



INSTITUTE FOR PLANETARY SYNTHESIS
UNIVERSITY FOR PLANETARY SYNTHESIS
P.O. BOX 128 – CH 1211 GENEVA 20

Email: ipsbox@ipsgeneva.com, site: <http://www.ipsgeneva.com>
Tel./Fax +41-(0)22-733.88.76

NEWSLETTER NO. 104

January - December 2008

Dear friends and co-workers,

Beyond man-made norms, standards and structures, there exists a working platform of universality and the common good.

A healthy existence for all living beings on Earth is possible, if we learn to live on the basis of ethics and eternal values, such as the following values taken from the teachings of the Tibetan Master, and distributed by the Lucis Trust under the name "Values To Live By":

Love of Truth – essential for a just, inclusive and progressive society

Sense of Justice – recognition of the needs of all

Spirit of Cooperation – based on active goodwill and the principle of right human relationships

Sense of Personal Responsibility – for group, community and national affairs

Serving the Common Good – through the sacrifice of selfishness. Only what's good for all is good for each one

For that, it is necessary that education emphasizes such values throughout our lives. The practice of these eternal values in all our relationships leads to mutual respect and inclusiveness, and to the protection of human dignity and of life in all its forms.

Solutions for all problems can be found if all decision-makers stop blaming each other and reflect together on how to integrate ethical values into their negotiations and decisions.

Since we, the human beings, are responsible for most of the problems and challenges we are facing today on planet Earth, let us meet first of all as human beings, not as representatives of different nations, beliefs or organisations. It is up to us to work together in good faith, respecting our individual conscience, and to make new steps towards mutual understanding in all walks of life, on the basis of transparency, truth and right speech.

GROUP MEDITATIONS

FULL MOON MEDITATIONS

Full Moon meditations of Aquarius, Pisces, Aries (Easter), Taurus (Wesak), Cancer, Virgo, Libra, Scapio and Sagittarius with the Arcane School Group in Geneva

Meditation during the second full moon of Taurus with the Foundation Unity of All Life in Lucern, Switzerland
Gemini Full Moon meditation (World Invocation Day) with the World Service Intergroup, Washington, USA

UNITED NATIONS STAFF PEACE MEDITATION GROUP
(Tuesdays at 13:00, Geneva time)

08.01.2008	UN Year of the potato – 2008
15.01.2008	Peace for the World
22.01.2008	Aquarius Full Moon
29.01.2008	International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World
05.02.2008	<i>Lumière de la sagesse, de la compréhension, de la connaissance</i> (Light of Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge)
12.02.2008	The Eternal Truth and Law: God is Love
19.02.2008	The Eight Winds
26.02.2008	We are points of light within a greater light
04.03.2008	UN International Women's Day; Four Noble Truths
11.03.2008	Contrast between Maya and Inspiration
18.03.2008	UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
25.03.2008	UN International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade
01.04.2008	<i>Le souffle extérieur et intérieur</i> (The Inner and Outer Breaths)
08.04.2008	Peace in our hands
15.04.2008	Energy of Light
22.04.2008	Self-forgetfulness, harmlessness and right speech
29.04.2008	The Blackbird
06.05.2008	Light to the global group work for the good of all
20.05.2008	Manifesto 2000 – Peace in our hands -
27.05.2008	The Great Invocation
03.06.2008	UN World Food Security and individual support by positive thinking
10.06.2008	Relationship of Light of all groups on Planet Earth serving the Common Good
09.09.2008	Human Rights – Spiritual Rights: Life
16.09.2008	The Law of Polarity and Duality
23.09.2008	Human Rights – Spiritual Rights: Brotherhood
07.10.2008	Affirmation of the disciple
14.10.2008	Human Rights – Spiritual Rights: Self-respect
28.10.2008	Human Rights - Spiritual Rights: Freedom of Movement
04.11.2008	<i>Le space de l'harmonie et les justes relations humaines</i> (A Space of Harmony and Right Human Relations)
11.11.2008	Human Rights – Spiritual Rights: Every Soul is a Master
18.11.2008	<i>Le space de la joie</i> (A Space of Joy)
25.11.2008	International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
09.12.2008	International Anti-Corruption Day
16.12.2008	Cosmic flower

* * *

IPS ACTIVITIES IN GENEVA AND THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

Study group on the Seven Rays, Lucern Switzerland

This monthly study group is organised by the Foundation Unity of All Life, and moderated by Rudolf Schneider, of the IPS.

18-20 April 2008, Kiev, Ukraine

8th International Forum on “Ethical and Spiritual Aspects of Human Development”

This Annual Forum focuses on new approaches to education, health, economical development, science and politics. It is organised by the Ankh Foundation, Kiev (ankh at adam.kiev.ua) and co-sponsored by the IPS. We were therefore invited to make an opening address of the Forum. Alice Boainain-Schneider read the address in English at the beginning of the Forum. She also had the opportunity to participate in an excursion to a sacred site near Kiev, and in a meditation at the centre and library of the Ankh Foundation, together with members of various spiritual groups from Kiev, Lvov, Odessa and Zaporozhye.

18 May 2008 – Geneva

18th General Assembly of the IPS

Rudolf Schneider, the Secretary-General of the IPS, welcomed the participants and opened the General Assembly, which started with the Taurus Full Moon meditation. He then presented a short history of the IPS, its aims and activities. In short, our work is to stand and continue to irradiate positive thoughts and energy in a world that is going through a crisis of orientation. Self-interest and materialistic values are today promoted worldwide, and our part is to continue to promote selflessness, harmlessness and right speech as a way of life, using the guidance and tools given by the Spiritual Hierarchy of the planet.

The IPS executive and consultative committees were then re-elected for the next 3 years, with a few modifications. In the afternoon, there was a general discussion on the world situation and current problems which participants perceived as a critical period of change on all levels of human life and relationships.

A more detailed report on the General Assembly can be downloaded from the IPS website, or will be mailed upon request to those without internet access.

21 June – 15 July 2008, Bolivia

During three weeks, Rudolf Schneider travelled to various cities in Bolivia: La Paz, Cochabamba, Sucre, Puka-Puka, Santa Cruz, Samaipata. He met spiritual groups, groups of teachers and students, and gave lectures and interviews on radio and television, visited local Aymara communities. The overall theme of the journey was “The human factor in our modern world and present temptations on a global scale”. In particular, he gave a seminar at the Universidad Nur in Santa Cruz, which is a university inspired by Baha’i teachings, and participated in the annual seminar of the Bolivian Unit of Service in Cochabamba, from 27-29 June, on the theme “Towards a Global Citizenship”.

Activities of IPS Congo

This IPS branch, based in Kinshasa, has various activities along the lines of meditation, study and service. It holds group meditations, group study, and has a small library of esoteric books. It networks with other spiritual groups, such as World Goodwill in Geneva, the World Goodwill Association in Quebec, Le Sentier in France, and with other organisations, such as the Compassion Response Network (<http://www.compassion-response.net>), to offer alternative treatment to HIV/AIDS patients, RENOSSEC (National Network for the Observation of Elections), Anamed (<http://www.anamed.net>), a natural therapy association working to promote the use of artemisia and moringa to treat malaria, diabetes, AIDS and other health conditions. Service activities include a vegetable and flower garden open for the use of the neighbourhood, cold water distribution, and a village development project.

On December 6, with financial support by the Maitreya Project/IPS Geneva, the IPS Congo organized in Kinshasa a public lecture on “La Bonne Volonté comme solution aux multiples problèmes actuels de l’humanité” (World Goodwill as the solution to the many problems of humanity). Also discussed were the triangle network as a means to strengthen the New Group of World Servers, and the Great Invocation.

GROUP CONTACTS AND ACTIVITIES

29-30 January 2008, Palexpo, Geneva

International AID+TRADE: Building Partnerships for Relief and Development

International Exhibition, and Workshops on humanitarian relief and sustained development
Organization: International Aid + Trade, www.aidandtrade.org, phone: +44(0)20-7871-0188.

Schweizerische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Freie Energie, SAFE (Swiss Association for Free Energy), Secretariat: Werner Rusterholz, P.O.Box 2337, CH-8645 Jona, Switzerland, tel. +41(0)55-282.53.21, fax +41(0)55-282.53.23, e-mail: rusterholz at active.ch, <http://www.safeswiss.org>. SAFE is an association of like-minded people with the aim of researching and making known free or space energy. It organizes conferences and open discussions to further contacts and exchanges of experiences.

9 February 2008, Baden – Vortrag über den Projekt Bedini-Generator. Referenten: Steffen Finger, Industrieelektroniker und Carl Jachulke, Systemelektroniker, Gründer der Raumergie-Förder-Gesellschaft Rafög, www.rafoeg.de) Presentation of the Bedini Generator Project by Steffen Finger, electronic engineer, and Carl Jachulke, electronic systems engineer, founders of the Association for the Promotion of Space Energy.

8 March 2008, Zürich – Ordentliche Generalversammlung – Annual General Assembly

30 August 2008, Zürich - Vortrag über Absolute Energie & AnEx Information (Anergie/Exergie-Information). Referent: Sven Kuch (Bern), Dipl.-Ing. Verfahrenstechnik. Presentation on Absolute Energy & AnEx Information (Anergie/Exergie Information), by Sven Kuch (Bern), industrial processes engineer

9 April 2008, Zürich – Tages-Seminar über den Thema “Synchronisation und Kohärenz als Organisationsprinzipien zellulärer Kommunikation: Begegnen sich die Forschung am Front-End moderner quantenmechanisch motivierter westlicher Ansätze und die Ergebnisse der russischen bio-psychophysikalisch motivierten FE-Forschungen im 20. Jahrhundert in einem neuen Paradigma zum non-lokalen Verständnis der Genfunktion?”. Referent: Dr. Uwe Kämpf (Biophysik, Neurowissenschaften, Psychologie TU Dresden). One day seminar on “Synchronisation and Coherence as Organisational Principles of Cellular Communication: Does the front-end research of modern western approaches based on quantum mechanics converge in the XX century with the results of Russian front-end research based on bio-psychophysics into a new paradigm involving a non-local understanding of genetic function?” Speaker: Dr. Uwe Kämpf (biophysics, neurology, psychology, Technical University of Dresden)

27 September 2008, Olten – Vortrag über die einheitliche Quantenfeldtheorie Burkhard Heims. Referentin: Elisabeth Lehmann (Mathematikerin, SAFE-Vorstandsmitglied). Presentation on Burkhard Heims’ unified quantum field theory, by Elisabeth Lehmann, mathematician and member of SAFE Executive Committee

15 November 2008, Zürich – Vortrag über die Grundlagen der Orgontheorie Wilhelm Reichs. Referenten: Dr. phil. Andreas Hellmann (SAFE-Präsident) und Dr. phil. nat. Frank Stöcklin (Vorstandsmitglied). Presentation of the Fundamentals of Wilhelm Reich’s Orgon Theory by SAFE President, Dr. Andreas Hellmann, and Dr. Frank Stöcklin, member of SAFE Executive Committee.

10 December 2008, Olten - Vortrag von Hermann Dettwiler, von der Firma DetTechnologies (www.det.ch) über 30 Jahre Forschungsarbeiten mit dem umstülpbaren Würfel (mit Ausstellung von Geräten). Presentation by Hermann Dettwiler of 30 years research on the invertible cube (with exhibition of machines developed by the company DetTechnologies (www.det.ch)).

21-22 February 2008, Geneva

13th Humanitarian Conference on the theme “Children at Risk”, addressing the following issues:

- Education: From Personal to Global Development
- Children Count: The Demographic Impact
- The Elimination of Child Labour
- Children in Complex Emergencies
- Child Soldiers

Organisation: Webster University Geneva, 15 route de Collex, CH-1293 Bellevue/Geneva, Switzerland, tel. +41-22-959-8000, e-mail: admissions at webster.ch, www.webster.ch.

28 February 2008, Geneva

Presentation on Cultural Expression, Traditional Knowledge and Land Rights: The case of the Mbororo indigenous people of Cameroon

Organisation: Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association (MBOSCUDA), P.O. Box 221 Bamenda, Cameroon, tel. +237 77948617, 77789487, e-mail: mboscuda at yahoo.co.uk, www.Mboscuda.org.

MBOSCUDA was founded in 1992 to empower the Mbororo pastoral people in Cameroon to achieve sustainable and equitable development on their own terms and to secure their human, social, cultural and economic rights as valued active citizens of Cameroon. It is based on the belief that it is only the Mbororo community that can identify, examine and find possible solutions to the major problems affecting them as a people. African ethics, culture and knowledge is traditionally based on oral transmission, and MBOSCUDA also aims at recording and protecting this knowledge and values.

28 February 2008, Geneva

Présentation sur “**Pic pétrolier, 11 septembre, guerre contre le terrorisme: quels sont les liens?**”. Presentation on “Peak Oil, September 11, War on Terror: What Links?”

Organisation: Association “Le 11 septembre en question”, www.11septembre.ch, www.reopen911.ch.

Peak oil is a term used to designate the maximum oil production, before starting to decline. The idea that oil production is running out is considered to be at the roots of decisions involving oil-producing nations in the Middle East, including the war on terror and US invasion of Irak.

Asociación Española para el Desarrollo y la Aplicación del Derecho Internacional de los Derechos Humanos (AEDIDH) - Spanish Society for the Advancement of International Human Rights Law (SSAIHRL) (Contact address: aedidh at yahoo.es or david.fernandez-puyana at orange.fr, www.aedidh.org). The AEDIDH leads a campaign to have the human right to peace, as defined in the Luarca Declaration, which is supported by the government of Catalunya and recognised by the international community. The Luarca Declaration is available in several languages at the AEDIDH website. We recommend that anyone who is interested in promoting peace read this declaration. David Fernandez Puyana, AEDIDH representative, is also one of the IPS representatives at the UN in Geneva. Members of the IPS often attend the events organised by AEDIDH in Geneva, and co-sign written statements presented by the AEDIDH at various UN fora.

7 March 2008, Geneva: Panel on "Extreme Poverty and Human Right to Peace"

12 September 2008, Geneva: Panel on "Indigenous Peoples and the Human Right to Peace"

19 September 2008, Geneva: Commemoration of the International Day of Peace

Forum Suisse de Politique Internationale (Swiss Forum for International Relations), P.O.Box 135 Champel, CH-1211 Geneva 12, Switzerland, tel. +41(2)22-311.24.24, fax +41(0)22-311.25.56, e-mail: fspi at gcsp.ch. The FSPI is a Geneva-based association which organises conferences on international relations issues, such as European integration, conflicts in the Middle East and Africa, US politics, the role of the UN and WTC, etc. These conferences are open to the public, and we recommend them to anyone who is in Switzerland and interested in international politics.

7 March 2008, Geneva – Célébration du 10e anniversaire du FSPI. Orateurs: Sandrine Salerno, conseillère administrative de la Ville de Genève, Laurent Moutinot, président du Conseil d'Etat de la République et Canton de Genève, Serguéï Orzhonikidzé, secrétaire général adjoint des Nations Unies et directeur général de l'Office des Nations Unies à Genève, Micheline Calmy-Rey, conseillère fédérale Suisse, qui a fait un exposé sur "Les priorités de la politique étrangère de la Suisse". Celebration of FSPI 10th anniversary. Speakers: Sandrine Salerno, administrative councillor of the City of Geneva, Laurent Moutinot, president of the Council of State of the Republic and Canton of Geneva, Serguéï Orzhonikidzé, vice-secretary general of the UN and general director of the Office of the United Nations in Geneva, Micheline Calmy-Rey, Swiss federal councillor, who talked about "The priorities of Swiss foreign policy".

24 June 2008, Geneva – Colloquium Edouard Brunner (1932-2007)

21 November 2008, Geneva - Assemblée Générale, suivie d'une conférence débat sur "Faut-il avoir peur de la Russie?" avec Eric Hoesli, directeur des quotidiens 24 heures et Tribune de Genève. General Assembly followed by a conference-debate on "Should We Be Afraid of Russia?" with Eric Hoesli, chief editor of the newspapers "24 heures" and "Tribune de Genève".

17 March 2008, Geneva

Annual Memorial Lecture for Sergio Vieira de Mello, by Kofi Annan

Organisation: Sergio Vieira de Mello Foundation, 29 rue des Allobroges, CH-1227 Carouge/Geneva, Switzerland, tel. +41-22-5481315, e-mail: info at sergioovdmfoundation.org, www.sergioovdmfoundation.org, and Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies of the University of Geneva.

On 19 August 2003, an attack against the United Nations Headquarters in Baghdad killed Sergio Vieira de Mello, Special Representative of the U.N. Secretary-General, and 21 of his colleagues. Sergio had gone to Baghdad to explore ways for the international community to play a constructive role in the early stages of the military intervention in Irak. He was a humanist by spirit, convinced of the need for openness and respect for all traditions. "The progress of humanity depends on being open to all currents of thought and action", he stated in his doctoral thesis "Civitas Maxima". The Sergio Vieira de Mello Foundation was established to continue Sergio's mission and fulfil his vision through an Annual Prize awarded each year to individuals, institutions or communities in recognition of their work for peaceful reconciliation between peoples and parties in conflict; an Annual Memorial Lecture in Geneva; a Fellowship for young people whose families were victims of humanitarian crises; advocating for the security and independence of humanitarian actors; and sporting initiatives and efforts to promote peaceful reconciliation and co-existence between peoples and communities divided by conflict.

20 April 2008, Lucern

One day seminar on "**Sanathana Sai Sanjeevini**" (Healing with Prayers), a spiritual healing method that awakens the inherent healing energy of the body.

Organisation: Sanjeevini-Bëro, Buchbinderei Fuchs, Zeller Bundesstrasse 4, A-5760 Saalfelden, Austria, tel. +41-6582/7520316, fax +43-6582-7520313, e-mail: centrum at saisanjeevini.com, www.saisanjeevini.com.

7-8 June 2008

Annual Conference of the Arcane School in Geneva, on the keynote: “When a human crisis and a hierarchical crisis coincide, an hour of opportunity emerges. Let the group respond”. Rudolf Schneider spoke on the theme “Participating Subjectively in the Major International Conferences”. The text of this lecture is attached to this newsletter.

Organisation: Arcane School, 1 rue de Varembé (3rd floor), P.O.Box 31, CH-1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland, www.lucitrust.org.

13-20 June 2008, Washington – **Annual Conclave of the World Service Intergroup**

The WSI is an international network of Ageless Wisdom groups committed to developing intergroup contact, cooperation and synthetic, subjective work. It has been meeting each year since 1996 during one of the Three Spiritual Festivals in various locations around the world including the five planetary centres of New York, London, Geneva, Darjeeling and Tokyo. The purpose of the World Service Intergroup is to generate a focused, conscious and deliberate intergroup effort to specifically assist the externalisation of the Hierarchy and the reappearance of the Christ. For further information, see its website: www.synthesis.tc.

24 June 2008, Geneva

Annual conference and General Assembly of the Institut Alcor, with talks and open discussion on the topic “Un Regard sur le XXe siècle” – “An Overview of the XX Century”, with presentations on the 1914-1945 World War, the spiritual origin of scientific technologies, the downfall of ideals, followed on 25 June by annual meeting of Sponsorship Committee in Lucinges, Haute-Savoie, France. Rudolf and Alice Schneider (IPS) are members of the Sponsorship Committee.

Organisation: **Institut Alcor** (5 chemin pré de lug, CH-1258 Certoux, Switzerland, and BP 50182, F-63174 AUBIERES, www.institut-alcor.org, e-mail: contact at institut-alcor.org). The two main aims of Alcor Institute are to bring people into contact with their spiritual being, and to contribute to an understanding of the etheric energy matrix underlying the physical world

The Women’s World Summit Foundation (WWSF, e-mail: wwsf at wwsf.ch, tel. +41-22-7386619, www.woman.ch) works for a new development paradigm with and for women and children. Its main objective is to empower women, children and NGOs. WWSF programs serve to help implement women's and children's rights, to generate increased commitment and support for the realization of agreed development goals, and to hold world leaders accountable to their promises made at numerous UN summits and international conferences.

15 October 2008, Geneva

Celebration of three important World Days, all contributing to achieving the Millennium Development Goals: UN International Day of Rural Women (15 October), FAO World Food Day (16 October), UN Day for the Eradication of Poverty (17 October). Theme: Rural Women Feed the World/The Right to Development.

19 November 2008, Geneva

Conférence sur “Progrès dans la prévention des abus envers les enfants; Etat des lieux annuel”, à l’occasion de la journée mondiale pour la prévention des abus et de la violence envers les enfants. Conference on “Progresses made for the prevention of child abuse and violence against children: yearly report” on the occasion of the World Day for the Prevention of Child Abuse.

1 November 2008, Geneva

Forum de la Bonne Volonté Mondiale sur “Droits Humains, Responsabilités spirituelles: une crise de la Démocratie?” - World Goodwill Forum on “Human Rights, Spiritual Responsibilities: a crisis for democracy?”

Organisation: World goodwill, 1 rue de Varembé, P.O.Box 31, CH-1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland, tel. +41-22-7341252, fax +41-22-7400911, e-mail: geneva at lucitrust.org, www.lucitrust.org.

4 November 2008, Geneva

Public lecture on “**Momentum for the Regional Integration in East-Asia**” by Mako Miyagawa, Consul General of Japan, Geneva

Organisation: Association Genève-Asie/Centre d’études asiatiques (IHEID), 63 rue de Lausanne, CH-1202 Geneva, tel. +41-22-9085820, fax +41-22-7383996, e-mail: mariejo.duc at graduateinstitute.ch, website: www.graduateinstitute.ch.

24 November 2008, Geneva

General Assembly of the “Fédération des Institutions Internationales semi-officielles et privées établies à Genève” (FIIG), CIC P.O.Box 20, CH-1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland, tel. +41-22-7336717, fax +41-22-7347082, e-mail: c.ritchie at fiig.org, website: www.fiig.org.

Fondée en juin 1929 par 39 organisations internationales non-gouvernementales, la Fédération des Institutions Internationales semi-officielles et privées établies à Genève a pour but de faciliter l’établissement et

l'action des organismes internationaux non gouvernementaux ou mixtes à Genève et de promouvoir et défendre leurs intérêts.

FIIG was founded in June 1929 by 39 international NGOs, and is hence one of the oldest NGO federations. Its aim is to help the establishment and the activities of NGOs in Geneva, and to promote and defend their interests.

2 December 2008

Conference on "**Chinese medicine at the service of human well being and for healing serious diseases**", with Dr. Ang, Chinese Nature-Cure Institute, 545 Orchard Road #03-06, Far East Shopping Centre, Singapore 238882.

Organisation: Club Santé-Bien être de l'ONU, c/o Muriel Scibilia, +41-79-4698574, e-mail: clubsante at unog.ch.

Dr. Ang talked about a new system of Chinese medicine based on acupuncture and embryology. It postulates the capacity of the organism to heal itself, once the appropriate energy stimulus is applied.

18 December 2008, Geneva

Film and Debate on "**Holy Mary – Women and Religion**"

Organisation: Fondation Islamique & Culturelle d'Ahi-El-Beit(s), 6 route des Acacias, CH-1227 Acacias /Geneva, e-mail: info.fica at 12imam.ch, www.12imam.ch and associationhamrahi.e-monsite.com.

This film showed that Mary is respected not only in the Christian faith, but also among Muslims.

20 December 2008, Geneva

Event "**Lumière pour l'Humanité**" / "**Light for Humanity**": sharing music and words of wisdom with Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary General, Laurent Moutinot, President of Geneva State Council, Cornelio Sommaruga, former President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and others.

Organisation: Association de l'Appel Spirituel de Genève, P.O.Box 2483, CH-1211 Geneva 21, www.aasg.ch.

COOPERATION WITH NGO COMMITTEES

NGO-Forum for Health, Geneva (Chair: Alan Leather, e-mail: alan.leather at gmail.com)

18 January 2008, Geneva – Brainstorming session for NGO's and country representatives: Preparation of the 122nd session of the WHO Executive Board

18 February 2008, Geneva - Mental Health: Compassion and Action

24 April 2008, Geneva - General Assembly – Election of a new steering group and officers

28 July 2008, Geneva - Mental Health for All

10 October 2008, Geneva - Making Mental Health a Global Priority

Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns/Geneva (email: secretariat at csvgc-geneva.org, website: www.csvgc-geneva.org)

4 February 2008 - Proposal for a UN Decade of Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace

26 March 2008 - Proposal for a Carrefour/Forum of NGOs, missions and interested parties to be established in Geneva

12 June 2008 – Religions and Women's Rights

14 October - Preparation for election of new officers, creation of Action Groups and presentation by Maria Lucia Uribe on "Learning to live together"

11 November 2008 - General Meeting: Clarification of Rules and By Laws, Ethics and Values in daily life

11 December 2008 - Rules and Regulations; Appointment of Nominating Committee

Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning, Geneva (Contact person: Kazunari Fujii, e-mail: sgjungv@bluewin.ch, tel. +41-22-755 27 00)

The NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning was created on 15 April 2006, within the framework of CONGO. The NGO WG was set up in order to effectively ensure the participation of NGOs in the processes of global policy making on human rights education in relation to the UN institutions, principally the UN Human Rights Council and other relevant bodies. The new Human Rights Council has included in the central concerns the promotion of "human rights education and learning as well as advisory services, technical assistance and capacity building (...)" (GA Resolution 60/251 on the establishment of Human Rights Council, para. 5). Human rights education and learning concerns not only primary and secondary education, it is necessary at all ages and walks of life.

5 February 2008 - Preparation of the plan of a Civil Society Forum on HREL 2009

15 April 2008 - Plan for the 8th Session of the Human Rights Council
18 September 2008 - Plan for the 10th Session of the Human Rights Council
4 November 2008 - Preparation for the 10th Session of the Human Rights Council: Joint statements and a series of parallel events

NGO Committee on Freedom of Religion and Belief (Contact: John Taylor, International Association for Religious Freedom, e-mail: echappee at bluewin.ch)

22 April 2008 – Election of office holders
23 September, 16 October 2008 - meetings

CONGO (Conference of NGOs with Consultative Status at the United Nations)

(Postal address in Geneva: CP 50, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland, tel: +41-22-3011000, fax: +41-22-3012000, e-mail: congo at ngocongo.org, website: www.ngocongo.org)

16 March 2008, Geneva - NGO Strategic Meeting and workshops on human rights education and learning, gender and other issues
27 March 2008, Geneva - NGO debriefing on the 7th session on the Human Rights Council
10, 11, 16 April 2008, Geneva - Briefing on daily Universal Periodic Reviews
11 April 2008, Geneva – Meeting and discussion with Liberato Bautista, new CONGO President
28 April 2008 – Annual meeting of the Association “Friends of CONGO”
6 May 2008, Geneva - NGO Orientation Session on the Universal Periodic Reviews
29 July 2008, Geneva – Presentation on the outcome of the New York Component of CONGO’s Civil Society Development Forum 2008 and on CONGO’s participation at ECOSOC’s Substantive Session
27-28 October 2008, Geneva - Civil Society Development Forum 2008
4 December 2008, Vienna – Celebration of 60 Years Universal Declaration of Human Rights and 60 years CONGO

Committee on the Status of Women, Geneva (President: Conchita Poncini, International Federation of University Women, Champ Carré 7, 1256 Troinex/Geneva, Switzerland, tel/fax: +41-22-343-3766, e-mail: conchita.poncini at bluewin.ch)

16 September 2008 – “Gender Balance in the Phillipines”, with Ambassador Erlinda Basilio, Phillipines, and the Vice-President of the Office of the Human Rights Council
12 December 2008 - Roundtable on “Les valeurs traditionnelles africaines significatives pour la paix et la non violence dans la sous région des Grands Lacs” – “Traditional African Values of significance for peace and non-violence in the Great Lake subregion”
Organisation: Bangwe + Dialogue, c/o Centre de liaison des associations féminines genevoises (CLAFG), 2 place de la Synagogue, CH-1205 Geneva, e-mail: colette_samoya at yahoo.fr. *In Burundi, it was the custom that in case of conflict amongst members of the same family, when the conflict reached a fighting stage, a woman would stand between the fighters and shout “Bangwe!”. The quarrel stopped immediately.*

PARTICIPATION IN UN MEETINGS

Human Rights Council

The Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body within the UN system made up of 47 States responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe. The Council was created by the UN General Assembly on 15 March 2006 with the main purpose of addressing situations of human rights violations and make recommendations on them.

One year after holding its first meeting, on 18 June 2007, the Council adopted its “Institution-building package” providing elements to guide it in its future work. Among the elements is the new Universal Periodic Review mechanism which will assess the human rights situations in all 192 UN Member States. Other features include a new Advisory Committee which serves as the Council’s “think tank” providing it with expertise and advice on thematic human rights issues and the revised Complaints Procedure mechanism which allows individuals and organizations to bring complaints about human rights violations to the attention of the Council. The Human Rights Council also continues to work closely with the UN Special Procedures established by the former Commission on Human Rights and assumed by the Council.

The meetings of the HRC are held in Geneva. In 2008, it met on the following dates:

23-24 January – 6th Special session on human rights violations emanating from Israeli military incursions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the recent ones in occupied Gaza and West Bank town of Nab-
lus
3-28 March – 7th regular session

22 May – 7th Special session on the negative impact on the realization of the right to food of the worsening of the world food crisis, caused *inter alia* by the soaring food prices
2-18 June – 8th regular session
8 September – 9th regular session
8 November – 8th Special session on the situation of the human rights in the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

During the HRC sessions, the NGO Liaison Office of the HRC Secretariat organises information and orientation sessions for NGOs, often in cooperation with CONGO. Here is a list of HRC meetings and information sessions attended by IPS co-workers:

5 February 2008 – Meeting with the President of the HRC for the upcoming seventh regular session of the HRC (March 3-28)

18 February 2008 – HR Council Organizational Meeting for the next session March 3-28, 2008

11 March 2008 – HRC – Item 3: Disappearances, sale of children, torture

14 March 2008 – HRC – Review, rationalization and improvements of mandates

25 March 2008 – Meeting of the Human Rights Council Bureau with NGOs

28 March 2008 – HRC – Right to Water; Prevention of Genocide

2 April 2008 – Informal Briefing by HRC President on UPR strategies

4 April 2008 – Informal Meeting on UPR non-paper

7 April 2008 – Universal Periodic Review 1st Session – UPR Alert – Bahrain

11 April 2008 – UPR on the Philippines

14 April 2008 – UPR on Poland

16 April 2008 – UPR on Argentina

9 May 2008 – UPR on Japan

28 May 2008 – NGO Meeting with HRC President: Preparation for upcoming 8th session

11 June 2008 – NGO Meeting with HRC President: UPR, an intergovernmental process

17 September 2008 – Meeting between the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and NGOs

At the same time as the HRC meets, many NGOs organise parallel events in Geneva, dealing with particular human rights situations or issues in the world. Here are a few of these events which we attended.

24 January 2008, Geneva

Parallel event on “Côte d’Ivoire, un exemple de la réconciliation et de paix en Afrique” (“Ivory Coast, an example of reconciliation and peace in Africa”)

Organisation: World Organization for Peace and WCC (World Council of Churches)

14 March 2008, Geneva

Parallel event on “Humanitarian and Human Rights Crisis in post-electoral Kenya”

Organisation: Franciscans International

17 March 2008, Geneva

Panel on “Civil Society Involvement in the Universal Periodic Review – the example of Indonesia”

Organisation: Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung Geneva Office, Chemin du Point-du-Jour 6bis, CH-1202 Geneva, Switzerland, tel. +41-22-7333450, fax +41-22-7333545, e-mail: info at fes-geneva.org, www.fes-geneva.org

18 March 2008, Geneva

Panel on “Human Rights and Humanitarian Crisis in Colombia”

Organisation: Colombian Commission of Jurists

20 March 2008, Geneva

Panel on “Human Rights for Elder People”

Organisation: NGO Committee on Ageing, Geneva . Contact: 16, Rue Butini, CH-1202 Geneva, Switzerland, tel/fax: +41 (0)22 738 05 51, e-mail: astrid.stuckelbergerl at sgg-ssg.ch

Interfaith International Geneva Office, P.O. Box 32, CH-1246 Corsier, Switzerland, tel. +41-22-7512345, fax +41-22-7512348, e-mail: charlesgraves at vtx.ch, www.interfaithonline.org.

Interfaith International aims to provide a space to its members and associates to promote the rights of persons of all different religions and ethnic groups. At present its main project is to provide an opportunity for Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Christians, Jews, those of Indigenous religions and others to speak before the sessions of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and its various subsidiary organs about human rights problems.

19 March 2008 – Panel on “Towards a Confederation of Peoples in South Asia”

25 March 2008 – Presentation on “Oil Rights and Refugee Rights in Iraq” by Mr. Mohammed Jwad Al-Ahadh

25 March 2008 – Presentation on “The Role of Sindh for Interfaith Harmony” by Mr. Khadim Hussain Soomro from Karachi/Pakistan

26 March 2008 – Audience tripartite pour la définition d'une stratégie de promotion du dialogue interculturel et interreligieux au Conseil des droits de l'homme – Tripartite hearing for the definition of a strategy to promote the interreligious and intercultural dialogue at the Human Rights Council

28 April 2008 – “AN NGO Forum for the Durban Review Conference 2009?”

5 June 2008 – “Sahara Autonomy – Realistic Solution to a Humanitarian Tragedy”

30 April 2008 – “Actions entreprises pour la mise en oeuvre effective du programme d'action de Durban au niveau national, régional et international: quels sont les résultats obtenus dans la lutte contre le racisme 6 ans après Durban?” – Actions taken to effectively implement the Durban Plan of Action at national, regional and international levels: what are the results obtained in the combat against racism six years after Durban?”

9 September 2008 – Human Rights Situation in India

18 September 2008 – “Forum Interculturel et Interreligieux” – Intercultural and Interreligious Forum

23 September 2008 – Open dialogue on the Kashmir Issue, Terrorism and Human Rights

29 April 2008, Geneva

Panel on “Combating Anti-Black Racism Globally: from Slavery to the Durban Review Conference”

Organisation: African Canadian Legal Clinic and Swedish Centre Against Racism

27 May 2008, Geneva

Panel on “South-South co-operation in the field of science and technology transfer”

Organisation: Commission on Science and Technology for Development

15 September 2008, Geneva

Panel on “The independence of Judges and International Tribunals: Keeping Justice In and Politics Out”, including discussion of the indictment of President Omar Al-Basher (Sudan), the trial of President Saddam Hussein (Iraq), the Al-Hriri tribunal (Lebanon)

Organisation: Union of Arab Jurists

16 September 2008, Geneva

Parallel event on “Drug Policy and Human Rights”

Organisation: Human Rights Watch

17 September 2008, Geneva

Panel on “Religion and Freedom of Expression in the Human Rights Council – is freedom of expression under threat in the Human Rights Council itself? How can the Council deal with challenges to human rights based on religion? Do religions need protection from defamation?”

Organisation: International Humanist and Ethical Union, Association for World Education, Center for Inquiry

22 September 2008

Panel on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 60 – viewed from the Paris NGO DPI Conference

Organisation: World Alliance for Citizen Participation (CIVICUS), 1420 K Street NW, Suite 900, Washington DC, 20005, USA, tel. +1-202-3318518, fax +1-202-3318774, e-mail: info at civicus.org, www.civicus.org.

CIVICUS, World Alliance for Citizen Participation, is an international movement with members in more than 100 countries. It is dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society throughout the world. Its vision is of a worldwide community of informed, inspired, committed citizens engaged in confronting the challenges facing humanity.

Other intergovernmental organisations

11 January 2008, Geneva

Conférence pour l'ensemble du personnel: “**Enfants et adultes traumatisés: influence de la culture dans la capacité des individus à surmonter les difficultés**”, par Boris Cyrulnik. Conference for all staff: “**Traumatized children and adults: influence of culture on individual capacity to overcome difficulties**”, with Boris Cyrulnik

Organisation: UN Office in Geneva

15 January 2008, Geneva

Presentation by Mr. Patrick Low, Director of the Economic Research and Statistics Division of WTO, on “Global Economic Prospects: Technology diffusion in the developing world 2008”

Organisation: World Bank Group in Geneva

Geneva International Network on Ageing (GINA)

GINA was launched on 1 October 1996 as an initiative of the World Health Organization (WHO), the Swiss Research Programme on Ageing (PNR32) and the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP). GINA

is a flexible, informal and interdisciplinary framework for organizations and their representatives interested in the many different aspects of ageing.

GINA's membership consists of the representatives of organizations which have programme activities focusing on ageing issues. Included are: United Nations organizations headquartered in Geneva, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as Swiss and Geneva organizations or institutions concerned with research, training and/or services to older persons, as well as associations of older persons themselves. Address: GINA, P.O.Box 413, CH-1211 Geneva, Switzerland. Fax: (41) 22-791-48-39.

21 April 2008 – General Assembly

26 May 2008 – Conference on “AgeQuake in Health Systems: Imperatives of an Ageing Population”, in cooperation with the NGO Committee on Ageing (CONGO) at the UN in Geneva

26 August 2008 – General Assembly

1 October 2008 – Inter-religious service on “Cultures and Religions for all Ages?”, to commemorate the UN International Day of Older Persons

5 November 2008 – General Assembly

29 April 2008, Geneva

Inaugural Lecture of the Geneva Lecture Series, a joint UNGO/UNITAR initiative to address global challenges. Speaker: UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, on “Are the development goals doomed to fail?"/ Conférence inaugurale des “Rendez-vous Mondiaux de Genève”, une initiative conjointe ONUG/UNITAR pour répondre aux défis contemporains. Intervenant: Ban Ki-Moon, secrétaire général des Nations Unies, sur “Les objectifs de développement sont-ils voués à l'échec”

3-5 September 2008, UNESCO, Paris

61st Annual Conference of the Department of Public Information for NGOs

Four IPS representatives (Rudolf Schneider, France Maître, Aïsha Guennoun and Francis Jocqueviel) attended this annual DPI/NGO Conference, which was held this year in Paris to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

To mark this anniversary, the conference focussed on the theme “Reaffirming Human Rights for All: The Universal Declaration at 60”. More than 2000 NGOs and other civil society partners from 90 countries attended the three-day event, which included five round table discussions followed by break-out sessions offering the opportunity for more in-depth discussion and sharing of experiences.

The themes of the five round table discussions were the following:

Upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Overcoming Discrimination to Realize Human Rights and Dignity for All

Human Rights and Human Security

Human Rights Education and Learning as a Way of Life

Addressing Gross Human Rights Violations: Prevention and Accountability

17 October 2008, Geneva

Celebration of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, on the theme “Human Rights and Dignity of People Living in Poverty”

Organisation. UN Office in Geneva, Fourth World

The theme of this year's celebration highlighted the links between human rights and extreme poverty, as well as the growing recognition that extreme poverty is a violation of human dignity. The ceremony was linked to the Millennium campaign “Stand Up and Take Action” to eradicate extreme poverty.

Journée internationale pour l'élimination de la pauvreté, sur le thème: “Droits de l'homme et dignité pour les personnes vivant dans la pauvreté”.

Ce thème met l'accent sur les liens entre droits de l'homme et extrême pauvreté et souligne, comme cela est de plus en plus reconnu, que l'extrême pauvreté constitue une violation de la dignité humaine. Cette cérémonie s'inscrit dans le cadre de la campagne de mobilisation en faveur des objectifs du Millénaire, sous le slogan “Debout et agissez” pour éliminer l'extrême pauvreté.

21 November 2008, UNESCO Paris

UNESCO organised a whole day of meetings and workshops with NGO on “**Human Rights Today: An ongoing fight for Democracy. What challenges for NGOs?**”, as a follow-up to the 61st DPI/NGO Annual Conference. It offered the opportunity for NGOs to meet and discuss strategies and projects for promoting human rights. Besides plenary sessions, it included three parallel workshops on the following themes:

Obstacles to the Implementation of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Implementation of the Declaration: What changes?

Education and Human Rights for the 21st century

19 December 2008, Geneva

International Forum on Universal Shared Values: Challenges and New Paradigms

Organisation: Permanent Observer Mission of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to the United Nations Offices in Geneva and Vienna (20 Route de Pré-Bois, CP1818, CH-1215 Geneva 15, tel : +41-22-7886000 or +41-22-9290390, fax : +41-22-788 6003, e-mail : oic at oic-un.org, website: www.oic-un.org.

This high-level conference gathered representatives of various Islamic organisations and international governmental organisations. The themes of the two sessions were “Human Rights and Cultural Diversity – Challenges and Perspectives”, and “Inter-institutional Dialogue on Development Issues and Humanitarian Assistance”.

PARTICIPATION IN MEETINGS OF GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

6 February 2008, Maison des Parlements, Geneva

Conférence-débat à l’occasion de la Journée Internationale de Tolérance zéro pour les mutilations génitales féminines (MGF): Que faire pour mettre fin à la pratique néfaste des MGF? - Conference-debate during the International Day of Zero Tolerance of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): What to do to put an end to the harmful practice of FGM?

Organization: Département des institutions de l’Etat de Genève (State of Geneva Department of Institutions), Union interparlementaire (UIP – Interparliamentary Union), Organisation internationale des Migrations (OIM – International Organization for Migration) and Comité inter-africain (CIAF – Inter-African Committee)

6 October 2008, Geneva

6e Rassemblement pour les Droits Humans: Liberté de croyance, Tolérance, Respect et Cohabitation dans une société laïque – 6th Human Rights Gathering: Freedom of Belief, Tolerance, Respect and Coexistence in a Lay Society

Organisation: Geneva Council of State, rue de l’Hôtel-de-Ville 14, CH-1202 Geneva, tel. +41-22-327 2500, fax +41-22-327 0600, website: www.geneve.ch

ENCLOSURES

Calendar of World Celebrations

“Participating Subjectively in the Major International Conferences”, by Rudolf Schneider

In order to help reduce spam mail, all email addresses in the newsletter are written out: to recover the original email address, write @ instead of “at”, without any spaces.