

BULLETIN

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Washington Liaison Office



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The UNDP Washington Bulletin is a regular update of UNDP activities and events by the Washington Office.

JULIA V.TAFT (1942-2008) COLLEAGUE AND FRIEND

The death of Julia Taft on March 15th is a tremendous loss for all those who had the privilege of working with her in the US government, the NGO community, and at UNDP. She was truly an inspiration to many around the world.

Julia was the first Director of UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, from 2001 to 2004. There, she led UNDP's efforts to bridge immediate humanitarian assistance with long-term development, now a key focus for the organization. Her leadership of the bureau helped turn UNDP into one of the main UN and international actors in the areas of crisis prevention and recovery.

Julia's determination and experience were instrumental in Afghanistan, where in January 2002 she headed a UN Task Force to coordinate and formulate a single, coherent recovery effort for that country in support of the work of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan. Under her leadership UNDP set up the Afghan Interim Authority Fund to support the implementation of the Bonn Peace Process. This fund enabled the convening of the emergency Loya Jirga – an important hallmark in the first six months of the new Authority. During Julia's tenure, UNDP also helped the Afghan Interim Authority set itself up; resuscitate the national civil service and police force; draft a new constitution; and hold successful elections.

Julia's leadership at UNDP coincided with critical times in other countries as well, particularly in Iraq, Haiti and Liberia. Her contribution to ensuring a more cohesive and effective UN response in these countries is a remarkable legacy. Recently, she was an active board member of the US Committee for UNDP.

Before joining UNDP, Julia served as Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration at the Department of State from 1997 to 2001. She was President and CEO of InterAction from 1993 to 1997. She also served as USAID Director of the Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance. Julia's many awards included a White House fellowship (1970), One of the Ten Most Outstanding Men and Women in Federal Service (1976), the Presidential End Hunger Award (1989), the USAID Distinguished Service Award (1989), and the USSR Award for Personal Courage for her relief efforts in the Armenian earthquake (1990).

In a recent interview with the *New York Times*, former Secretary of State Colin L. Powell said of Julia: "She was an image of American openness and generosity. Her professional life was committed to people trying to get by on a dollar a day, those who are hungry, without clean water, without medicine, without homes."

Julia will be warmly remembered and appreciated by her colleagues throughout UNDP for her strength, positive spirit, and good humor.

UNDP IN IRAQ: PARTNERING WITH GOVERNMENT & DONORS FOR RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT

UNDP staff, based in offices inside Iraq as well as in Jordan and Kuwait, work throughout the country in the midst of an extremely challenging environment. UNDP activities in the country concentrate on democratic governance, poverty reduction, rehabilitation of physical infrastructure and mine clearance.

The beginning of 2008 has seen several important developments initiated by UNDP's Iraq Country Office including the following:

- UNDP's Deputy Resident Representative has been appointed to head up the UN country team's efforts toward economic reform and diversification. Together, UNDP and several other UN and NGO partners are working on an economic recovery and economic governance strategy consistent with that agreed upon by the Bretton Woods Institutions, Coalition donors, and the Iraqi government. This strategy will target at least three geographic areas of Iraq for support packages that focus on policy reform, strengthened national budget execution, and the enabling environment for the private sector. These activities will be funded from the [UNDG Multi-donor Trust Fund](#) (which is administered by UNDP) as well as other donor sources.
- In February, UNDP opened an office, funded by the UK, at the Coalition-controlled airport in Basra, where UNDP is working closely with other parts of the UN, the Iraqi government, Coalition members, and donors to identify and remedy bottlenecks that delay budgetary resources from financing recovery and development.
- In early 2008, UNDP also launched a recovery program in nearby Muthanna Governate with funding from the Japanese government.
- UNDP Iraq established a Loan Facilitation Unit in January. The unit is currently facilitating \$140 million from the Japanese Bank for International Cooperation to the Ministry of Electricity of the Kurdistan Regional Government. Loan management experts from UNDP's Bureau for Latin American and the Caribbean are sharing their extensive experience to bolster this effort.
- The Japanese government funded a new UNDP project, Building Capacity of Law Enforcement, in February. UNDP will work with the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq, the Ministry of the Interior, and key donors to advance the work of the Basra Police Force.
- The US State Department informed UNDP Iraq in February that UNDP has been selected to receive a \$3.5 million grant to support the Iraqi civil aviation authorities with nationwide master planning in 2008-2009.

More information on UNDP's work in Iraq can be found [here](#).

UNDP IN KENYA: RESULTS OF PRE-ELECTION ATTENTION TO MITIGATING CONFLICT

Unrest following the presidential elections at the end of December left Kenya reeling: over 1,000 people died in the violence and over a half a million people were displaced from their homes. Relative calm has returned to most of the areas affected by the violence following a February political settlement and more recent power-sharing deal aimed at salvaging a country once seen as one of the most stable and prosperous in Africa.

The UN has played an important role in providing humanitarian assistance, sheltering the internally displaced people throughout the crisis, and supporting efforts by Former Secretary-General Kofi Annan to resolve the political crisis. As a complement to these to these efforts, UNDP has been working over many years to address the root causes of violence and strengthen peace in the country.

In fact, all Kenyan organizations engaged in these to efforts—from the government’s National Steering Committee on Conflict Management and Peace-building to civic umbrella organizations such as Peace-Net and the Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization—have noted that where significant local capacities were built on the ground with UN assistance, peace was conserved in the aftermath of national elections. This occurred despite a history of violent conflict over natural resources in some areas, notably in the country’s North and Northeast provinces.

UNDP has implemented three programs, all launched prior to the December 2007 elections, to bolster the peace in Kenya.

- Partnerships with the National Steering Committee on Conflict Management and Peace-building and with the Provincial Administration to help them further build their capacity. UNDP has also supported local dialogue efforts in northern Kenya, including the successful mediation of the Pokot-Samburu conflict in the Turkana region that had displaced nearly 20,000 people by the time that it was successfully mediated in October 2006.
- A program on dialogue and reconciliation that seeks to mobilize youth, media, and the ecumenical community towards peace. The program also supported the “Partnership for Peace,” an alliance among several Kenyan civil society organizations.
- A program on armed violence and small arms reduction in northern Kenya that has supported local-level District and Divisional Peace Committees and Women’s Peace Forums to prevent and reduce armed violence and to stem the cross-border flow of illicit small arms.

Each of these programs is adapting on an ongoing basis to the current situation in the country.

For more information on UNDP’s work in Africa, click [here](#).

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UNDP is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. We are on the ground in 166 countries, working with them on their own solutions to global and national development challenges. As they develop local capacity, they draw on the people of UNDP and our wide range of partners.

For additional information on the above news, please contact communications officer Cara Santos Pianesi at **UNDP’s Washington Office** at 202.331.9130 or cara.santos@undp.org.

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