Part 4

Development and Humanitarian Relief Activities

UN Development Program (UNDP)

Based in New York City, UNDP coordinates UN development activities and manages the world’s largest multilateral program of grant technical assistance. In addition, the UNDP Administrator chairs the UN Development Group (UNDG), whose primary members are UNDP, UN Children’s Fund, UNFPA (Population Fund), and World Food Program. The UNDG is charged with encouraging coordination and integration both at headquarters and at the country level. UNDP is also in charge of the Resident Coordinator System and is responsible for coordinating UN field activities in this capacity. In an encouraging partnership, the World Bank and UNDP have been increasing their level of dialogue and collaboration at the operational levels.

Funded entirely through voluntary contributions, UNDP’s activities center primarily on four aspects of sustainable human development: poverty eradication, environmental management, job creation, and the advancement of women. UNDP also actively promotes good governance as a crosscutting theme across these four focus areas. With strong support from the United States and in response to changing requests from program countries, UNDP is refocusing its corporate and personnel structures to make it a leader in the governance assistance area. Since it has offices in 134 countries, UNDP has a near–universal presence in the developing world, giving the United States an important channel of communication, particularly in countries where the United States has no permanent presence. The United States (along with Japan) has been a continuous member of the 36–state Executive Board, which oversees the activities of both UNDP and the UNFPA. A few examples of UNDP’s programs include: tough, new public accountability laws in Kazakhstan; the establishment of a comprehensive, new election infrastructure in Indonesia; increased Chinese priority on environmental sustainability; and successful collaboration with the government of Brazil in numerous areas, including good governance, human rights, and HIV/AIDS.

With strong encouragement from the United States and other donors, UNDP is developing results–based budgeting through the “Multi–year Funding Framework” (MYFF), which has been in place almost one year.
The goal of the MYFF was to increase UNDP’s focus on results and lessons learned in development and thus to attract more voluntary assistance from donors. However, core (non–earmarked) resources have continued to decline, dropping to under $700 million for 1999. Consequently, UNDP is hampered by financial constraints at the same time it is carrying out extensive internal and programmatic reforms. Historically, the United States has been UNDP’s largest contributor, peaking at $161 million in 1986. Throughout the 1990s, the United States has usually provided more than $100 million annually. In 1996, the U.S. contribution dropped to $52 million, but U.S. levels eventually recovered to $100 million in 1999. Specific legislative constraints lowered the U.S. contribution to $80 million in fiscal year 2000, but a number of key donors are planning to increase their 2000 voluntary contributions. Japan, at $100 million, will become the largest donor.

In July, Mark Malloch Brown (United Kingdom) became the new Administrator of UNDP, an appointment the United States welcomed. Mr. Malloch Brown has an impressive background in refugee and humanitarian assistance, journalism, and development. Since assuming leadership of UNDP, he has initiated wide–ranging changes. His “Business Plans” for the organization outline new policy and management proposals, including a welcome stress on indicators to measure implementation of these proposals. Malloch Brown’s stated objective is to transform UNDP’s organizational culture to make it more focused, responsive, and efficient. Although UNDP’s overarching goals will remain human development and poverty reduction and its programs will continue to be country driven, they will be much smaller in scope and more focused on policy and institutional development. Priority will be placed on governance, efficient aid fund management, and provision of development expertise for countries in crisis and post–conflict recovery. All of the Administrator’s targets for UNDP are in line with overall U.S. objectives.

UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF)

The UN General Assembly created UNICEF in 1946 to meet the emergency needs of children in the wake of World War II. UNICEF continues to provide emergency assistance for children and mothers affected by natural and human–made disasters in countries such as Kosovo, East Timor, and Sierra Leone. Since the mid–1950s, however, UNICEF has been primarily a development agency working to assist needy children and mothers in developing countries around the world. UNICEF programs address the health, sanitation, nutrition, and basic education needs of children, wherever possible, through low–cost interventions delivered at the community level. In its annual report, “The State of the World’s Children 2000,” UNICEF points out that, because of the progress countries have made in achieving goals adopted at the 1990 World Summit for Children, polio is on the verge of eradication, and deaths from measles and neonatal tetanus have been reduced over the past ten years by 85 percent and more than 25 percent, respectively.
UNICEF is considered the preeminent international advocate on behalf of the world’s children, particularly for “the most disadvantaged children,” that is, those who are victims of war, disasters, extreme poverty, all forms of violence and exploitation, and those with disabilities. Through advocacy and programming, UNICEF seeks to raise awareness of the situation of children and to elicit positive change. At the June 1999 Executive Board meeting, the UNICEF secretariat introduced its preliminary recommendations for a future global agenda for children and the focus of UNICEF beyond 2000. In addition, UNICEF and its partners continue to move forward in achieving the goals of the 1990 World Summit for Children, in the areas of immunization, dehydration, guinea-worm disease, vitamin A and iodine deficiencies, polio, and breastfeeding. The United States is working closely with UNICEF to further progress toward achieving the Summit’s year 2000 goals.

While UNICEF’s final 1999 expenditure figures are not yet available, the U.S. Government expects the expenditures will closely match the income of previous years. In 1998, UNICEF income totaled $966 million, an increase of approximately $64 million from 1997. Of this amount, governments contributed $603 million. An additional $319 million came from nongovernmental/private sector sources; another five percent ($44 million) was derived from other sources, including fees charged for implementing programs on behalf of other organizations. The UNICEF program budget is allocated per country according to three criteria: under-five mortality rate; income level (gross national product per capita); and the size of the child population. In 1999, the U.S. Government contributed a total of $213.8 million to regular and supplementary resources. The U.S. National UNICEF Committee, an independent nonprofit organization, gave $44.8 million. The U.S. Government continues to be the single largest donor.

The United States and UNICEF enjoy a strong and extensive relationship. There is close consultation between the United States and UNICEF on technical matters of common interest and strong cooperation in field activities. Health and education specialists from UNICEF, the U.S. Government, and American nongovernmental organizations work together on child survival and development activities, both at headquarters and in the field. In 1999, UNICEF employed 1,318 international professionals, 14 percent of them Americans. The United States is represented on UNICEF’s Executive Board, which meets three times a year in New York City, where UNICEF is headquartered.

Since her appointment in 1995, UNICEF’s Executive Director Carol Bellamy (United States) has made management reform one of her top priorities. As a result, UNICEF has implemented significant internal reforms, which have improved the effectiveness and administration of its programs in the 161 countries, areas, and territories throughout the world where it operates. UNICEF has collaborated with the other UN development agencies to implement a number of the Secretary General’s reform measures, including the UN Development Assistance Framework, Com-
mon Country Assessment, and the Multi-Year Funding Framework. These reforms are designed to increase cooperation and coordination among UN agencies at the country level.

**World Food Program (WFP)**

WFP is the UN system’s principal vehicle for multilateral food aid, including emergency food intervention and grant development assistance. Established in 1963 in Rome under United Nations and Food and Agriculture Organization auspices, WFP uses commodities and cash provided by donor countries to support social and economic development, protracted refugee and displaced persons projects, and emergency food assistance in natural disaster or human-made crisis situations. With strong U.S. encouragement, WFP has established formal working relationships with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and key nongovernmental organizations, which often act as distribution partners in the field.

WFP operates exclusively from voluntary contributions (commodities and cash) donated by governments. In 1999, donors contributed $1.5 billion, of which the U.S. total of $711,820,946 made the United States WFP’s top donor. WFP spent 53 percent of its resources in 1999 on emergency programs, 25 percent on other humanitarian relief projects, and 22 percent on development activities. WFP development projects relate directly to its food aid mission and seek to improve agricultural production, rural infrastructure, nutrition, and the environment. Food-for-work projects help build infrastructure and promote self-reliance of the poor through labor-intensive programs.

WFP’s primary enterprise is feeding the hungry through emergency operations. In 1999, an unprecedented combination of factors caused world hunger levels to rise: violence in East Timor; civil wars in Angola, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, and the Balkans; long-term conflicts in Sudan and Afghanistan; the border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea; drought in Ethiopia and Somalia; and severe food shortages in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK). In response, WFP fed 8.3 million people in the DPRK; 1.3 million refugees and internally displaced people in Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Albania; and 392,000 refugees in East Timor.

WFP’s first American and first woman Executive Director, Catherine Bertini, was reelected to a second term in March 1997. Ms. Bertini has implemented important internal reforms that have greatly increased the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. The United States is a member of WFP’s governing body, the Executive Board. Agenda concerns continue to be dominated by declining donor resources for development and burgeoning emergency and refugee populations. The United States has encouraged the organization to focus on its comparative advantage in relief and rehabilitation and place less emphasis on development, an area better handled elsewhere in the UN system. In addition, newly prosperous nations are being encouraged to assume WFP’s work within
their borders, so that WFP can restrict its development assistance to the world’s very poorest.

**UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**

The theme of the 50th session of UNHCR’s Executive Committee (EXCOM) was “strengthening partnership to ensure protection, also in relation to security.” The issues addressed by the delegations included the need to revitalize partnerships with governments, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and civil society; the desire for nonmember states to sign the refugee convention and/or protocol; the importance of protecting civilians in conflict; the need to maintain standards of care worldwide; and the call by developing countries for international burden-sharing. The EXCOM adopted conclusions on international protection in general, on protection of the refugee’s family, and on the follow-up to the Commonwealth of Independent States Conference.

Finally, the Executive Committee approved the revised 1999 General Program budget of $413 million and Special Program budget of $741.2 million. UNHCR adopted a consolidated budget scheme starting in 2000, so UNHCR’s Executive Committee approved a 2000 Annual Program Budget of $933,553,000. The EXCOM Standing Committee met three times in 1999 to discuss and provide guidance on protection, policy, management, finance, and program issues affecting the organization.

The U.S. statement on the annual theme at EXCOM, highlighting the importance of strengthening protection partnerships to ensure refugee camp security, recognized the successful international cooperation and response to the Kosovo crisis, and called for this to be replicated in other regions of the world, especially in Africa. The statement also focused attention on funding requirements, highlighting U.S. contributions for Africa, and called on other donors to do their part. In a separate statement on protection, the United States called on EXCOM members to become parties to the refugee instruments, stressed the importance of protection of women and children, and called attention to resettlement as an important tool for protection.

Throughout 1999, the United States emphasized the importance of UNHCR’s protection mandate, and particularly the need for equitable standards of protection and assistance for all refugees. The United States called for increased donor coordination and shared responsibility, and worked to advance U.S. positions on Kosovo, Timor, Afghanistan, Chechnya, and West Africa, particularly Sierra Leone.

**Disaster and Humanitarian Relief Activities**

A key U.S. priority over the past several years has been to enhance the coordination of UN emergency relief efforts. The United States strongly supported the following: General Assembly Resolution 46/182, which established the position of Emergency Relief Coordinator; ECOSOC Resolution 1995/56, which recognized the differences and limitations in the capacity of UN humanitarian agencies to respond to emergencies; and the
Secretary General’s 1997 Track II reform proposals, which created the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, headed by Under Secretary General Sergio Vieira de Mello (Brazil).

**Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Consideration**

General Assembly Resolution 52/12B established a humanitarian affairs segment of ECOSOC, which took effect in 1998. The second humanitarian affairs segment took place in July 1999 in Geneva. Its theme was “international cooperation and coordinated responses to the humanitarian emergencies, in particular in the transition from relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction, and development.”

The Council adopted agreed conclusions (1999/1) which, *inter alia*, expressed concern about the continuous erosion of respect for international humanitarian and human rights law and principles; called upon all parties to take measures to ensure the safety and security of international and local humanitarian personnel; encouraged the important contribution of civil society; addressed ways to improve coordination among relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction, and development efforts; and emphasized the need for measures to reduce the vulnerability of societies to natural disasters.

The Council also adopted a resolution on successor arrangements for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (1999/63), which the United States cosponsored. The resolution reiterates the importance of fully integrating natural disaster reduction into the sustainable development strategies of the United Nations. It asks the Secretary General to establish an interagency task force and to maintain the existing inter-agency secretariat function for natural disaster reduction.

**General Assembly Consideration**

The General Assembly adopted several resolutions on issues dealing with humanitarian affairs and disaster relief, including assistance to specific countries or regions. All were adopted by consensus.

The United States cosponsored and joined consensus in adopting the following: “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations” (54/95), which calls for the implementation of ECOSOC’s agreed conclusions 1999/1; “Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel” (54/192), which urges states to take all necessary measures to ensure full and effective implementation of the relevant principles and rules of international humanitarian law; “Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees” (54/146), which endorses the report of the Executive Committee of the Program of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the work of its fiftieth session and the conclusions contained therein; “Assistance to refugees, returnees, and displaced persons in Africa” (54/147), which addresses humanitarian issues affecting Africa; “Follow–up to the Regional Conference to Address the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Other Forms of Involuntary Displacement, and
Returnees in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relevant Neighboring States” (54/144), which addresses humanitarian issues affecting the region; “Assistance in Mine Action” (54/191), which calls for the continuation of efforts to establish mine action capabilities; “International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction Program Successor Arrangements” (54/219), which endorses the Secretary General’s proposals to ensure the swift establishment of future arrangements for disaster reduction; “International Cooperation on Humanitarian Assistance in the Field of Natural Disasters from Relief to Development” (54/233), which calls for efforts to mitigate the effects of natural disasters; “Emergency Response to Disasters” (54/30), a joint resolution by Greece and Turkey on earthquake response; “Emergency International Assistance for Peace, Normalcy, and Rehabilitation in Tajikistan” (54/96A); “Assistance for Humanitarian Relief, Rehabilitation, and Development for East Timor” (54/96H); “Emergency Assistance to Countries Affected by Hurricanes Jose and Lenny” (54/96I); and “Participation of Volunteers, ‘White Helmets,’ in Activities of the United Nations in the Field of Humanitarian Relief, Rehabilitation, and Technical Cooperation for Development” (54/98).

The United States joined consensus in adopting resolutions on: “Assistance to Unaccompanied Refugee Minors” (54/145); “Protection of and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons” (54/167); “Enlargement of the Executive Committee of the Program of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees” (54/143); “International Cooperation to Reduce the Impact of the El Nino Phenomenon” (54/220); and “Strengthening of International Cooperation and Coordination of Efforts to Study, Mitigate, and Minimize the Consequences of the Chernobyl Disaster” (54/97).

The United States also joined consensus in adopting all the resolutions on “Special Economic Assistance” to individual countries or regions (54/96A–K), which included assistance to Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Somalia, Central America, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), Eastern European states affected by developments in the Balkans, the Sudan, and Venezuela; as well as resolutions on “Assistance to the Palestinian People” (54/116) and “The Situation in Afghanistan” (54/189).

The Security Council, during 1999, held debates and adopted resolutions on a number of thematic topics, most of which had a significant humanitarian component.

ReliefWeb
From Afghanistan to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, humanitarian disaster workers know that reliable information saves lives. Relief managers must know the location and size of refugee groups and the best supply routes. Without updated and accurate information about washed-out roads, land mines, disease-infested water, or outbreaks of violence, aid workers and refugees die, and money and supplies are wasted.
Today this need for information is being met in a new way. If one visits Sierra Leone, the former Zaire, or Rwanda, he or she might see something unexpected—a relief worker with a laptop computer using lifesaving ReliefWeb information, an idea pioneered by the United States Department of State and put into action by the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs, now the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). And soon, this same worker might access ReliefWeb off a frequently refreshed CD-ROM when working in an area without electronic links to the outside world.

What is ReliefWeb: ReliefWeb (http://reliefweb.int) is a small but vivid example of the kind of improved and cost-effective service the United Nations is providing in the post–Cold War era. A direct result of U.S. efforts to make the United Nations more effective, ReliefWeb provides humanitarian field workers the most current vital information from satellite imagery and road maps to weather conditions to the location of land mines by posting information from the field and headquarters onto the Internet. It links low-tech relief operations with modern telecommunications and information management technologies. It is fast becoming the one-stop global information center for fresh, reliable, and relevant reports, maps, and press accounts of relief operations. While some of this information is available elsewhere on the Internet, ReliefWeb filters out the chaff and provides users time-saving search tools efficiently and at low cost. In fact, the project is so successful that the UN General Assembly declared ReliefWeb “the global information management system for humanitarian relief.” Thus this project also has become a stimulant to the United Nations to build an integrated emergency information management strategy.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies: ReliefWeb’s primary goals and objectives are to ensure that the necessary UN agencies, governments, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have access to timely and accurate information on emergencies or impending crises for damage control and relief purposes. In order to do this, ReliefWeb collaborates with other organizations, such as the Organization of African Unity, to develop an information collection and dissemination system on the root causes of natural and complex humanitarian emergencies. Using the latest technology, it has created an on-line distributed information system, easily and publicly available through existing networks. Regional information centers have been established to ensure the fastest exchange of information before and during emergencies and disasters.

Also, ReliefWeb has designed a system of early warning alerts to ensure prompt and effective humanitarian responses. A financial tracking database also lists humanitarian assistance projects and how they are funded. At a glance one can focus on a nation’s overall contributions or even look at aid to a tiny village. Thus, for the first time, U.S. citizens can quickly see where and how their tax dollars are being sent.

Success Stories:
Development and Humanitarian Relief Activities

- ReliefWeb is accessed more than 50,000 times a day, a 100 percent increase since 1998.
- ReliefWeb was redesigned in 1999, providing updated graphics, logo and user interface, improved functionalities, and a new search engine.
- The inventory contains more than 50,000 searchable, relevant disaster–related documents dating back to 1981.
- Satellite–generated images of a remote volcano eruption in the former Zaire were made available within 24 hours, helping the UN quickly assist vulnerable refugees.
- Current information on the disasters in Venezuela, Turkey, and Mozambique caused many to see ReliefWeb in 1999 as the “CNN of the disaster community.”
- Relevant daily updates occur on more than 40 humanitarian emergencies.
- The site is the world’s only reliable on–line financial tracking database for complex emergencies.
- More than 500 maps are on the server.
- ReliefWeb is used by government agencies, international bodies, nongovernmental organizations, research institutions, students, the academic community, media, and the general public in 170 countries.
- Since it was founded, ReliefWeb has returned more than 11 million documents on 19 complex emergencies and 1,100 natural disasters from more than 300 information sources.
- ReliefWeb serves as a web presence for the Tampere Convention on the provision of emergency telecommunications.
- The site serves as a web presence for the Integrated Regional Information Network in Africa.
- In 2000, ReliefWeb will launch a new service to ensure that ReliefWeb information can be made available to field offices where Internet connectivity is limited. ReliefWeb via email will offer personalized subscriptions to users based upon their information profile requirements. For example, a relief worker in Guinea–Bissau with only email capability could subscribe to all documents related to Guinea–Bissau posted by ReliefWeb, and receive those documents daily by email.

Who Supports ReliefWeb and Why: Managed by OCHA, ReliefWeb receives voluntary support from the United States, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Austria, Finland, and the European Union. ReliefWeb is expanding the boundaries of Internet Global Information Systems access to field staffs. It has been endorsed by relief agencies such as the World Food Program, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and UN Children’s Fund; by key nongovernmental organizations such as InterAc-

tion, the International Red Cross, Save the Children, and Doctors Without Borders; and by the Global Disaster Information Network Project, which is an effort to build better disaster mitigation tools for natural and technological disasters. Initiatives by supporting governments may also further enhance ReliefWeb’s reach into remote regions. For example, the U.S. project REMAPS (Relief Emergency Mapping Strategy), if successful, could greatly increase the amount of standardized data posted on ReliefWeb by remote locations, ensure that such data is interoperable with other systems, and provide “Deep Field,” an enhanced ability to do on–site analysis. With continued support by the United Nations, its member nations, and the NGO community as well as interested citizens and the private sector, ReliefWeb can help save even more lives.

Population Activities

The UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the leading multilateral donor for population assistance, finances activities in over 160 countries. Its focus areas include reproductive health information and services, advocacy on behalf of population issues, and activities linking population issues with concerns regarding sustainable development and the status of women. UNFPA projects create awareness among policymakers and the public at large about the adverse effects of rapid, unsustainable population growth on economic development, the environment, and social progress. UNFPA promotes the principle of voluntarism in population programs and opposes coercive population measures. It neither funds nor advocates abortion.

As one of 36 members of the UN Development Program/UNFPA Executive Board, the United States participates actively in the governance of UNFPA. For example, the United States played an important role in helping to design a new multi–year sustainable funding strategy, which will give UNFPA a more predictable, assured, and continuous funding base while maintaining the voluntary nature of contributions. The United States also supported full UNFPA engagement in efforts to reform the UN system.

An important U.S. policy objective is full implementation of the 1994 Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the recommendations made in the recently completed five-year review (“ICPD+5”). These include the establishment of national population programs, the integration of family planning services into broader reproductive health programs, and national program sustainability. UNFPA is guided by—and promotes—the principles of the ICPD Program of Action and is the lead UN organization for ICPD+5. Thus, its activities complement U.S. bilateral population assistance and promote principles of voluntary family planning and reproductive health consistent with U.S. policy. Also, as a result of the ICPD+5, UNFPA is working in collaboration with UNAIDS to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic, a key U.S. Government national interest.

In 1999, the United States did not contribute to UNFPA, marking the first time since 1993 that no U.S. contribution was made to the organiza-
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In November 1999, however, legislation was passed that allows the United States to resume funding for UNFPA in 2000, but with a dollar–for–dollar withholding equal to the amount UNFPA spends in the People’s Republic of China. Contributions from all donors to UNFPA in 1999 totaled approximately $250 million.

Human Settlements

Established by the UN General Assembly in 1977, the 58–member UN Commission on Human Settlements serves as the governing body for the UN Center for Human Settlements, headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya. The Center’s mandate includes coordinating human settlements activities within the UN system, executing technical assistance projects, performing research, and serving as a focal point for information exchange. A major focus of the Center’s activities in recent years has been the housing and urban indicators program. Most recently, at the 17th session of the Commission held in Nairobi May 5–14, delegates adopted a resolution calling upon governments to incorporate into their national plans of action a strategy to phase out leaded gasoline and to manage or eliminate the uncontrolled exposure to lead from other sources. The United States, Germany, and Argentina introduced this resolution and regard it as a significant step forward in improving both people’s health and the environment.

In Resolution 51/177, adopted by consensus on December 16, 1996, the UN General Assembly designated the UN Center for Human Settlements as the focal point for implementation of the Habitat Agenda, the final document from the June 1996 UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) held in Istanbul. The resolution also called for a comprehensive and in–depth assessment of the Center. Subsequently, in 1998 a task force was established to make recommendations to the Secretary General on environment and human settlement activities in the UN system. The task force’s final report contained a number of recommendations on how to improve the efficiency of the Center’s activities. As a result, various teams of consultants have been brought in to assess the Center’s operations and to provide recommendations for improvement. The United Nations is expected to release, in the near future, a report documenting the Center’s efforts to achieve more efficient and effective oversight and management of its operations. The United States has actively supported the Center’s efforts to reform and revitalize its financial and administrative processes. The United States has met frequently with the Center’s acting Executive Director and other interested parties to promote this outcome.

The commission meets every two years. The 18th session will be held April 5–9, 2001, immediately before the second meeting of the preparatory committee (PrepCom) for the Istanbul+5 Conference. The Istanbul+5 meeting will be held in June 2001. The purpose of this conference is to review countries’ progress toward achieving the goals established at Habitat II. The first PrepCom for Istanbul +5 will be held in Nairobi May 8–12.