



ADVANCING SCIENCE, SERVING SOCIETY

Program News

Science and Human Rights Coalition

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Program News

Launch of the AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition - This week!

Over 200 scientists and representatives of scientific organizations have registered to attend the launch of the AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition which is taking place at AAAS Headquarters on January 14-16, 2009. If you have not registered and wish to attend, please register at the event on Wednesday, January 14, at 5pm. For more information, see "Science and Human Rights Coalition" below.

Experts' Meeting in Galway Tackles the Right to the Benefits of Scientific Progress

The right to "enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its application" - What does it mean? Is all science beneficial? Is the right to science of value in itself or only as it contributes to other human rights, e.g., the rights to food and health? These and other questions were the topic of discussion at an experts' meeting held in Galway, Ireland, on November 23-24, 2008." [Read more.](#)

SHRP Marks 60th Anniversary of the UDHR with

ACTION ALERT

Physicians for Human Rights Call for Urgent Action on behalf of Dr. Kamiar Alaei and Dr. Arash Alaei ([link](#))

SHRP EVENTS

***January 14-16, 2009
Washington, DC
[AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition Launch](#)***

***February 13, 2009
Chicago, IL
[AAAS Annual Meeting: Science and Human Rights Reception](#)***

***February 14, 2009
Chicago, IL
[AAAS Annual Meeting: Introducing the AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition](#)***

OTHER EVENTS

***January 31 - February 1, 2009
Providence, RI***

Colleagues

On December 10, 2008, the AAAS Science and Human Rights Program celebrated the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with a full day of training on the right to "share in scientific advancement and its benefits" (Article 27). Over 50 AAAS staff, fellows, and Science and Human Rights Coalition members attended the training which was conducted by Project Director, Jessica Wyndham. That evening, the staff kicked off their shoes and, with AAAS colleagues, enjoyed their right to "rest and leisure" (Article 24) with human rights-friendly board games and hot chocolate!

"On-Call" Scientists Project Promotes, Protects Human Rights

Daniel Gorelick
America.gov
November 9, 2008



"A new project unveiled by the Science and Human Rights Program (SHRP) aims to create an international network of 'on-call' scientists to whom human rights organizations can turn for free consultations on scientific questions. ... Previous connections between scientists and human rights organizations requiring scientific capability were made informally, often through word of mouth, according to Mona Younis, director of SHRP. The new 'on-call' scientists Web site allows scientists to create a profile describing their expertise. AAAS will use these profiles to match scientists with the particular needs of human rights organizations." [Read more.](#)

If you are a scientist who would like to volunteer your time and skills, or a human rights organization in need of scientific expertise, visit ["On-call" Scientists](#) to find out more.

Science and Human Rights Coalition

Launch: January 14-16, 2009

If you represent or are a member of a scientific association, professional society, or science academy, we invite you to join us for the launch of the Coalition on January 14-16,

[Physicians for Human Rights National Student Conference: Health and Human Rights in 2009 - Global Problems, Local Solutions](#)

PUBLICATIONS

The Dirty War Index: A Public Health and Human Rights Tool for Examining and Monitoring Armed Conflict Outcomes
Madelyn Hsiao-Rei Hicks
and Michael Spagat

Published in the December 2008 edition of *PLoS Medicine*, the *Dirty War Index* is "a data-driven public health tool that identifies rates of particularly undesirable or prohibited, i.e., 'dirty,' outcomes inflicted on populations during war. . . DWIs are designed for direct, easy translation of war's public health outcomes into the human rights policy, and interdisciplinary work needed to address war's practice."

Climate Wrongs and Human Rights: Putting People at the Heart of Climate Change Policy
Oxfam

"What do human rights principles imply for states' responsibilities in tackling climate change? What rights-based policy approaches/actions are needed? This report argues that rich countries are violating the human rights of millions of the world's poorest people by failing to tackle climate change,

2009, at AAAS Headquarters in Washington, DC.

Opening the Launch, on the evening of January 14th, will be three distinguished speakers, including **Mary Robinson**, former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and former President of Ireland, and **Sidney Verba**, Chair of the Committee on Human Rights of the National Academy of Sciences, and Research Professor of Government at Harvard University.

The following day-and-a-half will be an opportunity to learn about the mission and structure of the Coalition, its areas of activity, and how scientific associations and individual scientists can become a part of this important new initiative. Launch participants will hear about the varied contributions that science and scientists can make to human rights, and will have the opportunity to equip their scientific associations with information and tools needed for robust engagement in human rights. View the [Launch Agenda](#) to find out more.

Get your organization involved!

Eager to see your scientific association, society, or academy become involved in the AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition? Keen to share with your colleagues and organization information about this initiative? Available [here](#) is a one-page description of the Coalition that you can use as the basis for listserv announcements, newsletter articles, and meeting presentations.

News from Coalition Members: *American Sociological Association*

Footnotes
January 2009

"As the universal human rights movement presses forward in the 21st century, scientific disciplines - by their nature universalistic - will play an increasingly important role. This is reflected in the christening of the new Science and Human Rights Coalition, of which ASA is a founding member, by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). For more than a year ASA has been engaged with about 20 other science disciplines in developing this coalition under the umbrella of the AAAS." [Read more.](#)



Introducing our Members:

which is set to undermine people's rights to life, security, food, water, health, shelter, and culture on a massive scale."

Health Systems and the right to health: an assessment of 194 countries

Gunilla Backman et al.

"We identify some of the right-to-health features of health systems, such as a comprehensive national health plan, and propose 72 indicators that reflect some of these features. . . Where they are available, the indicators show where health systems need to be improved to better realise the right to health. We provide recommendations for governments, international bodies, civil society organisations, and other institutions and suggest that these indicators and data, although not perfect, provide a basis for the monitoring of health systems and the progressive realization of the right to health."

International Studies Association



"A group of scholars and practitioners founded the International Studies Association (ISA) in 1959 to pursue mutual interests in international studies. Representing eighty countries, ISA has over four thousand members worldwide and is the most respected and widely known scholarly association in this field. Geographic subdivisions of ISA, called Regions, provide opportunities to exchange ideas and research with local colleagues. Over twenty special interest groups, [including a human rights section] offer additional contact between members interested in specific areas within the field of international studies." [Read more](#).

For more information about the Coalition and how you or your organization can become involved, please please [visit our website](#). To receive the latest information about the Coalition, please sign-up for our [Coalition Listserv](#).

From the Science Community

In Commemoration of International Human Rights Day

The National Academies
December 10, 2008

On the occasion of
the 60th anniversary
of the Universal

THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES
Advisers to the Nation on Science, Engineering, and Medicine

Declaration of Human Rights, the Presidents of the National Academies issued the following statement: "On this anniversary, it is fitting to recommit ourselves to the promotion and protection of basic human rights and, specifically, to augment our efforts to aid colleagues worldwide who today are imprisoned because they exercised or supported rights and freedoms set forth in the Declaration -- nondiscrimination; freedom of movement and association; right to education and asylum; freedom of thought, opinion, and expression; and protection of moral and material interests of authors of scientific works. These rights are essential to every human being, and especially to the conduct of science and to scientific progress." [Read more.](#)

From the Human Rights Community

Mary Robinson: Climate Change is an Issue of Human Rights

The Independent
December 10, 2008

"We must not lose sight of existing human rights principles in the tug and push of international climate change negotiations. A human rights lens reminds us there are reasons beyond economics and enlightened self-interest for states to act on climate change. Because climate change presents a new and unprecedented threat to the human rights of millions, international human rights law and institutions must evolve to protect the rights of these peoples. But, most importantly, states must take urgent action to avoid more serious and actionable violations of human rights." [Read more.](#)

From the UN

Closing a Historic Gap in Human Rights

UN Press Release

December 12, 2008



On December 10, 2008, the UN General Assembly adopted an important new human rights instrument to strengthen the protection of economic, social and cultural rights - the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. "The Optional Protocol . is of singular importance by closing a historic gap,' stated the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, in her address to the General Assembly. Under the Protocol, individuals will be able to complain to an independent human rights body at the international level about violations of rights enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights." [Read more.](#)

About the SHRP Newsletter

The Science & Human Rights Newsletter is issued monthly by the AAAS Science and Human Rights Program. Through the newsletter we strive to keep scientists and human rights practitioners informed with news items, program updates, new resources, and upcoming events at the intersection of science and human rights. Submissions to the newsletter are welcome and can be made via our [online submission form](#).

Please visit our website to learn more about our [programs](#) as well as our [past accomplishments](#).

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