

# UNITY

## THE NATIONAL PUBLICATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

Compiled from Federal parliamentary and other sources relevant to Australia's obligations to the United Nations.

July 4 2008

557

Editor: Judy Cannon - 07 3358 2623

Email: [judycnn@yahoo.com.au](mailto:judycnn@yahoo.com.au)

Contributing Editor: Ian Mathews - 02 6281 4025

Email: [ian.mathews7@bigpond.com](mailto:ian.mathews7@bigpond.com)

Unity and Supplement can also be accessed at: <http://www.unityunaa.info/>

Earlier editions of UNity 2004-05, 2006 and 2007 are on the UNAA website: [www.unaa.org.au](http://www.unaa.org.au) or email the editor.

(It may be necessary to copy and paste links into your browser/address box)

### **A. UNITED NATIONS & AGENCIES (UNity, UN AND UNAA Contacts)**

**UN PLANS 410 BILLION DISASTER RELIEF FUND** A \$10B disaster relief fund to help developing countries to cope with natural disasters would help promote world economic stability.

### **US CONGRESS APPROVES \$665M FOR UN AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS**

The fiscal 2008 supplemental appropriations Bill approved by US Congress includes critical funding that will help the US erase more than 20 per cent of its unpaid bills to the UN.

### **B. CLIMATE CHANGE**

**GARNAUT 'CLIMATE CHANGE A DIABOLICAL POLICY PROBLEM'** Economist Professor Ross Garnaut releases interim report on the impact of climate change on the Australian economy.

### **C. HUMAN RIGHTS**

### **D. PEACE & SECURITY**

**TALIBAN MILITANTS 'ALLOWED SAFE HAVEN'** President Pervez Musharraf and the Pakistani army were allowing Taliban militants a safe haven in the country's tribal belt in an effort to undermine the government of Afghan President Hamid Karzai, a key Pakistani official claimed.

**AFGHANISTAN NEEDS ACTION PLAN: UN OFFICIAL** Efforts to help Afghans must be scaled up as conflict, repatriation and natural disasters exacerbated humanitarian situation: UN official.

### **E. HEALTH & MEANS**

### **F. MEDIA MATTERS**

### **58<sup>TH</sup> JOURNALIST MURDERED IN PHILIPPINES SINCE 2001**

Philippines news correspondent and radio host Bert Sison was driving home with two of his daughters when two men on a motorcycle opened fire on his vehicle in Sariaya, Quezon.

### **30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY UNAA MEDIA PEACE AWARDS**

Nominations have opened nationally for the UNAA 30th Anniversary Media Peace Awards. The 2008 Awards will honour outstanding media pieces from the past 12 months.

### **G. OTHER NEWS**

### **H. ARTICLES IN FOCUS**

### **I. ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT**

## **A. UNITED NATIONS & AGENCIES (UNity, UN AND UNAA Contacts)**

### **UN PLANS 410 BILLION DISASTER RELIEF FUND**

The creation of a \$10 billion disaster relief fund to help developing countries better cope with increasingly frequent and stronger natural disasters would help promote world economic stability, the UN said in a report on Tuesday. The fund would reimburse countries for one-quarter of the damage sustained and cushion them from financial shocks, according to AlertNet.org/Reuters.

**REPORT:** <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/N01277404.htm> (7/2)

### **US CONGRESS APPROVES \$665M FOR UN AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS**

The fiscal 2008 supplemental appropriations Bill approved by Congress includes critical funding that will help the United States erase more than 20 per cent of its unpaid bills to the United Nations, the Better World Campaign reported (27/6/08).

“At a time when the US is asking the United Nations to take on more and more responsibilities for peace, security and progress around the world, it is imperative that America honour its financial commitments to the UN,” said former Senator Timothy E. Wirth, President of the United Nations Foundation and Better World Campaign.

“America is a great nation and as such needs to pay its bills on time and in full. This legislation is an important step toward reducing America’s nearly \$2 billion debt to the UN,” he said.

“If the president approves this budget request, US debt to the UN will fall to \$1.734 billion,” said Deborah Derrick, Executive Director of the Better World Campaign. “In order to further reduce US debt to the UN, and enhance America’s reputation in the world, the Better World Campaign is calling on Congress and the Administration to prioritise payment of unpaid bills to the UN in the fiscal 2009 appropriations process,” she said.

As approved by Congress, the supplemental funding bill includes \$524 million to help address US shortfalls to critical UN peacekeeping missions, including more than \$334 million for the UN peacekeeping mission in Darfur, Sudan (UNAMID) and another \$190 million for peacekeeping missions to countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, Liberia, and Sudan.

The approved legislation also includes \$141 million for the US government’s Contributions to International Organisations (CIO) account, which will finance US contributions to the UN assistance missions in Afghanistan and Iraq. The CIO account also supports the UN’s core funding and key peace and security organisations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the World Health Organisation.

The Better World Campaign (BWC), an initiative of the Better World Fund, works to strengthen the relationship between the United States and the United Nations through outreach, communications, and advocacy. It encourages US leadership to enhance UN ability to carry out its invaluable international work on behalf of peace, progress, freedom, and justice. In these efforts, BWC engages policy makers, media, and the American public to increase awareness of and support for the United Nations.

**BWC STATEMENT:** [BetterWorldCampaign.org](http://www.betterworldcampaign.org) on UN funding.

**DETAILS:** <http://www.betterworldcampaign.org/>

### **G8 BACKPEDALS ON \$25B FOR AFRICA: UK REPORT**

In repudiating their pledge to provide \$25 billion annually to Africa by 2010, the G8 nations are backpedaling on one of former UK prime minister Tony Blair's greatest foreign policy achievements, a plan bolstered by current UK leader Gordon Brown. A communiqué reveals that a budget summit planned for July fails to include the much praised aid amount, the UK Financial Times reported (30/6/08). **REPORT:** [www.ft.com](http://www.ft.com)

## **BAN URGES G8 NATIONS TO KEEP PLEDGE**

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged the G8 countries to follow through with pledges to increase aid to Africa \$25 billion. Reports surfaced that some countries might backtrack on the promises (7/1/08). "When it comes to climate change...and the global food crisis, these campaigns should be led by the industrialised countries - they have the capacity, they have the resources, and I hope the leadership demonstrates their political will," he said ahead of the G8 summit. [REPORT: http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/T268120.htm](http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/T268120.htm)

## **CHINA PUSHED TO BE AT GLOBAL FOREFRONT**

The UN expects China to be at the forefront of efforts to tackle the world's biggest challenges, such as the global food crisis, climate change and the quest to slash poverty, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said this week, calling on the Asian nation to step up its contribution in international affairs.

[Addressing](#) students at the Foreign Affairs University in Beijing, Mr Ban said China was already playing an important role as a permanent member of the Security Council and as a growing contributor to peacekeeping and the UN budget.

"China will need to rise even higher in both rankings if we are to meet growing global challenges," Mr Ban said. "Today, the entire United Nations system expects China to help lead on the international agenda." The threats posed by the food crisis, global warming and soaring energy prices could jeopardize the entire international order unless swift and united action was taken.

Mr Ban said all the major problems could be overcome if countries asserted their common interests and ideals and worked together through the UN. "The United Nations is the natural forum for mounting this response. Our organisation provides a multilateral platform for implementing concrete actions on all fronts."

He urged all world leaders to take urgent steps on the food crisis, such as by providing immediate food assistance for those in need and by removing export restrictions and levies on food commodities. Chinese business also has a critical role to play in devising and producing clean technology and renewable sources of energy to deal with climate change, he said.

Turning to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the series of anti-poverty targets which world leaders had agreed to try to achieve by 2015, he said China was well placed to make a difference, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, which was struggling the most to meet the goals.

[Speaking to reporters](#) at the National Press Club, Tokyo, earlier, Mr Ban praised the country's renewed commitment to the UN.

[REPORT: http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=27236&Cr=ki-moon&Cr1=japan](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=27236&Cr=ki-moon&Cr1=japan)

## **UN ASKS COMPANIES TO BOOST BUSINESS WITH WORLD'S POOR**

The UN Development Program (UNDP) has encouraged companies to expand beyond traditional business practices and offered them strategies and tools to bring in the world's poor as partners for economic growth, in a new report released (1/7/08).

Part of UNDP's Growing Inclusive Market's initiative, 'Creating Value for All: Strategies for Doing Business with the Poor' draws on extensive case studies and demonstrates the effectiveness of more inclusive business models.

The report highlights the untapped potential of the poor for consumption, production, innovation, and business activity. The more companies include the poor, the more likely they are to not only boost growth but also contribute to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – the global anti-poverty targets to be achieved by 2015.

"The power of poor people to benefit from market activity lies in their ability to participate in markets and take advantage of market opportunities," UNDP Administrator Kemal Dervis stated. **REPORT:** <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=27225&Cr=UNDP&Cr1=>

### **GUNMEN KIDNAP TWO MORE AID WORKERS IN SOMALIA**

Somali gunmen kidnapped another two aid workers in the latest attack on humanitarian workers in the Horn of Africa nation, locals said. According to Reuters (1/7/08), about a dozen men with rifles stopped the Somali aid workers on their way to Mogadishu and turned their two cars into bush near Afgooye, west of the capital.

"I could see the two cars marked 'WFL' being hijacked," bus-driver Hassan Osman reported. Regional governor Abdiqadir Sheikh confirmed a Somali man and a woman - whom he identified as working for a foreign charity Water For Life - went missing while travelling to Mogadishu. Suspicion for kidnappings generally falls on clan militia and Islamist insurgents fighting the Somali Government and Ethiopian military allies.

**REPORT:** <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/B570993.htm>

### **ATTACKS ON UN PERSONNEL EXPECTED TO RISE**

A panel convened after a December 2007 bombing in Algiers killed 17 UN workers produced a study suggesting that UN personnel are increasingly likely to be attack targets, the New York Times reported (1/7/08). The study falls in line with an ongoing evolution of the UN's security regime, which was formed after a 2003 suicide bombing in Baghdad killed 22. The study reveals, the UN is perceived by some to be acting for the world's most powerful interests. **REPORT:** [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/01/world/africa/01nations.html?\\_r=3&ref=world&oref=slogin&oref=slogin&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/01/world/africa/01nations.html?_r=3&ref=world&oref=slogin&oref=slogin&oref=slogin)

### **AUSTRALIAN AID WORKER SHOT DEAD IN AFRICA**

An Australian aid worker has been killed in East Africa by a group of armed robbers while protecting his co-workers, the ABC reported (3/7/08). Darren Stratti, 36, from NSW, was working with the Australian non-profit agency foodwatershelter in the village of Arusha in Northern Tanzania. He was shot while confronting gunmen.

Foodwatershelter's vice president Kelsey Wilson said Mr Stratti was the first person to confront the robbers and gave his life to protect others. She said there were six other volunteers at the village and no one else was hurt. They were being pulled out temporarily.

"We're extremely devastated and shocked, but we are looking towards the future to continue this project that Darren has worked so tirelessly and courageously on," she said. "He's been building six days a week for the past 18 months and we will see this project finished."

**REPORT:** <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/07/03/2292828.htm>

### **LOUISE ARBOUR LEAVES HUMAN RIGHTS POST**

After a four-year tenure marked by divisive controversy and much praise, Canadian judge Louise Arbour has left her post as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, CBC News reported (30/6/08).

She routinely singled out governments - including the US, Israel, China and Russia - for fierce criticism, drawing praise from human rights advocates and attacks from government offices.

A former Canadian Supreme Court Justice, she said she was stepping down after one term in the role to spend more time with her family. Montreal-born, Ms Arbour, 61, said critical attacks on her office, from countries including the US, had become intolerable and undermined the credibility of her office and the entire UN.

**REPORT:** <http://www.cbc.ca/world/story/2008/06/30/arbours-steps-down.html>

## **G8 2008: ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT**

A faltering global economy, rising concerns over global warming and turmoil in Africa are agenda items expected to be addressed during this year's G8 summit in Hokkaido Toyako, Japan.

This year's meeting is expected to be especially busy for those attending who will have a full plate of topics to discuss ranging from rising oil prices to stabilising financial markets worldwide to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). 2008 marks the halfway point for reaching three of the goals: health, water and education.

The event, being held from July 7-9, is an annual meeting of top leaders from Japan, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, the UK and the US, organisers state. Some of this year's discussion themes include: [Economy](#), [Environment](#) and the [Development and Africa](#)

## **NEPAL SEEKS EXTENSION OF PEACEKEEPING MISSION**

Nepal announced this week it was seeking a six-month extension of the existing United Nations peacekeeping mission to help facilitate the conclusion of the 2006 peace deal. Nepal has struggled with the rehabilitation of thousands of Maoist rebels, and UN help is needed to monitor rebels and their weapons until the process can be completed. [AlertNet.org/Reuters](#) (2/7/08).

## **DOWNER MAY WORK FOR UN**

Alexander Downer, former Australian foreign minister, met UN officials in New York to discuss a position as special envoy to assist peace talks on the divided island of Cyprus, the Herald-Sun reported (1/7/08).

It is understood the role will be part-time and Mr Downer would also concentrate on working for corporate advisory firm Bespoke Approach. The company has been described as a boutique advisory forum to be led by former Democats senator Natasha Stott Despoja's husband, Ian Smith. Bespoke Approach opens in Adelaide this week.

Last month, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd confirmed the UN had approached Mr Downer to act as interlocutor in reviving the peace process between the Greeks and Turks on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus.

"What the government has said quite clearly is that, should they extend that invitation to Mr Downer, we would support it," Mr Rudd said.

REPORT: <http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,23949604-662,00.html>

## **TWELVE SWITCHES TO TURN OFF UN LIGHTS**

Built more than 70 years ago to house the United Nations' predecessor and then largely neglected, the grandiose structure has miles of leaky and rusted pipes and unsafe wiring, inefficient heating and cooling systems, and also suffers frequent floods, Reuters reported (1/7/08). Its Russian director-general says the Geneva historic complex urgently needs repairs that could cost more than \$1 billion.

Sergei Ordzhonikidze said costly renovations of the New York headquarters had distracted attention from the dilapidated state of the UN's European base which hosts 9,000 meetings a year. "The old building is beautiful, but it is not that functional," he told Reuters in an interview in his vast office, where archaic electrical installations require him to flip 12 separate switches to turn the lights on or off. REPORT: <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L16159966.htm>

## **UNity, UN AND UNAA CONTACTS**

To access major United Nations websites, go to:

[United Nations](#).  
[Secretary-General](#).

[UN News Centre.](#)  
[Key UN Bodies, Agencies, Funds and Programs.](#)  
United Nations Information Centre for Australia,  
New Zealand and the Pacific, Level 1, 7 National Circuit, Barton ACT 2600, Canberra

or PO Box 5366, Kingston ACT 2604, and on 61 (2) 6273 8200 .

The World Federation of United Nations is a global network of people linked through [United Nations Associations](#) in over 100 UN member states. Website available at <http://www.wfuna.org/who/> ; newsletter at <http://www.wfuna.org/news/newsletter/index.cfm>.

For more information about the United Nations Association of Australia in your state or if you want to join UNAA, access <http://www.unaa.org.au/> or contact:

UNAA ACT [unaaact@cyberone.com.au](mailto:unaaact@cyberone.com.au) on 02 6247 4499 .

UNAA NSW [office@unaansw.org.au](mailto:office@unaansw.org.au) 02 9212 0998 ;f 02 9280  
0137 .

UNAA Qld [unaabalmaln@optusnet.com.au](mailto:unaabalmaln@optusnet.com.au) on ph/fax 07 32541096.

UNAA SA [unaasa@picknowl.com.au](mailto:unaasa@picknowl.com.au) on 08 8226 4141 .

UNAA Tas. [secretary@UNAATasmania.org](mailto:secretary@UNAATasmania.org) on 03 6229 4269  
<http://www.unaatasmania.org/>.

UNAA Vic [info@unaavictoria.org.au](mailto:info@unaavictoria.org.au) on (03) 9670 7878 Website:  
<http://www.unaavictoria.org.au/>.

UNAA WA [unaawa@tpg.com.au](mailto:unaawa@tpg.com.au) on 08 9221 9455 <http://www.unaa-wa.org.au/>.  
UNAA NT (Darwin) <http://au.f313.mail.yahoo.com/ym/Compose?To=fletch44@bigpond.net.au> or

on 0419 829509 .

Earlier editions of UNity 2004-05, 2006 and 2007 are on the UNAA website: [www.unaa.org.au](http://www.unaa.org.au) or email the editor.

As a regular reader of UNity, please make sure you notify us if you change your email address by sending your new email address to [judycnnn@yahoo.com.au](mailto:judycnnn@yahoo.com.au)

Daily press briefing by the office of the spokesperson for the UN Secretary General:

<http://www.un.org/News/briefings/docs/2008/db080527.doc.htm>

UN Daily News (Link only)

<http://www.un.org/news/dh/pdf/english/2008/27052008.pdf>

## B. CLIMATE CHANGE

### **GARNAUT 'CLIMATE CHANGE A DIABOLICAL POLICY PROBLEM'**

Economist Professor Ross Garnaut released an interim report on the impact of climate change on the Australian economy on Friday, the ABC reported (4/7/08). He described climate change as "a diabolical policy problem".

Speaking at the National Press Club in Canberra, he discussed some of the research that will be considered in his final report. A supplementary report is to be issued in August with the final report is due in September.

He called for an emissions trading scheme for Australia without delay as the best of possible options for cutting greenhouse gas output. He also wants a system to cap greenhouse emissions and a permit system for industry.

He said that, without mitigation, climate change could cause 4000 deaths a year in Queensland, Kakadu and the Great Barrier Reef would be no more, Australian snowfields could disappear and agricultural production in the Murray Darling basin could be reduced by 20 per cent.

Earlier he told a clean energy conference in Adelaide that Australia must make deep cuts to its greenhouse gas emissions, and that any climate change agreement beyond the Kyoto Protocol must have international consensus. [REPORT](#): Available at Garnaut Report website.

#### **BEIJING TAKES 300,000 HIGH-EMISSION CARS OFF ROAD**

Beijing took 300,000 high-emission cars off its roads on Tuesday, as part of measures to clean up the capital's air pollution and ease traffic on perennially clogged highways ahead of the Olympics, Reuters reported (1/7/08).

Pollution is a major concern for many athletes ahead of August 8 Games and the International Olympic Committee has said it may reschedule endurance events to remove a potential health risk. Authorities also banned trucks, tractors, and other "low-speed cargo vehicles" from entering Beijing municipal limits from neighbouring provinces, the Beijing Traffic Management Bureau said.

#### **CLIMATE POLICY NEEDS DRASTIC RETHINK: ACADEMIC**

Climate change policymakers must incorporate critical climate-carbon cycle feedback information into the decision-making process or run the risk of falling well short of what is required to prevent dangerous climate change, according to an ANU academic (2/7/08).

Associate Director of the ANU Centre for Climate Law and Policy (CCLP) Andrew Macintosh says that information from coupled climate-carbon cycle models suggests that the emission cuts that are required to prevent the global average surface temperature increasing by more than 2 - 3°C above pre-industrial levels are far greater than previously believed.

Failure to incorporate this information into policy processes now could close off options to avoid dangerous climate change, he said, as details of the latest CCLP working paper: *Climate Carbon-cycle Feedbacks: The Implications for Australian Climate Policy*, were released.

Climate-carbon cycle feedbacks are feedbacks in the climate system that relate to the interaction between temperature change, atmospheric carbon dioxide and the carbon cycle – the biogeochemical cycle by which carbon is exchanged between land, ocean and atmosphere.

"Global warming could significantly reduce the uptake and storage of carbon by land and ocean sinks," said Mr Macintosh. "This risk has profound implications for climate policy. If the uptake and storage of carbon by natural sinks declines, a greater proportion of carbon emissions will remain in the atmosphere. As a result, meeting climate targets based on atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide will be more difficult, requiring a greater reduction in emissions than would otherwise be necessary."

[DETAILS](#): Martyn Pearce, ANU Media Office, on 02 6125 5575.

## C. HUMAN RIGHTS

### MYANMAR 'STILL IN CRISIS'

Bringing clean water and purification supplies to remote areas within the most isolated state remains a challenge even two months after a cyclone devastated Myanmar. Humanitarian aid has yet to reach more than half the nation's affected people, and one third are in dire need of water and other essentials in order to stave off infection. [The Toronto Star](#) (7/3/08).

### TIBETANS AND CHINESE IN TALKS

Chinese officials met with representatives of Tibet's exiled Dalai Lama in the second round of formal talks begun after protests erupted in the Tibetan capital of Lhasa. Neither the location nor agenda has been released, but it is largely assumed that the talks, urged on the Chinese by an international community hoping for a breakthrough before the summer Olympics in Beijing, will involve the political status and structure of Tibet. [The New York Times](#) (1/7/08).

### CHINA ASKS FOREIGNERS TO LEAVE

Thousands of foreigners working in China as teachers, artists, students and non-diplomatic support have been asked to leave on the eve of the Olympics under tight new visa restrictions. By forcing an untold number of foreigners from the country and restricting entrance visas to 30 days only, China has decimated tourism and teachers of English. [Los Angeles Times](#) (1/7/08).

### TRAVEL BAN ON CANDIDATES

Israel's parliament has passed a law banning any citizen who has visited an "enemy" country in the previous seven years from standing for election, angering Israeli Arab MPs, the Sydney Morning Herald reported (2/7/08).

Fifty-two members of the 120-seat Knesset approved the law at a third and final reading, and 24 voted against it, it was reported. The law is aimed at MPs from Arab-led parties, some of whom have travelled to Lebanon and Syria, countries officially at war with Israel. The Arab Israeli MP Ahmed Tibi said he would appeal to the Supreme Court.

Israel (1/7/08) kept closed three Gaza border crossings for commercial goods in retaliation for a rocket fired from the Palestinian territory in violation of a truce, a military spokesman said.

**REPORT:** <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/07/01/1214678038490.html>

### RACE DISCRIMINATION: NEW PUBLICATION

A new publication, *Federal Discrimination Law*, has been released by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

Produced by HREOC's Legal Section, the publication examines the significant issues that have arisen in federal unlawful discrimination cases. It provides a comprehensive coverage of decisions in the jurisdiction as well as highlighting a range of relevant issues of practice and procedure. It was launched on June 26 by Justice Susan Crennan, of the High Court.

**DETAILS:** <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/legal/FDL/index.html>

**LAUNCH SPEECHES:** <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/legal/FDL/launch.html>

**PAPER COPIES:** <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/publications/index.html>

### PREJUDICE AGAINST GYPSIES ACCEPTABLE, SAY JUDGES

Italy's highest appeal court has ruled that it is acceptable to discriminate against gypsies on the grounds that they are thieves, the Sydney Morning Herald reported (2/7/08).

The judgment comes amid a nationwide clampdown on gypsies, also known as Roma, by the government of Silvio Berlusconi. Last week the Interior Minister, Roberto Maroni, announced plans to fingerprint all of Italy's Roma, including children.

**REPORT:** <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/07/01/1214678038487.html>

## **TIME FOR FRESH IDEAS TO TACKLE SEX DISCRIMINATION**

Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick has welcomed the announcement of the review of the Sex Discrimination Act (1984) by the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee saying that after nearly 25 years it's time to look at ways to improve Australia's record on reducing sex discrimination and harassment (27/6/08).

"Sex discrimination and sexual harassment are still major problems in Australian society, with devastating long term effects for those involved," she said.

"During my recent national Listening Tour, I heard many stories which highlighted to me that we still have a long way to go to ensuring that women and men live in a fair and equal Australia. This review is the perfect opportunity to look at new approaches.

"I encourage all those who have been affected by sex discrimination and sexual harassment and everyone committed to gender equality to voice their opinion about ways the protections, sanctions and powers in the Act can be improved" she said.

President of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC), John von Doussa QC, said that HREOC would make a formal submission to the Inquiry and emphasised the importance of the Sex Discrimination Act in protecting basic human rights.

**DETAILS:** Patrick Flynn on 0419 258 597.

## **GOVERNMENT TO HOLD CRIMINAL JUSTICE FORUM**

"The forum represents a unique opportunity to reconstruct the way in which federal criminal law and procedure is developed, Minister for Home Affairs Bob Debus, said (27/6/08).

The forum will involve academics, the legal profession, the Australian Institute of Criminology, the Australian Law Reform Commission, police unions and anyone interested in the future development of federal criminal justice, he said. Likely topics include:

- New technology and crime threats
- crime prevention
- victim's rights
- police investigations, powers and procedures
- trial procedure
- forfeiture of assets
- sentencing and
- management of federal offenders.

The forum will not canvass or deal with national security laws or anti-terrorism laws. Participants will be selected from nominations received by an independent steering committee. The public can also contribute by submitting their ideas or applying to present a paper at the forum.

**DETAILS:** [www.ag.gov.au/forum](http://www.ag.gov.au/forum) or Samantha Wills on 0448 721 372.

## **TWO EVALUATIONS ON INDIGENOUS DEVELOPMENT RELEASED**

The Federal Government has released two evaluation reports of Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) and two Indigenous-specific family violence programs, the Family Violence Partnership Program and the Family Violence Regional Activities Program. The IBA program evaluation examines the manner in which IBA seeks to create wealth in Indigenous communities, support Indigenous businesses and increase the rate of home ownership among Indigenous households. The evaluation highlights the diversity of IBA's partnerships with Indigenous people, their communities and the mainstream business community.

**DETAILS:** [http://www.financeminister.gov.au/media/2008/mr\\_222008.html](http://www.financeminister.gov.au/media/2008/mr_222008.html)

## **DISCUSSION ON 457 VISA REGIME**

A discussion paper on proposed reforms to the 457 visa regime to improve the processing and compliance of the temporary skilled migration program has been released. The uncapped

temporary skilled migration program will exceed 100 000 places in 2007-08 but these temporary visa holders are currently not entitled to a range of government services available to residents and citizens of Australia, such as health and welfare benefits.

DETAILS: <http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/media-releases/2008/ce08058.htm>

### **GRANT TO FACILITATE NGO EXPERTS OVER UN GENDER RESOLUTION**

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (Australian Section) (WILPF) has received a federal grant to facilitate the participation of NGO experts in the development of the Australia's National Action Plan to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

On October 24/25 2000, the UN Security Council discussed the question of women, peace and security for the first time. WILPF says this event marked an historic step forward which was celebrated when the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security. The resolution calls on all actors involved in negotiating and implementing peace agreements to adopt a gender perspective that takes into account the special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement, rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction.

So far, ten governments have generated these action plans - Austria, Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. In making this grant, through the Federal Office for Women has recognised the importance of the development of an Australian National Action Plan. This grant will cover three areas: analysis of other national action plans, support for the formation of an NGO Reference Group and facilitation of encounters between NGO experts and government departments and agencies.

DETAILS: [www.wilpf.org.au](http://www.wilpf.org.au) ; [www.peacewomen.org](http://www.peacewomen.org) and [www.1325australia.org.au](http://www.1325australia.org.au)

WILPF: 08 8296 4357 and [wilpfaustralia@wilpf.org.au](mailto:wilpfaustralia@wilpf.org.au).

### **QUEENSLAND TO ROAR AGAINST RACISM**

The Queensland Roars Against Racism campaign is a partnership between Multicultural Affairs Queensland (MAQ) and Queensland Roar FC aims to make it clear that Queensland does not tolerate racism.

On July 12 Brazilian Serie A team Palmeiras will descend on Brisbane to play in a pre-season match at Suncorp Stadium, as part of the Queensland Government's Queensland Roars Against Racism campaign. Roar Against Racism Celebrity Ambassadors will play in a curtain raiser match to support the campaign at 5.15pm, before the main game at 7pm.

DETAILS: Multicultural Affairs Queensland at [info@multicultural.qld.gov.au](mailto:info@multicultural.qld.gov.au); on 1800 053 739 and [www.multicultural.qld.gov.au](http://www.multicultural.qld.gov.au)

## **D. PEACE & SECURITY**

### **ASIA**

#### **TALIBAN MILITANTS 'ALLOWED SAFE HAVEN'**

President Pervez Musharraf and the Pakistani army were allowing Taliban militants a safe haven in the country's tribal belt in an effort to undermine the government of Afghan President Hamid Karzai, a key Pakistani provincial official claimed, according to a report.

The Canadian Globe & Mail reported an interview with Afrasiab Khattak, the "peace envoy" of the government of the insurgency-racked North West Frontier Province, who charged that Mr Musharraf and the army were still dictating policy for the region, and that "they want the Afghan Government to fail. A hangover of the 'strategic-depth' policy is still running."

A description of the Pakistan army's doctrine of "strategic depth" suggested it required a client regime in Kabul, so that Afghanistan will not side with India in the event of another India-Pakistan

war. Islamabad backed the Taliban government of the 1990s in Kabul. Mr Khattak said: "Unfortunately, the [Taliban] sanctuaries have not been dismantled. They are still functioning."

Islamabad has repeatedly denied that it allows its soil to be used against foreign governments, but Washington and Kabul believe that the Taliban and al-Qaeda enjoy refuge in Pakistan's tribal zone, known as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). [REPORT: http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20080701.pakistan01/BNStory/International/home](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20080701.pakistan01/BNStory/International/home)

#### **AFGHANISTAN NEEDS ACTION PLAN: UN OFFICIAL**

The international aid community must scale up its efforts to help Afghans as ongoing conflict, repatriation and natural disasters have exacerbated the humanitarian situation in the country, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes said in Kabul. "We need to have more of a humanitarian strategy, an action plan, than we had before," Mr Holmes said. [IRINNews.org](http://www.irinnews.org) (30/6/08).

#### **AUSTRALIA WELCOMES NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR ACTION**

Australia has welcomed the announcement that the DPRK has provided a declaration of its nuclear programs to China, in the chair of the Six Party Talks. Australia is urging the DPRK to maintain the current positive momentum and engage constructively and cooperatively in discussions on verification of its declaration and on the next phase of activity, in which its nuclear facilities are to be dismantled. [DETAILS: http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2008/fa-s101\\_08.html](http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2008/fa-s101_08.html)

#### **ICRC DEPLORES LOSS OF CIVILIAN LIFE**

Recent months have seen further attacks targeting civilians in different parts of Sri Lanka, the International Committee of the Red Cross reported (2/7/08). Over the past three months, at least 80 civilians had lost their lives in indiscriminate attacks on public transport and crowded public places.

The ICRC has continued to receive numerous allegations that civilians were directly targeted and became victims of killings, beatings, arrests and disappearances. The organisation has reminded the parties to the conflict that international humanitarian law prohibits attack on civilians and that they are obliged to take all feasible measures to protect civilians from conflict effects at all times.

"We deplore the loss of any civilian life," said Toon Vandenhove, head of the ICRC's delegation in Colombo. "Once again we appeal to those responsible for the recent attacks to respect civilian life at all times." A staff member of the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS), the ICRC's counterpart in Sri Lanka, was among those recently killed.

The ICRC has continued to monitor other violations of international humanitarian law affecting civilians throughout the country and to discuss them with the parties to the conflict. With cooperation from both government officials and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the ICRC has visited a growing number of people arrested in connection with the armed conflict. The aim of these visits is to monitor treatment and conditions of detention.

[DETAILS: Sydney Support Office on 61 \(0\)2 9388 9039 and sydney.syd@icrc.org](mailto:sydney.syd@icrc.org)

#### **AFRICA**

##### **'ASSASSINATE OR FRAME PLAN'**

Fresh from his rigged election victory, Robert Mugabe and his military backers plan to assassinate or frame dozens of opposition MPs in an attempt to consolidate power and take back control of Parliament, the TimesOnline reported (4/7/08)

Having overturned Morgan Tsvangirai's victory in the first round of the presidential vote with a brutal campaign of terror, President Mugabe's henchmen believe that they can retake Parliament

using violence or trumped-up criminal charges to drive out elected opposition MPs. [REPORT: http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article4265377.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article4265377.ece)

### **DESPITE DISAGREEMENTS, AU ENDORSES NEGOTIATIONS FOR ZIMBABWE**

Though African leaders failed to disguise their differences of opinion about the failed election that retained President Robert Mugabe in office in Zimbabwe, African Union leaders endorsed the creation of a unity government - or at least negotiations - between Mugabe and opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai. Botswana called on the AU and Southern African Development Community to ostracise Mugabe, whereas others were sympathetic to Mugabe's claim that Western forces interfered. [Financial Times](#) (2/7/08).

African leaders have called for a government of national unity in Zimbabwe, where President Robert Mugabe was re-elected unopposed last week, the BBC reported (1/7/08). The resolution was approved at an African Union summit in Egypt, which also saw strong criticism of Mr Mugabe by Zimbabwe's neighbour Botswana.

The presidential run-off was boycotted by the opposition candidate, citing widespread state-sponsored violence.

At the end of a two-day summit in Sharm el-Sheikh, AU leaders approved a resolution calling for the "creation of a government of national unity" in Zimbabwe. It also encouraged both sides to live up to pledges to start dialogue to promote stability.

[REPORT: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7484165.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7484165.stm)

### **ENVOY NAMED FOR DARFUR**

Burkina Faso's foreign minister, Djibril Bassole, has been appointed envoy to Darfur by the UN and African Union. Bassole, who negotiated a peace agreement last year in the Ivory Coast and New Forces conflict, will oversee negotiations in a situation that has recently become more complicated by splintering factions. [BBC](#) (1/7/08).

### **AL-QAIDA CONTROLS ALGERIAN MILITANTS REPORT**

Since reaching out to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in 2004, the once beleaguered Algerian militants have transformed themselves into al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, a professional arm of Islamic jihad. The rebranding has meant a change from gunfights with government officials to bombings and suicide attacks as well as goals larger than the Algerian insurgents' original nationalist mission. [The New York Times](#) (1/7/08).

## **MIDDLE EAST**

### **PENTAGON WARNS ON IRAN**

America's top military officer has warned that an Israeli air strike against Iran would make the Middle East more unstable and could add to pressures on the already overworked US forces in the region, the Sydney Morning Herald reported (4/7/08)

The comments by Michael Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, came days after he visited Israel and amid growing international concern that Jerusalem is considering an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities.

"Opening up a third front right now would be extremely stressful for us," Admiral Mullen said, referring to the prospect of a direct clash with Iran while fighting continues in Iraq and Afghanistan. "This is a very unstable part of the world and I don't need it to be more unstable."

[REPORT: http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/07/03/1214950950417.html](http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/07/03/1214950950417.html)

### **WOUNDED IRAQI SERVICEMEN 'FEEL ABANDONED'**

Tens of thousands of Iraqi security forces have been seriously wounded in the line of duty and left largely to fend for themselves with little government support, the New York Times writes. Iraqi officials dispute the lack of support and say a law to ensure sufficient care for veterans is being drafted. [The New York Times](#) (1/7/08).

### **LEBANON HAS LONGEST PERIOD OF RELATIVE STABILITY: BAN**

Southern Lebanon has witnessed the longest period of relative stability in many years as the cessation of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah following their 2006 war continues to hold, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, while voicing concern about the presence of armed groups and record levels of Israeli over flights in the area (1/7/08).

The presence of “unidentified armed elements” in the area of operations of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon ([UNIFIL](#)), along with restrictions on the force’s movement and the monitoring of its operations, are a source of serious concern, Mr Ban writes in his latest [report](#) on Security Council [resolution 1701](#). “They raise tensions and cannot but cast doubt on the motives of those involved.”

Resolution 1701 helped end the fighting between Israel and Hezbollah two years ago, and called for renewed respect for the Blue Line separating Israeli and Lebanese forces, the disarming of militias and an end to arms smuggling, among other measures.

Mr Ban underlines the importance of ensuring that the area between the Blue Line and the Litani River is free of unauthorized armed personnel, assets and weapons, and called on the Lebanese Government to ensure the force’s full freedom of movement.

The Secretary-General also called on Israel to cease all over flights, noting that air violations “not only continued unabated during the reporting period, but also reached record levels during the months of March and April 2008.”

Meanwhile, he also notes the emergence of “several positive indicators in the region” which bode well for further progress in implementing resolution 1701, among them signals from Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad regarding the establishment of diplomatic ties between his country and Lebanon.

“I urge both parties to capitalize on this potential momentum and to work together towards the delineation of their common border,” he stated, adding that restoring ties and dealing with such issues will go a long way in addressing key elements of the resolution. He is also encouraged by renewed declarations from the international community on the importance of finding a solution to the question of the Shab’a Farms area, and he plans to strengthen the diplomatic process aimed at resolving this key issue.

In addition, he points out that, with the Doha agreement, there are new opportunities for the Lebanese people to consolidate the country’s political stability and create an environment conducive to further addressing critical challenges.

The agreement – which helped break Lebanon’s political deadlock by paving the way for the election of a new president and the establishment of a national unity cabinet – was reached in May after deadly violence between pro- and anti-government militias erupted in the capital, Beirut, and elsewhere.

“I look forward to the speedy establishment of a national unity government and to the revitalisation of the constitutional institutions of Lebanon, which I believe will help the country make further concrete progress on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006),” he writes.  
REPORT: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=27232&Cr=leban&Cr1=>

## E. HEALTH & MEANS

### FOOD

#### **BREAD SUBSIDIES UNDER THREAT AS DROUGHT HITS WHEAT PRODUCTION**

Basil the baker is not a happy bread maker. "Everything is more difficult to afford now, and it will get worse," he said, amid the dough and ovens of his bakery in the middle class district of Shalan in Damascus, Syria, the Irin News reported (3/7/08), saying the availability of cheap food has been a cornerstone of Syrian domestic economic policy.

There are growing doubts among ordinary people and analysts as to how much longer the country can remain relatively insulated from the global food crisis which has sparked riots in over 30 countries, including Egypt, where a similar authoritarian socialist government is in place.

The government exerts significant control over food prices through its control of the marketing, import and export of agricultural produce. The agricultural sector has been partially liberalised, and food prices have risen 20 per cent in the last six months, according to the World Food Program (WFP). **REPORT:** <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=79006>

#### **WFP SCALES UP HAITI OPERATION TO REACH 2.3M**

The UN World Food Program is rapidly expanding operations in Haiti, reaching more hungry people thanks to a US\$23 million allocation from funds raised through the organisation's high food price appeal, it reported (2/7/08).

WFP is currently assisting more than 800,000 people in Haiti, including 40,000 vulnerable families – most of them headed by females – in urban areas. Over the summer months, WFP will give 200,000 school-age children hot meals and take home rations to prevent them from joining street gangs or searching for work.

"Our food is critical to helping people cope with high prices - a daily burden on people who were already very poor," said WFP Regional Director Pedro Medrano. WFP family food rations allow hope to return to households struggling to make ends meet and which buy less and less food as food prices increase. WFP provide a basket of food to feed a family for one month.

#### **AGREEMENT REACHED AS FIRST US SHIP ARRIVES IN DPRK WITH FOOD AID**

The UN World Food Program (WFP) has announced an agreement with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that paves the way for a rapid expansion of its food assistance to more than 5 million hungry people throughout the country (30/6/08).

WFP hailed the agreement as a significant break-through in its long-standing efforts to ensure all those in need of food assistance in the DPRK are able to receive it.

"WFP is grateful for the cooperation and commitment of the DPRK and United States governments," said Tony Banbury, Asia Regional Director for WFP. "With their support, WFP will now be able to dramatically expand our food assistance operation, and provide aid to millions of people who would otherwise be at risk of increased hunger and malnutrition."

Following the signing on Friday of the agreement, a US ship arrived Sunday in the port of Nampo carrying 37,000 tons of wheat, the first installment of a US food aid pledge of up to 500,000 metric tons, which would provide enough food to allow WFP to expand feeding operations from the 1.2 million persons currently being fed to more than five million.

The new agreement with the DPRK Government will allow WFP to send nearly 50 more international aid workers to the country, who will oversee and monitor the delivery of food to make sure it reaches hungry people most in need.

"With this agreement, WFP will be in a position to reach more hungry people and put an expanded and more comprehensive monitoring system in place," said Mr Banbury from the WFP Asia Office in Bangkok. "The presence of a larger number of international staff will ensure improved targeting and monitoring of food deliveries on behalf of WFP beneficiaries."

### **FOOD HOARDING EXACERBATES CRISIS**

India, China, Pakistan, and others have halted exports of basic foodstuffs like rice and wheat, fearing domestic shortages. Increasing perceptions of food shortages worldwide, precipitated by droughts and exacerbated by price increases, have led at least 29 nations to cut food exports. [The New York Times](#) (30/6/08).

### **HEALTH**

#### **REFUGEES' HEALTH CARE 'INADEQUATE'**

Refugees and migrants do not have adequate access to health care services in South Africa, aid organisations and NGOs say (2/7/08).

This is particularly detrimental for those who are HIV-positive and in need of continuous antiretroviral (ARV) medication: interrupted treatment can mean illness, development of drug-resistance and ultimately death.

"Displacement carries huge risks for people with chronic illnesses of not being able to access the medication they need," explains Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) spokesperson Nathan Geffen. "But so far (refugees and migrants) have received poor support from the national Department of Health." **REPORT:** <http://allafrica.com/stories/200807020002.html>

#### **RED CROSS USES FLIGHTS TO HELP SRI LANKAN PATIENTS**

More than 90 patients requiring specialised medical care, accompanied by 65 caregivers, were transported on ICRC-chartered flights between Jaffna and Colombo in both directions.

Recent months have seen further attacks targeting civilians in different parts of Sri Lanka, the International Committee of the Red Cross reported (2/7/08) SEE ALSO PEACE & SECURITY PAGE.

Around 30 doctors took these flights, either accompanying patients or to fulfil official duties. The ICRC also flew in medicine, including life-saving vaccines, for health-care facilities run by the Ministry of Health. At the Jaffna Jaipur Centre for Disability Rehabilitation, over 100 patients received artificial limbs, walking aids or wheelchairs.

With support from Red Cross Societies from other countries and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Sri Lanka Red Cross has provided emergency relief for thousands of people displaced by heavy monsoon flooding at the end of May.

More than 16,000 cooked meals were served and over 2,000 bottles of drinking water were distributed to families in the districts of Colombo, Galle, Kalutara and Gampaha. The Sri Lanka Red Cross also distributed 300 hygiene kits, 200 sleeping mats, 300 emergency household items and dry rations to 200 families. Red Cross volunteers administered first aid to people injured in the flooding and helped evacuate residents from inundated areas using canoes.

In a bid to increase the understanding of – and the respect for – international humanitarian law, the ICRC conducted more than 20 information sessions about IHL and the ICRC's work to about 1,200 people, including civilians, members of Tamil People Liberation Tigers (TMVP) and government security forces.

**DETAILS:** Sydney Support Office on 61 (0)2 9388 9039 and [sydney.syd@icrc.org](mailto:sydney.syd@icrc.org)

## **RAPID TESTS FOR DRUG-RESISTANT TB EXTENDED TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

People in low-resource countries, ill with multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB), will get a faster diagnosis - in two days instead of the standard two to three months - and appropriate treatment thanks to two initiatives unveiled by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Stop TB Partnership, UNITAID and the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND) (30/6/08).

MDR-TB is a form of TB that responds poorly to standard treatment because of resistance to the first-line drugs isoniazid and rifampicin. At present it is estimated that only 2 per cent of MDR-TB cases worldwide are being diagnosed and treated appropriately, mainly because of inadequate laboratory services. The initiatives announced should increase that proportion at least seven-fold over the next four years, to 15 per cent or more.

**DETAILS:** Glenn Thomas, WHO Stop TB Department, on +41 795090677; [thomasg@who.int](mailto:thomasg@who.int)

## **CHAD NOW FACES AIDS PROBLEM**

Chad has experienced decades of armed rebellions and weak governments, so a looming AIDS crisis is the last thing it needs, IRIN reported (30/6/08).

The West African country that sprawls across the Sahel is among the world's poorest; its development indicators, especially regarding women, are abysmal. It has less than 600km of tarred roads, only a few hundred doctors, and just 26 percent of Chadian adults can read.

In the area near its eastern border the country hosts 250,000 refugees who have fled the fighting in Sudan's Darfur region, while in the south some 57,000 refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR) have come to seek shelter. A number of rebel groups are also active in the arid east, and since 2006 have twice reached the capital, Ndjamen. Roughly 180,000 Chadians have been made homeless by the insurgency.

The silent partner of this humanitarian crisis is a potential HIV disaster. The national prevalence rate is estimated at 3.3 per cent, but in the south, among both local and refugee populations, it is roughly 10 per cent.

"In the south a really serious epidemic is underway," said Loretta Hieber Girardet, senior HIV AIDS adviser to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. "It's a crisis within a crisis." **REPORT:** <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=78991>

## **FISTULA CRISIS IN UGANDA**

Experts say that, though many women in the Teso subregion of Uganda suffer from fistula, many cases are neither known, reported, nor treated, due to ignorance, limited materials, and limited personnel. It is estimated that nearly 3 per cent of Ugandan women suffer from fistula, AllAfrica Global media reported (2/7/08). **REPORT:** <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806240218.html>

## **F. MEDIA MATTERS**

### **58<sup>TH</sup> JOURNALIST MURDERED IN PHILIPPINES SINCE 2001**

Philippines news correspondent and radio host Bert Sison was driving home with two of his daughters when two men on a motorcycle opened fire on his vehicle in Sariaya, Quezon, on June 30, National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) reported (2/7/08). His daughters are also news correspondents in Quezon. One of them reported to have been shot in the arm.

Mr Sison was working as a correspondent for *Regional Bulletin*, a Quezon-based weekly, and was the host of the weekly *Harana* (Serenade) program on radio dzAT-AM in Lucena City.

He is the third journalist to be murdered in the Philippines in 2008 and the 58th since President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's administration came to power in 2001, the NUJP reports. Lucena City, in Quezon province, remains a danger hot spot for journalists after the May 2003 fatal shooting of

Lucena-based radio announcer Apolinario “Polly” Pobeda and the near-fatal shooting attack on *Inquirer* correspondent Delfin T. Mallari Jr in April 2007.

**DETAILS:** IFJ Asia -Pacific on [ifj@ifj-asia.org](mailto:ifj@ifj-asia.org)/ +612 9333 0919.

### **BODY OF NEPALESE JOURNALIST IDENTIFIED**

A body exhumed in the town of Dailekh, in Nepal’s far western region, has been identified as that of Dekendra Raj Thapa, a reporter for Radio Nepal based in the town, who disappeared on assignment in June 2004. The exhumation on June 25 took place on the basis of information received by the Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ).

The FNJ has established through its own investigations that Mr Thapa may have died under torture on August 10, 2004. Krishna Bahadur Mahara, the then spokesman for the Maoist insurgency, was reported to have publicly expressed remorse over Mr Thapa’s killing and called it contrary to his party’s central policy directives. Maoist representatives had repeatedly asserted that he had died of natural causes.

**DETAILS:** IFJ Asia -Pacific on [ifj@ifj-asia.org](mailto:ifj@ifj-asia.org)/ +612 9333 0919.

### **SRI LANKAN JOURNALISTS SEEK UN HELP**

More than 30 international press freedom organisations have signed a letter to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to call for urgent action to resolve the extreme dangers faced by journalists in Sri Lanka.

The letter, prepared by General Secretary Aidan White of the International federation of Journalists (IFJ) and INSI Director Rodney Pinder, followed an emergency meeting of international and Sri Lankan press freedom organisations, hosted at IFJ’s Brussels headquarters, on June 1.

Among concerns were statements on the website of Sri Lanka’s Defence Ministry which labelled as “enemies of the state” any journalist who was critical of the government’s war against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Referring to the terms of the 2006 UN Security Council Resolution [1738] on the protection of journalists working in conflict zones, the letter called for the UN Secretary-General’s support in persuading the Sri Lanka’s Government to desist from hate speech and stop immediately all actions that undermine the independence and safety of the media community.

**DETAILS:** <http://asiapacific.ifj.org/en/articles/ifj-letter-to-un-secretary-general-danger-for-sri-lankan-journalists> To add an organisation’s name, contact [rachel.cohen@ifj.org](mailto:rachel.cohen@ifj.org)

### **EDITOR STILL IN DETENTION WITHOUT CHARGE**

A Sri Lanka court on June 30 continued the detention without charge of journalist J.S. Tissainayagam and rejected his appeal to be transferred from the supervision of the Terrorist Investigation Division (TID) into fiscal custody, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) (30/6/08).

Mr Tissainayagam, editor of the OutreachSL.com news website, has been held by TID without charge for 116 days. He was arrested on March 7 while visiting N. Jesiharan, owner of E-Kwality Printers, and his partner Valamarthi, who were detained by TID officers. In court on June 23, Mr Tissainayagam’s lawyer, Subandiran, argued that under Sections 19 and 21 of the Emergency Regulations Act, detainees must be transferred to fiscal custody (that is, removed from TID special detention into general detention) upon completion of a 90-day detention order.

The Free Media Movement (FMM) reported that the magistrate’s ruling in Colombo that Mr Tissainayagam should be kept in police custody while an investigation continues meant that TID was permitted to detain the senior Tamil journalist until September 5.

## FIVE MEDIA ORGANISATIONS PROTEST

Five organisations representing journalists in Sri Lanka – the FMM, the Federation of Media Employee's Trade Unions (FMETU), the Sri Lanka Working Journalists' Association (SLWJA), the Sri Lanka Muslim Media Forum (SLMMF) and the Sri Lanka Tamil Journalists' Alliance (SLTJA) – held a peaceful protest outside the Colombo court to demand justification of Mr Tissainayagam's detention or his immediate release.

After briefing representatives of political parties on June 17, the five organisations said that the 12 political parties present made a commitment to implement a common program to protect media freedom and media personnel.

In a joint statement, the five organisations said the appointment of a ministerial sub-committee to investigate the serious concerns of media personnel was a positive step, but that the committee, needed to build confidence among the media community.

The journalists' representatives said they would support any campaign for legislative reform to support media freedom, guarantee free and fair elections, protect trade union rights and abolish the executive presidency.

**DETAILS:** IFJ Asia -Pacific on [ifj@ifj-asia.org/](mailto:ifj@ifj-asia.org) +612 9333 0919; +612 9333 0919.

**CHINA:** The IFJ will partner with [Play the Game](#), a group promoting freedom of expression in sport, to provide support for journalists reporting from China on the Olympic Games. An international hotline will operate 24 hours a day to provide journalists with advice on press credentials and access to events and locations; China's legal system and International Olympic Committee statutes; and a monitoring service to register press freedom violations. More information, including the hotline number and website address, will be sent out shortly.

Throughout June, China's Government continued to restrict journalists' movements and media coverage, IFJ reported. Directives to media not to report on the 19th anniversary of the June 4 Tiananmen Square massacre and the aftermath of the Sichuan earthquake in May were followed by tight control on media reporting on the Tibet leg of the Olympic torch relay on June 21-22. There were reports of rough treatment, abduction and unexplained detention of journalists reporting on an illegal coal mine and earthquake-damaged towns, following a string of arrests of journalists including Huang Qi, founder of website [www.64tianwang.com](http://www.64tianwang.com), and Ren Shang Yan, editor of [www.shenzheng.net](http://www.shenzheng.net).

**DETAILS:** <http://asiapacific.ifj.org/en/pages/asia-pacific-china-bulletin>

## NANJING JOURNALIST JAILED FOR FOUR YEARS

A Nanjing court on June 26 sentenced Chinese journalist Sun Lin to four years' imprisonment for "disturbing the social order" and "concealing a weapon". Mr Sun, who writes for US-based website *Boxun News* under the pen name Jie Mu, and his wife, He Fang, were arrested in May, after reporting on civil rights violations in Nanjing and other regions of China.

A veteran journalist who has also worked for Nanjing's *Business Today*, Mr Sun was originally charged with four charges, none relating to his reporting. The charges were later reduced to two, namely "concealing a weapon" and "disturbing the social order". His wife was charged with "disturbing the social order".

His lawyer, Mo Shaoping, said the charges were related to a land dispute in 2004 and that there was no "social disorder". Mr Mo told the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) that no weapon was found with Mr Sun, and that the trial did not accord his client due process. Mr Sun allegedly has been beaten in detention. His wife received a suspended jail sentence on June 26.

**DETAILS:** IFJ Asia -Pacific on [ifj@ifj-asia.org/](mailto:ifj@ifj-asia.org) +612 9333 0919; +612 9333 0919.

**INDIA:** The editor of the Telugu newspaper *Andhra Jyoti* and two of its reporters have been released (30/6/08). They were arrested on June 24 for the alleged offence of insulting the dignity

of those of lower ritual status. K. Srinivas, Kumar Vamshi and N. Srinivas were granted bail by a court in Hyderabad, capital of Andhra Pradesh state, on June 26 and released the following day.

The IFJ said it was concerned to learn that the two reporters were granted only conditional bail, requiring them to report every week to the nearest police station.

#### **51 JOURNALISTS PUT IN PREVENTIVE DETENTION**

The IFJ said it was also disturbed that on June 27, 51 journalists were taken into preventive detention at the pilgrimage town of Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh, shortly before a visit by the state's chief minister, Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy. It was reported that the police feared a breach of the peace, "though the journalists had no intention other than to present a memorandum of protest on the *Andhra Jyoti* arrests." According to K. Sreenivas Reddy, general secretary of the Indian Journalists' Union (IJU), a war of words between the newspaper and the Andhra Pradesh Government shows no sign of abating.

**DETAILS:** IFJ Asia -Pacific on [ifj@ifj-asia.org](mailto:ifj@ifj-asia.org)/ +612 9333 0919; +612 9333 0919.

**INDONESIA:** Efforts by Indonesian journalists to end the criminalisation of the media were being undermined by a senior police official who had publicly encouraged people with complaints against journalists to file police reports rather than use the Press Law's complaint and resolution procedures, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) reported (27/6/08).

According to the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI), a top policeman told a Regional Press Jamboree in South Sulawesi on May 30 that (he) advised people against using the Press Law's mechanisms for settling disputes or expressing public dissatisfaction with the media.

His statements were reported as of particular concern for the AJI and the Indonesian journalism community as they continued a campaign to stop criminalisation of the press. Criminal defamation remained a significant obstacle for journalists in Indonesia. According to AJI's 2007 report, *Stop Criminalisation of the Press*, 41 defamation cases were filed against media and journalists between 2003 and April 2007. Recently, Risang Bima Wijaya, a journalist and former general manager of *Radar Yogya Daily*, was released from jail on June 7 after serving a six-month sentence for criminal defamation.

**DETAILS:** IFJ Asia -Pacific on [ifj@ifj-asia.org](mailto:ifj@ifj-asia.org)/ +612 9333 0919; +612 9333 0919.

**CAMBODIAN JOURNALISTS ENDORSE MEDIA CHARTER:** More than 70 media workers and journalism professionals attended a National Media Summit in Cambodia on June 16, the culmination of a two-year project run by the IFJ and the Cambodian Association for the Protection of Journalists (CAPJ). The project on Reporting the Khmer Rouge Trials involved training Cambodian journalists in ethics and in balanced and sensitive reporting of the trials of leaders of the Khmer Rouge regime. The media charter, unanimously adopted by participants, stressed the importance of independent and unbiased reporting and respect for court processes and decisions, presumption of innocence, dignity of the dead and for regime survivors.

**MEDIA CHARTER:** <http://admin.ifj.org/en/pages/a-charter-for-good-reporting-cambodia-june-16-2008> **DETAILS:** IFJ Asia -Pacific on [ifj@ifj-asia.org](mailto:ifj@ifj-asia.org)/ +612 9333 0919; +612 9333 0919.

**TAIWAN'S CHINA TIMES GROUP TO SACK HUNDREDS:** In a notice issued to the China Times Workers' Union on June 18, China Times Group (CTG) president Lin Sheng-fen announced mass retrenchment, citing a decline in circulation and insufficient advertising revenue as reasons for proposed company structural changes. Details about names and severance payments are expected in early July 7. The decision is a matter of concern to employees of China Television Company (CTV), CTI Television and the Chinese-language *China Times*, published for more than six decades, with a reported circulation of one million readers. Up to 600 journalists and staff at Taiwan's *China Times* newspaper feel at risk.

**DETAILS:** IFJ Asia -Pacific on [ifj@ifj-asia.org](mailto:ifj@ifj-asia.org)/ +612 9333 0919; +612 9333 0919.

### **AFGHANISTAN: FARIDA NEKZAD WINS COURAGE IN JOURNALISM PRIZE**

Farida Nekzad, managing editor of Pajwok Afghan News Agency, Afghanistan's only independent news agency, has been named among winners of the International Women's Media Foundation *Courage in Journalism Award* for 2008. The award honours women journalists who show extraordinary strength of character and integrity while reporting in dangerous or difficult circumstances. During 2007 and 2008, Ms Nekzad received many death threats, including threats received within days of the killings of prominent women journalists in Afghanistan.

#### **DEATH SENTENCE APPEAL DELAYED AGAIN**

Grave concerns continue to be held for the safety and physical and emotional wellbeing of young journalist Sayed Parvez Kambakhsh, whose appeal hearings to challenge his death sentence have been delayed four times due to his reported ill-health and allegations of torture.

Kambakhsh is appealing the sentence issued on January 23 on charges of "blasphemy" for allegedly downloading articles from the internet related to women's rights.

A four-day trade union training workshop in Afghanistan in mid-July is to be run by the IFJ in conjunction with the Afghan Independent Journalists' Association and the Committee for the Protection of Journalists. The training focuses on building a strong union and network of journalists in Afghanistan to improve information sharing, peer support and advocacy for working conditions. **DETAILS:** IFJ Asia -Pacific on [ifj@ifj-asia.org](mailto:ifj@ifj-asia.org)/ +612 9333 0919; +612 9333 0919.

**PAKISTAN:** The Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ), with the IFJ, is to set up a secretariat to assist the union in its campaign to promote press freedom, the safety of journalists and fair working conditions. The 12-month project begins with a national media summit in Islamabad on August 2. The IFJ reported the project comes as media restrictions and working conditions in Pakistan continued to cause concern. Two popular talk programs transmitted to Pakistan from Dubai-based GEO TV were taken off air on June 12 at the request of the Government of United Arab Emirates (UAE). The IFJ also backed the PFUJ in its opposition to a demand by the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) for a repeal of the Newspaper Employees' (Conditions of Service) Act. The IFJ called on the APNS to enter into a constructive dialogue with the PFUJ.

**DETAILS:** <http://asiapacific.ifj.org/en/pages/media-for-democracy-in-pakistan>

## **G. OTHER NEWS**

### **COLOMBIA SCORES DRAMATIC HOSTAGE RESCUE**

Colombia scores big against guerrillas with dramatic hostage rescue Colombia scored a major victory against Marxist rebels Wednesday with a rescue operation that secured the release of several hostages, including politician Ingrid Betancourt and three American military contractors. Colombia's government, particularly President Alvaro Uribe, immediately received widespread applause for the operation, which The Economist said ended better than "any Hollywood director would dare to dream up." **REPORT:**

[http://www.economist.com/world/la/displayStory.cfm?story\\_id=11670375&source=features\\_box\\_main](http://www.economist.com/world/la/displayStory.cfm?story_id=11670375&source=features_box_main)

### **REGIONAL COOPERATION PROMOTED BY PARLIAMENTARIANS**

Indonesian and Australian Parliamentarians shared ideas on how to promote regional cooperation at a two-day forum organised by the ANU at Jakarta's Parliament this week.

The third annual ANU Centre for Democratic Institutions (CDI) Indonesia-Australia Committees Forum brought together key figures from both countries' parliaments. The event is designed to foster closer parliamentary links between the two countries and give representatives the chance to learn about parliamentary practices in the other country.

The theme of this year's forum is *Parliament and its role in promoting regional cooperation*

**DETAILS:** Martyn Pearce, ANU Media Office on 02 6125 5575 / 0416 249 245.

### **ETAN 'NEEDS EYES AND EARS IN WASHINGTON'**

ETAN (East Timor and Indonesia Network) plans to hire someone permanent to act as eyes and ears on the ground in Washington, a part-time DC staffer, is seeking the required funds.

John M. Miller, ETAN National Coordinator, writes: "During the 10 years that ETAN had a Washington office, we were able to develop and sustain many of ETAN's most successful grassroots campaigns. We succeeded in:

putting Congress on record in support of self-determination for East Timor;  
succeeded in getting Congress to cut US assistance for the brutal Indonesian military, most recently blocking training for its notorious Kopassus special forces;  
generated multiple calls for justice for crimes against humanity and other human rights violations in Timor-Leste, Indonesia, and West Papua;  
helped to keep Timor-Leste free from impoverishing debt;  
and opposed the Australian Government's attempt to steal East Timor's petroleum resources, including by organising members of Congress to speak out during the US-Australia Free Trade Agreement debate.

"These campaigns would not have been nearly as successful without dedicated Washington staff. ETAN's Washington work has often helped ignite grassroots mobilisations in support of Timor-Leste and Indonesia. We are committed to again strengthening our organising and national advocacy base."

"ETAN is unique in the US. We are the only voice of solidarity dedicated to Timor-Leste on the national political scene. Further, we are very often the leading voice speaking out for Indonesian human rights in Washington."

DETAILS: <http://www.etan.org/etan/2008spring.htm> and ETAN, PO Box 21873, Brooklyn, NY 11202-1873 US

### **VIETNAM VISIT MARKS 35<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

Foreign Affairs Minister Stephen Smith visited Vietnam and Thailand over July 1-4 to advance two important bilateral relationships in South-East Asia. The Vietnam visit included the first bilateral meetings in Vietnam by a member of the present Federal Government and marked the 35th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations by the Whitlam Government.

DETAILS: [http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2008/fa-s104\\_08.html](http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2008/fa-s104_08.html)

Australia is this week signing the official Contract of Participation for the 2010 Shanghai World Expo to take place between May 1 and October 31 2010.

DETAILS: [http://www.trademinister.gov.au/releases/2008/sc\\_080629.html](http://www.trademinister.gov.au/releases/2008/sc_080629.html)

### **DIPLOMATIC APPOINTMENTS**

Marc Innes-Brown is to be Australia's new Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran and is expected to take up his appointment in August. He is currently Australia's Ambassador to Iraq, a position he has held since August 2006.

DETAILS: [http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2008/fa-s102\\_08.html](http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2008/fa-s102_08.html)

Australia has notified the Fiji Interim Government of its agreement to the appointment of an Acting High Commissioner in Canberra and a Consul-General in Sydney.

DETAILS: [http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2008/fa-s103\\_08.html](http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2008/fa-s103_08.html)

### **INQUIRY INTO WOMEN'S EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN THE WORKFORCE**

The House of Representatives Employment and Workplace Relations Committee has been asked by the Federal Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations to inquire into and report on the causes of any potential disadvantages in relation to women's participation in the workforce including, but not limited to:

The adequacy of current data to reliably monitor employment changes that may impact on pay equity issues:  
The need for education and information among employers, employees and trade unions in relation to pay equity issues;  
Current structural arrangements in the negotiation of wages that may impact disproportionately on women;  
The adequacy of recent and current equal remuneration provisions in state and federal workplace relations legislation;  
The adequacy of current arrangements to ensure fair access to training and promotion for women who have taken maternity leave and/or returned to work part time and/or sought flexible work hours;  
and the need for further legislative reform to address pay equity in Australia.  
**SUBMISSIONS:** By August 28  
**DETAILS:** [www.aph.gov.au/ewr](http://www.aph.gov.au/ewr) or on 02 6277 4162; [ewr.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:ewr.reps@aph.gov.au) .  
**BACKGROUND:** Committee Secretary on 02 6277 4162.

## H. ARTICLES IN FOCUS

### **G8 CLIMATE CHANGE FAILURE COULD HURT UN-LED TALKS**

G8 leaders have a 50-50 chance of agreeing next week on a global goal of halving greenhouse gas emissions by mid-century, a Japanese foreign ministry official said, adding that failure could hurt U.N.-led climate talks, Reuters reported (1/7/08). Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda hopes to build momentum for talks on a framework for after the Kyoto Protocol's first phase ends in 2012 when the leaders meet for the July 7-9 Group of Eight summit in Hokkaido, northern Japan ... G8 leaders agreed last year in Heiligendamm, Germany, to seriously consider a global goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent by 2050. Climate campaigners say this year's summit should go further by endorsing that goal and linking it to bold shorter-term targets for developed countries. But divisions among the US, Europe and Japan have raised doubts about how much the leaders can achieve next week

**ARTICLE:** <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/T303706.htm>

### **IRAQ SUES AWB FOR HARMING ITS PEOPLE**

The Iraqi Government is suing AWB Limited, alleging it rorted the UN oil-for-food program and caused "virtually incalculable" suffering for the Iraqi people, the Sydney Morning Herald reported (2/7/08). AWB is one of 94 companies named in the lawsuit filed in a United States court, which is seeking billions of dollars in damages and alleges the firms formed a conspiracy with the former dictator Saddam Hussein to reap economic benefits at the expense of Iraq's population.

**ARTICLE:** <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/07/01/1214678038469.html>

### **CHENEY'S FINGERPRINTS**

Seymour Hersh's latest New Yorker article describes an expansion of covert operations inside Iran and provides more evidence of Vice President Cheney's zeal to address the Iranian nuclear threat - possibly by force - before he and President Bush leave office, writes Dan Froomkin in the Washington Post. (30/6/08). [Hersh writes:](#) "Late last year, Congress agreed to a request from President Bush to fund a major escalation of covert operations against Iran, according to current and former military, intelligence, and congressional sources. These operations, for which the president sought up to four hundred million dollars, were described in a Presidential Finding signed by Bush, and are designed to destabilise the country's religious leadership.

**ARTICLE:**

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/linkset/2005/04/11/LI2005041100879.html>

### **BOWRING: MUD IN MALAYSIA**

In the aftermath of elections in March that resulted in huge losses for the ruling United Malays National Organization and its coalition partners, the struggle for power in Malaysia has become more vicious and the outcome less certain, writes Philip Bowring in the International Herald Tribune (1/7/08). It is drawing rapt attention not only from Malaysia's politically-engaged masses

but also from foreign investors and neighbours fascinated by Malaysia's curious blend of democracy, pluralism and authoritarianism. The battle is over who, if anyone, will succeed Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who is under pressure to quit after the election setback. But the more mud that is thrown, the more it appears that Abdullah may be the best man for the job.

ARTICLE: <http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/07/01/opinion/edbowring.php>

### **WEATHER PLAYS LARGER ROLE IN GLOBAL FUEL PRICES**

The record storms and floods that swept through the US Midwest last month struck at the heart of the corn-growing region, drowning fields and dashing hopes of a bumper crop, Jad Mouawad writes in the International Herald Tribune (1/7/08). They also brought into sharp relief a new economic hazard. As the world grows more reliant on crops like corn and palm oil for its fuel supply, it is becoming vulnerable to the many hazards that can damage agriculture, ranging from droughts to plagues to storms ... "We are holding ourselves hostage to the weather," said John Reilly, a senior lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and an ethanol expert. "Agricultural markets are subject to wide variability and big price spikes, just like oil markets."

ARTICLE: <http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/06/30/business/weather.php>

## **I. ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT**

### **GOVERNMENT PLEDGES \$3.7B TO SAVE MURRAY-DARLING**

The Federal Government will put \$3.7 billion into projects to save the Murray-Darling Basin as part of an agreement reached at today's Council of Australian Government's Meeting (COAG) in Sydney, the ABC reported (3/7/08).

The states and territories have also formally agreed with the Federal Government to the establishment the Murray-Darling Basin Authority. The authority will manage the basin as one body and is able to independently develop a plan for the basin.

Mr Rudd says the basin plan is critical to long term use and the authority will create a consistent set of rules across all areas on how water is traded. "For the first time in the nation's history now through a Murray-Darling Basin Authority [there is] a capacity to develop a whole of basin plan and that is absolutely essential," he said.

REPORT: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/07/03/2293596.htm>

### **AWB AMONG COMPANIES FACING IRAQI GOVERNMENT**

Australian wheat farmers may be forced to pay a second time for the Australian Wheat Board's oil-for-food kickbacks, the Herald-Sun reported (2/7/08).

AWB is among 94 companies being sued by the Iraqi Government in a \$10.4 billion action. It is alleged the companies defrauded the Iraqi people of cash, goods and services, which were diverted to Saddam Hussein and his cronies.

"Billions of dollars were lost, all of which were directly translatable into food, medicine and other humanitarian goods that were supposed to reach the Iraqi people," said the lawsuit, filed in the US District Court in Manhattan. "The resulting damage in human suffering caused to the Republic of Iraq and to the people of Iraq is virtually incalculable."

In a statement yesterday, AWB said it would "vigorously defend its position" if the case went ahead. Wheat farmers have lost \$300 million paid in kickbacks to Saddam's regime.

REPORT: <http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,23955404-662,00.html>

### **SPECIES EXTINCTION COULD DISAPPEAR '100 TIMES FASTER'**

Endangered species could become extinct 100 times faster than previously thought, scientists warned this week in a bleak reassessment of the threats to global biodiversity, the London Guardian reported (3/7/08). They say methods used to predict when species will die out are seriously flawed and dramatically underestimate the speed at which some will disappear.

The findings, presented in the journal *Nature*, suggest that animals such as the western gorilla, the Sumatran tiger and Malayan sun bear, the smallest of the bear family, may become extinct much sooner than conservationists had feared. [REPORT: http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/jul/03/endangeredspecies.scienceofclimatechange](http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/jul/03/endangeredspecies.scienceofclimatechange)

#### **WHALING: SUBSTANTIAL REFORMS WELCOMED**

Some of Australia's substantial reform proposals for the International Whaling Commission had been warmly welcomed and supported by a number of countries, Environment Minister Peter Garrett, said in a media release (26/6/08). The proposals would now be considered further.

“We've identified what we think are some of the significant impediments to reform are. We've proposed ways of dealing with those impediments. We've been very clear in our comments about special permit whaling, and also about so-called 'scientific' whaling. We've maintained strong opposition to the Japanese so-called 'scientific' whaling in the Southern Oceans but we've also played a constructive role in bringing forward concrete, positive reform proposals, which would reform the work of the commission and see the conservation of whales become a significant priority.” he said.

[REPORT: http://www.environment.gov.au/minister/garrett/2008/pubs/tr20080626b.pdf](http://www.environment.gov.au/minister/garrett/2008/pubs/tr20080626b.pdf)