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contents
contributing writers are listed in italics

4 Broadening Opportunities for South Asia:
Conference Helps Define Regional Identity

6 Entomology and Physics Professors
Recognized for Innovative Global Research
Christine Moritz

8 Experts Explore US and UM Role in Global Food
Systems at Second Annual World Hunger Conference
Christine Moritz

13 New UM Confucius Institute is First in Global Network

14 Ambassadorial Lecture Series Enters its Fifth Year

14 Bushrui Honors Mote
with Wisdom of the Irish Book Dedication

16 Think Outside Your Borders, Study Abroad

photo credits/notes (by page)

front Parul Christian, Dr.PH, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

FRONT COVER Women process shrimp in Karachi, Pakistan

OPPOSITE Zang (Tibet) Style Folk Dance: Back of Bulls as a Cradle

Kelly Blake is the new communications coordinator for the Office of International Programs. She completed her M.A. in publications design from the University of Baltimore in 2005 and comes to OIP from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health where she was the communications/publications coordinator with the Center for Human Nutrition (in the Department of International Health) since 2001. She is excited to be back at her alma mater (she earned her B.A. in English and a certificate in Women Studies from University of Maryland, College Park in 1994) and working to promote the University's international programs through print and web publications. In addition to being the editor for MARYLAND INTERNATIONAL, she will be working to redesign and unify the websites for the Office of International Programs, International Education Services, Study Abroad, and the Institute for Global Chinese Affairs in the coming months. Comments or contributions for MARYLAND INTERNATIONAL or the websites should be sent to her at kellyb@umd.edu.
Ambassadors and leaders from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka came together with University of Maryland policy experts for a spring conference on the relationship between South Asia and the United States. Participants strategized ways to strengthen the infrastructure and economies of South Asian nations and promote greater cooperation within the region. Ambassador Tariq Karim, former ambassador of Bangladesh to the United States and senior advisor with the University of Maryland’s IRIS center, helped convene the conference hosted by the Office of International Programs on April 21, 2005. The goals for the conference were to broaden the understanding of “South Asia” to include countries other than India and Pakistan (those listed above, plus Bhutan and Maldives), to explore the global significance of this region which comprises nearly a quarter of the world’s population, and to raise the possibility of creating a South Asian Area Studies program at the University of Maryland.

In his presentation on trade and investment in South Asia, Ambassador C.M. Shafi Sami, a senior research fellow with the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, discussed South Asia’s recent rapid economic growth, characterized both by the existence of a huge and cheap labor force and by an expanding middle class population of technically skilled professionals. Nonetheless, compared to the rest of the world, a disproportionate number of South Asians still live below the poverty line. Sami stressed the mutual benefit that could result from greater U.S. investment in South Asia. While the U.S. is the largest foreign investor in South Asia, and also the destination for the largest percentage of South Asian exports, the exchange of resources is relatively small when compared to the financial relationship between the U.S. and China and other East Asian countries. He cited the fact that the U.S. has designated India as one of the “ten big emerging markets” and the signing of the South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA), scheduled to take effect in January 2006, as opportunities to strengthen the region’s economic influence and capacities.

South Asia’s rapid growth has taxed its natural resources and energy production capacity. Ambassador Lalit Mansingh from India, with the NGO Development Alternatives, explained the crucial need for regional cooperation to address management of dwindling energy and water resources. He cited the importance of searching for non-conventional energy sources to meet the growing demand, and suggested that water availability could be dramatically improved if countries collaborated to better harness the Indus and the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna rivers. He also suggested that the U.S. could become an active partner in environmental management in South Asia, which would have a positive impact on the global environment, as well as a regional economic development benefit.
Ambassador Najmuddin A. Shaikh of Pakistan, member of the Board of Governors of the Institute of Strategic Studies and senior vice president of the Karachi Council of Foreign Relations, explained that inadequate transportation and energy infrastructure in South Asia will hinder economic growth if not strategically and swiftly addressed. He said that the effective use of transit routes between Central and South Asia depends on the success of U.S. efforts to quell the Taliban movement in southern Afghanistan, as well as on the international aid effort, led momentarily by the United States, to invest in creating the necessary infrastructure. Also, since oil and electricity demands already exceed the region’s supply and are projected to double in the next two decades, there is a great need to develop adequate infrastructure to accommodate the growing need.

Ambassador Tariq Karim explored the relationship between development and security issues in South Asia, citing the coinciding emergence of insurgency movements with vacated political space in countries including Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. When governments neglect the periphery or are unable to provide all citizens with public goods and services, he suggested, vengeful and often, violent insurgency movements, like the Maoists in Nepal will move in to assert power. Karim warned of the grave implications these insurgency movements may have on regional and global security and urged the need to address the root causes of such movements, which he linked to the inadequacy or lack of a regional development process. He further suggested that the U.S. should play an influential role to ensure Nepal’s short- and long-term stability and promote freedom, democracy and development by urging the Nepalese government to adhere to international codes of conduct on human and labor rights and environmental standards. At the same time, he cautioned, this pressure must be balanced with an understanding of the negative impact that global economic policy changes, like the Multi-Fiber Arrangement (MFA) phase-out, has had on many garment workers, particularly in countries like Nepal. Without economic relief, he said, many displaced Nepalese workers could succumb to the insurgency movement. The end of the MFA regime, Karim noted, has also adversely affected the garment industry in Bangladesh and has weakened the country’s overall socio-economic development and already fragile democracy.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7
At the 2004 International Awards Ceremony, held during International Education Week in November, President C.D. Mote, Jr. presented the Distinguished International Service Award to Dr. Dale G. Bottrell and Provost William W. Destler presented the Landmark Award to Dr. James Robert Anderson.

The Distinguished International Service Award recognizes significant contributions to the development of international programs at UM. The Landmark Award is given for exceptional long-term achievements in support of international life at UM.

Dale G. Bottrell, Professor of Entomology at the University of Maryland, has provided key leadership in international programs for integrated pest management that have led directly to reductions in insecticide use in developing countries, improvement in the health of farm workers, and preservation of the environment.

After eight years at Texas A&M University and two with the President’s Council on Environmental Quality, Bottrell was hired in 1978 by the University of California at Berkeley to work for the Consortium for International Crop Protection (CICP). Through CICP, a USAID-financed...
Ambassador Nihal Rodrigo of Sri Lanka discussed the role of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), formed in 1985, in promoting economic growth and development in the region. He described the organization as being hindered by its mandated consensus decision-making process and the fact that leadership appointments are often politically motivated. Nonetheless, he spoke optimistically about the role SAARC has played in facilitating trade in the region. Ambassador Rodrigo also recommended that the U.S. should build a relationship with SAARC, as Japan and Canada have begun to do, since it is in the country’s economic and security interests.

Whether or not a South Asian Studies Program will imminently emerge at the University of Maryland, this conference generated vital discussion about the challenges facing South Asia and ways that the U.S. can transcend the current paradigm of the war against terrorism and see South Asia as a region with great economic and intellectual potential. Suggested areas for partnership included Internet technology (IT) and telecommunications, power and energy, health care, tourism, insurance, environmental management projects, and infrastructure development. Participants stressed that proactive partnerships in these areas could lift millions South Asians up from poverty and dramatically reduce many causes of instability, which would enhance regional, and by extension, global security—a primary goal of U.S. international policy.

Full text of papers presented and other conference documents may be viewed at http://www.intprog.umd.edu/southasia.html.
In December 2004, the Office of International Programs, the Joint Institute for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (JIFSAN), the Center for Sustainable Development, and the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources co-sponsored the Second Annual Conference on World Hunger.

The daylong conference began with remarks from University Provost William W. Destler. Dr. David Lineback, Director of JIFSAN, moderated the conference’s first session, “Setting the Stage for the United States’ Role in Fighting World Hunger.” Panelists were Emmy Simmons, Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID); Dr. Cliff Gabriel, Deputy to the Associate Director for Science in the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) in the Executive Office of the President; and Dr. Barbara O. Schneeman, Director of the Office of Nutritional Products, Labeling, and Dietary Supplements in the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Emmy Simmons explained that while world hunger has declined overall since the 1990s (chiefly because of the “spectacular” progress made by China), when China is excluded from the figures, world hunger is actually on the rise. Particularly critical is the situation in sub-Saharan Africa, a region where hunger is projected to sharply increase during the first decade of the new millennium.

Simmons examined three possible roles for the United States. One is for the U.S. to feed the world, a role she described as “unrealistic and unsustainable” because food aid generally goes toward emergency situations and fails to address the more chronic issue of households too poor to produce enough food on which to live. The second is to support national food security, where each country strives...
to be self-sufficient in its food production. Simmons said that this strategy was often “inefficient and inequitable,” as different countries have different resource endowments, and since government intervention tends to counter market forces and discourage production. She recommended a third role—that of strategic facilitation. This process aims to bring markets and science together by expanding trade opportunities, improving agricultural sustainability, using scientific and technological innovations, and broadening agricultural training and education.

Simmons concluded by saying that the U.S. should lead the continued movement toward free trade, promote private-sector investment in agriculture and trade, deliver effective development assistance, and provide safety nets in areas such as health care and education.

Cliff Gabriel began his presentation by saying that since the 1996 World Food Summit, which established a goal to cut the number of food-insecure people in half by 2015, the number has actually increased by an estimated 800 million. He also focused on the role of science in fighting world hunger, highlighting scientific techniques to improve production, nutritional value, food desirability, and food safety. Discussing access to food, Gabriel mentioned the complex role of behavior and market conditions.

Gabriel recommended conducting research to determine locally appropriate solutions targeted to the special needs of
each population. He stressed the importance of interdisciplinary and participatory collaborations, and of education to combat misconceptions on topics such as genetically modified crops.

Barbara Schneeman spoke of the importance of “broadening our concept of ‘world hunger’” to include not only under-nutrition, but also other areas related to food, diet, and health: food supply safety, over-nutrition, and overall health and well-being. She traced the progress achieved through the 19th and 20th centuries with regard to food, nutrition, and health, and explained that while micronutrient deficiencies have been eliminated as major issues in most developed countries, they continue to affect people in the developing world. In addition, not all people have sufficient quantity and quality of food, and chronic diseases associated with over-consumption are appearing as problems in all countries.

Schneeman outlined the consequences that specific nutrient deficiencies have on development, learning capacity, and work capacity. Citing issues associated with the areas mentioned before—undernutrition, food supply safety, over-nutrition, and overall health and well-being—she discussed approaches to improve nutrition status, including the use of nutritional supplements, the fortification of staple foods, improving the food supply through diversification of food resources, pre- and post-harvest strategies to improve the nutrient content of the food supply, and launching programs to encourage consumption of certain foods. She also discussed the use of food-based dietary guidelines to educate people about nutrition.
Following the first session, former congresswoman Dr. Jill Long Thompson, now Chief Executive Officer and Senior Fellow at the National Center for Food and Agricultural Policy, spoke on current policies for addressing world hunger. Saying that the challenges posed by hunger are more political than production-related in nature, Thompson said current policies were “not adequate” and should be changed.

Thompson described her experience on the House Select Committee on Hunger and on the Domestic Hunger Task Force, and her travels to Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa as Undersecretary of Agriculture for Rural Development. She noted that current policy favors concentration and benefits multinational agribusiness firms, to the detriment of small farmers. Describing poverty as a direct reflection of how we distribute wealth (or allow it to be distributed), Thompson said that the challenge is figuring out a way to find balance in economic and political systems around the world.

Thompson named the key factors in poverty reduction as capacity-building (for which she recommended providing education and assistance), technology, resources for macroeconomic stability, and political stability. She also emphasized the need to build coalitions and to address intertwined issues in a comprehensive way, rather than one segmented by area.

The second session of the conference, “Land Grant Universities and World Hunger,” was moderated by Dr. Thomas Fretz, Executive Director of the Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (NERA) and former dean of UM’s College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Panelists were Dr. William E. Kirwan, Chancellor of the University System of Maryland; Fretz himself (filling in for originally scheduled panelist Dr. Peter Magrath of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC)); and Distinguished University Professor Dr. Bruce Gardner, Interim Dean and Director of UM’s College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Kirwan spoke on land-grant universities and the U.S. funding system for agricultural research, and the relation between that system and the need for basic research that would aid efforts to alleviate hunger. He said that land-grant institutions have a three-part mission of education, research, and outreach, and for that reason, the funding system has evolved to favor specialized rather than basic research.

While Kirwan cited past research-based achievements in the fight against hunger, he admitted that the current funding situation is not conducive to accomplishing similar research. Public funding for agricultural research is comparatively low, while privately-funded, specialized research has flourished as biotechnology has made such research profitable. In addition to an increase in public funding, Kirwan recommended joint public-private research to follow the example set by the medical sciences.

He cited several encouraging developments: the NASULGC’s Food and Society Initiative, which seeks to fill the gaps in funding for agricultural research and education; a recent workshop by the National Academies of Science that recommended interdisciplinary research; and a report by a congressionally-mandated task force calling for the creation of a National Institute for Food and Agriculture, to be modeled after the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation. Kirwan also spoke of the importance of providing a global perspective so that graduates can understand the global environment in which agriculture functions.

Fretz provided a number of recommendations as to how the resources of the land-grant system could be mobilized: the formation of regional and national consortia...
with shared interests; the renewal of USAID programs to fund university international efforts in institution building; increasing the size and scope of competitive portfolios focusing on international activities; and creating “a university culture where international activities are at the core of learning experiences.”

Concluding the conference’s second session, Gardner discussed past and present roles for land-grant universities with regard to the problem of world hunger. Like Kirwan, he noted the three-pronged mission of such universities, and said that while agricultural research, academic programs, and extension activities are relevant to world hunger, solving the problem requires more than just improving agricultural production. Gardner said that it would be necessary for the poor to have greater purchasing power, emphasizing that there is “no substitute for economic growth.”

Addressing the issue of how land-grant universities could support economic growth in poor countries, Gardner recommended promoting agriculture as a means of generating income for farmers, and also promoting rural development by providing ideas and education to improve agricultural productivity and market functioning, and to create credit opportunities and alternative (i.e., non-farm) opportunities for rural employment.

The presentations and notes of the conference speakers are available online at www.mdagnpolicy.org/Conferences/world.htm.
The University of Maryland and the China National Office for Chinese as a Foreign Language (NOCFL) signed an agreement in November 2004 to establish the Confucius Institute here on campus. The first in a planned global network, the Confucius Institute at Maryland promotes Chinese language, literature, and culture by offering non-credit language instruction and other activities with a goal of fostering understanding and communication between cultures.

The UM Confucius Institute at Maryland, housed at the Institute for Global Chinese Affairs in the Taliaferro building, is the first Confucius Institute worldwide to host language programs. Since January 2005, the Institute has offered a Business Communication course, Intensive Chinese Language classes, and an Express Chinese Reading and Writing course.

In addition to language instruction, the Institute also offered a two-week summer camp in Chinese language and culture for children ages 7-14, where children learned Chinese calligraphy and handicrafts and learned to recognize Chinese characters and enter them on a computer keyboard.

In April, the Institute also hosted the Fourth Chinese Bridge Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign College Students, which brought together contestants from area universities to display their language fluency, knowledge of China, and talent in one of the traditional Chinese arts.

The Confucius Institute looks forward to growing in capacity in the coming years. Demand for its programs has been increasing—all language students served so far have expressed 100% satisfaction with the instruction they received, and all of the parents of summer camp children hoped that the summer camp could be extended.
Ambassadorial Lecture Series Enters its Fifth Year

This fall, the Ambassadorial Lecture Series kicks off its fifth year with a visit from His Excellency Sereyewath Ek, ambassador from Cambodia to the United States, on October 4, 2005 at 3:30 PM in McKeldin Library, room 6137. Since its inception in 2001, the Ambassadorial Lecture Series has brought to campus the ambassadors of China, Bangladesh, Brazil, Argentina, Denmark, Afghanistan, Israel, Egypt, Turkey, France, South Africa, Japan, Mexico, Hungary, and Thailand.

Recent ambassadorial visits included His Excellency Carlos de Icaza, ambassador of Mexico to the United States, who spoke on campus on November 17, 2004 during International Education Week. The lecture series this past year also hosted His Excellency Kasit Piromya, ambassador of Thailand to the United States, who spoke on March 9, 2005, and His Excellency András Simonyi, ambassador of Hungary to the United States, who spoke on May 5, 2005.

Ambassador de Icaza recommended that the U.S. and Mexico address issues of migration with “an integral vision and a gradual approach.” He urged a vision of migration that would be “safe, orderly, and humane,” protect labor rights, and acknowledge immigrants’ contributions to the communities where they reside.

Bushrui Honors Mote with Wisdom of the Irish Book Dedication

On March 8, 2005, Suheil Bushrui, Bahá’í Chair for World Peace, dedicated his newest book, The Wisdom of the Irish, to President Mote in recognition of what he calls Mote’s “outstanding leadership in promoting the dialogue of civilizations.” The Wisdom of the Irish, an anthology Bushrui compiled, contains the work of Irish poets, dramatists, novelists, singers, talkers, and storytellers who bring the spiritual and cultural richness of Ireland’s heritage to life. Bushrui, though himself an Arab, has a unique knowledge and appreciation for Irish life and literature; in addition to being a scholar of Yeats, he was instrumental in establishing the first Center for Irish Studies in the Arab world several decades ago (at the American University of Beirut, Lebanon). Brendan Kennelly, one of Ireland’s best-known contemporary poets, says of Bushrui in the foreword, “Sometimes, an interested outsider can see things more clearly than an impassioned insider. And it is precisely that fresh, detached perspective together with a deep knowledge of Irish life and literature that makes this book of wisdom such an intellectual and emotional experience.”

As with his earlier anthology, The Wisdom of the Arabs, Bushrui compiled this anthology to advance the “dialogue of civilizations,” a concept promoted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) through initiatives that bridge gaps in knowledge about other civilizations, cultures and societies.

Among those present at the dedication was Desmond Egan, a highly-respected Irish poet, who read his poem “Peace” (see following page), which was translated into 21 languages for the United Nations Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders in 2000.

PEACE 1986
BY DESMOND EGAN

(For Seán MacBride, founder of Amnesty International)

just to go for a walk out the road
just that
under the deep trees
which whisper of peace
to break the bread of words
with someone passing
just that
four of us round a pram
and baby fingers asleep
just to join the harmony
the fields the blue everyday hills
the puddles of daylight and
you might hear a pheasant
echo through the woods
or plover may waver by
as the evening poises with a blackbird
on its table of hedge
just that
and here and there a gate
a bungalow’s bright window
the smell of woodsmoke of lives

just that!
but Sweet Christ that
is more than most of mankind can afford
with the globe still plaited in its own
crown of thorns
too many starving eyes
too many ancient children
squatting among flies
too many stockpiles of fear
too many dog jails too many generals
too many under torture by the impotent
screaming into the air we breathe
too many of us not sure what we want
so that we try to feed a habit for everything
until the ego puppets the militaries
mirror our own warring face
too little peace

A NOTE ON DESMOND EGAN

Desmond Egan has published seventeen books of poetry, one book of prose and two translations of Greek plays. Eighteen collections of his translated poetry have been published in France, Germany, Romania, Spain, Italy, Russia, Japan, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Hungary, China, and Poland.

His honors include the National Poetry Foundation of USA Award (1983), the Bologna Award (1998), an Honorary Doctorate in Literature from Washburn University (1998), a documentary video (2000) and the Literature Award of Macedonia (2004).

Desmond Egan lives in County Kildare as a full time writer and is Artistic Director of the Gerard Manley Hopkins Annual International Summer School.
On Tuesday, September 13th from 10 AM – 4 PM, visit the Grand Ballroom in the Student Union for the Study Abroad Fair. Learn about University of Maryland-sponsored study abroad programs offered throughout the year. Gain insight from faculty and students who have participated in past programs. Ask questions of study abroad program providers from accredited academic programs from all over the world. Get the details on financial aid, multicultural awareness, and Terps Abroad (the study abroad student organization).