



In & Around the UN

An Update from the Quaker United Nations Office

December 2012

Advocating for the Role of Peace in Development

In 2011, net Official Development Assistance (ODA) was \$133.5 billion, according to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. Over the last decade, much of this aid has been directed in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), eight guiding principles that spanned topics such as education and child mortality. With the MDGs set to expire in 2015, the world is now focused on the development framework that will replace them, as we described in our last newsletter (“What will replace the Millennium Development Goals?” In and Around the UN, September 2012). With this much money at stake, lobbyists and advocates for particular approaches and constituencies are out in force. In the midst of this, the basic challenge remains – how can we make



Stakeholders discuss the post 2015 agenda.
© Paul Okumu

So this now becomes a critical concern for the development community, as not a single MDG has been achieved in any low income fragile or conflict-affected country. Radical changes need to take place, and peacebuilding practitioners, long used to working in these environments, have a great deal to contribute to the discussion.

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sure that the needs of the poorest of the poor are heard, and that the new framework moves us towards a more just and peaceful world?

Part of the challenge is that the context of poverty is shifting. According to projections by the Brookings Institute, by 2015 more than 60% of the world’s poorest people will be living in fragile and conflict affected countries, and most of the rest will be located in areas of middle income countries affected by similar problems. Over the last 15 years, since the MDGs were put in place, the challenges of fragility and violence have moved from being an important but minority concern to being at the heart of the development agenda.

The high-level events around the opening of the 67th General Assembly Session in mid-September presented several opportunities for QUNO to engage on these issues. On September 24th, QUNO co-hosted with the Alliance for Peacebuilding, Saferworld and Cordaid a lunch at Quaker House entitled “Mainstreaming Peacebuilding and Prevention in the Post-2015 Agenda.” Speakers included the sponsoring organizations, four representatives from local civil society (from Liberia, Togo, South Sudan and Kenya), three officials from fragile and conflict affected countries (Timor Leste, Afghanistan and

(continued on page 3)

Letter from the Director	2
Update from QUNO Geneva	2
Crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo	3
Palestine Becomes a “Non-Member Observer State”	4
New Perspectives on Somalia	5

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Letter from the Director

Dear Friends:

As 2012 draws to a close, we are deeply concerned by the ongoing civil war in Syria, renewed fighting in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the deteriorating situation in Mali. Complicating the international response to these and other crises is continuing friction between UN member states. Disagreements over the approach to the Libyan situation last year continue to reverberate, with implications for the international community's ability to intervene, or even respond, to large-scale violence. And in other arenas, such as climate change and global economic management, member

states remain deeply divided.

Nevertheless, 2012 has also seen some signs of hope and change. In Somalia, a new government has provided the best opportunity for peace that we have seen in several years. In the Middle East, a Palestinian bid for changed standing at the UN has shaken up the status quo and may open up some new ways forward.

You will find articles on a number of these situations in this newsletter. In addition, we continue to work on finding ways to ensure that the needs of the poorest of the poor, who are increasingly to be found in fragile and conflict-affected states, are addressed in the development framework that will replace the Mil-

lennium Development Goals.

Closer to home, the visit of Hurricane Sandy in October laid bare the vulnerability of our urban society to natural hazards and the impact of a changing climate: many of our friends and neighbors went without power and services for weeks. As is often the case, the effects were felt hardest by the poor and the elderly, and our prayers go out to those still suffering the effects of the storm.

As we approach the end of another year of Quaker work at the UN, thank you for your continuing support and encouragement.

In friendship,

Andrew Tomlinson

Update from the Geneva Office

This October, for the first time in many years, QUNO was represented at the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome. Intellectual property issues continue to be a missing part of the CFS' work, making efforts of groups such as QUNO, which are seeking to link discussions of intellectual property in agriculture to food security, even more important.

In our work on Human Rights, the EU-funded research project on the mental health of children of prisoners (COPING) is coming to a conclusion and QUNO participated in the final conference event in Brussels where preliminary recommendations emerging from the research were made. Recommendations include that

visits be seen as the right of the child rather than privilege of the prisoner and that governments help schools recognize and respond to the needs of children of prisoners.

In September, we organized a consultation with peacebuilding, armed violence, and development experts from Geneva to contribute to identify-

ing targets and indicators for a proposed goal on peace and security to be included in the post-2015 development framework. Later that month, QUNO hosted representatives of the Life and Peace Institute Nairobi for a series of off-the-record meetings with diplomats and NGOs on alternative approaches to peacebuilding in Somalia. ❖



Rachel Brett from QUNO at the final conference for the COPING research project. (Source: Rebecca Cheung)

Crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo

On November 15, fighting between the M23 rebel group and the Congolese army broke out in the Democratic Republic of Congo, ending a three-month ceasefire. The following weeks brought an escalation of violence, the worst Congo has seen in years, causing a rising death toll, massive displacement, and serious human rights abuses.

The UN's current peacekeeping mission, MONUSCO, is tasked with a dual mandate of stabilization and protection of civilians. However, its reliance on a military approach to the problems of the Congo has seen few successes. In light of this reality, many analysts are advocating for the UN to increase its support for political engagement and dialogue, as well as for greater accountability and an end to impunity.

QUNO has been closely monitoring the deteriorating situation in Congo with great concern. The country has long been a priority case within our work on peacebuilding



Members of the rebel group known as M23 withdraw, on board a truck, from the North Kivu provincial capital of Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). © UN Photo/Sylvain Liechti

and prevention of violent conflict. In collaboration with NGO partners, QUNO has hosted a number of recent opportunities for UN colleagues to gather at Quaker House to discuss the current situation. The aim of these meetings has been to raise awareness, share expertise, and

consider possible options in terms of responses to the dire situation on the ground by the international community. We will continue to look for opportunities to bring policy makers, experts, and practitioners together around these pressing challenges. ❖

Peace in Development (continued from page 1)

Liberia), the Peacebuilding Support Office and USAID. Attendees came from a broad spectrum of member states, civil society and UN officials. The meeting served to launch a statement from more than 60 peacebuilding organizations entitled "Bringing peace into the post-2015 development framework: A joint statement by civil society organisations". Delegation members also had official speaking roles at a number of other high level events during the week, and Quaker House served as their home base, a place to strategize and to reflect. ❖

Looking for Interns for 2013-2014

The Quaker United Nations Office – New York invites applications for its 2013-14 internship program. The internship offers an opportunity for college graduates, with an interest in international affairs and a commitment to Friends' principles, to work at the UN. Currently, QUNO-NY focuses on issues of peacebuilding and prevention of violent conflict. Interns work closely with permanent staff on one or more issue areas and support office administration. Stipend and medical coverage provided. Further information and applications are available online (www.quno.org). Deadline for submission of applications and references: February 8th, 2013.



Current PAs Olivia Ensign and Amelia Breeze, front, and former PA Kirsten Mandala, back.
Credit: Doug Hostetter

Palestine Becomes a “Non-Member Observer State”



PA delegation celebrates successful bid for upgraded status.
Source: UN Photo/Rick Bajornas

Over the past two years, QUNO has closely monitored efforts by the Palestinian Authority (PA) to upgrade its status at the United Nations. Palestine is already recognized as a state by 132 of the 193 member states of the UN (161 recognize the State of Israel), but the road to formal recognition has been a long one. Last year, the PA's application for full member status was stalled in the Security Council through the efforts of Israel and the United States. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization vote last October to admit Palestine as a member was followed by punitive retaliation from the US, cutting off all funding for the agency. Finally this year, on November 29th, a resolution was adopted in the General Assembly granting the Palestinian Authority an upgrade in their official status, from a “non-member observer entity” to a “non-member observer state.”

This is a relatively minor change,

but one that has several potentially significant ramifications. This is a status that historically has been a stepping stone to full membership. Switzerland, for example, was a non-member observer state for 56 years, until 2002. It is also possible that certain international bodies and organizations may view Palestine differently now. For example, some have argued that the PA will now have improved access to the International Criminal Court (ICC), and could apply for membership. Thus far, the ICC has refrained from ruling on the case brought by the PA, alleging that Israel committed war crimes during the Gaza 2009 offensive, on the basis that it did not have the jurisdiction.

QUNO continues to track UN developments on Palestinian issues and provide background for our constituents and for people on the ground through updates of the Palestinian Statehood Resource, available on our [web site](#). ❖

How to Support QUNO

QUNO welcomes donations to help cover the cost of its work. We are happy to accept contributions towards two areas of our work:

The Fund for Quaker House: the endowment supports the maintenance and operation of Quaker House.

QUNO Operating and Program Expenses: contributions can be made toward the cost of our annual budget.

Please make your check payable to “QUNO.” If you'd like your gift to go towards Quaker House, please write “Quaker House” in the memo portion of the check. For credit card gifts, call toll free 1-888-588-2372 ext. 1, or click the [“Donations” button](#) on our web site and follow the instructions provided.

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New Perspectives on Somalia

In Early September, following a UN-supported political transition process, a newly appointed parliament and president were sworn into power in Somalia. This is arguably the closest Somalia has come to having a homegrown government in almost two decades and many Somali experts are cautiously optimistic about the new government and its relatively peaceful transition into power.

However, the situation in Somalia remains fragile. The Security Council decided in November to extend the mandate of the African Union peace-keeping mission, a military force made up of regional troops tasked to install stability in Somalia, for a further four months. Its troops continue to clash with Al Shabaab fighters, a Somali rebel group linked to Al Qaeda, in South Central Somalia.

As part of its work to present new perspectives, QUNO hosted a book launch during the opening weeks of the new

General Assembly session with Mary Harper, Africa Editor at the BBC World Service and author of *Getting*

Somalia Wrong: Faith, War and Hope in a Shattered State. For the event we were also joined by Dr. Ken Menkhaus, Professor of Political Science at Davidson



Mary Harper and Professor Ken Menkhaus discuss Somalia.
(Source:Amelia Breeze)

College and a specialist on Somalia and the Horn of Africa. Ms. Harper spoke

of how the international community and the media were getting Somalia wrong by treating it as a failed state and engaging with it only through the narrow themes of terrorism and piracy. She sees Somalia differently, describing it as a resilient

and dynamic state that has organically developed local-level governance structures amongst the chaos that the international media chooses to report.

Both she and Professor Menkhaus argued that the international community needs to change the way it views and operates in Somalia, and they pointed towards examples such as the northern region of Somaliland that has managed to establish a genuine multiparty democracy.

QUNO was glad for the chance to host this interesting and timely discussion at Quaker House. As the process of transition unfolds we continue to follow the situation in Somalia, looking out for opportunities where we can further encourage supportive and informed engagement by the international community that will help Somalis build sustained peace for the years to come. ❖