World Information Transfer, Inc.

Presents

Summer Speaker Series, June/July/August 2015

World Information Transfer with H.R.H. Prince Alois of Liechtenstein (Centre)

WIT Interns with H.R.H. Prince Alois of Liechtenstein (Centre)
Introduction

During the course of WIT’s two-and-a-half month internship program, a number of speakers from various professional backgrounds came to share their knowledge and experience with the interns. These individuals are leaders in their fields, and brought to light critical health, environment, and policy issues that relate to WIT’s work at the UN. The meetings with these distinguished guests are summarized below.

Table of Contents

Page 3: H.E. Ambassador Yuriy A. Sergeyev
Page 4: H.E. Ambassador Arthur Kafeero
Page 6: H.E. Ambassador Thomas Gass
Page 7: H.E. Ambassador Edita Hrdá
Page 9: H.E. Ambassador Henry MacDonald
Page 11: Mr. Igor Shpiniov
Page 13: Mr. Ahmad Alhendawi
Page 14: Mr. Beppe Lovoi
Page 16: Dr. Mame Selbee Diouf
Page 18: Dr. Scott Ratzan
Page 19: Prof. Mark Robson
Page 21: Mr. Richard Whiteford
Page 23: Dr. Brian R. Landzberg
Page 25: Dr. Gregory J. Muth
Page 27: Mr. Aleks Mehrle
Page 28: Mr. Barnett Koven
Page 30: Mr. Roland DeSilva
Page 32: Dr. Christine K. Durbak
H.E. Yuriy A. Sergeyev has been the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations since the year 2007. Ambassador Sergeyev has previously served as the Ambassador of Ukraine to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; to France, Greece, Albania, and the Bahamas. He also worked as the Secretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Ukraine, where he addressed land border issues with Russia.

Amb. Sergeyev offered WIT interns unparalleled access and insight into the ongoing developments in Crimea and eastern Ukraine. The escalating crisis has heightened tensions and exacerbated violence in Ukrainian territories. His Excellency underscored a wide variety of implications that have transpired following the Russian invasion, all of which have undoubtedly transformed the security paradigm of the Eastern European region.

The Russian invasion stands in contravention of international law, as it violates the norms and prerogatives of the United Nations Charter, which guarantees the basic principle of territorial integrity to each member state. Claiming to promote the right of self-determination, Russia encroached on Ukrainian territory, when in reality the principle of self-determination is a process and cannot be solved through armed aggression. Members of the international community staunchly disapproved of Russia’s annexation and did not sanction its territorial claims. Additionally, it is worth noting that Russia’s justification for their invasion stems from their desire to protect Russians in Crimea, where Russians were already protected. There was no legal pretext for an armed intervention.

Continued aggression in eastern Ukraine will undoubtedly destabilize the region, warned Ambassador Sergeyev. The conflict in Ukraine serves as a serious challenge to the region, seeing
as Baltic states are being threatened concurrently. In an attempt to uphold stability and promote development, the Ukrainian government has pledged its fervent commitment toward intensifying domestic reforms.

Ambassador Yuriy A. Sergeyev entertained questions and comments from WIT interns regarding the process of reforming the United Nations system and ensuring mediation and political reconciliation in eastern Ukraine and Crimea. The Ukrainian Ambassador noted that his delegation has repeatedly stated its commitment toward extending reforms in the General Assembly and Security Council since the mid-1960s. Systematic and inherent issues within the structure of the United Nations such as the exercise of the veto have remained at the forefront of debate for decades, yet Ambassador Sergeyev claimed that the stalemate in the UNSC cannot just be solved by enlarging states within the body.

As ardent adherents of international law and the mechanisms within it, the Ukrainian delegation understands that veto power cannot be contested since it is enshrined in the United Nations Charter, and that veto power cannot be suspended as it plays a constructive role in certain situations. Ambassador Sergeyev welcomed the proposal of French president Francois Hollande, who stated that the permanent members of the UNSC - China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and United States - should not use the veto power in cases of open conflict and atrocity, and should instead substitute the veto in the UNSC by the consensus principle.

The unique and valuable insight offered by His Excellency Ambassador Sergeyev equipped WIT interns with an unparalleled understanding of the Ukrainian crisis and the complexity of the United Nations system. Ambassador Sergeyev concluded by commending the interns for asking thought-provoking questions.

H.E. Ambassador Arthur Kafeero
Chef de Cabinet, Office of the President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly

Left to Right: Natalie Dell’Estate, Laurence Hochman, Dr. Christine K. Durbak, Parth Shingala, H.E. Ambassador Arthur Kafeero, Katy Ho, Calum Anderson, Mariano Sopena-Irula, Melissa Chan, Renée Landzberg, Modou Cham, Elisabeth Muratori

Over the course of his career, Amb. Kafeero has represented Uganda at different multilateral and regional fora including the United Nations (UN), the Commonwealth, the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), the African Union (AU), the East African Community (EAC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR). He holds a bachelor's degree in economics (University of Dar-es-Salaam), a master’s degree in Diplomatic Studies (University of Westminster) and a postgraduate diploma in Public Administration and Management (Uganda Management Institute). Amb. Kafeero is a national of Uganda.

Amb. Kafeero began his meeting with WIT interns by explaining the role of the Office of the President of the General Assembly (GA), and its ongoing focus on the post-2015 development agenda. He noted the GA’s three pillars: development, human rights, and peace/security. He also highlighted the unique feat of bringing all 193 member-states together in the GA. Throughout the meeting, Amb. Kafeero fielded many questions from WIT interns, encouraging a vibrant discussion that touched upon a wide array of issues associated with development. These included strategies to promote peace, natural resource wealth, collaboration with the private sector, UN reforms, agriculture, and gender equality.

On the subject of fostering peace, Amb. Kafeero pointed out that the UN operates by consensus, and encourages member states to collaborate for peace. He stated that the office vigorously encourages international cooperation, noting that states do indeed have differences, but so many more things in common. Arguing that nations should work together for peace and development, he expressed his belief that with more collaboration between the UN and governments, more opportunities for peace will follow. Speaking about reforms within the UN to work on peace and security issues, he noted that some believe the Security Council no longer reflects the current global situation. He pondered the question of balancing the issues between
non-permanent members, as well as veto powers and overall representation.

Regarding natural resources, Amb. Kafeero said that potential without action is worthless. He explained that one party alone can achieve very few objectives, and noted the importance of involving both the private sector and civil society. Amb. Kafeero offered the examples of building infrastructure, managing a supply chain, and securing energy resources. He emphasized that development is about turning these principles into practical action, and engaging all of the parties in a society.

Delving into more specific topics of development, he stressed the importance of agriculture, particularly with regard to the African continent. He noted that many African countries are endowed with rich agricultural potential, and that women and youth can be particularly involved. Therefore, investment in agriculture is investment in the people; by adding value to products within a country one can enhance domestic revenues through the multiplier effect. With regard to energy, Amb. Kafeero again stressed the importance of creating opportunities through investment. He noted that within a country one can enhance domestic revenues through the multiplier effect. With regard to energy, Amb. Kafeero again stressed creating opportunities through investment. He noted that issues of energy and agriculture are deeply intertwined, and by understanding and tackling both, there is significant potential for development.

**H.E. Ambassador Thomas Gass**

*Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, U.N. DESA*

Front Row (Left to Right): Dr. Christine K. Durbak, H.E. Ambassador Thomas Gass, Judge Arnaud LaFleche

Back Row (Left to Right): Rachel Leung, Parth Shingala, Ariel Granat, Melissa Chan, Calum Anderson, Judie Mendoza, Kyle Chan, Laurence Hochman, Elisabeth Muratori, Modou Cham

As Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs in the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Ambassador Thomas Gass is tasked with overseeing and coordinating the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. In August 2015,
member states reached an agreement on a universal and transformative agenda for sustainable development between 2015 and 2030. With historic participation from countless stakeholders, including civil society organizations, academia, the private sector and many others, this agenda will be adopted by world leaders when they gather at the United Nations on the 25th of September 2015. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an integrated plan of action for people, planet and prosperity.

Ambassador Gass is optimistic, forward-looking and confident as the world steps into the post-2015 era: “The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the centerpiece of the 2030 Agenda, are truly a bold shared vision of humanity for transforming our world”, he said, continuing “...whereas the Millennium Development Goals were a strategic plan for the development community to fix the most pressing problems in the developing countries, the SDGs, by virtue of a two-year consultative process, are more of a shared vision of humanity; strengthened by a commitment to leave no one behind”.

Ambassador Gass also shared his personal opinion regarding the reaction of civil society to the SDG consultation process. The diversity of voices from across the globe involved in shaping strategy designed to combat and address inequality has highlighted the importance of inclusivity and of identifying and reaching the most world’s most vulnerable populations. This is critical for the successful implementation of the SDGs, and will require multi-stakeholder partnerships worldwide. Beyond partnerships and institutions, the success of the SDGs will require the commitment of all governments and relevant decision-makers to the people and children of this world: this agenda is not only a deal between nations, but a solemn promise their populations.

H.E. Ambassador Edita Hrdá
Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the U.N.
H.E. Amb. Edita Hrdá has served as the Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the United Nations since the year 2011. Ambassador Hrdá previously served in varying capacities within the Czech Republic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, notably as the Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Argentina, Paraguay, and the Caribbean region. Her expertise in international diplomacy and international relations enabled her to serve as the Chair of the Committee for the United Nations Population Award for 2015.

As a proud member of the European Union and the North American Treaty Organization, the Czech Republic seeks to represent the balanced perspectives and ideals of both organizations at the United Nations. All 28 member states of the European Union are in constant communication with one another, and coordinate their remarks to ensure cohesion. Her Excellency posited that challenges facing any European country transcend its borders and affect the entire region as a whole.

Ambassador Hrdá discussed the perspectives and policies of the emerging Eastern European power, most notably in the realm of peace and security. The ongoing debates and deliberations of the United Nations Security Council are of particular interest to the Czech Republic, as they are highly invested in upholding peace and stability at home and abroad. As tensions continue to flare in the Middle East and violence remains unabated between warring factions, the Czech Republic emphasizes the need for meditation to prevent the region from being destabilized by competing interests. The delegation of the Czech Republic proclaimed their commitment toward their critical relationship with the state of Israel and is an ardent supporter of the Middle East peace process, along with its counterparts in the European Union.

Libya has made strides to instil progress and stability in a land that has been, and still is, ravaged by civil war. The Czech Republic hopes that an agreement will soon be signed in Libya, and believes that the Libyan nation has the potential to rise and stabilise. The atrocities being carried out in the Syrian Arab Republic are also of grave concern to the Czech Republic and its colleagues in NATO. The Czech Republic remains one of the few countries to maintain their representation in Damascus.

The delegation of the Czech Republic has asserted their obligation to uphold the norms and prerogatives of international law, and will continue to hold parties accountable for their actions, regardless of the activity. It seems fitting that Ambassador Hrdá pledged her nation’s commitment towards safeguarding undeniable human rights; as recurring members of the Human Rights Council of the United Nations, protecting the human rights of children, women and minorities takes precedence in the human rights agenda of the Czech Republic.

The Ambassador kindly accepted questions from WIT interns and engaged in dynamic and productive discussions ranging from implementing the Sustainable Development Goals to engaging in reformation of the United Nations, particularly that of the United Nations Security Council. Most intriguing, however, was the Ambassador’s insight into the much-needed reform of the Economic and Social Council. According to Amb. Hrdá, the mandate of the ECOSOC
should be bolstered to effectively implement the Sustainable Development Goals and promote cooperation between member states in areas relating to economic growth and development. Amb Edita Hrdá concluded by thanking WIT interns for their well crafted questions and commended them on their understanding of the United Nations system, which can be deemed as convoluted to certain parties.

H.E. Ambassador Henry MacDonald
Permanent Representative of Suriname to the U.N.

Ambassador MacDonald began his talk by speaking about Security Council reform. He explained that no real negotiation has taken place because of sticking points regarding the veto powers of the P5 nations. He argued that there is no clear understanding of the goals of the P5 nations on this subject, and that this is because they have the power right now. In addition, there are many factors that arise when nations begin to negotiate over reform. There are various sticking points in all regional groups when it comes to put forward permanent members for the Council. For example, most agree that Africa should have two permanent seats, but deciding which African countries should get those seats is very difficult, because there is confusion over criteria such as size, location, and language. Some may say that one more European country should occupy a permanent seat, however it is not crystal clear to him yet if the current permanent members from the European region are enthusiastic about such an idea.

Most also agree that a Spanish speaking country should have a seat, but this also comes with many difficult criteria to piece out. The Ambassador also noted the irony of non-permanent seats. He concluded his speech on this topic by admitting that the process is very difficult, with members disliking the veto power but wanting it for themselves should they be granted perma-
nent seats. He concluded his speech on this topic by admitting that the process is very difficult, with many issues that make progress questionable in the near future.

With regard to gender equality, the Ambassador spoke about the struggles for women's political representation in his home country of Suriname. At one point Suriname had only 8% representation of women in parliament. This had to do with the gender gap in politics that especially faces developing countries. In addition, all of the leaders of the Surinamese political parties were men. After a campaign was launched in Suriname to increase gender equality, where many, including party leaders, were educated on gender equality, female representation in Parliament increased from 8% to 30%.

The Ambassador explained the importance of making the issue of gender equality personal for men, and noted that every man can connect to gender equality through the important women in his life. Furthermore, the Ambassador expressed his appreciation for UN-Women's HeForShe initiative, and explained how this is a good example of mobilizing men to be advocates for gender equality. Too often women are considered as second-class citizens, although they actually have the capacity to do a lot and they have gained many rights. The fact that the global agenda is not moving fast enough is due to the lack of women's representation. The Ambassador mentioned the example of the Rwandan Genocide, where almost 800,000 people were killed, including a lot of men. In 1997, the Rwandan government estimated that their population was 70% female. Rwanda is the African country that has observed one of the fastest growing agricultural sectors, and possesses one of central Africa's fastest growing economies. In the environment of post-genocide Rwanda, there is a strong connection between the empowerment of Rwandan women and the country's economic growth. The Ambassador also mentioned that measures directed toward women have been visibly effective in fighting poverty in Brazil. The Brazilian Bolsa familia program grants money to families in financial need, with the stipulation that families ensure that their children stay in school and attend regular medical checkups. 93% of families that receive Bolsa familia are headed by women, and it is argued that the grants have enabled and empowered their recipients. This decision to grant means to women has helped lift millions of people out of poverty in Brazil. Supporting women is good for business, good for equality, and can solve poverty issues. Investing in women is investing in the future of humanity; they are not only individuals and workers able to participate in the policy making but also wives and mothers that have a strong influence on the development of society.
Mr. Igor Shpiniov serves as the Chief of Office of the Under-Secretary-General for the General Assembly and Conference Management in the United Nations. Mr. Shpiniov offered a detailed explanation regarding the complexity of the UN system, in addition to honing in on the organizational structure of certain branches within the UN. He began his tenure at the United Nations as a translator in 1989, before becoming responsible for facilitating the process of training language professionals, such as translators and interpreters. Currently, as the Chief of Office of the Under-Secretary-General for the General Assembly and Conference Management, Mr. Shpiniov coordinates the teams of professionals that are tasked with providing procedural advice and linguistic support to various UN committees. In order to ensure that conference proceedings are balanced and equitable, the Department for GA and Conference Management (DGACM) ensures that all actions and motions within a meeting are compliant with the GA's rules of procedure, the official governing practices of meetings held under the auspices of the United Nations.

The United Nations possesses two major functions, standing as an implementing agency and a platform for inter-governmental negotiations. Operating with a distinct mandate, the United Nations serves as the premier global forum for the international community, which is composed of 193 member states and participants from an increasingly robust civil society. Given the critical importance of facilitating productive dialogue amongst member states, DGACM ensures that the dialogue occurring in meetings is effectively structured and can be understood by the 193 member states. DGACM manages the sessions of the General Assembly, which comprises main committees: the Disarmament and International Security Committee, the Economic and
Financial Committee, the Social, Cultural and Humanitarian Committee, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, the Administrative and Budgetary Committee and the Legal Committee.

A wide variety of mechanisms are in place to equip member states with a proper understanding of UN proceedings, as translators re-produce every single document into the six official languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. An overwhelming majority of meetings feature on-site interpretation. Mr. Shpiniov commented on the dynamics of interpretation processes, stating that international organizations are reluctant to allow remote interpretation, and prefer interpreters present in the meeting room. Due to the aforementioned norm, the United Nations maintains a small army of interpreters, who are readily prepared to engage in perhaps one of the most challenging undertakings—simultaneously deciphering remarks stated in an official language and then immediately interpreting them into another language. Given the critical nature of the practice of interpretation and translation, aspiring language professionals must demonstrate their linguistic proficiency by passing an extremely rigorous examination.

Mr. Shpiniov fielded questions from WIT interns regarding his experiences, perspectives and responsibilities over the course of his lengthy career at the United Nations. Much of the discussion was centred on forthcoming flagship agreements in 2015: the Conference on Financing for Development held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda at the UN HQ in New York, and COP21 in Paris, France. The Conference on Financing for Development was widely discussed, as Mr. Shpiniov addressed the dilemma that may hinder member states from reaching their optimal outcome at the negotiations. Developed countries have consistently attempted to ensure that any funding or aid that is offered to developing countries is utilized in a transparent manner, and one that is compliant with the principles of good governance. Developing countries, however, have been quick to voice their qualms with the current process, and claim that they require additional autonomy in order to bolster national trust in the process.
Born in 1984 in Jordan, Mr. Alhendawi holds a master’s degree in Advanced European and International Relations, a diploma as ‘Policy Officer in European and International Organisations’ from the Institut Européen in Nice, and a bachelor’s degree in computer information systems from the Al-Balqa Applied University in Jordan.

Mr. Ahmad Alhendawi is the United Nations Secretary-General’s Envoy for Youth. He has been a youth advocate at the national, regional and international levels as the co-founder of the Youth for Democracy Network at the Jordanian Commission for Democratic Culture, which he headed, and the co-founder of the International Youth Council, based in New York.

Previously he worked as a team leader for the World Bank-funded programme to the League of Arab States on Institutional Development to Strengthen Arab Policy and Participation. Prior to this, he served as the youth policy advisor at the League of Arab States in Cairo and as an officer in the Technical Secretariat of the Arab Youth and Sports Ministers Council.

In our meeting, Mr. Alhendawi reflected on the 70 year anniversary of the UN, drawing attention to the unique position that the United Nations has attained since its inception in 1945. He identified the COP21 climate conference and the adoption of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda as salient examples of the UN's commitment to provide an accessible, functional platform for multilateral communication and cooperation, encouraging the peaceful resolution of conflict, and identifying and seizing multilateral opportunities. He also spoke of the UN Secretary-General Ban-Ki Moon’s focus on the need for ‘global citizenship’, asserting that many of the most important issues facing the world today cannot be tackled by one country alone; that countries, regardless of size, need to combat global problems that are inherently
interconnected and multi-faceted.

Because over half of the planet’s population is under 25, young people face particular opportunity and pressing responsibility for the future. For example, while many youth struggle to find full and productive employment, they also have the creativity to drive change, such as through entrepreneurial ventures and community outreach programmes.

He outlined the United Nations’ role with global youth as a facilitator, interlocutor, convener, and coordinator, with the office of the Envoy on Youth serving to tie together strands of youth interest across UN organs. The office aims to better construct and deliver a cohesive and concerted agenda on youth issues from UN agencies to sub-national strata. Conferences, training programmes, campaigns, summits, and advisory boards all assist in furthering the global youth agenda.

On the subject of pressing issues facing youth worldwide, Mr. Alhendawi pointed out that there exists a demand for 360 million new jobs, and he encouraged civil and governmental actors to work together in ever closer cooperation to ensure that member states’ youth populations are provided with the optimal framework from which to enter the relevant national and international job markets.

**Mr. Beppe Lovoi**  
*Sustainable Development Officer, UN DESA*

Beppe Lovoi joined the UN at the age of 21 due to his interest in the international field. Since beginning his career in Afghanistan, working with NGOs engaged in sustainable development, Mr. Lovoi has held a variety of positions at the United Nations. He continued in Afghanistan on a peacekeeping program, aiming to establish peace following the Taliban. Upon returning to
New York he worked in the Department of Political Affairs, before relocating to Iraq in 2009-10 during the country’s elections. Since 2011, Mr. Lovoi has been engaged in sustainable development. He was involved in the Rio+20 conference and was responsible for the participating NGO organisations. Currently, he is working on the SDG and post-2015 agenda.

Mr. Lovoi began his meeting with the WIT interns by briefly reviewing the UN’s history, and putting it into context. He explained how, when the UN was created, there was only one overarching goal and 3 pillars, with a primary focus on promoting development due to the political realities of the Cold War. Many new colonies came into existence, which led to the decolonization movement, marking the start of the UN’s ‘Decade of Development’. The UN took control of helping countries establish constitutions and ease into independence. It was not until the Stockholm Conference in 1972 that the environment became a major UN focus.

Mr. Lovoi then elaborated on sustainable development, defining it as “...all human activity that must provide for those living today and tomorrow.” He covered Agenda 21 from the Rio Conference and identified areas of work that grew to become important in the 20 years following Rio+20. The Rio Conference set up a constitutional agenda that is made to ‘break silos’ with regard to the way the constitutions work. By ‘silos’, Mr. Lovoi was describing policies that are constructed in a ‘vertical’ fashion - not sharing knowledge or expertise, nor planning accordingly.

Mr. Lovoi provided insight into his views on the MDGs and the SDGs. The MDGs were designed to streamline a national effort, with 8 goals to eradicate poverty. They were very useful when communicating the basic needs of the poor. They were also a useful exercise for policy makers, providing a framework that outlined exactly what they need to achieve. However, they were not perfect. Since there were only 8 goals, the MDGs tended only to address the extreme poverty that was the overarching challenge. The development was envisioned as a donor lead agenda, which set the bar for the poorest countries to catch up and reach the goals but didn't ask much from the rich. The SDGs differ by addressing issues universally. Unlike the MDGs, the SDGs are designed as a way to get to the root causes of inequalities instead of just addressing the symptoms. The SDGs take the complexity of the MDGs and translate them into a more comprehensive language. Both programmes have had an effect on institutions and governments: where previously there was a real lack of coordination, there is now a real sensitivity and desire to see effectiveness.

In conclusion, Mr. Lovoi emphasized the complexity of the UN system with a membership of 197 different perspectives. The UN system is one of the most confusing and duplicative creations in the world, with multiple different (and competing) divisions for development. An example is the issue of water: basic sanitation should be a human right, but what if you question whether or not water is sustainably managed? Then you are touching on issues of economics and politics. The biggest challenge is getting governments to work together and come up with a final answer. The most important thing is to build the capacities of countries, and to break silos.
Dr. Mame Selbee Diouf is a Resource Mobilization Specialist in the Strategic Partnership Division of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). Dr. Diouf began her presentation with an introduction to UN Women, the UN’s youngest entity, established in 2010. Operating on limited funding, UN Women mainly provides technical support to member states in their implementation of policies promoting gender equality. Dr. Diouf then continued her presentation with an overview of recent developments towards gender equality. It has been 15 years since the MDGs were adopted, and 20 years since the Beijing Conference. Progress has been made but it remains uneven, particularly for women and girls. Gender parity in schooling worldwide is close to being attained, but retention still remains a challenge as girls do not necessarily stay in school. Women’s political participation worldwide is still very low, with the share of women’s representation in parliament being around 20 percent. Given that this year is the 20th Anniversary of the Beijing Conference, UN Women asked member states to evaluate progress and to make a strong commitment to bridge the gaps identified in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. UN Women is also looking forward to member states’ commitment at the Global Leaders Meeting on Gender Equality, scheduled to take place on the 27th of September 2015, during the opening of the 70th session of the UN General Assembly.

Dr. Diouf also commented on the post-2015 transformative agenda, specifically Goal 5, which is dedicated toward promoting gender equality and female empowerment. UN Women remains profoundly committed to supporting the implementation of Goal 5 in the new development agenda. In order to achieve gender equality under SDG ‘Goal 5’, efforts to promote gender equality
equality have to be mainstreamed and tackled in a holistic manner throughout all of the SDGs. Dr. Diouf then mentioned the main focus areas of UN Women. Political participation is the first area: Dr. Diouf talked about UN Women's role to provide technical support to governmental bodies and civil society in order to promote women's participation. Economic empowerment of women is the second focus area: UN Women is working with government institutions and women's organizations and civil society to set a direct path towards gender equality, poverty eradication and inclusive economic growth. The third area is ending violence against women: UN Women focuses on the prevention of violence, support for women victims and the adoption and implementation of laws, policies and strategies to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against women and girls. UN Women also works in the area of peace and security and humanitarian action to support the participation of women in the peace building process and better protect the human rights of women and girls in conflict.

In the Q&A session, Dr. Diouf discussed the challenges of UN Women's work in regions where women's rights are experiencing a backlash. Although some of these countries are committed to do better, they often lack the necessary technical support; UN Women's limited funding challenges its capacity to respond to a growing demand. In addition, Dr. Diouf also recognized the importance of sharing good practices and lessons learnt from experiences in the developed and the developing world.

When asked about the economic empowerment of women, Dr. Diouf recognized that this is a priority issue. Once women are economically empowered, a lot of other issues can be effectively addressed. Dr. Diouf called for the adoption of a systemic approach to addressing the structural causes of gender inequality. Dr. Diouf also invited the interns to consult the website of UN Women, and in particular its strategic plan, for further information.

Dr. Diouf reinforced the need to bring men into the dialogue of feminism, with the HeForShe campaign serving as an excellent example of an inclusive approach to promoting gender equality. It is also useful to bring feminism to a community level, and to make the discussion personal and appealing. Dr. Diouf has also recommended using discussion on masculinity in schools as an entry points into conversations about advocating for women's rights. For example the way that boys are told to 'man up' says a lot about the stereotypes often imposed on them. Responding to more sensitive questions regarding abortion and contraception, Dr. Diouf acknowledged the difficulties encountered in using the language of ‘sexual rights’ for a lot of countries. She suggested using the language of the Beijing Conference as the baseline for these issues.

Dr. Diouf gave a truly enjoyable and informative presentation. Every intern benefited a lot from her personal advice and practical viewpoints about women's rights.
Dr. Scott Ratzan's multifarious background which has lead to his unique worldly perspective of viewing how the world could be instead of what it is. He began his career in academia and became very interested in public health. Early in his career, he created a program in health communications, and today there are 47 such programs operating throughout the U.S. Dr. Ratzan moved to Washington DC to work for an NGO before working with USAID. With USAID, Dr. Ratzan worked on developing a strategy for global communications when, at the time, half of the world’s population had never made a phone call. According to Dr. Ratzan, developing public and private relationships are crucial, particularly for public health initiatives.

Mr. Ratzan shared that the traffic accidents are the world’s number one cause of death for people aged 18-24. 90% of such incidents occur in the developing world, putting drivers, passengers, and pedestrians at risk. Today, many companies are viewing accidents as a public health initiative, due to their often preventable nature. Recently, companies such as AT&T, AIG, and Facebook have launched an initiative called Together for Safer Roads - a coalition representing more than 3 billion people - with the goals of minimizing distracted driving. Even with this decade of action, the 1.4 million people ages 18-24 who die each year due to traffic accidents have not gone down. Internally, companies are still working to help lower accidents. Many companies have a driver review system in place as well as a minimum standard checklist for their drivers. Companies have also begun to up their standards specifically with regard to drinking and driving, with random breath tests and alcohol interlock systems becoming increasingly popular. In the United States, alcohol interlock systems are often installed in the vehicles of repeat DUI offenders. Alcohol interlock systems require a breath test before the engine turns on and, if the
As Dr. Ratzan wrapped up, he left the interns with anecdotes from his own experience. He stated that charity does not scale and encouraged the interns to give back. He shared that it is vital to take the first step in anything you want to achieve because without the first step, you cannot make it to the finish line. Lastly, Dr. Ratzan encouraged the interns to support and inspire the people around you because everybody needs help whether they realize it or not.

**Professor Mark Robson**

*Chair of the Department of Plant Biology and Pathology at Rutgers University*

Professor Mark Robson is Chair of the Department of Plant Biology and Pathology at Rutgers University. He is a toxicologist who specializes in studying the use of pesticides. He has been working in Thailand for 20 years to study the environmental health of rural Thai communities.

Professor Robson began the session by bringing attention to the enormous growth of the world’s population. As the world’s population may reach 9 billion by 2050, the agricultural sector will undoubtedly shrink. Food security will become a serious challenge to the developing world, which comprises 85% of the world’s nations.

Following his remarks on food security challenges, Professor Robson continued discussing the case of pesticides in Thailand. As Thailand is about to become the world’s leading rice exporter, its rural communities, particularly rice farmers and their families, are experiencing an increase in pesticide poisoning from organophosphates used on the rice fields.

Dr. Robson believes that the problem is rooted in a lack of knowledge as to the dangers of spraying pesticides without adequate protection, and uninformed attitudes. For example, one operator is over the legal limit, the vehicle will shut off. Many stakeholders are hoping this becomes standard on cars within the next decade.
farmer was spraying pesticides while naked because he did not want to damage his clothes. Therefore, all intervention needs to be rooted in knowledge, attitudes and practices, or ‘KAP’.

When going through the activities of the Thai Fogarty ITREOH Center, Dr. Robson stressed several times that intervention does not have to be rocket science. Professor Robson offered an in-depth understanding of facilitations between various rural communities, stating: “They just have to be straightforward, which are usually how good public health practices are like.” During his tenure at the Thai Fogarty ITREOH Center, he ran workshops and practices for students and youth. Exercises are fairly practical, for instance, teaching students to effectively plan their farms in a sustainable manner to avoid contamination. At one point when he was working to alleviate poisoning in corn farms, he put up posters everywhere in a village and reminded the villagers through a broadcast tower. In villages, repetition is useful because it gets to the mind of the people.

However, when it comes to children, new challenges emerge. “Mothers lie...”, he warned, as he was comparing results from a questionnaire and observation exercise distributed among children as to how often they wash their hands. When observing chemical exposure among children, he found that more rural children were exposed to Glyphosate during dry seasons. As the comparison between rural and urban children returns no difference during the rainy season, he confirmed that children were exposed to pesticides as families could not use pesticides during the rainy season. A lack of genuine data could also hide risks for the most vulnerable members of the population – the children.

At times, pesticides may not be the most serious risk in rural communities. For instance, when studying skin cancers in a Thai village, the risk factor turned out to be water, as households with wells suffer from skin cancer. Water contamination could lead to disastrous health impacts as the local populace consumes 300% more fish from a local contaminated canal. At the end of the day, the question of food security left villages two options, both with different risk trade-offs: one can ban genetically modified organisms (GMOs), as Thailand did, but one would depend on pesticides and other harmful chemicals to facilitate crop growth, or one can fully embrace GMOs as China did, but copyright issues surrounding genetic data may further impoverish villages. By no means is it hopeless for the villages on this question.

Concluding the session, Prof. Robson gave high hopes to the resilience of the people from his observations on the aftermath of the 2004 Tsunami. “The people can be resilient, they can bounce back”, as he commented on the story of a family starting laundromat and tailoring businesses to recover from the losses. Prof. Robson has also encouraged interns to pursue their own projects with resilience and proceed with moderation, such as organic farming and river decontamination. He also suggested making use of good intergovernmental relations, as in his case of the Thai project, which was under the auspices of good US-Thailand relations.
Mr. Richard Whiteford
Leader, Climate Reality Project

Mr. Richard Whiteford is a writer, an environmental activist and a communications professional who has facilitated a multitude of presentations on environmental protection. Having published over 500 articles worldwide, and having completing Al Gore's training to become a certified presenter of the 'Inconvenient Truth', Mr. Whiteford was able to share a wealth of knowledge on climate change with WIT’s interns.

Mr. Whiteford began his presentation with an image of the world taken from Apollo 17, stating that it is one of his favourite images because only the Earth can be seen. No outside influences such as political, religious, or ideological boundaries are present. The Earth is our only home, and humanity must learn to co-exist.

Statistics indicate that humans pump 110 million tons of CO₂ into the atmosphere every twenty-four hours. Currently, there are 401.3 parts per million of CO₂ in the atmosphere - a historic high. The number continues to climb as CO₂ levels are on an upwards trajectory. The rapid rise can be attributed mainly to China and India’s increase in fossil energy in addition to a worldwide annual increase of three million parts per million of CO₂, for which humans are largely responsible.

There is wide skepticism about the topic of global warming, as critics question the validity of certain scientific claims. Individuals are quick to point out that the amount of carbon in the atmosphere is cyclical, an assertion that remains true to a degree. The amount of carbon in the atmosphere fluctuates, however, up until 1850, which marks roughly the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, the average amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere was about 280 parts per million.
Today, that number is around 400 and still going up. The amount of CO$_2$ in the air has nearly doubled in the past 165 years - if this rate continues, the Earth will eventually become uninhabitable. After revealing these statistics, Mr. Whiteford commented on the science behind the facts. He stated the science is becoming far more accurate because of programs such as Argo Floats. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has placed over 4,000 floats in the ocean to measure surface and depth temperatures in real time. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has placed 19 satellites exclusively for studying climate change.

Mr. Whiteford spoke at great length regarding the strong correlation between climate change and increased natural disasters. From 1983 until 1992, on average, 147 natural disasters occurred per year causing $30 billion in damages. Since 1992, there have been roughly 306 natural disasters per year causing 60,000 deaths and $1.6 trillion in damages.

Evidence of climate change is particularly evident by the melting of glaciers on a worldwide basis. As of 1850 at Boulder Glacier National Park, 150 glaciers existed and today, only 25 glaciers remain. The melting of the Polar Ice Cap has also proved to be problematic. The Thwaites Glacier recently split and is slowly moving into the ocean, which will force sea level to rise up to eleven feet in the next hundred years.

Mr. Whiteford emphasized what he calls the ‘critical issue’. From 1850 until today 565 billion metric tons of carbon have been released into the atmosphere. These emissions have caused temperatures to rise 1.5 degrees Fahrenheit. Through studies, scientists have concluded that the most temperature could rise is 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit. However, they recommend that mankind steers clear of approaching that number, as the conditions can be very detrimental to our existence. In order to reach that number, 565 billion more metric tons of carbon must be burned. The issue is 2795 billion metric tons are waiting to be burned, a number that is five times more than that which can burned whilst maintaining hospitable atmospheric conditions. It would force temperatures up 10.8 degrees Fahrenheit, which would make the Earth too hot.

Mr. Whiteford shared several ways to lower carbon emissions. He suggested widespread use of solar and wind energy, which would greatly reduce carbon emissions. Additionally, the notion of implementing a nationwide carbon tax would serve to be advantageous. Alaska has been practicing carbon tax since President Eisenhower was in office. The carbon tax would undoubtedly raise gas and oil prices, however, revenue generated from the tax would directly go to taxpayers as a means of offsetting the price hikes.

With the rapid growth of technology, Mr. Whiteford believes that society can invest in innovation and technology to counter rising CO$_2$ levels. Recent developments in the technology industry reaffirm Mr. Whiteford’s sentiment. For example, Elon Musk, CEO of Tesla Motors, recently introduced a compact battery pack for the home that stores power generated by solar panels. Mr. Whiteford concluded his remarks with urging our generation to take initiative and advocate for change—otherwise, the future of mankind will remain bleak.
Dr. Brian R. Landzberg  
*Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine at the Weill Medical College of Cornell University*

Dr. Landzberg, a gastroenterologist at New York-Presbyterian Hospital and Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine at the Weill Medical College of Cornell University, has been specializing in gastroenterology for 20 years. He studied history and literature in Harvard University for his undergraduate studies and received his medical degree from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University.

In today’s meeting, Dr. Landzberg shared his insights into gastroenterology, a branch of medicine focused on the digestive system and its disorders, focusing specifically on the subject of travelers’ diarrhea. He asserted that learning about this subject would be practical for all global travelers whether it is for medical mission, diplomacy delegation or pleasure travel. His presentation of traveler's diarrhea addressed the following: epidemiology, causes, prevention and treatment.

**Epidemiology**

Each year, approximately 30-70% of travelers are affected by travelers’ diarrhea, which typically lasts for 3-6 days. Although men and women are affected equally, younger travelers are more affected than older travelers. Furthermore, pregnant women are more susceptible to travelers’ diarrhea because their immune system is more tolerant to foreign cells during pregnancy. The likelihood of travelers’ diarrhea is increased by poor access to plumbing, unreliable refrigeration and unsanitary water. Seasonality is also important because it affects different locations and creates wide disparities. For example, during monsoon season, travelers to Southeast Asia...
are advised to take particular water safety precautions.

**Causes**

According to Dr. Landzberg, about 80-90% of cases of travelers' diarrhea are caused by bacteria, while 5-8% are viral. Viruses and bacteria both incubate for 1-2 days. However, viral causes last for 2-3 days while bacterial causes last for 3-5 days. Some of the most common forms of causative bacteria are *E. coli*, *Campylobacter*, *Shigella*, and *Salmonella*, which all have rod-shaped structure. He also mentioned some bacterial processes which cause food poisoning from pre-formed toxin syndromes such as *Bacillus cereus* and *S. Aureus*.

Although viral causes are less common than bacterial causes among travelers, Dr. Landzberg highlighted norovirus because it is a leading cause of gastroenteritis in enclosed spaces such as sleep-away camps and cruise ships. It affects hundreds of millions of non-travelers worldwide as well. Fortunately, it is almost always self-limited and non-life threatening.

**Prevention**

Dr. Landzberg stressed the importance of the phrase, “boil it, cook it, peel it, or forget it”. It is a simple phrase that travelers should apply when trying food in areas at high risk for travelers’ diarrhea. He also mentioned avoiding frozen drinks, as the ice is usually made using local water, and avoiding salads that are exposed to warm temperatures for extended periods of time. Travelers should also carry hand-based sanitizers at all times and clean hands frequently, especially if traveling on cruise ships.

Drugs such as bismuth subsalicylate (sold under the drug name Pepto-Bismol) and antibiotics can also be used to prevent travelers' diarrhea. Bismuth subsalicylate is about 50-65% effective, but requires two large pills taken four times daily beginning prior to the trip. Some side effects include ‘black hairy tongue’, soft stool, nausea and Reye's syndrome. Antibiotics are 90% effective, but side effects include allergic reactions, photosensitivity, breeding resistance, and *Candida* infections and thus should be limited to patients who are immunocompromised, suffer from inflammatory bowel disease, and people on important missions, where the loss of a few days would be catastrophic.

**Treatment**

Fluids and electrolytes are essential components of treatments for travelers' diarrhea. Dr. Landzberg mentioned using oral hydration therapy, which involves drinking water with sugar and salt. Oral hydration therapy is an inexpensive way to replace lost fluids and essential salts while enabling the intestine to absorb the fluid and salt more efficiently. It is usually sold in separate packages and is mixed with water to create a solution. Anitbiotics, such as quinolones in most of the world and azithromycin in Southeast Asia, are an effective treatment, shave off a few days from the illness, and can be self-initiated by the patient when diarrhea begins.
Dr. Gregory Muth is a member of the faculty of the Fundraising Management program at Columbia University. He has extensive experience in fundraising in the non-profit sector. He is also the founder and was chief executive officer of StrategicMed, a national disease and population management practice aimed at the chronically afflicted.

Dr. Muth commenced his presentation by showing a picture of New York's Central Park. How can one raise funds for a massive public good such as the Central Park? The answer, he revealed, is venture philanthropy: a problem-solving approach using private wealth as venture capital for the common good. "Not all the rich are bad – there are some good companies who do good deeds...", he proclaimed.

The basic idea of venture philanthropy involves linking private capital and public projects. The private sector is not as self-centred as it is often said to be, as there are various venture philanthropy organizations such as EchoingGreen, Community Wealth Ventures, Silicon Valley Social Venture Fund & etc.

In the case of Central Park, funding came largely from the private domain. In the 1970s, the park was run-down and riddled with lawlessness. However, it was too popular and too precious as an urban resource to write off. After all, Central Park brought and nurtured dwellers in the north so it could not simply be removed. While there was a general agreement on the need for preservation, there was little agreement as to how to rescue it. Under then Mayor Ed Koch, the Central Park Conservancy (CPC) was formed, a public-private partnership (PPP) with the New York City government. Investors such as George Soros and Richard Gilder were among the first supporters of the Central Park Community Fund under the CPC.
The way venture philanthropy plays out resembles everyday business planning. The CPC has to write a business plan for full restoration of the park for funding; Elizabeth B. Rogers, the first Chief Executive of the CPC, would have to set out a plan, decide measures to be taken, and put together a board with expertise from different sectors, for example, culture, community management, architecture & etc.

The result of the Central Park experiment has been very fruitful. Nowadays, the park mobilizes around 130 volunteers everyday at 8am to perform conservatory work. An examination of the park’s income statement reveals some total revenue of $1.6 billion, in which the government funds only $58 million. The park once raised $3.5 million in an event called the ‘Hat Luncheon’ in just a few hours!

Sometimes, supporters can be found amongst the so-called ‘B corporations’: for-profit companies certified as having met set standards for ‘social and environmental performance’, as well as for ‘transparency and accountability’. Warby Parker, a glasses-manufacturing company, is one such ‘B corp’, and runs the ‘Buy a Pair, Give a Pair’ programme, donating one pair of glasses to a person in need for every pair sold. Eager corporations do exist, one just has to reach out to them.

However, the sharing of experience gained from the central Central Park project may not be as easy as expected. The city of Charleston, South Carolina, has attempted to replicate the Central Park model to fund beautification projects in 15 parks. Since supporters may have various preferences, the city realized they might not be able to beautify the parks in the way that they want. The project eventually lost momentum and is currently in limbo. Private preferences may hinder venture philanthropy: what if the private sector is divided, for instance, between developers and other potential supporters? Dr. Muth emphasized that these conflicts must be diffused, as venture philanthropy plays out the best when it is framed as a win-win situation, giving New York’s High Line project as an example.

Another challenge to venture philanthropy lies in the temptation to rely overly on private funding. When asked whether venture philanthropy is a redistribution approach, Dr. Muth insisted that venture philanthropy is about “…teaching people how to fish, not to give them the fish…” In fact, the Central Park experience is so successful that the New York state government wanted to revitalize redistribution instead. Whether plans are well implemented on top of the huge chunks of cash received determines the success of a venture philanthropy project. That’s why Dr. Muth spent more time than usual explaining how impact studies could be used to evaluate the effectiveness of projects, such as measuring transitions and commodity price changes by project areas, identified by their ZIP codes.

To conclude, venture philanthropy provides a promising channel for funding in the interest of the public good, but projects need careful planning and implementation. Dr. Muth ended by suggesting that the interns find their passion in their future choices.
Aleks Mehrle is a Ukrainian-American who was raised in New York City. He was influenced by the collapse of the Soviet Union during his childhood and, as a result, always wanted to do something to assist his home country of Ukraine. He believes that everyone, regardless of age or location, is able to facilitate meaningful social change.

Mr. Mehrle explained that there has been a lot of disappointment in Ukraine since elections recommenced in the 1990s, in what was then the Ukrainian SSR. The Orange Revolution that took place in 2004 triggered the change that people were seeking through non-violent means although, after Yanukovych became elected, he turned out to be more of a bureaucrat than a leader. Today’s generation, who answered the call to push for reforms and changes, is the generation that became aware of the challenges in Ukraine in the wake of 2004’s discontent. Yanukovych was finally removed from the presidency in 2014 as a result of the Ukrainian revolution.

During his presentation, Aleks Mehrle also highlighted how important it is to find something that intrigues you, empowers you, and educates the world around you. His career began when he became interested in intellectual property laws. He went to law school in 2002, but found out that there were no jobs then available as a result of the 2002 ‘bubble-burst’ and ultimately realized that he did not want to pursue the legal profession. He eventually landed an internship at a capital firm for law technology and business. Following this experience, he developed a desire to conduct independent research and started utilizing private capital from the United States to finance research and development projects in Ukraine. Since then, he has been using guidance and money for the Ukrainian people and developed the Wolfe Nanotech Report. When working on energy matters in Ukraine, he underlined the importance of finding energy sources that
did not rely on the provision of Russian gas. In the past he has worked closely with Ener-Core Inc., a company engaged in the design and production of technology that converts industrial waste gases into electricity. He also worked for a company dealing with patents.

Finally, Mr. Mehrle concluded by stating that his relationships with people enabled him to carve out a way to achieve his career goals as well as his capacity to be adaptable and open-minded. He took large portfolios of ideas and investment connections with him to Ukraine and used the European Investment Bank as a financer to fund new initiatives. Without these connections he would not have been able to obtain the trust and the good working environment necessary to build successful projects, both in Ukraine and elsewhere.

Mr. Barnett Koven
Ph.D. Candidate – George Washington University

Barnett Koven is a man of diverse studies and interests. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Science at George Washington University. Mr. Koven is also Co-Founder and Chair of Village Energy, a not-for-profit, non-governmental organization, in which he modified anaerobic digestion technology to provide rural electrification to underdeveloped communities throughout the world. Previously, he served as Treasurer on the Executive Board of Directors of World Information Transfer. Mr. Koven also served on the International Advisory Board of the Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future, and as an Executive Committee Member of the Council of Organizations of the United Nations Association of the United States of America. In his free time, Mr. Koven volunteers as a translator and field administrator on medical aid missions to Latin America with Healing the Children.

Mr. Koven began his meeting with the WIT interns by explaining his goal of improving the
understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of civil wars and providing insight for preventing the spread and/or exacerbation of intrastate conflicts. His aim is to demonstrate how unequal distribution of development aid can provide support for insurgents and provoke anger and violent attacks in disadvantaged areas. Existing research focuses on relatively static background conditions such as poverty, inequality, rugged terrain and access to resources (like diamonds and oil). These factors help us to understand which areas are more susceptible to conflict, but do not aid in predicting when violence will spread or be exacerbated. The existing literature also does not adequately explain the effects of government policies; his project aims to explore and fill that gap.

Mr. Koven presented his initial findings from Iraq. He clarified that this was only part of a much broader project, which includes Peru, Colombia, and Afghanistan as well. The Iraq chapter leverages extensive data on development assistance and insurgent violence collected by coalition troops. He explained the concept of ‘money as a weapons system’ (MAAWS), which was employed by the U.S. in Iraq as part of its counterinsurgency strategy, and reminded us that the way funds are distributed can exacerbate violence.

He examined the role that the inequitable distribution of development aid and other government projects plays in intensifying the sense of deprivation that some groups feel. Even the best-intended plans to distribute aid can result in grievance and thus violence among neighboring communities and groups who are excluded and perceive favoritism. Problems are caused when people can see governments giving help to some groups more than others. Mr. Koven emphasized that perception, not reality, is what really drives the violent reaction, and that rapidly changing perceptions of relative deprivation may help predict when and where insurgent violence is likely to be exacerbated or spread during existing conflicts.

He gave an example of two villages (A and B), where only Village A received necessary aid. Initially there are no expectations for assistance within the Village B, but once Village B observes what Village A is receiving, it begins to expect the same, leading to a ‘frustration-aggression’ response when those expectations go unmet. Preliminary results suggest that aid spending – in aggregate – did not have any effect on violence in Village A. However, violence levels increased substantially in Village B, which was an unexpected consequence. This shows that the attempted aid wasted money (in the case of Village A) and provoked even more violence (in Village B). Simply throwing humanitarian aid at a problem can make a bad situation worse.

Mr. Koven provided the example of the Basra Children’s hospital. Recognizing a need for quality medical care for local children, the hospital was constructed. However, costs greatly exceeded the budget and the hospital suffered from a shortage of qualified personnel and supplies. Moreover, the hospital was constructed in a predominately Shiite location, which precluded Sunnis from accessing the hospital and, not surprisingly, generated grievances.

He suggested two solutions:
1) The party providing aid needs to be transparent about the reasons behind the chosen
course of distribution, and needs to clearly explain that plan to the public in order to keep a handle on communal perceptions.

2) The party providing aid should make efforts to make development aid more equitable.

Mr. Koven ended on the note of his future aspirations. He stated that his research is ongoing, and it is important to remember that these results are tentative. There will be continued efforts to expand the analysis for Iraq, and the broader project will continue with work on Afghanistan, Colombia, and Peru.

Mr. Roland DeSilva
Chairman and Managing Partner, DeSilva & Phillips

Roland DeSilva, a New York native, currently manages a worldwide mergers and acquisitions company, DeSilva & Phillips, established in 1995. He has served World Information Transfer as one of its executive board members for nearly 30 years. “Do not let 'no' determine your fate...”, said Mr. DeSilva, “...always have trust in yourself and never say no to anything. Once you say "yes" and you try hard, you will eventually achieve the goal you want. Patience and perseverance are essential for one's success.”
The 2015 Summer Speakers Series

Managing Editors:

Calum Anderson
Laurence Hochman
Parth Shingala

Contributing Editors:

Melissa Chan, Kyle Chan,
Natalie Dell’Estate, Ariel Granat, Katy Ho,
Marli Kasdan,
Renée Landzberg, Rachel Leung,
Judie Mendoza, Elisabeth Muratori

Supervisor:

Dr. Christine K. Durbak
Founder and Chair, World Information Transfer, Inc.

Modou Cham, Administrator
Excellencies, Delegates and Colleagues,

Thank you for the opportunity to address this important gathering and thank you to the organizers of this NGO Conference, their sponsors and supporters.

I try to keep my feet on the ground, as President Theodore Roosevelt stated, and do a great deal of reality testing and reading scientifically grounded material. Our reality has to be focused on the future of our planet, just as our daily pursuit of happiness includes the happiness of our children.

However, people can only focus on the future when their daily needs are met every day. Since the wealthy and the policy makers have their needs met, they are the ones that need to spend the time to focus on the future. In my opinion, I see a two-prong problem for the attainment of the U.N. Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals, which is the main focus of World Information Transfer - education and enabling those that can achieve change, despite the resistance of those around them:

1. Very rapid population growth in developing countries which can only be addressed by the leaders of these nations.

2. A powerful fossil fuel industry that is deterring the development of sustainable energy for all and destroying the environment.

Fundamentally, we need fewer people and more clean energy to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of Agenda 2030!

I believe that if the power of NGOs can be galvanized to work on the above issues we will be able to create a better world for the future generations. But we need to be united in our efforts and not allow fundamentalist misconceptions to interfere with reality. I’m addressing these issues even though we have been hearing them since 1972, the first U.N. Earth Conference, and again in 1992 during the Earth Summit in Rio and Rio+20.

We have achieved major accomplishments, including the development of clean alternative energy. However, we still have not addressed the issue of very rapid population growth in developing countries. According to the new U.N. estimates the world population will reach over 11 billion in less than 50 years.

The key to curbing population growth is educating women, many of whom seek birth control and also educating their brothers and fathers and sons about the privileges conferred on small families. We have witnessed how smaller families in Europe expanded the middle class and in China recently. I would like to see a world, as I stated during the U.N. Population Summit in Cairo in 1995, where every child has a parent that provides food, shelter and an education and is not condemned to a life of misery, slavery or jail. It is up to us to make this happen. Thank you for your attention.

Dr. Christine K. Durbak, Chair and CEO
World Information Transfer, Inc.
WORLD INFORMATION TRANSFER’S
WORLD ECOLOGY REPORT
FALL ‘CONFERENCE SPECIAL’ NOW AVAILABLE:

http://worldinfo.org

World Information Transfer,
475 Park Avenue South,
New York, NY 10016,
UNITED STATES

Tel: 212-686-1996
Fax: 212-686-2172
Email: wit@worldinfo.org