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Note to Correspondents

PANEL ON 21 NOVEMBER TO DISCUSS ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF DEVELOPMENT

Panellists will meet on Thursday, 21 November at United Nations Headquarters to discuss the ethical approaches to international relations and public policies advocated in the new book *Candles in the Dark: A New Spirit for a Plural World*. The panel discussion will take place in Conference Room 6 from 1:15 p.m. to 2:45 p.m.

The panellists are four of the book's contributors: Barbara Sundberg Baudot, the book's editor and a Professor of Politics, Saint Anselm College, New Hampshire; Richard Falk, Professor Emeritus of International Law and Practice, Princeton University, author of numerous books on international law and politics; Giandomenico Picco, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for the Dialogue among Civilizations; and Nitin Desai, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, who will moderate.

"We must apply the values that are shared by all peoples," United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan states in his introductory message to the book, "and that are particularly important to our age: freedom; equity and solidarity; tolerance; non-violence; respect for nature; and shared responsibility. Only in this way can we make globalization inclusive, allowing everyone to share its opportunities."

The central theme of this international compendium of essays is the need to rediscover ethical and spiritual values in the global economy and society. The book's contributors maintain that the current approach to the central problems in international relations, economics and social policies ignores a host of neglected but vital interests,

beliefs and values. Stressing the links between self-interest and the common good, they introduce, in a practical way, philosophical, spiritual and cultural perspectives in the debate on global political, economic and social problems.

Calling for a social and political approach that esteems the human spirit and dignity as central values in decision-making, the book's contributors address issues such as "Values and leadership in managing high-performance financial firms"; "Principles in the practice of diplomacy"; and "What can be wrong with growth?"

The book is an offshoot of a seminar on Ethical and Spiritual Dimensions of Social Progress, which the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) organized in Bled, Slovenia, in 1994 in preparation for the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development. The seminar's report (United Nations publications, Sales No E.95.IV.2) had some influence on the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the Summit in 1995. The Copenhagen Declaration states that "Our societies must respond more effectively to the material and spiritual needs of individuals, their families and the communities in which they live," and has several references to ethics, ethical principles and ethical conduct.

To contribute to the debate, a group of persons led by Ms. Sundberg Baudot decided to create an association of the participants in the Bled Seminar -- the Triglav Circle, a non-governmental organization accredited at the Economic and Social Council -- and to prepare a book.

In his foreword, Czech President and playwright Vaclav Havel calls for searching for "a reasonable hope against all hopelessness, an understandable and visible reason, like a candle lit in the darkness."

Candles in the Dark: A New Spirit for a Plural World, ISBN 0-295-98292-6, is published by the New Hampshire Institute of Politics at Saint Anselm College, in association with University of Washington Press. It is available at the United Nations bookstore and from the editor, Barbara Sundberg Baudot, at bbaudot@anselm.edu.

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