UN Gold Star Communities
(A Discussion Paper)
– with some suggested modifications

"We will not enjoy development without security, we will not enjoy security without development, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights"

United Nations Secretary-General, March 2005

Purpose

To advance the goals of the UN Charter, peace and security and social progress, by raising awareness and understanding of other societies through community-based, international link partnerships. At the same time, and by means of such community links, to bring about sustainable development within the linked communities and, by so doing, to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Background

Communities, community institutions and community groups will be encouraged to form link partnerships with the objective of increasing their understanding of one another through a wide variety of activities centred on building friendships, promoting learning in both communities and fostering mutual development. At least one of the two link partner communities would be in a developing country. By pursuing such activities, and meeting high standards (to be established), a link would receive United Nations recognition in the form of a prestigious United Nations award – a UN Gold Star.

A second level of recognition

The link partners would be invited to aim for additional stars, one for each aspect of the following activities undertaken jointly by and in both communities:

1) **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs):** By pursuing one or more of the following MDGs**,** the linked communities would earn recognition for an additional Gold Star in respect of each MDG where the high standards established are met:
    - Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
    - Achieve universal primary education
    - Promote gender equality and empower women

- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability

2) **Social Cohesion**. By enhancing social cohesion in the partner communities, through initiatives and sustained work on interfaith and interethnic needs or in race relations, the link could be eligible for an additional Gold Star

3) **Child friendliness:** By implementing child-friendly policies, in line with norms established by UNICEF, the link would be eligible for an additional Gold Star

4) **Fairtrade:** By pursuing fair-trade, as advocated by the International Fairtrade Foundation, the link would have achieved Fairtrade status, thus earning recognition with an additional Gold Star;

Process

The UN Gold Star Award would be hard to achieve, thus signifying a particularly high standard of activity and United Nations recognition
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The link partners would have to be able to demonstrate that their link activities fulfil (to be) established qualitative criteria. The United Nations Development Programme would establish the necessary criteria and oversee a non-governmental monitoring body to operationalise the Gold Star Award Scheme.

This Discussion Paper envisages that there will be a small, effective institutional structure in each participating country to drive these initiatives and act as the conduit to the monitoring body.

The Way Forward

BUILD, a UK based non-government organisation, would be prepared to work with NGOs and United Nations Associations in the other countries, as well as with staff of the United Nations and its agencies to take this idea forward and develop a proposal to put to the appropriate UN body.

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