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# UN NEWS

UN Information Centre for India and Bhutan

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## UN DAY SPECIAL

*Peace*



*Development*



*Human Rights*



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# UN Associations, diplomats observe UN Day

UN Day was celebrated at the US Consulate in Mumbai, a wonderful setting where UNIC has earlier collaborated on other events. This Day was organized by the Maharashtra UN Association (MUNA), under the umbrella of the Indian Federation of UN Associations (IFUNA). A number of eminent speakers talked about different aspects of the United Nations. Deputy Chief of Mission of the US Embassy in Delhi, **Michael Pelletier**, said he was pleased to host the celebrations together with **Peter Haas**, the Consul General in Mumbai. He emphasised the importance of different actors coming together to discuss the values of the UN, in particular in India, which plays an increasingly important role in the global field, and has shown its ability and desire to face out and engage in the world. The US supports this very important role of the UN Associations'

help in spreading and fostering conversations.

"UN Day is an occasion to celebrate the UN's achievements. Equally, it is a time to look ahead and assess the way forward", said UNIC Director **Kiran Mehra-Kerpelman**, "because our task will never be done until the manifold challenges facing the world are addressed. Peace, development and human rights – these are not abstract concepts but practical tasks that the UN sets out to do on a daily basis around the world". She thanked MUNA and the US Consulate for organising and hosting the event, particularly Secretary-General **A. A. Syed** and MUNA Secretary and Youth Wing President **Ashraf Ahmed Sheikh**. "At the UN Information Centre, we undertake campaigns that highlight the work of the UN and also promote its various messages and interlinked themes", she added. Quoting from UN

Secretary-General's message for the day, she said: "We continue to show what collective action can do. We can do even more. In a world that is more connected, we must be more united".

**Dr. Mukul Sangma**, Chief Minister of Meghalaya and Chairman of IFUNA, was unable to attend but sent an inspiring message, delivered by **Dr. Sheshadri Charl**.

Other speakers included **Suresh Srivastava**, Secretary-General, IFUNA; **Mohini Mathur**, Executive Chairperson, MUNA; **H.E. Mark Pierce**, Consul General of Australia in Mumbai who gave an extremely interesting overview of UN and Australia and the latter's role in the Security Council; and **H.E. Jaroslaw Mikus**, Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Mumbai who provided an emotional account of Poland's struggle over the years. He recounted the poignant story of how more than 50,000 Polish refugees were given asylum by the Maharaja of Nawanagar in India, between 1942 and 1948 and how welcoming the Indian people were. He also noted Poland's presidency of the Human Rights Council in 2013. **H.E. Ceylan Ozen Ertisen**, Consul General of the Republic of Turkey in Mumbai, talked about the UN and the girl child and the significant progress Turkey has made in this respect. ■



Photo: MUNA

# Volunteers in Mumbai school celebrate spirit of UN Day

UNIC New Delhi has been working closely with the NGO Anant Vikas Trust, headed by **Hritu Rana**, actively involved in inspiring school children into volunteerism. Several schools and colleges across the country, in particular in Delhi and Mumbai, are

part of this project which takes on villages and provides them with support in leading a better life. Together with some sponsors and the volunteers, the NGO has provided sanitation, sports facilities, education, safe drinking water facilities, skills development for women and children, among other

innovative activities such as providing opportunities for marketing products made by the villagers.

One such school which has been extremely active is the Jamnabai Narsee School in Mumbai where students have put their heart and soul

## 'E-challenges' for academic libraries

UNIC Director **Kiran Mehra-Kerpelman** attended a conference on "Challenges of Electronic Environment in Academic Libraries", organized by the University of Panjab Library for its Golden Jubilee Celebrations at Chandigarh. Panjab University has been given the highest ranking in India. "I am here to connect with your academic and student community as you discuss the changing paradigms of accessing information," Ms. Mehra-Kerpelman said, "and how our traditional libraries have to rise to the challenge." She spoke about how the arena of information access is so challenging in a country such as India where broadband accessibility in many areas is extremely difficult, and even more challenging is the lack of electricity in many villages. "How do we reconcile the fact that while many of us in urban hotspots are tapping and surfing along at high speeds on the information highway", she questioned, "there are millions of people who must rely on printed material as a matter of necessity?"

"Libraries therefore have to navigate this digital divide," she added. "They have to look ahead at new technologies, but also look back to make sure that people are not left behind".

A lively discussion took place on how librarians will need to reskill and retrain and face the new generation of libraries which highlight information access services and seek to optimize the infrastructure in line with users' requirements. And in this process of managing and communication of information, technological advances are playing a vital role.

Panjab University Vice-Chancellor Mr. **Arun K. Grover** said that in addition to the Central Library, the University had 75 other departments with their own specialized libraries, and that his dream was to have all these electronically connected in the next 12 months.

Former librarian Ms. **A.K. Anand** focused on the fact that existing infrastructure should be upgraded and she emphasized that training and upgrading of skills was extremely important. She also made a case for "not forgetting the old and traditional as the new and technology-oriented is ushered in".

UNIC Librarian **Dr. R. K. Sharma** chaired two Technical Sessions – on E-Resources and Emerging Technologies/ Web Resources Management and the Growing Trends in Library & Information Science. He said that the Library and



Photo: Panjab University

Information Science scene is changing fast in the face of new challenges and in response to new demands. Library professionals are experiencing a transition from stand-alone libraries to library and information networks. Today libraries can in principle be completely web-based. He explained how libraries are entering into collaborative utilization of resources through Cloud Computing. Problems like risk of data security, archiving of e-books and back volumes of e-journals have emerged as a big challenge to the libraries known as a place for heritage of documents. "A 'library without walls' or a virtual library is now becoming a reality, and it is possible now to provide library services and access to information even outside the library", Dr. Sharma said. ■

## UN reading corner at US Consulate

UNIC Director **Kiran Mehra-Kerpelman**, together with **Anamika Chakravorty**, Cultural Affairs Officer, U.S. Consulate General Mumbai, and **Philip Roskamp**, Public Affairs Officer at the Consulate, inaugurated a UN Information Centre corner with UN publications at the Consulate Library, enabling the numerous students who

visit the Library to avail of this added information.

"When I visited this beautiful library a couple of years ago", said UNIC Director, "I dreamt of how we could have some UN publications in there. Thank you to all those who have helped to make it a reality." Deputy Chief of Mission of the US Embassy in Delhi



Photo: MUNA

**Michael Pelletier** thanked UNIC for the contribution, and said that he appreciated the opportunity to make the UN better known among Library's visitors. ■



**World AIDS Day**  
**1 December**

The global theme for World AIDS Day from 2011-2015, as selected by the World AIDS Campaign, is "Getting to Zero," echoing the UNAIDS vision of achieving "zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination, zero AIDS-related deaths."

Observed worldwide on 1 December since 1988, World AIDS Day unites people from around the world to raise awareness of the global AIDS response and join, in solidarity, the millions of people living with and affected by HIV.

**International Day of Persons with Disabilities**  
**3 December**



Persons with disabilities are both agents and beneficiaries, who would also take the lead in development processes. The full and effective participation of persons with disabilities is a prerequisite for inclusive, sustainable and equitable development.

The commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities in 2013 provides an opportunity to address this exclusion by focusing on promoting accessibility and removing all types of barriers in society.

3 December was proclaimed as the International Day of Persons with Disabilities by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/3 of 14 October 1992.

**International Volunteer Day**  
**5 December**



International Volunteer Day (IVD) offers an opportunity for volunteer organizations and individual volunteers to make visible their contributions - at local, national and international levels - to the achievement of the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**.

Apart from mobilising thousands of volunteers every year, the **United Nations Volunteers (UNV)** programme works closely with partners and governments to establish national volunteer programmes to create structures that foster and sustain local volunteerism in countries. Through the **Online Volunteering service** volunteers can take action for sustainable human development.

In the wake of the 2013 high-level meeting on disability and development, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities provides an opportunity to bring global attention to the situation of persons with disabilities, to create a strategic vision and to plan for disability-inclusive development.

**International Anti-Corruption Day**  
**9 December**



Corruption is a complex social, political and economic phenomenon that affects all countries. Corruption undermines democratic institutions, slows economic development and contributes to governmental instability. Corruption attacks the foundation of democratic institutions by distorting electoral processes, perverting the rule of law and creating bureaucratic quagmires whose only reason for existing is the soliciting of bribes.

On 31 October 2003, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention against Corruption and requested that the Secretary-General designate the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as secretariat for the Convention's Conference of States Parties (resolution 58/4).

The Assembly also designated 9 December as International Anti-Corruption Day, to raise awareness of corruption and of the role of the Convention in combating and preventing it. The Convention entered into force in December 2005.



**Human Rights Day**  
**10 December**

Human Rights Day 2013 has special significance in this 20th anniversary year of the establishment of the mandate of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Human Rights Day continues the celebration of the anniversary with **20 YEARS: WORKING FOR YOUR RIGHTS** as its theme but with the emphasis on the future and identifying the challenges that lie ahead.

The UN General Assembly proclaimed 10 December as Human Rights Day in 1950, to bring to the attention 'of the peoples of the world' the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations.

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