UNAI-Amrita Conference on Technology for Sustainable Development

On 8 July at United Nations Headquarters, the United Nations Academic Impact Initiative (UNAI) and Amrita University co-hosted a one-day conference on "Technology for Sustainable Development". Over 700 people joined in person as well as many others following online. Speakers at the event included United Nations Development Programme Administrator Helen Clark; Chancellor of Amrita University, Sri Mata Amritanandamayi; His Excellency Mr. Kaza Imnadze, Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations; Mr. Vijay Nambiar, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Myanmar and Board Chair of the United Nations International School.

The event was the first in a series of discussions entitled START, Skills and Technology Accelerating Rapid Transformation. Other universities represented include the University of Cambridge, the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, Monash University, the National University of Singapore, the University of Oxford, Stanford University and the University of Twente. The event can be viewed at http://bit.ly/1UlIt0h.

Speeches are available below:

UNDP Administrator Helen Clark
Amrita Chancellor Sri Mata Amritanandamayi
Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations H.E. Mr. Kaza Imnadze
Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Myanmar Mr. Vijay Nambiar
Seventieth Anniversary of the United Nations Charter

We, the Peoples of the United Nations,” the opening words of the Charter became a reality just four months after the signing of the Organization’s founding document on 26 June 1945 in the auditorium of the Veterans’ Memorial Hall in San Francisco.

Seventy years later, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon returned to San Francisco where the Charter was first signed. The Secretary General’s words laid down the importance of that moment in history and in the present- “The 70th anniversary falls in a year of potentially momentous decisions on our common future. Countries are shaping what we hope will be an inspiring new sustainable development agenda and moving towards a meaningful agreement on climate change. Our goal is transformation: we are the first generation that can erase poverty from the earth – and the last that can act to avoid the worst impacts of a warming world.”

The Secretary-General recalled his first encounter with the UN, dating back to his childhood during the Korean War when, as a displaced person fleeing his burning village, he and his family relied on the Organization to rescue them from the ravages of war. His family, he has said, was saved from hunger by UN food relief operations and, when doubts surfaced over whether the world was concerned about their suffering, “the troops of many nations sacrificed their lives to restore security and peace.”

On 26th June 2015, with a fresh set of challenges marking a pivotal moment for the planet – from the fight against climate change to the aspirations of a sustainable future – the Secretary-General confirmed that the UN is standing once again as a nexus of collaboration for all Member States.

“As the distinctions between the national and the international continue to fall away, challenges faced by one become challenges faced by all, sometimes gradually but often suddenly,” the Secretary-General concluded. “With our fates ever more entwined, our future must be one of ever deeper cooperation – nations united by a spirit of global citizenship that lives up to the promise of the Organization’s name.”
Winners of multilingual essay contest on new UN sustainability agenda honoured in New York

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on July 26th welcomed the 70 winners of the United Nations-sponsored MANY LANGUAGES, ONE WORLD contest who wrote “inspired” essays in languages not their own, about a new sustainable development path that will lead to an end to poverty and a life of dignity for all.

“You were asked to do something inspired and challenging – to write an essay in an official United Nations language that is not your own,” the UN chief said in a message delivered to the Global Youth Forum by Cristina Gallach, the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information. “You did so in the United Nations’ 70th anniversary year. You are our “70 for 70” team!

From a pool of over 1,200 entrants, the 70 students, from 42 countries representing 60 universities, were selected as winners of the essay contest, which was organized by ELS Educational Services, Inc., and the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI).

The MANY LANGUAGES, ONE WORLD, contest challenged college and university students from around the globe to write an essay examining the post-2015 global development agenda of the United Nations. The essays were to be submitted in one of the six official United Nations languages, which was not the student’s first-language, or the principal language of instruction in their primary or secondary education. The official languages of the United Nations are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

More than 3,500 people from 130 countries took part in the initial phase of the contest. The winners were invited to New York and given the opportunity today to speak in the UN General Assembly Hall.

In his remarks, the Secretary-General noted the importance of multilingualism, which “allows us to come together across diverse societies to work cooperatively to improve the state of the world.”

“This is, of course, is the central mission of the United Nations, and it is one that depends upon multilingualism,” he said.

Describing the year 2015 as “a special time,” Mr. Ban said this year represents “a historic opportunity to forge a new sustainable development path that will lead us to an end to poverty and a life of dignity for all.”

The students wrote about such topics as inclusive and equitable education for all; healthy lives and well-being for all ages; full and productive employment and decent work for all; and the importance of human rights and holding institutions accountable.
UNAI and United Colors of Benetton’s UNHate Foundation Recognize Winners of Diversity Contest on UN Charter Day

“What can you do to combat hate and intolerance in your community?” This was the question posed by the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI) and the United Colors of Benetton UNHate Foundation in a contest co-sponsored by the two organizations that challenged young people, age 18 to 30, to address discrimination, bigotry, prejudice and exclusion in their communities.

The 2015 UNAI/UNHate Diversity Contest received more than 100 entries from around the world on a range of issues including sexism, racism, xenophobia, homophobia, religious intolerance, interethnic conflict, discrimination against indigenous people and exclusion of persons with disabilities. Ten winning proposals were selected by a panel of four judges, including two UN staff members from DPI and UN Women who volunteered to help evaluate contest entries as a way to empower and encourage young people around the world to be change agents.

The winners were recognized during an event held at the United Nations in New York on 26 June on the 70th anniversary of the signing of the UN Charter, a fitting way to honour the UN’s founding document that calls for human rights, freedom and equality. The winning projects were selected based on their promotion of UN values, creativity, and feasibility, and each of the winners will receive €20,000 to implement their proposals.

Panel speakers included Lakshmi Puri, Deputy Executive Director of UN Women, who praised the winners for their dedication and thanked them for their efforts to make the world a more tolerant place. “I appreciate you all for trying to transform, through the mobilization of the community around you, the attitudes, economic space, social space and political space in your communities. Today we celebrate your agency, leadership, initiative and the will to change the world.”

UNAI was happy to partner with the United Colors of Benetton UNHate Foundation to support the contest because it believes that empowering youth is the key to building a sustainable future.

Learn more about the competition and the winning projects at http://bit.ly/1IuqxIX and watch a video about the contest http://bit.ly/1dOYF9X.

Compete in the People’s Voices Challenge!

The Peoples’ Voices Challenge offers individuals or organizations the opportunity to access the data collected through Global Conversation and to communicate findings to decision-makers as well as the general public. Participants serve as a powerful link between the United Nations and the people in spreading the Sustainable Development Goals, which will be set as the post 2015 agenda of the United Nations. This could be done by organizing a policy event, a social media rally or youth debates. The competitors will be allowed to access the MY World Dataset which showcases the results of MY World Survey: the United Nations Survey for a Better World. Furthermore, the competitors will be nudged in the right direction with resources and suggestions on how they can contribute towards the objective.

The winners will be honoured with the coveted Peoples’ Voices Award at the Award Ceremony which will be held during the UN General Assembly in September 2015 at New York.

As Edmund Burke once said: “All that is needed for the forces of evil to succeed is for enough good men to remain silent”. Make your voice heard; contribute your share to a sustainable tomorrow!

For more information visit- http://peoplesvoiceschallenge.org/
WFUNA International Model United Nations (WIMUN) program

The World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) is pleased to invite you to the second annual WFUNA International Model United Nations (WIMUN) program, the most authentic MUN experience in the world. WIMUN is an extraordinary intellectual student seminar that brings together an amazing assortment of young minds from around the world to engage in cultural exchange, gain first-hand experience of negotiating process, and improve their knowledge of the UN system while enhancing their awareness of the most relevant international issues. Over 700 young students coming from all over the world will attend WIMUN, an event with high symbolic value of education to international and intercultural dialogue. Students have a unique opportunity to improve their debating and negotiation under the simulation of the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Sixth Committees. This second edition of the conference will take place in New York City, USA from 10 to 14 November 2015. WIMUN is the most accurate and realistic simulation of the United Nations and features intensive training workshops taught by UN officials on UN4MUN (the official Model UN platform introduced by the UN), briefings on important agenda items by UN Agencies and internationally renowned experts, and conference sessions at the United Nations Headquarters.

For more information, please visit our website: [www.wfuna.org/wimun](http://www.wfuna.org/wimun).

The year 2015 does not only mark the 70th anniversary of the UN, but also puts the organization at a crossroads. The Millennium Development Goals, set out in 2000, are set to expire at the end of this year. It is expected that 17 Sustainable Development Goals will be adopted in September 2015 at the UN Summit to Adopt the Post-2015 Agenda. During WIMUN 2015, participants will have the unparalleled opportunity to engage in the Post-2015 process at the United Nations while the world’s top diplomats debate the exact same issues alongside them in the UN Headquarters during the 70th Session of the General Assembly. The conference theme “Global Transformation: The Sustainable Development Goals” and the selected issues on the agenda challenges all participants to engage actively with the Post-2015 Agenda and the SDGs and make a strong and meaningful contribution to the ongoing dialogue.

Register for WIMUN today: [www.wfuna.org/wimun/registration](http://www.wfuna.org/wimun/registration).

WIMUN is being organized in conjunction with the United Nations Department of Public Information Model UN workshop that will take place in New York from 6 to 9 November. Students who want to participate in both programs are welcomed to do so but must register separately for each.

WFUNA independently charges a fee for participation its Model UN programme. Please note that there is no cost to participate in the UN4MUN workshop organized by the Education Outreach Section, Outreach Division, United Nations Department of Public Information.

---

COP 21 or the Paris Climate Conference

In December, country representatives will meet in Paris for the 21st Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) to achieve a new international agreement on climate change.

It’s time for global action on climate change and sustainable development and your institution can play a role by:

1) Developing curricula that incorporate sustainable development

2) Ensuring your campus is green: reduce waste, install solar panels and encourage walking to school

3) Promoting research on sustainable development
The Green Batti Project: Mentoring Mumbai’s Youth

By UNAI Intern, Scott Simonsen.

“The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves.” -Steven Spielberg.

Similar to America’s “Big Brother” and “Big Sister” programmes, The Green Batti Project connects children from under resourced communities in Mumbai with young professionals looking to make a positive impact on the country’s youth. Through this mentorship the children learn necessary skills to improve their quality of life and to provide for their future.

The three main impact areas are lateral thinking, problem solving, and goal setting. Beyond this, the program also touches on other areas, including exposure to technology, financial literacy, environmental awareness, science, current affairs, respect, communication skills, and etiquette. As of now, the programme boasts of 500 mentor-mentee pairs and plans on adding another 1000 soon, thanks to partnerships with Teach for India, Mumbai Smiles, the Tata Institute for Social Sciences, and the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI). The Green Batti Project has used the principles laid out by UNAI to help guide them, specifically: 1. A commitment to human rights, among them freedom of inquiry, opinion, and speech. 2. A commitment to educational opportunity for all people regardless of gender, race, religion, or ethnicity. 3. A commitment to addressing issues of poverty through education.

However, it is not only the children that benefit. Dimple Laungani, a mentor with the programme, claims “In the process of breaking ice with your mentee, the mentor breaks many walls around them.” Sudhanshu Dikshit, another mentor, said, “The most important thing I have learned from my mentee is to challenge the things that intimidate us head on.” The majority of mentors say they have become more aware of social realities through the programme and that they are more willing to give their time to enabling positive social impact. The programme emphasizes a two way street, benefitting both mentor and mentee.

Both mentors and mentees go through a rigorous selection process to make sure they are suitable for the program. The mentees are from under resourced areas and lack positive adult relationships to help guide them through to the next stage of their lives. The mentors on the other hand are young professionals based in Mumbai, between the ages of 21 to 35, and willing to dedicate roughly two hours a week for a four month period to working closely with the mentee and being a part of his/her life. If accepted, an exhaustive interview follows to make sure the mentor meets the high standards of the organization.

The Green Batti Project’s unique approach has already provided tangible results and has made a significant impact on bridging the education gap in and around Mumbai. For example, as a direct result of the mentoring, dropout rates have plummeted and children from these under resourced communities now have access to quality extra-curricular activities to help shape their personalities and instil a sense of self confidence.

For more information check out their presence on the web:

http://www.thegreenbattiproject.in/
https://twitter.com/greenbatti
https://www.facebook.com/thegreenbattiproject

“Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine, that the child of farmworkers can become the president of a great nation.” -Nelson Mandela
Yoga: Stretching Across the Globe

An article by UNAI Intern Achuth Krishnan who reports "As an intern of the United Nations Academic Impact, I had the memorable opportunity to celebrate the first ever International Day of Yoga on 21 June, 2015 at the UN Headquarters in New York."

UNAI Newsletter June 2015 7

Yoga, a holistic practise which dates as far back as the pre-vedic times, is much more than a mere art of callisthenics. In its entirety, it touches upon the physical, mental, emotional, intellectual and spiritual aspects of life. One of the earliest expositions on Yoga was written by the Indian sage, Patanjali. Yoga was systematically classified into eight stages by Patanjali -

- Yama, which deals with one’s morality and sense of integrity
- Niyama, which deals with self-discipline and spiritual observances
- Asana, which deals with practising postures
- Pranayama, which deals with breath control
- Pratyahara, which deals with the withdrawal from the organs of sense and action
- Dharana, which deals with Meditation or contemplation
- Dhyana, which deals with meditation or the uninterrupted flow of concentration
- Samadhi, which deal with the complete absorption in super consciousness or divine mind

The United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI) which has as its founding principles commitment to promoting inter-cultural dialogue and understanding, and the “unlearning” of intolerance through education, rejoiced as the world celebrated the International Day of Yoga. India’s stepping forward to share her inimitable cultural treasure with the world, and the world’s wholehearted acceptance of it, emit new rays of hope across today’s world rampant with physical and spiritual disquiet. The world’s embrace of an ancient system of yogic practise which disciplines the body, mind and soul, for the well-being of the entire human race, bears testimony to the successful bourgeoning of inter-cultural dialogue and understanding among nations.

Let’s remember what the UN Secretary General said - “On this first-ever International Day of Yoga, let us see the benefits of this practice in terms of individual well-being as well as our collective efforts to improve public health, promote peaceful relations and usher in a life of dignity for all.”
Food Security & Sustainable Agriculture: Central to the Sustainable Development Goals

By UNAI Intern, Zinnia Batliwalla

On June 4, 2015 the Permanent Missions of Ecuador, Georgia, Italy and South Africa to the UN, along with the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and World Food Programme (WFP) organized a panel discussion on the topic of ‘Addressing Food Security, Nutrition and Sustainable Agriculture through the Prism of the SDGs’.

Significant progress has been achieved on MDG 1c, which was to halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger between 1990 and 2015. According to the 2014 edition of The State of Food Security in the World, Latin America and the Caribbean is the region which has shown the greatest progress, as the prevalence of hunger has been reduced by two-thirds since the early 1990s. The panel praised Brazil’s Zero Hunger Programme (launched in 2003) in particular for its innovative approach that placed food security and nutrition at the centre of the country’s political agenda. Amongst its strategies, the Zero Hunger Programme emphasized investing in small farmers and markets to promote job creation and higher real wages, while ensuring nutritional value for all. Brazil’s holistic approach to food security has influenced an overall improvement in human development and reduction in inequality. The link between improving food security and poverty eradication was an underlying theme of the panel, and it was emphasized that sustainable agriculture is central to health, education and energy.

Despite these successes, there is still a need for the SDGs to emphasize the importance of sustainable food security for all.

The 2015, and most recent, edition of The State of Food Security in the World emphasizes that:

- At least 795 million, or just over one in nine people worldwide do not have enough to eat
- Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest prevalence of undernourishment – ¼ of people are undernourished
- Southern Asia, has the highest number of undernourished individuals in absolute terms, with estimates suggesting 281 people are undernourished in the region

A primary focus of the panel was the importance of engaging partners from academia, research institutions, and the private sector to address food security and nutrition in a sustainable way. Academia and research institutions might contribute by developing technology which promotes sustainable development and developing programs and implementation strategies promoting hunger-eradication that are region-specific. The issue of sustainable agriculture and food security is multi-faceted, thus requiring a variety of stakeholders to commit to engage in reducing food insecurity and ensuring sustainable agriculture for all.

Elyx Around the World in 70 Days

The United Nations’ first digital ambassador, will travel around the world in 70 days. Elyx will visit the UNICs, UN peacekeeping and humanitarian missions around the planet to shed light on the work of the UN. Elyx has no nationality, race or gender, and best of all Elyx does not speak, making it a truly universal character. Everyone is invited to show Elyx where you are, and what you do. Print the images of Elyx and place or hold the image of your choice in front of a readily identifiable, easily recognized landmark in your country. Visit us at www.elyx70days.org
Countering destruction of and trafficking in cultural property: from lessons learned to implementation

By UNAI Intern, Achuth Krishnan

With the hitherto unprecedented rise in the illegitimate trafficking and destruction of cultural property in the recent years, the United Nations alongside global organizations takes on the challenge. This burning issue of today is important mainly for two reasons: it obliterates the unique character of a society and secondly, the money it generates often gets appropriated by terrorist organizations. The primary concern in its management is the critical nature of the situation which requires immediate and effective action.

The trafficking of cultural properties can be systematically divided into three stages of origin, transit and transfer/destruction. The origin is the ideal point at which to implement security and to protect the property. Monitoring the heritage sites, raising awareness among people, facilitating the reporting of the issue by witnesses and ensuring quick response from the authorities are all positive steps in this direction.

The second stage which is the transit phase refers to the time spent between the point of origin and the point at which the property leaves the country. The plan to forestall the calamity at this stage primarily focuses on the authorities controlling the border. Accurate information about the stolen property and a competent alert system warning the authorities with details of the hijacked goods would greatly enhance chances of recovery at this stage. Lackadaisical attitude of the authorities as well as corruption may be suspected as the stolen articles are often of formidable size and quite unlikely to escape notice. Frequent, effective monitoring of the officials however, could produce positive results.

Once the property has left the country of origin, it would be in the transfer/destruction phase and retrieval at this point could be a prolonged and arduous task. The state may have by then, lost the authority to take direct action and might require the assistance of international authorities to recover the heritage properties.

International organizations such as Interpol and Carabinieri for the Protection of Cultural Heritage have been working on developing a database with access to cultural properties. The organizations collect information on cultural properties with the help of museums and such other institutions so as to be able to provide accurate descriptions of items in the event of a hijacking. We can also provide information to the probable market for individual artefacts. Such venues could be alerted on the hijacked property and reporting of the matter may be encouraged.

The United Nations Academic Impact division, moving emphatically towards its principle of commitment to promoting inter-cultural dialogue and understanding, and the “unlearning” of intolerance through education, applauds the advancement made by the international community towards the realization of this goal. Education can play a pivotal role in raising awareness and in ensuring that the new generation appreciates the inimitable differences and the unique splendour of the various cultures of the world. Education should equip the youth to employ their talents for the good of the community, motivate them to develop their potential to the full, nurture the air of open tolerance for the various cultures of the world, and bring an appreciation the beauty of diversity.

Destruction of the cultural property of a country is an assault on the cultural identity and uniqueness of a land. As stated by the UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, - ‘The destruction of cultural heritage bears witness to a form of violent extremism that seeks to destroy the present, past and future of human civilization’. While the magnitude of the problem we are facing at the moment appears overwhelming and insurmountable, we must rise with the challenge to do the seemingly impossible. As Nelson Mandela said, ‘It always seems impossible, until it is done.’
What gets measured, gets done: How to track Universal Healthcare Coverage and make it a reality

By UNAI Intern, Zinnia Batliwalla

The June 2015 report, Tracking Universal Health Coverage, from the World Health Organization (WHO) and World Bank Group (WBG) shows that 400 million people do not have access to essential health services. This report is a wake-up call demonstrating the need for universal healthcare coverage (UHC). UHC means all people receive the quality, essential health services they need, without being exposed to financial hardship. Over the past year, the world has witnessed the importance of strong health systems with the recent Ebola outbreak in West Africa. UHC is the foundation needed for resilient health systems which provide promotion, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and palliation. UHC is also necessary to reduce inequity and eradicate extreme poverty (less than $1.25/day), as people are often tipped or pushed further into extreme poverty as they have had to pay for health services out of their own pockets.

Many perceive the greatest challenge to achieving UHC is that UHC-progress is not easily quantifiable. Monitoring of UHC-progress must account for whether people receive the services they need, as well as the quality of services and the impact on health. The June 2015 report is the first of its kind and uses innovative indicators to measure health service coverage and financial protection to assess progress towards UHC.

The report identifies the following eight core tracer indicators for differing aspects of health service coverage:

- Reproductive and newborn health: family planning, antenatal care, skilled birth attendance
- Child immunization: 3 doses of diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTP)-containing vaccine
- Infectious disease: antiretroviral therapy (ART), tuberculosis (TB) treatment
- Non-health sector determinants of health: improved water sources, improved sanitary facilities

The indicators have been chosen as they indicate a population’s health and well-being, regardless of the country’s socioeconomic development, health system or other considerations.

Effective monitoring of these indicators is necessary to achieve UHC. By monitoring these indicators, policy-makers and decision-makers can set appropriate targets and goals for their countries as they work towards the UHC objectives and strengthen their existing health systems. Each of the eight core tracer indicators have also been included in the recently launched Global Reference List of 100 Core Health Indicators, which was developed by WHO and its partners. The Global Reference List will be a global standard for health data collection.

Dr. Mary E. Norton is a professor and Executive Director of Global Academic Initiatives at UNAI member institute, Felician College-The Franciscan College of New Jersey in the United States of America, and has extensive knowledge of health systems across the world having developed baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs in Iran, Pakistan and Jordan and taught in Qatar, Bahrain, China and Finland. She applauds the WHO and WBG’s comprehensive data collection approach to identify each country’s individual needs. However, she states there are limits to the report saying, “We need to ask ourselves is such a daunting task sustainable? How long can it be sustained? Who will finance the data gathering?” She also emphasizes the importance of determining how to collect the health data of vulnerable populations, such as refugees and countries experiencing conflict. Dr. Norton asks, “How will the quality of care in these countries, and this population be measured and monitored? Who will pay for their care?”

By encouraging the production of accurate and timely health data, action is being taken to ensure academics and researchers have the information needed to identify and solve the world’s most daunting health challenges. This is a necessary and important first step to achieving universal healthcare for all.
The Protection of Human Rights in Europe, a dialogue between Luxembourg, Strasbourg, Karlsruhe and Paris

On 30 May 2015, the UNAI Global Hub on Human Rights, the Paris-Sorbonne University, held a ceremony and panel discussion with the University of Cologne to celebrate the 25th anniversary of their joint French German law degree (LL.B. Köln/Paris 1).

The protection of Human Rights in Europe was the predominant issue along the ceremony. In addition, the importance of mastering the other countries’ language was discussed. The German Federal Minister of Justice demonstrated his strong admiration for the double-degree, the French Capital, as well as the venerable Sorbonne University, by holding his speech entirely in French.

Christiane Taubira, the French Minister of Justice, outlined the influence German and French legal systems have had on each other in the last decades and the respective benefits of this, for example: France examines every proceeding in Germany with curiosity; and the rulings of the German Federal Constitutional Court stimulates the legal debates in France, as shown with regards to anti-terrorism data and its collection.

During a panel discussion, Human Rights protection in Europe was examined by a high-ranking panel, composed of Angelika Nußberger (Judge at the European Court of Human Rights [ECHR]), Thomas von Danwitz (Judge at the European Court of Justice [ECJ]), Johannes Masing (Judge at the German Federal Constitutional Court) Guy Canivet (Judge at the French Conseil constitutionnel) and Christian Vigouroux (Judge at the French Conseil d’État).

The core of the discussion was the complex relationship between the three levels of Human Rights protection in Europe: national (constitutional) law, European Union law and, International Law. “The era of “Solange” is over!” Thomas von Danwitz declared with reference to the famous rulings of the German Constitutional Court “Solange” and “Solange II”. He explained that human rights protection within the European Union can be fully exercised through the European Institutions. He argued that the ECJ offers more than sufficient protection of fundamental values and human rights in EU Member States, which leaves no more reason to argue that any national court needs to preserve its competencies with regards to a possible failure of human rights protection through EU. He also defended the ECJ report, according to which the accession agreement of the EU to the European Convention on Human Rights, negotiated by the EU and the Council of Europe, was incompatible with EU law.

Angelika Nußberger discussed the consequences of this decision, saying it will induce a closer control by the ECHR of the state measures taken in order to transpose European Union Law. Guy Canivet and Christian Vigouroux explained how the French supreme courts try to harmonize the three stages of the fundamental rights protection, by trying to interpret national law in the light of supranational law and European Court precedent. Both of them stressed that they consider it to be the duty of national courts to inform the ECJ about possible deficiencies in its rulings.

Johannes Masing discussed the importance of federalism with regards to Human Rights protection. He mentioned the different positions about issues such as the wearing of veils in public, in order to illustrate that the difficulties of unifying fundamental rights protection without consideration to national history. In his point of view, the European Convention on Human Rights is a minimum threshold, on which Member States build their own system. As to the influence of the EU’s Charter of Fundamental Rights, he suggested it should be reduced to areas where the EU imposes concrete obligations upon Member States, and bears the political responsibility for them.
During 2013-14, Georgia State University’s College of Education was highly effective in promoting the principles of the United Nations Academic Impact initiative. Of particular note are the following programs:

The Georgia State University’s College of Education hosted a group of students from the University of Johannesburg to help them learn more about the U.S. educational system, thus promoting UNAI’s Global Citizenship through Education principle. The two-week visit, which included visits to local landmarks places and schools, was designed to encourage cultural exchange and initiate discussions about the nature of education and educational systems around the world.

The 7th Annual meeting of the Atlanta Committee on Teaching about the United Nations (CTAUN) was also held at Georgia State University’s College of Education in March of 2014. Conference attendees discussed ways and models for implementing and promoting positive youth programs that empower and educate through a call to action. Among the outcomes of the conference was the production of a document titled “Youth in Danger: Strategies for Action—Locally and Globally”, which provided specific practical suggestions for empowering and improving situations for youth in the Southeast region of the United States. Keynote speakers of the meeting included Hawa Diallo, the public information officer in the NGO Relations section of the UN’s Department of Public Information, and Al Duncan, an award winning youth advocate and publisher.

All UNAI members are required to send an annual activity reports. Members that have not yet sent their annual activity for the preceding 12 months are requested to do so without delay.

All submissions are available at https://academicimpact.un.org/content/activity-reports

---

21st Century monthly news magazine
http://www.unmultimedia.org/tv/21stcentury/
- Ark of Return: New Slavery Memorial (12’00”)
- Guns, Guards and Gorillas: Republic of the Congo (6’30”)

UN in Action short feature series
http://www.unmultimedia.org/tv/unia/
- Palestine and Israel: Mending Hearts (5’23) (#1483)
- Nepal: Thousands Affected by Earthquake (3’30) (#1484)

---

For all issues of the UNAI Newsletter, please visit https://academicimpact.un.org/content/newsletters
For comments on or queries about the UNAI Newsletter, please write to academicimpact@un.org
We welcome your thoughts and feedback on our articles and our program!

(This edition of the newsletter was prepared and edited by Achuth Krishnan Sreedevi)