



United Nations Development Programme

Communications Office

PRESS RELEASE

UNDP HONOURS ARGENTINA FOR 2002 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Award for "Excellence in Policy Impact" to be Presented at New York Ceremony

NEW YORK – 15 December, 2004 -- Argentina will be honoured by the United Nations Development Programme for its Report, "**Contributions to Human Development: Inequality, Poverty, Competitiveness and Democracy**," at a special ceremony in New York City on 15 December, 2004. Argentina was one of seven winners of the 2004 Awards for Human Development, as selected by a panel of distinguished independent judges.

The Argentina Report poses a provocative question: Is it possible to address human development needs in the middle of a severe political and economic crisis? The Report surmises that it is not only possible, but essential.

The economy of "badly united" Argentina is deteriorating, fueling a crisis of inequality, malnutrition and plummeting incomes, especially in northern provinces, where 30-40% of the nation's people cannot meet basic needs. Faith in the nation's political institutions has faltered, yielding widespread cynicism and despair, and fracturing Argentina into competing power bases without a unified, federal development strategy.

But it doesn't have to be this way, the Report argues. "Argentina has the human and economic resources to overcome its current crisis, but needs significant reforms to remedy growing poverty and glaring inequality," said Argentine political science professor **Liliana De Riz**, the Report's lead author. Since 1995, she noted, the number of poor people nearly doubled, with about half the population now below the poverty line. "The future of the next generation is at stake," De Riz warned. "In some provinces children under five account for three out of five people in poverty."

To address the challenges, the Report lays out 18 "Proposals for Human Development" aimed at economic integration, democratic reforms, improved education and increased public participation in the political life of the country. Without true democracy, it concludes, there can be no true development. "Despite the economic collapse and political crisis in Argentina, support for democracy has increased," De Riz added.

An Early Impact

The Report has already influenced Argentine society, simply by being disseminated, discussed and debated. **Argentine media** have given extraordinary attention to the Report and its proposals, which may soon be **required reading** in the nation's high schools. Over **90 articles** and interviews in national and regional media have been conducted in regards to the Report, with articles published in 21 newspapers, and interviews completed on 15 radio stations, 10 national broadcast channels and cable TV. "Because of this Report, we were able to bring to light the problems facing Argentine federalism and the effect it has on democratic governance," Ms. De Riz said. "We were equally able to place Human Development as a core topic on the national political, economic and social agenda."

The Report has had its impact in other ways, as well. “We are now able to position institutional and technical professionals as spokespersons in the **national dialogue**,” Ms. De Riz said. “In the process, we are creating a **network of people** willing to expand the concept of human development throughout the country, and we now have a tool to build a system of alliances with different players in the development communities.” And, she noted, the Report is invaluable in promoting the presence of UNDP throughout Argentina.

Also at the December 15 ceremony, the **Mahbub ul Haq Award for Outstanding Contribution to Human Development** will be presented to **Mr. Fazle Hasan Abed**, founder of the BRAC organisation in Bangladesh. BRAC has continued its success in advancing food security, health, education and micro-finance, disbursing some \$2 billion to the landless, the rural poor and others with no collateral, with a 98% repayment rate.

The other Latin American award winner is **Colombia Report 2003** – “The Conflict, A Way Out.” **Hernando Gomez Buendia**, the Colombian journalist and lead author, will be at the ceremony to accept the award. Other winners are: **West Bengal Sub-National Report 2004**; **Latvia 2002/2003**: “Human Security;” **Zambia 2003**: “Eradication of Extreme Poverty and Hunger;” and **Roma in Central and Eastern Europe 2002**: “Avoiding the Dependency Trap.”

“The goal of human development is to put people back at the centre of the development process,” said **UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown**, who will host the proceedings on December 15, along with **Juju Chang**, the Emmy Award-winning correspondent for ABC News and “20/20” reporter. “It is about expanding choices for people, to enable them to enjoy long and healthy lives, knowledge, fair access to the resources and the ability to participate in the life of the community.”

The UNDP has helped more than 135 developing countries and five regions to produce their own national and regional Human Development Reports. These reports, written by local experts, spur public debate and bring political attention to pressing development needs. They propose concrete solutions to mobilise the resources, policies and political will to overcome poverty and bring about growth, equality, investment in people’s basic needs, and freedom. They also help donor governments measure the impact of aid dollars.

The UNDP is the global development network of the United Nations. UNDP advocates for change and connects countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. It is on the ground in 166 countries, working with people on their own solutions to global and national development challenges.

The event will take place at the **New York Historical Society on Wednesday, 15 December, 2004, from 6:30-800 PM**. The audience will include important figures from the business, diplomatic, media, philanthropic, United Nations and university communities, and from Argentine residents of the northeastern United States.

Additional information on the UNDP Awards for Human Development is available at <http://hdr.undp.org/aboutus/nhdr/awards/>.

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