



APAY NEWS

Monthly e-Newsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs No. 07 / 08 ~ August / September 2008

Rebuilding Lives in Sichuan

YMCA of Singapore has entered into a partnership with the National Committee of YMCAs China (YMCA China), National University of Singapore Business School and its China Alumni Network (CAN) to contribute to the rebuilding of Sichuan Province devastated by the earthquake on 12 May. All donations solicited via the fundraising campaign spearheaded by the CAN will be received and held in trust by the YMCA China and the YMCA of Singapore. The four parties will then work together to identify the area of need and select the school(s) to be rebuilt. The YMCAs will implement their YMCA Rebuilding Communities Programme (RCP) in the area of the selected school(s) with participation from the school community. Focused mainly on youth development, the RCP is aimed at supporting the affected local people to rebuild their self-determination and re-establish their self-reliance. *Y-Factor, YMCA of Singapore*

Cyclone Nargis Rehabilitation Work in Myanmar

► **Contributors** ~ YMCAs of Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chiang Mai -Thailand, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, YMCA Kuala Lumpur – Malaysia; Manila Downtown YMCA-Philippines, Manila YMCA-Philippines, New Zealand, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, and USA – World Service. **[LATEST Total USD 49,781]**

Sichuan Earthquake Rehabilitation Work in Chengdu, China

► **Contributors** ~ YMCAs of Canada, Hong Kong, Japan, Macau, YMCA Kuala Lumpur – Malaysia, Manila Downtown YMCA - Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, USA – World Service. **[LATEST Total USD 43,355]**

1. Training Workshop on Empowering Women for Mission

Around 30 YMCA (women and men) leaders and staff are expected to gather on 25-29 September in Chiang Mai, Thailand to share and learn practical actions and issues to bridge the gaps between policy and practice in fostering Gender Equity in YMCA. Focus will be on building gender sensitivity and YMCA's responses for partnerships for mission and development. The training workshop will have interactive input presentations, case stories and exposures for experiential learning and engagement of women in community development. Skills workshops on mainstreaming gender equality and advocacy will provide participants with practical intervention skills and tools. Participants will have the opportunity to share affirmative action and good practices. This training workshop is APAY's continuing response to developing women capacity, fostering Gender Equity and increasing efforts towards fostering partnership between women and men within the YMCA.

Ms. Carla S. Santos, Director, Movement Building and Field Operations Office, Philippines Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM) and Ms. Lynnsay Francis, Regional Coordinator Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) will make key presentations.

Details have been sent to National Movements and posted on our website.

2. Global Citizenship Forum to Strengthen YMCA Responses

In response to our commitment to promoting Global Citizenship, a Forum will be held from 16-19 October 2008 at the Asia Youth Centre in Tokyo, Japan. The Global Citizenship Forum hopes to bring together YMCAs from within and outside the region to deepen understanding on the wider perspectives of Global Citizenship and engage in analyzing the social dynamics of Globalization. It will focus discussion on wider perspectives of Global Citizenship, explore and develop a practical curriculum framework for meaningful social response. Case stories by the YMCAs / NGOs will be presented for sharing/learning good practices and possible actions. It will also seek to develop a resource team for furthering actions at various levels.

Key inputs will be by Professor Jun-Hyeok Kwak, Political Science Department, Korea University; Dr. Darren O Byren, Head of Social Sciences, Roehampton University, London, England; and Mr. Kenneth Holmes, Chairman, Coventry and Warwickshire YMCA, England.

Details have been sent to the National Movements; and on the APAY website.

3. YMCA Cambodia Community Volunteer Leaders Training ~ Rescheduled

The Cambodia YMCA Training of Community Youth Volunteer Leaders has been rescheduled to **13-14 December** due to unforeseen circumstances. The training programme will focus on developing Community Volunteers/Workers to lead community activities for children/youth/adults. It is a continued effort to strengthen the capacity of the young Cambodian YMCA. The Student Christian Movement (SCM) in Phnom Penh is also participating as our ecumenical partners in capacity building.

Movements interested in sending youth leaders to join the Cambodian youth leaders in the programme may contact cristina@asiapacificymca.org for details.

4. UPDATES ~ Youth Participation and Development Programmes

University YMCA ~ A Winning Resource for Socially Responsible Volunteerism

The 1st Asia and Pacific University YMCAs Regional Conference held on 2-8 August in Hong Kong gave students a platform to be engaged in deliberations for equality in local communities. This was done through input presentations on the theme, immersion in several exposures and experiential-learning settings. The Conference helped widen perspectives, as they reflected on issues impacting them, particularly on poverty-related issues. The participants have become more aware of their social responsibility, to be engaged in social change.

In his input presentation, Mr. Albert Ching, General Secretary of Singapore YMCA emphasised the important role of the University YMCA as an invaluable resource to foster socially responsible volunteerism, build a sustainable model for ongoing leadership development and succession programme for the YMCA and local communities. He shared how volunteerism had led him to become a part of the YMCA family and challenged the Uni-Y members to be volunteers for life and to make the YMCA-way as their way of life.

The 2nd Asia and Pacific University YMCAs Regional Conference will be held next year in early August.

We thank the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong for hosting and co-organising this historical first Uni-Y Conference.

Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong Initiates University YMCA Asia Pacific (UYAP) Network

Report by Ms. Quennie Man, Chairperson of the Student Organising Committee of the 1st Uni-Y Regional Conference.

Inspired and motivated by how Uni-Ys and university students have been a significant factor in the development of many YMCAs in the region and *Challenge 21*, student representatives who met at the 1st Uni-Y Regional Conference discussed plans for Uni-Ys networking for further joint-efforts.

The Network will bring together Uni-Ys leaders in the region for exchanges, sharing and learning to promote and strengthen the community-based programmes and work of Uni-Ys. They plan to engage in social services/community immersion programmes through internships, international community programmes and environmental campaigns.

The founding members are the Uni-Ys of the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong, YMCA of Singapore and YMCA of the Philippines with Metropolitan YMCA of Singapore, YMCA of Taiwan, University YMCAs of the National Council of Japan and National Council of Korea as co-founders.

Youth Peace-Building Across Boundaries...

Lee Mei Sin, Fiona, of the YMCA of Hong Kong shares her ASYG 2008 experiences.

The *Asia-Pacific Students and Youth Gathering 2008 ~ ASYG 2008* was an enjoyable and meaningful experience. It provided us room to learn and share, to witness and reflect over various regional and global peace-related issues. The exposures offered us unparalleled opportunities to experience what was meant by a culture of peace. We deliberated on topics including environment, inter-faith cooperation, militarisation, discrimination, and sustainable development. We also learnt about Korean realities and issues.

Bible study and worship were integral components of ASYG 2008. We were challenged to be peace-makers. We took part in various thematic workshops and open spaces to reinforce our understanding of the concepts of peace. Both the Cultural Night and the Korean Cultural Night gave us inspiration and more understanding about others traditions. We left Korea not only with wonderful memories and friendships, but also, both an imperative and a continuing challenge to commit ourselves to build a peaceful environment collectively.

East Asian University Students for Peace and History

Report by Pablito A. Tabucol, Coordinator, YMCA of the Philippines Team.

Around 250 university students from 10 East Asia and South East Asia YMCAs participated in the East Asian University Student Gathering on Peace and History. The Gathering in Gyeonggi-do, Korea from August 27-31, 2008 was aimed at searching for ways to bring peace and co-prosperity in Asia through recognition of differences, going beyond boundaries of language, culture, ethnicity and nation. It featured 51 presentations of the various field studies made by the students in their local communities; seminar workshops and exposures.

From among the overseas teams' local field studies, Hope Givers (Philippines) was adjudged grand prize-winner, with Shanghai University (China) and Shokei University (Japan) as runners-up. Hea Neul was the Korean grand prize-winner, Edge Thinkers and Hope were runners-up.

The programme was jointly organised by the National Council of YMCAs of Korea and the Northeast Asian History Foundation. Among the National YMCA Movements and NGOs that participated were China, East Timor, Japan, Mongolia, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, and the host country Korea.

5. East Timor Youth Peace Camp, An Experiential Learning

Forty-five youth members and staff of the YMCAs of Hong Kong, Japan, Kenya, Korea and Timor Leste participated in the 3rd International YMCA Youth Peace Camp last 5-13 August in Dili, East Timor.

Ms. Maki Enokita, Intern of the National Council of the YMCAs of Japan wrote, "Participants learnt from the people's experience, sharing issues and movements for peace, and peace building work with local children. The Timorese youth presented their historical and social situation and their ongoing struggle for a peaceful society. We learnt about issues and movements for peace building, such as 'Issues of Japanese Constitution on Article 9' and 'Korea's Candlelight Movement Against US Beef Importation'. We visited the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation and the government offices. In a small village, we organised peace building work activities for about 100 local children and together we learned and enjoyed singing traditional songs, playing musical instruments and making soap.

This youth camp was a good opportunity for us to share, learn and understand peace issues in a global perspective. We were able to experience good relationships and build friendship with the local youth and among the participants. We left with resolve to make every effort for building peace in our own local communities and in the world. "

We thank the East Timor YMCA, ANJUCTIL, and Ishibashi Hideki, APAY Coordinator in Dili and the local YMCA youth leaders for coordinating the camp. This is a multi-lateral partnership programme of the YMCAs of Japan, Korea, East Timor and APAY.

6. Sri Lanka YMCA Strengthens Scouting for Youth Development

To strengthen the scouting activities of local YMCAs, the National Council of YMCAs of Sri Lanka organized a Scout Masters' Training Programme on 4-5 July 2008, at Ananda College, Boralasgamuwa, near Colombo. The Sri Lanka Scouts Association conducted the Programme for 45 persons including several regional YMCA leaders. Following the training a scout group was inaugurated at the Rambukkana YMCA on 12 July 2008. The YWCA - YMCA Global Norway supports the Sri Lanka YMCA Scouts Programme.

7. Promoting Peace Through Children's Art

In continuing efforts to promote peace the National Council of YMCAs of Sri Lanka organised a nation-wide children's art competition in July. It created much enthusiasm among children and the community around the country. Entries were called from 2 age groups, 6-9 years and 10-14 years, through newspaper announcements, church and school bulletins.

Regional exhibitions and judging were held in 5 local YMCAs in the 5 regions of the country, and 300 drawings were selected for the finals. The NCY has organized a grand exhibition of the 300 art pieces on 1 October at the Lionel Wendt Theatre in Colombo when the final judging will take place.

8. India Tsunami Response – Final PCG Meeting in Kanyakumari

The final meeting of the India YMCA Tsunami Response Partners' Coordinating Group will be held on 11-13 October in Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu, India. Site visits will take place from 7-10 October to various response programme sites – Koonimedikuppam, Pondicherry, Nagapattinam, and Kanyakumari. Y Care International, the YMCAs of Germany and the USA are key partners.

9. Bangladesh YMCA Moves Towards Reconciliation and Revitalisation

As the Bangladesh YMCA moves towards normalisation of its status with the World Alliance, the National Council of YMCAs of Bangladesh, under the new leadership of Mr. Symon Adhikary, met on 30 August to map out steps and strategies to revitalise and move the YMCA Bangladesh forward. Dr. Park Jai Chang, President represented the APAY at this important meeting. Mr. Bill Harte, Scotland represented the World Alliance.

At a Public Reception on 29 August at which Dr. Park was the chief guest, church and ecumenical organisations expressed their solidarity support for the YMCA and its revitalisation.

Mr. Duncan Chowdhury was reinstated as the National General Secretary in July 2008.

10. Introducing Sustainability for Life.....

Y Green Fingers Programme

In collaboration with the National Parks Board's Community In Bloom (CIB) programme, the YMCA of Singapore embarked on its first community gardening project at APSN in August 2006. This week day volunteering programme allows our volunteers and beneficiaries to learn the values of Care, Compassion, Respect and Responsibility as they jointly tend to the development of the plants and garden, while adding to their own personal growth. This programme will include planting of ornamentals, herbs and spices and organic vegetable gardens at various VWOs.

A second garden plot at Bishan Home was grown in April 2007 where spice/herbs and vegetables grown with organic principles are interwoven with ornamental plants to form an aesthetic garden with crop yields. Produce from the garden are harvested and sold to the YMCA's Y Cafe.

Immediately following this, the 3rd garden was planted at Christalite Methodist Home where plants/herbs/spices are grown in raised pots so as to allow the elderly and wheel chair bound beneficiaries to be engaged in bi-monthly programmes with regular groups of Y Volunteers from neighbouring schools.

Gardening provides a form of emotional expression & release that brings cognitive as well as physical benefits. Just looking at trees and plants reduces stress, lowers blood pressure and help muscle tensions. Gardening stimulates the senses, especially for older adults. The interesting sights, sounds, textures and scents inspire memories & connections to the past.

Y Green Fingers is part of the YMCA of Singapore-Tan Chin Tuan Foundation Community Service Programmes.

*The Herbs & Spice Garden at Bishan East, a **Y Green Fingers Programme**, has clinched the top award in the Best New Garden category of the National Parks Board Community in Bloom Awards 2008. Mr. Wong Kan Seng, the Deputy Prime Minister officially launched the garden on 17 November 2007.*

For information, contact Mr. Mark Hsu, Manager, Community Service Department ~ markhsu@ymca.org.sg

Baguio YMCA ~ Awareness to Action: Eco Walk and Coffee for College

The YMCA of Baguio, Philippines developed the **“Eco-Walk” Programme** to help children validate the classroom lessons on the environment through experiential learning using the forest as an open laboratory. They saw and touched the trees, identified flora and fauna. They helped restore the balding cover of the Busol Watershed, one of Baguio’s few remaining water sources by each child planting and tending a single seedling every year. They succeeded in restoring the forest watershed’s cover from 20 to 75 percent. Seedling survival was at 80 to 90 percent because of frequent return visits

The children’s success where previous adult reforestation projects had failed, led to a project dubbed **“Ecology for College”** (Ecol-lege) piloted in some of the interior indigenous villages in the Cordillera region of Northern Philippines. In 1996, children in Tuba, Benguet planted over a hundred mahogany seedlings. In Gonogon, Bontoc, Mt. Province, 7,000 eucalyptus seedlings. In Tadian, Mt. Province, 400 grafted mango seedlings. At maturity, the mahogany and eucalyptus were sold. The proceeds were equally divided among the children for their college education. Proceeds from the sale of the mangoes were similarly divided.

And where do the children go after exploring the forest? Two years ago, the YMCA of Baguio and the Eco-Walk volunteers piloted the **“Baguio Children’s Urban Heritage Walk”**. It provided children the opportunity to explore the urban landscape that like the Baguio’s forest and water resources, they would eventually inherit and manage. The walk brings them to significant roads, the city’s oldest building, city cathedral, post office, Veterans Park and the YMCA of Baguio, during which they are briefed on the history and significance of these historical landmarks. They pick up and segregate litter along the way in a *“pulot-walk”*. They observe traffic congestion, the extent of pollution, over crowding and other problems in the city. At Burnham Park, Baguio’s main park, they identify its flora; and discuss their experiences and suggest solutions to problems or what they can do to help address them. Their impressions and experiences are published in the local media.

Last April, the YMCA of Baguio Board approved the establishment of a coffee plantation for children in Pinsao, Proper *Barangay* that has idle lands owned by the Ibaloi, the original tribe that settled in Baguio. Sixty-seven children who underwent the *barangay*-sponsored summer training in music were briefed on what they could do for the environment. They adopted the children’s tree plantation as a project. Volunteers from the YMCA, the Benguet Electric Cooperative, the *barangay* and the Baguio City Government accompanied the children in cleaning up the site. Together they planted an initial 200 coffee seedlings last 15 June and

organic fertilizers will be applied regularly. The children will be able to harvest the Arabica coffee after two years. With the help of YMCA and other agencies, the beans will be processed, packaged and sold. The proceeds will go to a trust fund for the children's college education. Meanwhile, the children are organizing themselves into *barangay*-based College/High School Ys and Red Triangle Clubs.

For their efforts, the Eco-walk children of Baguio, including pre-schoolers of the city's YMCA, received the 2002 Global 500 Roll of Honour for Outstanding Environmental Achievement bestowed by the United Nations Environmental Programme on World Environment Day in Shenzhen, China. The children also won for their city the 1996 "Galing Pook" award from the Asian Institute of Management for having one of the Philippines most outstanding local governance programmes.

For information, contact Mr. Ramon Dacawi, Corporate Secretary, Aida.aquino@yahoo.com

11. FORTHCOMING EVENTS/MEETINGS

DATES	EVENTS	VENUE
16-19 September	Global Staff Team – Resource Mobilisation	Geneva, Switzerland
25-29 September	Empowering Women for Mission and Development	Chiang Mai, Thailand
16-19 October	Regional Forum on Global Citizenship	Tokyo, Japan
19-21 October	Third APAY Officers' Meeting	Hong Kong
26 October -29 November	26th Advanced Studies Programme	Hong Kong
5-9 December	Regional Roundtable on Building Peace With Justice, For Security	To be decided
12-15 December	YMCA Cambodia Community Volunteer Leaders Training	Phnom Penh, Cambodia

12. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ~ One World.....One Dream

For more than two weeks in August, the world focussed its attention on Beijing, China, to be specific on the Olympic Games with the theme *One World....One Dream*. Thousands of young women and men were there to live out the dream of the founder of the modern Olympics, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, 'to celebrate the universality of humankind and show that participation in an event like this was more important than victory.' For Coubertin the Olympics was more than just the sports competition. He felt that it should include 'the philosophical arts' as we saw in the spectacular, colourful historical, cultural and philosophical performances in the opening and closing celebrations.

As *One World* the youth displayed their God-given talents as they sprinted, swam, dived, jumped, moved gracefully in various sports, challenged each other in racquet, ball games, etc. Victors of different faith traditions raised their hands or knelt in prayer. The Olympics in Beijing united peoples from all over the world, some from countries in conflict with others, but here they were *One*, with *One Dream as One World*. Here was the building of relationships and why not also the healing of nations?

Reflecting on this recent grand spectacular event, when nations sent their best, their brightest potential 'to celebrate the universality of humankind' as *One*, I cannot but recall our own call of John 17.21, 'That we all may be one'!

We often quote this at our seminars, conferences when we deem fit. And then we go from these meetings and do our own thing, without much thought of our common calling, our common mission. We often do not dream the same dream..... or see the same vision. We

could learn much from the Olympics where the common *One Dream* is to do better, to be faster, to jump higher, to leap further, to be as perfect as they possibly can....

In our region, we have adopted a common vision and a common framework to realise this vision. Diversified in contexts and expressions of the mission as we are, we do have common threads linking us to our common Vision....God's Word, God's Love and God's people, the Community.....in which we are to live God's Words and share God's Love to all, regardless of colour, creed or race. We in solidarity can support one another as we go about doing our common mission in our communities to glorify God.

We saw this great coming together as *One* when the 2004 tsunami devastated countries around the Indian Ocean. Or recently when cyclone Nargis inundated much of lower Myanmar and the earthquake that flattened a large part of Sichuan in south-western China.

But do need natural disasters like these or wars, conflicts to bring us together as *One*?

Will John 17.21, not bring us together as *One* to achieve common Mission? To reach our common Vision?

Will movements in solidarity, strengthened by our spirituality not work together to sustain one another to reach our common Vision, and achieve common Mission?

The Lord bless and lead us to be One as we seek to fulfil our Mission in community.

Yip Kok Choong
General Secretary

Cristina A. Dalope, Jose Varghese,
Executive Secretaries

International Day of Older Persons, 1 October: The International Day of Older Persons has been observed by the United Nations on October 1st since 1990. The idea of a society for all ages takes its roots from the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995. 'A society for all' was interpreted as a society in which "every individual, each with rights and responsibilities, has an active role to play". In our fast ageing world, older people will increasingly play a critical role - through volunteer work, transmitting experience and knowledge, helping their families with caring responsibilities and increasing their participation in the paid labour force. The theme for 2008 will be "*Rights of Older Persons*"

International day of Non Violence , 2 October :The International Day of Non-Violence is observed on 2 October , the birthday of [Mahatma Gandhi](#), leader of the Indian independence movement and pioneer of the philosophy and strategy of non-violence. According to [General Assembly resolution A/RES/61/271 of 15 June 2007, which established the commemoration](#), the International Day is an occasion to "disseminate the message of non-violence, including through education and public awareness". The resolution reaffirms "the universal relevance of the principle of non-violence" and the desire "to secure a culture of peace, tolerance, understanding and non-violence".

World Habitat Day, 2 October: The United Nations has designated the first Monday in October each year as World Habitat Day. The idea is to reflect on the state of our towns and cities and the basic right to adequate shelter for all. It is also intended to remind the world of its collective responsibility for the future of the human habitat. The global observance of the occasion this year will be led from the Angolan capital, Luanda. The celebrations in Angola will show the world, how the country, after years of conflict, is progressing in the establishment of harmonious cities through improvements in urban infrastructure and services, and a new urban development strategy. The United Nations chose the theme of *Harmonious Cities* for 2008 to raise awareness about the problems of rapid urbanisation, its impact on the environment, the growth of slums, and the urbanisation of poverty as more and more people teem into towns and cities looking for a better life.

World Space Week, 4 - 10 October: The World Space Week is an international celebration of science and technology, and their contribution to the betterment of the human condition. These dates commemorate two events: 4 October 1957, the launch of the first human-made Earth satellite, Sputnik 1, thus opening the way for space exploration; and 10 October 1967, the Signing of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies. The theme for World Space Week 2008 is "*Exploring the Universe*" This theme encourages participants to reflect during World Space Week on space as the next frontier. Exploration can take many forms, from scientific discovery to human colonisation. From space, we learn not only about astronomy, but we learn about Earth in many ways. As the next frontier, space offers bountiful resources of energy and materials, as well as a path for permanent human expansion off of our home planet Earth.

World Teachers Day, 5 October: On 5 October, teachers' organisations worldwide mobilise to ensure that the needs of future generations are taken into consideration in this increasingly complex, multicultural and technological world. UNESCO inaugurated 5 October as World Teachers' Day in 1994 to commemorate the joint signing of the UNESCO/ILO

Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers on 5 October 1966. World Teachers' Day also highlights the Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel adopted in 1997. It represents a significant token of the awareness, understanding and appreciation displayed for the vital contribution that teachers make to education and development.

World Post Day, 9 October: World Post Day is observed on 9 October every year to mark the anniversary of the founding of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) on 9 October 1874. Today the UPU, with 189 member countries, oversees the co-ordination of the global postal service, the world's largest physical distribution network. Postal services in all countries provide the primary means of communication for people, organisations and business. The goal is to ensure a universal postal service that is easily accessible, efficient and affordable.

World Mental Health Day, 10 October: World Mental Health Day is co-organised by the World Federation of Mental Health (WFMH) and the World Health Organisation. The WFMH is a global network of people involved in mental health issues. The theme for this year's World Mental Health Day - '*Advocacy for Global Mental Health: Scaling Up Services through Citizen Advocacy and Action*' - was chosen partly to gather together the hundreds of grassroots mental health organisations that participate in the World Mental Health Day so they can plan and carry out awareness and advocacy events within their own communities and countries.

International Day For Natural Disaster Reduction, 12 October: Natural, environmental and technological disasters regularly occur throughout the world. One of the primary roles of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) is to educate populations and communities most at risk from natural disasters on the means available to prevent hazards from turning into disasters. A World Disaster Reduction Campaign is promoted in an effort to mobilise youth through appropriate education towards a global culture of preventing natural disasters. The Day is observed on the second Wednesday of October.

World Food Day, 16 October: World Food Day commemorates the anniversary of the founding of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) on 16 October 1945. World Food Day activities aim to heighten public understanding of hunger and strengthen solidarity in the struggle to make sure that everyone has enough to eat every day. This year's theme *World Food Security: the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy*

International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, 17 October: The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty has been observed every year since 1993, when the UN General Assembly designated this day to promote awareness of the need to eradicate poverty and destitution in all countries, particularly in developing countries - a need that has become a development priority. In recognition of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the theme for this year's observance of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is "*Human Rights and Dignity of People Living in Poverty*".

United Nations Day, 24 October: The anniversary of the coming into force of the United Nations Charter on 24 October 1945 has been observed as United Nations Day since 1948. The UN Preamble says: "We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold misery to (hu)mankind, to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity

and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom..” These commitments have been constantly challenged, put to the test and always reaffirmed by the global community despite difficulties and barriers.

World Development Information Day, 24 October: The United Nations General Assembly instituted World Development Information Day at its 27th Session in December 1972 with the object of drawing the attention of world public opinion each year to development problems and the necessity of strengthening international co-operation to solve them. The General Assembly also decided that World Development Information Day should coincide, in principle, with United Nations Day to stress the central role of development in the work of the United Nations.

Disarmament Week, 24-30 October: Disarmament Week has been observed by the United Nations since 1978 when Member States were invited to highlight the dangers of the arms race, promote recognition of the need to stop the arms race, and increase public understanding of the urgent tasks of disarmament. The United Nations has always taken a keen interest in arms control and disarmament issues. The Secretariat, sometimes without much support from member states, has striven to make the world safer for all.