



# In & Around the UN

## An Update from the Quaker United Nations Office (New York)

June 2011

### Building Peace: From China to Africa and Back Again

In early April, the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) and the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) organized a two-week long educational exchange visit focused on China's role in peacekeeping and peacebuilding in Africa. While China has a growing role in UN peacekeeping operations around the world through its contribution of non-combat troops and medical teams, peacebuilding remains a relatively new concept. The purpose of the exchange visit was to bring China's leading scholars on Africa and the UN to countries where they could witness peacebuilding and peacekeeping activities in the field first-hand.

The six Chinese scholars who participated in the exchange came from various institutions, including the Chinese Academy for

Social Sciences (CASS), the China University of Political Science and Law, and the China Foundation for International and Strategic Studies (CFISS). The group traveled to Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Kenya. Meetings were held with government officials, civil society, UN staff, International NGOs, and African scholars. Staff from AFSC based in China, AFSC Burundi, AFSC Kenya (Regional Office), and QUNO NY facilitated the visit.

One positive outcome of the exchange visit was that the Chinese academics learned about the importance of civil society participation in peacebuilding activities in Africa. During a half-day workshop in Nairobi at the end of their visit, the Chinese academics were offered a chance to share their findings with African scholars. A scholar from CASS noted that prior to this trip she was not aware of the role that civil society played in peacebuilding, and suggested that China might provide support to such initiatives.

In Burundi, the group learned about how local civil society became engaged in monitoring the Peacebuilding Commission's strategic framework for peacebuilding. Now that this framework has come to an end, civil society is contribut-

ing to making the second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP II) for Burundi conflict sensitive. In a meeting with the Chinese scholars, Burundian civil society raised the need not only for their inclusion in producing the PRSP II but also in monitoring afterwards. In addition, several members of civil society high lighted the issues of land, transitional justice, and the reintegration of ex-combatants and returnees as particular

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AFSC and QUNO staff along with Chinese scholars pose for a picture with members of the Chinese peacekeeping engineering unit in Bukavu, DRC.

Photo/Zhou Anan

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## Letter from the Director

**D**ear Friends:  
QUNO's work continues to develop in some new and exciting directions. Our new representative, Camilla Campisi, is just back from a two-week trip to Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) with a group of senior Chinese academics from Beijing. This was a trip arranged jointly with the American Friends Service Committee, and was designed to show UN peacebuilding and peacekeeping in action on the ground, highlighting the role of local civil society. (See article, p. 1.)

More broadly, the last few months have seen remarkable developments in the study of violence, in the use of non-violent methods to achieve social change, and in the debate around violent or non-violent

response to international crises. At the same time, the UN has continued its steady focus on the work of accompanying conflict-affected countries as they struggle to build the foundations for sustainable peace.

On June 15th, David Atwood, Director of QUNO Geneva, is set to retire. Since my arrival three years ago, he has been consistently available to advise, encourage, and support me as I have gradually found my feet. It is hard to imagine doing this without him, and we will miss him dearly.

If it seems like it's been a long time since our last newsletter – that's because it has been! The cost of printing and mailing a physical newsletter has grown beyond the capacity of our budget to support more

than one a year. But we want to be able to keep you up to date more often than that. So starting in the Fall, we are planning to supplement our one physical newsletter with more frequent electronic newsletters. To make this work, we need your email address! The easiest way is to go to our website at [www.quno.org](http://www.quno.org) and sign up there. If you no longer want to receive a physical newsletter and only want to get the electronic ones, let us know that, too, by emailing to [qunony@afsc.org](mailto:qunony@afsc.org)

The effects of the financial crisis continue to be felt, and QUNO is still operating on a very tight budget. We greatly value all the support we get from individuals and organizations around the world.

*Andrew Tomlinson*

## Peacebuilding at the United Nations

**T**he concept of peacebuilding at the United Nations (UN) continues to evolve, especially as it relates to the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). There is growing attention on the space that the PBC occupies, including the nexus between peace, security and development. Through its peacebuilding program, QUNO is focused on monitoring and facilitating discussions around the PBC and peacebuilding in general at the UN.

The past year has been a particularly important one for the PBC. Its recent five-year review, adopted in October 2010 by the General Assembly and Security Council, has added a political momentum and urgency to peace building that *(continued on page 5)*



Andrew Tomlinson, QUNO Director, addresses roundtable participants at a workshop for new PBC members. Seated on the right is Ambassador Anne Anderson.

Photo/International Peace Institute

## Finding Hope for a Troubled World: Reflections from David Atwood, QUNO Geneva Director, on His Retirement

However pleasant the surrounds of the United Nations in New York and Geneva may be, there are certain occupational hazards for those working in such settings. Confronted as we are on a daily basis by shocking stories of human cruelty and the seeming inability of institutions to respond adequately to the realities that make up our planetary predicaments, cynicism and despair can easily become the norm.

As I take my leave after spending the last 16 years working for Quakers in our UN work, I have been reflecting on factors that have sustained me and have kept hope alive for me. One important element has been the remarkable people with whom I have been privileged to work over these years as we have sought together to find ways through. Seeing beyond the titles, roles, institutional definitions, stereotypes, and other barriers allows understanding, comradeship, solidarity, and vision of the possible to flourish. A particular dimension for me has been the many times when I have been honored to work with and be inspired by incredible individuals struggling right at the cold face of armed violence.

Having a perspective lasting a good number of years also can give one evidence that the human determination to improve things is



David Atwood addresses participants in the "Creating a Community of Practice on Armed Violence and Development (AV&D) in East Africa" conference for civil society organizations in Nairobi, 2-3 NOV 2010. This meeting was co-sponsored by QUNO-Geneva, the Danish Demining Group, PeaceNet (Kenya), and the Africa Peace Forum.

Photo/Grace Mbula

alive and well. Progress is possible. Years of struggle are rewarded. Two hope-giving examples for me have been the Antipersonnel Landmine Convention, mother to so many other forces for change over the last decade, and the permanent engage-

**No matter how formidable the structures and obstacles may seem, it is possible to make a difference.**

ment with the understanding and institutionalization of processes that make for sustainable peace that is at the very heart of the UN system in this decade.

This work has also taught me that size doesn't necessarily matter. No matter how formidable the structures and obstacles may seem, it is possible to make a difference. Listening

and finding one's niche, along with respect and doing one's homework, can mean that it is possible to get heard, to grease the wheels of change, and to see positive change happen.

I have also found hope-giving inspiration in the words of many individuals over the years. One helpful reminder to me along the way comes in the form of a query.

It is from Stephen

Cary, who had a life-time of engagement in work for Friends: "Do we remember that it is the spirit of our service, the aura that surrounds it, the gentleness and the patience that marks it, the love made visible that compels it, that is the truly distinctive quality that lifts Quaker service above lobbying, above pressure, above coercion, that inspires the doubtful, and reaches to the heart of the adversary?"<sup>1</sup> Hold fast, be hopeful and give peace a chance.

*David Atwood has served as the Representative for Peace and Disarmament at the Quaker UN Office in Geneva since 1995 and as its Director since 2004.* ❖

<sup>1</sup> Stephen G. Cary, *The Intrepid Quaker: One Man's Quest for Peace*, Pendle Hill Publications, 2003, 265-6.

## Learning from Friends' Efforts to Prevent Election-related Violence in Kenya

During the post-election violence in Kenya that took place in late 2007 and early 2008, Kenyan Quakers formed Friends Church Peace Teams (FCPT) to address problems brought about by the violence. Work included provision of humanitarian relief and accompaniment of internally displaced persons. In their peacebuilding efforts, FCPT decided to concentrate on Turbo Division in the Rift Valley Province, which was particularly affected by the post-election violence. In Turbo, FCPT have helped to start the Turbo Division Interfaith Peace Task Force and have begun a non-violent conflict resolution project with youth.

Given the experience of this important community-level work, QUNO-NY was honored to host a visit by Getry Agizah, Coordinator for FCPT, during March 2011. Getry spent two days in New York as part of a larger month-long speaking tour in the United States. The visit provided an opportunity for QUNO-NY to organize a series of informal Quaker House conversation with UN staff and representatives of non-government organizations (NGOs).

During the meetings, Getry described FCPT's activities in the



FCPT celebrating International Day of Peace, September 21, 2010.

Photo/David Zarembka

past and highlighted plans for the future. She placed great emphasis on the need for support to civic

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education, reconciliation activities, and work with youth. During the coming year, FCPT plan to focus its efforts on Turbo Division to demon-

strate how it is possible for community-level work to prevent violence in advance of the next Kenyan election in 2012.

The conversations provided an opportunity for a rich exchange of information and ideas. UN staff were eager to learn from Getry's experience and they shared details on UN efforts in country which include a conflict early warning system being supported by UNDP.

Over the coming months QUNO-NY will continue to work on issues related to the prevention of election-related violence as part of the Prevention program.

Another recent QUNO-NY activity in this area was the event entitled *The Day*

*After: Post-Election Consolidation in Africa*, co-hosted with the Delegation of the European Union. This well-attended meeting served to share lessons from a range of African cases illustrating the need for meaningful planning for maintaining space for political dialogue in the post-electoral period.

Activities like these provide a valuable opportunity for QUNO-NY to facilitate linkages between the UN and practitioners engaged in efforts to prevent election-related violence – an issue of key importance to the UN. ❖

should be maintained throughout the year. The PBC has also been in growth mode, with Liberia and Guinea recently becoming the fifth and sixth countries on the PBC agenda, all of which are in Africa. While PBC engagement is context specific, evolutions in PBC thinking have been seen in the quickly assembled, more coordinated and lighter approaches taken in Liberia and Guinea. The PBC is yet to fully explore the trade-off between sticking to a few priorities that are identified early on, and keeping greater flexibility.

An issue of concern to QUNO from the PBC review is national ownership for peacebuilding strategy planning and implementation. QUNO has facilitated off-the-record discussions on this topic, sharing views on national ownership for rebuilding communities and institutions, and around building the necessary capacity for ownership. The appointment of the Rwandan Mission to the PBC Chair is very welcome and QUNO hopes it will encourage greater African participation in the commission. QUNO's perspective is that national ownership must go beyond states to include civil society and other actors who are vital to peacebuilding in countries recovering from conflict. The support of community leaders for political processes and peacebuilding programs is essential, as peace at the governmental level can still unravel at the local level.

Improving the link between the field and headquarters is another rec-

ommendation from the PBC review that interests QUNO. QUNO's work has encouraged vertical lines of communication, bringing civil society witness to the UN and Member States in New York, and providing opportunities for mutual learning. Among other things, civil society actors can speak on behalf of people at the grassroots level, offering an alternative perspective. They can reflect on government and international projects and provide a legitimate line of communication to otherwise invisible communities. QUNO reaffirmed this commitment to civil society participation and restorative practices in a statement submitted to the UN's Civilian Capacity Review in December 2010, an initiative aiming to improve the quality and quantity of its civilian staff deployed with UN missions overseas. QUNO seeks to uphold the softer aspects of peacebuilding, such as reconciliation and dialogue which often receive little funding or political support.

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QUNO continues to maintain a particular focus on Burundi, one of the first PBC countries, through its collaboration with American Friends Service Committee's (AFSC) work in the country. AFSC is active in supporting civil society engagement in peacebuilding activities in Burundi. In NY, QUNO continues to partici-

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## How to Support QUNO-NY

QUNO-NY 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 in New York.

*QUNO-NY 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 ([www.quno.org](http://www.quno.org)) and follow the instructions provided.

Please send checks to:  
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## QUNO-NY Staff Update

Over the past year, QUNO-NY has seen a number of changes to its team. In September 2010, we welcomed a new Quaker UN Representative, Camilla Campisi. She is now serving as the lead staff person for QUNO's Peacebuilding program. Prior to QUNO, Camilla was an Advocate with Refugees International based in Washington, DC, where she focused in particular on issues related to displacement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Myanmar. Camilla has facilitated a series of discussions around peacebuilding at Quaker House for diplomats, UN staff, and NGOs. She has also had an opportunity to visit the programs of American Friends Service Committee in Burundi and Kenya.

Our new PAs—Miranda Hurst and Nadira Khudayberdieva—also began their work in September. Miranda is a British Quaker with a degree in Social Anthropology from the London School of Economics. After graduating in 2007, she spent a year in Jerusalem in a grass-roots organization that brings together Israeli and Palestinian school communities. Miranda then moved to Ramallah, where she worked for a policy think-tank and as a field coordinator for an export company. Miranda attended the QUNO Geneva summer school, and is active among young adult Friends. At QUNO, Miranda is focusing on peacebuilding.

Nadira comes from an ethnic minority group in Uzbekistan and is a native Russian speaker. She spent two years in India, where she attended a United World College and completed an International Baccalaureate diploma. She later graduated from Earlham College (Richmond, IN) with a

B.A. in International Studies. In 2009, as a summer fellow at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, she conducted research on issues pertaining to Nonproliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and International Security. At QUNO, Nadira is focusing on prevention of violent conflict. Both PAs will be at QUNO until summer 2011.

After a year at QUNO, former Program Assistant (PA) Molly Mitchell-Olds left QUNO in September 2010 and began work at the Department of State as a Foreign Service Officer in Washington, DC. Her first international posting will be in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil beginning in summer 2012. At the same time, former Program Assistant Joe Thwaites returned to the UK and is providing research assistance on a project examining the influence of local leaders upon climate change policy in India. He is also serving on the planning committee for Britain Yearly Meeting Gathering, which will take place in July 2011.

Sarah Clarke continues her work with QUNO as UN Representative and Associate Director, focusing on QUNO's newly established Prevention program. The program is currently exploring work on themes such as prevention of election-related violence, as well as opportunities to reach out and engage with rising centers of power around conflict preven-



The staff of QUNO-New York, December 2010. From left to right: Andrew Tomlinson, Cathy Thomas, Nadira Khudayberdieva, Miranda Hurst, Sarah Clarke and Camilla Campisi.

Photo/Doug Hostetter

tion strategies.

QUNO's Director, Andrew Tomlinson, has been playing a leading role in ensuring a strong and dynamic linkage between the two core program areas and representing the office at a senior level at the UN and beyond. Apart from his directorial duties, Andrew has done extensive programmatic work on Israel-Palestine and Somalia, among other issues.

Cathy Thomas has been a part of QUNO since January 2002 performing many of the organization's detailed financial and administrative tasks and maintaining the website. Cathy will be retiring in September 2011 and relocating to Washington state. While we are saddened by her departure, we are excited about this new chapter in Cathy's life and wish her a very happy retirement. QUNO is indebted to Cathy for her exceptional work and dedication over the years. Recruitment for the position of Coordinator for Finance and Administration is currently in progress. Cathy will provide support and training to a new staff member, ensuring continuity. ❖

## The Changing Face of Violence



World Development Report 2011: “Conflict, Security and Development.”

In early April a major milestone in the analysis of violence was published – one which in many ways supports approaches that Friends have taken for some time. The event was the release of the World Bank’s World Development Report 2011:

“Conflict, Security and Development.”

The report starts out by noting that the nature of violence has changed: It estimates that 1.5 billion people (a quarter of the world’s population) live in areas experiencing or threatened by organized violence, even though the incidence of conventional and civil war has declined. What has happened to fill the gap has been the strong growth of organized crime and trafficking, civil unrest due to global economic shocks, urban violence, and so on. And these categories of violence have started to blur.

The report also draws a key connection between the prevalence of violence and a lack of human development: that violence causes poverty and cripples societies. And that therefore far more attention needs to be given to violence prevention.

Despite the many forms of violence, the report notes that they are triggered by similar kinds of stress factors, and although some of those emanate from the global environment, those generated within societies are mostly rooted in exclusion, inequality, and injustice – what a World Bank blog calls “unfairness, in other words.”

So there is a real paradigm shift going on: On the global stage, violence is starting to be seen much more broadly, not just as something going on in obscure parts of Africa, but as a pervasive scourge that affects cities as much as villages, and societies at all levels of development. And that a key factor that leads to violence is “exclusion, inequality and injustice.” As the implications of this analysis filter into the system, we expect that UN approaches to development, violence prevention and peacebuilding will begin to reflect these new insights. ❖

### Building Peace: From China to Africa

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challenges moving forward. AFSC’s program in Burundi supports civil society inclusion and capacity building in peacebuilding activities.

In the DRC, the Chinese academics learned about the difficulties facing Congolese civil society. Many of the local groups expressed a need for capacity building and assistance. Several expressed frustrations about the government’s current stabilization plan for the east, STAREC, and the lack of consultation with civil society despite their ongoing grassroots

work on peacebuilding. Civil society in the DRC is engaged in everything from mediating land disputes to addressing women’s rights and combating the illegal exploitation of natural resources. Several groups also expressed concerns about the upcoming elections and the lack of international support, including concerns about potential violence. Many of them hope to be involved in election monitoring when the time comes. Following their conversations with civil society and visits to project sites, a participant from the CFISS noted that “China is presently focused on

the hard aspects of peacebuilding in the DRC, but the trip helped [her] to learn that much more work needs to be done on the softer side.”

The Chinese academics were left with many stories and strong impressions and a desire to continue a dialogue with the local and international groups they met. After returning to China they will be producing reports that will highlight what they learned during the exchange visit and propose ways in which China might further engage in peacebuilding activities in Africa. ❖

Peacebuilding at the UN  
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pate in discussions around the PBC's approach and priorities in Burundi, stressing the importance of measures that restore people's trust and confidence in governance systems and the rule of law. The government of Burundi has recently shifted gears, from post-conflict peacebuilding to development, and may become the first country to "graduate" from the PBC. While it is essential that the government of Burundi drives and owns its agenda, there are outstanding concerns regarding the need for political dialogue and monitoring of human rights abuses. QUNO believes that these issues need attention and that the PBC still has an important role to play in sustaining international engagement with Burundi.

In February 2011 QUNO organized a workshop for new PBC

members, alongside the International Peace Institute and with support from the Peacebuilding Support Office. The event brought existing and incoming PBC members and PBC staff together to highlight the current issues of concern and offer a space for reflection and critical thinking about how the PBC can continue to improve its impact in the field. Three panels addressed key priorities that emerged from the 2010 review: building national capacity, mobilizing resources, and strategies for engagement. QUNO contributed to the discussion through an opening statement reminding participants that rebuilding society is a goal articulated by fragile and conflict-affected societies. QUNO believes that the UN and Member States should be encouraged to respond to this with peacebuilding activities that place a greater attention to the

restoration of relationships between people through dialogue, the resolution of conflicts, and support of social capacities for reconciliation.

Looking forward, the PBC still has plenty of follow up from the 2010 review, including dealing with high expectations and improving its links between the field and headquarters. The opinion that peacebuilding should come second to militarized peacekeeping operations still lingers. With peacebuilding scattered across the UN system it has sometimes been tough for the PBC to show its value added. While measuring the success of peacebuilding is hard, due in part to the long-term nature of the work, the PBC has been able to encourage a culture of political inclusion and dialogue. The need for the PBC to invest and engage with civil society is also gaining traction. ❖

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