



'Stories from the Field'

The First United Nations Documentary Film Festival Broadens Fan-Base

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Top left: Refugee children from the documentary film "Refugees in Tanzania", hosted by Angelina Jolie, part of the "What's Going On?" television series (produced by UN Works). *Top right:* Abu Bakar Bangura, from "Child Soldiers in Sierra Leone", also of the What's Going On? series. *Top bottom:* "For Every Child" (UNICEF).

Myriad acronyms, diverse agencies and the sheer scope of responsibilities make the United Nations an organization worthy of exploring and understanding. Through the powerful medium of films, the First United Nations Documentary Film Festival was organized to look at the wide-ranging work of the United Nations system, as part of the activities and events being held to celebrate its sixtieth anniversary.

The festival, titled "Stories from the Field", was a joint undertaking between the UN Department of Public Information (DPI), the New School University and Media Communications Association-International, New York Chapter, showcasing films produced by the United Nations and its agencies. It was held on 21 and 22 May 2005 at the New School's Tishman Auditorium in New York City.



On location in Timor Leste, filming "Kbit" (Courage) (UN Mission in Support of Timor-Leste).

Some 80 films were submitted, which was the culmination of a search that spanned United Nations agencies, field offices and peacekeeping missions worldwide. Screened during the festival were 30 dynamic documentaries, each tied in some ways to the themes of the Millennium Development Goals. These MDGs are a set of eight time-defined goals adopted by 189 Heads of State and Government at the 2000 Millennium Summit, detailing what must be done in the coming 15 years. They included eradication of extreme poverty and

hunger, universal primary education, gender equality, reduction of child mortality, better maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, environmental sustainability and a global partnership for development.

The festival was also a rare opportunity to see films that tell tales on critical issues that do not often make the 24-hour news channels. For example, a hard-won peace in Sierra Leone did make the headlines, but the documentary picks up from where the headlines leave off, weaving a

