

[ESPAÑOL](#)    [FRANÇAIS](#)

*Amidst its differences, humanity very often finds itself working as one. Examples of cooperation, generosity and selflessness touch the heart, and the differences fade. In its*

*pages One World One Humanity brings highlights of the association between Shri Ram Chandra Mission and UN DPI communicating that ideal of oneness.*

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Inside      November 2011

UN 64<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL DPI/ NGO CONFERENCE: SEEDS OF HOPE      1-4

"CONFRONTING FAMILY POVERTY"

2011, UNIVERSAL FAMILY DAY  
Latvia, Oceania, South Africa, United States      5-7

"CHANGE YOUR WORLD"

2011, INTERNATIONAL DAY OF YOUTH  
India, Oceania, South Africa, United States      8-10

"MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD... BE THE CHANGE"

2011, INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE  
Gujarat India, Oceania, Singapore, South Africa, United States      10-11

UPCOMING EVENTS      12

WEB ARCHIVES      13

# One World One Humanity



**64th Annual UN Department of Public Information  
Non-Governmental Organizations Conference  
Bonn, Germany • 3-5 September 2011**

**COMMIT ● ENCOURAGE ● VOLUNTEER**

Photo: UN 64th Annual DPI / NGO Conference: Seeds of hope

## A nnual UN Conference of NGOs Focuses on Sustainable Living

Participants: Ekta Bouderlique - France, Monique Divanach - Switzerland

The 64<sup>th</sup> conference of the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI) for Non-Governmental Organizations titled, "Sustainable Societies; Responsive Citizens" was held in Bonn from 3 to 5 September.

Shri Ram Chandra Mission is one among the more than 1,500 NGOs affiliated with DPI and was represented by two abhayasis, Ekta Bouderlique from France and Monique Divanach from Switzerland.

The conference was an effort to mobilize civil society to think, find ways and cooperate in building sustainable lives and societies. Sustainable development means a way of improving the standard of living that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

At the opening ceremony and during the round tables, experts, officials and youth gave a clarion call to emphasize the gravity of the environmental challenges such as from climate change, and food insecurity, and monetary and financial instability facing the world today. They spoke of the need for a

## Sahaj Marg Around the World    UN DPI / NGO Conference: Seeds of hope

real change in current attitudes towards development and what it meant by a better standard of living if it was not sustainable and equitable. They spoke of the important role of civil society, especially the ethic of volunteerism in educating people on sustainable living. Youth delivered new ideas and vision with splendid dynamism.

For three days, roundtables, workshops and side events were organized by some 1,500 participants from 70 countries. They shared perspectives and experiences on sustainable livelihoods and made headway in building networks and partnerships to tackle common challenges.

In the workshops SRCM volunteers took part, the experiences and the sharing, especially on formal and non-formal education in sustainable development and on values-based education was valuable. It was wonderful to share the seeds of hope, the strong enthusiasm nourishing the commitment of many and, above all, feel a merging of common vision for the future of the planet and humankind, even if expressed in diverse forms.

The final conference declaration will contribute to the two-day special session of the UN General Assembly during the [10th Anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers](#) in December

2011, and assist in the preparations for the UN Conference on Sustainable development Known also known as [Rio +20](#) in June 2012.

To know more about the conference: <<http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/ngoconference/pid/16700>>

### A symbolic start with “Planting a tree: stop talking, start planting”

The 64th United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI) NGO Conference was kicked off by a tree planting ceremony near the site of the conference.



Photo: Jürgen Nimptsch, Mayor of Bonn (left) with Felix Finkbeiner (right) about to release 64 balloons as part of the tree planting ceremony in the presence of Dr. Vandana Shiva of India. .

## Sahaj Marg Around the World

Felix Finkbeiner wasn't shy about spreading his message of "stop talking, start planting". This 13-year-old boy, who started 'Plant for the Planet' four years ago as a school project, covered the mayor of Bonn's mouth with his hand to symbolize the need for action and not rhetoric in reducing carbon emissions. His organization has planted more than 1 million trees in Germany and his goal is to plant one trillion trees around the world by 2050.

Interesting event to kick off three days of tireless speeches and exchanges!

## Introductory speeches Roundtables, Workshops

The introductory speeches started with reminding participants about the challenges that humanity faces and the urgency of actions.

Some quotations: "We must not wait catastrophes to contribute towards challenges we have to face". "Ideas will be brought forward to UNO and other conferences". "In the many ways of contributions to more sustainable societies, volunteering is one of the most powerful as it can change attitudes and practices". "Each one has an important role to play: to commit, to engage, to volunteer". "We need responsive citizens to make sure that we have the right policies, to put into practice and to change: we have to connect the

dots between policies and initiatives". "All resources are becoming commodities. The model of economy is based on the separation between real and abstract economies. It also separates earth from humanity. We have to reconcile economy and ecology." "We have to change the paradigm of growth. Other ways are possible: don't be silent, be pro-active. RIO conference will encourage innovation and creativity."

Roundtables were formal but more and more participants asked the keynote speakers relevant questions. For instance, they pointed out the fact that this conference about sustainability and responsive citizens was held in a four star hotel, overly air-conditioned, a huge waste of lights and plastics, paper etc. - what kind of example was it?

## Workshops

Many workshops with 20 – 50 participants were proposed on the following major themes:

- Transition to sustainable consumption and production
- Solutions for green economy
- The role of education in engaging citizens
- Proposals from civil society
- Volunteering for a sustainable future and better communities
- Engaging youth towards a green economy; competencies 2.0
- Preparing RIO 2012

The workshops and roundtables ended in discussions that led to many interactions formal and informal.

## UN DPI / NGO Conference: Seeds of hope



UN 64th Annual DPI/NGO Conference: Seeds of hope

# ONE WORLD ONE HUMANITY

Page 4

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The networking that was established permitted many NGO's to reach out to similar minded organizations to enhance their spread and deepen their work. Prominent speakers and activists such as Dr Vandana Shiva- quite the star of the event with her eloquent and powerful communication - met and exchanged notes with all kinds of people to infuse enthusiasm and spread new ideas on sustainable futures for our planet.

Most of all, SRCM volunteers Ekta and Monique spent time being attentive to what was being offered and keeping a state of prayer in our hearts for human evolution. This state of prayer brought a lovely receptivity and gratitude that made some extraordinary meetings and observations possible for Ekta and Monique. Both were received by the abhyasis of SRCM Bonn Centre who were absolutely charming in their hospitality. On Sunday they attended satsangh in the littlest possible centre seen by them but so fully functional that it was like a "dollhouse" meditation hall!

## Meanderings

### *Monique Divanach*

"I really appreciated discovering and learning about fruitful national or international experiences conducted by ecovillages (and their global networks) and by religious or spiritual movements such as Findhorn / UK (values based education), and Nano Nagle Centre for Heritage, Spirituality and Ecology / Ireland.

I felt like a new or young gardener visiting different gardens already full of fruits and wonderful flowers and discussing the matter with other gardeners. We shared these seeds of hope, the strong enthusiasm nourishing their commitment, and I could more than once feel a common conscience even if expressed in various forms.

In the side event managed by young people, I felt as if the requested change of paradigm has already happened, they think and act in a different way: they are much more connected, they dare much more, and they volunteer joyfully.

We did not contribute directly to the final declaration which you can read on the web site. It seemed changed quite a lot from the draft, including many of the concerns that were expressed and shared during these special days. I felt grateful to my Master for this opportunity to participate and be there during this conference."

### *Ekta Bouderlique*

"The Bonn Conference came as a pleasant surprise as I felt that "we are not alone" - in this concern for human evolution, in this race to save the planet, in this surge of pushing "love and peace" on the international agenda. The various forms it took made it all the more joyful and like children going to a fair, one felt uplifted and energized.

Over the couple of days I spent time exchanging and meeting in amazing synchronicity, some of the most interesting people from

various corners of the world. The meetings were simple - over a cup of coffee or during a talk in a workshop, but they are creating very interesting waves as even last week I was contacted by the Nano Nagle centre so that we could organize a visit to the Laalaji Memorial Omega International School.

It stretched the mind and the heart to see that efforts for human evolution can be made in so many different ways. For once I did not feel the need to reach out to people and show them the beautiful treasure that I carried called "Sahaj Marg" within me. It was all over the place here !! Just in varied depths. That feeling of being in a room full, rather halls full of "brothers and sisters" sharing a world that I lived in, was indeed liberating.

SRCM has been making super human efforts, mostly through volunteerism, to uplift the human consciousness for decades and the work goes in the silence of human hearts filled with love for the divine in simple brotherhood across the globe.

But for all that silence, I realized, as I walked out of the conference's closing ceremony, SRCM is certainly making quite a clamor in the world of good will and peace because "some" experiences go beyond regular communication channels and register their passage in the records of the collective consciousness- however silent and unseen - surely and rapidly transforming towards a higher dimension to the joy and benefit of us all." †

## Sahaj Marg Around the World UN INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FAMILIES

### C onfronting Family Poverty

was the theme for the United Nations International Day of Families, this past 15 May 2011. Events organized by members of Shri Ram Chandra Mission, took place in meditation centres, ashrams, and in the community. The programmes focused on the impact of poverty on the family. Family, friends, and community, invited to participate and commemorate the day, explored ideas together on creating love and harmony in one's life and family. Especially poignant, was the agreement that the impact of prayer, inner reflection and contemplation is the real help in becoming more open and responsive to the needs of others. Part of all programmes included a prayer-meditation for the welfare of humanity.

**Latvia, South Africa, Oceania and the United States** reported



Photo: SRCM Riga, Latvia; International Day of Families 2011

events. *Families Australia* recognized Australia with a Certificate of Appreciation for the second year in a row.

The meditation centre in **Riga, Latvia** celebrated the United Nations International Day of Families on Sunday 15 May 2011. Twenty-one adults gathered for talks, presentations, a prayer session and reception. It was a wonderful opportunity to be together for sharing views, interacting and praying for others. We had

invited members of other spiritual movements and found it very useful to exchange views on the topic. It felt like a family atmosphere.

**Lenasia, South Africa** continued their UN Prayer Programme initiative with the International Day of Families on 15 May. A prayer event at the Lenasia Ashram was followed by a family picnic at the Pretoria Botanical Gardens the same afternoon. A welcome message and invitation was sent to the community to attend either event, or simply contribute to the spirit of universal brotherhood and togetherness on Family Day by closing their eyes at 21h00 and maintaining the thought, for about fifteen minutes, that all people of the world are becoming peace loving and pious. "As always we were happy to support the United Nations in its tremendous service to humanity". ‡



Photo: SRCM: Lenasia Ashram; 2011 International Day of Families

## Sahaj Marg Around the World UN INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FAMILIES

**S**hri Ram Chandra Centres in Oceania; Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Auckland and Dunedin, commemorated this year's Family Day. Families, friends, and community were invited. The theme, "Confronting Family Poverty", aimed at raising awareness of the plight of families living in poverty. Non-denominational prayer/meditation and discussion about the significance of this UN Commemorative Day was shared.

In Sydney, the 50 minute event started right after a sumptuous breakfast. Br. David and Br. Arjun conducted the PowerPoint presentation. The children showed a filmed interview, which they had made, to the audience. The question asked and answered by the kids was "If they had only \$1.25 for the whole week, how would they feel and how would they



Photo: SRCM Lenasia; Pretoria Botanical Gardens; International Day of Families 2011

use the money?" The kids' presentation was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

In Perth, three workshops were conducted with the children who attend regularly the VBSE and discussed family and the less fortunate families. Children were made to realize how lucky they were to have such families as they were describing. They also became aware that all were not so lucky and proposed many ways to help the less fortunate. It culminated with the understanding that prayer was the easiest, cheapest, most powerful means available in the heart of everyone.

With a teenage abhyasi conducting the programme, a very touching rendition of John Lennon's song, "Imagine", accompanied by music, was sung by



Photo: SRCM OCEANIA; International Day of Families

one of the children. A second child spoke about how precious it is to have a family, and a third child presented a very beautiful giant drawing about her family and its member activity. Silent prayer was observed by everyone. Arlette made the closing talk before departing; yummy pizzas and homemade cakes were served. †



Photo: SRCM OCEANIA; International Day of Families

## Sahaj Marg Around the World UN INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FAMILIES

In the United States, Plainsboro New Jersey Center and Sunderland Ashram reported events in observance of Family Day.

**Plainsboro New Jersey Center** commemorated with an extended Sunday Satsangh. They asked what could be more appropriate than to be with our brothers and sisters and discuss the topic as a 'family'?

To understand the 'basics' of the UN DPI and SRCM connection, this programme started with a slideshow about the principles of the United Nations Department of Public Information (UN-DPI), a definition of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and how they help to achieve UN-DPI's goals and principles, and how these principles match what we do in SRCM as a non-profit organization.

After the initial presentation, there was a brief explanation of the day's event and the topic given by the UN: 'Family Day - Confronting Family Poverty'. After some 'silent' participation, where brothers and sisters collected their thoughts, everyone joined in the discussion and gave their views on what they thought would be a resolution to the issue.

There were many solutions discussed as part of a resolution to the problem, and everyone agreed that although there was no one solution to eradicate the

issue of 'family poverty', we should continue to help in whatever way we can, in the material sense. The only real solution to the problem is 'praying for everyone'. Once the discussion was over, everyone watched the presentation provided which included Master's lovely quotes. Finally, all sat for a 'prayer' session which concluded the event.



"We come here solely to develop our hearts, clean them, refine them and restore to them the original nature when the heart was an instrument of love, and therefore could manifest the human qualities of compassion, mercy, caring for others, sharing with others, and living in harmony with others, all of which nowadays, virtually, have ceased to exist."

Shri P Rajagopalachari at the Latin America and Oceania Seminar, Oct 14, 2010, Chennai, India  
<http://www.sahajmarg.org/literature/online/speeches/restore-the-heart-to-its-original-nature>

your money, but how much Love your heart can hold." Together, breakfast was tidied up, the group headed into the meditation hall and watched the power point presentation, which emphasized the qualities of a human being. After which, 15 minutes of silent prayer-meditation was observed. ‡

## Sahaj Marg Around the World UN INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY 2011

The International Day of Youth offers the world an opportunity to recognize the potential of youth and to celebrate their achievements.

The All-India Essay Writing Event to commemorate the International Day of Youth was conducted in schools, colleges, and Shri Ram Chandra Mission ashrams. This prestigious annual event is a collaborative effort of the United Nations Information Centre for India and Bhutan [UNIC] and Shri Ram Chandra Mission [SRCM] to celebrate the International Day of Youth observed on the 12 August every year.

Both organizations, dedicated to the creation of a peaceful human society, founded upon love and harmony, believe that this can be achieved best by the inculcation of moral and spiritual values in younger generations, in whom lies the hope of a better tomorrow.

Students, teachers and parents from the 2010 Award Ceremonies expressed "happiness and wonder that Shri Ram Chandra Mission as a whole is taking great interest in organizing such events which inculcate moral and ethical values in youth".<sup>1</sup>

There are two topic categories for awards. Category 1; [classes 9 through 12]; topic "*Change and the world changes for you*";

<sup>1</sup> (One World One Humanity Newsletter, Vol 5 Issue 1, April 2011. Shri Ram Chandra Mission ® )

### All-India Essay Writing Event 2011

Commemorating the International Day of Youth

ORGANIZED BY



SHRI RAM CHANDRA MISSION

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE



UNITED NATIONS INFORMATION CENTRE FOR INDIA AND BHUTAN

Category 2; [Upper Grades and Post Graduate]; topic "*Success must bestow humility*".

Special trophies and prizes will be awards for the best three essays by language. It is the hope of the organizers that the oppor-

tunity and experience of the participants, in reflecting upon higher values will be its own reward. Details on the event can be found at

<<http://www.sahajmarg.org/resources/un-dpi/events/essay-writing-event>>. +



"Because by working for yourself, faithfully, sincerely, the future of humanity can change. You should not think, "How can I change the world?" You are not going to change the world. But when you change, the world will change...So this is what we have to offer to all of you."

—P. Rajagopalachari, *Youth: a Time of Promise and for Effort*, p 69

## Sahaj Marg Around the World UN INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY 2011 "Change Your World"

**S**hri Ram Chandra Mission around the world commemorated United Nations International Youth Day on 12 August 2011, with the Theme "Change Your World". SRCM suggests that through prayer, achievement of this ideal can happen more quickly.

Numerous prayer-meditation events around the globe observing the International Day of Youth were hosted by SRCM Centers and Ashrams. The events are welcome to all. **Reported event highlights from South Africa, the United States, and Oceania follow.**

In **South Africa**, Shri Ram Chandra Mission, hosted prayer programmes for upper and middle grade school students from various backgrounds and denominations for UN International Youth Day highlights. The students sat quietly and focused on the thought that all people in the world are becoming peace-loving and pious. At Woolhope Secondary School in Malabar Port Elizabeth, South Africa, seventy-five grade eleven students participated in the event. Fifty-three grade six and seven pupils at Cavandish Primary School in Durban participated in the prayer programme offered. All reported enjoying the event and feeling very peaceful.

From UN Youth Day at the **North American Teen Camp, Molena Ashram, United States**, one of



Photos: South Africa, Youth Day 2011 prayer event

the participants, Kirthini reported on Youth Day.

The UN Youth Day fell on the last full day of the North American Teen Camp. By that point, we had all gotten to know each other very well.

**"Happiness, of course, is necessary to end all grief... To come up to the level of real happiness we must necessarily rise above ourselves, which is essential for the creation of atmosphere of universal love."**

Excerpts of Ram Chandra's Letter to the UNO  
8 July 1957

The first part of the day, we listened to some of Master's talks to the youth; how the youth can change the world. ("How to Create Change in the World"). Many of the campers felt empowered; especially since Master had said in the talks that we can change the world by becoming better people ourselves. I think many took comfort from knowing that by changing our own actions, we can inspire the people around us to act like us; and change the

world without any drastic measures. The connection that had grown among us during the camp was a source of inspiration for us; all of us working together would be able to change world in the small ways Master had mentioned.

The second part of the day we spent at a nearby state park, near a river. We all had lunch and spent time together at the river. One thing that happened there showed me how even our smallest actions can change the world for the better. When we reached the river, there was a small group of teens there. These teens were smoking and had definitely not come from the spiritual environment that we had. I was uncomfortable with their presence, since we were all here to have a good time, and I did not want any negative influences to ruin the atmosphere. It turned out that my worries were unnecessary. Within 15 minutes of arriving, this group of people left and we enjoyed our time together at the river without ruining our spiritual condition.

## Sahaj Marg Around the World UN INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY 2011

One of the team leaders, Shelley Gould Burgess, said that throughout the day's program, "the teens expressed a greater sense of empowerment to improve the world by improving themselves internally rather than assuming that change comes only from external action. The visions and hopes of the teens for the future of humanity were uplifting to all present." †

For the UN International Day of Youth in **Brisbane, Melbourne, Auckland and Wellington**, Shri Ram Chandra Mission organized outreach programmes to celebrate youth, and offered the community a prayer/meditation session, a presentation conveyed by SRCM's children and youth presentations on the theme: "Change Your World".

These programmes were felt to

be an opportunity highlighting the need to inspire, guide and advance youth's full and effective participation constructing a peaceful and loving future fundamental to the future of the human race.

Taking place on 14 August, a non-denominational prayer/meditation was offered along with a multi-generational discussion regarding the significance of this UN Commemorative Day. Included was a reference talk by P. Rajagopalachari from "Heartspeak 2008", 'Change Your World by Changing Yourself'. Good synergy resulted with youth taking up the core throughout the presentations and engaging discussions.

There was a report of the event by a journalist from the "Epoch

Times" who participated in the **Brisbane** Commemoration and took pictures, and another guest participated who had spent a week at the ashram in Shajahanpur and met Babuji in 1975.

### UN DAY OF PEACE 2011

21 September 2011

**F**or Peace Day 2011 using the theme, "Make Your Voice Heard...Be the Change...", events took place in **Australia; New Zealand; Gujarat, India; Singapore; South Africa and the United States**.

**Sydney, Australia, and Dunedin and Wellington, New Zealand** observed UN Peace Day.

Fifty-four adults and 7 children of all age groups participated. The programmes included various contributions such as a video from TED who has been a UN ambassador, a children's presentation where they talked about their views on what peace means to them and how we can build a peaceful world around us. The concluding presentation was a melodious choir performance in Sydney.

In Wellington, after impromptu discussions on the Peace Day quotes, the Youth held a premier of a short film they had made about UN Peace Day.



**"To dissipate the idea of the individual self and to work harmoniously for the common good is the demand of the time... We must learn how to create within the heart a feeling of universal love, which is the surest remedy of all evils."**

**Babuji's letter to the United Nations, 8th July, 1957**  
(Letters of the Master Vol. I Page no. 130,131 & 132)

## Sahaj Marg Around the World

### "Make Your Voice Heard... Be the Change..."

They wore white T-shirts they had designed in commemoration of the occasion. Everyone present felt touched and amazed by the film, and by the great effort the Youth displayed.

**Dunedin** had a relaxed event around a cup of tea.

In **India, Gujarat** organized a Peace Day prayer meeting at



Photo: SRCM Oceania International Day of Peace

twenty-nine locations. Invitation cards were distributed to friends and family, and 525 abhyasis and 1,600 guests participated in the events. **Jamnagar**, at four locations, had 400 participants, 200 in **Bhavnagar** and 50 in **Porbander**.

In **Kadi**, the same was organized in a school and wherein 225 guests and abhyasis attended; Sixty of them attended in **Bhuj** centre and similarly in **Rajkot** centre. The universal prayer displayed in Gujarati in a banner, for the benefit of the entire audience, was helpful in memorizing the prayer.<sup>1</sup>

The **Singapore Centre** observed the UN International Day of Peace. Twenty-four adults and eight children attended the

event held at the West Coast Park. There was an interactive, informative and purposeful session in the park. SRCM literature promoting peace was used for a presentation, followed by a meditation for peace. A potluck dinner was included in the festivities.

**South Africa** commemorated Peace Day and observed that "The power of a compassionate heart is considered a deep secret of peace making, and we seek to harness the power of the hearts on this special day for the good of our beautiful country and the world. Join us in the Universal Prayer at 2100 hours when we sit quietly and focus on the thought that all people in the world are becoming peace loving and pious"

*"The power of a compassionate heart is considered a deep secret of peace making..."*

South Africa, in an invitation to pray for peace

**In the United States, Southeastern CT Centre**, co-hosted a programme with the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Centre (Mystic, CT), commemorating the International Day of Peace. A group of 18 adults, (included 13 guests), hiked up an easy trail to the venue after a brief history of this site and a poem about peace.

## UN DAY OF PEACE 2011



Photo: SRCM Wellington, New Zealand: Creative Tshirts made for the occasion of International Day of Peace 2011 by Wellington Youths Rohan Kul-karni, Shreya Joshi, Narayan Mani, Shriram Mani and Shushruth Joshi"

**The site is the location of the first peace temple built for the purpose in the West since Rome. Forty-two large gatherings - 10,000 attendees- were sponsored by the Universal Peace Union from 1866 - 1902.**

At the venue, Maggie Jones, the Nature Center Director, spoke about the UN Peace Day and Marsha Thompson introduced the importance of meditation to regulate the mind in order to create an environment conducive to peace within and without.

After a 15-minute prayer meditation, cider and muffins were shared and informal discussions ensued about meditation and the history of the Peace Sanctuary. Peace Day was a compelling observance to many in the community. There was an awe-inspiring awareness of the event even among people who had to work during the noon hour. ‡

<sup>1</sup> (Adapted from Echoes India Newsletter , Volume 4, Issue 6)



## The UN Conference on Sustainable Development

Twenty years after the first Earth Summit, the world will take stock of where its future is heading at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012. The current world population of 7 billion is expected to rise to 9 billion in forty years. Will future generations have access to the finite and diminishing natural resources that today we use in unsustainable ways? What can we do as individuals, as families, societies and nations to provide a decent life today without compromising the needs of future generations? What future do we want?

For more, visit: [www.un.org/sustainablefuture](http://www.un.org/sustainablefuture)

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## UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS, 2011-2012

**20** NOVEMBER, 2011 U.N. UNIVERSAL CHILDREN'S DAY

**10** DECEMBER, 2011 U.N. HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

**15** MAY, 2012 U.N. INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FAMILIES

**12** AUGUST, 2012 U.N. INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY

**21** SEPTEMBER, 2012 U.N. WORLD PEACE DAY

