

NEWSLETTER

January 2015

I. MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF CoNGO

A personal affirmation from Cyril Ritchie, President of CoNGO

"I AM CHARLIE"

Because, like all NGOs, I am committed to freedom of opinion and freedom of expression

Because, like all NGOs, I am committed to democracy, human rights and the rule of law

Because, like all NGOs, I am committed to tolerance, consultation, human relationship

Because, like all NGOs, I am committed to peace, understanding and dialogue

Because, like all NGOs, I am committed to justice, education and equality.

I thank Nathalie Schenker for once more producing the CoNGO E-NEWSLETTER. Nathalie was a CoNGO intern for the last months of 2014, and though now in full-time employment is continuing her excellent service as a volunteer. Deep thanks, Nathalie.

Cyril Ritchie
President of CoNGO

II. UN NEWS & UPCOMING UN EVENTS

International Decade for People of African Descent

With the resolution 68/237 the UN General Assembly proclaimed the years 2015-2024 as the International Decade for People of African Descent with the theme "People of African descent: recognition, justice and development". With this decade, the international community is recognizing that people of African descent represent a distinct group whose human rights must be promoted and protected.

Around 200 million people that are identifying themselves as being of African descent live in the Americas. Many millions more live in other parts of the world, outside of the African continent. "We must remember that people of African descent are among those most affected by racism. Too often, they face denial of basic rights such as access to quality health services and education", said UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon. Whether as descendants of the victims of the transatlantic slave trade or as more recent migrants, they constitute some of the poorest

and most marginalized groups. In addition, people of African descent can suffer from multiple, aggravated or intersecting forms of discrimination based on other related grounds, such as age, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, social origin, property, disability, birth, or other status.

Building on the International Year for People of African Descent in 2011, the plan of action brings together governments, civil society and all other relevant actors to take effective measures for the implementation of the programme of activities in the spirit of recognition, justice and development.

For further information please visit:

<http://www.un.org/en/events/africandescentdecade/index.shtml>

UN World Food Programme (WFP)

Five years after the Haitian earthquake progress is threatened by poverty and inequality

Five years after the devastating earthquake in Haiti that killed 200'000 people, the UN World Food Programme (WFP) calls for more funding to continue building more resilient communities that will withstand future disasters.

“Persistent chronic poverty and inequality, environmental degradation and continuing political uncertainty threaten achievements Haitians have made over the past five years”, WFP’s representative in Haiti, Wendy Bigham, warned. Thus, the WFP requires about \$28 million in 2015 to provide essential food to the three million Haitians that still remain unsure where their next meal will come from. Since 2010, WFP has helped create over 200'000 job opportunities and has trained smallholder farmers’ associations.

As a result of its geography, Haiti is highly prone to natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods, landslides and droughts. In such a context poverty means that even moderate shocks can push people into hunger.

In the hours after the earthquake struck on 12 January 2010, WFP began distributing emergency food. This helped avert a food crisis. The food that WFP has been providing with its partners is, for example, flour mixed with vitamins and minerals as well as bulgur wheat, cooking oil and beans. By strengthening nutrition now, vulnerable Haitians will be stronger and healthier the next time a disaster strikes.

source: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=49760#.VLVoyyuG9yU>

OHCHR

Civil Society Space and the United Nations Human Rights System – A practical guide for civil society

At its essence, civil society work, irrespective of its content, is about equitable redistribution of power and control over peoples' lives back to people themselves: raising awareness of issues;

helping others articulate concerns; shaping laws and policies; pressing for accountability; providing support to groups at risk, etc. It is human rights work. And it is in the interests of all civil society actors to build awareness and solidarity on how to further promote and safeguard their space to work.

Members States, the international community, and civil society together must acknowledge the value of civil society's contribution, build the capacity of marginalised voices, ensure a place at the table for civil society actors, and safeguard their activities.

OHCHR, with input from civil society, has put together a short, simple guide for civil society to explain:

- concepts of civil society, and civil society space
- elements for promoting space
- challenges faced by civil society actors
- how issues of shrinking space may be brought to the attention of UN mechanisms
- a list of useful links and documents

The guide is available in all six UN languages.

Read here the English version of the guide:

http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/AboutUs/CivilSociety/CS_space_UNHRSysystem_Guide.pdf

For further resources, please visit: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/Pages/CivilSociety.aspx>

III. INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

May 2015: World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)

WSIS Forum 2015

Co-organized by the ITU, UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD, the WSIS Forum 2015 will take place from 25 to 29 May in Geneva. The annual meeting contributes to building the information society and bridging the digital divide and thus contributes to sustainable development, as it is an efficient mechanism for the coordination of multi-stakeholder implementation activities, information exchange, creation of knowledge, sharing of best practices and continues to provide assistance in developing multi-stakeholder and public/private partnerships to advance development goals.

The outcome and the agenda of the Forum is going to be based on open consultations with all stakeholders – governments, civil society, the private sector and intergovernmental organizations. The Open Consultation Process for official submissions has already been launched.

The *WSIS Stocktaking Report 2015* will be released at the WSIS Forum in May. It witnesses the numerous efforts of WSIS-related projects and initiatives that have successfully been taken for building an information society.

For further information on the WSIS Forum (including the open consultations), please visit:
<http://www.itu.int/wsis/implementation/2015/forum/ocp/>

Entries for the *WSIS Stocktaking Report 2015* can be submitted here:
<http://www.itu.int/wsis/implementation/2015/forum/ocp/>

WSIS Project Prizes 2015

The WSIS Project Prizes 2015 provides a platform to identify and showcase success stories and models that could be easily replicated; empowers communities at the local level; gives a chance to all stakeholders working on WSIS to participate in the contest, and particularly recognizes the efforts of stakeholders for their added value to the society and commitment towards achieving WSIS goals. The contest is open to all stakeholders, entities representing governments, the private sector, international and regional institutions, civil society and academia.

The call for new entries 2014-2015 has been launched and is open until 10 February 2015. The announcement of winners will take place at the WSIS Forum 2015.

You can submit entries here:
<http://groups.itu.int/stocktaking/WSISProjectPrizes2015.aspx#submitTab>

The International Anti-Corruption Academy

The International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA), based in Laxenburg, Austria, is both an academic institution and an intergovernmental organization, and aims at overcoming current shortcomings in knowledge and practice in the field of anti-corruption and is seeking to empower professionals for the challenges for tomorrow. The organization was initiated by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), the Republic of Austria, and other stakeholders and became an international organization in March 2011. The IACA now has 60 parties including three international organizations.

Shortly after its founding, a Memorandum of Understanding between the IACA and the OSCE was signed on undertaking joint efforts to promote good governance and the fight against corruption. Moreover, the IACA is also active in the anti-corruption education. In 2012, it launched the first international, interdisciplinary Master in Anti-Corruption Studies, designed for working professionals. It also offers summer schools and training, promotes research and provides a platform for dialogue and networking.

The IACA is the first global institution of its kind and seeks to create cooperative relationships with states, international organizations, public and private entities, business cooperations and associations, civil society and professional networks, among others, which can contribute to its work.

For further information, please visit: <http://www.iaca.int/>

IV. CALENDAR

NOTICE:

1. The CoNGO Calendar is a service to the NGO constituency to enable each individual organization to determine, in good time, its possible or desired involvement in the event mentioned, in accordance with the organization's own statutory or programmatic focus.
2. The conferences and meetings listed in the CoNGO Calendar are not under the convening or invitational or access responsibility of CoNGO. They are listed for the information of readers, and any queries about any event should be addressed solely to the organizer of the event, not to CoNGO.

Cyril Ritchie, President of CoNGO

2015

70th Anniversary of the United Nations Organization (1945-2015)

http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=48149#.U9oWsvl_vTo

150th Anniversary of the International Telecommunications Union (1865-2015)

<http://www.itu.int/en/council/150committee/Pages/default.aspx>

World Summit on Social Development – Copenhagen+20

<http://undesadspd.org/CalendarofEvents.aspx>

UN International Year of Soils

<http://www.fao.org/soils-2015/en/>

Serbian Chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

<http://www.osce.org/pc/121276>

February

February 4-13: DESA-ECOSOC: 53rd Session of the Commission for Social Development:

"Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world" (UN Headquarters, New York)

<http://undesadspd.org/CommissionforSocialDevelopment/Sessions/2015.aspx>

February 18-20: Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: 2015 Social Forum –

"Access to Medicines in the context of the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including best practices in this regard" (Palais des Nations, Geneva)

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Poverty/SForum/Pages/SForum2015.aspx>

March

March 9-20: UN ECOSOC Commission on the Status of Women: CSW59 / Beijing+20 – "Implementing the Beijing Platform for Action" (UN Headquarters, New York)
<http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw59-2015>

March 14-18: UNISDR: 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (Sendai, Japan)
<http://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/wcdr>

March 21: World Down Syndrome Day
<http://www.un.org/en/events/downsyndromeday/>

April

April 2: World Autism Awareness Day
<https://www.un.org/en/events/autismday>

April 4-15: Meetings of the Conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (Geneva)
<http://www.cooperationinternationalegeneve.ch/meetings-conferences-parties-basel-rotterdam-and-stockholm-conventions>

April 12-17: World Water Forum: 7th World Water Forum – "Water for Our Future" (Daegu and Gyeongbuk, South Korea)
<http://worldwaterforum7.org/en>

April 12-19: UNODC: 13th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice – "Integrating crime prevention and criminal justice into the wider UN agenda ..." (Doha, Qatar)
<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/crime-congress/13-crime-congress.html>

April 18: Kota Center: Conference on the Kota World Center for Women (New York)
www.kotaproject.org

April 27-29: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom: WILPF 2015 Conference – "Women's Power to Stop War" (The Hague, Netherlands)
<https://wilpfact.wordpress.com/category/wilpf-history/>

May

May 19-22: World Education Forum 2015 (WEF) (Incheon, South Korea)
<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/education-for-all/world-education-forum-2015/>

May 25-29: ITU, UNESCO, UNCTAD and UNDP: WSIS Forum 2015 – "Innovating Together: Enabling ICTs for Sustainable Development" (Geneva)
<http://www.itu.int/wsis/implementation/2015/forum/ocp/>

June

June 7-9: Organization of American States (OAS): General Assembly (Haiti)
<http://www.oas.org/en/default.asp>

June 9-11: UN enable: 8th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN Headquarters, New York)
<http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1535>

June 22-24: Deutsche Welle (DW): Global Media Forum – "Media and foreign policy in the digital age" (Bonn, Germany)
www.dw-gmf.de

July

July 13-16: UN: 3rd International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)
<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/third-conference-ffd/index.htm>

July 27-30: Asian Population Association: 3rd International Conference (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)
www.asianpa.org

July 28-31: TRANSED: 14th International Conference on Mobility and Transport for Elderly and Disabled Persons (Lisbon, Portugal)
<http://www.transed2015.com>

2016

UN Commission on Human Settlements: HABITAT III
<http://unhabitat.org/habitat-iii/>

UNODC: Special Session of the UN General Assembly on the World Drug Problem – "Achieving the 2019 Goals – A better Tomorrow for the World's Youth"
www.ungass2016.org

German Chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

May

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs: UN World Humanitarian Summit (Istanbul, Turkey)
<http://www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/>

May 23-27: UN Environment Assembly: Second Meeting of the UN Environment Assembly (Nairobi, Kenya)
<http://uncsd.iisd.org/events/second-meeting-of-the-un-environment-assembly/>

September

September 23-25: Global Campaign on Military Spending: World Congress – “War, Money, Transformation: Disarmament for Development!” (Berlin, Germany)
<http://demilitarize.org/get-involved/conference-2016/>

2018

UN General Assembly: UN High-Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament
<http://www.2020visioncampaign.org/en/action-alerts/high-level-nuclear-disarmament-conference.html>

UN-Habitat: 9th World Urban Forum (WUF9)(Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)
<http://unhabitat.org/kuala-lumpur-to-host-world-urban-forum-in-2018/>

2019

100th Anniversary of the International Labour Organization (ILO)
<http://www.ilo.org/century/lang--ja/index.htm>