

Summary of “Meet & Greet” Event with Cissa Wa Numbe, Secretary General of UNA-DRC, March 14, 2009

This “Meet & Greet” Event featured our guest speaker from the UNA in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Secretary General, Cissa WA Numbe. This talk event was co-sponsored by UNA of Michigan in collaboration with The Congo Cause.

The event began with introductions by the host, Diane Western (The Congo Cause). UNA member, Professor Roberta Cottman (WSU) spoke briefly and explained the importance of the UN Millennium Development Goals, and stressed Goal 4: Reduce child mortality and Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. Mosquito bed nets are being used to help meet these goals.

Roberta presented Cissa Wa Numbe and Diane Western with 2009 UNA calendars. UNA member Bob Lang presented Cissa with a peace insignia lapel pin, expressing appreciation on behalf of like-minded UNA members for Cissa's significant life work towards peace, human rights, and health in DRC.

Lyndon Babcock, President of Michigan Division of the United Nations Association-USA, spoke briefly about global challenges and opportunities for productive involvement at local, state, national, and global levels (especially the opportunity to create a



successful UNA chapter to serve Greater Detroit). We were pleased that Lyndon was able to join us despite a busy schedule that began with a morning Model UN event in Lansing.

Professor Jeff Kupperman spoke about the Technology in Education Global Program at University of Michigan-Flint. The Global Program graduate students met Cissa Wa Numbe while attending the WFUNA Human Rights Conference in July 2007 where they observed Cissa as a panel speaker. A student team began a partnership with UNA-DRC for its original graduate project (AmaniDRC.org). Later, The Congo Cause was created by one of the

graduate students who became acutely aware of the need for increased public awareness and fund raising for Congo and UNA-DRC.

The main event speaker, Cissa Wa Numbe of the UN Association of the Dem. Rep. of Congo, spoke about the ten-year war in Congo that has displaced up to 1.5 million people during its peak in December of 2008. Cissa explained the importance of bringing mosquito bed nets to poor families in eastern Congo, where a family might only earn a few dollars a day, making a \$5 mosquito bed net an unobtainable luxury. UNA-DRC works with local community groups and health centers to determine the areas with the highest malaria rates, and to find the vulnerable groups who need the free bed nets (pregnant women and children under five years of age).

The event concluded with the audience asking questions about malaria, bed nets, and events in Congo. Some groups represented at the event were UNA Michigan, Young Dems, Alumni from U of M Global Program, the U of M Biology class (with Dr. Pace), Michigan State Univ., Asia Pacific Americans for Progress, Africans for Change (recently renamed to the “Africa Cause” in honor of The Congo Cause), ARC Detroit, Troy High School, and others.

CMNtv.org donated their time and efforts by sending a crew to film the event and produce the video on the local cable channel in the Troy area in the near future.

The “Meet and Greet” event was followed by an Afterglow in Troy, where local activists were able to share inspired stories, ideas, and future plans to rejuvenate the UNA presence in the Detroit area with like-minded friends of vision.



Diane Western, The Congo Cause