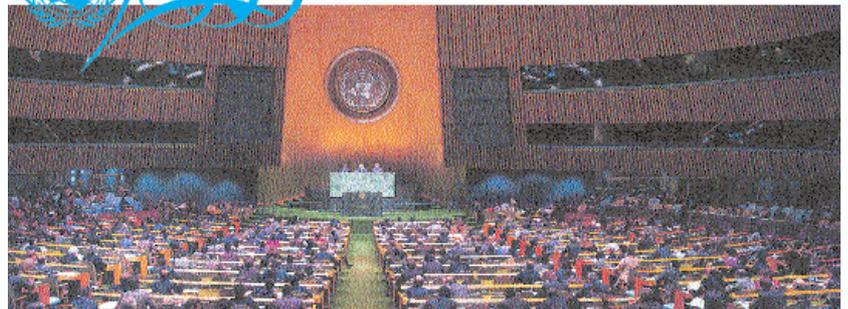
United Nations Office in the Republic of Armenia

N°5



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**FROM THE MILLENNIUM RELATED EVENTS**

28-31 Aug. 2000	UNHQ, New York	"World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders"
28-30 Aug. 2000	UNHQ, New York	<u><a href="#">UN Department of Public Information/NGO Forum: "Global Solidarity: The Way to Peace and International Cooperation"</a></u>
30 Aug. -1 Sept. 2000	UNHQ, New York	Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments ( <u><a href="http://www.ipu.org">www.ipu.org</a></u> )
5 Sept. 2000	UNHQ, New York	Opening of the <i>Millennium Assembly of the United Nations</i>
6-8 Sept. 2000	UNHQ, New York	<u><a href="#">Millennium Summit</a></u>

For complete information visit URL: <http://www.un.org/millennium>

**DPI/NGO CONFERENCE**

*The Fifty-third annual Department of Public Information/Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Conference, entitled "Global Solidarity: the Way to Peace and International Cooperation", opened at Headquarters on 28 August.*

This year's conference provided a forum for representatives of NGOs, the United Nations system and Governments to explore concrete ways in which civil society can work with the Organization and Member States to implement the actions plans that were agreed upon during the major world conferences of the 1990s.

Among the questions raised during the Conference were: what makes for successful campaigns; how can cross-cutting sectoral concerns be unified; how can they be replicated from country to country; how are priorities set; and what kind of working relationships between NGOs, the United Nations and Governments will ensure sustained success?

The UN Secretary-General Mr. Kofi Annan made an address to over 1,800 representatives of NGOs from more than 60 countries. The three-day conference was also welcome by the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, Mr. Kensaku Hogen.

**KOFIANNAN:**

"The beginning of the new millennium was the time to give real meaning to the concept of political will. The NGOs had raised serious concerns about some of the negative aspects of globalization. It had been said that arguing about globalization was like arguing against the law of gravity. Globalization must be made into an engine that lifted people out of hardship and misery, and not a force that held them down. Partnerships must be forged strong enough to ensure that the global market was embedded in broadly shared values and practices that reflected global needs, so that globalization could benefit all the world's people. That meant private corporations must be engaged in a search for something beyond short-term profit..."

**KENSAKU HOGEN:**

"The Conference would reflect the most experienced and diverse voices of the United Nations community, national and local Governments and civil society activists. Their perspectives were connected by a deep commitment to the notion of partnership, in particular the working partnerships that were evolving between the Organization and civil society — the best guarantee for the achievement of lasting peace and cooperation..."



## MILLENNIUM FORUM OF NATIONS



The turn of the century is “a unique and symbolically compelling moment to articulate and affirm an animating vision for the United Nations in the new era”, the General Assembly stated when it decided in December 1998 to hold the Millennium events, based on the Secretary-General’s recommendation.

To consider how to strengthen the role of the world body in meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century, the UN General Assembly decided to designate its 55th session, starting on 5 September 2000, as the **Millennium Assembly of the United Nations** and to hold a **Millennium Summit**.

When Heads of State and/or Government of the Member States of the United Nations converge on the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York to participate in the Millennium Summit from 6 to 8 September 2000, it is likely to be the largest single gathering of Heads of State and/or Government ever held in the world. As humanity reflects on the challenges we face at this millennial milestone, it is a chance also to reflect on the only global organization to which we can turn: the United Nations.

At the Summit, heads of State or government will deliver formal statements and will have the opportunity to engage in interactive discussions by participating in several roundtable meetings. The framework of the discussions of the Summit has been outlined by the General Assembly resolutions, and by the Secretary-General’s Millennium Report “**We, the Peoples**,” that urges the Summit to act on the six shared values of Freedom; Equity and Solidarity; Tolerance; Non-Violence; Respect for Nature; and Shared Responsibility.

The millennium events will be really unprecedented in nature. Like never before, the heads of State and government will be able to actively contribute to the strengthening of the international rule of law by signing and ratifying the vast body of treaties deposited with the Secretary General. The member countries will also review the seven development goals set during world conference in the 1990s and reflected upon in a report “**Better World for All**” that was for the first time jointly prepared by the UN, WB, IMF and OECD and will be sure to become a framework of agitated debate of the member states over the ways and means of attaining these goals and halving the world poverty by the year 2015.

For any country, participation in the Millennium Assembly and Millennium Summit is a matter of international politics and national prestige. And with so many landmark fora taking place at the same time at the UN Headquarters, it is essential that country delegations are adequately representative to be able to attend the events that are likely to shape the history of the United Nations in the 21st century.

For more information visit the following URL addresses:

<http://www.un.org/millennium/>; <http://www.un.org/russian/conferen/millennium/>;

and

<http://www.undpi.am>



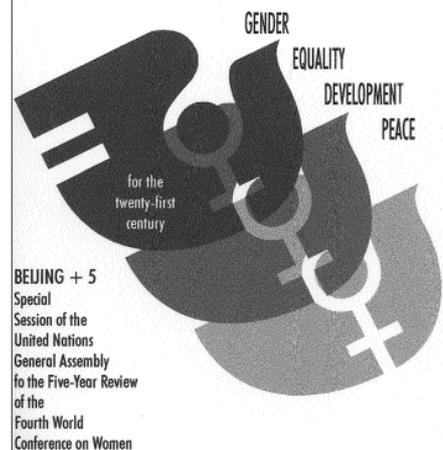
# UNDP

### ARMENIAN NGOS REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION OF BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION

The preparation of Armenia for Beijing+ 5 special session of UN General Assembly commenced since the beginning of 2000. The preparation activities, ranging from thematic reports to workshops and round tables, enjoyed support and advice from UN and UNDP Offices in Armenia.

A document entitled “**NGO Review of Implementation of Beijing Platform for Action**” produced for the Special Session for the Five-Year Review of the Fourth World Conference on Women was sponsored by the UN Resident Coordinator System in Armenia and supported by United Nations Development Program. The document reflects on selected areas of concern identified by the NGOs themselves such as Women and Health, Violence Against Women, Women and Economy, Women in Power and Decision Making, Advancement of Professional Women. It also contains a section on NGO Follow-up to Beijing Platform for Action prepared on the basis of information provided by the NGOs.

#### NGO REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION



## UNDP ADMINISTRATOR URGES WOMEN TO DEMAND ACCOUNTABILITY FROM POLICYMAKERS

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At the close of the Beijing+5 conference, UNDP Administrator, Mark Malloch Brown said the most striking social, political and economic transformation of the past century had been the emergence of women leaders in nearly every country and walk of life. Mr. Malloch Brown said that progress had been encouraging on a number of fronts. *“However, much remains to be done”, he said. “Whether we are talking about women’s presence in parliaments, in business, in education or simply the right to vote, own property and be protected from violence and discrimination, much,*

*much more still needs to be done to achieve gender equality.”*

*“As an organization, UNDP is committed to helping answer those tough questions by using our universal presence and strong record as trusted partner to help build capacity and strong institutions that help drive human development with gender sensitivity. That means we are striving to move beyond treating gender issues simply as a separate set of concerns. We are mainstreaming gender throughout our policies and internal working practices and across our country offices.”*

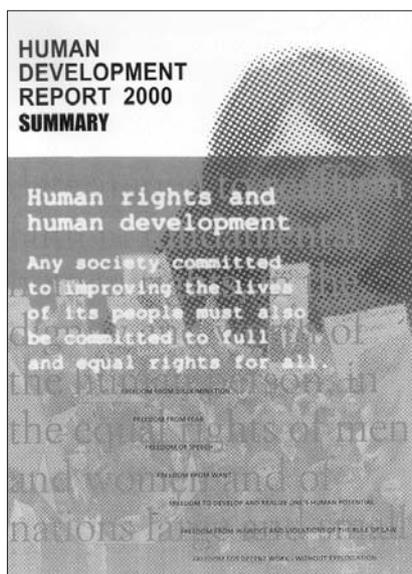
## LAUNCH OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2000

This year’s global launch of Human Development Report was led from Paris by French President Jacques Chirac. Other launches were held in more than 70 countries where civic and political leaders embraced its central theme **“Human Rights and Human Development.”**

UNDP Administrator, Mark Malloch Brown said that unfortunately, human rights and human development are largely abstract and unattainable concepts for too many of the world’s poorest citizens. Speaking at the Paris launch, Mr. Malloch Brown said that economic, social and cultural rights for people living in extreme poverty had not kept pace with the promises of democracy.

*“In the past decade, the proportion of the world’s population living in democracies has surged from little more than a fifth to two-thirds today,” he said. “But that wave of democratisation has carried in its wake new demands from citizens everywhere for honest, accountable, democratic institutions that honour and protect their rights and dignity. Because, for too many of the 1.2 billion people living on less than a dollar a day, to the 150m unemployed, to the 100m children who live and work on the streets both human rights and human development are largely abstract and unattainable concepts.”*

While the findings and conclusions remain those of the authors, UNDP is confident that HDR 2000 will advance a high quality of the policy making dialogue concerned with human rights and human development .



## HDR 2000 LAUNCH IN ARMENIA

Armenia launched Human Development Report 2000 **“Human Rights and Human Development”** on 12 July 2000. The launching ceremony took place at the UN House in Yerevan. The opening remarks were delivered by *H.E. the Ambassador of France Mr. Michel Legras.*

The Report examines the issue of human rights and human development in light of the seven basic freedoms, mentions the breakthroughs of the 1990s in human rights and the 21st century threats to human rights. It also calls for new and bold approaches and alliances to achieve realization of human rights in the 21st century – adapted to the opportunities and realities of the era of globalization, to its global actors and to its new global rules.

The realization of *“all rights for all people”* calls for strong social arrangements, inclusive democracy, poverty eradication, accountability of non-state actors, better and new statistics and international action. The Report proposes five priorities for national and international action. It also suggests five specific initiatives, which would mobilize people around the world to enhance the reign of human rights and human development.

## UNDP STRENGTHENS EFFORTS TO BOOST CONNECTIVITY IN POORER COUNTRIES

At a meeting with G-8 leaders in Tokyo in July, UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown announced that UNDP is launching a series of project activities that will boost internet connectivity and access in some of the poorest countries in the world.

UNDP is already helping countries gain access to the digital economy in places ranging from Estonia to East Timor. The organization supports the launching of new networks and helps construct policy frameworks for Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

UNDP is helping undertake a new effort to determine the extent of "e-readiness" in individual developing countries. Drawing on UNDP's network of 136 country offices and long-standing, trusted relationship with governments, it will identify concrete steps needed to foster and ensure the broader development of domestic ICT sectors. Recommendations will focus on providing resource support and technical assistance in removing regulatory bottlenecks and creating an enabling environment for new public-private partnerships that encourage the rapid growth of a domestic sector providing portal, content, local cellular operations and other ICT services.

UNDP is working on a wide range of innovative applications of ICT in promoting poverty alleviation and human development. One particular priority is exploring the potential of using the dramatic cuts in transactions costs offered by ICT to find new ways of expanding micro-finance initiatives for the poor, ranging from credit for small and

medium business development.

Through UN Volunteers, a subsidiary organization, UNDP is developing Secretary-General Kofi Annan's new United Nations Information Technology Service ('UNITEs') to train groups in developing countries in the uses and opportunities of the Internet and information technology. UNDP will also be taking a lead in working with the World Health Organisation and other agencies to establish the Health InterNetwork, linking 10,000 on-line sites in hospitals and clinics in developing countries to cutting edge medical information and assistance.

Another example of country-based initiatives is the work that UNDP is doing with CISCO Systems in setting up networking academies in developing countries, especially in Africa. In addition, NetAid.org, the innovative website run jointly by UNDP and Cisco systems, is pioneering new ways to support development initiatives across the world.

Through APDIP, which is a US\$ 2.2 million UNDP programme funded by governments, the UN and by private sector partnerships, UNDP aims to provide training and technical support in ICT in developing countries worldwide.

In Armenia, UNDP pioneered international technical assistance in ICT by implementing its project on "National Information Infrastructure for Sustainable Development (Internet)" that provides access and training to about 10,000 organisations and individuals connected to the first public access and training facility in Armenia – the Armenian Freenet.



### INTERNET AND SOCIETY: GLOBAL VISION IN NATIONAL CONTEXT

In July 2000, Armenia hosted an international conference entitled "**Internet and Society.**" The Conference was co-sponsored by *UNDP*, *Council of Europe* and *Open Society Institute* and organised by *Information Technologies Foundation* (ITF). The Conference addressed the development of information and communications technologies and their impact on political, societal, economic, technological, legal, educational and cultural aspects of contemporary life. Participating in the conference

were representatives from Western European Countries, United States, Russia, the Ukraine, Georgia and Azerbaijan, as well as Armenian Diaspora and representatives of international organizations.

The conference identified several priority areas of cooperation, Government action and international support for ICT development in Armenia: *design of strategy and plan of action for ICT development in Armenia, development of e-commerce, integration of public access, design of ICT-based school training programmes, regional cooperation. The agreements reached and contacts established in the course of the Conference are to serve as catalysts for the development of identified priority areas.*

## FIRST VISIT OF UNFPA COUNTRY DIRECTOR TO ARMENIA

Through July 14 – 18 2000, Dr. Katy Shroff, the newly appointed UNFPA Country Director visited Armenia on her first familiarization mission. The Resident Office of the UNFPA Country Director is placed in Tirana, Albania, and besides Armenia, it covers Albania, Bulgaria, and Georgia.

The visit was very intensive and included numerous meetings with representatives of the Government, UN Agencies, and multilateral and bilateral donor organizations, local and international NGOs. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Health, and the President of the National Statistical Service received the Country Director.

Work on drawing outlines of future cooperation with the Government constituted an important part of the Director's visit. The Country Director confirmed that despite UNFPA's difficult financial situation, it stands ready to support further implementation of the National Reproductive Health Program in Armenia through mobilizing the available resources and making better use of the existing vast technical potential and experiences of the Fund.

As the current UNFPA program cycle comes to the end, formulation of the new program will begin this fall.

The beginning of its implementation is scheduled for early next year. Throughout the next cycle, UNFPA will focus on improving the STI, pre-cancer, and cancer screening services with the maternities and will support close collaboration between antenatal services and STI Center through establishing a partner referral system.

Another important area that UNFPA will focus on is gradual introduction of social marketing of contraceptives. This would allow smooth transition from supply of free contraceptives – something that cannot be sustained in long term – to uninterrupted supply of high quality and affordable contraceptives. The social marketing will have a component on promotion of contraceptive use.

UNFPA will continue IEC activities in line with ICPD principles and Program of Action. The network of local NGOs actively involved in reproductive health will be used for promoting ICPD goals, informing and educating community members of the various aspects of RH.

Dr. Shroff considered her visit as very productive and useful in terms of familiarization with the country, the situation, problems, as well existing opportunities and potential for further improvement of RH in the country, in cooperation with the stakeholders and the community at large.

## THE WORLD POPULATION DAY SAVING WOMEN'S LIFE

Observing the World Population Day on 11 July is becoming a tradition in Armenia. For the last several years UNFPA has been sponsoring organization of events dedicated to this important day that is being observed worldwide.

The motto of the World Population Day 2000 was "Saving Women's Life". Why so? Because, as UN Secretary-General mentioned in his WPD message: "Too many girls do not have the same chance of education as boys. Too many women still cannot choose when or whether to become pregnant. Too many women are victims of sexual violence, especially during conflict. Too many women resort to abortions that are not safe. Too many are subjected to genital mutilation and other harmful traditional practices."

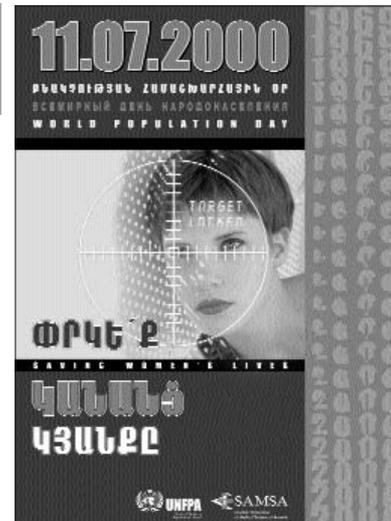
There are many factors that threaten reproductive health and even lives of women in Armenia as well. To name few – high rate of abortions, increasing numbers of STI infected women, lack of proper sexual education for adolescents. The AIDS may become the major threat for women's health and lives, unless urgent steps are taken to prevent its spread in the country. So, these were the issues, which were voiced by the members of Scientific Association of Armenian Students (SAMSA) and Association of Gynecologists-Endocrinologists (AGE) —two NGOs that collaborated with UNFPA in observing the World Population Day this year.

An appealing poster with the Day's motto was exhibited in public places prior to the Day. On 11 July,

an open-air public concert directed by Maestro Ghara-bekyan took place in Komitas Square. SAMSA members distributed to the public about 2,000 copies of booklets, with useful information focusing on HIV/AIDS problem, ways of transmission, and prevention.

The same day AGE NGO held a public lecture for a group of University students on RH, STI, HIV/AIDS prevention. Because of genuine interest of the audience and numerous questions the lecture lasted twice longer than was planned. All these prove that in Armenia, there is a huge demand among the population and particularly the youth for reliable information on reproductive health issues, which concern their lives. This lecture was first in a series of meetings to be held by AGE with students of all 19 departments of the Yerevan State University during the second semester of 2000.

At the same time, SAMSA will conduct 7 seminars for communities, including 2 communities with compact refugee population.





## CIS STEERING GROUP DISCUSSING FUTURE ACTIVITIES



On 13-14 July 2000, the Steering Group in the Follow-Up to the **Regional Conference to Address Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Other Forms of Involuntary Displacement and Returnees in CIS** met at its last, fifth, session to review the achievements of the CIS Conference process in the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted in 1996, areas necessitating further attention, and to take a decision on the future activities. The latter was required in accordance with the Programme of Action, which stated that *“the meeting of the year 2000 should conclude the process, and the Steering Group would decide then on any further appropriate follow-up.”*

41 states, 3 observers, 11 intergovernmental organizations, 4 other entities and 126 non-governmental organizations participated in the event.

Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen, Assistant High Commissioner at UNHCR, Mr. Brunson McKinley, Director General of IOM and Mr. Andreas Halbach, Regional Representative of IOM, and Mr. Knut Langeland, Chargé d’Affaires a. i. of Norway, in the capacity as member of the OSCE Troika, co-chaired the meeting.

Mr. Jessen-Petersen, Assistant High Commissioner at UNHCR in his opening remarks reviewed the original objectives of the Conference and the follow-up process’ achievements in the implementation of the Program of Action over the past four years.

An important aspect of the CIS Conference process has been the fact that it contributed significantly to making the NGO sector a vibrant part of the civil society.

A further noteworthy development has been the operational partnerships developed and reinforced between international organizations, including IOM, the OSCE, ODIHR, the Council of Europe and UNHCR.

The Assistant High Commissioner said that one successful outcome of the Conference process often overlooked was the absence of dramatic developments

to the contrary. The process helped demonstrate how humanitarian action through a comprehensive approach can contribute to regional stability.

At the CIS Conference Armenia was represented by Head of the Department of Migration and Refugees Mr. Gagik Yeganyan, Representative of the Armenian Permanent Mission to UN in Geneva Mr. Karen Nazaryan and Third Secretary of the Armenian Permanent Mission to UN in Geneva Ms. Arpine Gevorgyan. Besides, the Conference was attended by a number of Armenian non-governmental organizations, which directly or indirectly deal with the problems of concern to the CIS Conference.

During presentation of the governments the Armenian delegation stated that the Program of Action was and still is a solid base in the search for solutions of problems of migrants and refugees. The Conference process greatly contributed to better understanding of the necessity of coordinated efforts to improve the migration situation in the region. Armenian representatives also briefed the meeting on the current developments and activities in the country.

As presented by the delegation, the Government priorities now and for the future are mainly focused on the following issues: solution of housing problems; employment and compensation for lost property of refugees as the main impediment to their integration and naturalization; return of IDPs to the places of their origin - border regions; reintegration of Armenian illegal migrants deported from Western Europe; issues related to involuntary displaced persons from a number of CIS countries; problems of asylum seekers, as well as reinforcement of border control.

At the end of the meeting it was said that the Conference process has considerably advanced a number of issues identified in the Program of Action and met its essential objectives:

- to provide a reliable international forum to discuss population displacement problems,
- to review the population movements taking place in the region,
- to clarify categories of concern,
- to devise an integrated strategy,
- to manage migratory movements.

In addition, it has given impetus to development of the NGO sector and civil society, and forged vital partnerships.

According to the Assistant High Commissioner, the formal follow-up to the Conference has come to its conclusion at this Steering Group meeting. However, much remains to be done, such as:

- addressing institutional gaps, including the imple-

mentation of legislation and fulfilling international obligations by the states concerned,

- ensuring concrete assistance and protection to groups of concern in the region and finding durable solutions to their problems,
- intensifying conflict resolution efforts,
- ensuring adequate financial support by the international community,
- consolidating partnerships between international organisations and institutions,
- sustaining the NGO sector.

A new chapter of more intensive and focused follow-up to the 1996 Geneva Conference is being now opened, Mr. Jessen-Petersen said.

He went on saying that with the adoption of the Recommendations, the Conference process is moving to a more advanced level of co-operation in the search for concrete solutions to problems in four main areas, as identified in the adopted document. The Recommendations create a framework flexible enough for future amendments and adjustments, as they may be needed.

## JOINT WORKSHOP ON STATELESSNESS/ACQUISITION OF NATIONALITY

On July 26-27, 2000 the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Armenia Office organized a workshop on Statelessness & Acquisition of Nationality. The workshop was held in Yerevan and was a joint initiative of the UNHCR Armenia Office and the Council of Europe.

**The workshop was attended by experts of the Council of Europe Ms. Tanja Gerwien, Mr. Roland Scharer, Prof. Giovanni Kojanec, Ms. Carol Batchelor of the UNHCR headquarters, as well as representatives of the Armenian government, the National Assembly, the judiciary and academic circles, diplomatic corps and NGOs.**

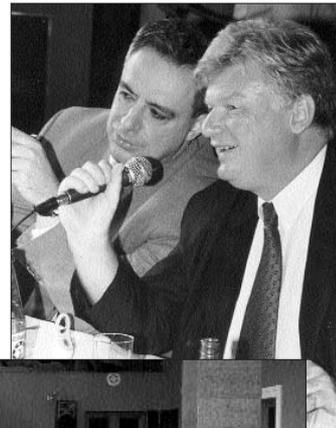
In his opening remarks Armenia's Foreign Minister Mr. Vardan Oskanian noted that Armenia joined the Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on Reduction of Statelessness in 1994. During the past years, according to the Foreign Minister, Armenia has done a lot in the direction of reduction of statelessness on its territory. There is a big number of refugees in Armenia, who arrived in the country in the Soviet times. However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union these people automatically lost their Soviet citizenship, but so far have not acquired the Armenian citizenship. According to Mr. Oskanian, the relevant legislation, namely the law on citizenship of the Republic of Armenia and the law on refugees, are already in place. "What we need is to bring this legislation in conformity with European standards, as Armenia will soon become a full-fledged member of the Council of Europe and will be requested to sign the European Convention on Nationality," Armenia's Foreign Minister said. The minister stressed the importance and timeliness of the workshop, emphasizing its practical use for the local authorities, dealing with issues raised in the workshop.

The workshop focused its attention on the approaches taken by international, regional and national bodies on the question of statelessness, citizenship/nationality.

Representatives of government structures, NGOs and international organisations made their presentations, wherein discussed legal aspects of the statelessness and nationality acquisition.

OSCE representative, in particular, said that the Armenian law on citizenship yields to the similar law adopted in Azerbaijan in 1998 as the latter provides citizenship to those persons, who lived in the country before the law was adopted. According to the OSCE representa-

tive, it means that under the Azeri law on citizenship ethnic Armenian refugees are not deprived of the right to return and claim Azeri citizenship, whereas the similar law in Armenia does not give such an opportunity to Azeri refugees from Armenia.



The participants also addressed the problem of dual/multiple nationality and its advantages and disadvantages. Representatives of local authorities and academic circles voiced an opinion that dual nationality is not acceptable for Armenia, as it raises the problem of fulfilling obligations (payment of taxes, military service) in relation to more than one state. It was said that dual/multiple nationality is advantageous for great powers or countries with big population, as in that case these countries may influence political processes in other state, where its citizens live.

However, supporters of the concept argue that dual/multiple nationality also has positive aspects and today even countries, which previously opposed to the idea of dual/multiple nationality are embracing it because of its convenience.

Closing the workshop, representatives of the Council of Europe and UNHCR Headquarters stressed that in general the Armenian legislation in the field discussed was very close to European standards and, according to them, for Armenia there will be no difficulties in acceding to the European Convention on Nationality, although some minor amendments to the existing legislation may be required.

## BEGINNING OF UNHCR 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS IN ARMENIA



On July 31, 2000 the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Yerevan opened a photo-exhibition entitled “**Light at the End of the Tunnel**”. The exhibition was dedicated to the 50th anniversary of UNHCR and was the first event in a series of arrangements planned by the UNHCR Armenia Office to mark this historical date. Renowned Armenian photographer German Avagyan, who once already organized a striking exhibition of photos, illustrating the life of the elderly refugees, made the photos for the exhibition.

In his opening speech UNHCR Representative in Armenia Mr. Thomas Birath said that UNHCR

was established in 1950 with the initial mandate for the period of 5 years. “However, the mandate of UNHCR has been extended for the same period over 10 times and today we are entering the third millenium with the 50-year experience and 22 million refugees under our care,” Mr. Birath added.

The major date for the celebrations was set for 14 December 2000. However, the arrangements are planned up to 28 July, 2001, when UNHCR will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*.

The photos by German Avagyan presented at the exhibition “**Light at the End of the Tunnel**” illustrate the life of children who suffer from blindness and eyesight defects and live in Yerevan’s Special Boarding School for the Blind and Partially Sighted. The photos took faces of both refugee and non-refugee children. According to Mr. Birath, there is no difference between refugee and non-refugee children, “as they live in the same Boarding School, eat the same food, have the same problem and equally need our care.”

In conclusion of his speech, Mr. Birath expressed an opinion that there are different criteria to determine the degree of the society’s civilisation, but the most important and impartial one is the attitude of the society towards the vulnerable.

From Yerevan the exhibition will travel to Gyumri, Vanadzor, Stepanavan and other cities of Armenia.



# UNESCO

### ARMENIAN NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO BRIEF SUMMARY

The Armenian National Commission for UNESCO was established in 1991 by the decree of the Armenian Supreme Soviet, which committed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to set up a National Commission for UNESCO. By the same decree, the Republic of Armenia became a member of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on 9 June, 1992.

Since the day of its creation, the National Commission has implemented a great number of programmes in the fields of education, science, culture, women and youth affairs as well as human rights.

It is worthwhile to mention that UNESCO is the only organization to have created the democratic institute of National Commissions and to co-operate with its Member States through them.

*Actually, National Commissions might be considered as crucial instruments of a given state aimed at*

*putting the national objectives in the fields of education, science and culture in harmony with universal standards.*

- The main objective of the activities of the Armenian National Commission in the field of education was and remains the task of consistency of the Armenian educational system to the international standards. In this regard, Committee on Education under the Commission was established in 1993, which included specialists who, with the help of the UNESCO international experts, prepared the brief report entitled “**Educational Reforms During Emergency Situation in Armenia**”. It should be mentioned that this report is the first experience of Armenia in co-operating with international organisations in the field of education. It was followed by the UNDP and World Bank projects on education and, on the initial stage of implementation, this report was regarded as a main guiding document.

The same can also be said concerning the programme on the creation of information and statistics system in the field of education. The National Commission also, at first, urged this issue during Seminar organized in 1995 for the employees of the Ministry of Education and Science and the State Statistics Administration to introduce them the Education Management Information System (EMIS) programme. As it is known, at present the World Bank realizes the programme on the creation of information network of the Armenian educational system and UNESCO also takes active part in its works.

The other critical objective in education field remains the public and consequent dissemination of knowledge on human rights, civic education and democracy. In this regard, the establishment of **UNESCO Chair on Human Rights and Democracy** is underway at the State Institute of Foreign Languages n/a Brusov, which aims at elaborating national vision and methodology of teaching the principles of human rights and democracy, as well as to train relevant specialists at schools and other educational institutions.

Not to overload this article, I would like to conclude the topic on the activities of the National Commission in the field of education, nevertheless, it is expedient to mention that a considerable number of other educational programmes were implemented.

- The activities of the National Commission in the field of culture were generally carried out in the framework of UNESCO cultural conventions. In the framework of **UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the World Natural and Cultural Heritage**, the World Heritage List is set up, which includes the most valuable and unique natural and cultural sites of the world. Only after gaining independence, Armenia has obtained the opportunity to be also represented in the List. At present, *Haghpat* and *Sanahin* Monastery Complexes are included in the List as a common unit. *Geghard* Monastery Complex along with Azat valley, as a joint cultural and natural site, is also introduced in the List. The works are being carried out to also include the Echmiadzin Main Cathedral, churches and archaeological site of Zvartnots. We strongly hope to see them included in the List in 2001, the year of the celebration of the 1,700th anniversary of adoption of Christianity as a State religion in Armenia. The representation in the World Heritage List is a big honour and has great importance for the development of tourism, as the included sites are advertised throughout the world and included in various tourist routes.

The Commission is also occupied with the improvement of cultural conventions. With the active participation of Armenia, the Second Supplementary Protocol to the UNESCO Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Heritage in Case of Armed Conflict was adopted in 1999. Due to the fact that we succeeded in includ-

ing some points, which are both just and convenient for our country, in the new protocol, Armenia has immediately become a signatory to the Protocol. At present, the National Assembly is expected to ratify it.

The activities of Commission in the field of culture are considerably dedicated to the 1,700th anniversary of adoption of Christianity as a State religion in Armenia. In 1995, the 28th session of the UNESCO General Conference adopted 28 C/5 3.9 Resolution which recognised the unique importance of this anniversary not only for the Armenian nation but also for the whole history of civilization.

We also plan to carry out a number of other programmes during this and the next year aimed at disseminating the principles of the Armenian spiritual and secular cultures, development of Armenology, as well as introduction of the Armenian hand-made and virtual values to the wide international society.

- In the field of science, it is worth to note the creation



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*Higher Educational School* (LSIHES) was created by a Government decree. We expect that the LSIHES will host students from different countries, including Iran, India, Greece, the Ukraine, China, etc., who will pursue their studies and prepare their theses.

Another important scientific programme, wherein the National Commission is actively engaged, is SESAME project. It is aimed at creating a new International Scientific Center for Middle and Near East, as well as a number of other countries, on the basis of the Yerevan Physics Institute-based ARUS accelerator. The implementation of SESAME project in Armenia will contribute to the effective use of advantages that appear in comparison with the other states. It will also contribute to the welfare development in Armenia and the other countries of the region, as well as will promote and further strengthen peace in the region.

- The youth issues are also in the centre of attention of the Commission. The *Youth Initiative Supporting Centre* was created in 1997, which carried out a number of programmes directed at the creation of information field, accessibility of information for the youth, etc.

- The National Commission has its **Documentation and Information Centre** located in the Foreign Language Department of the Yerevan State University. The documentation on the various activities carried out by the National Commission is accumulated in the Centre and it is open for public. To introduce its activities to the society, the National Commission regularly publishes its Bulletin, which presents materials on the implemented programmes, as well as provides the information on UNESCO different activities and significant documentation.



## LIFE SKILLS PROJECT EXPANDS TO SYUNIK

UNICEF in collaboration with GTZ, Ministry of Education and Science of Armenia and Syunik Education Department launched a project to expand Life Skills to primary schools in Syunik marz.

The Life Skills project in Armenia started as early as in 1998 and is geared to the introduction of interactive learning methodologies and curriculum modules that encourage the child's learning process in an active manner. The project aims to prepare students to make healthy choices and equip them for life in a democratic, free market society. Life Skills addresses curriculum gaps in areas related to healthy lifestyles, family and community relationships, environmental protection, conflict resolution and children's rights. Every academic year, based on the ongoing pilot experience, additional schools are included in the project.

The expansion of the project to Syunik provides a unique opportunity to establish local conditions for a sustainable school network in the region, as well as introduce changes in the contents of curriculum and teaching methods, thus bringing together two critical areas of the education reform. In addition to other major components of the project curriculum, the Syunik initiative involves a strong agricultural component that is important for the regional infrastructure. Over this summer, the foundation was laid for successful actual startup of Life Skills education in schools, which is upcoming in September. Introductory training for school administration and training for 64 Life Skills teachers was completed in August and an awareness raising campaign on the project through local media and distribution of leaflets to community members started.

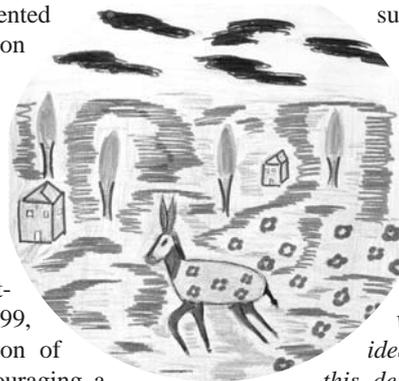
## CHILDREN ABOUT THEIR RIGHTS: A MESSAGE FOR THE WORLD

The publishing of the books written by children is a key instrument in bringing the message to the adults. This concept underpins the new project implemented by All Armenian Women's Union NGO and supported by UNICEF.

The project continues the pilot worldwide initiative of the Spanish National Committee for UNICEF and PAU Educacion to increase active knowledge of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) through a work of literary and artistic creation. In 1999, UNICEF supported implementation of the initiative in Armenia by encouraging a Yerevan school to write a book illustrating the provisions of the Convention.

This year, the initiative developed into a full-scale project. A group of 44 children, age 10-12, representing all Armenia's marzes, gathered in a summer camp in Hankavan, where they learned about the CRC through interactive workshops conducted by youth facilitators and worked in teams to produce the book. Depending of the availability of funds, it will be published in October by PAU Educacion in Spain along with books produced by children in other countries which joined the initiative, as

well as promoted through a gateway on Internet (URL <http://www.educared.net/unicef>). This unique cooperative project thus helps create a network that can successfully catalyze UNICEF's worldwide efforts in promoting the protection of children's rights worldwide.



Natalia Martirossian, Project Coordinator, All Armenian Women's Union: *"At the participant selection stage, children played a role play called 'The Ship'. Imagine a ship with kids on the crew, no adults, sailing to some 'dream country'. It's all thought up by the kids where exactly they will travel, what the ideal country's got to be like. On their way to this destination they are faced with challenges, dangers and pleasant surprises alike. Here is one of the situations: a dragon emerged from the sea depths and demanded that they sacrifice the best of the best people on the crew, the smartest and the most beautiful one, otherwise they would never get anywhere. The captain suggested the team they send herself to the dragon and get saved, but the others said no, 'you don't want to die, if you get sacrificed we would lose the leader, and besides, why create a precedent? If we give up this time that's going to happen over and over again, let's fight and we'll win.' That was marvelous."*

*The main character of the book the children wrote is the Flower Donkey. If you want to know who he is and what happened to him you can learn that from the book coming in fall 2000.*

## CHILDREN IN INSTITUTIONS: THE EXISTING REALITY AND PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Deinstitutionalization of services for children with special protection needs became a topic of heated discussions in the mid 90s in most countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS where transition to market economy was underway. Armenia was not an exception, and advocacy for the dissolution of the Soviet-inherited system of institutionalized care, education and rehabilitation and the promotion of community-based alternatives soon became of an overriding importance for the well being of the nation's children.

To evaluate the actual living conditions of children in residential care institutions and the services provided to them, and to assess the resources and capacities for alternative community-based care, education and rehabilitation, UNICEF with the help of an international consultant conducted a situation analysis of children in institutions and resources available. During the assessment some underlying causes for the existing deficits of residential institutions became visible, together with hidden institutional resources and possible entry points for change.

The report findings demonstrate that at present, the children's survival, development and protection rights are at serious risk in most institutions. Their physical well-being is most acutely threatened by shortages in food and medical supply and services, but also by persistent shortcomings in the provision of clothes and shoes, and the continuous decay of many buildings, including water and sanitation, electricity and heating systems. With regard to children's development rights, their right to education is basically secured by a sufficient number of qualified and experienced staff and a well-established system of general and special education. However, within the special education system, teachers rely on very old and inadequate textbooks, and have not participated in training and upgrading of skills and knowledge for the last 10 years. Children's right to education is violated in a significant number of cases where socially vulnerable, developmentally neglected but in fact non-disabled children only have the chance to participate in the special education syllabus for children with mental disability. Children's right to play, leisure time and recreation is often hampered by a lack of awareness on the side of staff, and generally by deficits in opportunities and material provision. Their psychological and social rehabilitation needs are not universally acknowledged. Lack of awareness has been obvious in some cases.



Sevan psychiatric hospital  
Photo by German Avagyan/UNICEF

On the other hand, a good number of institutions have realized the need for more specialized staff (psychologists and social workers) in order to respond to the children's needs and relieve them of emotional distress.

Overall, the situation analysis reveals that for the time being the system of residential institutions still provide practically for many needy children the only chance to have their survival, development and rehabilitation needs met. It is proposed that within the current economic and social context of Armenia, interventions should aim at strengthening a gradual transition from residential to community-based services for children with special protection needs, having in mind to include all children in need. To achieve this, a three-year intervention plan has been developed by all key players in the field, including UNICEF and its government counterparts in both national and regional (marz) levels, representatives of the residential institutions and community-based projects, technical resource persons and organizations, as well as the concerned NGOs. UNICEF will assist the Armenian government in the organization of financial and technical assistance.

*To stay abreast of the developments in deinstitutionalization and the status of children with special protection needs, listen to Seroond Studio's program series on childhood disability, every Thursday at 4:30 p.m. on Armenian National Radio and FM 107.6.*



## WHO SUPPORTS THE PHARMACEUTICAL SECTOR REFORM

• Since 1994 EURO Special NIS Project has very close collaboration with the pharmaceutical sector in Armenia. The direct counterpart/driving force is the Armenian Drug and Medical Technology Agency (ADMTA). The UK Know How Fund (KHF) provides continuing support for the project in Armenia.

In 1992, based on WHO Model List of Essential Drugs the first Armenian Essential Drug List was elaborated (annually updated). The implementation of the Essential Drugs Concept gave start to the drug registration process - an extremely important tool for quality assurance of drugs in the increasing pharmaceutical market of the country.

In 1994 the National Drug Policy Document was developed.

Assistance was rendered to the development of the drug information system, initially supporting publication of quarterly bulletin "Drugs and Medicine", and in 1997, publishing and distributing among Armenian doctors of the National Drug Formulary - the first authoritative reference book on essential drugs (in Armenian).

Armenia is participating in a two-year intercountry project, also financed by the KHF (£250,000), which includes a network of drug regulatory agencies (DRUGNET), exchange of knowledge and information on rational drug use and treatment, and a baseline survey on access to drugs for poor population groups. The intercountry activities include the annual publication on pharmaceutical sector development and maintenance of a website with key information on pharmaceutical reforms in NIS.

Since 1996, the WHO/Armenia cooperation embarked on "Improved Prescribing Practices" including:

1. Cost-effective drug management system in a group of pilot hospitals (creation of Drug and Therapeutic Committees), combined with better procurement methods, improved prescribing by better selection and rational use of drugs;
  2. Optimal Drug Treatment Guidelines. Currently the treatment guidelines of more than 40 diseases are elaborated and approved by the Ministry of Health. The first seven guidelines are published in a separate booklet, which is distributed to 3000 doctors.
- In 1998/99 a series of seminars on rational drug use, implementation of treatment guidelines and good pharmacy practice was held in Yerevan and 4 marzes. More than 500 clinical doctors and 200 pharmacists accepted the seminars with great interest.

The problem-based pharmacotherapy course is introduced in the curricula for medical students.

- WHO cooperates with Armenian counterparts and experts in facilitating the acquisition, effective utilization and dissemination of knowledge in the region. The ADMTA quality control laboratory, organized two weeks on site (Yerevan) training for staff of Kyrgyz lab in analytical techniques and one week training in Bishkek on the quality control procedures. A raining was conducted for teachers from Kyrgyz Medical University in problem-based pharmacotherapy teaching (April 1998), training materials were developed for identical course for NIS in Tashkent, 1998. A WHO Study Tour on Effective Drug Regulation was organized in Yerevan for 9 experts from Tajikistan, March 2000.

- The Armenian National Assembly, October 1998, adopted the Drug Law.

- Throughout 2000, the WHO/Armenia cooperation continues in line with overall goal of the two-year project (since March 1999) focusing on the highly important area of access. The hospital drug management component is proceeding in 5 pilot hospitals of Yerevan; the Pilot Drug Reimbursement project started in the pilot marz of Kotayk.

- With WHO support, from 1993 to 2000 Armenian experts participated in more than 90 various working discussions, consultations, scientific workshops, conferences, seminars and study tours in over 25 foreign countries.

### WHO ASSISTS ARMENIA IN EPI PROGRAM

- 8-11 May, 2000 - WHO/HQ mission, consisted of Drs. N. Dellepiane, L. Chocarro and G. Larsen, conducted detailed study of all aspects of arrival, clearance, storage and distribution system of EPI vaccines and assessed all factors likely to affect vaccine quality at each stage.

- 21 June - 12 July, 2000 - Dr. S. Popova, WHO consultant, assisted the National EPI program to develop 5-year plan and MMR strategy.


**WFP**


Photo by M. Mata-Langlois

A Joint FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission which worked in Armenia from 14-21 May 2000 established that crop yields in 2000 could be higher than last year's and the official projection of 320,000 tons of cereals and pulses in 2000 was reasonable. However, the authors of the Mission Report were right to state that the outlook for agricultural production in general and cereal production in particular in 2000 remained uncertain since rainfall in the crucial period May-August was inadequate and irrigation was necessary to ensure satisfactory crop development. This Special Report is available on the Internet as part of the **FAO World Wide Web** at the following URL address:

<http://www.fao.org/giews/>.

Armenia's agricultural sector has found itself in an

## FAO/WFP MISSION AND THE DROUGHT

exceptionally difficult situation. Extremely high air temperatures and low precipitation prevailing since the second half of June have led to a continued drought and aridity. Given the damaged agricultural crops, losses in crops according to Government are expected to total over USD 40 million.

The Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Armenia has publicized a *Report on the Consequences of a Continued Drought and Aridity and Measures to Eliminate Them*. At the same time, it has appealed to FAO and WFP headquarters in Rome for assistance to be able to address the situation. Through its monitor/senior staff visits countrywide, interviews with relevant agencies/people, WFP has been and is continuing to keep a close check on the evolution of the situation and its already emerging consequences. In particular, in Shirak Marz, which is one of the most affected, (a) some of the harvested wheat has yield less than 1 ton per 5 hectare whereas the usual is 2/3 ton per hectare; (b) price of fodder has already increased; (c) meat vendors are ready to buy farmers cattle at less than 50% of the regular price (d) price of milk purchased by grocers is also decreasing from 80 AMD/litre to 50-60AMD/ litre.

## FOOD-FOR-WORK PROJECT UPDATE

This year, the amount of food provided for the Food-For-Work (FFW) Program has nearly doubled from last year, and the number of FFW participants will increase from last year's 40,000 to 60,000. The WFP strategy is to gradually limit relief assistance to those who cannot engage in labor-intensive FFW activities.

WFP has reestablished its food co-ordination meetings with a notable reorientation toward the food-for-work component of its program of activities. The first such meeting held on 20 June was attended by quite a number of international/national agency representatives and opened corridors of cooperation especially beneficial for poorer communities that apart from the labor force have no other resources to contribute for project implementation.

WFP sends out regular updated information about FFW projects and project proposals to all marzes to ensure a transparent flow of information and equal access to the program.

To support the efficiency of projects in poor communities, WFP is providing also non-food items (NFIs). At the same time, WFP is actively looking for partners who will provide NFI inputs for FFW. Current partners are GTZ, Armenian Caritas, Armenian Red Cross, UMCOR and UNHCR. WFP and UNHCR signed an agreement on NFI's worth USD 50,000 donated to WFP.

In the first half of 2000, WFP has dispatched 12,810 tons of commodities generating 3,618,000 mandays and has registered 839 submitted project proposals of which it has approved 420.



Photo by M. Mata-Langlois



## OBSERVANCE OF THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY

The first celebration of *International Youth Day* was observed on 12 August this year. The idea originated with young people themselves who gathered at the first session of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System, in Vienna, Austria, 27-29 May 1991. The Forum recommended that an International Youth Day be declared, especially for fundraising and promotional purposes, to support the United Nations Youth Fund in partnership with youth organizations.

Youth, in general — defined by the United Nations as the age group between 15 and 24 years old — make up one-sixth of the world's population. The majority of these young men and women live in developing countries, and their numbers are expected to rise steeply well into the twenty-first century.

Subsequently, the first session of the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, hosted by the Government of Portugal in cooperation with the United Nations in Lisbon, on 8-12 August 1998, adopted a resolution proclaiming **12 August as International Youth Day**. At its fifty-fourth session, the General Assembly, in its resolution **A/RES/54/120** entitled "*Policies and programs involving youth*" (17 December 1999) endorsed the recommendation made by the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth (Lisbon, 8-12 August 1998) that 12 August be declared

International Youth Day.

On this first International Youth Day, attention should be focused on the World Program of Action and how it can be best implemented for, by and with youth. It also should be recognized that young people cannot effectively deal with the impact of globalisation on their lives by remaining passive and silent. New partnerships are needed at all levels, between youth, between youth and Governments, and between youth and the United Nations. International Youth Day is an opportunity to review such partnerships and strengthen them. And as Secretary-General urges in his International Youth Day message "Let us resolve to consolidate our partnerships with youth on every front." Young people understood that, to deal effectively with the impact of globalization on their lives, they must start preparing for the future now and not wait for governments to tell them what to do. At the national level, Mr. Kofi Annan encourages governments that have not already done so, to formulate and adopt integrated national policies that address youth concerns; and to support the creation of national youth partnership bodies, so youth policy can be implemented through youth action.

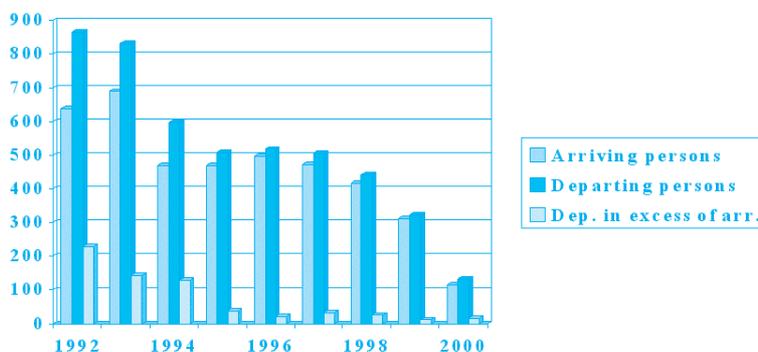
See press releases on

<http://www.undpi.am/releases>



## BORDER MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

IOM, in cooperation with the Ministry of National Security, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, organised an expert's assessment of visa and entry/exit processes in Armenia with a view to provide recommendations for the facilitation of bonafide travellers and the prevention of illegal migration. The assessment team



visited Zvartnots airport and Bagratashen and Meghri land borders. It also met officials from the concerned government ministries and departments, airlines and embassies and international organisations. A report will be submitted to the government in September and IOM will assist the government in implementation of the recommendations.

In 1996 UNHCR, IOM and OSCE convened the CIS Conference (CISCONF) to address the problems of forced migrants and refugees in the CIS and neighbouring states. The conference drew senior representatives of governments, international organisations and NGOs. The final product was a five year Programme of Action that became the framework within which to address the wide-ranging and complex migration problems emerging with the break-up of the Soviet Union. Through the CISCONF Programme of Action, international organisations and governments have emphasised the importance of the development of durable solutions for population displacement and related migration problems, and recognised as well the essential role of national NGOs in achieving these solutions.

In July 2000 the fifth and final Steering Group Meeting (SGM) of the CISCONF follow-up was held in Geneva. A Statement was made by IOM at the SGM and preceding NGO meeting. IOM's Director General, Brunson McKinley, chaired the final day of the SGM. The meeting while recognising that the Conference process has considerably advanced a number of issues identified in the Programme of Action and met its essential objectives noted that work remains to be done. As a result a modified follow-up process is to continue via Expert Working Groups in four thematic issues, supported and facilitated by a lead agency. The four themes are: assuring continued focus on groups of concern; migration management; sustaining the achievements of the NGO sector and civil society; and implementing legislation.

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING FOR BORDER PERSONNEL

Twelve men and women, working for the border guards and passports and visas department at Zvartnots and Erebuni airports in Yerevan and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs consular department, completed a twelve week beginners English language course organised by IOM. The curriculum developed by IOM for the purpose is based on the functional needs of the border personnel. The training was carried out by a native English speaker and experienced teacher of English as a foreign language.

### AGREEMENT ON SELF-RELIANCE AND INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES

As a continuation of its successful collaboration in 1999, resulting in the self-employment and employment of over 100 families (most of them refugees), the IOM executed micro-enterprise development project has received financial support from UNHCR for 2000. This will enable the project to provide business management training, advice and funding that will assist a further 150 refugee and low income families in Yerevan and Vanadzor.

## IOM DIRECTOR GENERAL TO VISIT ARMENIA

IOM's Director General, Brunson McKinley, on the invitation of the government of Armenia, is to visit Armenia in the week beginning October 22nd. This will provide an opportunity to discuss issues of mutual interest to both Armenia and IOM and for the Director General to learn first-hand of migration related issues in Armenia. This is the first visit of an IOM Director General to the country. Armenia is a member state of IOM.

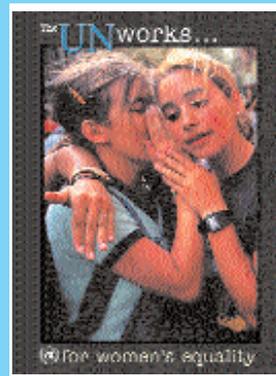
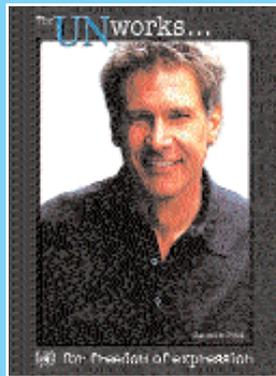
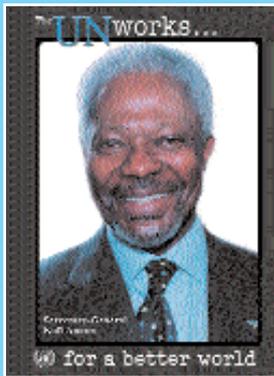
## HANDLING THE COMPENSATION CLAIMS OF FORMER FORCED LABOURERS

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has been designated by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany to be a partner organisation of the Federal Foundation handling claims and paying compensation to former forced labourers under the Nazi regime.

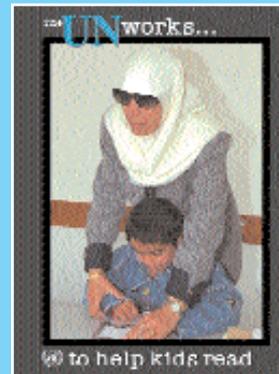
IOM will be in charge of claims covering the so-called "rest of the world" category. This category comprises the non-Jewish victims living anywhere in the world except of Poland, Russia, the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Belarus, Estonia,

Latvia, Lithuania and the other former republics of the USSR. These states will be covered by other partner organisations, such as Reconciliation Foundations and the Jewish Claims Conference. For claimants residing in Armenia, the partner organisation is not IOM, but the partner organisation in the country from where the forced labourer was deported. Prisoners of war are not eligible unless the person was transferred to a concentration camp where he underwent forced labour.

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