



# Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

# NewsNotes

*A bi-monthly newsletter of information on international justice and peace issues*

November/December 2007  
Volume 32, Number 6

On the way: From Kairos to Jubilee.....3

**Africa**

Africa: Long term impact of World Bank investment.....4

N. Uganda: Commitment to peace, reconciliation.....5

Africa: China, U.S. scramble for influence.....6

Tanzania: Benefits from debt cancellation.....7

**Asia**

Burma: Arrests follow peaceful demonstrations.....9

Nepal: Maoists demand early end to monarchy.....10

Japan: PM could risk post over extending war aid.....11

Cambodia: Khmer Rouge Brother No. 2 arrested.....12

**Latin America**

Bolivia: Effects of migration.....13

South America: Bank of the South opens.....13

Time for a trade moratorium.....14

Costa Rica: Referendum on CAFTA.....15

United Nations celebrates its 62nd anniversary.....16

World Bank releases paper on odious debt.....17

Health care crisis in poor countries.....18

Nobel peace prize connects peace, care for earth.....19

Update on torture.....20

U.S.-India nuclear plan remains unsettled.....21

World AIDS Day and Advent.....22

Resources.....23

**Published by the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns: Peace, Social Justice & Integrity of Creation**

P.O. Box 29132 Washington, D.C. 20017-0132  
Phone: (202)832-1780 Fax: (202)832-5195  
ogc@maryknoll.org www.maryknollogc.org

**Receive NewsNotes electronically**

If you would like to receive your bimonthly copy of *NewsNotes* as a PDF file via email, please send a message to [ogc@maryknoll.org](mailto:ogc@maryknoll.org), subject line: NN subscription. Subscription price will remain the same (\$20/U.S.; \$25 outside U.S.); continue to send annual payment to P.O. Box 29132, Washington, D.C., 20017.

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns:  
*Peace, Social Justice and the Integrity of Creation*  
<http://www.maryknollogc.org>

Maryknoll Sisters  
 Maryknoll Lay Missioners  
 Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers

Marie Dennis — Director.....[mdennis@maryknoll.org](mailto:mdennis@maryknoll.org)  
 Sr. Ann Braudis, MM.....[abraudis@mksisters.org](mailto:abraudis@mksisters.org)  
 Judy Coode.....[jcoode@maryknoll.org](mailto:jcoode@maryknoll.org)  
 YamilethCoreas.....[ycoreas@maryknoll.org](mailto:ycoreas@maryknoll.org)  
 Sr. Rose Bernadette (Meg) Gallagher, MM.....[rgallagher@mksisters.org](mailto:rgallagher@mksisters.org)  
 David Kane, MLM.....[dkane@maryknoll.org](mailto:dkane@maryknoll.org)  
 Rev. Jim Kofski, MM.....[jkofski@maryknoll.org](mailto:jkofski@maryknoll.org)  
 Susan Weissert, MLM.....[sweissert@mksisters.org](mailto:sweissert@mksisters.org)

MOGC Washington  
 P.O. Box 29132  
 Washington, D.C. 20017  
 (202)832-1780 phone  
 (202)832-5195 fax  
[ogc@maryknoll.org](mailto:ogc@maryknoll.org)

MOGC Maryknoll NY  
 P.O. Box 311  
 Maryknoll, N.Y. 10545-0311  
 (914)941-7575 phone  
 (914)923-0733 fax  
[ogc@maryknoll.org](mailto:ogc@maryknoll.org)

MOGC UN Office  
 777 First Ave., 10th Fl.  
 New York, N.Y. 10115  
 (212)973-9551 phone

**TAKE ACTION - EMAIL, CALL, FAX OR WRITE U.S. DECISIONMAKERS**

President George W. Bush  
 The White House  
 Washington, D.C. 20500  
[www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)

Vice President Dick Cheney  
 The White House  
 Washington, D.C. 20500  
[vice\\_president@whitehouse.gov](mailto:vice_president@whitehouse.gov)

White House Comment Desk  
 (202) 456-1111 phone  
 (202) 456-2461 fax

Condoleezza Rice  
 Secretary of State  
 2201 C Street, N.W.  
 Washington, D.C. 20520  
 (202) 647-6575 phone  
 (202) 647-2283 fax  
[www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)

Robert Gates  
 Secretary of Defense  
 The Pentagon  
 Washington, D.C. 20301  
 (703) 695-5261 phone  
[www.defenselink.mil](http://www.defenselink.mil)

Attorney General  
 U.S. Department of Justice  
 950 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.  
 Washington, D.C. 20530-0001  
 (202)353-1555 phone  
[AskDOJ@usdoj.gov](mailto:AskDOJ@usdoj.gov)  
[www.justice.gov](http://www.justice.gov)

Dr. Zalmay Khalilzad  
 U.S. Representative to UN  
 799 United Nations Plaza  
 New York, NY 10017  
 (212) 415-4000 phone

Current status of bills:  
 (202) 225-1772  
<http://thomas.loc.gov>

Capitol switchboard:  
 (202) 224-3121

[www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)  
[www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)

Robert B. Zoellick  
 President  
 World Bank Group  
 1818 H Street, N.W.  
 Washington, D.C. 20433  
[www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)

Managing Director  
 International Monetary Fund  
 700 19th Street, N.W.  
 Washington, D.C. 20431  
[www.imf.org](http://www.imf.org)

## On the way: From Kairos to Jubilee

*This final issue of NewsNotes for the Sabbath Year begins with the concluding section of On the Way: From Kairos to Jubilee, a U.S. document written in the tradition of the South African and other Kairos documents by a racially, ethnically and geographically diverse group based on reflections from local communities across the country. Written over 10 years ago, the challenge and vision it presents remain appropriate today.*

### The challenge we face

We who walk this journey of discernment, in this time and place, recognize that as Christians in the United States, as nations, as a nation, as communities of faith, as families and individuals, we are called by the Spirit to conversion, to life renewed.

Our greatest challenge is simply to act humanly in the midst of violence and death, to exercise sanity and conscience, to practice resurrection.

In this moment of kairos we are called and led by the Spirit of God to join the thriving new theological convergence which crosses traditional church barriers, to change the landscape and the soulscape of our communities.

We are led by the Spirit to form alliances across difference, embracing diverse gifts and the gifts of diversity – to ally ourselves with people of other faiths and with those who claim no faith at all – to build a multiracial, multicultural movement for justice and peace.

We are led by the Spirit to a new relationship with the earth and all its creatures based on a deep sense of kinship – to reject the obsessive patterns of consumption which drive the disintegration of creation.

We are led by the Spirit to shape a culture of radical nonviolence – a living alternative to the reality of our times, consciously countering racism, sexism, heterosexism, domestic violence, street violence, state violence, militarism.

We are led by the Spirit to rebuild the fabric of our families and our communities; to affirm and foster covenantal relationships with sexual integrity; and to further a culture of personal responsibility and social reconstruction.

We are led by the Spirit to birth now forms of community; reflective and analytical, contextual and prophetic, contemplative and active, diverse and creative.

We are led by the Spirit to create new visions and possibilities through art, music, poetry, story telling, a renewal of language itself – nurturing both memory and imagination as spiritual disciplines.

We are led by the Spirit to relinquish and renounce economic privilege that allows us as persons and families, as communities and churches, to ignore the social mortgage on property, both real and financial – to join the continuing struggles for Native land rights, for family farms, and for accessible, ecologically sound common land in urban areas.

We are led by the Spirit to free economic imagination to promote alternative economic practice and economic relationships in our institutions and communities that ensure the needs of all not the desires of a few, that value equally the work of each one; that honor the dignity of all and promote the rights of every one to a fully human existence.

We are led by the Spirit to restructure radically the global economy to benefit the excluded poor and to protect the rest of creation – to lift the burden of debt from the backs of the world's poor.

We seek nothing less that the conversion of our cultural soul of our values as a people, of our priorities as a nation. For that reason we pray first for the conversion of our own stony hearts. It is time in this place for humility, sensitivity, generosity. It is time for us to give flesh to the discipleship communities which may seed the deepest transformation of our families and our neighborhoods, of the institutional church, and the dominant society.

We take the spirit of Jubilee to be a preeminent sign of this kairos time.

We are frightened by the signs of crisis ...encouraged by the signs of hope ...compelled by the urgency of both.

Thus, we commit ourselves to the works of repentance – to reparation, redress, re-valuing. We commit ourselves to enact the Jubilee concretely in our communities, our institutions, our lives.

We commit ourselves to a continuing quest – an ongoing journey – a form of faith in itself, a sign of freedom, a mark of serious discipleship. The contours of Jubilee are yet to be defined, but the invitation is clear and the need is great.

In the spirit of community, mindful of truth ever exceeding our knowledge, let us covenant to live in a manner explicitly informed by the Gospel we proclaim. Amen.

(For a photocopy of the entire document *On the Way: From Kairos to Jubilee*, contact the Maryknoll Global Concerns Washington, D.C. office.)

## Africa: Long term impact of World Bank investment

*The Bank Information Center's (BIC) Africa News Briefing reported recently on World Bank investment in Africa's mining industry and large scale infrastructure. An apparent surge in mining, particularly in the southern hemisphere's poorest countries, is generating deep concern about the social and environmental impact of some mines in local communities, and, despite the need for infrastructure development on the African continent, questions remain about whether local communities will ever benefit from large scale projects. In both cases, involvement of local communities in major "development" decisions is crucial. The Washington, D.C.-based BIC partners with civil society organizations around the world to influence the World Bank and other international financial institutions (IFIs) to promote social and economic justice and ecological sustainability.*

According to BIC, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the World Bank institution that lends to private sector companies doing business in poor countries, appears on track to meet its goal of doubling financing for mining in Africa this year. According to its website, the IFC is currently considering a \$7.8 million investment in the Kalakundi copper-cobalt mining concession in the Kolwezi District of southeastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The proposed project is operated by Canada-based Africo Resources Ltd (ARL). Despite widespread evidence of the risks involved in hard-rock mining, the IFC has classified the project as environmental "Category B," meaning that it involves only limited adverse social and environmental impacts that can be readily mitigated.

The IFC is also reportedly interested in financing a greenfield open pit gold mine in the Sabodala gold belt of southeastern Senegal. The 20 square kilometer concession is owned by Australian mining company Mineral Deposits Ltd. (MDL). According to the MDL website, exploration has already indicated that the project site contains over one million ounces of gold reserves. Production is expected to begin toward the end of 2008, and the company will use cyanide leaching to treat the ore. The project has already drawn considerable attention from local affected communities, who have serious concerns relating to: the lack of access to information and inadequate consultation on the environmental and social management plan; impending displacement; low recruitment levels of local laborers for the project; the continued lack of potable

water in the area and the improper disposal of chemical waste, as well as noise, dust and other disturbances from blasting near their communities.

Meanwhile, the World Bank approved a record total of \$5.8 billion in new commitments to sub-Saharan Africa during fiscal year 2007. Much of the increase in lending to Africa can be attributed to a spike in financing for infrastructure, energy and regional integration projects. These sectors are typified by large-scale investments that require massive amounts of capital, and often generate significant foreign-denominated debts for borrowing countries. The flagship FY07 projects highlighted in the Bank's recent press release include some of its most controversial, such as the \$800 million Bujagali Dam on the Victoria Nile in Uganda.

While there is broad consensus on the importance of infrastructure for development, there is far less agreement on what kind of infrastructure is appropriate to meet whose needs. The trend toward regional infrastructure interconnections and transnational electricity trading schemes, pushed through initiatives like the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in Africa and the Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America (IIRSA) in Latin America, holds clear benefits for industry. What is far less clear is whether local populations stand to gain from these mega projects, or whether their needs and interests will be (literally) overshadowed by the pylons and pipelines built by and for the private sector.

The Bank continues to make declarative statements about the virtues of its economic growth-centered development model, despite ample evidence that the trickle-down approach has failed poor people around the world at least as often as it has helped them. The Bank's own publications (like the *World Development Report 2006: Equity and Development*) have acknowledged that it's the distribution of the benefits from economic growth, not the rate of growth alone, that has an impact on sustainable development.

Many believe that the Bank's preoccupation with its lending volume undermines its effectiveness. The pressure to lend, inherent in Bank policies and staff incentives, ensures that money gets out the door. But it often contributes to a bias in favor of large projects over more suitable alternatives tailored to the needs of the poor.

For additional information, see [www.bicusa.org](http://www.bicusa.org).



## N. Uganda: Commitment to peace, reconciliation

*The following "Lira declaration" was signed in August 2007 by cultural and religious leaders, women and youth from Madi, Teso, Lango, and Acholi sub-regions in Uganda. It is an important sign of growing consensus for peace in the region.*

Preamble: Recognizing the first anniversary of the Juba Peace Talks between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army mediated by the Vice President of Southern Sudan Dr. Riek Machar,

Aware of the progress made towards the peaceful resolution of the conflict under this process to date,

Commending both parties for the successful agreement reached on agenda item three on accountability and reconciliation on the 29th of June 2007 and efforts by both parties to conduct consultations with war affected persons on the way forward,

Emphasizing that war affected persons deserve peace, justice and reconciliation, and that this entails the realization of truth and acknowledgement of wrong doings; reparations to victims; and, symbolic closure through reconciliation with the living and dead,

Supportive of the desire of the parties at the negotiation to prevent impunity in accordance with the Ugandan legislation and in particular working within the provisions of the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court on the principle of complementarity to bring alleged perpetrators to justice,

Realizing the need for a regional and national reconciliation mechanism to promote unity among war affected communities,

Aware that traditional justice mechanisms are a necessary and desired complement to formal judicial processes and a national truth mechanisms and that, with specific modifications, can effectively involve war affected populations in a process of social healing and reconciliation of communities,

Affirming that traditionally based mechanisms can form a complementary approach to the formal justice processes and community level justice and reconciliation.

We the cultural and religious leaders, elders, women, youth and concerned individuals from Madi, Teso, Lango and Acholi sub-regions do hereby resolve and declare as follows:

1. That traditional approaches to justice and reconciliation in northern and eastern Uganda ... share similar principles including truth-telling, confession, mediation, and reparation and resulting in reconciliation

and the restoration of relations, and that such traditional mechanisms are therefore locally and culturally relevant to meeting the justice needs of victims of the conflict.

2. We commit to develop a common strategy based on shared principles of justice and reconciliation to promote reconciliation among ethnic groups and regions of Uganda;

3. We support the creation of an independent and neutral national Truth Commission that would provide a comprehensive, independent and impartial analysis of human rights violations and crimes committed during the conflict.

4. We urge the government of Uganda and the international community to support a community level justice strategy that would include, but not limited to the following:

- The creation of independent informal courts of justice for alleged crimes committed during the conflict.
- To create a community level truth seeking and truth telling process to feed into a national Truth Commission;
- To promote community and regional level reconciliation by drawing upon the diverse traditions of local justice practices and ceremonies.

5. We commit to establish a special task force of experts to draw upon the particular circumstances of Uganda in order to determine the jurisdiction of traditional courts and urgently call upon the government of Uganda and the international community to support the initiative.

6. We undertake to provide victims and perpetrators a forum for reconciliation by among others holding communal traditional and religious ceremonies for community level truth telling processes.

7. We commit to reconciliation that includes the reconciliation of the living with the dead by carrying out traditional and religious ceremonies to lay the spirits of those killed unjustly to rest, including cleansing of areas where mass killings, ambushes and atrocities took place.

8. We support the construction of memorials and commemoration of events in areas where massacres and gross human rights abuses have occurred during the conflict.

9. We call on the government of Uganda, international organizations, donor countries to act now and to contribute the required resources needed for the realization of sustainable peace and justice for our people.

## Africa: China, U.S. scramble for influence

*The following article was written by Shawo Mwakilama, an intern with the Maryknoll Global Concerns office.*

Africa is richly endowed with valuable natural resources. Pursuit of these natural resources, in response to the booming industrial revolution's need for raw materials and markets, forced European countries to scramble for and colonize Africa towards the end of the 19th century. However, Africa's transactions with Western countries and financial institutions, during both the colonial and post-colonial eras, have not brought the continent the benefits which Africans and their leaders anticipated. The economies of most African countries are still struggling, and poverty and diseases are widespread on the continent today. Some analysts argue that the bad colonial and post-independence experiences and frustration have recently compelled most African countries to turn to the East, and to start transacting with a new partner, China. Coincidentally, this happened at a time when China's economy is booming and the country needs more raw materials to feed its industries and more markets for manufactured goods. No wonder China's role in Africa is growing.

There are, however, many questions regarding China's expanding role in Africa. Will Africa really develop if it completely turns to the East? Who benefits more, Africa or China? Is China a new colonizer of Africa? Is the U.S.'s new African Command (AFRICOM) Washington's direct response to China's growing influence in Africa? Are China and the U.S. scrambling for Africa? Is this a gold-rush?



Photo by Jim Stipe, [www.jimstipe.com](http://www.jimstipe.com)

Today China has the greatest presence in African countries, especially in those with important resources, such as oil (Sudan, Nigeria and Angola), minerals (DRC, Zambia, and South Africa), and timber (Congo region), thanks to China's remarkable increase in demand for oil and other raw materials for its booming economy. For instance, today China gets 30 percent of its crude oil from Africa. China is also investing in other important sectors of the economy in Africa, e.g. mining, construction industry, trade and agriculture.

In a move to strengthen its relationship with Africa, China hosted 50 heads of state of African nations in November 2006. At the conference China offered Africa US\$3 billion in preferential loans and US\$2 billion in export credits over the next three years, and promised to double aid by 2009, whereas Western nations such as the U.S., France and UK have slashed development aid year after year (*The Washington Post*, December 2006). The paper further stated that China offers aid without insisting on the onerous conditions that Western donors do, which is sweet music to African nations, who for long now have protested the hypocritical insistence of Western countries calling for Africa to open their markets while heavily subsidizing their own agriculture sectors. Unlike the World Bank, a de facto arm of U.S. foreign economic policy, China shrewdly attaches no strings to its loans (Global Research, May 2007).

However, the negative effects of China's extractive investments and other transactions in Africa are well documented. First, when doing projects in Africa, China brings its citizens to fill important positions instead of hiring local people, which could have been one way of transferring skills and empowering them. Cheap and low quality Chinese goods are brought to Africa, which kills local industries and ultimately exacerbates the unemployment problem. In South Africa, for example, official figures show that cheap Chinese textiles have led to the loss of at least 67,000 jobs in the past four years (*The Washington Post*, December 2006). Moreover, Africans endure bad working conditions in Chinese companies, and yet governments fail to intervene for fear of souring their relationship with China. Finally, China's presence in fragile or war-torn areas, such as Sudan and the DRC, often perpetuate conflicts.

At the same time, it has been argued that China's interest in Africa has given African nations more options to negotiate better trade deals with Western competitors. In the past, African countries had to accept the poor deals Western countries forced on them (*The Washington Post*, December 2006). In 2006 China

committed more than \$8 billion to Nigeria, Angola and Mozambique, versus the World Bank's \$2.3 billion to all sub-Saharan Africa. Ghana is negotiating a \$1.2 billion Chinese electrification loan. DRC has already gotten \$5 billion loan from China for mining and infrastructure development (building roads, hospitals, health centers, housing and universities), and in exchange China will have access to natural resources such as timber, copper, and cobalt in the country.

The establishment of AFRICOM by the U.S. is being viewed as Washington's effort to check the expanding role of China in Africa, and as a way of augmenting U.S. security and economic interests in Africa (UPI, October 2007). The U.S., it has been argued, is accusing China of trying to control oil from its source, yet the U.S. itself has been preoccupied with the same for at least a century. The U.S. government brushes off this claim by arguing that it decided to launch AFRICOM because Africa is growing in military, strategic and economic importance in global affairs; yet many nations on the African continent continue to rely on the international community for security-related assistance. So, AFRICOM will build

military capacity in African countries, and help with security matters as well as development and humanitarian projects.

It remains to be seen how China and U.S. interests are going to play out, and what the outcomes will be, once AFRICOM is established on the African continent. Some have pointed to likely negative impacts of AFRICOM, including host countries becoming a terrorist target; possible further destabilization of the continent, especially war-torn regions; and the U.S. using its military power to access natural resources on the continent.

Africans and their leaders have a critical responsibility to ascertain the real intentions of foreign investment and programs and to judge the benefits to local people. Africa's civil society's vigilance is equally important in asking governments and foreign investors to be transparent and accountable on all their actions. Regarding AFRICOM, wider consultations and involvement of the general public, African governments, civil society, African Union and African regional groupings is needed in order to check if this would work on, and benefit, the continent.

---

## Tanzania: Benefits from debt cancellation

*The following statement by the Ambassador of the United Republic of Tanzania, Ombeni Y. Sefue, at the Congressional Prayer Breakfast, hosted by the Jubilee USA Network on October 16, 2007, speaks volumes about the potentially very positive impact of debt cancellation. While debt is only one of many obstacles to economic justice, its cancellation is an important step in the right direction. Ambassador Sefue said:*

I should like to thank the Jubilee USA Network for inviting me to speak at this important event that focuses our minds, pulls the strings of our hearts, and draws out a chorus of our shared humanity as we strive to break the chains of the debt that hangs like an albatross around the necks of too many poor nations, threatening to sink them into the depths of irrelevance in a sea of globalization.

Debt relief works and I am here to provide testimony on the impact of debt cancellation in Tanzania.

For 10 years, I worked as speechwriter and personal assistant to the immediate past president of Tanzania, Benjamin William Mkapa. For 10 years we worked on debt relief for our country.

When President Mkapa came into office in late 1995, Tanzania was a distressingly highly indebted poor country, with an external debt of almost US\$8 billion. It

may not seem much in this country. But in that year, this was equivalent to 10 years worth of our exports. If we had decided to spend every cent of our foreign exchange earnings to repay that debt, it would still have taken us over 12 years to clear the debt.

If that debt had been apportioned to every man, woman and child, each one of them would have been indebted to the magnitude of their per capita incomes for two and a half years.

In 1995-96, we were spending about 35 percent of our domestic revenue to service only a part of our debt obligations. That amount was sufficient to meet the budgeted expenditures of seven major government ministries. We were spending more on debt service than we were on health and education combined. For every dollar we spent on health, we spent four dollars on debt service. The same was the case for education. Yet, we kept on sinking in the quicksand of debt.

The situation was indefensible on moral and ethical grounds, and unsustainable in political and economic terms. Like our founding president, Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere, we had to ask: shall we let our children die of curable diseases; prevent them from going to school; let our people drink polluted water – just to pay this debt?

For, this was what was literally happening. In

the mid 1990s, almost all indicators for basic education were in free fall. The Gross Enrollment Rate had fallen from 98 percent in the early 1980s to 77.6 percent in 2000, the year we qualified for interim debt relief. The Net Enrollment Rate had likewise fallen from over 80 percent to only 58.8 percent over the same period. Thousands of qualified teachers remained unemployed even as teacher-student ratios were unacceptably high. Science students completed secondary school without ever having conducted a real experiment in a proper laboratory, for many schools had none. In some schools, a whole class would share less than five textbooks. The pass rate in primary schools was a pitiful 19.3 percent in 1999.

It was my great honor to work with President Mkapa and all other national and international partners for debt relief and ultimately, cancellation.

In 2000 Tanzania became eligible for interim debt relief under the Enhanced Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative framework, and in November 2001 we reached the Completion Point, making us among the first five countries to do so. In December 2005 as President Mkapa was handing over power to his successor, Tanzania's historical multilateral debt was finally cancelled.

For any properly governed country, debt relief immediately translates into more resources and capacity to fight poverty and provide very basic services to the people. This is what happened in Tanzania.

When President Mkapa came to power in 1995, the external debt was over 100 percent of GDP. In 2005, the year he left office, the ratio was down to 69.2 percent, and thanks to the cancellation of multilateral debt as he was leaving office, the ratio in 2006-07 fiscal year is down to 35.5 percent. We channeled debt savings to social development. We put in place an open and transparent system of using debt relief, in a consultative and participatory way involving government, civil society and donor countries. All the money was directed to priority interventions in education, health, water, rural roads and HIV/AIDS.

Let me tell you what we did with regard to educa-



tion in the first three years only. We improved access to basic education, we improved the quality of education, and we strengthened capacity for delivery.

With regard to access: The government abolished school fees in primary schools. There was a 50 percent increase in primary school population between 2000-04. An additional 2.7 million children went to school, raising the Gross Enrollment Ratio from 77.6 percent to 106.3 percent; and the Net Enrollment Ratio (NER) from 58.8 percent to 90.5 percent. Today, the Net Enrollment Rate is over 96 percent, and gender parity has been attained. In the first three years, 31,825 classrooms were

built, 7,530 teachers' houses were built, mostly in rural areas, and 2,035 new schools were built.

We also improved the quality of education: In those three years, there was a 106.3 percent increase in the number of teachers. An additional 62,643 teachers were recruited or retrained. The book/student ratio improved from 1:8 to 1:3 in class 1-IV, and from 1:10 to 1:6 in class V-VII. About 9,100 science-teaching kits were supplied along with other teaching and learning materials by end of 2003. The pass rate in the primary school leaving examination rose from 19.3 percent in 1999 to 48.6 percent in 2004. Last year, the pass rate was 70.5 percent, 45 percent being girls.

... I could have spoken about the tremendous progress equally being made in secondary and tertiary education, or in health and water, albeit from low levels. I do, however, hope that my testimony has been able to convey the following ...: Perseverance pays. In 1995 few believed a decision [would] be reached to cancel the historical debt of countries such as Tanzania. Yet, with your support, it has come to pass, and we are eternally grateful ... Debt relief for all deserving countries is possible, if there is political will. Our venue today is a good place to focus our plea for political will. If properly channeled and managed, debt relief can make an important contribution to poverty reduction and growth. It has done so in Tanzania. The case for further debt relief has been made, not only by the need of those yet to get it, but also by the experience and testimony of beneficiaries of debt relief like Tanzania. Emboldened by these successes, and propelled by the acute needs of other poor countries, we can only move forward with greater zeal. On to the jubilee!



## Burma: Arrests follow peaceful demonstrations

*The words of poet T.S. Eliot evoke an image of Burma's generals as well as the nightly arrests that followed September's peaceful processions, from the title of his poem "The Hollow Men" to its conclusion: "This is the way the world ends/Not with a bang but a whimper." Although a doubling of fuel prices in August sparked the initial protests, an underlying theme soon became apparent when even Buddhist monks began shouting, "Democracy, democracy!"*

The protests began Aug. 19, eventually spreading to dozens of Burmese cities. Arrests and intimidation kept the demonstrations small and scattered at first. But when monks began to join in, crowds swelled to as many as 100,000. The protests posed the most potent threat to the regime since student-led demonstrations were violently suppressed in 1988.

During their peaceful marches the monks made the dramatic gesture of overturning their begging bowls, indicating a boycott of the military regime. As the Asian Human Rights Commission explains, "This means a total ban on all religious activities relating to the military government: no donations, no preaching, no funeral rites, nothing."

For a time Burmese soldiers stood by, possibly spying out the protest leaders. On Sept. 26 the junta imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew in Rangoon and Mandalay and prohibited public gatherings of more than five people. Troops began to attack demonstrators with batons and tear gas, and the first monks were reported shot to death in Rangoon.

Subsequently, reports circulated of long prison sentences being meted out in closed courts to monks and to members of the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD). On Oct. 17 the junta acknowledged detaining nearly 3,000 persons during the crackdown. The government also reported 10 deaths during the protests. However, human rights organizations estimate that as many as 6,000 protesters were rounded up and that hundreds were killed. In addition, army attacks on ethnic minority villages in eastern Burma have reportedly displaced hundreds of thousands, creating dire humanitarian conditions.

While Western nations tighten economic sanctions on Burma to try to force political change, the elite continue to lavish much of the country's wealth on themselves. The junta is said to spend up to half of the national budget on the military while designating just 3-5 percent on health and educational services. "Military-run hospitals and schools are the best in the country, while civilian

hospitals are poorly funded and cannot respond to the widespread health crisis in HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria," according to Human Rights Watch (HRW).

HRW urges the UN Security Council to impose an arms embargo on Burma because of its continuing widespread human rights violations. It notes that "India, China, Russia, and other nations are supplying Burma with weapons that the military uses to commit human rights abuses and to bolster its ability to maintain power."

The democracy movement in Burma draws its inspiration from Aung San Suu Kyi, who has spent 12 of the past 18 years under house arrest. She is the daughter of General Aung San, who was Burma's de facto prime minister when he was assassinated in July 1947 at the age of 32. Six months later Burma won its independence from Great Britain. Suu Kyi's mother, Khin Kyi, later became Burma's ambassador to India.

In July 1988 General Ne Win, who had been Burma's military dictator since 1962, stepped down in the face of anti-government demonstrations. Popular protests continued throughout the country, but in August a new crop of generals violently suppressed the movement, killing thousands. The NLD was organized in September, with Suu Kyi as general secretary.

The junta, then known as the State Law and Order Restoration Council, called elections in 1990. The NLD won in a landslide, but the generals refused to recognize the result. Suu Kyi, still under house arrest, was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1991.

Suu Kyi was granted a respite in 2003, and she undertook a series of public speaking events in western and northern Burma. Her speeches drew crowds in the tens of thousands. Alarmed by the widespread public support, the military unleashed a violent crackdown. Several of Suu Kyi's supporters were killed, and hundreds were arrested. Taken into custody once again, she has been detained ever since.

In October 2007 Burma's military leader, General Than Shwe, offered to talk directly with Suu Kyi – but only if she dropped her support for sanctions against Burma and ended what he called her "confrontational" policies against the regime.

The final death toll and the number of those displaced or sent to prison as a result of the recent demonstrations are unknown. Even if the junta makes no concession to democracy, however, the protests represent more than a short-lived, hollow victory. As Suu Kyi assures her supporters: "Of course we will win. All they have is guns."

## Nepal: Maoists demand early end to monarchy

*In parliament, as on the battlefield, Nepal's Maoists are a force to be reckoned with. A peace accord signed in November 2006 ended 10 years of fighting between Maoist rebels and the then-Royal Nepalese Army. The agreement called for the election of a Constituent Assembly that would write a new constitution and decide the future of the monarchy. However, the Maoists pulled out of Nepal's seven-party governing alliance in mid-September, demanding that the monarchy be abolished and calling for electoral reforms before the Assembly elections are held. The polls, set for Nov. 22, have been postponed pending resolution of the issue.*

Maoists say loyalists to King Gyanendra could disrupt the Constituent Assembly elections unless a republic is declared first. Nepal's interim constitution gives parliament the power to abolish the monarchy before elections are held if the king is interfering with the process. The government denies that Gyanendra is in any way involved, but the Maoists disagree.

Negotiations with the Maoists were suspended during the popular Hindu festival of Dashain. Postponed several times, a vote on the monarchy in a special session of the interim parliament was rescheduled Oct. 29.

Some analysts suggest the Maoists are seeking a change in government and electoral reforms before the Assembly elections because they are losing popularity and fear a poor showing at the polls. They would need the support of the Nepali Congress (NC) Party – the largest in the governing alliance – to achieve its two major objectives in parliament. However, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, head of the NC, opposes both motions. (The Maoists hold 83 of the 329 seats in parliament.)

Critics warn that abolishing the monarchy might fail to win international recognition unless it is done by a popularly elected Constituent Assembly. However, the Maoists have denounced the warning, notably by neighboring India, as interference in Nepal's internal affairs.

The Maoists still have the potential to disrupt the government with large street protests and strikes. Prachanda, head of the former rebels, reportedly threatened that the group could bring down the interim government if it does not agree to their demands. On Oct. 11 about 5,000 Maoist supporters, carrying flags and chanting “down with the monarchy,” demonstrated near the parliament in Kathmandu in support of their demand.

In all, the Maoists have presented 22 demands, including the declaration of a republic, a proportional electoral system, formation of an inquiry commission on involuntary disappearances, a roundtable conference of all

sectors of society including minorities, release of political detainees, the integration of the People's Liberation Army into the Nepali Army, withdrawal of the army from the royal palace and nationalization of the properties of King Gyanendra. (See “Nepal: Constituent Assembly to weigh monarchy” in September/October 2007 *NewsNotes* and “Nepal: Peace accord ends 10-year insurgency” in January/February 2007 *NewsNotes*.)

Earlier this year the Maoists agreed to a mixed election system, in which half the members of the Constituent Assembly would be chosen through proportional representation. The other half was to be directly elected by the public.

The Maoists' now demand full proportional representation. This would require voters to cast ballots for political parties, which in turn would appoint members to the Assembly. Some analysts say the Maoists want a proportional election because few of their leaders have the stature to win election in a direct vote.

After the Assembly elections were postponed, the parties in the coalition government issued a joint statement addressing Nepal's donors. “We regret the postponement of the elections, but we want to assure people that we are committed to hold Constituent Assembly elections, and a new date will be fixed soon,” they said. “We hope that the international community and the United Nations will continue their support of the ongoing peace process.”

UN spokesman Ian Martin said the postponement was disappointing but said, “I have no doubt that the UN and member states will remain committed to supporting the Nepal peace process.”

The U.S. Embassy issued a statement saying, “The people of Nepal have been denied a timely opportunity to elect representatives to decide the framework for the future government of Nepal.” The European Union said it was “deeply disappointed” but said European countries would continue to support the peace process.

A feudal state for centuries, Nepal held its first election in 1959. King Birendra, who allowed further democratic reforms, was assassinated by his son in 2001. His brother Gyanendra, a prominent businessman, assumed the throne. Due to his autocratic style, the new king ran into conflict with the politicians running the government. After the peace accord was signed in November 2006, parliament severely limited Gyanendra's powers.

Negotiators remain hopeful of reaching an accord between the Maoists and other government parties and breaking any impasse. All parties seek to avoid a resumption of the decade-long insurgency that claimed 13,000 lives.

## Japan: PM could risk post over extending war aid

*Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda finds himself in a quandary over whether to force a bill through the Diet to extend Japan's naval mission in support of U.S.-led forces in Afghanistan. Japan's antiterrorism law expired Nov. 1, and Fukuda's top legislative priority was to extend the naval operation in the Indian Ocean. However, the leader of the main opposition, Ichiro Ozawa, says if the mission is extended he will use the issue to press for early elections.*

Fukuda, 71, took office Sept. 26. His ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) proposed a bill to extend the naval operation, placing a one-year limit on the mission to persuade opposition parties to vote for it. The legislation would limit Japanese naval vessels in the Indian Ocean to supplying fuel and water to U.S. and coalition ships conducting maritime interdictions near Afghanistan. The law that expired Nov. 1 also allowed search and rescue operations.

Ozawa's opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) won a majority in the Diet's upper house in July elections, and the DPJ has pledged to defeat Fukuda's bill in the upper chamber. However, Fukuda's LDP and its coalition partner New Komeito control more than two-thirds of the seats in the lower house, which could enable them to prevail.

The constitution allows the lower house to pass a bill into law over the objection of the upper house with a two-thirds vote of the members present. Since the LDP-New Komeito coalition controls two-thirds of the seats in the House of Representatives, Fukuda could still pass the bill after a rejection by the upper house. However, the DPJ would likely submit a motion of censure against him in the House of Councilors, putting pressure on Fukuda to step down and call a general election. The prime minister may call early elections, but a vote need not be held before 2009.

Since December 2001, Japanese naval vessels have provided fuel in the Indian Ocean to 11 nations, including the U.S. and its coalition partners in Afghanistan, according to Japan's Ministry of Defense. Peace Depot, a non-governmental organization based in Yokohama, says U.S. naval records show fuel supplied by Japan in 2003 was used for operations in Iraq. Opposition lawmakers raised the claims in parliament in October, and the government denied them.

Ozawa himself supports a more active military role for Japan. He says he would be willing to send Japanese troops to participate in NATO-led missions authorized by the UN – such as the International Security Assistance

Force in Afghanistan. At the same time he argues that Japan, officially pacifist since the end of World War II, should not partake in an "American war."

Polls seem to reflect mixed feelings about Japan's mission in the Indian Ocean. The *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper, for example, reports that while support for the naval mission in the Indian Ocean was only lukewarm, nearly two-thirds of voters wanted the opposition to compromise in its campaign to end it. Fukuda's predecessor, Shinzo Abe, cited his failure to extend the mission when he resigned as prime minister in September.

U.S. Ambassador Thomas Schieffer has urged Japan to maintain its support for forces in Afghanistan. "If the mission stops, the impact on our bilateral relationship would be regrettable. It will be hard to make an argument that it's strengthened," he says. The U.S. would respect whatever decision Japan makes, but Tokyo must "decide what role it will play in the international community," Schieffer adds. "The discontinuation of the mission would send a bad signal to the rest of the international community, and I hope that's not the message Japan will wind up sending."

While the U.S. might feel Japan is backing down from its global responsibility, however, liberal and conservative parties alike in Japan are actually expressing their opposition to the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Although Ozawa and his party openly question the Iraq war, the DPJ supported the antiterrorism law when it was passed in 2001. The party refused to support its renewal only after the war in Iraq had begun.

Recently the opposition was outraged when LDP lawmaker Gen Nakatani said Oct. 14 that "only terrorists" oppose the government's activities in support of U.S.-led forces in Afghanistan. Nakatani later apologized for his remark and received a reproof from Fukuda, but it seemed unlikely that he had won any further support for the bill.

The LDP coalition holds its more than two-thirds majority in the lower house by a slim 16-vote margin. If Fukuda's bill to renew the antiterrorism law failed in that chamber to override a defeat in the upper house when the Diet reconvenes in January, it could be catastrophic for the ruling party. In 2008 Fukuda will have to weigh the benefits of pushing his bill through despite considerable opposition, against maintaining the unity of his coalition and the risk of having to call early elections. Meanwhile, the popular will in Japan has cost the coalition in the U.S.' vowed "war on terror" another significant member.

## Cambodia: Khmer Rouge Brother No. 2 arrested

*The second-ranking member of Cambodia's former Khmer Rouge regime has been arrested on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Nuon Chea, the party's ideologist, was charged Sept. 19 in connection with the deaths of an estimated 1.7 million Cambodians from 1975 to 1979. He is expected to go on trial next year before a special tribunal known as the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia.*

Nuon Chea, 82, is only the second member of the regime to be taken into custody. The first – Kaing Guek Iev, or Duch – has been held for eight years at a military prison in Phnom Penh. Duch was director of Tuol Sleng prison, or S-21, in the capital city. An estimated 16,000 persons sent to the facility were killed. (See “Cambodia: Tuol Sleng director headed for trial” in September-October 2007 *NewsNotes*.)

Duch, who is also charged with crimes against humanity, accused Nuon Chea in 1999 of being directly responsible for much of the killing during the regime – something Nuon Chea denies. “I was president of the National Assembly and had nothing to do with the operation of the government,” he says. “Sometimes I didn’t know what they were doing because I was in the assembly.”

Known as Brother No. 2, Nuon Chea envisioned a return to the glory of the 13th century Angkor kingdom. His plan called for eliminating currency, religion and education and turning the calendar back to Year Zero. In the process the intelligentsia were to be eliminated – physicians, teachers, anyone who knew a foreign language. Even those wearing glasses were at risk. Under the Khmer Rouge a quarter of the country’s population were executed or died of starvation, disease or overwork.

Prosecutors say they have also recommended three other senior Khmer Rouge officials for trial. Their names have not been released, but local media speculate they might be Khieu Samphan, the former head of state; Ieng Sary, the foreign minister, and Ieng Thirith, who served as minister of social affairs.

Khieu Samphan and Ieng Sary live freely in Cambodia but are in declining health. Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot died in 1998 at his home. His military chief, Ta Mok, died in 2006 while in government custody.

Creating the tribunal has been a long and complicated process. Part of the delay was due to Cold War politics. Vietnam invaded Cambodia in December 1978,

after three years of Khmer Rouge attacks on its territory. Much of the world subsequently got its first glimpse of the mass crimes committed under Pol Pot's regime. However, the UN, the U.S., China and their allies condemned the regime change brought about by foreign intervention. The major consideration seemed to be that Cambodia had been liberated by a Soviet ally.

Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot and Ieng Sary, his minister of foreign affairs, were tried in absentia in 1979 and sentenced to death. However, the two-day trial – which had enabled many Cambodians to testify about Khmer Rouge atrocities – was largely ignored by the rest of the world because it was conducted under Vietnamese influence. The Vietnamese withdrew in 1989. Meanwhile, the new Cambodian republic was not recognized, however, and a Khmer Rouge ambassador continued to occupy the country's UN seat for another ten years.

The special tribunal was created last year after seven years of negotiations between Cambodia and the UN. The court has a budget of \$56.3 million for three years, one each for investigation, trial and appeal. Cambodian judges hold a majority on the tribunal in decision-making matters, but the vote of one foreign counterpart is needed for a decision to prevail.

Efforts to bring former Khmer Rouge leaders to justice have moved at a glacial pace in the nearly three decades since the regime was driven from power, but that could be changing. “We used to say that our history is like muddy water,” says Nop Paul, a former civil servant who lost four brothers and one sister to the Khmer Rouge. “But now the water is clearing.”

However, opinion is mixed. Residents of Anlong Veng, the last Khmer Rouge stronghold, still express sympathy for the former regime. Many residents of the town in northern Cambodia near the Thai border say they were not even aware of Nuon Chea’s arrest, despite widespread publicity. “Sure, some bad things happened (under the Khmer Rouge), but that wasn’t the leaders’ fault,” according to one resident. “There were many (Vietnamese) agents here; they have always tried to dominate Cambodia.”

“The Khmer Rouge leaders were always good to us,” says another. “We always had enough food. Everybody liked Ta Mok and Nuon Chea.” That might be true of some who survived the regime. But nearly every family lost members to the Khmer Rouge, and millions of Cambodians still await justice.



## Bolivia: Effects of migration

*The following article was submitted by Maryknoll Sr. Margaret Smith and Maryknoll lay missioner Jason Obergfell.*

Most countries are affected by migration, either by their own people leaving or by foreigners arriving. As the holiday season approaches, when families in the U.S. gather together to celebrate, it is important to reflect on the many-sided reasons for migration.

Globalization has led to massive migration around the world. Competition in a globalized world is especially difficult for countries that are not as economically powerful or as technologically advanced, and Bolivia is no exception: Over the past 20 years the number of people leaving Bolivia has increased considerably. According to the Fundación Centro Operativo Político, Económico, y Social (COPEs), 30 percent of those born in Bolivia have migrated to other countries, primarily for economic reasons. It estimates that this number will increase to 50 percent by 2010.

In the past couple of decades, young people would migrate to Bolivia's coca growing area to earn money. In recent years, they began to go to Korean-run factories in Buenos Aires. At first, they earned good money (\$600–800/month); however, they typically worked 16 hours a day except Sundays. When the economic crisis hit Argentina in 1998, Bolivians began migrating to Spain. According to COPEs, the number of Bolivians migrating annually to Spain has increased from 112 in 1993 to an

estimated 400,000 by the end of 2007.

In Yatamoco, Bolivia -- a rural agricultural community of about 125 families with a population close to 1,000 people -- the small land holdings of the families cannot be divided anymore, and as children grow up they must migrate for economic reasons. Young men of Yatamoco have moved to Spain taken agricultural jobs in the large vineyards north of Madrid; however, those who do not want to be farmers can't find work easily. Work for women, on the other hand, is plentiful. In Spain the women often work as servants: cleaning houses, caring for children, and accompanying elderly people in their homes.

What often happens in this search for economic security is that children are left in Bolivia with their grandparents or older siblings in the home. Some children begin to skip school and take to the streets. Shelters for street children are filled with those whose mothers have gone to Spain. Parishes are opening centers for after-school help in an effort to give children a chance at a better future. Some attend these programs, but many children are required to work after school to support what remains of their family. With a lack of a parental presence, more teenagers are becoming pregnant.

What are the long term consequences of these mass economic and political migrations for the sending countries, the receiving countries, and most importantly the families that are affected? These are important questions for reflection during gatherings this holiday season.

## South America: Bank of the South opens

*In another sign of the diminished influence of international financial institutions (IFIs) in South America, eight countries will open a Bank of the South, a development bank that will make loans for projects throughout the region. Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel Prize winner for economics and former vice president of the World Bank, praised the effort saying, "It is a good thing to have competition in most markets, including the market for development lending," referring to the fact that the new bank would compete with the IMF, World Bank and other IFIs.*

Participating countries felt the need for such a bank in reaction to the strict conditions attached to IFI loans to South American countries. These called for radical cuts in public spending and other demands that often worsened living conditions for the poorest citizens. The Bank of the

South will not make such demands. Venezuela's finance minister, Rodrigo Cabezas said, "International financial institutions have humiliating demands that are contrary to national development." The Bank of the South, he said, "is a space for sovereignty." Bolivia's ambassador to the U.S., Gustavo Guzman, said that the bank is "an act of self determination" for South American countries.

The bank, launched on November 3 of this year, is set to begin operations in 2008 and initially will be funded by Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela. They are negotiating with Chile, Peru, Guyana and Suriname to join as well. The finance ministers still have not decided exactly how much money each country will put in for initial funding, but they have agreed that the amount should be as much or more than they have paid to current IFIs. Initial esti-

mates are for an initial fund of US\$7 billion. The bank's headquarters will be in Caracas, Venezuela with regional offices in La Paz, Bolivia and Buenos Aires, Argentina.

One especially contentious issue in the forming of the bank was how votes would be distributed. After much debate, larger countries like Brazil and Argentina ceded so that the voting allotment will be one country/one vote, rather than the typical IFI structure of votes based on financial contributions.

In a recent presentation, Cabezas listed the bank's principle objectives. Primarily, it will provide loans for development projects, emphasizing infrastructure, integration of roads, health and education infrastructures and energy projects like oil and gas pipelines. It will also work to foster South American integration and to diminish asymmetries both between and within client countries.

The bank will not, at least initially, give loans for balance of payment problems or other financial emergencies, but will concentrate on longer term development projects.

Civil society organizations around the Americas have been following the development of the bank and have called for transparency and independent oversight of all of the bank's activities. Minister Cabezas reported that formal structures will be put in place to guarantee public access to the bank's numbers.

The Bank of the South represents a significant shift in power relations in South America. Countries there are emerging from years of strong U.S. influence on their economies into a time of more freedom and flexibility in economic policy making. They hope to never again depend on crushingly restrictive loans from the U.S. or other agencies.

---

## Time for a trade moratorium

*There's still time to stop the passage of four trade agreements (FTAs) being considered by the U.S. Congress, agreements which contain NAFTA and CAFTA's failed provisions. Those two trade pacts have resulted in job loss, the destruction of rural communities through cheap agriculture imports, and the closure of small and medium businesses. At the same time, NAFTA and CAFTA have undermined the ability of governments in the global south to create development policies that favor local job creation and protect the environment.*

A group of civil society organizations, led by Global Exchange and the Alliance for Responsible Trade, have proposed a trade moratorium when no new agreements would be ratified; instead, it would be a time to study the real effects of past trade agreements in order to change to more inclusive and mutually beneficial policies.

The trade promotion authority, or "Fast Track," which gave the president authority to negotiate agreements that the Congress could approve or disapprove, but not change, expired on July 1, 2007. Before the law expired, the Bush administration signed four agreements with Peru, Panama, Colombia, and South Korea. Each of these must be ratified by Congress in coming months.

These types of trade agreements have not brought the positive changes their advocates promised. Congress should consider the proposed trade moratorium and take advantage of the expiration of Fast Track as a time to hold a series of hearings on the effects of past

trade agreements on the U.S. and other signing countries. Current trade policy has been dominated by corporate interests and primarily benefits them. Hearings on trade agreements should call on representatives from a variety of sectors including citizens of co-signing countries. Congress should then work to construct a new trade model that is more inclusive of larger parts of society.

Some members of Congress argue that if the U.S. does not ratify the three agreements with Latin American countries, it will drive those countries into the hands of other regional powers, but this argument shows a key misunderstanding of why so many Latin American countries have moved away from the U.S. and elected progressive governments in the past decade: today's trade agreements are very similar to the policies recommended by the IMF and other international lenders since the early 1980s. By looking at real growth rates in Latin America, it is clear what a devastating failure these policies have been. From 1960-1980, real per capita GDP in Latin America grew 82 percent; from 1980-2000, with the implementation of IMF policies, growth shrunk to only nine percent. From 2000 to 2005, slower growth continued with only one percent growth in five years.

It was the dismal failure of these policies that drove populations throughout Latin America to vote for change and for candidates, like Evo Morales in Bolivia, who spoke out against these policies. By ratifying these FTAs, Congress will only deepen and prolong these same policies that have proven to be destructive for significant parts of signing countries' populations.

**Faith in action:**

In May, Congress made a deal with the administration for some minor changes to trade policy. The administration is trying to pass this off as a major improvement yet almost nothing changed. (See *NewsNotes*, July-August

2007.) Consider signing the “Call for a Moratorium on Trade Agreements” which is found on the Maryknoll Global Concerns website, [www.maryknollogc.org](http://www.maryknollogc.org), under “Economic Justice/Trade and Investment.”

---

## Costa Rica: Referendum on CAFTA

*Costa Rica's referendum on the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) (see NewsNotes, September-October 2007) took place on October 7 in a flurry of illegal activities that show the length that pro-free trade forces must go to in order to pass trade agreements today. Their efforts were apparently successful -- over 1.5 million votes were cast (75 percent of the voting population), and about 50,000 votes gave the “yes” campaign their victory (51.6 percent to 48.4 percent). Due to the pro-CAFTA campaign's illicit actions, international observers say that the vote should not be recognized. It is unlikely that the “no” campaign will accept the result.*

The “yes” campaign counted on many powerful partners. Transnational corporations, like the Dole fruit company and their suppliers, threatened workers with closure if the referendum failed. Some even told their workers not to return to work on Monday if CAFTA did not pass. These corporations also helped fund the “yes” campaign with millions of dollars that flooded Costa Rica with billboards and TV and radio commercials.

In July, a memo from Vice President Kevin Casas and a member of Congress to President Oscar Arias and his chief of staff was leaked to the press. It was a strategy paper for the “yes” campaign and contained many questionable recommendations. The memo recommended threatening mayors that if their area were to vote against CAFTA, they would be cut off from federal funding for three years. It also proposed negotiating a recess in the Congress to free legislators to work on the “yes” campaign in their districts. Additionally the memo proposed a campaign to “stimulate fear,” especially by linking the “no” campaign and its funding to Hugo Chavez and Fidel Castro. The memo states, “It is possible that this kind of campaign might be uncomfortable to some people, but it is almost sure that it can have a considerable impact amongst the simplest people, which is where we have the most problems.” Vice President Casas was forced to step down due to this leaked memo.

In the months leading up to the vote, numerous factory workers reported that the U.S. ambassador to Costa

Rica, Mark Langdale, visited businesses and personally threatened workers of dire consequences if they voted against CAFTA. It is illegal for a foreign representative to try to influence elections in Costa Rica. Rep. Linda Sanchez (D-CA) wrote a letter to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice demanding that Ambassador Langdale stop his interference. “[T]he perception of such interference harms the U.S. image,” she wrote. “If we are to be seen as respecting democracy, sovereignty, and economic development, we must not interfere in any way with the historic popular referendum on CAFTA in Costa Rica, the region's oldest and strongest democracy.”

This serious concern did not stop the Bush administration and the “yes” campaign from working desperately after polls showed 55 percent of voters opposed CAFTA. During the two-day media blackout period before the vote, TV and other news outlets repeatedly showed President Bush and Susan Schwab, the U.S. trade representative, threatening to retract Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) trade preferences that Costa Rica currently has if they failed to pass CAFTA. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid sent a letter to Costa Rica's ambassador to the U.S. correcting these false threats but their statements were not given any coverage. This is especially ironic because it is Congress, not the president, which would make any decision regarding the CBI.

Despite these clear legal breaches, the Supreme Electoral Council has not reacted. International observers have registered complaints but do not see much possibility of that body's rectifying the situation. On October 19, dozens of civil society organizations and hundreds of individuals sent a letter to the Organization of American States (OAS) asking that it not recognize the results of the referendum until further investigations have taken place. So far the Costa Rican government has ignored these pleas and is treating the result as final. However, it is unlikely that Costa Rica's citizens will accept this. In 2000, when the Congress tried to pass a law privatizing energy and telephone services, protests and strikes shut down Costa Rica for weeks. With even more at stake in the CAFTA decision, it is doubtful that the people will accept these corrupted results very quietly.

## United Nations celebrates its 62nd anniversary

*In October 1945, when the world faced immense challenges stemming from the devastation of two world wars, 51 countries created the United Nations in order to preserve peace through international cooperation and collective security. Today nearly all the countries of the world, 191 nations, belong to the UN. Although today's challenges were unimaginable 62 years ago, the root problems remain the same – systemic poverty and inequity. After many years of struggle to achieve its purpose, the UN, now a mature organization, continues to keep faith with hope and remains determined in its struggle against global poverty and inequity.*

The commitment to a future marked by economic justice where all live with dignity is embodied in the Secretary General, the UN's highest official and public face. His words and actions keep truth and high purpose before us. On the occasion of its 62nd anniversary, current UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon delivered the following address:

"The world is changing in the United Nations' favor – as more people and governments understand that multilateralism is the only path in our interdependent and globalizing world. Global problems demand global solutions – and going it alone is not a viable option. Whether we are speaking of peace and security, development, or human rights, demands on our organization are growing every day.

"I am determined to ensure that we make progress on the pressing issues of our time, step by step, building on achievements along the way, working with member states and civil society. That means strengthening the UN's ability to play its role to the fullest extent in conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

And it means invigorating our efforts for disarmament and non-proliferation.

"At the same time, we must redouble our efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals, particularly in Africa. I will seek to mobilize political will and hold leaders to their commitments on aid, trade and debt relief.

"And I will continue to do all I can to galvanize global and decisive action on climate change. The UN is the natural forum for building consensus on this pressing issue, as we saw in the high-level event held a month ago on the margins of the General Assembly. The many leaders who attended sent a clear message to the Bali negotiations in December under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change: this is no longer business as usual, and we must build momentum across industrialized and developing countries to ensure results. Protecting the climate for present and future generations is in the common interest of all.

"If security and development are two pillars of the UN's work, human rights is the third. I will work with member states and civil society to translate the concept of the responsibility to protect from word to deed, so as to ensure timely action when populations face genocide, ethnic cleansing or crimes against humanity.

"Finally, we must transform the UN itself. We must adapt to meet new needs, and ensure the highest standards of ethics, integrity and accountability, so as to demonstrate that we are fully answerable to all member states and to people around the world.

"We will be judged in the future on the actions we take today -- on results. On this United Nations Day, let us rededicate ourselves to achieving them."

### **Vigil to close the School of the Americas (SOA/WHINSEC)**

**November 16-18, 2007, Columbus GA**

Join the Maryknoll Global Concerns office at the annual gathering at Ft. Benning. Maryknoll will hold a gathering at 5 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 17 in room 104 of the Convention Center. The Ignatian Solidarity Network's Mass will begin at 7 p.m. You're also welcome to join us again after the Mass in room 104 to continue to hear about our project for the 2008 elections, "Loving our neighbor in a shrinking world." **If you plan to be there, please let us know: [ogc@maryknoll.org](mailto:ogc@maryknoll.org) or call 202-832-1780.**

For more information on the School of the Americas Watch and its annual vigil on the anniversary of the deaths of the six Jesuits, their housekeeper and her daughter in El Salvador in 1989, go to [www.soaw.org](http://www.soaw.org) or call 202-234-3440.



# World Bank releases paper on odious debt

*As part of its work on debt-related issues, the Economic Policy and Debt Department of the World Bank (PRMED) released recently a draft discussion paper entitled "The Concept of Odious Debt: Some Considerations."*

Although international law does not generally provide for the repudiation of debts on the ground of their being "odious," the World Bank paper suggests that this should not deter lenders and sovereign borrowers from acting in a variety of ways to ensure that loans are used for the benefit of the borrowing states and not to subjugate their populations or enrich the corrupt.

The discussion paper asserts that there is little agreement on a workable definition of "odious" debt and there are only a few examples where the concept has been used to justify the non-payment of sovereign debts. Most often, these have been cases when a successor state or government has refused to honor certain debts contracted by its predecessor state or government. The extension of the debate to cases other than those of state or governmental succession and the identification of a broader concept of "illegitimate debt" have "further complicated an already controversial concept and diminished its practical value in addressing real problems. Repudiating sovereign debts on this ground would increase the risk of reduced lending to sovereign borrowers, thereby affecting financial flows to developing countries as a result of the danger of ex post challenges to lenders' claims." The paper argues that countries can choose the middle path between paying their unsustainable debts or repudiating them by restructuring their debt when it has become unsustainable. Iraq and South Africa are recent examples of countries where new governments inherited large sovereign debts but, rather than repudiating them, chose instead to negotiate their restructuring with their creditors.

While it is encouraging that the World Bank has begun to engage in the extremely important discussion about odious debt, it has not yet asked the basic question, "Who owes whom?"

In response to the Bank's paper, 15 nongovernmental organizations and networks from around the world working on debt-related issues wrote:

"We welcome the fact that the Bank has taken-up the important issue of odious debt following pressure from civil society organizations and financing from the Norwegian government.

"However both the paper itself and the process for producing and reviewing it are far below what is needed. The draft paper is missing significant sources and arguments, and is one-sided.

"We propose that the Bank spell out clearly what it intends to do with the document and the status of the final output, and that it institute a well-organized peer review process involving external experts. The Bank should actively solicit expert feedback from a range of external specialists in the fields of law, economics, and political science....

"Such a process is the best way to resolve the significant shortcomings and omissions in the current draft and to prevent the exercise missing the opportunity to make a significant contribution to improving the international debt architecture.

"The paper is largely dismissive of the concept of odious debt. It emphasizes that the concept is complex, given an over-wide scope by some analysts and not yet established in international law. The paper omits important cases where the concept has been recognized and also several political and judicial processes and concepts such as authority to borrow which are cited in many writings on the subject.

"There is no mention of the need for fair and transparent debt resolution processes, which would enable independent judgments to be made regarding the cancellation of odious debts.

"These are just some examples of many significant gaps in the paper. We do not have confidence in the current process that the Bank has initiated and believe that a formal external peer review process is the only way that the paper can be taken forward properly. We would be happy to provide suggestions of names of potential reviewers once this idea is accepted."

The World Bank's paper seems to miss completely the whole argument around odious or illegitimate debt, which is that such debt is not owed by borrowers to creditors at all for a variety of possible reasons, any one of which would render the loan agreement null and void.

## **Faith in action:**

Read the World Bank discussion paper at [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org); use the search tool to find "The Concept of Odious Debt: Some Considerations," and send your comments to Vikram Nehru ([vnehr@worldbank.org](mailto:vnehr@worldbank.org)).



## Health care crisis in poor countries

*Four of the eight Millennium Development Goals, which the UN set for poor countries to achieve by 2015, are related to health: reduce by three-quarters maternal mortality ratio; reduce child mortality by two-thirds; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; and halve the proportion of people suffering from hunger. However, this will be difficult for poor nations, since their health sectors face challenges such as shortage of workers, inadequate capacity, and insufficient medical supplies. The following article was written by Shawo Mwakilama, an intern with the Maryknoll Global Concerns office.*

The current dearth of health care workers is an acute problem in poor countries. The most notable causes are emigration of doctors and nurses to industrialized countries in search of better salaries and working conditions, and the lack of capacity and funds needed for training. The pervasiveness of HIV/AIDS-related diseases, malaria, and tuberculosis (TB), including among health care workers themselves, has also exacerbated the problem.

In 2004, CNN reported that the number of certified nurses from former British colonies such as Ghana, Malawi, Kenya, Botswana, and South Africa were appearing in the British register of nurses, which corresponded to the fact that 60 percent of nursing positions remained unfilled in some of these countries. Reuters reported in April 2007 that countries and areas with the largest health worker shortages include India, Indonesia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Tanzania, most of West Africa and Peru. In June, the *New York Times* also reported the severe shortage of health care workers in Africa; for instance, Rwanda has only 500 doctors serving 10 million people, resulting into a doctor to patient ratio of one to 20,000. In Rwanda, the majority of people will not see a physician in their lifetime.

Another challenge is the shortage of both health facilities and drugs. Most developing nations lack functional health infrastructures, and have insufficient medical equipment. Some must struggle with a corrupt health care system, in which the few drugs and medical equipment available to public hospitals and clinics seem to vanish and find their way to private hospitals, pharmacies and drug stores. As a result, poor people, who lack health insurance, cannot afford to pay, and continue to be the ones who suffer.

The persistence of infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria are among the major threats today. The number of people living with HIV/AIDS in the world has grown from eight million in 1990 to about 40 million today; 62 percent of HIV/AIDS cases are in sub-Saharan Africa. (In that region, according to a NextAids report, a child loses a parent to AIDS in every 14 seconds, and out of 15 million orphans in Africa, only 10 percent are receiving some kind of support.) A virulent new drug-resistant form of TB poses a serious danger to the general public in this era in which people travel from one part of the world to another with much ease.

Unfortunately, efforts to resuscitate and revamp health sectors of poor nations are slowing, in part, by policy prescriptions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Since most poor countries do not possess the financial resources necessary for the revitalization or improvement of their health sectors, they request funding from rich nations and the donor community. However, due to the fact that the IMF requires low-income countries to follow tight budget ceilings, amongst

other policies, in order to achieve macroeconomic stability and growth, it is difficult for them to absorb all the funds they receive and spend them on health and education sectors. IMF policies force governments of poor countries to cut their spending on social service sectors such as health and education, which result in few people trained as health workers and in the government's inability to increase wages for doctors and nurses in order to retain them. A primary IMF goal is the attainment of low inflation and macroeconomic indicators in general, but paradoxically, for a country's economy to be stable and vibrant, its people (especially the work force) need to have good health.

Opinions regarding the relationship between low inflation and economic growth are mixed. While some people agree with the Washington Consensus view of achieving macroeconomic stability mentioned above, other people argue that "there is not a significant correlation between growth and inflation, because if inflation persists over a long time period, economic agents find mechanisms to adjust so that growth is not affected" (*Journal of International Business Research*, January 2004). Japan, Korea and some Latin American countries managed to attain economic growth even though they had high inflation of about 20 percent in the 1950s to

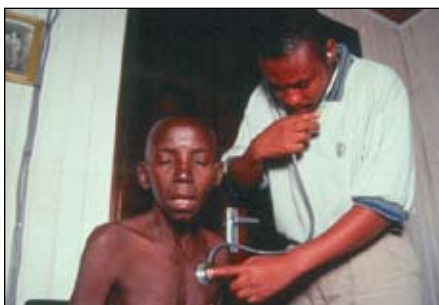


Photo by Sean Sprague, courtesy of Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers

1970s. Furthermore, although the IMF claims that higher government spending will lead to higher inflation, much of the research used to justify this claim is based on the

### **Faith in action:**

1. Ask Congress to consider increasing PEPFAR funds and include in it a component of capacity building or training for health care workers in poor countries;
2. Advocate for cancellation of debts of low-income countries so that the funds should be put into social services such as the health sector;
3. Ask governments of industrialized countries to stop or reduce their dependency of doctors and nurses

experiences of industrialized countries; but there is no empirical evidence that this is actually the case in poor countries.

from poor nations; and

4. Ask the IMF to reconsider policies it prescribes to poor countries, and find ways of accommodating the health and other social needs of people low-income countries.

For more information, see ActionAid, [www.actionaid.org](http://www.actionaid.org) and the Bretton Woods Project, [www.brettonwoodsproject.org](http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org).

## **Nobel peace prize connects peace, care for earth**

*The 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, recently awarded to Al Gore and the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (UN IPCC) for being catalysts in moving people throughout the world to combat the global climate crisis, is an example of what can be done by individuals, civil society and political institutions to bring forth conditions where peace and human security can prevail within the collective human enterprise of living on Earth.*

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon commended Gore's "exceptional commitment and conviction, as an example of the crucial role that individuals and civil society can play in encouraging multilateral responses to global issues." Ban hailed the IPCC and its co-sponsors, the UN Environment Program (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization, saying that the IPCC's "lucid and well-documented findings helped to establish beyond doubt that climate change is happening, and that much of it is caused by human activity." He added that this led to "unprecedented momentum for action on climate change around the world, and recognition of the UN as the forum for reaching agreement on it."

Achim Steiner, executive director of UNEP, praised the decision of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee, saying it "has today made it clear that combating climate change is a central peace and security policy for the 21st century." He further noted that the IPCC has also calculated the price of peace and stability on this planet at perhaps 0.1 percent of global GDP a year for 30 years for combating climate change and avoiding instability, rising tensions and conflict." Finally, Steiner said, "The IPCC, in validating the climate science, represents one of the most important contributions the UN has made in its history

to humanity and its current and future choices."

For the IPCC, undergirding the joy of receiving the Nobel prize is the long toil of scientists in collecting data and the tedious work of evaluating their work. The IPCC itself is not a research body but rather gathers and engages the research of others from the entire world and at the end of the painstaking process of assessing the data collected, prepares with exactitude the document of its findings. Then it seeks the ratification of the document by the UN member nations.

While this represents precise adherence to the tenets of the scientific method, Gore's work, which coincides in large part with that of the IPCC, is concerned less with the data than with the central truth to be conveyed. Throughout time, images, symbols and stories have been humans' tools for communicating new and difficult concepts. Gore combined all the wizardry of art, photography, technology, poignancy, and humor to form the images, symbols and stories that at last helped convince an apathetic public that climate change is serious and that the well-being of all life forms is imperiled by unsustainable human activity.

Unsustainable human activity is causing the rapid depletion of resources, including water, leading to tensions and severe rivalry. Indeed, if the global climate crisis is not dealt with seriously and swiftly the obstacles to maintaining global peace and human security may be insurmountable. Certainly the Nobel peace committee demonstrated great wisdom in linking peace with climate change and dramatically calling attention to it through its 2007 awards. In addition, it is fitting symbolism that an individual, civil society and the UN are linked together showing the integration of the effects of human endeavor for the common good.

## Update on torture

*The following article was written by Emily Thrush, an intern with the Maryknoll Global Concerns office.*

For those who track the progress towards outlawing U.S.-sponsored torture, 2007 has been a year of rising awareness and frustrating double-talk. In response to the widely debated Military Commissions Act (MCA) passed and signed into law in October 2006, some members of Congress have attempted to restore vestiges of traditional U.S. American values.

In January 2007, Sen. Arlen Specter (R-PA) and Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT) introduced the Habeas Corpus Restoration Act (S 185); Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-NY) introduced a companion bill for the House (HR 1416). The intention of the bill was to rectify the breach of human rights stripped from detainees in the MCA. Habeas corpus has served as a foundational right since the Magna Carta was signed in the 13th century. Eight hundred years later, in a democracy that self-proclaims leadership in these inalienable rights, the U.S. denies prisoners both the ability to refute their detention, and the right to have legal counsel to review the circumstances under which they were detained. In September 2007, a majority in the Senate were in favor of this Habeas Corpus Restoration bill, but they were four votes short of overcoming the minority party's filibuster, so the issue has been shelved. (Check <http://www.fcnl.org/torture> to see how senators voted.)

Sen. Christopher Dodd (D-CT) introduced another counter-bill to the MCA in February. "Restoring the Constitution Act of 2007" (S 576) and its companion bill in the House (HR 1415) — also sponsored by Rep. Nadler — did a number of things to overturn the most grievous qualities of the MCA. Among the most important changes, it would require the U.S. to adhere to its Geneva Convention responsibilities; outlaw the admission of evidence gained through torture or coercion; restore the right to a trial and allow detainees the right to non-military representation; strengthen the military judges' ability to exclude hearsay evidence they determine as unreliable; and begin an accelerated judicial review of the MCA to ascertain the constitutionality of its provisions. As of this printing, no movement has been made to vote for either version of the bill.

On July 20, President Bush signed an Executive Order that establishes a number of troubling precedents: It authorizes secret detention centers (violating international law) that lend themselves to cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment due to lack of accountability; re-defines the

"vague" language of the Geneva Convention to diminish torture to something that "shocks the conscience," giving the power to the Executive Branch to determine what does or does not qualify as "shocking"; offers impunity to current interrogators, thus protecting them from future prosecutions; fails to change the practice of CIA rendition, which allows agents to capture, interrogate, and deport terrorist suspects to countries who have known human rights violations for further interrogation, with no need to charge or try the suspects; and creates other loopholes that are equally damaging to due process and human rights.

Speaking in front of the General Council at the UN in September, President Bush strongly condemned governments that were not upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In October, Bush re-emphasized to the press that the U.S. "does not torture people." Yet Bush opens himself to legitimate criticism when he cannot transparently defend U.S. policies regarding U.S.-held detainees in secret prisons around the world.

Proponents of the MCA and Executive Order say that since Sept. 11, 2001, there are new rules with new standards, and new methods must be used to gain pertinent information from captives. Leaders from religious groups and human rights advocates resoundingly repudiate this end-justifies-the-means philosophy, however. Torture not only trounces all respect for human dignity, it also destroys the torturers and opens the way for gross misconduct the world over, leaving personnel from the U.S. at just as much risk as others by giving complicit permission to act with such aggression.

The *New York Times* bolstered new conversation regarding U.S.-sponsored torture this October when it reported on secret memorandums issued by the Justice Department in 2005 that still serve as legal standard today. These memos outline the legality of certain "enhanced interrogation methods" that CIA operatives can use without falling into the criminal category of "torture." The memos codify behavior that is prohibited in the U.S. Army Field Manual (which directs military conduct), and effectively circumvents International Law and the directives of the Geneva Convention by establishing a secretive standard that has very little accountability outside of the Executive branch.

For more resources to stay informed and current on torture, check the websites of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture ([www.NRCAT.org](http://www.NRCAT.org)) and the Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International ([www.TASSC.org](http://www.TASSC.org)).

## U.S.-India nuclear plan remains unsettled

*The proposed accord on civilian nuclear cooperation between the United States and India is near collapse, fortunately. Under the deal, India would receive nuclear technology and materials to help meet its increasing demand for energy needed for economic growth. In return, India would separate its civilian and military nuclear programs and allow limited monitoring of specific sites. The U.S. also believes the deal will help forge a U.S.-India strategic partnership to counterbalance China as it rises. However, the future dynamics among the U.S., China and India are uncertain and the proliferation risks of this deal are significant. This is one case where a failure of diplomacy would be welcome. The following article is written by Tim O'Connell, a former Maryknoll lay missionary who currently serves on the Maryknoll Global Concerns peace advisory committee.*

In August, after two years of complex negotiations, India and the U.S. agreed on an operational framework for nuclear cooperation. In mid-October, India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh informed President Bush that he was encountering "difficulties" in the approval process in India. Indian Communists are concerned about growing too close to the U.S. and fear the deal would give Washington undue influence in New Delhi. They have threatened to pull their support for the coalition government if the deal goes through, triggering new elections, which Singh could lose. Although he sees the deal as good for India, he is not keen to lose his job over it.

The Bush administration and Singh's government say the democratic process in India is working and they hope an agreement can still be finalized. The Indian opponents of the deal and Singh's representatives will meet to discuss the matter again November 16. Though the deal is not dead, its prospects are fading because of opposition in the Indian parliament and U.S. politics. Though the agreement has supporters in the U.S. Congress (as well as critics), it is unclear it would gain approval now and is less likely to do so as the 2008 elections near.

Other steps toward finalizing the agreement remain to be taken. Before the plan can go to Congress, India must negotiate arrangements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) which will monitor the facilities covered under the agreement. It also must procure a waiver from the Nuclear Suppliers Group which consists of 45 countries that manage nuclear commerce.



The waiver would allow countries to sell controlled nuclear items and technology to India despite not being subject to "full-scope" safeguards required by the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT).

Arms control advocates and nuclear disarmament proponents hope it never gets that far. The agreement would reverse decades of nonproliferation efforts. India has tested nuclear weapons in recent years and refuses to sign the NPT, which guarantees signatories peaceful nuclear technology and materials in exchange for a pledge not to build nuclear weapons. Yet, the agreement would grant India a better deal than members of the NPT have. Seeking exceptions to the rules for India while working hard to bring North Korea into compliance with the NPT and to keep Iran and others within the regime sends mixed messages to other countries.

While, the agreement has some benefits such as enhanced scrutiny of India's nuclear activities, it contains several practical problems including:

- It does not specifically state that the U.S. would terminate the agreement if India resumes nuclear testing. Nuclear tests are provocative politically and permit a nation to improve weapons designs.
- Providing India with more nuclear fuel for its civilian programs will allow it to divert its own nuclear resources to weapons programs and increase its stockpile.
- The agreement contains no provisions for insuring Indian nuclear facilities are secure. Providing radioactive materials to a country without establishing security guarantees would be irresponsible as terrorists are eager to steal or buy nuclear materials.

Finally, while the Bush administration seeks to make India a strategic partner with this deal it may complicate relations with another partner, Pakistan. This partnership is not perfect, but it is important for confronting terrorism. Pakistan and India are regional rivals and have fought three wars since 1947. Adding more nuclear fuel to the sparks that exist between them would be a bad strategic move.

Improving relations between the U.S. and India is desirable. However, the nuclear cooperation agreement is not the way to do it. It would undermine global efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, while increasing India's reliance on nuclear power with its concomitant problems including toxic wastes. Let's hope the deal collapses and diplomatic energy can be used to engage India on problems like climate change, HIV/AIDS, terrorism, and *non*proliferation.

## World AIDS Day and Advent

*World AIDS Day, December 1, coincides every year with the beginning of Advent, the church season which focuses our waiting on hope. Now, 26 years into the AIDS pandemic, we are still “hoping” for the fulfillment of promises from government, private sector and civil society leaders. Today, about 40 million persons are living with HIV, and every day 6,000 young people are infected with HIV. Less than 20 percent of those living with AIDS have access to anti-retroviral medicines (ARVs), and each day 8,500 people die of AIDS.*

The theme for World AIDS Day 2007 is “Stop AIDS: Keep the Promise,” with a focus on leadership. Interestingly, this World AIDS Day heralds the 2008 UN Review on HIV/AIDS, when governments will report on their accomplishments or unachieved goals in response to the 2001 Declaration of Commitment and the 2006 Political Declaration. In those documents, commitments and deadlines were set at national, regional and global levels in the areas of leaderships, prevention, care and treatment, human rights, children, conflict zones, research and resources.

In addition to specific government commitments, other recent efforts include the establishment of the Global Fund in 2002, offering a multilateral, non-government vehicle for receiving and disbursing donations for funding HIV/AIDS programs for AIDS programs around the world. In 2003, the World Health Organization and UNAIDS proposed the 3x5 Initiative, the target of which was to provide antiretroviral treatment to three million people living with AIDS in developing countries and those in transition by the end of 2005. While this number was not reached, this campaign demonstrated that in fact it was possible to make ARVs available in resource poor settings.

Also, in 2003, the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) was established, providing major funding for 14 countries. In 2007, President Bush announced that he would commit another \$30 billion in order to continue PEPFAR for another five years.

In April 2004, major donors, developing countries and UN agencies agreed to three core principles – known as the “Three Ones” – to better coordinate the scale up of national AIDS responses. The “Three Ones” principles are: one HIV/AIDS action framework that provides the basis for coordinating the work of all partners; one national AIDS coordinating authority, with a broad based multi-sector mandate; and one agreed country-level monitoring and evaluation system.

In June 2006, UN member states agreed to work

towards the goal of “Universal Access to comprehensive prevention programs, treatment care and support by 2010.” To date, 92 countries actually have set targets, and one-third of these have specific plans.

A myriad of challenges still exist, including the need for 1) a more open and effective role for civil society at all levels of planning and monitoring; 2) more specific and effective inclusion of gender issues and responses in all programming; 3) improved programming to make certain that persons can know their HIV status; and 4) appropriate prevention programs that address issues of stigma and gender [e.g., 90 percent of women needing prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) services are not receiving them]. ARVs are still out of reach of the majority of persons who need them; pharmaceutical firms need to lower prices as well as provide access to low-cost generic medicines. Yet, even where medicines are available, shortages of health care workers and weak health care infrastructures are additional obstacles to universal access.

The G8, in recent meetings, failed to ensure increased commitment to universal access to prevention, care and treatment. A long-term, sustainable response to the pandemic, in terms of leadership and resources, needs to be found.

### **Faith in action:**

This World AIDS Day, and for the rest of Advent, consider your own role as leaders, and encourage the following actions:

1. Add a fifth candle to the Advent wreath, remember people living with or affected by HIV throughout Advent.

2. Plan a prayer or worship service for the Sunday before or after World AIDS Day, or on December 1 itself. For resources go to the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA): <http://www.e-alliance.ch/>

3. Write letters to your national leaders, asking them to “take the lead” in keeping the commitments they have made, and encouraging them to do all they can to meet the promise of universal access by 2010. (See resources on the websites of EAA and the Global AIDS Alliance, [www.globalaidsalliance.org](http://www.globalaidsalliance.org)).

4. Contact your senators and ask them to co-sponsor S. 805, the African Health Capacity Investment Act of 2007. If your senator is already co-sponsoring S. 805, please send him/her a thank you email, and ask him/her to encourage Senate colleagues to support the bill. (Check <http://thomas.loc.gov> for a list of cosponsors.)

## Resources

- 1) "Stop AIDS: Keep the promise": The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance has published a packet of resources to commemorate World AIDS Day 2007, Saturday December 1. Included in the packet are a multilingual CD, "Take the lead. Stop AIDS. Keep the promise," which contains a section of faith-based suggestions. Four posters are also included (in English, French, Spanish and Russian), and an ecumenical worship service. To learn more about the packet for World AIDS Day and other resources, go to the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance website at [www.e-alliance.ch/](http://www.e-alliance.ch/) or email [info@e-alliance.ch](mailto:info@e-alliance.ch). Write the EAA at 150 route de Ferney, P.O. Box 2100, CH-1211, Geneva 2, Switzerland.
- 2) Claiming a Vision of True Security: 2008 Ecumenical Advocacy Days: The 2008 Ecumenical Advocacy Days conference will be held **March 7-10, 2008** in Alexandria VA, just outside of Washington, D.C. "It is time to move beyond the misdirected strategies of the past few years and envision a new pathway to true human security – one which seeks not only the absence of tension, but the presence of justice." (Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.). Ecumenical Advocacy Days is a movement of the ecumenical Christian community (including the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns), grounded in biblical witness and our shared traditions of justice, peace and the integrity of creation. Our goal, through worship, theological reflection and opportunities for learning and witness, is to strengthen our Christian voice and to mobilize for advocacy on a wide variety of U.S. domestic and international policy issues. For more information, go to [www.advocacydays.org](http://www.advocacydays.org) or call 202-386-6397. (The Maryknoll Global Concerns office will gladly welcome any Maryknollers, Affiliates, supporters and friends who would like to participate in this great conference. Please let us know if you want to join us for EAD: [ogc@maryknoll.org](mailto:ogc@maryknoll.org), or call 202-832-1780.)
- 3) *To Walk Humbly: Stories and activities for teaching compassion and justice*: This new resource from Anne E. Neuberger is for ages 10-13 (grades 5-8). Published by 23rd Publications, this book offers 55 stories from around the world to help young Catholics connect with the social, environmental, and economic problems of children around the globe. It encourages them to accept and think of these children as family. Story topics include school life, child labor, cultural and religious celebrations, hunger, racism, poverty, sharing, generosity and lifestyles. It is also a primer on Catholic social teaching and how its principles can be lived out in daily life in simple and doable ways. 96 pages; \$14.95. For more information, contact 23rd Publications, P.O. Box 6015, New London CT, 06320; [www.23rdpublications.com](http://www.23rdpublications.com). (Use "search" toolbar; type in "to walk humbly.")
- 4) *Cowboy in Caracas: A Personal Account of Venezuela's Democratic Revolution*: Written by Charles Hardy, this book tells the story of the people who support Hugo Chavez and why. It also explores the social and political phenomenon of the Venezuelan Bolivarian revolution, and its impact throughout Latin America and the world. Hardy lives in Venezuela, and spent eight years in the barrios of Caracas. Published by Curbstone Press, 176 pages, \$15, ISBN: 978-931896-37-5. [www.curbstone.org](http://www.curbstone.org).
- 5) "Lives for Sale": This one-hour investigative documentary, a joint production of Maryknoll and Lightfoot Films, exposes the painful, rarely seen human side of illegal immigration, including the growing black market trade in human beings. "Documents the horrific, and lucrative, business of human trafficking . . . ideal for church and Bible study groups." -- Sojourners magazine. \$19.95. To order, go to [www.livesforsale.org](http://www.livesforsale.org) or go to [www.maryknollmall.org](http://www.maryknollmall.org), or call 914-941-7590.
- 6) *For You Were Once a Stranger: Immigration in the U.S. Through the Lens of Faith*: Recognizing the desire of many in the religious community to become engaged in the ongoing debate on our nation's current immigration policy, Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ) created this resource for congregations of all traditions. *For You Were Once a Stranger: Immigration in the U.S. Through the Lens of Faith* is a comprehensive toolkit that helps people of faith reflect on what their religious traditions say about immigration. IWJ calls upon our religious values in order to educate, organize, and mobilize the religious community in the U.S. on issues and campaigns that will improve wages, benefits, and working conditions for workers, especially low-wage workers. Available at <http://www.iwj.org/actnow/imm/immigration.html>, or contact IWJ at 1020 W. Bryn Mawr Avenue, 4th Fl., Chicago, IL 60660; phone: (773) 728-8400; fax: (773) 728-8409.