Section 1: UNSP launches two new initiatives: “A Day at the UN” and Interviews with SIPA Alumni

In response to SIPA students’ requests to gain a better understanding of the realities of working within the UN, Professor Lindenmayer launched two new initiatives this fall: “A Day at the UN: A View from Inside” and “Insights into the UN: Interviews with SIPA Alumni.” Both activities offer students a chance to have insider access into the UN and provide them with valuable networking opportunities. These initiatives will also foster a better understanding of the inner workings and culture of a multilateral organization.

95 Students Apply for the ‘Day at the UN: A View from Inside’ Initiative. 40 Lucky Students to Spend a Day at the UN this Spring Semester

“A Day at the UN: A View from Inside,” is an engaging new program, which will provide students with the unique opportunity to spend a day within a UN Department, Agency, Program or Fund. Ninety-five SIPA students applied for this exciting experience, from which forty students were selected. Students will be placed in one of the following offices: Office of the Secretary General, Peacekeeping, Political Affairs, Mediation, Security Council, Public Administration, Peacebuilding Support, Administration and Management, Economic and Social Affairs, UN Women, UNDP, UNICEF, UNIFEM, and UNFPA. Students will have the privilege of shadowing a UN staff member as he/she participates in meetings, briefings, teleconferences with the field, and other activities, and will gain a sense of a “typical day” within a chosen office.

On April 6, 2011, students will share with the SIPA community their experience spending a day with a UN staff member through a panel to be organized by the UNSP.
After graduating from SIPA in 2002, Sebastian von Einsiedel started an interesting career in international affairs both in New York and in the field. Working after his graduation with the International Peace Institute (IPI) allowed him to build a network in the broader UN community and he eventually joined the Organization in 2004 and worked for the research staff of the UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change. After some years spent at Headquarters, Sebastian joined the UN Mission in Nepal as a political affairs officer. In 2008, he returned to New York, first to work with the Secretary-General’s Counter Terrorism Implementation Task Force, and later serving with the Policy Planning Unit of the UN Department of Political Affairs. Sebastian shares with us some insights on the nature of his work as well as valuable advice on how to maximize our chances of starting a career at the UN.

INSIDE THE UN: SEBASTIAN’ WORK AT DPA

What does it mean “to work at the UN?” Sebastian tells us more about his daily tasks and responsibilities and highlights the pros and cons of his work.

Q: Can you describe the work and mission of the Policy Planning Unit where you work?

SVE: The Policy Planning Unit works primarily on thematic rather than country- or region-specific issues. Our main areas of focus are conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding (DPA has currently 14 political missions deployed in the field, many of them in post-conflict settings). We try to learn lessons from past engagements with the hope to improve UN policies and response mechanisms over time. For instance, we look at security implications of drug trafficking and organized crimes, explore UN strategies of response to unconstitutional changes of government or examine the relationships between terrorism and conflict prevention. The type of typical tasks includes writing talking points, speeches or policy papers for senior UN officials and liaising with key stakeholders on any given issue (UN Departments and Agencies; Member States; Regional organizations; and think tanks).

Q: Which aspects of your work do you find the most/least interesting?

SVE: Our work tends to be quite substantive and from where we sit, we occasionally have the opportunity to meaningfully influence policy development at the UN. The Department of Political Affairs is currently in the midst of a transformation to become a more operational, field-oriented, nimble actor in conflict prevention and mediation. Partly as a result of this transformation, the Department’s leadership is remarkably receptive – even keen on – new ideas and policy initiatives. Some of these policy initiatives reach the level of the UN Secretary-General and his cabinet, which is of course very gratifying. For instance, on the question of unconstitutional changes of government, we developed policies and mechanisms to guide the UN system on how to respond to situations of Coup d’Etat. Besides, in DPA the quality of the staff is very high and it is a pleasure to work with a great number of young, smart, dynamic, idealistic and hard-working colleagues. That said, working at the UN can also be quite frustrating on occasion. Especially some of the most capable and initially enthusiastic UN staffers tend to feel somewhat discouraged after a few years with the Organization. Often, the human resources system is suboptimal and colleagues get stuck for many years at the same level without ever getting promoted. Like many large bureaucracies, the UN feels at times excessively hierarchical and even more senior colleagues sometimes complain that they feel like “glorified desk officers”. Moreover, the UN is a highly politicized environment and we work on issues on which there is sometimes considerable disagreement among Member States (or among UN Departments and Agencies). As a result, UN docu-
ments are often somewhat bland, losing their punchiness in the process. Also, sitting at UN headquarters, it is sometimes hard to see the real impact of your work on the ground. I therefore recommend any young UN colleagues to spend some time with UN field missions because it is on the ground, that the UN makes the biggest difference. However, despite these flaws, I never regretted my decision to seek a career with the United Nations. Indeed, I very much enjoy my work.

HOW WE GET THERE
Sebastian now shed light on important skills and prerequisites that help succeeding in this field.

Q: What are the most important skills needed for this type of work?
SVE: DPA is looking for people with a range of skills. Most graduates from grad school programs in international affairs or other relevant field who seek employment with the UN have a very good education and already two or three years of relevant work experience. It is difficult for any candidate to distinguish him or herself in this highly competitive environment. I would mention the following skill sets as ones that would help candidates stand out among the lot: First, relevant language skills. Speaking French is of course important because many of our main Missions are in francophone countries. And if you speak Arabic, Chinese, Kiswahili (especially as someone not hailing from a region where these languages are spoken), this is a major plus. Second, relevant field experience and regional expertise. If you’ve spent a couple of years working in a fragile, conflict, or post-conflict state, that immediately makes you more interesting to DPA. Everyone has thematic expertise. Few people, however, can claim to have serious expertise on West Africa or the Great Lakes region. In light of the fact that DPA is becoming more and more field-oriented and operational, we are also looking for people who know how to run things, who have experience that will help them set up a field mission or a mediation initiative in the field. I also found it very helpful in my work to have at least some background in International Law, given that much of the language used at the UN is couched in legal concepts. Good drafting skills are very important at DPA as written documents are ultimately the main currency in which we trade. You also need good team and personal skills. You have to have a good feeling of how to work with people and a degree of humility helps a lot.

Q: How does one get into UN?
SVE: It is rare for people to enter the UN straight after grad school. You need to first build-up a little bit of a record of practice in your CV. Even at the entry level, most staff has worked for a few years with NGOs or think tanks before joining the UN. Again, we do not necessarily want to see how much academic expertise you have on any given subject, but what your work record shows, your experience and ability to engage people. Technically, there are three ways to enter into the UN. You can get in via the front door, by taking the yearly national competitive exam. The latter is reserved to selected under-represented countries. It is a very complex and lengthy process. At the entry level, even if you pass the exam, it can take 2 to 3 years before you get your contract. You can also enter through the side entrance, and work for a UN agency as a consultant or as UNV for a field mission. Finally, you can also access the UN via the back door, by joining a think tank or an NGO working around the UN and develop relationships that may help you eventually land a job at the UN.

FROM SIPA TO THE UN: HOW TO PRODUCTIVELY USE OUR SIPA EXPERIENCE
Here, Sebastian gives us some advice on how to use our SIPA time at best. Good news: SIPA is well-represented at the UN so we have our chances to join them. Until then, we still need to work on our French and international law classes…

Q: how did your master at SIPA help you get this job? Are there any courses or activities you would advise us to focus on at SIPA to prepare ourselves for a possible future career at the UN?
SVE: A large majority of UN folks have a degree from US or UK Universities – among them Oxford, Cambridge, LSE, SIPA, SAIS, Fletcher, Georgetown, or Kennedy School. I would recommend students take international law classes at SIPA as well as a good IR theory class, (Prof. Jervis’ class for instance). Such a class helps you think conceptually about international affairs which help especially if you work in policy planning. Another piece of advice would be to try to get some of your writing published. Publications can really differentiate you from the rest of the students and shows that you can write well. In the meantime, it is important for you to accumulate field experience and live in conflict zones to strengthen your regional expertise. Field experience should really be your priority as the UN is now a field-oriented organization. At the end of the day, the UN is not just looking for mini Kissingers but for staff who know how to manage initiatives and engage with people.
The UNSP gives SIPA students the unique opportunity to attend open meetings of the Security Council. During the fall 2010 semester, Professor Lindenmayer took large groups of students to the Council to attend various debates on a number of current issues: The 10th Anniversary of Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, the upcoming referendum on South Sudan, reconstruction in Haiti, peace and security in Africa and the situation in Somalia.

Read accounts of these meetings by a group of SIPA students.

Section 2: UNSP Makes the UN Security Council Its Classroom

SIPA Students Gain Insider Access to UN Security Council

By Samantha Hammer

How can you rescue a government under siege? Prevent civilians from being caught in the crossfire? Ensure that no children are forced to take up arms? At a recent open meeting of the United Nations Security Council, a group of UN Studies Program students watched representatives from seventeen nations attempt to find answers to these unanswerable questions in the context of Somalia, which, in the words of the Kenyan Representative’s statement that day, has become “a source of collective shame for the international community” for its decades of unceasing crises.

Elisabeth Lindenmayer, a former Assistant Secretary-General to Kofi Annan and current Director of the UN Studies Program at SIPA, has made the Security Council a classroom for SIPA students by inviting those interested in the workings of the Council to attend open meetings. In these meetings, the Council considers current international security issues, paving the way for subsequent private debates and, eventually, adoption of an action plan on the issue at hand.

Barred to those without the sponsorship of a UN insider (although full transcripts of the proceedings are available on the Security Council website), the attendance of these meetings by SIPA students portrays one of the school’s most attractive assets: insider access to the international organizations.

Although SIPA students are hardly a naïve bunch when it comes to international policymaking, the chance to sit in the Security Council meeting chamber as statements were being read – to have Japan’s instantaneously-translated position coming through their headsets at the same time that it was being piped to U.S. Representative Susan Rice – was an inspiring experience for first-timers.

Yet the event was more than just spectacle. By providing access to Security Council meetings to SIPA students, Professor Lindenmayer sought “not to show students [simply how the Council functions]”, but to encourage them to think critically about the substance of the meetings – to analyze the representatives’ statements and evaluate the options available to the international community in dealing with crises.

At this recent meeting, the UN’s Special Representative for Somalia, Augustine Mahiga, argued for increased international intervention in Somalia. He detailed the violence perpetrated by the insurgent group al-Shabab, the fragility of the transitional government, the suffering of the Somali people, and the risk Somalia’s instability poses to the international community vis-à-vis piracy and terrorism.

(Continued p. 5)
He praised the African Union Mission in Somalia troops “heroically” defending the government and called for greater international support to bolster their coordination and capabilities.

Following Mr. Mahiga’s testimony, representatives from Somalia and Kenya both took the floor to reiterate the urgent need for a strengthened international response to the crisis in Somalia. The remaining representatives responded with a chorus of statements expressing both condemnation of the violence and pledges of support – in some cases moral, others financial – for Somalia’s stabilization.

While these two themes were a near constant in each statement, potential areas of debate within the Council emerged. Some nations, like the U.K., called for an increased international commitment; others, like Japan, suggested that the transitional Somali government needed to solve its internal disputes before it could win the confidence of the international community.

US Representative Susan Rice emphasized the continuing plight of Somalia’s child soldiers, calling for an end to the practice of using children as young as nine as combatants. As there was no decision-taking planned, the session closed without the Council confirming its next move to help resolve the crisis.

Students hoping to catch a glimpse of impassioned debate were disappointed as the prepared statements proceeded one after another with no comment other than the perfunctory thank you from the sitting President, the Representative from Turkey. For some, the anticlimactic proceedings exemplified the layers of formality and political caution that hinder UN progress on critical issues. For others, who gleaned the kernels of controversy threaded throughout the statements, this taste of how the UN functions whetted their appetite for a better understanding of how the real decisions are made – in back rooms, out of sight of eager students sitting in the observation deck.

However, all students interviewed felt that the experience was worthwhile, whether they had gone simply out of curiosity about the UN or because of a dedicated interest in Somalia.

Despite the privileges the UN Studies Program offers, SIPA students shouldn’t expect to get a full UN behind-the-scenes pass any time soon (unless, of course, they end up taking on Ban Ki-Moon’s job after they graduate). However, there are plenty of further opportunities to get a first-hand look at the UN on the horizon. Professor Lindenmayer will continue to make open meetings of the Security Council accessible to SIPA students as she seeks to teach and inspire students.

SIPA Students Observe Key Players in Action at UN Security Council Ahead of Referendum on South Sudan, All Sides Pledge Peace

By Marie O’Reilly

If South Sudan votes to secede from the rest of the republic in January 2011, it will be a defining moment for peace and stability in Sudan with significant repercussions for the African continent. SIPA students got a sense of the implications of such a historic move from UN Security Council representatives and Sudanese political leaders on November 16 when they attended a special high-level session of the Security Council as part of SIPA’s UN Studies Program.

“It is a question of peace or war for the Security Council,” said Professor Lindenmayer as she briefed students in the UN Headquarters conference room before the session on the upcoming referenda in South Sudan began. After government representatives from North and South Sudan addressed the Council, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and UK Foreign Minister William Hague stressed that all parties must respect the results of the referenda, which are widely expected to result in an independent state. The only other example of a successful post-independence secession in Africa is Eritrea, which separated from Ethiopia in 1993.

With unresolved questions over border demarcation, citizenship rights and oil revenue distribution post-secession, Secretary General Ban Ki Moon emphasized that “a return to war is not an option.”
Instability persists in Sudan despite the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005, which officially ended its 24-year civil war. While conflict in Africa’s largest state is frequently depicted in tribal or religious terms, the importance of marginalized peripheries and access to natural resources cannot be understated. Southern Sudan is emblematic of this predicament. On the one hand, it is the source of Sudan’s oil—the lynchpin of the Sudanese economy. On the other, southerners argue that political unity has been used to the advantage of the successive central governments in Khartoum in the north, which have controlled distribution of this oil. SIPA students will tackle some of these oil- and water-related challenges in Sudan as part of a capstone workshop in the spring under the guidance of Professor Lindenmayer.

At the Security Council Hillary Clinton promised Sudan a normalization of relations with the United States and removal from the list of state sponsors of terrorism if it pursued the “path of peace.” Even before this carrot was tabled, representatives from both the governing National Congress Party (NCP) and the south’s Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) expressed a clear commitment to peace and stability for north and south alike from their seats in the UN auditorium. “I thought both of them, if we could translate their words into action immediately, would have demonstrated unequivocally the commitment to find a way toward a durable peace that we seek,” commented Clinton in response, before going on to address continuing challenges to peace and stability in Sudan’s western region of Darfur.

The consistent pledges for peace by all sides did not go unnoticed by the SIPA students in attendance. “I thought there was a lot of idealism,” said Clarissa Baldin, second-year Master of International Affairs student, “Everyone seems committed to peace. But when you’re there on the ground… I don’t know.” Implementing the commitments made in New York will be crucial to ensuring a peaceful outcome in January, whichever way the vote goes.

UNSC, Peace and Security in Africa – Support for AU Peacekeeping

By Yumin Lu

On October 22, Professor Elisabeth Lindenmayer, Director of the UN Studies Program, invited a group of students to attend the UN Security Council meeting on Peace and Security in Africa – Support for African Union (AU) Peacekeeping. The meeting was intended to strengthen the collaboration between the UN and AU and to find a solution that will provide the AU with predictable, sustainable and flexible resources. The agenda was adopted without objection.

The Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria Mr. Henry Odein Ajumogobia each made a statement. They all affirmed the progress and efforts made by both the UN and AU through joint missions such as AMIS, UNAMID and AMISOM. They praised the importance of AU in regional peacekeeping and also reiterated the necessity of developing an institutional capacity commensurate with the demands placed on the AU.

“The demands placed upon the AU far outweigh its resources and capacities to effectively respond. The consequences of this mismatch include mission failure, increased stability, retarded economic development and a reluctance among potential partners to contribute to what is perceived to be a failing system.” said Mr. Ajumogobia. “Without a truly strategic relationship, vision and clear guidance, our enormous investments on conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding will continue to be short-term and ad hoc.” The Security Council meeting provided an excellent opportunity for SIPA students to see first-hand the workings on the United Nations, and the UN Studies Program constantly seeks to engage students with the work of the UN.
UN Security Council Meeting: Haiti
By Karin Vazquez

The United Nations Security Council had a busy Monday, September 13, 2010. Ambassadors, high-level representatives, notetakers, interpreters, and even SIPA students with the UN Studies Program were there for the meeting on Haiti’s reconstruction. The numbers tell the story: less than 2% of the earthquake debris has been cleared, only 18% of international aid promised has been disbursed and 29 projects recently approved still lack funding. Is reconstruction ever possible in this scenario?

International community pledges for Haiti’s reconstruction earlier this year contradicts the present stalemate. UNSC members are still uncertain on whether international efforts should primarily ensure security on the ground, improve coordination among the various actors, or increase funding to Haiti’s reconstruction. But even as aid remains a challenge, progress is steadily being made to build back the country: infrastructure is being rebuilt, displaced people are becoming to return home and security, although still fragile, is under control.

One month after the UNSC meeting on the situation of Haiti, the adoption of resolution 1944 extending the mandate of MINUSTAH renews international engagement in a critical moment for the country. Ensuring free and fair presidential and legislative elections on November 28, 2010 is the current challenge to guarantee a government able to bring about the real transformation Haiti needs to go through.

Students Observe Bachelet and Clinton Discuss Women, Peace and Security
By Tyler Radford

On the morning of October 26th, a group of just over 20 students in the UN Studies Program accompanied by Professor Lindenmayer attended the UN Security Council open debate commemorating the 10th anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on “women, peace and security”. Many students in the group, both first and second year students and recent alumni, had attended a UN Studies Program panel of UN representatives the prior evening at SIPA to discuss the topic including the next day’s meeting.

In the minutes before the Security Council meeting began, the group was treated to an informal chat with the Bangladesh’s former ambassador to the UN Mr. Anwarul Karim Chowdhury just outside the Council chambers. Mr. Chowdhury was instrumental in the creation and adoption of resolution 1325 during his tenure as Security Council president in the year 2000. Also participating in the open debate were Ms. Michele Bachelet, former president of Chile and recently appointed head of the new UN entity “UN Women”, as well as US Secretary of State Ms. Hillary Clinton and many others.

In the official statement read by the Council’s president, the council reiterated “…its demand to all parties to armed conflict to immediately and completely cease all forms of violence against women and girls…”. The council’s statement also touched on the need for improved reporting from member states to measure performance against a set of UN indicators, as well as increasing the number of female peacekeepers. The debate was then opened by UN Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon who delivered his comments via video while travelling on official business in Asia. The Secretary-General emphasized in his comments the need for UN and member states to play a lead role, saying “only by acting on our promises can we hope to create change.”

Some of the morning’s most powerful words came from civil society. Ms. Thelma Awori, representing the Civil Society Advisory Group began “…We can no longer afford to wait. It is time for action, not words…”. She closed by saying “Let us look at the past 10 years of preparation…of putting in place the structures and tools. But we must also note that these 10 years of preparation have been costly to women’s health and well-being…This second decade must be the decade of action on resolution 1325. We cannot wait another 10 years for action.” Ms. Awori’s comments received loud and continuous applause not only from the Council floor but also from the nearly full observer seating. Following statements from other Council members, over 90 member states took the floor, many outlining their national plans in an exciting session that lasted well into the night.
Section 3: UNSP Engages Students in Cutting-Edge Research on Current Topics

The UN Studies Program promotes research and creates projects which give students hands on possibilities to analyze current global issues. The research projects allow students to strengthen research skills as well as connect with current UN officials. This summer and fall 2010, Professor Lindenmayer led two teams of students in a literature review for UN Department of Civil Affairs and an analysis of best practices for the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Next semester, she and a team of students will be examining the role of natural resources on peace and security in South Sudan in the context of the referendum scheduled for January 2011. For past research projects with the UN Studies Program see http://www.sipa.columbia.edu/academics/concentrations/unsp/research.html.

Professor Lindenmayer Leads Research Project with the Peacekeeping Best Practices Section of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)

By Allison Johnson

Professor Lindenmayer is leading a research group comprised of six SIPA students in a project with the UN Department of Peacekeeping’s Best Practices Section (PBPS). The PBPS, which is located within the Policy, Evaluation and Training Division of DPKO, supports peacekeeping operations by developing mechanisms that encourage the sharing of knowledge and the transfer of best practices among peacekeeping missions worldwide. The research team is conducting analytical research on the basis of various documents provided by PBPS with a view to identifying valuable best practices and lessons learned so far.

The students created a matrix as a means to classify information and are using this methodology to devise a set of findings related to key areas of interest for PBPS. These areas of interest encompass a variety of themes related to military, police, civilian, and mission support and include topics as diverse as the peacekeeping/peacebuilding nexus, rule of law, mission integration, and the protection of civilians. The ultimate goal of the research is to assist PBPS in its assessment of the best practices utilized in response to challenges faced so that they can continue to advise missions on how to incorporate these lessons into their own planning and policy development.

The UN Studies Program offered students the unique opportunity to take part in this exciting project during a crucial time for UN peacekeeping. DPKO is currently in the implementation phase of its New Horizon non-paper, which aims to offer a way forward as peacekeeping missions continue to grow more complex and multidimensional and seeks to better position UN peacekeeping to address emerging global challenges.
UNSP and UN Department of Civil Affairs Examine Local Peacekeeping

By John Burnett

Last spring, five UN Studies Program members [NB: John Burnett, Stephen Gray, Carina Lakovits, James Taylor, and Gerald Stang] were given a unique opportunity to work with the UN Department of Civil Affairs to assess local peacekeeping best practices under the direction of Professor Elisabeth Lindenmayer. The research project involved assessing academic literature on linking local-level peacebuilding efforts with national-level initiatives. This information was needed for a UN Civil Affairs conference in New York, which drew together leaders of Civil Affairs teams from many UN peacekeeping operations around the world.

This challenging topic is of ongoing concern to UN peacekeeping operations, as laying the foundations for successful national peace in many contexts requires assessing local drivers of conflict. Given limited critical assessment of this topic across different contexts, the UN Department of Civil Affairs sought additional input from the SIPA team as to what general lessons, if any, could be drawn from across varying national frameworks.

In reporting its findings, the UN Studies Program team prepared a summary report on current academic literature, and presented its findings to the UN Civil Affairs conference. This presentation was the highlight of the project, as students were given the opportunity to interact, and take questions from practitioners working on the leading edge of the field. UN Studies Program members were thus able to both learn the current state of knowledge on the topic, and gain insights into how this may be implemented in practice. In the end, it proved to be yet another exciting opportunity presented through the UN Studies Program to learn about

Capstone Project: The Role of Natural Resources in Sustainable Peace in Sudan

By Allison Johnson

The UN Studies Program, in close consultation with the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations will conduct a research project on the impact of oil and water on peace and security in Sudan. This Spring 2011 Capstone Project will focus in particular on the effect of natural resources in Southern Sudan, which will see substantial transitions in coming months following the January 2011 referendum that will determine whether the south will remain part of a united Sudan or become a separate state. It is widely believed that the people of Southern Sudan will vote in favor of secession, and this outcome will highlight many vital issues that have yet to be addressed between the north and south, perhaps most important of which will concern water and oil.

The team, led by Professor Lindenmayer, will produce an analytic paper that includes recommendations on how the international community can most effectively engage the parties in Sudan on the topic of natural resources in order to bring stability to the region. In particular, the project will look at the issue from political and economic perspectives, as well as through the lens of the peacekeeping missions in the region. The recommendations will include possible arrangements between the two sides that will support a long-term peaceful coexistence and mutually beneficial use of oil and water, as well as highlight potential priorities for the Government of Southern Sudan in fostering economic growth, security, and good governance through the use of natural resources.
Section 4: UNSP Continues Its Working Lunch Series with UN Ambassadors

Last year, the UNSP launched a “Working Lunch Series with UN Ambassadors.” The purpose of these lunches is to give SIPA students access to the current thinking of the UN’s diplomatic community on specific issues, while at the same time providing UN Ambassadors the opportunity to hear students’ views and perspectives on topics of mutual concern and interest. It is meant to continue strengthening the relationship between the United Nations and SIPA and create an ongoing dialogue between the world of international politics and academia. The UNSP’s first working lunch this fall was a discussion on the humanitarian response in Pakistan with Ambassador Harron, followed by a conversation with Ambassador Wenaweser on current developments in the International Criminal Court (ICC).


Previous Working Lunches with UN Ambassadors organized by Professor Lindenmayer include:


AMBASSADOR GERARD ARAUD, Permanent Representative of France to the UN, “The Security Council seen by a Permanent Member (P5),” January 29th, 2010. Attendance: 20 SIPA students

AMBASSADOR VANU GOPALA MENON, Permanent Representative of Singapore to the UN, “The G20 and the UN “Global Governance,” February 11th, 2010. Attendance: 21 SIPA students

AMBASSADOR VIOTTI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BRAZIL TO THE UN, “Rebuilding Haiti,” February 26th, 2010. Attendance: 18 SIPA students

AMBASSADOR PETER MAURER, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the UN and President of the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, “The UN Landscape and the Challenges of the 21st Century: the Decision-making Process in Changing World Politics; Reforms: who decides, who pays? Is the UN delivering?” March 11th, 2010. Attendance: 18 SIPA students

AMBASSADOR MAGED A. ABDELAZIZ, Permanent Representative of Egypt to the UN and Chair of the Non-Aligned-Movement, Ambassador Pedro Nunez Mosquera, Permanent Representative of Cuba to the UN, and Ambassador Mohammad Khazae, Permanent Representative of Iran to the UN, “The Responsibility to Protect: Perspectives from the Non-Aligned-Movement (NAM),” April 8th, 2010. Attendance: 23 SIPA students

AMBASSADOR KHALID A. AL NAFISEE, Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the UN “The Role of the Kingdom with Respect to the Issue of Energy Politics in the International Sphere,” April 30th, 2010. Attendance: 30 SIPA students

WATCH FOR UPCOMING WORKING LUNCHES:

For the spring 2011 semester, the following Ambassadors to the UN have confirmed participation in the “Working Lunch Series” and will host lunches for SIPA students.

- Canada: the complexities and challenges of peacebuilding. January 28
- The Security Council seen by the S5 (Small Five) Ambassadors of Jordan, Costa Rica, Liechtenstein, Singapore, Switzerland. February 11
- Jordan
- The Netherlands
UNSP Working Lunch with the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the UN, Ambassador Husain Abdullah Haroon

By Geraldine Ang

In October 2010, thirteen SIPA students attended a working lunch with the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, Ambassador Husain Abdullah Haroon. The working lunch was organized by Professor Elizabeth Lindenmayer, director of the UN Studies Program at SIPA. Ambassador Haroon welcomed the students and Professor Lindenmayer in his beautiful Upper West Side residence, in Manhattan, New York, to discuss the humanitarian situation in Pakistan and the role of the United Nations in coping with the post-flooding crisis. He also extended his hospitality to students with a sumptuous Pakistani meal.

As Ambassador Haroon reminded the students, the United Nations has been a key player in addressing the current crisis. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon visited the flooded areas, and decided to put himself upfront in order to mobilize the international community to fund humanitarian aid relief, as 21 million Pakistanis were displaced at the peak of the crisis. With a pre-flooding presence in the Swat valley, located in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province, UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) were the most efficient on-the-ground UN clusters. However, as Ambassador Haroon pointed out, UN agencies were much less prepared to intervene in the other affected provinces Sindh and Punjab, which got isolated by the floods, with no electricity or road access. With only 300 UN staff members on the ground, the UN has nonetheless done a remarkable job, concentrating mostly on saving people. One of the biggest challenges remains food supply and vital goods delivery. With fields and crops’ storage destroyed, the flooding will have a deep, long-lasting effect in Pakistani rural areas.

Ambassador Haroon also discussed with SIPA students the challenges of post-crisis reconstruction. Pakistan’s ability to recover was extremely promising, and he applauded the spontaneous mobilization of the Pakistani people. According to the Ambassador, about 80 percent of the total aid for food, tents and blankets was spontaneously offered by Pakistan’s private and civilian community. Individuals played an essential role. Pakistan will also benefit from its young population (70 percent under the age of 30) to gain economic productivity. On the other hand, Ambassador Haroon very much regretted that the Pakistani government would at times undermine Pakistan’s recovery ability. Corruption for instance limits Pakistan’s ability to assess dangers and its readiness to cope with humanitarian crises such as the recent flooding. Ambassador Haroon explained that Pakistan is a society “which has stopped recording itself,” for personal benefits. The underuse of Pakistani women is another factor which will cripple Pakistan’s reconstruction. Pakistan is depriving itself from half of its working age population, by not including women more within the economic workforce. Another hindrance is the lack of cooperation between Pakistan and India. Collaboration with other South Asian countries, including India, is essential to ensure the revival of Pakistan’s economic activity.

The working lunch with Ambassador Haroon went a long way to enlightening SIPA students on the challenges and opportunities facing Pakistan to address the humanitarian crisis, and economic recovery.
The Future of the ICC: UNSP Working Lunch with the Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein

By Matthew Schaaf

The Future of the ICC: UNSP Working Lunch with the Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein

A dozen SIPA students visited the Permanent Mission of Liechtenstein to the United Nations for a lunchtime discussion hosted by Ambassador Christian Wenaweser, Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein to the UN and President of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). During the 2-hour luncheon, Ambassador Wenaweser discussed the outcomes of the Review Conference of the Rome Statute which took place in Kampala, Uganda in May and June 2010 and engaged with the students in a lively discussion on the future of the ICC and the Rome Statute. The UN Studies Program-sponsored event proved to be an excellent opportunity for SIPA students to engage with a working diplomat.

Long before the review conference began two items were already on its agenda: the crime of aggression and Article 124 of the Rome Statute which allows States to exclude their nationals from the Court’s jurisdiction over war crimes for 7 years after ratification. The states parties also engaged in stocktaking on the Rome Statute’s impact on victims and affected communities, complementarity with national systems, cooperation, and peace and justice. Ambassador Wenaweser noted that the states parties are generally in wide agreement about the progress of the Rome Statute, pointing to the fact that they adopted resolutions for each of the first three stocktaking areas; because there was less consensus about the peace and justice area, however, only a summary of the discussion was adopted. Despite continued differences of opinion in some areas, Ambassador Wenaweser concluded that the states decided that the Rome Statute is overall a good treaty, and that as such, there is no need for changes or additions at this point in time.

Many of the students’ questions revolved around the ICC’s indictment of the Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, which, according to Ambassador Wenaweser, was also a prominent part of the discussion in Kampala. According to the Rome Statute, as a result of his indictment states parties are obliged to apprehend al-Bashir should he enter their jurisdiction. However, al-Bashir was not detained during recent trips to Kenya and Chat, both states parties to the Rome Statute. The challenges of the Rome Statute’s cooperation and enforcement framework were laid bare by the refusal of these states to apprehend al-Bashir as required by their international obligations.

The situation in the Sudan also illustrates the challenges of seeking peace and justice while faithfully implementing the Rome Statute. According to Ambassador Wenaweser, the ICC prosecutor’s indictment of al-Bashir has complicated relations with Sudan as several international actors seek to work with it to hold a referendum on southern independence as stipulated by the Naivasha Agreement, that ended the Sudanese civil war, and sporadic violence continues elsewhere in Sudan. Indeed, because the indictment cannot be withdrawn and al-Bashir is being sought by the ICC’s prosecutor, it has been difficult to convince the Sudanese to cooperate with international actors in many areas. Despite these challenges, Ambassador Wenaweser unequivocally stated that indictments should not be delayed because of political concerns or because conflict continues.

Underlining the success of the Rome Statute, states continue to ratify the Statute at a moderate pace. While Ambassador Wenaweser noted that some states have no reason not to join and should be priority targets for supporters of the Rome Statute, his upbeat evaluation was also realistic; in the Ambassador’s view, the ICC has always been a project of small- and medium-sized states and efforts to get big states to ratify the Rome Statute, while not futile, are necessarily a long-term endeavor.

Throughout the luncheon Ambassador Wenaweser provided the students with a fascinating peek into the workings of the ICC and the recent review conference, and at the end left them with an optimistic view of the future of the ICC.
Section 5: UNSP Hosts Discussion Panels on Hot Topics

The UN Studies Program offers discussion panels, bringing prominent speakers from the UN and its agencies to share diverse perspectives on current issues. Lively interactive debates left no seat empty this fall and stimulating conversations spilled into the hallway following each event. These well-attended panels are meant to and further strengthen the synergy between the UNSP at SIPA and the UN.

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGS): CAN WE KEEP THE PROMISE?
September 16th, 2010
Panelists:
- Kandeh K Yumkella, Director General of UNIDO
- Nafis Sadik, Special Advisor of the Secretary General on HIV/AIDS and former Executive Director of UNFPA
- Jomo Sundaram, Assistant Secretary General for Economic Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs
- Rebeca Grynspan, Associate Administrator, UNDP
- Robert Orr, Assistant Secretary General for Policy Coordination and Strategic Planning, Executive Office of the Secretary General

10 YEARS OF WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY: WHAT ARE THE ACHIEVEMENTS? WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?
October 25th, 2010
Panelists:
- Atul Khare, Assistant Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations
- Judy Cheng-Hopkins, Assistant Secretary General for Peacebuilding Support to the Peacebuilding Commission
- Betty Achan Ogwaro, Chairperson of Sudanese Women Forum on Darfur, Southern Sudan
- Barbara Crossette, former NYT Foreign Correspondent
- Jurgen Heissel, Austrian Mission

UNSP CO-SPONSORED EVENTS:

A CONVERSATION WITH YOUSSEF MAHMOUD, SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC AND CHAD (MINURCAT)
UNSP and CICR Co-Sponsored Event
October 19th, 2010
Panelists:
- Youssef Mahmoud, Special Representative for the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT)
- Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Director, Center of International Conflict Resolution, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University
- Elisabeth Lindenmayer, Director, United Nations Studies Program, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University

A DEBRIEFING ON THE CANCUN CLIMATE TALKS 2010
The Alliance Program, the Sustainable Development Doctoral Society and the UNSP Co-Sponsored Event
December 13th, 2010
Panelists:
- Scott Barrett, Lenfest-Earth Institute Professor of Natural Resource Economics, SIPA and the Earth Institute
- Laurence Tubiana, Director, Sustainable Development Center, Sciences Po
- Moderated by Elisabeth Lindenmayer, Director, UNSP, SIPA, Columbia University
First UNSP Panel on “The Millennium Development Goals: Can We Keep the Promise?”

By Mathias Zeller

In view of the high level debate of the UN General Assembly about the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), The United Nations Studies Program at SIPA has chosen to organize its first panel on this very same topic. In a packed audience, the participating practitioners took stock of the progress that has been made so far, and were also asked to evaluate the prospects to achieve the goals that world leaders set for themselves 10 years ago. And while the opinions diverged on identifying success stories, issues and needs, they all agreed on one thing: Yes, we can keep the promise we made. But, as Nafis Sadik, Special Advisor of the Secretary General on HIV/AIDS and former Executive Director of UNFPA put it, it will depend on whether we want to.

In that respect, she painted a rather bleak picture of the current situation. On the one hand, some of the urgency has decreased in recent years. On the other hand, Sadik stressed the importance of empowering women, without which none of the social goals will be achieved. To her it is not surprising that maternal health has barely improved, keeping in mind that in many countries, women’s education is not considered important.

The slow pace at which maternal health is improving is not only raising concerns as a moral responsibility, so Robert Orr, Assistant Secretary General for Policy Coordination and Strategic Planning, Office of the Executive Office of the Secretary General. We need to address the issue because of its ripple effects. So despite the fact that today is the “worst possible time to raise money,” the high level debate has to remind the leaders of the world that there will be no recovery if we don’t incorporate the poor.

Jomo Sundaram, Assistant Secretary General for Economic Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, pointed out that we actually have a problem identifying what we understand as poverty and how we measure it. He noted that in Africa, the number of poor people has gone up and that hunger has increased since 1990. “And yet we are told that poverty has decreased!” Although Sundaram mentioned various shortcomings of the MDGs and their progress, he sees a particular strength of the goals. According to him, the greatest success is that the MDGs are still being debated and that they have moved resources in order to address very important issues.

Similarly, Kandeh Yumkella, Director General of UNIDO, regards the MDGs as very helpful in that they gave civil society something to measure their governments and an instrument of accountability. However, he voiced grave concerns regarding Africa and emphasized that we need to look beyond 2015. More specifically, he advocated that we give energy a more important role. Production in Africa will not pick up if energy is left out of the equation. Therefore, we need to achieve universal access to modern energy services and reduce global energy intensity by 40 per cent by 2030, so Yumkella.

As Associate Administrator of UNDP, Rebeca Grynspan agreed with many points of her co-panelists. She observed the need to disaggregate the MDGs in terms of ethnic groups or gender and remarked that we need to make sure that countries themselves lead their development. At the same time, there is more investment needed in health, education and sanitation and she agreed with Yumkella that energy is indeed the missing MDG. And to make these efforts sustainable, she saw the empowerment of women as the best way forward. So with all the progress that has been made in the past 10 years, Grynspan said that there is still much to do, we have to strengthen the efforts and we need to reenergize the commitment in the high level debate at the UN. She thinks this is important because of the simple truth that we might look at MDGs as goals, but the people concerned look at them as a matter of survival.
UNSP “10 Years of Women, Peace and Security” Panel – “Women, Peace and Security: Norms have changed, but implementation still struggles”

By Zara Rapoport

In celebration of the 10th anniversary of the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325, the UN Studies Program organized a panel on “Women, Peace and Security” moderated by the Director of the UN Studies Program, Professor Elisabeth Lindenmayer. Resolution 1325 mandates greater participation of women in peacekeeping and decision-making positions globally, and this panel served to discuss its progress over the past ten years.

Despite being in the middle of midterms, students and practitioners packed into room 1501 at SIPA, eager to hear the five expert panelists’ views on women, peace and security. Present on the panel were Betty Achan Ogwaro, Chairperson of Sudanese Women Forum on Darfur, South Sudan; Judy Cheng-Hopkins, SIPA alum and Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding support; Jergen Heissel, representative for the Mission of Austria to the UN, Atul Kare, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; and Barbara Cossette, journalist and former foreign correspondent for the New York Times. While the normative structures have significantly improved for women and security because of Resolution 1325, implementation of such norms has been a challenge. The panelists addressed this slow-moving progress and lack of resources in explaining why implementation of the resolution has been slow.

Representative Jergen Heissel directly addressing the actions and processes of the Security Council. He stated that the Security Council has adopted a number of other resolutions under Resolution 1325, including Resolution 1889, which better addressed women and girls in post-conflicted situations, particularly victims of sexual violence. He acknowledged that there is minimal accountability and ongoing impunity for such crimes is an issue. One important step of progress, Heissel noted, is that sexual violence is now a criterion for sanctions and targeted measures. He made several suggestions that would aid in the effective implementation of Resolution 1325 including a working group in the field of Women, Peace, and Security which could better measure success and mainstreaming, as well as aid in more comprehensive reporting.

Ms. Betty Achan Ogwaro gave a heartfelt and compelling speech on the situation of women in times of war, noting some of the failures of the UN and its peacekeepers to protect these women. She explained that few women have been part of the upcoming referendum and negotiating processes in Sudan. Ms. Ogwaro also mentioned that the UN mandate did not include prevention and protection, and therefore were not able to protect the people in Sudan, even though other countries were granted these inclusions in their mandates. As a member of the mediation team with Uganda and the LRA, Ms. Ogwaro and other women worked to push the women’s agenda; however, when she asked the leader of the army to stop or punish his men for crimes against women, he would not comply. She expressed concern that the government would not punish a man for a crime of violence, even sexual, against a woman. Ms. Ogwaro explained that the coming referendum in January 2011 is a warning of imminent violence, and expressed concern that the Security Council is not acting, even though they preach the need for early warning and prevention systems. She stated that the women are tired of war. They are tired of being raped, losing husbands and sons, and caring for the wounded. She asks that the Security Council do something today that should have been done yesterday.

Mr. Atul Kare, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations explained that gender-sensitive policies are not just about peacekeeping but also about increasing women’s political involvement. More women peacekeepers, greater global efforts to increase women in the UN police force, and increased number of women in the military are needed. Mr. Kare acknowledged gaps in the peacekeeping mechanism, particularly the lack of resources and support from developed nations. Mr. Kare made several suggestions for improve-

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ment, most notably the need for targeted sanctions, particularly in regards to rape, as well as a better communication network, an increase in women’s involvement, and a mechanism to identify and prevent potential conflicts. A clear statement also needs to be made and implemented, declaring that violence against women will not be tolerated.

Judy Cheng-Hopkins, SIPA alum and Assistant Secretary-General for Peace-building support, explained that while the fight leading up to the adoption of the Resolution 1325 was hopeful and persistent, there has not been much progress in the last ten years. There are still too few female peacekeepers, and financing for gender issues is still less than 3-4% of an overall post-conflict budget. She stated women are the ultimate victims of conflict in many ways, including sexual violence, inheritance laws and land laws. However, women are also the ultimate agents of change. Women often make better peace-builders and peacemakers, as they are the caretakers and strive for peace, not for the power and money, but for themselves and their children. Up until now, she says, what has been done concerning women, peace and security, has been ad-hoc and add-on. She commented on the need for training, resources, and microcredit to enable women to be self-employed and financially independent. The issue is not about women in peacebuilding per se, but about peacebuilding that effectively includes women.

Ms. Barbara Cossette, journalist and former foreign correspondent for the New York Times, explained that Resolution 1325 was largely unknown by the local populations, because of the abundance of top-down programs that did not reach the people. Ms. Cossette suggested that an important step toward effective programming is to start communication between people and governments in order to broaden perspectives and programming details. She ended on the positive and hopeful note that the era of separate gender roles is changing. Women are rising up in local NGOs and attaining the critical mass necessary to implement the change that is so desperately needed. Most of all, she stated, women are central to development and peace, but cannot be more deeply involved until they are physically safe.

The overall response to the question of progress since the adoption of Resolution 1325, is that while norms have been changed, progress on the ground has been moderate at best. Resources are scarce, the Security Council acts too late, if at all, and there is the ongoing cry for more data even though data does indeed exist. Local governments are resistant to empower women and end impunity for violent acts committed. It seems that many people who had hope after the initial adoption, have come to realize just how slowly things move for women’s rights, especially when women aren’t involved in the process. It is apparent to everyone on the panel that until more women are involved locally and globally in these processes, it will cannot be taken seriously enough or acted upon quickly enough.
The UNSP also connects SIPA students to internship possibilities within the UN system. Robust communication through the UNSP email listserv highlights opportunities for students searching for internships or career networks. One example of such internship is Miya EunMee Lee, a SIPA class of 2010 graduate concentrating on International Energy Management and Policy and now interning with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Read her article:

Miya EunMee Lee (SIPA Class of 2010, MPA IEMP)

I am currently working as an Expert at UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) New York Office for six months. I found out about the opportunity through Professor Lindenmayer’s email to SIPA students informing of UNIDO’s recruitment. It has been 6 weeks and so far I have been producing briefing notes from various meetings on behalf of the Regional Director and Representative, including the Second Committee (handling economic and social affairs), informal draft resolution negotiations, and interagency meetings. I am involved in sustainable development projects, with particular focus on sustainable energy and green economy. For me this experience is providing an opportunity to participate in the process of making an initiative become formally adopted at the General Assembly. In addition, I am able to work closely with a dynamic team comprised of staffs with different cultural and professional backgrounds. This allows me to increase my understanding of the projects being implemented by other organizations within the UN and see a more holistic view of the UN mission. Lastly, I have a chance to evaluate my capability in terms of the demand within the organization and plan my next career move.
Section 7: UNSP Fall 2010 Retreat

UNSP Fall 2010 Retreat

By Sandra Bitar and Christine Heckman

This September, an enthusiastic group of SIPA students attended the UN Studies Program (UNSP) annual retreat in Chester, Connecticut. For first-year students, the retreat served as a valuable introduction to UN-related opportunities available at SIPA, a chance to dig deeper into the issues facing the United Nations, as well as an opportunity to meet fellow students with similar interests.

The weekend’s activities focused on the theme of global governance, chosen to reflect the agenda for the UN General Assembly taking place in New York the following week. Participants took part in debates on contemporary global issues; made policy presentations on issues including peacekeeping, gender issues, and climate change; and brainstormed ideas for UNSP Working Group events and activities for the coming year.

The guest of honor was Ambassador Vanu Gopala Menon, Permanent Representative of Singapore to the United Nations, who joined the group for dinner and spoke about the future of the UN in light of the G20’s recent re-emergence as well as his role in creating the ‘Small 5’, a forum of five small, but influential states pushing for Security Council reform.

When asked about their favorite part of the weekend, many students highlighted hearing Professor Lindenmayer’s insights into the workings of the UN. She shared stories from peacekeeping missions as well as her thoughts on the opportunities and challenges of a UN career.

Students left the retreat inspired, motivated, and excited about upcoming UNSP activities.