

# GLOBAL NETWORK FOR JUSTICE

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## GLOBAL NETWORK FOR JUSTICE (GNFJ) ONE YEAR OLD AND GROWING

The GNFJ project began on September 4, 2001. Its goal is to establish a structure that would enable social justice organizations to collaborate and communicate on the international level for the purpose of educating and advocating on behalf of human rights especially the right to food. In its first year much was accomplished. We participated in UN Conferences such as Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development. At each conference we met representatives from Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and included them in our network. Although much was accomplished there is still much to be done.

On September 24, 2002 the U.S. Census Bureau data released its findings that poverty in 2001 jumped to 11.7% of the U.S. population (32.9 million people), from 11.3% (31.6 million people) the year before. The poverty rate for children is a shameful 16.3% or one of every six children.

For 28 years Bread for the World members have worked to reduce hunger at home and around the world. Despite significant gains, there is yet a long way to go before chronic hunger is ended.

Key measures to help those struggling with hunger and poverty in the U.S.A. and overseas are being pushed aside, for example;

- **Renewal of Temporary Assistance for Needy families (TANF)** is at an impasse. The Work Act passed with bipartisan support by the Senate Finance Committee would open doors for more education and job training and bolster support for child care and transportation. **Passing it would be the single best thing Congress can do for hungry and poor people in the U.S. this year.**

- **The foreign operations spending bill, passed by both House and Senate appropriations committees is stalled.** Both the House and Senate versions add \$500 million in poverty-focused development assistance to last year's allocation. Now there is talk that these increases may be stripped from the final bill.

### Eye Witness in Iraq

Bill Quigley, a law professor at Loyola University New Orleans, joined Voices in the Wilderness for a ten day visit to Iraq. The following is his reflection.

I met briefly with Bert Saacks, the man from the State of Washington who the US is fining \$10,000 for bringing medicines to Iraq with Physicians for Social Responsibility. He brought the three congress representatives with him to Iraq to see what our policies continue to do. He is an extraordinary man of peace. I met two of the congressmen at a visit to a Baghdad water treatment plant bombed during the gulf war that remains unfixed because of sanctions. Rep. McDermott said it well, "We should not impose economic sanctions or military war on the people of Iraq." Should the people of Iraq have to choose between systematic economic war or the USA telling them how their country should be run or another military and bombing war? Should anyone?

They say no. I hear Trent Lott says, "they should shut their mouths and come home." Hello, democracy! Finally, I leave you with this observation by Nobel Peace Prize winner Mairead Maguire, after her visit to Iraq: "When I visited Auschwitz, I was horrified and when I visited Iraq, I thought to myself, "What will we tell the children in fifty years when they ask what we did when people of Iraq were dying?"

**Important websites regarding Iraq:**

**Voices in the Wilderness:** [www.vitw.org](http://www.vitw.org)

**Move On:** [www.moveon.org](http://www.moveon.org)

## The Global Network for Justice Team Attends the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)

Local, indigenous knowledge, cultural assets are but a few words that help describe sustainable development. Words such as free trade and genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are more representative of short-term development. Aside from a few positive commitments from governments in support of safe drinking water and sanitation, free trade and GMOs were the issues the United States and its partners steadfastly pursued at WSSD. Industrialized nations, such as the United States, are not willing to see beyond the trickle-down economic models of the past.

Away from Johannesburg and the pressure of the summit, what was achieved at the grassroots level was perhaps more sustainable. Our team traveled to Mboza in the Bush country of Maputland in northern KwaZulu-Natal. There we met with local fisher folks turned farmers. They farm because the delta of the Ndumo River, which provided their fishing grounds, has dried up when the Jozini Dam was built.

Our team had the luxury of examining their situation with a “fresh set of eyes” and was able to offer relevant insights in assisting these local entrepreneurs in developing an economy that is sustainable and also preserves their culture.



Sister Helen (left) and Sister Jane (right) stand on either end of women farmers of Mboza.

For official documents, statements, speeches from WSSD visit, [www.un.org/events/wssd](http://www.un.org/events/wssd).  
For a copy of our economic model visit, [www.globalnetwork4justice.org](http://www.globalnetwork4justice.org) and click on Crescent City Market icon.

## 55th Annual Conference of the United Nations Department of Public Information / NGO

*Rebuilding Societies Emerging from Conflict: A Shared Responsibility* was the theme of the conference which explored the role of the international community in supporting societies emerging from conflict. Speakers came from government, UN officials and NGO representatives who had first-hand experience in conflict situations. Speakers also included citizens who lived through violence in their communities, cultural leaders and journalists who are in the forefront of civil society efforts of recovery and reconciliation.



Speakers came from post-conflict situations such as, Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia and Hersegovina, Cambodia, East Timor, Guatemala, Kosovo, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and the Middle East to name a few.

Three outstanding keys in peace building mentioned by many of the speakers are:

- 1) role of women in decision-making positions,
- 2) peace education for youth,
- 3) economic development.

For more information visit,  
[www.un.org/dpi/ngosection/55conf.htm](http://www.un.org/dpi/ngosection/55conf.htm)

**World Food Day**  
**October 16, 2002**  
Theme ~ *Hungry Farmers: A National Security Issue for All*  
[www.worldfooddayusa.org](http://www.worldfooddayusa.org)