



# In & Around the UN

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## Continuing Challenges in Iraq

Iraqis and the international community are working hard to bring peace to Iraq, yet formidable challenges remain. On the ground, the US-led Multinational Force-Iraq (MNF-I), Iraqi army, Sunni and Shia militias, and private security contractors struggle to assert control, and the country lacks basic rule of law. The government remains deeply divided and struggles to provide basic services. Iraqi refugees are the third-largest refugee population in the world, likely numbering more than 2 million, while another 2 million people are displaced inside the country. There are great needs for food and shelter among the internally displaced and what humanitarian assistance is reaching the population is often politicized. Many agree that a national reconciliation process is desperately needed, but carrying out

such a process seems daunting.

In this difficult context, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1770 in August 2007. This resolution expanded the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), mandated to support efforts at national reconciliation in the country, and to provide humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations.

While striving to expand its role, the UN faces significant practical challenges. For one thing, its presence in the country must contend with a legacy that includes a harsh sanctions regime, the Oil-for-Food scandal, a difficult battle over authorization of the American-led invasion, and the bombing of the UN office in Baghdad. Some of these events have damaged

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## Postcard from China

By Andrew Tomlinson

“How have I managed to make it to ripe middle age knowing so little about the history and culture of a quarter of the world’s population?” This was the question that hit me half way through my trip to China in April. We were in Xi’an, which in 900 AD was the largest city in the world, strategically placed at the end of the silk road, and now is a bustling, commercial metropolis of some six million people. As everywhere in China, every block was a construction site. We were being welcomed to the city at a banquet and I was sitting next to a representative of the provincial foreign affairs office. His English was good so I was able to learn that almost every one of the Fortune 500, the world’s largest corporations, had some kind of operation in Xi’an. He spent most of his time welcoming commercial delegations from all over the world looking to develop or expand business in the area. A high level of commercialism and technology—and yet, the day before we had driven by farmers preparing for planting, walking behind ploughs drawn by skinny cattle.



US Peace Delegation on the Great Wall of China © Andrew Tomlinson

At short notice I had joined a delegation of US peace activists to China, led by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). There were representatives from the Friends Committee for National Legislation (FCNL) and Peace Action and Progressive Democrats of America, as well as AFSC staff from

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## Democratic Republic of the Congo: Persistence Needed

In January 2008 the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) took a step toward peace with the signing of the Goma Peace Accords. The agreement is aimed at bringing peace to the war-torn eastern part of the country and was signed by local, regional, and international actors, including government, militias, regional bodies, religious leaders, and international actors.

Although the civil war in the DRC officially ended in 2002, insecurity has persisted with renewed hostilities flaring in 2006 and again in 2007 producing 900,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) within eastern DRC since December 2006.<sup>1</sup> The new Goma Peace Accords require continued engagement with the peace process, something lacking in the previous Lusaka and Sun City peace agreements. Militia representatives have agreed to work with the government to implement the agenda of peace, disarmament, and military reform outlined in the accords. While the agreement represents a positive step for the DRC, Alan Doss, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General in the DRC, also warned that “Peace agreements do not make peace, they only set us on the road.”<sup>2</sup> Diligence and continued involvement by the government of the DRC, militias, regional actors, and the international community, will be needed to move forward on the path to peace in the eastern DRC.

Continuing down this path is of

utmost urgency as the people of the DRC have suffered greatly through years of violence and now live in the midst of a catastrophic humanitarian disaster. It is estimated that 5.4 million people have died in the DRC since 1998 and the International



MONUC Delegation Arrives in Goma for Peace Conference: Alan Doss (right), Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Head of the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) confers with Babacar Gaye (left), MONUC Force Commander; as Ross Mountain (center), Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General looks on upon arrival in Goma for the Peace Conference.  
© UN Photo/Marie Frechon

Rescue Committee estimates that 45,000 more are dying each month.<sup>3</sup> Although only a portion of civilian deaths are due to direct violence, preventable conditions such as illness and lack of access to clean water kill tens of thousands each month. Continued insecurity creates an environment in which it is impossible for families to cultivate their fields, medical supplies to reach populations, and local and international organizations to provide consistent programming. Without progress toward stability, delivery of services to prevent disease and development of secure livelihoods to produce basic food necessities will not be possible. In this context, the commitment of the government, militias, regional actors and the international community to build lasting peace and

stability for the people of eastern DRC is essential.

The peace accords require the continued engagement of the signing groups through the creation of commissions—a set of integrated committees to address peace and security in the region. These commissions, known as the “Amani programme,” will look at the reform of the military and police, disarmament of combatants, as well as development and humanitarian issues. In order to stabilize the situation, militias will need to disarm and reintegrate into society. In addition, the government will have to reform the military by providing training including lessons in international humanitarian law and build local police forces and judicial systems. The 15,000-person strong UN force in the region, MONUC, will continue to monitor the ceasefire while helping to push the peace process and the work of the commissions forward.

The safe return of displaced persons and refugees will also be a priority for any durable peace. Over one million people need to be able to return to their homes without fear of renewed violence. In order for this return to take place, disbanded militias and government forces must demonstrate a true commitment to peace. In addition, the government of the DRC and the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) will need to employ a great degree of ethnic sensitivity as they support people returning home or resettling in new areas.

The DRC is on the path to peace but it is an uncharted course. Continued engagement by the international community, the government of the DRC, regional governments,

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## Congo

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and former rebel militias will be necessary for the DRC to achieve lasting peace. QUNO will continue to look for opportunities to support work in New York that engages the UN system and governments and centers on the peaceful rebuilding of the lives of people in the Eastern Congo. ❖

<sup>1</sup> UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates 22 April 2008.

<sup>2</sup> "A Briefing on the Congo by SRSF Alan Doss," Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, D.C., 18 April 2008.

<sup>3</sup> For further information on the report please go to: <http://www.theirc.org/special-report/congo-forgotten-crisis.html>



Congolese Women Rejoice after Signing of Peace Accord in Goma: Women representatives of local civil society rejoice at the signing of the peace accord between rebel movements and the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to end fighting in the east of the country.

© UN Photo/Marie Frechon

## UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

By Jennifer Preston

April 21 – May 2, 2008 marked the 7th session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII) at UN Headquarters in New York with the theme of "Climate change, bio-cultural diversity and livelihoods: the stewardship role of indigenous peoples and new challenges."

More than 3,000 delegates registered, including indigenous peoples' representatives, governments, UN agencies and NGOs. Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC), who carries the indigenous peoples' rights mandate for Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), sent a team of observers—Jennifer Preston, Monica Walters-Field, Linda Kreitzer and Steve Brechtel. As in the past, QUNO supported the work through the New York office.

The PFII is an advisory body to the Economic and Social Council, with a mandate to discuss Indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education,

health and human rights. This was the first session since the historic General Assembly adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Many states and UN agencies, in addition to



President of Bolivia Addresses Indigenous Forum on Climate Change: Evo Morales, President of Bolivia, addresses the opening ceremony of the seventh session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on the role the indigenous peoples may play in combating climate change.

© UN Photo/Paulo Filgueiras

indigenous representatives, gave information to the PFII regarding early initiatives to implement the Declaration.

This year was particularly notable as President Evo Morales formally opened the Forum—the first time a Head of State has done so. During the two week period there were dozens of side events on many of the topics discussed in the plenary. It was very encouraging to see the depth of engagement from all participants. The interaction of the UN agencies was impressive—and highlighted the mandate of the PFII to ensure that indigenous peoples' issues be mainstreamed throughout the UN system.

As always, the PFII was a whirlwind of meetings, dialogue, networking and sharing. Jennifer Preston represented Friends at a small meeting at Quaker House with a delegation of the European Parliament. The purpose of the meeting was to share information with the parliamentarians on NGO engagement with indigenous peoples.

For more information on the PFII, see [www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/) ❖

## Cautious Optimism in the UN Peacebuilding Commission

This June will mark the end of the second session of the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), a body of 31 member states tasked with helping countries emerging from conflict avoid a return to violence. Over the past two years, the PBC has worked with Burundi, Sierra Leone and now Guinea-Bissau to identify the make-or-break issues for helping those countries consolidate peace. These peacebuilding priorities have included issues like improving government institutions, youth employment, and providing more reliable electric power, among others. The PBC is above all a forum for the government of the country, donor countries, the World Bank and IMF, and civil society organizations to come together to coordinate their activities and renew their commitments to peace.

The PBC has shown itself to be an innovative and unique body. It brings together players from all corners of the UN, including big contributors of money and peace-keeping troops, ECOSOC, the Security Council and the General Assembly. Thus, the PBC can sometimes transcend the power struggles that affect other UN bodies.

As a result of this flexible format and consultative approach, discussions that might not have traditionally been considered “peacebuilding” issues have been recast in that light. For example, in discussions on Sierra Leone, the government argued that the energy sector was a key factor in helping consolidate peace—if there is not enough electricity for economic development to take place, people would not have means to support themselves and might consider turning to violence. Before the PBC took up this issue, donors were unwilling to consider it in conversations about peace; the PBC successfully gave it greater prominence in discussions on Sierra Leone’s needs.

Despite these positive steps, the PBC remains somewhat dogged by its difficult first year, in which much time and energy was devoted to procedural issues rather than substantive activities. Through the hard work of PBC members and other stakeholders, the mood in the PBC and elsewhere in the UN system is shifting to cautious optimism, and its full potential is beginning to be realized.

QUNO, drawing on a long history of Quaker peacebuilding activities, has followed the PBC closely since its inception. QUNO’s efforts in New York have aimed to help the PBC become a more effective body that engages with all important actors. To these ends, QUNO has been holding a series of informal dialogues on important issues before the PBC, bringing together representatives from UN member states, UN agencies, and non-governmental organizations. Topics have included restorative justice, dialogue and reconciliation, and land tenure. Through these dialogues, we hope to enrich the work by building stronger connections between PBC stakeholders, sharing important expertise, and creating space for discussion of difficult issues.

QUNO also works with the American Friends Service Committee, the African Great Lakes Initiative, and Quakers in Burundi to share information and analysis with PBC members on peacebuilding activities taking place in-country. In March, QUNO collaborated with



Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations and chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, addresses a March 26, 2008 Security Council meeting during the consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on the developments in Guinea-Bissau, and the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support in that country.  
© UN Photo/Devra Berkowitz

the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) to organize a briefing in Washington, D.C., to raise the profile of the PBC. QUNO also works to coordinate NGO activity in New York around the PBC, as NGOs work to find ways to come to grips with the new body.

Coordination with QUNO Geneva is also an important part of our work. Work is underway in Geneva to draw together peacebuilding expertise, and regular communication and coordination between the two offices informs the work on both sides. A day-long conference in Geneva evaluating the PBC is scheduled for mid-summer.

The coming months will be critical for the PBC. It must continue to prove its effectiveness on the ground in its focus countries and to streamline its work in New York as well. Civil society and other players need to continue to engage. While formidable challenges lie ahead for the PBC, QUNO will continue to support this body’s important and innovative work in helping consolidate peace. ❖

## Northern Uganda: Juba Peace Talks – So Close, Yet So Far

Over the past two years, the people of northern Uganda and the international community have watched progress, interruptions, resumptions and delays around the negotiation of the Juba peace process. Launched in July 2006, the peace process has brought the government of Uganda and representatives of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) together to negotiate a peaceful resolution to one of Africa's longest standing conflicts. The peace talks have been hosted and mediated by the government of Southern Sudan and have received support from the international community through the appointment of Joaquim Chissano, former President of Mozambique, as UN Special Envoy.

Since July 2006, the talks have focused on a five-point agenda that has included 1) cessation of hostilities, 2) comprehensive solutions to the war, 3) reconciliation and accountability, 4) formal ceasefire, and 5) disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. While parties arrived at a cessation of hostilities quickly in 2006, agreement on following agenda items took time, with talks at times being suspended. In May 2007, parties came to agreement on agenda item 2, including a proposed Peace, Reconstruction and Development Plan (PRDP). This was followed by agreement on the difficult issue of reconciliation and accountability with a proposal for an approach that would combine traditional justice mechanisms with trials and agreement that the government of Uganda would ask that International Criminal Court to drop arrest warrants for top LRA officials once a Final Peace Agreement was signed.

Negotiations over the past two years have given the people of north-

ern Uganda a tremendous source of hope. With an end to attacks and abductions and a growing sense of security, thousands of displaced persons have begun to return home. While major challenges remain on the ground in terms of needs around food security, education and health services, basic infrastructure, and employment, many have hoped that the Juba peace talks would produce the resolution and security needed to start rebuilding lives shattered by war.

However, the peace talks have also seen significant challenges. Many of these rose to the surface as parties to

**Negotiations over the past two years have given the people of northern Uganda a tremendous source of hope. With an end to attacks and abductions and a growing sense of security, thousands of displaced persons have begun to return home.**

the conflict, negotiators, and the international community tried repeatedly, over recent months, to reach a Final Peace Agreement.

Some of the greatest challenges have come in the area of communications: negotiators have had to rely on indirect communications with LRA leader, Joseph Kony. Secluded in the bush, information has been transmitted to and from Kony through a delegation of LRA negotiators. Over the course of the negotiations worrisome signs of divisions within the LRA leadership began to emerge. In addition, reports of abductions and attacks in neighbor-

ing countries seemed to indicate that LRA forces are operating outside of northern Uganda. Serious concerns now exist that the region may be facing the prospects of renewed attacks by splinter groups of LRA intent on terrorizing civilian populations across northern Uganda, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, southern Sudan, and the Central African Republic.

In April of this year, Kony refused to sign a Final Peace Agreement, claiming confusion regarding agenda item 3 on reconciliation and accountability. Some observers have expressed skepticism that it was ever

Kony's intention to sign. At the same time many community leaders have continued efforts to sustain the peace talks in hopes of achieving a final agreement. While some have pointed to what they see as a hopeless situation and advocated for a hard line approach including military attacks against Kony and the LRA, several attempts have been made to salvage the peace process and maintain dialogue. The Quaker UN Office and Quaker Peace and Social Witness joined over thirty other organizations in urging patience and support for ongoing efforts and emphasizing the importance of consolidating gains that have been reached through the negotiation process. (To see a copy of the letter visit

[www.resolveuganda.org/node/600](http://www.resolveuganda.org/node/600))

At the time of writing it is far from clear what the next steps in the process will be. QUNO and others will watch the situation closely in hopes of identifying openings that would help preserve gains reached through the talks and opportunities for bringing long-term peace to northern-Uganda and the region. ❖

## China

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Philadelphia, New England, Hawaii, Cambodia, and China. Over a two-week period, we went to Beijing, Yan'an, Xi'an, and Shanghai, hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Disarmament and Peace



This way to the Quakers? Sign in garden, Shanghai  
© Andrew Tomlinson

(CPAPD). British and American Quakers did humanitarian work in the 1940s in China, with the Friends' Ambulance Unit operating on both sides during the civil war, and this work of Quakers at the birth of the People's Republic of China was well remembered. The primary aim of the delegation was to listen and learn. We met academics, think-tanks, and government and party officials. We also gave presentations at a "Peace Forum" organized by our hosts.

There were a number of themes that came up repeatedly on the visit. The first was development. China has made great strides since the "opening up" of Deng Xiaoping, announced 30 years ago. China has 22% of the world's population and 8% of its arable land and the history of the country has been punctuated by periodic widespread famine. Attaining food security has been an impressive achievement. But per capita GDP is still very low, so there's a long way to go before development approaches Western levels.

A further idea we heard a lot about was harmony, in the context of societal stability. This notion has many different roots in China. Part of it is Confucian: Chinese civil servants for almost 2,000 years were trained in Confucian ideas, including the concept of the primacy of social order. This cultural preference has been reinforced

by a reaction to the turbulence of the twentieth century: colonialism, civil war and the chaos of the Cultural Revolution. One expression of this is a different set of priorities than in the West—collective rights ahead of individual rights, for example.

Another theme that cropped up in various guises was a strong sense of national identity—coupled with

an acute sensitivity to any appearance of outside interference in Chinese internal affairs. There is an emphasis given to continuity, a unified country existing within clear geographical borders, unified by race (over 95% of the population are Han Chinese), language and thousands of years of history and culture. Layered on to this is the sensitivity to foreign interference engendered by 100 years of Western colonial involvement, followed by the Japanese occupation. A number of times it was stated that China had never invaded another country, and that its military forces were configured for defense, not for attack.

These three factors, so evident to a visitor, also influence China's foreign policy. At the UN, China frequently aligns itself with the developing nations, with an agenda that emphasizes economic development and respect for sovereignty. In the developing world, and particularly in Africa, China is becoming an

increasingly important force, blending diplomacy and commerce in a potent mix.

There has always been a tension at the UN around the reality that, as a club of nation states, it is the rights and interests of nation states that will tend to be focused on most strongly, whereas the philosophical underpinnings of the institution (as expressed in the UN Charter and the Human Rights Charter) give weight to a variety of other factors, such as the rights of individuals and minorities. During this decade the balance has shifted a little in favor of human individual rights, as the reforms of Kofi Annan, including the adoption of concepts such as the Responsibility to Protect, moved up the UN agenda. Now it appears, with the growing power of China, that the terms of the debate may shift again.

It was to understand these dynamics better that I went to China. I



The Forbidden City, Beijing, in the spring rain  
© Andrew Tomlinson

returned with a finer appreciation of the roots of Chinese approaches to the world, but above all I was impressed by the friendliness and generosity of ordinary Chinese people. ❖

## Iraq (continued from page 1)

the way that Iraqis perceive the UN, while others have made the UN itself hesitant and cautious when operating inside the country. Most areas outside the US-secured Green Zone in Baghdad are extremely dangerous for international staff. Because of these security concerns, UN staff is mostly confined to the Green Zone. The UN must rely on those with greater access to the population to carry out delivery of goods and services. While many applaud the intentions and efforts of UNAMI, some non-governmental organizations argue that it must do more to make its presence felt by the people on the ground. There is also concern that UNAMI is perceived as too closely aligned with the American and multinational forces.

In addition to these difficulties surrounding UN operations in Iraq, the issue of the US-led Multinational Force-Iraq (MNF-I) comes before the UN Security Council on a regular basis. The Security Council authorized MNF-I operations in October 2003 following the US-led

invasion and requires quarterly reports that outline MNF-I activities and conditions on the ground. MNF-I reports offer an opportunity for Security Council members to voice concerns and exchange views on the security situation in Iraq and the operations of the MNF-I. In principle, these sessions give the Security Council some over-



Hamid Al-Bayati, Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations, addresses an April 28 Security Council meeting on the situation in his country.  
© UN Photo/Paulo Filgueiras

sight of MNF-I activities. In practice, few missions are overtly critical in an effort to preserve good relations within the Council.

The MNF-I mandate will expire in

December 2008 and it is not expected to be renewed. If the mandate is not renewed, the international community will lose any oversight (substantive or not) of the activities of the MNF-I. Some Iraqis, NGOs and others have suggested that the mandate should be renewed with provisions for troop drawdown enabling the UN to continue its monitoring role.

While the UN grapples with major challenges as it expands its engagement on the crisis, the situation facing Iraqis in-country and those who have sought refuge in neighboring countries is dire. In this context, QUNO has worked in New York to stimulate discussion on the humanitarian needs inside Iraq and in the region.

QUNO is heartened by the hard work that many are doing to bring peace to Iraq; yet we remain deeply concerned about the situation, and hopeful that the UN and

international community will be able to overcome the practical and political complications of the conflict in Iraq to support meaningfully efforts to achieve peace. ❖

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## Introducing Andrew Tomlinson, New QUNO Director



In February 2008, QUNO welcomed its new director, Andrew Tomlinson. With his dedication and energy, Andrew has invigorated the office, and is quickly finding his feet as the “Quaker Ambassador” to the UN.

Andrew brings to this position 20 years of experience in international finance with Salomon Smith Barney/Citigroup, NY and S.G. Warburg & Co., London & NY. His work has included projects in Mexico, the Far East, and Latin America. Most recently, Andrew founded and managed a socially responsible investment fund. He studied Archaeology and Anthropology at St. John's College, Cambridge, U.K., holds a Masters in Oriental Studies from the University of Pennsylvania, and has worked as an archaeologist in Europe, the Middle East, and India.

A Quaker for 25 years, Andrew is currently clerk of Chatham-Summit Monthly Quaker Meeting. He also has

Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) training. Andrew is eager to put his Quaker values into action in his new position at the Quaker UN Office.

In his busy first months, Andrew has worked to make connections with representatives of UN Missions, UN agencies and non-governmental organizations. He has hosted events at Quaker House, and recently participated in an AFSC-led peace delegation to China. In the coming months, Andrew will work to recruit new staff, and shape a strategic planning session to take place this July.

QUNO is delighted to welcome such an active and enthusiastic director as Andrew. ❖

## QUNO Out and About

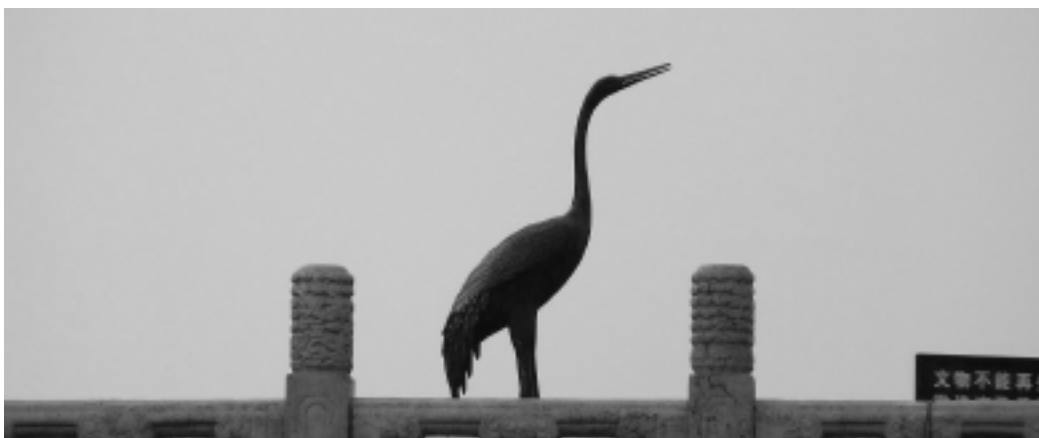
This spring QUNO staff have enjoyed a number of opportunities to visit with Friends around the U.S. and look forward to visits over the summer. Gathering with Friends reinvigorates our work and gives us the opportunity to share about the witness of Quakers at the UN.

We were pleased to attend the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) Section of the Americas annual meeting held in Indiana. Friends

expressed a particular interest in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and how it may draw on and connect to the experiences of Latin American Friends. In gatherings at the Quaker Hill Conference Center, QUNO explained its efforts to connect individual Friends' experiences, particularly those in central Africa to the UN system. QUNO also spoke with students at Earlham College about the international body and Quakers

engagement at the UN over time. The Young Adult Friends gathering in May, also in Indiana, gave QUNO the chance to lead a discussion about Quaker international service and the contribution of Young Adult Friends past and present.

QUNO staff look forward to greeting Friends at the Friends United Meeting Triennial in North Carolina in July and at New England Yearly Meeting in Rhode Island in August. ❖



Crane Statue in the  
Forbidden City,  
Beijing  
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