



# Update

November - December 2017

## UNANIMA Celebrates the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on Two Continents



Each year since 1992, the United Nations system honors 17 October as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, a designation put forth due to the efforts of Father Joseph Wresinski, founder of the ATD-4<sup>th</sup> World, a global organization that works with people experiencing extreme poverty to improve their lives and advocate for others facing the same challenges.

This year, a unified IDEP celebration took place in 5 cities around the world: Dakar, Guatemala City, Paris, Dublin, and New York. All ceremonies were

livestreamed on the Stop Poverty Campaign website, which featured footage of the celebratory activities with subtitles in English, French, and Spanish, for a full 24 hours on the 17<sup>th</sup>. On a separate website organized by a UN agency for the 2017 IDEP, several pieces of artwork created by students in schools run by UNANIMA's member congregations were featured.

Students submitted these works to the event to offer their ideas of what a world without poverty would look like. UNANIMA was fortunate enough to help organize and participate in the celebrations in both Dublin and New York this year as Executive Director Jean Quinn was in Ireland at that time.

Each ceremony featured the testimony of people with a background experience of extreme poverty as its central component. Those who gave testimony asked to be treated with dignity, to be consulted in the policy decisions that affect them, and to be recognized as people who are working for human rights, for themselves and for others. They told stories of passing out sandwiches in the alley to those in need in order to share what little they had. Again and again, they returned to the theme of the supreme value of being treated with dignity and respect.



After hearing these testimonies within a conference room at UN Headquarters, the New York celebration migrated out to the north lawn of UN Gardens for a ritual around the newly erected memorial stone in honor of Father Joseph Wresinski. The cubic stone is inscribed with his most famous quotation in all 6 UN languages: “Wherever men and women are condemned to live in extreme poverty, human rights are violated. To come together to ensure that these rights be respected is our solemn duty.” The garden gathering was complete with musical performances from a local gospel choir, a reading of the stone quotation in all six languages by New York City elementary school students, and a gesture of solidarity with those living in poverty in which everyone present selected one of many small stones inscribed

with the words “stop poverty” from a bowl to keep as a reminder of our “solemn duty.”

(Photos 1 and 2: Irish Committee for the IDEP (<http://17october.ie/gallery2017/>); Photo 3: Winifred Doherty, RGS)

## Looking Inward to Combat Modern Slavery



Anyone interested in learning how human trafficking impacts her life need look no further than the label on the clothes she is wearing. While many industries and products we consume every day may have been touched by forced or exploited laborers, the fashion industry is particularly fraught with unjust labor conditions and wages. Even clothing producers that attempt to eradicate exploitative practices from their manufacturing facilities find it a great challenge to track all exploitation in their supply chains at the level of harvesting raw materials for and producing fabrics. The profitability of forced labor in loosely regulated industries like the “sex trade” and low-tier fabric and garment manufacturing, makes them a prime market for human traffickers looking to sell or otherwise exploit their victims. The NGO Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons (CSTIP) is participating in a campaign that examines the role of forced labor in the clothing and garment industry. The campaign, entitled “Who Made My Clothes?” is being led by a group called Fashion Revolution. Their website (<http://bit.ly/1hoQITw>) offers a number of articles and tools for activism on this issue. At their November meeting, CSTIP members wrote postcards to policymakers, asking them what actions they are taking to create a fairer, safer, cleaner more transparent fashion industry. The template for the cards was produced by Fashion Revolution and is available online (<http://bit.ly/2oTigwU>). So, who made the shirt you are wearing right now?

## Two New Documents from Civil Society to Help Governments Enter the Next Chapter in the Process of Creating a Global Compact on Migration



Since September 2016, the UN Member States, several UN agencies, and a great number of NGOs concerned with migration have been engaged in a series of regional and thematic dialogues on the subject of an international agreement on international migration. Negotiations on the content of the agreement, which is being referred to as the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM), will begin in February 2018 and continue through July 2018.

Between late November 2017 and February 2108, the GCM development process will be in a “stocktaking phase” in which States, UN agencies, and NGOs reflect on the many points and perspectives shared by one another in the consultations of the past year. As a part of this exercise, leaders in the NGO community that

has mobilized to advocate for the centrality of human rights in the forthcoming GCM have put together two new documents. The first document, *Ten Acts for the Global Compact*, encompasses a broad agenda organized into ten concrete recommendations for the substance of the GCM. It was drafted by the International Catholic Migration Commission and the Migration and Development Network (MADE) in consultation with hundreds of NGOs worldwide, including UNANIMA and other members of the NGO Committee on Migration. It is available online in English (<http://bit.ly/2zUfb7m>), French (<http://bit.ly/2oYg1w9>), Russian (<http://bit.ly/2kSDqd2>), and Spanish (<http://bit.ly/2BpkuxU>).

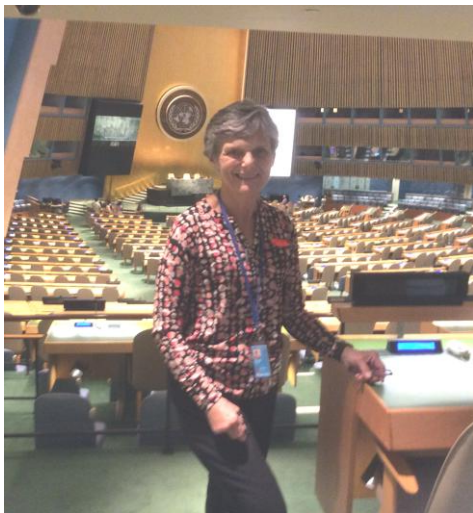
The second document, *Putting Words into ACTION: Concrete Policies and Practices for Implementation of a Civil Society Vision for the Global Compact* (<http://bit.ly/2BqgWva>), was created by the NGO Committee on Migration as a complement to the Ten Acts. It focuses on a selection of the points detailed in the Ten Acts by offering a compendium of model practices and policies countries already have in place that could be replicated and adapted for implementation of our recommendations.



You are encouraged to read and share both of these documents with anyone who may want to know what commitments UNANIMA and many other NGOs are urging governments to include in the Global Compact on Migration.

## Reflection on a Whirlwind Tour at the UN

By Jacquelyn Gusdane, SND, 2017 Catherine Ferguson Scholar



My commitment as a woman religious has been rooted in two “g” words: Gospel and global. This internship confirmed my commitment in ways I never anticipated. In the short span of four weeks, my global vision was stretched and I was exposed to issues and areas of the world about which I had been uninformed. For those who allowed me to come to and who supported me during this time, I am extremely grateful.

After engaging in conversation with several people, it appears that most citizens, even religious, have meager knowledge of the real work of the UN and even less about Non-Governmental Organizations that are present at the UN. The more I engaged in the opportunities offered me, the clearer it became that the alignment between the UN

Charter and the mission of the Catholic Church are common avenues for influencing and advocating for the People of God. On the issues of peace, security, human rights for all, the dignity of every human being, the preservation of the planet, and the self-determination of peoples, we are on essentially on the same page.

The NGOs who represent us are like conduits bringing the priorities and concerns of civil society to the United Nations and its Agencies and at the same time alerting you and me, “the people on the ground” to the issues that need to be in our hearts, on our radar screens, and addressed by

us. It is for each of us to join with the NGOs in seeking ways to make these priorities ours and ultimately to do our small part in bringing about a just world or, as I like to say, the Reign of God. The ministry of religious or their representatives who are NGOs is a labor of love because it is unending, tireless, and one in which they may see some, little, or no progress. They continually strategize to discover new ways that the voice of civil society can reach the member states and also, in turn, reach you and me. This is both a complicated and challenging endeavor and they are relentless in their efforts.

Because of this internship, I know I am called once again to examine my own life and honestly ask, “What more can I do *now* to make the Reign of God present where I am?” For me, this is both a simple and profound question. I can’t address every issue that touched me during my internship but I can be open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and where God leads me. I can share my experiences with the women in my religious congregation, my friends, family, and those whom I serve. I can network with members of our JPIC committee and share resources that I have discovered.

In summary, the United Nations, with its strengths and weaknesses, is the only global body with the capacity to address global issues and to have its decisions carry the weight of world opinion and moral authority. Our Church, with all its strengths and weaknesses, possesses a rich tradition of Catholic social teaching and is, likewise, a very visible and strong moral voice that carries weight across the continents for the people of God. To experience these peace and justice-seeking institutions working together and addressing multiple human rights/social justice issues is a lasting testament to the goodness of people and an inestimable gift to our global community. Through the United Nations, its many agencies and the NGOs working on our behalf, the Gospel message of Jesus lives. I encourage any sister whose congregation belongs to the coalition and feels the prompting of God’s Spirit to consider applying for an internship, which can vary in length, with UNANIMA. It will be a graced and transformative time in your life.



### **UNANIMA Commemorates 16 Days to End Violence Against Women**



Each year, 25 November marks the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and 10 December marks Human Rights Day. The UN community of agencies and NGOs has established the 16 days from 25 November to 10 December as a time for raising awareness and taking action to eradicate gender-based violence against women

(VAW) in all its forms, including domestic (or spousal) violence, sexual assault, sexual

harassment sex trafficking and forced labor, female genital mutilation, early and forced marriage, honor killings, and dowry killings. This year, UNANIMA is participating in the 16-day campaign to end VAW by generating one Facebook post each day to highlight a different aspect of this global epidemic for our members and network. The topics touched upon in our posts range from a glossary of terms related to VAW, to its impact on national economies, to its disproportionate impact on Indigenous women and girls, to strategies healthcare providers can employ to help identify and protect victims. For more details, see our Facebook page posts from 25 November to 10 December 2017. (Photo: UN Women)

## **A Great Sign of Hope**

By Stacy Hanrahan, CND

While Nuclear Weapon Disarmament is not one of UNANIMA's specific goals, I knew we want to rejoice in the message of Hope given to ICAN, by the Nobel Peace Prize Committee. An end to these weapons could enable all the world's peoples, creatures and earth itself to be free from the menace shackling our imaginations and resources from becoming the world we desire.

This Prize is an acknowledgement of decades of campaigning against nuclear weapons, as well as the particular contributions of ICAN to achieving an historic instrument of international law. Since the first nuclear weapon tests in New Mexico in July 1945 to their horrific and inhumane use against citizens in Hiroshima and Nagasaki to the thousands of tests around the world, activists have worked tirelessly to oppose the possession of these weapons on the basis of their catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences. Excerpt from: Reaching Critical Will October 2017 E-News. Reaching Critical Will. For more information see: [www.reachingcriticalwill.org](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org).



## **Reflection on a First Month at the UN**

By Carmen Soto, CCV, 2017 Catherine Ferguson Scholar

My internship at UNANIMA is for three months and this past September was very enriching. I arrived the week the General Assembly commenced, when all the representatives of the member states (countries) of the U.N. arrived. The security was impressive and imposing, it felt as if all of the New York City police were around the U.N. area. It was crazy for the everyday citizen, the businesses, and definitely the traffic. Security went to the extreme in the sense that the United Nations Office did not give passes for NGOs, nor were NGO's with Ground Passes permitted to enter.



Thanks to Teresa Blumenstein who showed me how to contact the sponsoring missions of specific side I was able to receive the tickets necessary to enter the U.N. I was able to attend side events such as Refugees and migrants- Ideas and best practices between development cooperation and the need for security, and Revealing the Unknown-Measuring the SDG Indicators on Human Trafficking. Throughout the city I was able to be present at several events and committee meetings such as: One year on- Delivering on the promise of shared responsibilities for refugees, Climate induced Migration, and International Humanitarian Law.

The experience of the U.N. is unique. In 2015 the United Nations Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The focus of this agenda is the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), of which there are 17.

Being present at several committee meetings has given me the opportunity to listen to representatives of various countries express the commitments they have made to implement one or several of the SDG's; their goals toward further progress for their countries, the sharing of various aspects of implementation and some have also shared the difficulties they encounter executing those goals. There have been occasions when member states have expressed concern of actions or lack of action from member states and have challenged another attempting to keep the other accountable.

There have been times when I've listen to member states, and it aches to see how the bureaucracy, at times the lack of commitment and lack of accountability to the agreements that have been made are holding back countries from progress and from so many injustices. It is why the importance of UNANNIMA'S presence at the United Nations is essential. The participation in the NGO committees and commissions such as Social Development, Indigenous Peoples, Climate Change Induced Migration, RUN (Religious at United Nations) and others groups also offers the opportunity to raise our concerns and express the values important to us on behalf of the poor and for justice.

### Flashpoints:

- Sisters of the **Society of the Holy Child Jesus** have undertaken an initiative to support women in Ghana by distbuting donkeys and carts to their communities. In the dry season, groups of women with children are given carts to carry sand and water to assist in repairing damage done to their homes in the rainy season. They also use the carts to



generate income to support their households, because many men migrate away for work and do not send funds home with great frequency in the dry season. Income generated by working with the carts helps to ensure these women have enough money to buy food for themselves and their children throughout the season.

- As part of the celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the founding of Sophia Housing by UI Executive Director and **Daughter of Wisdom**, Jean Quinn, the Sophia team hosted an International Conference with SMES Europa. This pan-European network of front line organization's across Europe is committed to helping the homeless, the socially excluded, and migrant populations. Jean spoke at two sessions at the conference: one in Dublin on homelessness and social exclusion and the second one in the Irish Midlands on the work of UNANIMA International, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Compacts for Migrants and Refugees. A Government Minister attended each of the conferences, including one who had actually worked at the United Nations in the past.
- The **Carmelite Sisters of Charity-Vedruna** also commemorated the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women this year. They worked with a diocese in Madrid, Spain to organize a vigil for all women who had been victims of violence. In the photo S. Cova Orejas (fourth from left) stands alongside other women who helped to organize the event.



*Merry Christmas  
and blessings for a  
peaceful new year  
from the  
UNANIMA team  
in New York!*

