The United Nations
Making A Difference
2013 Calendar
In September 2013, the General Assembly of the United Nations will hold a high-level meeting in New York on disability and development, in support of the aims of the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities.

The United Nations General Assembly declared 2013 the International Year of Water Cooperation—highlighting new potentials and challenges in water management due to increased demand for water access, allocation and services—and the International Year of Quinoa—focusing attention on the biodiversity and nutritional value of this important traditional Andean food resource.

International Mother Language Day, 21 February, promotes linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism, including the preservation of endangered languages. About 7,000 languages are spoken in the world today.

The International Day of Peace, 21 September, is marked at UN Headquarters with a ceremony at the Peace Bell. The metal in the Bell was obtained from coins collected by children. The Bell was presented to the United Nations in 1954 by the United Nations Association of Japan.

The UN Charter entered into force in 1945 on 24 October, now celebrated as United Nations Day. That year the UN had 51 members; today 193 countries are members of the Organization.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted on 10 December 1948. Commemorating this historic occasion, Human Rights Day was the first international day approved by the General Assembly (1950).

Annual UN peacekeeping costs amount to $7.8 billion, which is less than 0.5 per cent of total world military expenditure, estimated at $1.74 trillion in 2011—a figure itself dwarfed by the actual costs of wars and armed conflicts. By sending 66 peacekeeping and observer missions to the world’s trouble spots over the past 64 years, the United Nations has helped restore calm, allowing many countries to recover from the ravages of conflict.

The United Nations, its specialized agencies and staff have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize ten times.


Virtually all UN humanitarian relief is funded by voluntary contributions. In 2011, the United Nations coordinated humanitarian programming valued at $9.4 billion, managed consolidated appeals benefiting 61 million people and provided services in 47 countries.

UN environmental treaties have helped cut down marine pollution worldwide; restricted the use of hazardous pesticides and chemicals; and helped phase out production of substances destroying the Earth’s ozone layer, as well as accord protection to many endangered species of animals and plants.

Do you want to help out? The United Nations Volunteers programme mobilizes more than 7,700 UN Volunteers every year, and also features online opportunities. UN Volunteers assist in organizing and running elections, support humanitarian projects, and comprise one third of all international civilians working in UN peacekeeping operations.

For the most up-to-date listing of United Nations Observances, please visit www.un.org/observances.

For more information on the UN and its family of organizations, please visit www.un.org and www.unsystem.org.
“I am more than my title, more than simply Secretary-General of the United Nations. I am also a father and a grandfather. And like you, I want a world where our children, our succeeding generations, can prosper and be happy. A world where all people can have a decent job and live with dignity. A world where everyone can breathe clean air, drink safe water and have enough to eat. Where everyone can live, confident in tomorrow. That is the future I want—that is the future you want, and we want.”

— Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, 20 June 2012
The United Nations
Making
A Difference
### Aiding reconstruction

The United Nations helps countries rebuild after conflict. UN peacebuilding and political offices assist in reconstruction and reconciliation in countries such as Afghanistan, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Iraq and Sierra Leone. By bringing together Governments, donors and financial institutions, the UN Peacebuilding Commission helps other countries such as the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone in recovery and development. The UN Peacebuilding Fund supports 193 projects in 22 countries by delivering fast, flexible and relevant funding.

### Supporting disarmament

The United Nations has been instrumental in bringing about treaties against weapons of mass destruction and other deadly devices. The Chemical Weapons Convention has led to the destruction of more than 70 per cent of declared stockpiles, while the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols restrict the use of landmines, booby traps, incendiary weapons and laser weapons. The United Nations supports the Biological Weapons Convention and the Anti-personnel Landmine Convention. It also works to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons—the weapons of choice of insurgents, gang members, drug lords, pirates and terrorists. It promotes transparency in military expenditures and monitors arms transfers.

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*27 January
International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust*
### Promoting decent work

The International Labour Organization promotes decent work for all, social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights. The ILO brings together workers, employers and Governments, giving representatives of all three areas an equal voice in jointly shaping labour standards and policies. Its 189 Conventions have established standards and fundamental principles and rights for work, including freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining and the abolition of forced labour, child labour and workplace discrimination.

### Serving industry

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization works to improve living standards and promote development through industry. UNIDO provides policy advice to encourage entrepreneurship and development of small and medium enterprises; supports sustainable production; and promotes the provision of rural energy. It generates and disseminates industry-related knowledge; promotes the integration of developing countries in global trade through trade capacity-building; fosters environmental sustainability in industry; and help improve access to energy. Its technical support to industry-related projects and programmes around the world is valued at some $772 million.
The United Nations
Making A Difference
Alleviating rural poverty

The International Fund for Agricultural Development provides low-interest loans and grants to very poor rural people. Its country-specific solutions involve increasing access to financial services, markets, technology, land and natural resources, as well as training in agricultural practices and technologies. Since 1978, IFAD has invested some $13 billion in helping over 400 million women and men increase their incomes and provide for their families, while Governments and other local sources in recipient countries have contributed $11.7 billion, and international donors another $9.3 billion in co-financing. Today IFAD supports some 240 programmes and projects in 94 countries.

Fighting hunger

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations leads global efforts to defeat hunger, which affects some 925 million people around the world. FAO delivers practical assistance in fighting hunger, whether in meeting an immediate need—such as restarting food production after a disaster—or in taking long-term action, such as helping prevent soil erosion. It supports countries in mobilizing resources for their food and agriculture priorities or putting into action national strategies for food security. FAO manages over 2,000 field projects and programmes worth close to $900 million—more than 95 per cent of which are funded by voluntary contributions.
Promoting reproductive and maternal health

By promoting the right of individuals to make their own decisions on the number and spacing of their children through voluntary family planning, the United Nations Population Fund helps give families—and especially women—greater control over their lives. As a result, women in developing countries are having fewer children—from six in the 1960s to three today—slowing world population growth. When UNFPA started work in 1969, under 20 per cent of couples practiced family planning; the number now stands at 63 per cent. Fewer unintended pregnancies means fewer maternal deaths and fewer abortions. UNFPA and its partners also work to provide skilled assistance during childbirth and access to emergency obstetrical care in 91 countries.

Protecting consumers’ health

Foodborne diseases and threats to food safety constitute a growing public health problem. To ensure the safety of food sold in the marketplace, FAO and the World Health Organization, working with Member States, have established standards for some 300 food commodities, safety limits for more than 3,000 food contaminants, and regulations on food processing, transport and storage. With more food than ever before travelling the globe, harmonized international standards, guidelines and codes of practice protect the health of consumers and ensure the safety, quality and fairness of the international food trade.

April 2013

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2 April World Autism Awareness Day
4 April International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action
7 April World Health Day
Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Rwanda Genocide
12 April International Day of Human Space Flight
22 April International Mother Earth Day
23 April World Book and Copyright Day
25 April World Malaria Day
26 April World Intellectual Property Day
28 April World Day for Safety and Health at Work
29 April Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare
30 April International Jazz Day
Supporting civil aviation

The International Civil Aviation Organization serves as the forum for cooperation in all fields of civil aviation among its 191 member States. It sets standards and regulations for the safety, security, efficiency and regularity of air travel, as well as for environmental protection. International aviation—now with 2.7 billion airline passengers annually—is the first industry sector with global goals of stabilizing carbon emissions at 2020 levels and achieving a 2 per cent annual increase in fuel efficiency.

Improving shipping

The International Maritime Organization works to make shipping—which serves more than 90 per cent of global trade—safer and more secure, and the seas cleaner. With the help of IMO, ship losses have fallen and fatalities decreased; pollution incidents—including total oil pollution—are down; and air pollution and pollution from sewage are now being addressed. All these improvements are taking place even as the amount of cargo carried by sea continues to increase: the total of goods loaded reached 8.4 billion tons in 2010.
The United Nations

Making A Difference
Saving lives

After natural disasters and during conflicts, the United Nations assists people who need life-saving help. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs deploys rapid response coordination teams and works with partners to assess needs, mobilize funds, advocate for protection and access, and provide decision makers with vital data and information. In 2012, OCHA came to the aid of 54 million people in 19 countries. Funds managed by OCHA help provide food, water and shelter following a natural disaster; life-saving nutrition and medical care for babies born in refugee camps; and basic life necessities for those struggling to survive.

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Mitigating disasters

The World Meteorological Organization works to spare millions of people from the calamitous effects of natural and man-made disasters. Early warning systems composed of national meteorological and hydrological services—including thousands of surface monitors, sea buoys and satellites—improve the prediction and management of weather, climate and water-related hazards such as tropical cyclones, floods and droughts. They also provide information about the dispersal of volcanic ash and nuclear and chemical accidents.
The United Nations
Making
A Difference
Improving literacy and education

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization supports literacy programmes around the world, including the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment carried out in more than 40 countries. Today, 83.7 per cent of adults can read and write and 90 per cent of children attend primary school. The goal is to ensure that, by 2015, all children complete a full course of primary school, and acquire knowledge and skills at a high level of proficiency. While programmes promoting education and advancement for women have been instrumental in raising the female literacy rate in developing countries from 36 per cent in 1970 to 79.2 per cent in 2009, the goal is to ensure that, by 2015, all girls complete primary and secondary school.

Preserving heritage

UNESCO has helped 137 countries protect historic, cultural and natural sites for all humanity. It has negotiated international conventions to preserve cultural property, cultural diversity and outstanding cultural and natural sites. Inscribed in its World Heritage List are 962 sites in 157 countries designated as having exceptional universal value. The List of World Heritage in Danger draws attention to 38 such sites, and seeks to prompt action in order to save them. UNESCO campaigns have contributed to restoring world treasures such as the Old City of Dubrovnik in Croatia, the Temple of Borobudur in Indonesia and Angkor in Cambodia.
### Coping with climate change

The Nobel Prize-winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change provides a clear scientific view on the current state of knowledge in climate change and its potential environmental and socio-economic impacts. A partnership of 38 UN bodies assists Governments in measures such as investment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, initiatives to increase energy efficiency, and action to adapt to climate change. The Global Environment Facility allocates some $260 million per year in projects on energy efficiency, renewable energy and sustainable transportation, supplemented by an additional $1,585 million in co-financing from GEF partners.

### Protecting the ozone layer

The United Nations Environment Programme and the World Meteorological Organization have been instrumental in highlighting the damage caused to Earth’s ozone layer—the atmospheric shield that filters out dangerous levels of the sun’s ultraviolet rays. Two treaties known as the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol, ratified by over 190 countries, have enabled reductions of over 97 per cent of all global consumption of ozone-depleting substances and their replacement through safer alternatives. This has spared millions of people from contracting skin cancer and eye cataracts because of exposure to increased ultraviolet radiation.
Providing safe drinking water

The second International Water Decade (2005–2015) aims to reduce by half the number of people—currently some 780 million—without a source of clean drinking water. Since 1990, with the help of the United Nations, more than 2 billion people have gained access to improved drinking water sources such as piped supplies and protected wells. While current trends suggest that more than 90 per cent of the global population will use improved drinking water sources by 2015, over 2.4 billion people will still lack improved sanitation. Investment in safe drinking water and sanitation, however, contributes to economic growth. For each $1 invested, the World Health Organization estimates returns of between $3 and $34, depending on the region and technology.

Advocating for indigenous peoples

Indigenous peoples enrich our cultural diversity, speaking more than two thirds of our languages and contributing an extraordinary amount of traditional knowledge. The United Nations advocates for the 370 million indigenous people living in some 90 countries who number among the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in the world. The 16-member Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues works to improve the situation of indigenous peoples with regard to development, culture, human rights, the environment, education and health. The Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and a United Nations independent expert promote indigenous rights and monitor their application.
**Countering fish stock depletion**

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, about 30 per cent of the world’s fish stocks are overexploited, depleted, or recovering from depletion, while 50 per cent are fully exploited. FAO monitors global fisheries production and the status of wild fish stocks, and works with countries to improve the management of fisheries, stamp out illegal fishing, promote responsible international fish trade and protect fragile species. According to FAO and World Bank estimates, the world economy could gain up to $50 billion annually by restoring fish stocks and reducing fishing capacity to an optimal level.

**Banning toxic chemicals**

The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants seeks to rid the world of some of the most dangerous chemicals ever created. Ratified by 176 countries, the Convention and its amendments protect human health and the environment by targeting 22 hazardous pesticides and industrial chemicals such as PCBs and DDT that can cause cancer and birth defects, damage the nervous and immune systems, and interfere with child development. Other United Nations conventions and action plans help preserve biodiversity, protect endangered species, combat desertification, clean up seas and curb cross-border movements of hazardous wastes.
### Tackling the world drug problem

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime helps countries reduce the supply of and demand for illicit drugs under the three main United Nations conventions on drug control. It advocates measures to reduce vulnerability, treat drug dependence and prevent the spread of infections associated with drug use, such as HIV. The Office works with rural communities to provide farmers with legal livelihoods and wean them away from illicit crop cultivation. Because several countries and regions remain vulnerable to the instability caused by drug crop cultivation and trafficking, UNODC is particularly engaged in Afghanistan, the Andean countries, Central Asia, South-East Asia and West Africa. The Office supports joint law enforcement initiatives, security sector reforms and disrupting the links between drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime.

### Combating international crime

UNODC provides legal and technical assistance to counter transnational organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism; accurate and reliable research to inform policies and operational decisions; and support for law enforcement. It helps build fair and effective criminal justice systems by assisting States in reforming their criminal justice systems, with particular emphasis on vulnerable groups such as women and children. The Office has developed projects in the areas of juvenile justice, penal reform and victim support. It is a leader in the global fight against trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants.

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**November 2013**

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Containers at the port of Balboa, Panama, being inspected in a joint UNODC/World Customs Organization project (2011)

UN Photo/UNODC/Joey Loreto
Mobilizing volunteers

Volunteerism is a powerful means for tackling global challenges. The United Nations Volunteers programme contributes to peace and development by mobilizing more than 7,700 volunteers every year nationally and internationally. Of these, 80 per cent come from developing countries, and more than 30 per cent volunteer within their own countries. Volunteers help organize and run local and national elections and support humanitarian projects; they also compose one third of all international civilians working in United Nations peacekeeping operations. In addition, UNV connects development organizations and volunteers worldwide by coordinating online volunteering opportunities.

Transforming slums

In many cities in developing countries, slum dwellers number more than 50 per cent of the population, and have little or no access to shelter, water and sanitation. With over 150 programmes and projects in some 70 countries, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme seeks innovative solutions enabling towns and cities to meet such challenges. UN-Habitat projects that aim to provide secure tenure for the urban poor involve local financing which, in turn, stimulates investment in housing and basic services. One of these—a participatory slum upgrading programme for improving living conditions—benefits 63 cities in 38 countries through pilot projects, policy development, good governance and management, and other support.
Every day the United Nations works to tackle global challenges.