



The United Nations in partnership with the Millenium Film Festival welcomes you to the screening of

“NO WOMAN NO CRY”

A film by Christy Turlington Burns



Dr Goedele Liekens (UNFPA Goodwill Ambassador and media personality),

Clinical psychologist and sexologist, she was elected Miss Belgium in 1987. In 1999, Ms Liekens became Goodwill Ambassador and Spokesperson for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) after which she produced several documentaries about underdevelopment issues such as HIV/AIDS and women's health-rights throughout the world. Recently, she visited Botswana, Afghanistan and various Pakistani refugee camps. Her last missions took her to Ethiopia and Nigeria, together with singer Natalie Imbruglia, to report on fistula. Ms Liekens runs an independent TV production company and her own monthly magazine under the name "Goedele". The magazine covers diverse topics such as trends in society, injustice, rebellion, relationships, sexuality and the struggle of women in the world. Since August 2010, she has hosted her own weekly television talk show on the Flemish channel VTM.



Pascale Maquestiau (Le Monde selon Les Femmes)

When she was 25 years old, Pascale became a nurse specializing in Tropical Medicine in Bolivia, and started her international career. After 12 years experience in development projects, Ms Maquestiau decided to specialize in gender, development, reproductive and sexual rights in the field and practised advocacy in Latin America. Ms Maquestiau has helped organisations to empower women, to advance women's rights and women's political participation through the development of education tools. Together with other associations on gender in the Francophone world and Latin-America, she is one of the organizers of the 11th International Women and Health meeting to be held in Brussels in September.



Dagmar Schumacher (Director UN Women Brussels)

Prior to joining UN Women Ms Schumacher worked at the Headquarters of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme in Bonn. For five years she held both positions: Chief, Partnerships Section, UNV as well as of Donor Relations Adviser on Germany for UNDP. From 1998 - 2002 she was working with UNDP in Hanoi, heading the Poverty and Social Development Unit. Ms Schumacher started her career with the United Nations in 1990 as Junior Professional Officer in the Regional Office of UNIFEM in the Andean Region. Subsequently, she was the UNIFEM focal point in Buenos Aires, Argentina in preparation of the Latin-American Preparatory Conference for the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. She holds a Master's Degree in 'Oecotrophologie' from Kiel University.



The debate will be moderated by Sietske Steneker (Director UNFPA Brussels).



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Film festival to raise awareness of millennium goals

Interview in Agence Europe with director of the UN Office in Brussels and director of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Brussels- Antonio Vigilante

The eight goals that were set for the year 2015 by all UN member states will be presented to the public in Brussels in an altogether fresh way from June 8th onwards: a documentary film festival will be held to raise people's awareness of the real challenges of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), presenting these objectives with a human face, beyond the sheer numbers - such is the wish of Mr. Antonio Vigilante, who is also one a member of the jury of the third Millennium International Documentary Film Festival organised by the Diogène association and supported by the UN office in Brussels and the MDG Achievement Fund. In an interview with AGENCE EUROPE, he discussed the interest of documentary films, the meaning of the festival and the hope it generates.

Why is the United Nations a major partner in a cultural event like a film festival?

Certainly, cinematographic art is not the first priority in the task that we are trying to achieve. We are supporting this festival because it's a special one. First of all, it's a festival of documentary films, rather than fiction. Next, it's an international festival focusing on the Millennium Development Goals - probably the best and newest representation of what international development cooperation should achieve. But not many people know about this so, through this documentary film festival, we are taking the opportunity to make the Millennium Goals better known. However, leaving aside the purely informative aspect, I think that, even if we talk about globalisation every day, it remains very abstract. We need to humanise globalisation, by understanding the impact and effect of our actions in the world, be it climate change or financial crises. But how can this be done? Perhaps through documentaries because you see situations, you see people, you see real human stories. We can awaken empathy and make people feel they are in other people's shoes. And then perhaps they can will understand why the Millennium Goals are so important and what they really mean.

How have the Millennium Development Goals been presented on film?

The Festival is entirely independent, our support is just partial and we don't interfere in the management. The films were chosen on the basis of their quality. The link with the Millennium Goals did not come until after the films had been made. For instance, this year there will be a lot on environment, on culture, the status of women and on North Africa. It happens that those topics are seen as more relevant, more dramatic, more interesting. And obviously, climate change has brought the environment and sustainable development issues to the forefront. For example, migration is a very frequent topic. Because it tries to show what the human face means in an issue that is often, especially in Europe, associated with crime. But the truth is that these are desperate people fleeing death and misery in the search of dignity and a better life. Humanising the discussion, showing what it means, always captures the imagination of film-makers.

Why do you think the documentary is more powerful, more likely to have a positive impact on viewers?

Over time, I started to better understand its strength. In a documentary, we have a narrator, who looks at reality and shows you what s/he has seen. It shows reality through the eyes of someone who is immersed in it and, because of that, it comes with empathy. This perspective is very powerful. Normally, we ask people to support something that is for them very abstract: - Let's cut poverty in half; - Let's reduce child mortality by two-thirds. It only looks like statistics. A documentary film helps people understand this very basic concept - the Millennium Development Goals are about life and improving lives, not just numbers or money.

It is crucial to show through documentary films that whether the MDG are reached or not makes a huge difference for hundreds of thousands, millions, of people. However, I personally feel that people talk about such matters in an increasingly abstract way. They don't think: "What would I do if it was my son or daughter." Such empathy in our generation is more and more scarce. I can see from the generation of our grandparents, perhaps because the information was less frequent and less accessible, that they were a lot more sensitive to the lives of others, even people very far away from them. But today, we tend to consider other people and their lives like make-believe. I don't know if it is only my personal impression. I remember people watching news of a drought in Africa on television, and I remember distinctly when I was a child that people were crying in response to the news. I have never again seen this kind of thing over the last 40 years. It means that we are harder, we are more competitive and have less time and interest to think about others, we think it's not our business. We think development is someone else's job. At the end of the festival, we will be happy if people say "Well, maybe it's my business too."

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