



Partnership for Global Justice December 2017/January 2018

Partnership For Global Justice Monthly Newsletter

Welcome to the Partnership for Global Justice Monthly – a newsletter about PGJ programs, news from the United Nations and its briefings, and information about the activities of our participating membership. With this Monthly, we invite our members to provide updates of their social justice initiatives and share their related experiences. Please respond to this posting with a comment on our blog or send your thoughts to partnershipforglobaljustice@gmail.com.

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LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Members,

As we begin a new year we enter the 70th year since the acceptance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the part that Eleanor Roosevelt had in that historic document. She is a model for all of us as we join the UN Campaign Stand Up for Human Rights. This campaign has three goals: 1) promote an awareness of what the Declaration means in everyday life and show how it empowers us all, 2) engage in expressing your commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights, and 3) reflect on the state of human rights today and on how you can stand up for rights. (<http://www.standup4humanrights.org/en/take-action.html>) There are many suggestions on the webpage from which the goals are taken. You can “promote” by using your phone to record yourself or a friend reading one of the articles from the Declaration and then sharing briefly on its meaning for you. You can engage by taking the human rights pledge available at <http://www.standup4humanrights.org/en/engage.html> and encourage others to take the pledge. You can reflect on human rights in your local civic community as well as in the broader community. You might share your reflection in a letter to the editor or for an article in a publication you read.

This celebration of Human Rights fit well with the celebration of Martin Luther King Day on January 15 and the 4th Annual Symposium on the Role of Religion and Faith-based Organizations in International Affairs: Perspectives on Migration: Displacement and Marginalization, Inclusion and Justice, January 22 at the UN Secretariat. This put the Flight of the Holy Family into Egypt in today’s context.

In many countries, youth are mistreated but at the UN they will be given special attention at the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum January 30 and 31. Youth from around the world will share with Member States on The role of youth in building sustainable and resilient urban and rural communities- #YOUTH2030. More information is available at <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/node/2641005>

The PGJ Board has established a subcommittee to work to increase membership. If you know any congregation, institution, or individual that you think would be interested in joining PGJ, please share PGJ info with them and send their contact information to Kathy Nolan, OP at KaNolan@adriandominicans.org

With hope that 2018 will see less violence than 2017 and that true progress will be made on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals,



JoAnn Mark, ASC
Executive Director



December 4-6 UN Environment Assembly

Nairobi, Kenya

The **UN Environment Assembly** issued this **public notice** on December 6: “Today, world leaders came together to #BeatPollution at the close of the 3rd session of the UN Environment Assembly by passing resolutions and making pledges to improve the lives of billions of people across the globe by cleaning up our air, land and water.”

Highlights

- Over 4,000 heads of state, ministers, business leaders, UN officials, civil society, activists and celebrities gathered at the summit in Nairobi, Kenya, which ran from 4 to 6 December.
- 2.5 million people made pledges to #BeatPollution.
- If all commitments made by governments, civil society, businesses, and individuals are met: 1.49 billion people will breathe clean air, one-third of the world's coastlines will be clean, and USD 18.6 billion will be invested in research and innovation.
- For the first time, environment ministers issued a declaration, stating that nations would honour efforts to prevent, mitigate and manage pollution in all its forms.
- 13 Resolutions were passed to address various types of pollution, notably, marine litter and micro plastics, air pollution, lead poisoning, soil contamination, and to manage pollution in areas hit by conflict and terrorism.
- The 2017 Champions of the Earth were revealed, including Paul A. Newman & NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, and Emmy Award-winning filmmaker Jeff Orlowski.
- The UN Environment Assembly was featured live on Al Gore's 24 Hours of Reality to a global audience of tens of thousands.
- Singer and song-writer Ellie Goulding was honored as UN Environment Global Goodwill Ambassador.

[Read the full story](#)

CleanSeas

Chile, Oman, South Africa and Sri Lanka all joined the #CleanSeas campaign during the summit, with Sri Lanka promising to implement a ban on single-use plastic products from 1 January 2018. There are now 39 countries in the campaign.

BreatheLife

Colombia, Singapore, Bulgaria, Hungary and Mongolia joined 100 cities who were already in the #BreatheLife campaign, which aims to tackle air pollution. Every signatory has committed to reduce air pollution to safe levels by 2030.

Thank you to everyone who took the #beatpollution pledge, made commitments, and spread the word! Let's take a moment to celebrate the achievements of this past week, and get ready to translate the commitments into actions for a pollution-free world!

#BEATPOLLUTION | www.beatpollution.org | www.unenvironment.org/assembly



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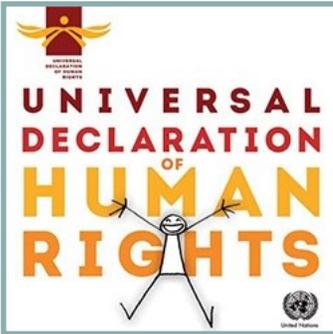
Adorers of the Blood of Christ - US Region
Adrian Dominican Sisters
Annie Dang (Intern)
Ashlee Yearwood (Youth Rep)
Barbara Ellen Black
Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration
Benedictine Sisters of Erie
Cenacle Sisters North American Province
Cheryl Golden
Cheryl Wittenauer
Clint Stucky
Congregation of the Infant Jesus:
Nursing Sisters of the Sick Poor
Congregation of Notre Dame
Congregation of St. Joseph
CSJ Concordia
Daughters of the Holy Spirit
Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids
Donna Luetters
Janet Potts
La Congregation des Soeurs de Sainte-Anne
Linnea Ristow
Mary Ellen Loch, CSJ
Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit
Molloy College
Oblate Sisters of the Most Holy Redeemer
OSF of Dubuque
OSF of Oldenburg
OSF of Rochester
Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters, Inc.
Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
Sisters of Divine Compassion
Sisters of Divine Providence
Sisters of St. John the Baptist

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December 11 Human Rights Day Event 1 Special event to mark Human Rights Day and launch of the year-long campaign for the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

by M. Doretta Cornell, RDC



See also this interesting [illustrated book on the Declaration](#) – flip through the pages; you may have to wait a second or two for the illustrations to appear on your screen.

Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights **Andrew Gilmour** welcomed all and described the signing of the [Universal Declaration on Human Rights](#) 69 years ago yesterday and hailed the start, today, of the Declaration's 70th anniversary year.

Secretary-General **Antonio Guterres** described the Declaration as having profoundly changed our world, by establishing that these rights as universal, for all, wherever and whoever. For the

first time, all nations agreed that these rights are not bound by any tradition, culture, or political system. The ratification means that all the then-members saw this as the standard for all people.

As we begin to celebrate the 70th anniversary, Mr. Guterres said, we need to take stock of *achievements in human rights*: people have gained progressively greater freedom, greater access to justice, health, and education; the rights of women, children, and those with disabilities have been emphasized; and dictators have been replaced through prosecution for their offenses by an international tribunal.

It is also time to take stock of *where we fall short*: equal dignity is still far from universal; many still face persecution. In some places limits are placed on the ability to NGOs to work, for examples. Because there can be no progress without human rights and respect, the SDGs are deeply rooted in human rights. We must reflect on human rights and act to enforce them, speak out and take a stand for human rights.

Mr. Guterres ended by calling on everyone to take this pledge:

"I will respect your rights regardless of who you are. I will uphold your rights even when I disagree with you. When anyone's human rights are denied, everyone's rights are undermined, so I will stand up. I will raise my voice. I will take action. I will use my rights to stand up for your rights."

It was very stirring to hear the words echo through the chamber as all repeated them.

[Editor's note: You also can sign on to this [Pledge here](#).]

The President of General Assembly, **Miroslav Lajcak**, reiterated that the Declaration showed the agreement of nations that these rights are an inherent part of humanity and always will be. They can be trampled on and violated but never taken away.

At this point, Mr. Lajcak declared, treaties and other agreements are important, but the people are central, especially those who remain in the dark: the young man in prison, the journalist afraid of a knock on the door, refugees fleeing for their lives, the girl forced to marry a man three times her age. These people cannot exercise their rights, so we must speak louder for them.

The General Assembly works, he stated, because it is the most representative body of the world. It encompasses differing perspectives but all participate in the General Assembly.

Like Mr. Guterres, Mr. Lajcak noted the reason for celebrating: UN actions on human rights have been effective. NGOs have intervened in many cases using the Declaration to act for people living in injustice. But there are still many who cannot exercise these rights. He concluded by asking, "Would Eleanor Roosevelt be content with where we are today or did she hope for more? We must act to fulfill her legacy."



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Sisters of the Blessed
Sacrament
Sisters of the Humility of Mary
Sisters of the Most Precious
Blood- O'Fallon
Society of the Precious Blood -
Liberty
Stephen Rivet
Steven Rufe
Victory Noll Center - Jenna
Strick
Wheaton Franciscans



The **Moderator** then invited us all to imagine we are present at signing and listening to Eleanor Roosevelt explain why the world needs the Declaration. An actress (whose name I was unable to find) **spoke as Mrs. Roosevelt**, imitating her voice, with Mrs. Roosevelt's hairstyle and dressed in clothes of the period, a suit and hat and orchids. Hearing this live was very effective.



Mrs. Roosevelt began by reminding the General Assembly that the Declaration was drawn up in response to World War II, which cost 60 million lives, the majority of them civilians. The aftermath, she stated, continues to wreak havoc on millions of people and economies. She said she had been asking for years why men couldn't sit down and settle their differences, but, in preparing the document, she found out that it is far easier to start a war than to build understanding.

The UN and its process to build the declaration show it is possible to solve our difference without taking up arms, she declared.. "We must rise to a new level of understanding," Mrs. Roosevelt asserted. No nation can be at peace as long as other nations continue to be at war. "Nobody wins a war," she said; at the end of the conflict, the same problems still exist, and there are added problems created by the fighting.

Mrs. Roosevelt then described the trials of the Working Group sketching out what the rights of every person are. She participated as delegate from the United States, adding that she believed the country had assigned her to the UN "to keep me out of important things, like arms." When ECOSOC asked the group to create a formal document defining human rights, Mrs. Roosevelt was elected chair of the committee and she led the decision to address three areas of rights: social, humanitarian, and economic.

The process was difficult because they had to find words that (a) could be agreed on by the majority, and (b) could be translated accurately into all the official UN languages and 58 different legal systems. For instance, they started with "all men." The three women on the committee objected, "When we get home it will be [seen as applying only to] all men." They decided to use "all human beings," instead. Then came "are created equal." Not all of the participants believed in a creator, so they settled on "are born free and equal." It took the committee four weeks to draft the first two articles – five sentences! And so the process went for the whole document.

Former High Commissioners for Human Rights (2004-2008) and now UN Special Representative for International Migration, **Louise Arbour**, reminded us that many still must fight to exercise these universal human rights. The UN now is still working to apply the Declaration to refugees, for instance, as they develop the Global Compact for safe, orderly, and regular migration. She noted the "significant hostility toward migrants in many places, exhibiting deep-seated prejudice and xenophobia," ignoring the fact of the benefits nations gain from migrants. Ms. Arbour ended by stating that we must all take the lead in enacting legislation to make refugees and migrant not a burden and not a threat. We must remember that migration is often the only way for people to gain equality and opportunity.

Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs **Liu Zhenmin** declared that the Declaration is the *most important document* of the United Nations. The current social development agenda [*SDGs*] draws on the aspirations of all people. Reaching our human potential is not possible if our fellow human beings are denied their human rights. Human rights and development are two sides of same coin.



The most recent former Commissioner of Human Rights (2008-2014), **Navanethem Pillay**, told us that, as a young lawyer, before the Declaration was ratified in South Africa, she could not plead a case on the basis of human rights, since there was not universal definition. On one case, she said, a judge used an article in *Time* magazine to justify corporal punishment as acceptable. Recently, on the other hand, a young child sued her father for assault for beating her. So there has been a progression of rights. To make an emphasis on human rights practical, we needed a document to lay out those rights. She urged all nations to include the Declaration in their constitutions.

For UN Member States to deny human rights to their citizens is hypocrisy, Ms. Pillay declared. For example, the Security Council sees nations that are acting for national or regional interests, rather than for the good of all. Ms. Pillay suggested all Members hold their friends to the same standard as they hold others and enforce human rights.

Ms. Pillay does see progress, especially working with Civil Society, but she sees a “dangerous decreasing” place for such societies at the UN. This is very important because the main concern has to be the people. She told of some young people coming to her about the lack of human rights in the United States, in spite of the country’s “big proclamations” about human rights in other nations.



“Refugee populations do not lose their nationality. What they lose is the protection of their country.”

– Geoff Gilbert, University of Essex, UK



December 11 Human Rights Day Event 2 Interactive Panel Discussion: “Realizing Human Rights Effective Protection of Civil and Political Rights of Migrants and Refugees”

by M. Doretta Cornell, RDC

Welcoming remarks were offered by **Massimo Tommasoli**, Permanent Observer for International IDEA to the United Nations

Patrick Keuleers, Director of Governance and Peacebuilding in UNDP Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, spoke of the [Global Compact](#) for safe, orderly and regular migration now being prepared as important for achieving the SDGs. Noting how many people live outside of the country they were born in, Mr. Keuleers said that everyone needs to be involved in this, so that the Global Compact will explicitly recognize human rights, such as the right to employment; birth registration, etc., for refugees, as well as the right to vote in their country of origin.

Besides forming policy, the United Nations can help on the ground; there has been great progress this year, with the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) collaborating with the High Commission for Refugees. Groups such as UN Women are helping arrange for refugees to vote, especially internally displaced persons. Mr. Keuleers expressed his hope that the Global Compact will strengthen this work.

Jonathan Prentice, Chief of Staff of the Office of the UN Special Representative for International Migration, spoke of the December 4-6 [meeting in Puerto Villarta](#), Mexico, a preliminary meeting in preparation for the Global Compact. Mr. Prentice said the meeting was encouraging because it showed the large degree of consensus on how to move forward, thanks to the “intentionally long period of consultation,” (7-8 months) which has allowed a “significant rise in the knowledge base” and also increased “comfort level” in regard to the challenges.

The meeting resulted in a “zero draft” for negotiation for Global Compact in its final form. There is also universal commitment to a non-legally-binding compact. In spite of the headlines, he sees wide-spread agreement that such a compact is needed and does not pose a threat to national integrity. Once it was agreed that the compact would not be legally binding, all agreed to the document.

The flip side to the increased knowledge, he told us, is that we also understand better what we do not know. There is increased focus on filling the “data gaps.” Capacity building needs greater efforts, for instance, as do key questions like the impact on formal economies and the relationship between migration and development. Also needed are more data on the impact of political and economic contributions to home communities, such as remittances. He is more interested in looking at political participation for refugees and migrants, rather than at the politics of migration in general.

Because of the recent large uncontrolled migrations, people and nations are perceiving migration a threat. The majority of migration, Mr. Prentice said, is regular and managed well. The [Global Compact](#) will have to be able to adapt as migration patterns change in the future.

He then outlined the next steps: the Secretary-General’s report would come within the day and the zero draft will be prepared during January, so that formal negotiations can begin, with the aim of formalizing the compact by July. Following that will be a summit of heads of state in Morocco next December. He is hopeful for this process, as the [New York Declaration](#) showed such a high level of agreement and resolve to put migration in focus for the UN.



Mr. **Niall McCann**, Lead Electoral Advisor, UNDP, continued this discussion of voting rights for refugees, saying that the Puerta Villarta document shows a wide range of opinions about how refugees can or should be included. One complication is that, in the past, migration was usually “finite and traumatic, with little contact or return.” Modern technology allows more constant connection by refugees and migrants with their homeland and can facilitate things like voter registration from afar. In some instances where large numbers of refugees fleeing violence from a country have gathered, the UN has facilitated voting; it is more difficult for smaller and more dispersed groups. Mr. McCann argued that the UN should discuss policies for voting, as more and more refugees demand their right to a voice in their country’s future.

Moderator **Massimo Tommasoli**, Permanent Observer for the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) to the United Nations, noted that migrants and refugees have become issues in established democracies, so the Global Compact needs to include consistent policies. He warned of “political entrepreneurs” who are using migration for their own political ends, considering only the impact for short-term election results, rather than long-term approaches, which must acknowledge the contributions and benefits of migrants and refugees. We need to have a global picture or we will lose a great opportunity.



“The Declaration of Human Rights is the most important document of the United Nations.”

— Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs



December 11 Human Rights Day Event 3**Panel Discussion: Political Participation of Refugees and Migrants
Future Outlooks**

by M. Doretta Cornell, RDC

Pennelope Beckles, Ambassador of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, said that, because Trinidad has many migrants and refugees, the country has developed national policies, for instance, to protect economic migrants from being exposed to abuse, provide training, and build the capacity to treat refugees and asylum seekers.

Trinidad recognizes the relationship between employment and migration, so it has agreements with other countries. Managing internal migration, they have been working with IOM, African groups, and the UN Fund to develop policy, mainstream migrants, and strengthen institutions that make migration a benefit for the country and ensure the political rights of all refugees. She encouraged other countries to mainstream migrants into their national plans.

Craig Jenness, Director of the UN Electoral Assistance Division and a participant at Puerta Villarta, spoke of that meeting's narrow focus on the political rights of migrants and refugees and outlined three points in the discussion:

1. Except in special cases, international frameworks do not yet allow for or require host countries to ensure voting by migrants and refugees.
2. Making provision for citizens abroad to vote can be crucial, especially in places with peace negotiations going on, to ensure that people displaced internally and externally have a right to participate in the peace processes.
3. The host country at present determines whether these accommodations are made, and often depends on the size of the population and the host's ability to facilitate the process. Out-of-country operations can be very expensive, especially when there are large numbers of refugees, so host countries (many of which are developing nations) would need international support. The international community seems to be mostly in favor of supporting this, for instance in Syria. This was also true in Kosovo.

Elhadji Amadou Ndao, Consul General of Senegal in New York, told us that Senegal is committed to political rights and has for many years been organizing voting rights for Senegalese who do not live in the country. Senegal wants to include diaspora Senegalese in all regions of the world in national and parliamentary elections, a right guaranteed by their constitution. The government even includes a department for this. Technical advances make the process of registration and verification of enrollment easier and allows for applications on line. For the first time, Senegal has 15 seats in Parliament for persons in diaspora to elect their own representatives. One of Mr. Ndao's challenges is the size of his jurisdictions: he is in charge of voting for all Senegalese all in the United States. The volume of material such as voter cards and ballots to be dispatched for the election makes this difficult.

Geoff Gilbert, Professor of International Human Rights & Humanitarian Law, School of Law and Human Rights Centre, University of Essex spoke via Skype from Switzerland. His work with the High Commissioner for Refugees has included collaborating on the Global Compact, on human rights and the rule of law. He told us of his conversations with refugees, many of whom are not planning to return, while others are planning to return. Both cases involve human rights and international law in different ways.

Refugee populations, he reminded us, do not lose their nationality – what they have lost is *protection* by their home country. People who have experienced persecution are an essential voice in any peace process; they must be included to create a peaceful society, respectful of human rights. This is very complex, for example in reaching Malians in Niger and also reaching those scattered in Europe. The long-term refugees who have lost their connections to their homelands pose a different challenge.



Patricia Hornby [*I am not sure this is her correct name*] of Canada told of monitoring Afghan elections, with thousands of refugees assembled, amid great energy to push the peace process forward. Another challenge is working with new migrants who have not yet been granted citizenship. She encourages calling volunteers from among them to get involved in preparing for elections, to enable them to become part of their new community as well as learn how the new system works.

Yet another issue is the timing of campaigns; short election processes increase the challenges of getting information out and ballots back and verifying the identity of voters. Voting by refugees and migrants is important to sustain peace and stable governments, in Afghanistan, for instance.

Yet another issue is how to engage these people on the social issues. For instance, in Italy, there was debate among Italian-Canadians with dual citizenship about how they belong in the conversation. Those who left long ago may have very different ideas about issues. In some situations, first-wave refugees, and in some places second-wave, are the ones to keep the fighting going, not those still in the country. This needs to be considered.

Ms. Hornby said that the dialogue about refugees and migrants must continue, as most democracies don't know how to provide them with political engagement, especially on human rights issues. She reminded us, "If you are not represented, you are not protected," especially on human rights. Canadian citizens don't often rally for migrant rights, and there is some push-back among objectors. This brings up the question of limits: whose family should be excluded, since all have refugees or migrants in their past.

The Moderator **Sarah Rattray**, Human Rights Policy Specialist, UNDP, told us that the average length of stay for migrants is about 17 years, some longer; migrants are not returning as quickly as in the past, as the home situations are not being resolved quickly. The impact on women especially, and families having migrant or refugee status is great, making the Global Compact urgent.



December 15 UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner – Report on Human Rights in the United States

by M. Doretta Cornell, RDC

Signatories to the [Declaration of Human Rights](#) are periodically visited by rapporteurs to assess their compliance with the terms of the Declaration. **Philip Alston**, the UN's special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, spent ten days in the United States during fall 2017 "to look at whether the persistence of extreme poverty in America undermines the enjoyment of human rights by its citizens." **Read Mr. Alston's full [UN Report here](#).**

This report by the Special Rapporteur is a devastating account of human rights violations in the United States, which Mr. Alston reports are increasing under the present administration. Increasing inequality underlies many other violations.. Proposed changes in laws and policies "will essentially shred crucial dimensions of a safety net that is already full of holes," Mr. Alston reported, adding that, in particular, "The proposed tax reform package [*which has since been passed*] stakes out America's bid to become the most unequal society in the world."

Mr. Alston noted that, while there are many positive actions, especially by cities, to assist people living in the poorest conditions, he presents a few comparisons between the United States and other nations that show widespread disregard for human rights of the poorest Americans. Here are just a few:

- The United States spends more on defense than the next seven countries combined. *[Editor's Note: I recently read that 3% of the US military budget would end extreme poverty worldwide.]*
- Infant mortality rates are the highest among all developed countries.
- The United States ranks 36th in the world for access to water and sanitation.
- One quarter of youth in the US live in poverty, the highest percentage among nations that signed the Convention on the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development ([OECD](#)). The average for these countries is less than 14%.
- U.S. health care costs are double those in other OECD countries, while having fewer doctors and hospital beds per capita than average.
- The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world, nearly five times the OECD average.
- The United States ranks 35th out of 37 OECD nations on poverty and inequality. By the United States' own calculations, more than one in every eight Americans was living in poverty in September 2017 (40 million, equal to 12.7% of the population). And almost half of those (18.5 million) were living in deep poverty, with reported family income below one-half of the poverty threshold.

One of the most devastating sentences in the report is this one, following statements on the disjunction between what the US demands of other nations and what this country practices at home:

"In practice, the United States is alone among developed countries in insisting that, while human rights are of fundamental importance, they do not include rights that guard against dying of hunger, dying from a lack of access to affordable healthcare, or growing up in a context of total deprivation."



Mr. Alston also reported widespread undermining of the right to participate in government, which is greatly undermining U.S. democracy. He listed the various ways many Americans are prevented from exercising their right to vote.

The right to employment also came under scrutiny; Mr. Alston cited the illusion of jobs waiting for workers and increasing removal of programs to support those who are poor,

Paragraph 22 summarizes the employment situation in the United States:

“ Reflecting on these developments, leading poverty experts have concluded: Because of this rising joblessness, the U.S. poverty population is becoming a more deprived and destitute class, one that’s disconnected from the economy and unable to meet basic needs. ... 40 percent of the 1999 poverty population was in deep poverty ... compared to 46 percent of the 2015 poverty population. . . . Likewise, rates of extreme poverty (i.e., living on less than \$2 per day per person) are also increasing, again because of declining employment as well as growing ‘disconnection’ from the safety net.”

Further analysis of social protections for indigenous people in the US and children in poverty, the environmental sustainability, “racism, disability and demonization of the poor,” and the use of “fraud as a smokescreen” to hide reality shows severe dysfunction in our country. The report ends with a paragraph on the current plight of the people of Puerto Rico.

All in all, this is a [UN Report](#) that all of us should read and to which we should give serious thought and prayer.



January 8 Security Council President Priorities for 2018

by JoAnn Mark, ASC

Security Council President Kairat Umarov (from Kazakhstan) held a Briefing for Civil Societies on the Council's priorities for January 2018. This is the first Civil Society Briefing of 2018 and the Ninth in the Series.

The series supports the work of NGOs as they relate to peace and security issues, and to the Security Council. Ambassador Umarov started by noting that all were hoping for a quiet and peaceful first week, but that was not the case as a special meeting was called.

NGOs play an important role as “watchdogs” of the Security Council work and Ambassador Umarov will try to make his month of presidency as transparent as possible. He wanted to make his presidency different, and so it began with the ceremony welcoming the new non-permanent members to the Security Council: Equatorial Guinea, Kuwait, Netherlands, Peru and Poland. This introduced them to the Security Council and showed them the great trust the international community places in them.

The Ambassador stated the **priorities for the month**: 1) non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, 2) Afghanistan and Central Asia, and 3) the Middle East.

On **January 18**, there will be a **High-Level Thematic Debate** on the first priority. The hope is to achieve non-proliferation through confidence building. Confidence building or trust is important in all issues since without trust countries go to military action. On **January 19**, **Ministerial Level Debate** on building regional partnership in Afghanistan and Central Asia as a model to link security and development. They think that the country-specific approach, especially in conflict areas, is a little outdated. What is happening in one country is often dependent upon what is happening in the region. Linking security and development is also important, since without development there will be no lasting security. If this model works in Afghanistan, it can work in other countries also.

On **January 25**, the Security Council will have a **quarterly discussion** on the situation in Middle East. He did not elaborate because, in his opinion, nothing will be changed in this debate. Mr. Umarov also mentioned **other issues on the agenda**: Palestine, Columbia, Cyprus, Syria, and Africa. On **January 31**, there will be a **wrap-up session and discussion** on how the Security Council can improve their work.

The Ambassador then **responded to questions**. Here are a few thoughts from that interaction:

- The best way to settle any issue is by diplomacy.
- Citizens suffer from nuclear testing.
- An example of confidence building: agreeing to move troops 100 meters from the border and to notify each other if there is movement.
- Returning Rohingya people to Myanmar requires a change of attitude on the part of the citizens so that they welcome the Rohingya return.
- It is essential that youth voices are heard in peace and security issues.
- Kazakhstan has established a Food Bank that is available to help other countries that are experiencing food insecurity.



January 11 Working Group on Girls (WGG): Girls in Rural India

by Sr. Elsa Jeronimo, CSJB

At the Working Group on Girls (WGG) monthly meeting at the Salvation Army in New York, **Upasana Chauhan**, a WGG Member, made a presentation based on her journey into the remote villages of Rajasthan, India, on the struggles girls and women suffer in India especially in rural areas. The topic of her presentation was “Why laws to protect girls are unprotected: a grey area of society, politics and government.”

Upasana reported that basically the laws do not protect girls, and police often does not get involved in disputes and/or reports of rape. In this area, the caste system is still very prevalent, and if a girl is raped by a member of the higher caste, her family will not report due to the shame associated with the rape and because the police will protect the boys/men of the higher castes.

She feels that the solution lies within the problem. Younger men are willing to listen and change but the older men who basically control the villages and their families are unwilling to listen and change. She discussed the importance of role models from an early age. She realized during her trip that this conversation has to start at age 5, because boys and girls still dream at this age. From age 6 and 7, she noticed, boys still dream but girls stop doing it.

Girls are often forced into child marriages. India ranks second highest in the world, with 12 million married girls under the age of 10, which equals the population of NYC and LA combined.

At the end of her presentation, she offered that the challenge to curb child marriage is: poverty, protection and societal norms. Q&A followed.

Following Upasana’s presentation, the different committees had a chance to look at the themes that will be addressed for the Rural Girl Child at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62). Contributions were made by WGG members toward our talking points for CSW62 Mission Advocacy.



January 16 Secretary-General's Press Conference on 2018 Priorities

Watch the full (4½ minutes) talk [here](#)

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres held a Press Conference shortly after he presented his priorities for 2018 to the General Assembly. He recalled that he began his first year in 2017 by calling for a surge in diplomacy. This year, he is issuing a Red Alert because the international community is failing and falling short. Sources of alarm are protective countries, terrorism, the increased nuclear threat, climate change, the rise of nationalism and decline of trust and solidarity.

The world now needs bold leadership, with less hatred and more dialogue and deeper international cooperation, to set the world on a better course.

At the recent meeting in Addis Ababa, Mr. Guterres said he was happy to see strong collaborative action and pledged to continue to advocate for strongest international support for the African Union's [Agenda 63](#) and ongoing peace efforts. One way the rest of the world can support this development in Africa is by providing predictable financing. Africa, Mr. Guterres noted, is going through a dramatic change and needs the support of the entire world.

Mr. Guterres spoke of his hope that the Olympic spirit this winter will spread across the region and the whole world.

The Secretary-General also noted that a milestone had been reached the previous day, with a new appointment resulting in the first-time-ever gender parity among senior leadership at the UN. He pledged to keep working for equality and gender parity.

He then addressed the recent movements to suppress freedom of the press. Mr. Guterres declared that he will "continue to champion freedom of press in public and through diplomatic means."

January 17 UN Announcement: Gender Parity in UN Leadership

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres announced that for the first time since its founding, the United Nations has achieved gender parity in its leadership – an equal number of women and men now lead various UN departments and agencies.

Gender parity at the UN was one of the Secretary-General's priorities on taking office. The dispatch with a roster, and other statistics about women at the United Nations can be found [here](#).



Advocacy

In December and January, the Partnership signed on to the following actions for the good of the poorest people and in defense of our planet:

- A letter from Faith Leaders to Kirstjen Nielsen, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, calling for an extension of Temporary Protected Status **(TPS) for Syrian refugees**, to prevent 5,800 people from being sent back to an active, brutal war zone.
- From Friends of the Earth, a public comment to the Interior Department against President Trump’s proposal to **open U.S. coastal waters to oil drilling**.
- From Friends of the Earth, a petition to The Environmental Protection Agency, to prevent Mr. Trump from **dismantling the Clean Power Act** and replacing it with fewer protections for Earth and people.



When you see a hate message, send two messages of love instead."

- Miroslav Lajcak, President of the 72nd General Assembly



“We know the why and what and how. We need to create harmony between humans and nature for sustainable development, peace, and security.”

- Professor Liberata Mulamula



INTERN PROJECTS

PGJ Intern Annie Dang reports on her Bags to Rugs, [Mats for the Homeless Project](#)

by Annie Dang, Newman University student and PGJ Intern

The mats are taking longer than expected because of the unexpected toll on the person making them. Three are in progress currently, with one finished, by Jeanette Parker, assistant librarian at Newman (shown in photo). [Editor's note: see next article for more progress on the project]



PGJ Intern Report Linnea Ristow Women's Empowerment Week

Led by Linnea Ristow, Newman University student and PGJ Intern. During the week of November 27-30, 2017, Linnea planned and executed a full program of events. Here is her summary, along with only a few pictures of the events.



Monday, November 27:

Wonder Women of Wichita Panel, comprised of "Successful Leaders in Careers Where Women Are Typically Underrepresented." The speakers were Dr. Noreen Carrocci, President of Newman University; Dr. Diana Crook, a physician, and Margaret Di Silvestro, an attorney. Linnea, with another Newman student, developed questions to stimulate discussion with the panel.

Wednesday, November 29:

Fearless and Female Self-Defense Class
Linnea received a grant of \$200 from the SGA to fund this event, which included a short informative lecture and a hands-on self-defense lesson. Participants also received a cat-ear key chain to use for self-defense.



Thursday, November 30 noon **Lunch and Learn: Domestic Abuse and Human Trafficking**, with Presentations by the Women's Initiative Network and Sr. Therese Wetta.

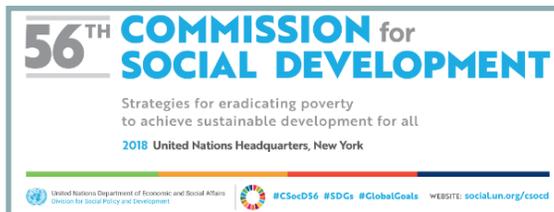
Also Thursday, November 30 evening
Wonder Woman + Bags to Rugs

Students gathered to watch and discuss the movie *Wonder Woman*, while cutting and tying plastic bags for Annie Deng's Bags to Rugs, mats for the homeless project.



PARTICIPATE IN UN ACTIVITIES

The major event coming up is the **56th Session of the Commission on Social Development**. We invite you to participate through [UN WebTV](#). Questions and comments may be solicited via Facebook and Twitter, if time permits.



The 56th Session of the Commission on Social Development ([CSocD56](#)) will meet in New York from January 29 to February 7. The *Priority Theme* for the 2018 Policy Cycle is *Strategies for eradicating poverty to achieve sustainable development for all*. During these two weeks, various groups report on the progress toward and obstacles to development in their agency or country. The major topics seem

to be Persons with Disabilities, Youth, and Ageing. “Agenda 30” refers to the [Sustainable Development Goals](#), plus the [Paris Agreement](#) and other similar agreements. The major reports are listed [here](#) and will be televised.

Watch UN Events Live

AS always, you can watch live coverage (and often stored videos) of major UN events at the UN [WebTV channel](#). Click the language button to hear them in English). A list of daily events is listed in the UN Journal at 11 pm the day before. Webcasts are indicated by a small red icon of a camera.

Several Events you may be interested in following on [UN WebTV](#):

(Times are Eastern Standard Time)

High-level Panel Discussions:

1. *Strategies for eradicating poverty to achieve sustainable development for all* 29 January 2018, CR.4, 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm
2. *Towards sustainable and resilient societies: Innovation and inter-connectivity for social development* 30 January 2018, CR.4, 3:00 – 6:00 pm
3. *Third review and appraisal of the [Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing](#)* 31 January 2018, CR.4, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
4. *Towards inclusive, resilient and sustainable development: an evidence-based approach to the mainstreaming of disability in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Agenda 2030* 31 January 2018, CR.4, 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Side Events:

The entire list of Side Events (i.e., presentations on narrower topics related to the main theme by UN groups) can be found [here](#). (Be sure to zoom in so you don't strain your eyes!) Those meetings in rooms with number lower than 7 will probably be televised. Be sure to check the site closer to the date for additions and changes.

Let's Keep Connected:

Please link the Partnership for Global Justice Website to your community's website.

<http://www.partnershipforglobaljustice.com/>

