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Zeta Phi Beta brings its message of HOPE to UN

International organization's visit to UN focuses on key issues impacting Africans and African-Americans, including health care disparities and improvement of quality of life in developing nations.

WASHINGTON—Joined by United Nations representatives, clergy, members of other non-profit organizations and leaders in government, more than 160 members of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., engaged in one of its most significant displays of social and international civic commitment at Zeta Day at the United Nations on June 16, 2005. It was the first time that the Sorority, a U.N. non-governmental organization (NGO), presented its international service initiative to U.N. officials.

Led by International President Barbara C. Moore and under the day's theme of *Health Disparities: Zetas confronting the International Issues through ZHOPE*, Zeta members met for a day of dialogue and networking with some of the nation's top leaders renowned in the area of Health Disparities to discuss world health issues and solutions, particularly those that affect African people and people of color.

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During the morning briefing held in the Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium, International President Moore, welcomed participants to New York City and communicated her vision to further the success of the international component of Sorority's signature program Z-HOPE (Zetas Helping Other People Excel). She announced that her goal was to provide the Sorority and its constituents with "measurable, practical and traceable goals as we cooperatively take action" on recommendations on the improvement of the health care policy abroad, particularly in Africa.

Dr. Kathryn T. Malvern, the Sorority's UN representative and Chairperson of the Zeta National Educational Foundation served as the moderator for the distinguished group of speakers. Also giving greetings was Robert J. Tachie-Menson, Deputy Permanent Representative and Head Chancery of the Mission of Ghana to the United Nations. Mr. Tachie-Menson publicly acknowledged and thanked Zeta for its Z-HOPE initiatives, which include the construction of water well, rice and book distributions and the dissemination of HIV/AIDS medical kits in West Africa. But even with the work of organizations like Zeta Phi Beta, Mr. Tachie-Menson said Africans "continue to suffer with limited economic access". He said that, "there is much more that needs to be done." Isolda Oca, Associate Information Officer in NGO's Department of Public Information at the United Nations greeted the organization stating that Zeta is "high on the list of friends" of the United Nations and that the organization is in good standing. Other panelists included Kwame Anyane-Yeboah, M.D., Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Columbia University. The Ghana, West African native discussed issues on achieving better international health through education, while pointing out alarming statistics on West African infant mortality, lack of drinking water and the pandemic of HIV/AIDS that ravage African communities. Also speaking was Dr. Daniel Drell, program manager of the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Biological and Environmental Research. He discussed new approaches to correcting health disparities through genetic research. Concluding the briefing was Soror Mary E. Singletary, RN, and coordinator for International Women component of the Z-HOPE program. Soror Singletary's presentation educated the audience of Zeta's contributions of the year 2003-2004, which included the purchase of eight water wells, 1,331 medical kits for patients living with HIV/AIDS and 1,331 food baskets.

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Following the opening session, a luncheon in the Delegate's Dining Room was held where Dr. Constance Smith Hendricks, National Chairperson of Z-HOPE, welcomed attendees. The luncheon's first keynote speaker was Dr. Richard Alderslade, Deputy Director of the World Health Organization-New York, followed by Dr. Winston Price, President of the National Medical Association, who announced his desire to develop a health-related partnership with the Sorority. The final speaker was Dr. Aristides Patrinos, Associate Director of Biological and Environmental Research for the U.S. Department of Energy. The Department of Energy has worked with Zeta since 1999 on the Human Genome Project. Each speaker addressed health disparities both nationally and internationally, noting alarming disparities among people of color for diseases such as diabetes and HIV/AIDS.

After the luncheon, participants joined the International President at the Millennium UN Plaza Hotel where she thanked the speakers, committee members and all attendees for participating.

Other highlights of the Zeta Day at the UN was the acknowledgement of late Rev. Dr. Deborah Cannon Partridge Wolfe, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority's longest serving president. Dr. Wolfe, who died on September 3, 2004, was an active international leader at the United Nations. Dr. Wolfe's family accepted the International President's proclamation on her behalf, which proclaimed June 16, 2005 as Deborah Cannon Partridge Wolf Day at the United Nations and the Sorority will honor her memory by purchasing a water well in her name.

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Zeta Phi Beta Sorority was founded in 1920 in Washington, D.C., with the belief that the social nature of sorority life should not overshadow the real mission for progressive organizations to address societal mores, ills, prejudices, poverty, and health concerns of the day. The international organization's more than 125,000 initiated members, operating in more than 800 chapters, have given millions of voluntary hours to educate the public, provide scholarships, support organized charities and promote legislation for social and civic change. In addition to its membership of college-educated woman, the Zeta Phi Beta organizational umbrella includes Amicae (adult women), Archonettes (girls 14-18), Amicettes (girls 9-13), Pearlettes (girls 4-8), and the Zeta Male Network auxiliaries. For more information on Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., please visit the official web site at www.zphib1920.org.