

Geneva Reporter

Quaker United Nations Office - Geneva

About the year-in-review issue

Often times, it is difficult to see the wider impact of the small contributions we make. Quaker peacemaker Adam Curle said 'We never know what ripples spread from what seems the smallest action. Only let us be led by the Spirit and we will vanquish the philosophy of death.' In this issue of the *Geneva Reporter*, QUNO staff reflect on our activities in 2010 and analyse how our work has contributed to progress at the UN and further afield. On **Page 2**, the Global Economic Issues (GEI) programme reflects on issues of climate change, food & sustainability and QUNO's work with UPOV. Human Rights and Refugees (HR&R) explores QUNO's contribution on a number of significant achievements among UN and EU institutions on **Page 3**. Below, the Disarmament and Peace (D&P) programme outlines our work with the Geneva Declaration, Geneva Forum and the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform. We hope that our work in 2010 has made many ripples and look forward to creating some more in 2011.

From Policy-makers to Practitioners: D&P 2010

Real progress on reducing the threat or reality of armed violence — while building effective methods and enhancing behaviours that take us towards greater real security for peoples — is often hard to measure. This certainly must be a multi-faceted and long-term struggle. QUNO seeks to recognize this through the three principal and inter-related strands of its Disarmament & Peace programme.

If sheer time spent on arms control and disarmament concerns were a sign of real progress in demilitarising the world, 2010 should have been a banner year. Yet for all the efforts made, one would be hard pressed to be able to show many indicators that the world was indeed a safer place at the end of 2010 than at the

beginning. However, one year is a short period of time to judge real progress. In 2010 QUNO contributed to ongoing disarmament processes on a variety of fronts. This was done largely through its Geneva Forum partnership, where disarmament machinery, the arms trade, biological weapons and other

issues featured in 2010 (see www.geneva-forum.org). As in years past, QUNO was much involved in small arms processes, in particular work with governments and other actors aimed at ensuring an effective 4th Biennial Meeting of States on small arms and light weapons.

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Geneva Declaration Civil Society Regional Conference in Nairobi in November 2010

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From Seeds to Sustainability: GEI 2010

2010 was the International Year of Biodiversity. It was also a year during which climate change negotiators valiantly continued efforts to reach international agreement on ways to reduce carbon emissions and deal with mitigation of and adaptation to, climate change. Food prices continued to rise, as did carbon emissions. In this context, the dual focuses of QUNO's economics work in 2010, on food & sustainability, and climate change & migration, seem fitting.

QUNO's work on food & sustainability has sought to bring evidence about issues such as food security, climate

change and low-input farming to agricultural trade negotiators. Through meetings with delegates and experts, we have sought to reframe the agriculture trade discussion to focus on ensuring long-term food security. This may hardly sound radical, but it is a far remove from negotiators' current concerns with agreeing mathematical formulae for calculating opening of markets, and promoting agricultural exports and imports. At the WTO's annual Public Forum, QUNO invited Christian Aid to present evidence of how small-scale and low-input farming has the potential to increase food production, reduce carbon emissions and sustain biological diversity.

QUNO also worked on the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), building on our earlier work on intellectual property and biological diversity. We commissioned a study on UPOV, examining the extent to which UPOV's rules and institutional structures facilitate examination of what – if any – kind of intellectual property protection is most suited to promote innovation and improvement of agricultural crops, while also maintaining biodiversity and recognition of traditional knowledge. The process of preparing this study – to be published in February 2011 – has already raised awareness about UPOV among

delegates in Geneva, which contributed to the landmark decision, in October 2010, to admit not-for-profit NGOs as UPOV observers for the first time.

QUNO is concerned with the human impacts of climate change and environmental degradation, and in 2010 we deepened our exploration of climate

change & migration. This issue will increase in importance as people move in response to environmental changes, but policy makers and civil society alike are still unsure of how to respond to it. During 2010 we entered into collaboration with the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) and are working towards convening a gathering of

faith community

representatives on climate change and migration in Geneva in late 2011. In preparation for this we are encouraging representatives of faith groups to articulate their 'theology of the stranger.' We are also seeking personal narratives of climate change and migration, as input into the faith leaders' gathering and to inform international policy discussions relating to climate change and migration.

To read more about GEI activities in 2010, please visit our website at www.quano.org/economicissues/default.htm



The future in her hands: Planting fruit trees for food and the environment

QUNO Summer School 2011

QUNO's annual Summer School provides an introduction to the work of the United Nations, as seen through the programmes of QUNO. Taking place this year from **3rd-15th July 2011**, the summer school is an excellent opportunity to learn more about international affairs while meeting peers from across the globe.

Further information and application forms are available at www.quaker.org.uk/geneva-summer-school-2011 **The deadline for applications is 14th March 2011.**



From Prisons to Protection: HR&R 2010

From new standards on women prisoners to groundbreaking decisions on conscientious objection, 2010 was a year in which the UN took significant strides in protecting oft-forgotten segments of society. QUNO played a quiet but influential role in ensuring such progress.

Since 2004, QUNO has highlighted the needs of women prisoners and offenders. Women have different offending patterns, socioeconomic positions and family relationships from men and prison regulations frequently ignore their situation. However, in December 2010 the UN General Assembly adopted new UN Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders, to be known as the Bangkok Rules because of the leading role of the Thai Government in their initiation and development. QUNO was involved in the drafting and development of the text for the Bangkok Rules and has undertaken research, publications and advocacy in both the human rights bodies in Geneva and the criminal justice bodies in Vienna. We are delighted with this result, and look forward to working with others to publicise these new Rules and getting them applied in practice.

Growing out of QUNO's work on women prisoners came our work on children of prisoners. This includes both those babies and young children who may be in prison with their mother (rarely are fathers allowed to have children in prison with them), and those

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children left outside while their mother or father (or both) are in prison. The major step forward in 2010 was the decision of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child to devote its 2011 Day of General Discussion to this issue. This is evidence of a significant step forward in getting real attention, and a child rights approach, to the situation of these

children. During 2010, QUNO was also engaged in the three-year EU-funded research project on Children of Prisoners, Interventions and Mitigations to Strengthen Mental Health (COPING), together with partners in Germany, Romania, Sweden, France and the UK. The results of this research will not only provide input to the Committee's Discussion Day but also QUNO's future work on this issue at the UN.



Djiniyini Gondarra and Rosalie Kunoth-Monks in Geneva for the UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)

At the request of Australian Quakers, QUNO facilitated and supported two Aboriginal Elders from the Australian Northern Territories in presenting the situation and concerns of their communities to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. That Committee heard and responded to them, making strong and specific recommendations to the Australian Government.

The European Court of Human Rights is poised to decide whether conscientious objection to military service is protected under the European Human Rights Convention. To date, it has lagged behind the UN in this respect, and building on the case law of the UN Human Rights Committee under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, QUNO and four other organisations prepared and submitted an amicus curiae brief to the Grand Chamber of the European Court. The hearing took place in November, and we await the final decision. Meanwhile, the Human Rights Committee in 2010 decided unanimously that failure to provide for conscientious objectors to military service on various religions and non-religious grounds was an infringement of their conscience and a violation of the Covenant's article 18 on the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, a decision that reaffirms and strengthens their earlier case law on the issue.

To read more about HR&R activities in 2010, please visit our website at www.quno.org/humanrights/default.htm



From Policy-makers to Practitioners: D&P 2010

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A related feature of QUNO's work in 2010 concerned its ongoing engagement with the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development (see www.genevadeclaration.org). This included active participation at the World Urban Forum in March in Rio de Janeiro, efforts to enhance attention to the issue of armed violence as part of the Millennium Development Goals review process in 2010, and the organisation and coordination of regional workshops in Latin America and Eastern Africa for civil society organisations actively engaged in actual armed violence reduction programmes. The relationship between armed violence and development has not proven as obvious in policy practice as it seems in theory. This is an area of work still at its early stages, but for QUNO it is the right place for us to be engaged.

The third dimension of the programme in 2010

involved QUNO's continuing work on peacebuilding questions. While the world continues to be a very unpeaceful place, there is clearly a greater understanding of the factors required to enhance peace prospects, and policies and mechanisms are being developed to match. QUNO's involvement in this work in 2010 was realised for the most part through its work as a partner in the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform (see www.gcsp.ch/Conflict-and-Peacebuilding/The-Geneva-Peacebuilding-Platform-GPP). Among the range of initiatives undertaken by the Platform in 2010 were Geneva-based consultations contributing to the five-year review of the UN Peacebuilding Commission.

No disarmament and peace issues disappeared from the international agenda in 2010. The challenges remain. QUNO will continue to be involved in trying to meet them.

Update from QUNO New York

'QUNO NY will have finished its work when the UN fully carries out its responsibility to build peace and to prevent violent conflict.'

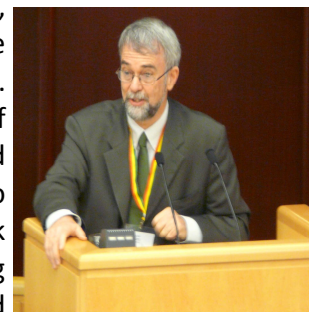
So begins the mission statement on our new strategic plan. 2010 was the first full year under that plan and there is no sign that we're going to put ourselves out of work any time soon! The first element of the plan is a core focus on Peacebuilding and the Prevention of Violent Conflict: the 'prevention' and 'peacebuilding' discussions are largely separate ones at the UN, involving different structures and processes. Yet, from a thematic perspective, there is considerable complementarity between the two and our key themes (peace being based in relationships, the importance of restorative processes and reconciliation, the significant role played by non-government actors, the need to link up prevention, peace-making and peacebuilding, etc.) are indeed cross-cutting. The second is an emphasis on UN structures, processes and norms: this approach of focusing on longer term themes rather than getting stuck in 'crisis chasing' has really helped us plan and implement programs on a more sustainable, long-

term basis.

The results have been encouraging. For example, QUNO was frequently invited to provide input to UN discussions on Peacebuilding during the course of the year, and a fact-finding exercise around the Prevention program demonstrated that diplomats and UN staffers felt that QUNO was focusing on the right issues and was filling a real need. We go into 2011 with fresh energy and a renewed sense of purpose.

Staff Update

Jonathan Woolley will take up the post of Director for QUNO Geneva in June 2011, when David Atwood, the present Director, retires. Jonathan is a member of Britain Yearly meeting and currently an elder at Mexico City Meeting. We look forward to Jonathan joining the team here at QUNO and wish him well.



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