

For further information:
Dhruva Hein, (212) 754-8484

WINTER PEACE SWIM TO BE HELD IN WILMINGTON

WILMINGTON (Mar. 1) -- Three United Nations staffers are flying in from New York for a mile-long "peace swim" in Wilmington at 4:00 pm on Saturday, 8 March, at Johnny Mercer Pier, Wrightsville Beach.

It's the latest in a series of more than 20 winter swims the trio are making to focus attention on 1986 as the "United Nations International Year of Peace."

The three began their peace journey Jan. 1 with a 1 1/2-mile swim off Hiroshima, Japan. As thousands of Japanese lined the shore, they swam around one of that country's most sacred sites: the shrine on Miyajima Island. Five days later they repeated their swim in Nagasaki Harbor.

Since that time they have swum in six states and Bermuda, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Wilmington swim is part of a weekend series that will include Virginia Beach, VA, Myrtle Beach, SC and Charleston, SC.

"We're hoping to make people more aware of what the UN is doing for peace and to inspire others to make their own efforts for world peace," says Adhiratha Keefe, one of the swimmers.

Keefe, a 38-year old UNICEF employee, whose first name means "divine charioteer," swam the English Channel last September to commemorate the UN's 40th anniversary. Over 4,000 people have attempted to swim the Channel, but less than 400 have completed the difficult crossing.

The two other swimmers are Sunil ("infinite blue sky") Davidson, 38, also of UNICEF, and Shraddha ("faith") Howard, 32, of the United Nations Secretariat. Both are training for English Channel swims later this year.

The three swimmers belong to the Peace Meditation group, which meets twice weekly at the United Nations under the leadership of spiritual master Sri Chinmoy, and attribute the inspiration for their peace swims to Sri Chinmoy. He has been leading these peace meditations for UN delegates and staff since 1970 in an effort to create a spiritual basis for the drive toward world peace. Two years ago he embarked on a global peace concert tour to bring a new peace momentum to this effort.

In addition to the Peace Swims, the Peace Meditation sponsors several silent Peace Walks at UN Headquarters and around the country, as well as Seven Minutes of World Peace, a global simultaneous observance of silence on October 24, UN Day. Information about these and other events can be obtained from Sri Chinmoy: The Peace Meditation at the UN, Room S-765, United Nations, NY 10017.