

Annual DPI/NGO Conference to focus on human rights

Posted: Wednesday, 20 August 2008, New York | Author: iSeek

Months of careful and detailed planning coordinated by a small team from the Outreach Division of the Department of Public Information (DPI) are about to come to fruition as the first-ever **DPI/NGO Conference** to be held outside of New York City nears. For 2008, it was decided that the annual event would be held in Paris, with a focus on human rights.

The 61st annual Conference will take place from 3 to 5 September and will be opened by Secretary-General BAN Ki-moon via video-conference. Human rights advocate Simone Veil has accepted to be the keynote speaker. Also participating in opening the Conference will be the General Assembly President and the Director-General of UNESCO.

Ingrid Betancourt, the former Colombian presidential candidate and recently released hostage, will take part in the closing session, via video from New York.

Every year, the event is organized by DPI in cooperation with the nongovernmental organization community. This year, additional assistance is being provided by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Government of France.

Some 60 years ago, on 10 December 1948, it was in the capital city of France that the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** was adopted by the General Assembly, meeting in the Palais de Chaillot. It is therefore fitting that Paris will be the host city for the 61st DPI/NGO Conference which is expected to attract more than 2,000 NGO representatives from some 90 countries.

USG for Communications and Public Information Kiyoo Akasaka explained the significance of the Paris venue at a **press conference** on Tuesday. Not only had Paris been the site of the signing of the Universal Declaration, but it also “presents us with the opportunity to reach out to new constituencies of non-governmental organizations – particularly, in developing countries – who would be able to participate this time”.

The aim of the Conference is to highlight effective ways in which civil society, in partnership with other actors, can contribute to the advancement of human rights at the international, regional, national and local levels. A major feature of this conference will be its emphasis on active participation whether through involvement in the five roundtables, the 42 midday workshops or several breakout sessions.



A Committee representing different areas of the NGO world, including NGO partners in Geneva and Paris, has assisted in the selection of this year's offerings.

The DPI Outreach Division has also developed the visual identity for the Conference, including a poster created by the Division's Graphic Designers, which is available in the NGO Resource Centre.