



October 2006

dfa **Now**

Your voice to be heard



From right: President Thabo Mbeki and Gracia Machel, President Armando Guebuza and the First Lady Ms Guebuza of Mozambique and Thabang Makwetla, Premier of Mpumalanga.

President Thabo Mbeki and President Armando Guebuza of Mozambique leading a solemn ceremony to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the death of the first President of independent Mozambique, Samora Moises Machel, who died in a plane crash on 19 October 1986, at Mbuzini.

DEAR COLLEAGUES,

Welcome to another informative edition of the *dfa Now*. During the month of October it is important for all of us to take part in increasing awareness of breast cancer and also offer the crucial support to all people diagnosed with and those affected by breast cancer. Let's all remember that with early detection breast cancer can be beaten.

This month the Department will also begin with fulfilling its name tags responsibility as required by the corporate identity of government. Colleagues should please note that this is per the Cabinet guidelines on government's corporate identity, which requires that public service officials should be easily identifiable by wearing name tags to identify themselves. This requirement is also in line with the Batho Pele principles, especially regarding accountability in service delivery. The provision of name tags will begin with the Ministry, DG's office and frontline offices (Protocol, Consular and Security), to be followed by all other remaining Branches. Please wear your name tag visibly at all times while at work and don't lose it because you will be required to pay for the replacement tag.

The *dfa Now* needs and value your views/opinions. Please forward your letters and articles to the Editor before the deadline.

Enjoy it!

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Editor-in-Chief: Ronnie Mamoepa

Editor: Paseka Mokhethea

Editorial Committee:

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Design and Layout: Shaune van Wyk, Zimele Ngxongo

Pictures: Andrew Mohamed, Jacoline Prinsloo, Sanjay Singh and the GCIS.

The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the DFA or the editors. The deadline for contributions is 11 November 2006. Contributions may be sent to cbe300 or mokhetheap@foreign.gov.za

All enquiries:

Paseka @ Tel: (012) 351-1569 • Fax : (012) 351-1327

Breast Cancer Month

BEAT BREAST CANCER

OCTOBER IS BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH. Breast cancer is the number one cancer type amongst women worldwide. It is also the most common cancer type amongst South African women. Between 3500- 4000 women in South African are being diagnosed with breast cancer every year.

PREVENTION OF BREAST CANCER

- limit your alcohol intake
- maintain a healthy weight
- stay physically active
- eat high fibre foods
- limit your fat intake
- eat plenty of foods and vegetables
- avoid unnecessary antibiotic usage
- women with an increased risk e.g. a family history of cancer should discuss it with their medical doctor



SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF BREAST CANCER

The most common signs of breast cancer in women are a lump or thickening in the breast

Other signs of breast cancer include:

- a spontaneous clear or bloody discharge from the nipple
- retraction indentation of the nipple
- change in the size or contours of the breast
- any flattening or indentation of the skin over the breast
- redness or pitting of the skin over the breast

BREAST EXAMINATIONS

- all women over the age of 40 should have an annual mammogram and clinical breast examination
- women between the ages of 20-39 should have a clinical breast examination at least every three years
- women who prefer to have self breast examinations should receive instruction on how to implement such an examination
- women who do self breast examinations should have their technique reviewed during their periodic health examinations

Honouring our global responsibilities

SOUTH AFRICA WAS VOTED INTO THE SECURITY COUNCIL by 186 countries, well beyond the two-thirds (125) that is required to secure the UNSC seat, with no country voting against or abstaining (Italy was similarly voted into the UNSC by 186 countries).

When we were elected, our Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma issued a statement welcoming this development. She said:

“South Africa is greatly privileged and honoured by its election by the general membership of the United Nations to serve on the UN Security Council in a non-permanent capacity. In this regard, South Africa extends its gratitude to the peoples and government of Africa and the world for the confidence bestowed upon us to serve the people of our continent and indeed the world in the UN Security Council.

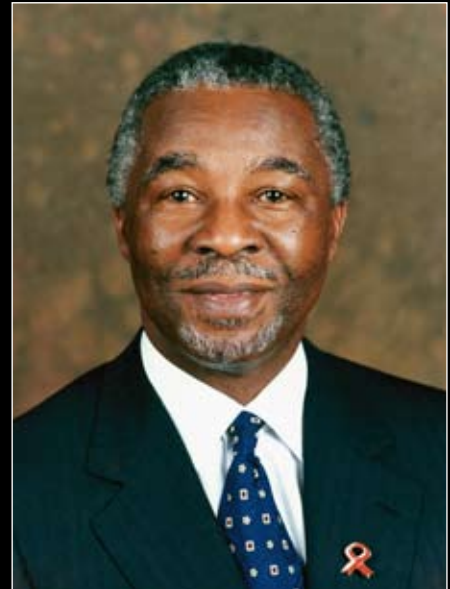
“Accordingly, and on behalf of President Thabo Mbeki, the government and people of South Africa we humbly accept the mandate thrust upon us by the peoples of Africa, the South and the world in general in electing us to this position of responsibility. We do so conscious and convinced that the multilateral system of global governance remains the only hope for challenges facing humanity today.

“As a consequence thereof, we declare our readiness and preparedness to serve the peoples of Africa, the South and the World in this capacity. South Africa, commits itself thus, fully cognisant of the challenges that will certainly arise from the responsibilities that will attend to the membership of the UN Security Council as an instrument of our collective peace and security.

“In pursuance thereof, South Africa will strive in conjunction with the African Union, to create synergies between the work of the African Union Peace and Security Council and the UN Security Council with a view to the prevention of outbreaks of violence and conflict in the continent of Africa.

“We shall work with all members

On 16 October the General Assembly of the United Nations elected South Africa, Italy, Belgium and Indonesia to serve as non-permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for two-year terms starting on 1 January 2007. As we go to press, voting is still continuing to elect one representative from Latin America and the Caribbean. When we take our seat, South Africa will join the Republic of Congo and Ghana as the third African non-permanent member of the Security Council.



Inside the Headquarters of the UNSC.

of the Security Council, and regional organisations in pursuit of peace and stability in all regions of the world especially in the Middle East. In addition, South Africa shall continue to work with all members of the United Nations General Assembly in pursuit of the comprehensive reform of the United Nations including the reform and expansion of the United Nations Security Council.”

This Statement correctly identifies our country’s approach to the work we will have to do as members of the

UNSC over the two years 2007 and 2008. It correctly reiterates our long-established position that “the multilateral system of global governance remains the only hope for challenges facing humanity today”. The UNSC occupies an important and unique place in this multilateral system, with its tasks defined in the UN Charter.

The Charter says: “In order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations, its Members confer on the Security Council primary respon-

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sibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility, the Security Council acts on their behalf. In discharging these duties the Security Council shall act in accordance with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations."

Of fundamental importance to the tasks that face the UNSC is the need to respect the Principles reflected in the Preamble of the UN Charter. This Preamble says:

"We the Peoples of the United Nations determined:

- to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind;
- to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and
- to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and
- to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom."

All the foregoing explains the critical importance of the UNSC in terms of ensuring that the peoples of the world live in conditions of peace and security. This is not just a matter of peace keeping through the deployment of UN military and other forces in cases where war has broken out, important as this task is.

In all the work we have done especially on our continent since we attained our freedom 12 years ago, to contribute to the achievement of the goal of peace and security in Africa, we have indeed proceeded from the position that it is very important to address the underlying specific causes of conflict and war in any country faced with this problem.

In many instances these include the issues mentioned in the Preamble of the UN Charter, such as fundamental human rights, equality within and between nations, respect for international law and the struggle for access to the resources that everybody needs to achieve "social progress and better

standards of life in larger freedom", as the Preamble says.

In this regard, a 2000 Report of a Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, which was chaired by Mr Lakhdar Brahimi, a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Algeria, said:

"There is a pressing need for the United Nations and its Member States to establish a more effective system for long-term conflict prevention. Prevention is clearly far more preferable for those who would otherwise suffer the consequences of war, and is a less costly option for the international community than military action, emergency humanitarian relief or reconstruction after a war has run its course. As the Secretary-General noted in his recent Millennium Report (A/54/2000), 'every step taken towards reducing poverty and achieving broad-based economic growth is a step toward conflict prevention'.

"In many cases of internal conflict, 'poverty is coupled with sharp ethnic or religious cleavages', in which minority rights 'are insufficiently respected [and] the institutions of government are insufficiently inclusive'. Long-term preventive strategies in such instances must therefore work 'to promote human rights, to protect minority rights and to institute political arrangements in which all groups are represented... Every group needs to become convinced that the state belongs to all people'".

Because of the nature of the mandate of the UNSC, members of the Council have to be on standby to attend meetings of the Council on a 24-hour basis, given that conflict that threatens international peace and security may begin to emerge, break out in full force or escalate anywhere in the world, at any time.

This means that our government will have to build up the necessary all-round capacity both in Pretoria and New York in particular, to enable our government and its diplomatic service properly to discharge their responsibilities, so that our country does everything necessary to meet its obligations as a member of the Council.

This means that we must put ourselves in a position fully to understand each and every issue that might come



Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, with South Africa's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo at the UN.

under the purview or is already on the agenda of the UNSC. It is only on this basis that we will be able to take properly informed and independent positions on any of these issues.

In addition, as our Minister of Foreign Affairs pointed out in her Statement, we will also have to take the necessary measures to ensure that we regularly consult the African Union and other regional organisations, especially on issues that affect these regions.

Currently, for instance, the African issues of which the UNSC remains seized include Western Sahara, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, Sudan, Somalia, and Ethiopia and Eritrea with regard to their border dispute.

There are, of course, other important issues that continue to serve on the agenda of the UNSC, to whose resolution we will have to make our own contribution. These include Palestine and Israel, Lebanon and Israel, Iraq, Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Haiti and Cyprus.

The mere listing of these issues brings sharply into focus the challenge we will face from 1 January 2007, properly to live up to the inspiring confidence in our country shown by Africa and the rest of the world community when they decided at the UN General



the peaceful resolution of international disputes, an equitable world order, and ensuring that globalisation serves the interests especially of the poor of the world.

As a movement we have always sought faithfully to honour our commitments to our people. Throughout the 94 years of our existence, we have sustained the loyalty and attachment of the masses of our people in good measure on the basis that our leaders and members have opted voluntarily to work as members and leaders of the ANC solely and exclusively to serve the interests of all the people of our country, with no expectation for any personal or selfish reward.

Similarly, the peoples of Africa and the world have, in the ways that we have mentioned already, consistently demonstrated their confidence in our country despite the fact that our democracy is a mere 12 years old. Again, this confidence is based on the understanding that we say and have said for 12 years about a just world, and what we have done in this regard is genuinely meant, with absolutely no intention to gain any selfish benefit for our country.

The responsibility facing our government as a member of the UNSC, to live up to the expectations of the African people and the rest of the world community, does not rest solely with the government.

It is a national task to which we must respond in unity, inspired by the sentiment native to all our people, encapsulated in the spirit of ubuntu, that with regard to all humanity, we are truly one another's brothers' and sisters' keepers.

Pride in ourselves and our country and a shared and new patriotism must surely tell all of us, regardless of any political or other affiliation and identity, that when we end our privileged tour of duty as a member of the 15-member UNSC on 31 December 2008, we will be immensely honoured to hear all humanity saying – thank you South Africa for everything you did to strive to make ours a better and safer world for all!

Thabo Mbeki

Source: ANC Today Newsletter:
<http://www.anc.org.za>

Assembly, virtually unanimously, that our country should serve on the UNSC as a non-permanent member.

During the first twelve years of our liberation, Southern Africa, Africa and the rest of the international community have repeatedly shown their confidence in democratic South Africa as a reliable partner in the global struggle for a just and peaceful world.

Accordingly, among others, we have served as Chair of the South African Development Community (SADC) and the AU, Chair of the Commonwealth, Co-Chair of the Africa-Asia Forum, President of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and Chair of the G77 + China. We have also hosted various important international conferences, such as the founding conference of the AU, the Commonwealth, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the UN Conference on Racism, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

This global confidence in democratic South Africa has also found expression among others in the area of sport. We have accordingly hosted the Soccer African Cup of Nations, the International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF), the Rugby and Cricket World Cups, and the golf President's Cup. Of course, we have now been

given the responsibility to host the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup.

Within the African context, we have acted on behalf of the continent with regard to Lesotho, Comoros, Burundi, the DRC, Côte d'Ivoire and Sudan. We are also privileged to host the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Secretariat and the Pan African Parliament.

Our virtually unanimous election by the nations of the world, organised as Members of the UN General Assembly, to serve as a non-permanent member of the UNSC has confirmed and underlined the confidence that the peoples of the world have in democratic South Africa.

What this means is that we must continue to do the things in our country that have given the nations of the world confidence in our country as an important force in the struggle to build a new world order that would stand for the good of all humanity.

These include our deep seated respect for democracy, human rights, peace and stability in our country, non-racialism and non-sexism, our commitment to eradicate poverty and otherwise respond continuously to the challenge to ensure the upliftment of the poor in our society and the world, the success of the African renaissance, peace in the world and

The Nuclear Disarmament Debate – Part 2



(8) USA and Russian Bilateral Arms Reduction Initiatives

STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION TALKS (SALT) negotiations were resumed in the 1970's and continued in the early 1980's under the new name of Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START). These negotiations are recognised as the major bilateral initiatives of Russian and America to limit and reduce the stockpiles on nuclear arsenals. A wide range of weapons was discussed in the framework of SALT negotiations and the talks resulted in two treaties and several less formal agreements.

SALT I

SALT I, the first series of Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, extended from November 1969 to May 1972. In a summit meeting in Moscow, after two and a half years of negotiation, the first round of SALT was brought to a conclusion on May 26, 1972, when President Nixon and General Secretary Brezhnev signed the ABM Treaty and the Interim Agreement on the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms.

In terms of its major provisions, the SALT I agreement essentially freezes at existing levels the number of strategic ballistic missile launchers, operational or under construction, on each side. It permits an increase in SLBM launchers up to an agreed level for each party only with the dismantling or destruction of a corresponding number of older ICBM or SLBM launchers. In view of the many asymmetries in the two countries forces, imposing equivalent limitations required rather complex and precise provisions.

SALT II

SALT II negotiations began in November 1972 and the Vladivostok Accord of 1974 is an integral part of the SALT II agreement that placed limits for the first time on the total numbers of strategic launchers and of US strategic bombers. President Carter and



General Secretary Brezhnev signed the completed SALT II agreement in Vienna on June 18, 1979. President Carter transmitted it to the Senate on June 22 for its advice and consent to ratification.

SALT II set precise limits on the numbers of each type and subtype of strategic launcher and specifically defined each type. It provided for destruction of all launchers beyond the number allowed, but permitted the testing and development of certain kinds of launchers. Verification was provided once again by national technical means, with no on-site inspection. The SALT II Treaty met with stiff resistance when it was presented to the U.S. Senate for ratification and in January 1980 the Senate debate was postponed at the request of President Jimmy Carter in retaliation for Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

Although the treaty never entered into force, both the United States and the USSR pledged to abide by its limits. In May 1982 President Ronald Reagan, an opponent of SALT II, advanced his own proposal for a Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), calling for deep cuts in land-based missiles (in which the USSR was perceived to hold an advantage). This became the U.S. negotiating position during talks at Geneva, Switzerland, but the Soviets broke off this talks in late 1983 to protest the deployment of U.S. intermediate-range missiles in Europe. When formal negotiations resumed in January 1985, the United States continued to focus on land-

based weapons, while the USSR demanded that space weaponry – as envisioned in the U.S. Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) – be the leading item on the agenda.

The Soviets eventually dropped this demand and direct talks between Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev led to the signing of the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in December 1987. Negotiations that laid the basis for the START I were continued after George W Bush was elected USA President in 1988.

START I

After almost 10 years of difficult negotiations, the United States and the Soviet Union signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) on 31 July 1991. The main provision of this agreement calls for reductions to equal aggregate levels in strategic offensive arms, carried out in three phases over seven years from the date the treaty enters into force. The scope of the START agreement was expanded to cover Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine because these four breakaway republics that had become independent states had strategic nuclear weapons on their respective territories belonging to the former Soviet Union.

START includes an intrusive verification regime consisting of a detailed data exchange, extensive notifications, 12 types of on-site inspection, and continuous monitoring activities designed to help verify that signatories are complying with their treaty obligations.

The break-up of the Soviet Union delayed START's entry into force nearly three-and-a-half years until Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, which had inherited strategic nuclear weapons from the Soviet Union, ratified START and joined the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as non-nuclear states. On 05 December 1994 the parties ex-

changed instruments of ratification at the Budapest summit.

START II

Presidents' Bush and Yeltsin signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) II on 3 January 1993 in Moscow and the USA Senate ratified it on 26 January 1996. Russia's Duma ratified START II in April 2000 just after the inauguration of its President Vladimir Putin.

Under the treaty, which applies to inter-continental rockets, the USA and Russia will both halve their stocks of atomic warheads to levels between 3000 and 3500 each by 2007. A Protocol to the original text of the agreement was negotiated at the Helsinki Summit in March 1997. The Helsinki Protocol, subject to the ratification of both parties was signed in New York on 26 September 1997. It is envisaged that a START III treaty currently being negotiated would increase arms reduction even further.



START III

START III will establish by December 31, 2007 a ceiling of 2,000-2,500 strategic nuclear weapons for each of the parties, representing a 30-45 per cent reduction in the number of total deployed strategic warheads permitted under START II. START III will include measures relating to the transparency of strategic nuclear warhead inventories and the destruction of strategic nuclear warheads. The Russian Federation has proposed a reduction of the overall threshold of up to 1,500 warheads, a more substantial reduction of nuclear arms than had been foreseen at Helsinki in March 1997. Negotiation of the details of START III is pending on the ratification by the Russian Duma of START II.

START IV

Negotiations of the details of START IV are pending on negotiation and ratification of START III. A future START IV agreement would involve all declared nuclear nations. The goal of such a multilateral effort would be to substantially reduce global warhead inventories to the point where the declared powers would have some level of parity.



(9) 2000 NPT Review Conference Undertakings

TOGETHER WITH OTHER STATES PARTIES the NWS at the 2000 NPT Review Conference (NPTRC) agreed that the ultimate objective in the disarmament process is general and complete disarmament under effective international control. This clearly laid down the parameters in which specific steps for nuclear disarmament must now be achieved. No longer did the possibility exist of a situation - as some had previously attempted to argue - where nuclear disarmament is part of some "ultimate" objective. It was made clear that, as in the case of other weapons of mass destruction, the elimination of nuclear weapons is a milestone that must be reached on the way to the ultimate objective of the disarmament process, namely general and complete disarmament. The agreed commitment by all States parties to nuclear disarmament had become unequivocal.

At the 2000 NPTRC NWS made an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. This undertaking was an important indication that the NWS would pursue negotiations in good faith, on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament and that they had made the NPT a living legal framework within which the non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS) hold the NWS accountable for their actions on nuclear disarmament. This undertaking also confirmed our long held view that the possession of nuclear weapons by the NWS is only temporary and not a permanent situation and that the NPT is indeed the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. NWS freely arrived at this undertaking just like they had freely negotiated and equally agreed to the Treaty.

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Also at the 2000 NPTRC the NWS agreed to thirteen practical steps for nuclear disarmament that signified their move away from empty rhetoric. This was warmly welcomed and the international community applauded this gesture that was thought to be a major benchmark in nuclear disarmament.

The unequivocal undertaking by the NWS to eliminate their nuclear arsenals and the practical steps agreed at the 2000 NPTRC by the NWS represents the solemn reaffirmation of their obligations under Article VI of the Treaty.

The following are the 13 Practical Steps for Nuclear Disarmament agreed to at the 2000 NPTRC:

1. The importance and urgency of signatures and ratification's, without delay and without conditions and in accordance with constitutional processes, to achieve the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear- Test-Ban Treaty.
2. A moratorium on nuclear-weapon-test explosions or any other nuclear explosions pending entry into force of that Treaty.
3. The necessity of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in accordance with the statement of the Special Co-ordinator in 1995 and the mandate contained therein, taking into consideration both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives. The Conference on Disarmament is urged to agree on a programme of work, which includes the immediate commencement of negotiations on such a treaty with a view to their conclusion within five years.
4. The necessity of establishing in the Conference on Disarmament an appropriate subsidiary body with a mandate to deal with nuclear disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament is urged to agree on a programme of work, which includes the immediate establishment of such a body.
5. The principle of irreversibility to apply to nuclear disarmament, nuclear and other related arms control and reduction measures.
6. An unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all States parties are committed under article VI.
7. The early entry into force and full implementation of START II and the conclusion of START III as soon as possible while preserving and strengthening the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems as a cornerstone of strategic stability and as a basis for further reductions of strategic offensive weapons, in accordance with its provisions.
8. The completion and implementation of the Trilateral Initiative between the United States of America, the Russian Federation and the International Atomic Energy Agency.
9. Steps by all the nuclear-weapon States leading to nuclear disarmament in a way that promotes international stability, and based on the principle of undiminished security for all:
 - Further efforts by the nuclear-weapon States to reduce their nuclear arsenals unilaterally;
 - Increased transparency by the nuclear weapon States with regard to the nuclear weapons capabilities and the implementation of agreements pursuant to article VI and as a voluntary confidence-building measure to support further progress on nuclear disarmament;
 - The further reduction of non-strategic nuclear weapons, based on unilateral initiatives and as an integral part of the nuclear arms reduction and disarmament process;
 - Concrete agreed measures to further reduce the operational status of nuclear weapons systems;
 - A diminishing role for nuclear weapons in security policies to minimise the risk that these weapons will ever be used and to facilitate the process of their total elimination;
 - The engagement as soon as appropriate of all the nuclear weapons States in the process leading to the total elimination of their nuclear weapons.
10. Arrangements by all nuclear-weapon States to place, as soon as practicable, fissile material designated by each of them as no longer required for military purposes under IAEA or other relevant international verification and arrangements for the disposition of such material for peaceful purposes, to ensure that such material remains permanently outside military programmes.
11. Reaffirmation that the ultimate objective of the efforts of States in the disarmament processes is general and complete disarmament under effective international control.
12. Regular reports, within the framework of the strengthened review process for the Non-Proliferation Treaty, by all States parties on the implementation of article VI and paragraph 4 (c) of the 1995 Decision on "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament", and recalling the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 8 July 1996.
13. The further development of the verification capabilities that will be required to provide assurance of compliance with nuclear disarmament agreements for the achievement and maintenance of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The adoption of the 13 practical steps for nuclear disarmament, as well as the nuclear disarmament proposals in the SSOD I Programme of Action have presented the international community with ideal measures to enhance nuclear disarmament leading to a total ban on nuclear weapons. These measures would create a conducive environment for the achievement of a total elimination of existing nuclear weapons and their further development.

In spite of all these initiatives the international community is increasingly concerned that NWS are not doing enough on nuclear disarmament because there is limited, if not minimal progress and that in some areas there is in fact a reversal in agreements previously reached. This state of affairs is attributable to a number of factors examined in the following segment of this piece.

By Amb LM Gumbi. Part 3 will appear in the November issue of the dfa Now!

Lunch with the Lisu: It changed my life!

From 8 – 12 August 2005 Rudi Conley (Consul Admin and Cons) traveled from Shanghai to the western side of Yunnan Province to assist with the distribution of clothing to the poor. This is his story.



ties like the Han, Bai, Yi and Naxi peoples. The population of Fugong consists of 270,000 people of which 98% are from the Lisu tribe. The Lisu have their distinct language (oral and written) that belongs to the Chinese-Tibetan language family and is completely different from Mandarin. The Lisu engages mainly in subsistence farming with corn as their main crop. Annual per capita income is minimal and cash is usually obtained when selling live stock (e.g goat or pig). Apart from common ownership of land and working together, the Lisu help one another in daily life. When a girl gets married, the wedding gifts given to the parents are shared by everyone, and when a young man takes a wife, the gifts for the bride's family are borne by all. These obligations in production and daily life make it possible for the Lisu to live in harmony with each other.

After meeting our local contact person we found ourselves in awe at the beautiful view of the Gaoligong Mountain on the west and the Biluo Mountain on the east. The Nujiang River and the Lancang River flow through the area, forming two big valleys. Our group visited the Nujiang River valley. The view of the mountains is spectacular though many parts are covered with dense forests. It's not hard to see where the Nujiang River got its name. Nujiang means "angry river" in Chinese and every inch of it really does epitomise anger. It swirls up and seems to swallow everything that gets in its path.

During March 2005, the town of Fugong and nearby villages experienced one of their worst snow falls in 100 years. The Charity, River of Hearts, decided to assist by arranging clothing donations, received from all over Shanghai, to be sent to Fugong. This included clothing donated through the generosity of Shanghai residents, which added up to a total of 130 boxes. During the time spent in Fugong, we were privileged to be part of the distribution of these donations to the people of Fugong. Despite the obvious poverty and hardship, we couldn't help but be touched by the friendliness and courtesy shown to us. A total of 3000 sets of clothing (1 set per family) were distributed with many

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EVER HEARD OF FUGONG OR LISU? A few weeks ago I travelled from Shanghai to the south western part of China to a small town called Fugong and visited a Chinese minority group called the Lisu. I had the privilege of experiencing firsthand, what many would refer to as the "real China." As I got ready to leave, my thoughts were filled with a sense of excitement but also anxiety for the unknown. I was about to embark on an adventure that would leave a lasting impression, and one that I would treasure for a long time to come.

The first leg of our trip consisted of a three hour flight from Shanghai to Kunming. Upon arriving in Kunming, my anxiety had to take the back seat as I set off to admire the beauty that this city offers. After eating a wholesome Kunming meal we visited a park where many minority groups were represented. This gave us some insight into the way of life for some of China's minority groups, especially their customs and beliefs. After our visit that lasted several hours, we continued on the second part of our journey.

At this stage you may be wondering what prompted me to undertake a trip to this part of the world to visit the Lisu people. Having resided in China for a short period and living a comfortable life, I decided to get involved in a local charity whose express purpose it is to help the less fortunate. Upon coming to China it was one of my aspirations to see the country and behold its beauty. I wanted to be exposed to the richness of its culture, values, peoples and traditions. I desired to have an eyewitness account of what China has to offer. When an opportunity presented itself, I naturally grabbed it with both hands and I found myself embarking on my first Chinese adventure.

After a visit to the local toilet (which is an experience for the uninitiated) I was ready to join the rest of our group and start our 16 hour bus ride which took us from Kunming to Liuku, and then finally to Fugong. A total of 540km was travelled throughout the night.

The next morning, at about 07h00, we arrived at our destination: the small town of Fugong. Fugong is 123km north of Liuku and populated by the Lisu tribe and other smaller communi-

coming from far up in the mountains to collect the clothes down in the valley (a journey that can take two to four hours to complete). Each individual receiving clothing extended a heartfelt "thank you." As we interacted with the villagers, we were encouraged and overjoyed to see the appreciation and thankfulness on the faces of the recipients. One lady even shared with me that she came to collect clothes for her disabled father who lives on top the mountain. This and many other stories encouraged us and made us realize that an act of goodness is most appreciated by those in need.

After 5 days of traveling we returned to Shanghai. After being re-united with



Rudi Conley (right), of the South African Consulate General in Shanghai.

my children and getting back into my daily routine, I just couldn't get the experiences of the last few days out of my mind. I kept saying to my wife "what an awesome privilege!" Though I remembered that I had some anxieties before the trip commenced, these are all just a distant memory now. The impact this clothing donation made on the people of Fugong was what dominated my thoughts the most. The gratitude and childlike appreciation shown when each piece of clothing was received was a humbling experience.

Ever heard of Fugong or Lisu? Yes! I was in Fugong and had lunch with the Lisu.

And it changed my life.

WHAT IS GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH TO HIV AND AIDS?

Government is implementing a comprehensive plan to deal with HIV and AIDS, which combines prevention, to ensure that those who are not infected remain so, with treatment, care and support for those infected or affected.

It is based on a five-year strategic plan adopted in 2000 which has unfolded into what is probably the largest programme in the world, sustained by a budget which has expanded and is set to grow still further in order to sustain it. Essential to the programme is the strengthening of the national health system.

Government expenditure on HIV and AIDS increased substantially over years – it grew from R30 million in 1994 to over R3 billion in 2005/06. The World Health Organisation's progress report on the expansion of AIDS treatment, released in June 2005, noted that: 'South Africa has committed US\$1 billion over the next three years to scaling up antiretroviral treatment, by far the largest budget allocation of any low- or middle-income country'.

The programme's impact is reflected in very high levels of awareness; changes in behaviour, especially among the young; stabilisation in recent years of the level of prevalence which had been rising fast; and the creation of infrastructure to support and sustain counselling, testing, care and treatment

South African Government's approach to HIV/AIDS

- What is government's approach to HIV and AIDS?
- What progress has been made in implementing the country's comprehensive plan?
- What place does prevention have in South Africa's HIV and AIDS programme?
- How is the country approaching human resources in the public health system?
- What treatment is offered in the public health sector?
- What is done to provide care and support and to fight discrimination?

across the country.

Critical to successful implementation is an active partnership of all of society with government. The partnership is embodied in the South Africa National AIDS Council and expressed in action which sees government, communities and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working together to implement all aspects of the comprehensive plan.

WHAT PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN IMPLEMENTING THE COUNTRY'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

Progress has been made in the various aspects of the plan:

- in accordance with the plan, each of the 53 health districts in the country now has at least one service point providing comprehensive HIV- and AIDS-related services, including antiretroviral treatment (ART), from prevention to terminal palliative care
- 250 laboratories have been certified to provide support to the programme
- three pharmacovigilance centres have been established to monitor and investigate adverse reaction to treatment.

By the end of June 2006, over 178 635 patients had been initiated for ART and there is no stock out in all facilities.

To date, 254 facilities are implementing the comprehensive plan covering 72,5% of the country's subdistricts. Forty-three CD4 counts, 11 viral load and seven PCR machines are operational in laboratories across the country.

WHAT PLACE DOES PREVENTION HAVE IN SOUTH AFRICA'S HIV AND AIDS PROGRAMME?

South Africa's approach emphasises the centrality of prevention, so that those not infected remain so; and the

importance of strengthening the national health system to provide a complete continuum of care and other interventions that would mitigate the impact of HIV and AIDS and other diseases.

A significant reduction in sexually transmitted infections has been reported over the last few years due to communication and treatment programmes.

Government programmes are complemented by private-sector, NGO and civil-society initiatives. A new phase of the awareness campaign started in September 2002, joining government with partners like loveLife, and focusing on youth prevention, support for orphans and vulnerable children, and living positively.

Prevention activities have further been strengthened through the Khomanani (Caring Together) Campaign, a multimedia mass communication campaign supporting all aspects of the comprehensive programme and driving the ABC message for sexual behavioural change.

The Khomanani Campaign is being decentralised to provinces.

The distribution of condoms increased to 386 million male and 1,3 million female condoms in 2005/06.

The prevention programme includes prevention of mother-to-child transmission, with 3 000 facilities in operation, covering 87% of health facilities, Post-exposure prophylaxis is provided in almost all hospitals and trauma centres for sexual assault survivors and health professionals exposed to HIV.

Health facilities providing voluntary counselling and testing increased from 3 369 in 2004/05 to 4 930 in 2005/06.

HOW IS THE COUNTRY APPROACHING HUMAN RESOURCES IN THE PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM?

More than 1 060 health professionals have been recruited to support the programme and 9 107 health professionals have been trained in the management, care and treatment of HIV and AIDS.

Government is also improving working conditions so that it can recruit and retain more health professionals. This includes providing scarce skills allowances for certain categories of health

professionals (doctors, pharmacists and specialist nurses) and rural allowances for health professionals working in less developed parts of the country. This is in addition to steadily improving salary packages.

WHAT TREATMENT IS OFFERED IN THE PUBLIC HEALTH SECTOR?

Treatment at public health facilities is covered in the Operational Plan for Comprehensive Treatment and Care for HIV and AIDS in the country, which was approved by Cabinet in November 2003. This covers the areas of counselling, good nutrition and healthy lifestyles, treatment of opportunistic infections, traditional medicine and antiretroviral drugs.

Public health facilities have a duty to treat opportunistic infections, irrespective of the patient's HIV status. The Department of Health is continuing with the training of healthcare workers in the management of opportunistic infections. Currently, all health facilities are providing treatment for opportunistic infections.

Nutritional supplements are provided to those who need them, as part of the comprehensive response to HIV and AIDS, as a complement to the appropriate forms of treatment. About 480 000 qualifying TB and HIV-positive patients have accessed this service since April 2004.

WHAT IS DONE TO PROVIDE CARE AND SUPPORT AND TO FIGHT DISCRIMINATION?

Support and care for those affected by HIV and AIDS is expanding, through increased governmental social grant registration and increases in grants, as well as growing home- and community-based care programmes.

There are 45 step down care facilities, 732 support groups and 1 176 home-based care organisations providing services in the communities.

The public health system provides nutritional supplements to patients with HIV and AIDS and/or TB and this has therefore increased macro and micro-nutrient requirements.

The Khomanani Campaign is tapping public willingness to help alleviate the suffering caused by HIV and AIDS.

A tool kit on how to live positively

with HIV and AIDS has been developed in collaboration with people living with the disease. It aims to put faces and share experiences to reduce the stigma, and is being distributed to support groups

About 10 million Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials were distributed in 2005.

Government efforts are further complemented by initiatives of the private sector, and non-governmental, community-based and faith-based organisations aimed at addressing the impact of HIV and AIDS on individuals and the broader society.

*Source: Department of Health 2006
September*

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

Heads and Missions and Mission Staff are encouraged to read the following documents to keep abreast of key developments in South Africa that have a bearing on their work:

- Deputy Minister Pahad's Briefing's to the media on current international issues; www.dfa.gov.za <<http://www.dfa.gov.za/>>
- Latest on Chinese clothing imports; www.dti.gov.za <<http://www.dti.gov.za/>>
- Cabinet statements, *Bua News*; www.gcis.gov.za <<http://www.gcis.gov.za/>>
- A Nation in the Making – A Discussion Document on Macro Social Trends in South Africa; www.info.gov.za/otherdocs/2006/socioreport.pdf <<http://www.info.gov.za/otherdocs/2006/socioreport.pdf>>
- Letter from the President; www.anc.org.za <<http://www.anc.org.za/>>

Please note that the list of recommended readings will be updated in accordance with new developments.

Annual LRP tour 2006 ...

