

"We are not controlled by logic, but by imagination".
Carlyle

Reform Times in Uruguay



Sistema de las Naciones Unidas en Uruguay
UNIDOS EN LA ACCIÓN

A monthly newsletter with news, data and events on the "Delivering as One" process in Uruguay

Rebeca Grynspan speaks on the global crisis

"Move from social programmes to social security system"

During a visit to Montevideo from 9 to 13 March, UNDP Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, Rebeca Grynspan, addressed the challenges posed by the global financial crisis to programmes of international cooperation for development. "Sooner or later it will hit; the whole world will experience an economic downturn. Uruguay, however, is a country well prepared to deal with the crisis", she said.

The Regional Director also said that the present situation "is defying the forecast capacity of economics". She regretted that the crisis could interrupt "six years of growth and an increase in decent jobs that has contributed to reduce poverty and inequality for the first time in many years ...As a matter of fact, we're already facing reverse migration movements, and even in some places would be migrants are not leaving anymore, generating tension in the labour market". The region though, she said, is better prepared than in the past to face the crisis, because the "institutional economic structure is better".

However, she went on, Latin American countries "still don't have automatic stabilizing mechanisms". She added that "Uruguay, in fact, is one of the few countries that has had for long time unemployment insurance, but most social security systems are still fragmented and with a range of benefits not fit to face the current crisis. In Latin America, we haven't yet moved from the social programme to the social security system", said Grynspan stressing one of the key challenges for the region. ■



The global crisis seen from the regional perspective of Rebeca Grynspan

Prof. Manfred Nowak in extensive visit

UN rapporteur raises up prisons problems

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Manfred Nowak, visited Uruguay from 20th to 28th March 2009.

During his stay in the country, Mr. Nowak held personal meetings with people from the Government, legislators, members of the Parliament, the diplomatic community and civil society representatives. He also gathered with the United Nations Country Team, whose members introduced him to the diverse projects taking place in our country, related to the topics of his mandate.

In the press conference held before his departure, on Friday 27th March, in which also participated the United Nations Resident Coordinator, Mr. Pablo Mandeville, Nowak claimed for urgent changes to be made in the Uruguayan penitentiary system, and to the attention payed to juveniles in conflict with the law, by the juvenile justice.

The Special Rapporteur put forward detention situations as well as the need for new programmes on attention and treatment. "Many, if not all, of the problems faced by the penitentiary system and the juvenile justice system are a direct result of the lack of a comprehensive criminal or penitentiary policy. Prisoners have hardly any opportunities for rehabilitation and preparation for reinsertion into society. In some cases, they are only allowed outside their cells for two hours per week. This lack of activities, coupled with the conditions of detention, perpetuate the problem and lead to higher criminality", said Mr. Nowak at the press conference.

In particular, Nowak recommended to the Government the following¹:

- Undertake a fundamental reform of the criminal justice system aimed at the prevention of crime and the resocialization of offenders, rather than punitive measures and a policy of simply locking suspected and convicted criminals away from society;
- Create a Ministry of Justice, responsible for the penitentiary system and encompassed in a comprehensive reform of the criminal justice and penitentiary policy;
- Increase the use of non-custodial measures as a means to reduce the overcrowding of prisons;
- Separate pre-trial detainees from convicted prisoners;

His final report will be presented in a few months to the United Nations Human Rights Council. ■

1 / Extract from the Assessment presented by Mr. Nowak on the press conference held on Friday 27th March 2009



Prof. Manfred Nowak, at the press conference held as a closure of his visit to Montevideo, on 27th March 2009

In contact with the UN reform

UNIFEM Executive Director calls for “parity in political institutions”

The Executive Director to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), Inés Alberdi, visited Uruguay on 26 and 27 of March. She had a tight agenda of meetings with representatives from the government, the legislative branch and representatives of civil society organizations.

Alberdi's visit had two objectives: to familiarize herself with the "United in Action" pilot experience and to participate in workshops on the work of UNIFEM.

During her visit, Alberdi also launched the report "Who answers to women? Gender and Accountability", and gave a press conference together with the Director of UNIFEM Regional Office for Brazil and South America, Ana Falú, and the Coordinator of UNIFEM Country Program in Uruguay, Mariana González Guyer.

Speaking to the press, the Executive Director of UNIFEM highlighted the increase in legislation related to gender violence in several countries, and referred to the Social Quota Law approved on 24 March by the Uruguayan House of Representatives, which requires political parties to include at least one woman for every two men in future voting lists. "The quota system is a step, but it's not enough, since the main goal is to prevent such situations from occurring and to obtain gender parity in political institutions", said Alberdi. ■



UNIFEM Executive Director Inés Alberdi, UNIFEM Regional Director Ana Falú, UNIFEM Country Programme Coordinator, Mariana González Guyer, and members of the UNCT in Uruguay, during a meeting in Montevideo

"All of us – men and women, soldiers and peacekeepers, citizens and leaders – have a responsibility to help end violence against women. States must honour their commitments to prevent violence, bring perpetrators to justice and provide redress to victims. And each of us must speak out in our families, workplaces and communities, so that acts of violence against women cease."

Message of the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, on the International Women's Day

Joint Projects: letter by letter

Project C

"Development of instruments for monitoring the environment and territory"

Project products: Support the policies for environmental protection through the development of monitoring instruments that incorporate socio-economic, environmental, and territorial indicators at the national scale along with a strong component on the Uruguayan coast. Strengthen the National Emergency System with information and data to improve its operations, decision-making ability, and management.

Participating Agencies: Executing Agencies: UNEP and UNESCO. Associated Agencies: FAO, IOM, PAHO/WHO and UNDP

National implementing associates: Ministry of Transportation and Public Works, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Land, Agriculture and Fishing, Ministry of National Defense, Ministry of Housing, Land Use Management and Environment, National Statistics Institute, National Emergency System and the Office of Planning and Budget.

Budget (2008-2010): USD 621.670 ■



University professor Victoria Agazzi traveled from Valencia, Spain, to teach a course in the advanced management of gvSIG to technicians of the Ministries of Livestock, Agriculture and Fishing; Public Transportation; and Housing, Territory Organization and Environment. This was held within the framework of Project C from the pilot process "United in Action" in Uruguay.

gvSIG: is a tool oriented towards the management of geographical information characterized by a friendly outline, able to access the most usual formats quickly, both raster as well as vector graphics. It integrates local and remote data through an origin WMS, WCS or WFS. It is a free software tailored to final users of geographical information, both professionals and civil servants. ■

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