

Witnessing the Birth of a Nation

In this decade, we will have witnessed many things: the election of the first African American president in the United States, the Arab awakening and demand for freedom in much of the Middle East and North Africa, and more recently the creation and independence of a new country in the world: The Republic of South Sudan.

On July 9, 2011, South Sudan declared its independence from Sudan and was formally recognized as the world's 193rd country by the UN. This comes after results of January's independence referendum showed that 99 per cent of South Sudanese voted to split from the northern part of the region, and become independent.

Northern and Southern Sudan have always had their disagreements, and for decades the two regions have been in constant conflict and war over government autonomy and recognition for the Southern Sudanese people. With North Sudan having a stronger and more powerful hold on the country and its resources, the South was often left in forgotten ruins.

The decision to split into two countries was, for many, a sign of hope and relief, rather than a division of a nation. "We were all born into war. All of us. [But] this generation" Allen, a citizen of South Sudan told Al Jazeera as he pointed to a truck full of youngsters, "this generation will see the hope of the newborn nation."

Spirits and celebration were high on July 9 as Southern Sudanese gathered in the capital city of Juba celebrating this monumental and historic day through music, and dancing. Crowds chanted "We are free! We are free! Goodbye



A red carpet, rolled out during the independence ceremony of the Republic of South Sudan, in Juba, South Sudan, on Saturday July 9, 2011. Photo: Andrew Burton

north, hello happiness!" as independence flags waved in the hot summer air, and signs of expression, like one in particular reading "just divorced", scattered street corners, and decorated car and shop windows.

But as the celebrations died down, reality soon hit: running a country would not be easy.

South Sudan will face many challenges as it builds itself from the ground up. While independence is only one part of the equation, the country will have to iron out many economic and social hardships before it can fully be able to stand on its own two feet. There is widespread poverty, and a lack of infrastructure throughout the country, and over the past couple of years there had

been major shortcomings, especially in Juba, where health care, education, and other basic services had been neglected, and partially non-existent.

New president Mr. Salva Kiir Mayardit acknowledges that the country "is at the tail end of economic development. On all indexes of human welfare it is at the bottom of all humanity."

But he, like the citizens of South Sudan, has hope that the country will emerge out of its turmoil, strong.

In the meantime, the eyes of the world are on what steps Kiir will take next to develop his country. And just as the world had been able to witness the birth of South Sudan, many will continue to watch as this country grows from its infancy into its youth and adulthood.



Earthbeat

is a publication of the Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation. SCIC is a coalition of organizations involved in international development and committed to the recognition of the dignity of all people and their right to self-determination, to the protection of the world's fragile environment, and to the promotion of global understanding, cooperation, peace and justice.

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We welcome readers' comments and contributions, including donations to help cover production and distribution costs. Put your pen to paper, or your fingers to the keyboard, and send your contributions to: SCIC Newsletter, 2138 McIntyre Street, Regina, SK. S4P 2R7



SCIC

SASKATCHEWAN COUNCIL
FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

For more information on the work of SCIC and its Member Agencies, please check out our Web site: www.earthbeat.sk.ca or e-mail: scic@earthbeat.sk.ca or call 306-757-4669.

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SCIC REPORT

Hellos and Goodbyes

Over the past few months SCIC has been very lucky to welcome 3 new staff people into our midst. Anna Weber and Taouba Khelifa were hired as summer students, and Steffany Salloum has joined the team as the SCIC Public Engagement Officer, who will also be responsible for WorldBeat.

Taouba Khelifa is an ex-business student. She transferred out of the business faculty in 2011 after finding that her true passion had little to do with making profit, but instead was fuelled by fighting injustice and raising awareness about social justice issues. Come September, Taouba will move from being our summer student to our Human Justice Practicum student.



SCIC summer students, Anna and Taouba, staff the registration table at the development issues luncheon in June.

Anna Weber is going into her fourth year in International Development studies at the U of R. She was thrilled to be given the opportunity to work at SCIC, because it is an organization that is heavily invested in international issues, and also encourages local involvement. This summer Anna has honed her skills in a variety of areas, from scouring the web for educational resources to pulling up weeds.

Steffany Salloum, SCIC's new Public Engagement Officer is a trained Saskatchewan teacher. Though she is relatively young Steffany has taught in diverse situations, including Northern British Columbia, Trek School in Regina, and at Sheldon-Williams Collegiate in Regina. In June 2010 she took a break from classroom teaching to travel and deepen her global awareness. Having recently returned to Saskatchewan, Steffany is excited to re-engage in teaching in ways that educate, empower, and activate the community. WorldBeat is now scheduling classroom workshops for the fall, which can be requested by emailing worldbeat@earthbeat.sk.ca or calling 306-757-4669.

Goodbye? Yes, all good things come to an end. At the end of August Anna will be returning to full time studies and an active

volunteer life on campus. We would like to thank Anna for all her work over the summer. SCIC would also like to acknowledge and thank Mike Nassachuk for the years of work he put in as the WorldBeat Program Officer with SCIC. Mike built up the WorldBeat program during his time with SCIC, and forged many relationships with educators throughout this province.

Changing Landscape

This summer SCIC, along with Briarpatch Magazine, was pleased to hand over our front yard to a very capable urban farmer. Audrey Aamodt started an urban Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) venture in Regina called Harvests from Home. Audrey farms about 15 different plots around the city, most of which are in yards. Like any CSA, people buy a share into Harvests from Home and receive fresh, (very) local produce every week. The values of a CSA mesh very well with SCIC's and the front yard is looking great! To learn more about how you can start getting your share of fresh veggies check out www.harvestsfromhome.ca.

Haiti and Food Security

SCIC would like to thank Bonnie Morton for her presentation at the June Development Issues Luncheon. Bonnie spoke about her recent trip to Haiti with the United Church of Canada and the hope and innovation she saw there. A delicious meal was enjoyed by all. SCIC will be offering more Development Issues Luncheons in the fall.

If you happen to be in Ottawa...

SCIC would like to invite you to the Kaleidoscope National Gala – a celebration of young filmmakers speaking out on global issues – taking place on September 30. The Kaleidoscope Real World Video Challenge invited Canadian youth to create short videos highlighting why they think active global citizenship is important and what makes them global citizens. The National Gala is a celebration of the regional winners from across Canada. The young filmmakers will be present for a screening of their videos, followed by a wine and cheese reception. The event is open to the public and members of the media will be in attendance.

Date: 5:00 pm, Friday, September 30, 2011

Location: University of Ottawa Alumni Auditorium. Jock Turcot University Centre, Main Floor, 85 University Private., Ottawa

RSVP to kaleidoscope@acgc.ca or 780-988-0200 before September 16, 2011. Kindly inform us of any allergies or other special needs.

(IN)Equality Matters: Social justice and the economy

A global economy that pushes millions of people into poverty and bankrupts countries is not only irrational but fundamentally unjust. What kind of society do we want, and how do we get there?

This is the question that Inter Pares, an international social justice organization, will be exploring in our upcoming cross-country tour – including stops in Saskatoon, Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa – with renowned African scholar and activist Dr. Yao Graham, November 8-15, 2011.

Dr. Graham is the Coordinator of Third World Network – Africa, based in Ghana. He is an expert in international trade and taxation, particularly with respect to mining and petroleum development. In coordination with the National Farmers Union (NFU) in Saskatoon, and local organizations in each of the other cities, Dr. Graham, an Inter Pares staff member and a local community leader will engage in an exploration of inequality, and the mechanisms that perpetuate it in our communities and internationally.

There is growing economic disparity in Canada and around the world. Indeed, the current levels of economic inequality in both Canada and the United States have not been seen since 1929, the very cusp of a worldwide depression.

Before the onset of the financial crisis in 2008, 3.5 million Canadians lived in



poverty; some estimates suggest this figure could increase by another 1.8 million by the end of 2011. And Southern countries are experiencing diminished export revenues, burgeoning unemployment rates, weakening commodity prices, and precipitous increases in food and energy prices. An additional 130 to 155 million people worldwide have been pushed into poverty.

National governments should be addressing these appalling inequalities through economic and social policies that promote the well-being of all. Instead, we see governments around the world supporting a global economy organized in the interests of financial speculators.

The campaign by financial and political elites against regulatory oversight of the banking system led to an economic collapse that continues to inflict enor-

mous damage throughout the world. Everywhere, the subsequent bailout of banks and financial institutions is being paid for by cutbacks to social services, education, workers' pensions and healthcare.

Deepening economic inequality is not only a moral issue. Research from Richard Wilkinson's recently published book, *The Spirit Level: why equality is better for everyone*, convincingly argues that more egalitarian societies have significantly lower incidences of physical and mental health problems, addictions, crime, imprisonment, violence, and better child well-being outcomes. This research demonstrates what many of us intuitively know – more equal societies are happier and healthier and enjoy higher levels of social cohesion, trust and civic engagement.

The current levels of economic inequality in both Canada and the United States have not been seen since 1929, the very cusp of a worldwide depression.

On November 9, we invite you to join us in Saskatoon to explore what we can do to foster greater equality, in our communities and internationally. For more information, including location, visit www.interpares.ca or email us at info@interpares.ca.

SCIC AGM

Saturday, September 24 is the day! SCIC staff, board and member representatives come together to celebrate the past year, and make decisions for the future. This year's agenda will include a presentation and workshop by Fraser Reilly-King, CCIC's Aid and International Cooperation Policy Analyst. The focus of his interactive workshop will be on CSO Development Effectiveness and will include: the history and origins of the CSO Development Principles process, the Istanbul Principles-what are they and how can we use them, and discussion about plans of SCIC members on outreach and building a community of practice.

Minister Rob Norris will be present at the AGM to bring greetings from the provincial government and give an update on SCIC's relationship and work with the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration.

As always, the AGM will include the business meeting. Some highlights from that will include a presentation about the results of the Global Poverty Survey SCIC commissioned last year and an update about the work of the Southern Sudan pilot project that was discussed last year.

This year's AGM will be held from 9 am-4 pm on September 24 at Mayfair United Church, 902 33rd Street West in Saskatoon. To RSVP your attendance, contact Joan at 306-757-4669.

The Suffering *of* People *in* the

This article is a contribution from Sponsored WUSC Regina Students Mohamed Hassan and Marie Wollel.

Somalia has been in a constant state of turmoil, fighting and anarchy since the collapse of Siad Barre's regime in 1991. It remains one of the worst humanitarian situations in the world, with millions of people in need of assistance inside Somalia and many other Somalis fleeing their home country. While peace and stability have been established in the north-eastern independent region of Somaliland, south/central Somalia remains unpredictable. Clan warfare and attacks on aid workers continue to block relief efforts for many years.

Most parts of the country are controlled by armed groups who haven't allowed relief organizations to work in the regions under their control until recently. Due to the ongoing severe drought, which many observers believe is the worst crisis in East Africa for sixty years, coupled by conflicts and high food prices, many Somalis are forced to move to the neighbouring countries of Ethiopia and Kenya in search of humanitarian assistance. While many of them die along the way, particularly the malnourished children and women, others who make it to the already



Dolo Ado is tucked in the southeast corner of Ethiopia. It would laughably be called a 'refugee' if it weren't such a vision of hell [Peter Grestel/Al Jazeera]

over-crowded refugee camps in these two neighbouring countries are not guaranteed food, shelter and medical care. They stay homeless and basic necessities are scarce and not available to them in time.

Dadaab Refugee Camps in Kenya

Thousands of Somalis arrive in Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya every week. Dadaab

refugee camp was established in 1991, and this is where Mohamed grew up. It is the biggest and oldest refugee camp in the world and was initially meant to hold ninety thousand refugees, but is now holding almost half a million. The NGO's there do not have the capacity to support the overwhelming population and are calling for help. Antonio Guterres, the head of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, who recently visited Dadaab camp, said that the camp needs humanitarian emergency support.

As the refugees cannot rely on NGO's to support them, they instead create their own circles of support. Despite having their own challenges and shortages, the refugees who have been in Dadaab the longest (since 1992) try to help newcomers with food, used clothes and water (which there is a shortage of). While in the camp, Mohamed heard the story of a new refugee woman who refused to come out of her make-shift home when a group of well-wishers came to give her food. She needed the food but was embarrassed to come out because she was naked and had no clothes,



For Somalis, drought is a normal part of existence, and they have a well-developed set of coping strategies that would help millions of them survive this latest disaster if only the war and its belligerents would get out of the way. [Peter Grestel/Al Jazeera]

Forgotten Country – Somalia

forcing her to stay inside. Her story is just one of many at this camp.

Dolo Ado Camp of the Ethio-Somalia Border

Dolo Ado refugee camp is found at the southeast corner of Ethiopia which is 40 km north of the Kenyan border and five km from Somalia. The camp mainly consists of Somali refugees who fled civil war and the great East African drought. Based on realities on the ground, Peter Greste of Al Jazeera equates Dolo Ado refugee camp with the vision of hell on earth for various reasons. It is extremely hot – “more than 40 degrees centigrade in the shade– if one can find it – with a constant dust and wind.” The number of new arrivals in the camp is over 2000 per-day. The transit center at the camp consists of over 14,000 people which is beyond its capacity. Originally it was “intended for one-tenth that number.” The camp suffers from lack of basic necessities.

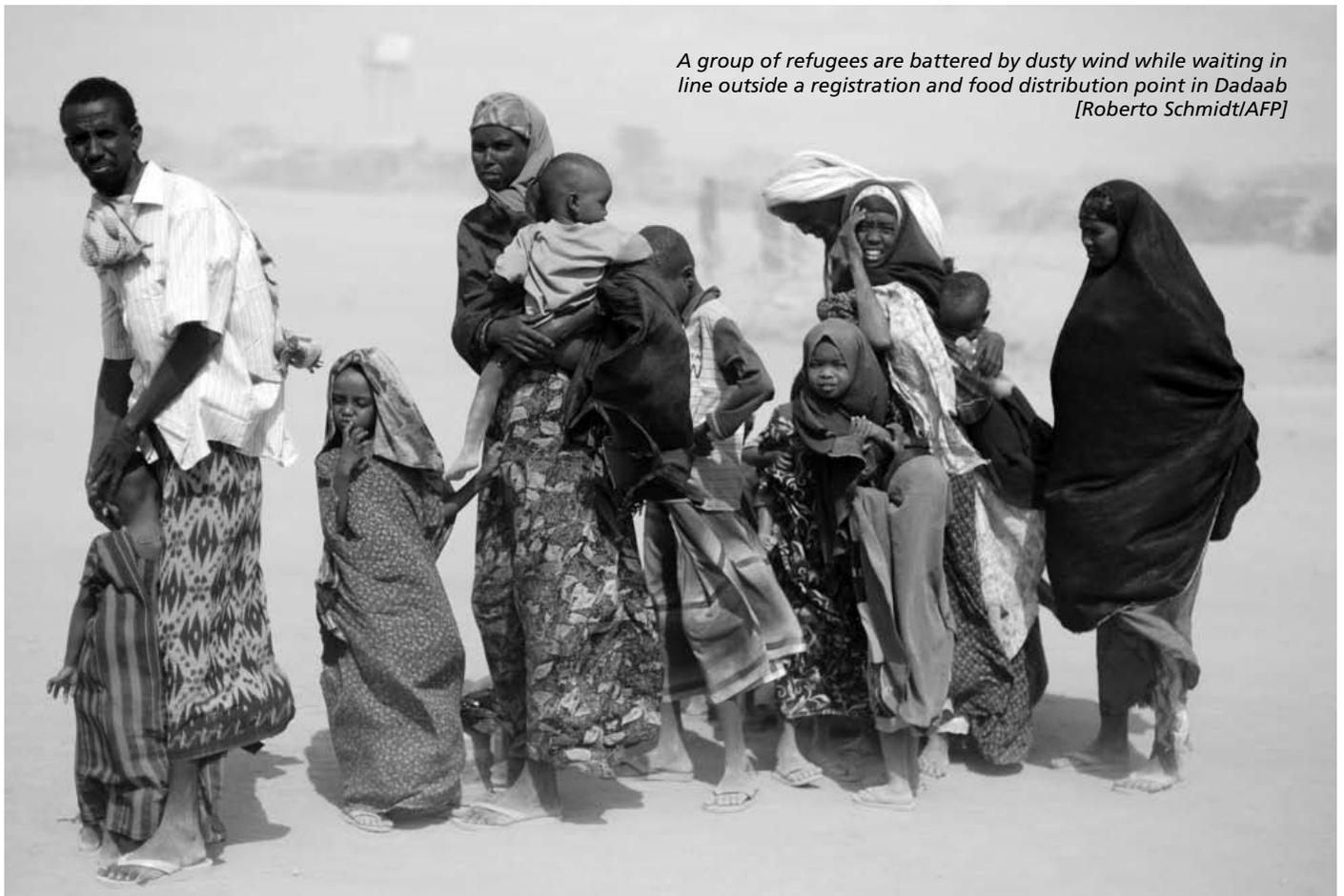
Lack of food remains chronic, and people sleep in shabby makeshift shelters and all over the bush.

One of the most striking events and heart breaking issues that occur across refugee camps all around the world, particularly in Dolo Ado, is the inappropriate location of the refugee camps and the suffering of the children, elderly, and women. Most of the time refugees and their camps are located in the remote and non-productive desert lands, unlike the majority of the population in the host countries. Thus refugees are punished twice: in their homeland as well as in their host countries. Refugees flee their home country mainly because of human rights violations and natural disasters, only to be allocated to the deserts and non-productive agricultural areas of the host country where there is little room for growth or opportunity. This is just

a small part of the larger picture of refugee life at the Dolo Ado refugee camp at the Ethio-Somalia Border.

What Now?

Our world is facing a historically unparalleled humanitarian crisis in these refugee camps which is caused by Human made and natural disaster. According to the reports of Greste, with Al Jazeera, “the pictures emerging from the Horn of Africa seem to show helpless hoards of Somalis. They suggest an entire nation on its knees, begging bowl meekly pushed forward, entirely dependent on others for all their most basic needs.” How can the world solve and stop such kinds of humanitarian crisis? While the people in Somalia are undergoing a crisis, these people need our help, BUT their situation is not helpless, nor is it impossible to solve. Help is never too late, and any assistance means a lot to those who are suffering. Any humanitarian effort, no matter how small, can bring hope and make a change in a life.



A group of refugees are battered by dusty wind while waiting in line outside a registration and food distribution point in Dadaab [Roberto Schmidt/AFP]

SCIC Youth

Living in Relationship with Water Lessons from a Global Youth Assembly

By Anna Weber

This July I attended the Global Youth Assembly on Water in Edmonton, a conference held by the John Humphrey Centre for Human Rights. The four day conference touched on a range of topics such as Indigenous perspectives on water, protecting your watershed, sustainability and water management, consumer social responsibility, and the green energy sector. It was a jam-packed few days, full of workshops, talks, and presentations all providing varying perspectives on different water issues.

A criticism of the event was that due to corporate sponsorship, some of the views presented were rather conflicting, and as a result, critical discussion was limited. One example was the topic of Alberta's oil sands. We heard both from concerned community activists, and the companies who are heavily invested in the project, but the corporate view seemed to be the most dominant. It became obvious to me that it is crucial to have open and unlimited space for critical discussion on important issues such as water. Especially at a gathering of youth, where we were heralded as being future leaders, it is essential not to stifle dialogue and the exchange of ideas with corporate propaganda.

Despite this, I was able to gather some new ideas, discover unique perspectives, and get inspired for future action. Because of the large number of presenters and ideas that were brought forward, I'll share only a select few:

I learned that Ecuador is the first country in the world to recognize Rights of Nature in its constitution. By moving away from treating nature as property Ecuador is protecting its biodiversity and its peoples. The Right for Water in the constitution is not just the right to access water, but guarantees for a safe environment and promotes alternative energy and technology. By recogni-



Participants get involved in one of the workshops at the Conference.

ing the Rights of Nature, preventative measures can be taken to stop environmental damage, and in cases where harm has been done, nature must be compensated, rather than only the affected peoples.

I learned that Water conservation is not about feeling guilty everytime you turn on the tap, flush the toilet, or wash your dishes; but it is about being conscious of the amount of water you use, and the impact that has both locally and globally. We must value being able to turn on the tap, value that it is clean and safe, and understand that water is not something we can waste, pollute, or take for granted.

I learned about the deep disparity that exists in Canada between the ease of water access in urban centres and the lack of basic water and sanitation for rural Indigenous communities. To remedy this situation there is a need for funding for water management, greater public participation in water policy decision-making, and political will and leadership.

In the quest to ensure the recognition of water as a human right integral to human health and wellbeing, as well

as nature's need for water, we must become leaders, support leaders, and create leadership. Many presenters at the Global Youth Assembly encouraged us to go and be leaders, and to use our social networking skills to change the world in ways older generations were not capable of doing. Maude Barlow, addressing us via video, said that the older generations are "not going off to the cottage to let the youth handle the problems." Youth can be leaders and use new strategies, but to be successful we must partner with those who have been tirelessly working before us.

We need to start to see water as a precious resource, and not as a commodity that can be bought, sold, polluted, and wasted. We need to appreciate that water is a human right, something that we are entitled to, but not something we should take for granted. As global citizens, we must not only be concerned about Canada's water supply, but about water issues around the globe. As we look around us at the increasing frequency of drought, famine and disaster, let us recognize the need to live sustainably – meeting the needs of the present and the needs of the future.

SCIC MEMBER PROFILE

Global Neighbors Canada Inc.

By Tarren Saleski

Global Neighbors Canada Inc. is an organization whose aim is to make a difference in the lives of the orphaned and displaced children from Burma living in the border town of Mae Sot in Thailand. They have constructed several schools and orphanages and are responsible for providing thousands of children with an opportunity for an education and a chance at a brighter future.

In December of 2009 I took my first trip to Mae Sot. My instructor at SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) approached our class and asked if we would be interested in joining Global Neighbors in the construction of a school. Myself and 11 other classmates jumped at this opportunity. We were unaware of what to expect but the prospect of traveling to construct a school

in Thailand was something we could not turn down. The months leading up to our departure were filled with fundraising, excitement and endless research. The news articles, books and documentaries did not prepare us for what we experienced on our work tour. The poverty and suffering was harder to accept than we could have ever imagined. Seeing the conditions these children were forced to attend school in was heart wrenching. Children sitting on concrete floors trying to learn with minimal books and even less food were so difficult to witness.

The construction of New Light Learning Center was an amazing experience. It was so great to be able to offer these children a safe and comfortable learning environment. The smiles on their faces when they saw their new school was the greatest thank you we could have asked for.

After our group returned home to Saskatchewan we noticed an increased interest from other groups of students in our program at SIAST. My instructor, myself and two classmates decided to return the following year with a new group of students. In December of 2010 I took my second trip to Mae Sot Thailand for the construction of Hle Bee School. This was an equally eye opening experience for myself and the others I was with. Along with the school construction we also participated in desk building, teaching and distributions of relief supplies to the families in the Mae Sot area. We also had an opportunity to visit a refugee camp (Mae La Refugee Camp) outside Mae Sot. We gathered into a church and a group of orphaned children began to sing us Christmas carols. They sang of snow and gifts under the tree, things that

they will possibly never have a chance to experience in their lifetime, things that we take for granted every year.

The impact these experiences have had on the SIAST students who have traveled with Global Neighbors is significant. I am pleased to see an increasing amount of interest and involvement in Global Neighbors and their cause from people in my community. I will be joining another group of students this upcoming December. The new skills acquired on these work tours with Global Neighbors will be brought home to our communities where we will continue to make a difference. We hope we can continue to raise awareness of the hardships people are faced with around the world and encourage youth involvement in wanting to make a difference in the global community.

Students at the Hsa Thoo Lei school in Thailand enjoy using their new computers.





Upcoming Opportunities & Events

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24 **SCIC Annual General Meeting in Saskatoon**

9:00am-4:00pm
Mayfair United Church,
902 33 Street West

This year's agenda will include a presentation and workshop by Fraser Reilly-King, CCIC's Aid and International Cooperation Policy Analyst. The focus of his interactive workshop will be on CSO Development Effectiveness, including the Istanbul Principles. Participants will also hear from Minister Rob Norris to bring greetings from the provincial government, and Robert Fox, the Executive Director of Oxfam Canada to give our lunch time key-note address.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16 **World Food Day**

Oxfam and its partners will be holding events and workshops in both Saskatoon and Regina to mark World Food Day. Please keep reading SCIC's E-Zine to find out the details. If you know of other World Food Day events in your area, let us know by emailing communications@earthbeat.sk.ca

NOVEMBER 2011 **ACTIVATE: Global Justice Youth Experience**

New to SCIC and the WorldBeat project is **ACTIVATE: Global Justice Youth Experience**. Activate is a conference held in different locations in the province with an aim to get students exposed to international development issues. ACTIVATE will bring a small group of students from different schools together to learn about international issues, and provide them with leadership skills so they can return to their schools and communities to organize an activity or event. This year's theme is **Food Security**. ACTIVATE is a one-day opportunity for youth Grades 6-8 and will be in Yorkton and North Battleford this year. Sign up for WorldBeat Ezines or check out the WorldBeat website for upcoming information and registration information.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9 **Deadline to Nominate a 2012 Global Citizen**

SCIC is calling for nominations for this year's Global Citizens Awards. For the past 22 years, SCIC has recognized over 75 individuals, couples, organizations, publications, youth and teachers worthy of the title "Global Citizens" for their work towards a better world for all. Our only criterion is that the recipients are Saskatchewan residents or have a strong connection to this province, and have demonstrated a commitment and contribution to global justice and cooperation.

We will gather during International Development Week (at the beginning of February) to present the Saskatchewan Global Citizens award at a gala awards ceremony filled with stories of hope, peace and justice.

Global Citizens Nomination Forms must be received by December 9, 2011.

For more information contact SCIC at 306-757-4669 or scic@earthbeat.sk.ca.