Program News

SHRP Director Bids Fond Farewell

At the end of this month, I will be leaving the AAAS Science and Human Rights Program after a very rewarding two and half years. When I joined the Program in January 2007, the staff and I set our sights on expanding and accelerating the contributions of science and scientists to human rights, by building on the Program’s remarkable 30-year history and the many strengths of its institutional home – AAAS. We are heartened by the scientific community’s enthusiastic response and energetic support for our efforts. Read more.

High Resolution Satellite Imagery and the Conflict in Sri Lanka

In May, SHRP responded to requests from Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International, USA (AI), to rapidly acquire and analyze high-resolution satellite imagery of Sri Lanka. Seeking information on the status and fate of an unknown number of internally displaced persons (IDP), SHRP reviewed satellite imagery acquired May 6 and 10 to determine changes in the location of IDP settlements and identify any evidence of heavy weapons use. Significant changes in the location of IDPs were documented, along with dozens of possible impact craters. Results were utilized by HRW, AI, and other organizations in advocating for civilian protection in Sri Lanka. Read report.

"On-call" Scientists: An Overwhelming Response

As word of the Program’s "On-call" Scientists initiative has spread, we have received requests for volunteers from human rights organizations in the US, Colombia, Kenya, and elsewhere. One request alone calls for petroleum engineers, geologists with gold and diamond extraction experience, and chemists with air, soil and water contamination expertise, who would support human rights work in three countries in west and central Africa. In our search, we reached out through the AAAS sections to find suitably qualified members and were overwhelmed by the positive response we
received. Over 30 chemists and nearly as many engineers and geologists have now signed up to be “On-call” Scientists, bringing the total of volunteers available to help human rights organizations in their work to over 250! We are thankful to all volunteers for their willingness to give of their time and contribute their expertise.

Webinar: Dialogue Bringing Science and Scientists to Human Rights

On June 24, 2009, the AAAS Science and Human Rights Program hosted a webinar for AAAS members and donors interested in the intersections between science and human rights. Moderated by AAAS President, Nobel laureate and Member of the Committee on Human Rights of the National Academies Peter Agre, the panel discussed the ways in which scientists advance human rights work, and what the community can do to further those efforts through the application of science and technology. Read more.

Science and Human Rights Coalition

Next Council and Coalition Meetings: July 23-24, 2009 Register by July 15!

Coalition Council – July 23, 1-5pm

On July 23, 2009 the Coalition Council will meet for the first time. The Council is comprised of the two representatives of each Member Organization, and is the Coalition’s policy-setting body. This first meeting of the Council will provide Members the opportunity to determine the responsibilities, rules and procedures of the Council, as well as to address recommendations relevant to the future direction of the Coalition, including the internationalization of the Coalition beyond a primarily U.S.-based membership; membership of university-based human rights centers; and other policy matters. View agenda.

Coalition: Opening Plenary – July 23, 5:30-7:30pm

The second meeting of the Coalition will begin on the evening of July 23 with an event to honor science and human rights pioneer, Richard Pierre Claude. A scholar, educator, and writer, Claude believes that the education of young scientists and health professionals must be bound by a social contract that safeguards their freedom to travel, associate, and communicate freely, but asks in return that they do no harm and direct their talents toward caring for all human beings and the earth we inhabit. Claude developed this thesis in his award-winning book Science in the Service of Human Rights. A Professor Emeritus of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland, College Park, Claude is founding editor of Human Rights Quarterly. View agenda.

Coalition: Meeting – July 24, 8:30am-5:30pm

Open to all members, affiliates, and other interested scientists, the meeting will continue through July 24 and will provide participants with the opportunity to learn about the deliberations and decisions of the Council, participate in working group meetings, and acquire skills and

A Human Rights Network Influences Countries’ Torture Policies

Christopher J. Fariss and Keith E. Schnakenberg (link)

"This study utilizes a novel network analytic method to analyze how the complex relationships between rights violations develop as states encroach on the liberties of individuals. For our analysis, we use the Cingranelli and Richards (CIRI) human rights data. The human rights network links 13 human rights variables to reveal the most likely path to torture."

Applying Human Rights in Practice

German Ministry for Economic Cooperation & Development (link)

A series of Fact Sheets, Applying Human Rights in Practice provides practical guidance for applying a "human rights based approach" in the context of development cooperation and specifically in the following sectors: education, energy, natural resources, health, justice, food security, and water and sanitation.

Does ratification of human-rights treaties have effects on population health?

Alexis Palmer et al. (link)

"Human-rights treaties indicate a country's commitment to human rights. Here, we assess whether ratification of human-rights treaties is associated with improved health and social indicators." Analyzing data gathered from 170 countries, the authors conclude that "[t]he status of treaty ratification alone is not a good indicator of the

**Introducing our Members**

**National Council of Teachers of Mathematics**

"The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics is a public voice of mathematics education, providing vision, leadership and professional development to support teachers in ensuring equitable mathematics learning of the highest quality for all students." Read more.

**From the Science Community**

**WHO Wins Spanish Cooperation Prize**

"The World Health Organization was awarded the 2009 Prince of Asturias Prize for International Cooperation on [June 3] 'for its work in safeguarding the fundamental right of every human being to health.' ... The jury took into account the WHO's 'capacity to set the agenda for research in health matters, establish standards and formulate policies that combine both ethical and scientific principles, as well as providing technical support to those countries in need.'" Read more.

**From the Human Rights Community**

**A Human Rights Assessment of Single Payer Plans**
National Economic Social Rights Initiative (NESRI)
May 20, 2009

On May 20, 2009 NESRI released "an in-depth analysis of four single-payer bills that are currently in the U.S. Congress and State Legislatures. The assessment measures the bills against human rights standards, and concludes that single-payer plans are superior to market-based proposals because they go further towards creating a system that is universal, equitable and accountable to the people." Read the assessment.

**Physicians for Human Rights Launches Global Health Action**
Physicians for Human Rights (PHR)
June 11, 2009

"Over the past eight years, PHR's Health Action AIDS Campaign has helped shape policy and programs that saved millions of lives and built support for a human rights approach to HIV prevention and care for women and injection drug users." Health Action AIDS is now transitioning into Global Health Action with the aim of helping "establish the right to health as the prism through which governments - both donor countries and those in the developing world - develop health programs and are held accountable for the health of their populations." Read more.

From the UN

International Conference on Bioethics and Human Rights
Baku, Azerbaijan


About the SHRP Newsletter

The Science & Human Rights Newsletter is issued bi-monthly by the AAAS Science and Human Rights Program. Through the newsletter we strive to keep scientists and human rights practitioners informed with news items, program updates, new resources, and upcoming events at the intersection of science and human rights. Submissions to the newsletter are welcome and can be made via our online form.

Please visit our website to learn more about our programs as well as our past accomplishments.

To unsubscribe from the SHRP Newsletter, please click here.

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