

Southern California Regional Council of Organizations  
Annual Report 2009 - 2010  
By Mwende May, President and Chair  
June 16, 2010

The fiscal year of the Southern California Council of Organizations (SCRCO) began in June, 2009. The leadership responsibilities of the newly elected Chair, Mwende May, began immediately as our representative to the annual meeting of both the United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA) and the Council of Organizations (COO). The two meetings converged concurrently in Washington, D.C. SCRCO had been invited to attend the COO annual meeting to unite the efforts of all the local Area Council of Organizations across the country, including the four separate groups of: New York, Washington, D.C., Southern California and Philadelphia, PA. The motion was presented and adopted at that meeting to create better and stronger efforts in support of the United Nations. An Executive Committee (ExCom) team of 18 was created and SCRCO's representative was elected as one of the members of that team, along with the representative from the Pennsylvania council and eight members from each group representing New York and Washington, D.C. From that ExCom; two of the members living in New York were elected as representatives of COO to the Board of Directors of UNA-USA and Jessica Hartl continued as the salaried Executive Director of COO. In accord with the COO bylaws, the ExCom will meet monthly by teleconference and once a year in person at the annual meeting that will take place in New York or Washington, D.C., where the majority of the members live and concurrent with the UNA-USA annual meeting.

UNA-USA's Council of Organizations Summary of Events in New York and Washington, D.C. are:

This is the United Nations, Oct. 5 - Nov. 2, 2009 (weekly seminar) UN, New York Defending women's human rights through the United Nations, Thurs. Oct. 8, 2009, UN, New York Stand Up-Take Action to Fight Poverty, A Videoconference Discussion in Support of the 72 Hour UN Millennium Campaign on the Millennium Development Goals, Fri. Oct. 16, 2009,, Wash., DC A Child's Right to Health, Thurs. Nov. 12, 2009, New York Seeking Environmental Justice, Thurs., Dec. 10, 2009, New York Moving Forward from Copenhagen, A town hall style discussion, Thurs., Jan. 14, 2010, New York Moving Forward from Copenhagen, a town hall style discussion, Fri., Jan. 22, 2010, New York CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action – Empowering Women, Thurs., March 11, 2010, New York The Year Ahead in US-UN Relations, Thurs., March 25, 2010, Emerging Women's Health Issues: Focus on Fistula, Weds., March 31, 2010, Wash., D.C.

The current members of the Executive Committee of UNA-USA / COO are: Jessica Alatorre and Kevin Anderson, Friends of the World Food Program; Gloria L. Blackwell, AAUW; Noema Chaplin, US Servas, Inc.; Carole M. Conors, League of Women Voters-USA; Aaron Etra, B'nai B'rith Int'l; Nancy Fitzpatrick, Quota Int'l; Norma Keller, Centre County PA-UNA Council of Org, Bob Klein, Lions Club Int'l; Bruce Knotts, Unitarian Universalist; Nicholas Martin, UPEACE/US); Mwende May, SCRCO and Soka Gakkai Int'l-USA; Bart Misana, Global Education Motivators; Louisa Rahmani, Americans for UNFPA, Angelika Selle, Women's Federation for World Peace USA; Jackie Shapiro, Zonta Int'l; Mignon Smith, Global Assoc. for Health Development, Inc.; Claudia Strauss, World Information Transfer, Inc.; and Audrey Wood, UN Information Center.

SCRCO paid the total cost of \$810 from the treasury, to send the Chair-elect to the UNA-USA & COO Annual Meetings in Washington, D.C.

The Southern California Division UNA-USA web master, Shirley Williams agreed to put the SCRCO web link on the Home page of their web site so that it could be located easier than it was before. She posted our membership list, our 2008-2009 Annual Report and our organizational background and mission to the link. She agreed to post our monthly minutes and any event announcements as we provide them to her.

Because of the difficulty with time, distance, traffic and parking for our Executive Committee meetings, we introduced the teleconference and the majority of the ExCom members prefer this mode of communication for our monthly meetings. From September through June, the Executive Committee met via teleconference by telephone from their home or mobile phone at their convenience. We did meet in person prior to the annual meeting to assemble the packets for the retreat.

The Council submitted a letter to U.S. President Obama's office with suggestions of talking points for the first U.S. presidential address to the United Nations on Sept. 23, 2009. We presented information about CEDAW and the "Law of the Sea" with a list of our participating organizations in support of the talking points. We did receive acknowledgement of receipt of the submission.

Rene Wilson, the founder of SCRCO, was appointed to represent us on the UNA-USA Council of Organizations' Executive Committee, Membership Sub-Committee teleconferences, to help establish other Councils of Organizations around the country. They have created an "Organizational Manual for Starting an Area Council of Organizations."

Finally, after several months of deliberation, we came to an agreement: Three officers of the SCRCO; Chair, VP of Admin and the Treasurer would be added as signors on the SCD UNA-USA Bank of America account that houses the SCRCO funds in checking and investment accounts. SCRCO will be given three checks per quarter and deposit slips to have on-hand, to use when needed for SCRCO purposes and the Treasurer will deposit all monies directly into a local branch of the bank. The Treasurer will continue to keep track of the deposits made and checks drawn on our account and will present a written report to the Council as well as to the SCD UNA-USA Treasurer on a monthly basis. It was voted to keep our monies in the joint-account (as-is) with SCD UNA-USA and to try the new agreed upon bank account processing and accounting through the end of the year. The Council will revisit this topic for discussion in January 2011 to determine if they want to completely sever the monies by establishing a separate bank account from SCD UNA-USA, in checking as well as investment accounts.

A new SCRCO brochure was created adding all participating organizations and listing all officers with their respective organizational affiliations. This brochure has the name and address of the Membership Chair to receive all submissions for membership and annual donation/dues. The brochure is now electronically available to be updated as officers change or leave positions. Organizational stationery was also created with the names of the officers, their position and organizational affiliation. It is also electronically available for updates as appropriate.

Throughout the year, the Council supported and attended several events that were hosted by the Southern California Division of UNA-USA and the local Chapters.

In November 2009, the SCRCO presented honors to the Treasurer, Toby Osos of the YWCA, as a recipient of the "Lifetime Achievement Award" at the SCD UNA-USA Annual Meeting, for her lifelong dedication and service to the rights and empowerment of Women and Girls.

The SCRCO conducted several events where we invited speakers to make a presentation to our Council and also we presented a special event with dinner:

"Working Promoting Democracy around the world: An Idea Whose Time Has Gone?" was the title of the speech that took place on Friday, July 24, 2009, at The Cravens Estate, home office of American Red Cross, San Gabriel Pomona Valley Chapter in Pasadena. A successful dinner occurred, hosting Jeffrey Laurenti, a Senior Fellow and Director of Programs at the Century Foundation as the presenter of the evening. He led a very informed speech and discussion. The event was catered with appetizers and Sangria punch followed by a three course pasta meal including salad and dessert. The price of the dinner covered the costs of the caterer and the shared fee (split with Citizens for Global Solutions) to sponsor the speaker. We did not profit from this event. The American Red Cross became a participating member of SCRCO.

Arin Ghosh was a guest speaker at our November Council meeting. Mr. Ghosh was invited by Ted Leutzinger, the representative of Citizens for Global Solutions and International Criminal Court Alliance. Arin had been appointed the Youth Chair on the Board of Directors of UNA-USA Pacific Los Angeles Chapter. This position includes being spokesperson for UNA-USA Youth advocacy issues and programs like the High School Essay Contest, Student Alliance and Global Classrooms and Model United Nations. In July of 2008 he led the USA Youth delegation to the APMUN conference in Korea, where the USA Team won Second place and Arin won the Most Competent Delegate award. He gave us a great presentation entitled: "Youth in Action for World Peace."

In January 2010, we had a guest speaker from the National Council of Negro Women, Ms. Othetta Glover, invited by their representative, Joan Jackson. Ms. Glover gave a very interesting and informative presentation and overview of their organization's history and their national as well as international community service and support.

In February, Mwendé May, representing Soka Gakkai International-USA invited a Youth Division Leader from the organization, Jeremy Valdes to give a presentation about a project that he is involved in personally. Jeremy is working with the Tap Project that is an organization associated with UNICEF and its basic goal is to decrease the amount of people in the world that do not have access to clean water. They are raising funds and awareness for The Tap Project's 2010 sanitation and hygiene programs in targeted countries including: Haiti, Central African Republic, Guatemala, Togo and Vietnam. He informed us about a youth concert that they were going to present as part of their fund raising efforts.

SCRCO had an open invitation from the National Council of Jewish Women, L.A. to have them host a monthly meeting or large event at their facilities in Los Angeles, and in April 2010, we accepted their invitation and met at their office building in Los Angeles. The Council members were welcomed by Hillary Selvin, Executive Director and Ruth Williams, the representative to SCRCO. They presented an

overview of their organization. The many outreach efforts and activities of the Council were described with many questions and interesting discussion that followed.

We had our Annual Meeting and Retreat on Wednesday, May 19 at Blinn House, the Women's City Club in Pasadena. The morning session included a presentation of the packets that were distributed. Each packet contained an updated list of member organizations in the Council of Organizations of the UNA-USA, the "White Paper" that was written and sent to us by the COO Executive Committee describing what the COO is today, the Exec Com contact list, a fact sheet of the UNA-USA, the UNA-USA Mission, a list of the Millennium Development Goals, the SCRCO brochure, the SCRCO Mission Statement, and the participating NGO membership list. A report from each member of the Exec Committee was presented and a written annual report was presented by the Treasurer, Hildreth Simmons and a draft from the Chair, Mwende May. The luncheon theme was: "Violence Against Women, A global struggle" and was well attended by many members and guests that enjoyed a great meal with engaging conversation. The luncheon speakers were: Julie Mairs, Chair, Soroptimists International STOP Trafficking, Camino Real Region that and Sherry Ludwig, Director, CA AAUW for International Advocacy, they were both invited by Ginny Hatfield, VP of Admin-SCRCO and representative of AAUW. Both speakers led us through a very informative discussion of the various forms of violence against women and the impact on society and they explained what we as NGOs can do to bring about change legislatively and socially on a local, national and international level. The afternoon session was conducted by Rene Wilson, SCRCO founding President that worked us through the discussion and election of the NGO suggested Proposals & Projects for SCRCO to undertake in 2010-11. An invitational letter requesting proposals to be submitted by the participating member organizations was signed and sent by the past and current presidents of SCRCO a few weeks prior to the annual meeting.

On a personal note, I wish to thank all the members of the Executive Committee that worked so hard to help me lead in a more business and professional manner, which was not an easy task. Thank you all for the opportunity to serve and the trust that you all bestowed upon me to represent you on the national board of the Council of Organizations.

Yours very sincerely,  
Mwende May, Chair  
2009-2010 SCRCO