

# Report on September NGO/DPI Conference at UN (September 8-10, 2004)

**By Christina Braidotti**

What are the prospects of One By One becoming a Nongovernmental Organization under the auspices of the Department of Public Interest in the United Nations? I would like to share with you briefly the highlights of my attendance during this 3-day conference, September 8-10, 2004, in New York City, and what I perceive to be the positive aspects of our affiliation with the UN.

The Conference this year was entitled "Millennium Development Goals: Civil Society Takes Action," and focused on 8 major goals to reduce poverty and improve people's lives - all to be accomplished by 2015. In recognition of this tall order, the organizers of this conference clearly had in mind to reach out into civil society as far and widely as possible, creating partnerships between other international institutions, national and local governments, the private sector and the broad spectrum of civil society organizations. In the morning sessions, these topics generated and discussed very informatively by panels of experts: the MDG progress to date; strategies to overcome MDG obstacles; different responsibilities and opportunities for North/South partnerships; and making MDGs relevant.

The afternoon interactive workshops gave participants ample opportunities to voice our concerns in such areas as health and development policy, human rights, peacemaking and conflict resolution, overcoming poverty through education, and many others. One of the workshops I attended was "Overcoming Barriers through Dialogue and Development." A thought-provoking experience, it struck me as a promising potential venue for One By One participation. Other workshops that could conceivably have given forum for One By One were: "Peace-building and Development: The Role of Veterans and Women," "Global Cooperation for Improving Communication and Decision-making," and "Learning How to Think and Act in Sustainable Ways."

New York member Hesther Weisberger agrees that the Conference was a very stimulating, proactive experience that, were we an NGO, would broaden One By One's visions and enable us to spread our message of transformation through dialogue to a wider global community. She and I met on the first night at the scrumptious opening reception. This evening and other breaks and lunch hours gave us incredible networking sessions during which I told many attendees about One By One and we exchanged contact information. As an example, I shared a lunch table with a gentleman who for 20 years has been CEO of the Executive Program of the United Nations. When I told him about One By One, he gave me his card telling me to be contact him when One By One is ready to take the first step towards becoming an NGO.

Were time and space not an issue, I would have much more to tell about this superb Conference. All of us wish to thank Anie Kalayjian of the World Federation for Mental Health, who has been so generous in offering One By One the chance to attend these valuable NGO conferences at the UN.