



Partnership for Global Justice

February 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 BOARD CHAIR

Dear Members,

I begin this letter with a sadness that comes when one has to say goodbye to a good friend and colleague, and our dedicated Executive Director of the Partnership for Global Justice. JoAnn Mark, ASC, has served as the Executive Director for the past 3 years; however her connection to the Partnership began many years before that. She served on the PGJ Board for the full length of permitted terms and also represented her community when she served on the ASC (Adorers of the Blood of Christ) Peace and Justice Committee.



JoAnn's service has been exemplary from the very first day she became the Executive Director. She has shown a passion and dedication to the work of the PGJ that has energized and expanded the mission to include outreach to the college population. Her work with Molloy College has been exceptional, and, because of her tireless efforts, many Molloy students have been introduced to the important role the UN plays in the world. Today, she and Dr. Barbara Black are making a presentation to a consortium of colleges and universities to

invite them to consider offering their students the opportunity to become global citizens through the programs and educational opportunities the PGJ can offer.

JoAnn tendered her resignation, and the Board has accepted it with much reluctance but with full support and best wishes. Her last day will be March 15, 2018. I know that we all wish JoAnn the very best. Words are really inadequate to express the gratitude that we have for all JoAnn has done and been for the Partnership for Global Justice.

On a positive note, I have the privilege of introducing you to Sister Janet Kinney, CSJ, who has accepted the position of Executive Director of the Partnership for Global Justice beginning March 1, 2018. The Board is delighted to welcome Janet because she comes with credentials, experience and skills that will serve the PGJ quite well



For the past 22 years, she has served as the Executive Director of Providence House, Inc., Brooklyn, NY, a faith-based nonprofit housing organization serving low income women and children who are either homeless or returning from a period of incarceration. She grew this organization from a one-million-dollar operation to 3.5 million.

Janet became a respected nonprofit leader in the metro NY area and served on a number of mayoral task forces as well as boards of numerous organizations. She is a strong communicator with excellent writing skills and also a strategic thinker and problem solver with the ability to respond to issues quickly and effectively. Janet has also been very successful in raising funds for her organization.

We welcome Janet to the Partnership for Global Justice and look forward to working with her over the next years.

Kathleen Nolan, OP,

Kathleen Nolan, OP
Board Chair



January 22 Fourth Annual Symposium on the Role of Religion and Faith-Based Organizations in International Affairs: Perspectives on Migration: Displacement and Marginalization, Inclusion and Justice

by JoAnn Mark, ASC

The day began shortly after 9:00 A.M. with welcomes and opening remarks by Ms. **Amina J. Mohammed**, Deputy Secretary-General, United Nations; Mr. **Adama Dieng**, Under-Secretary-General and United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide; Rev. Dr. **Olav Fykse Tveit**, General Secretary, World Council of Churches; Rev. Dr. **Susan Henry-Crowe**, General Secretary of the General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Board; and Mr. **Rudelmar Bueno de Faria**, General Secretary, ACT Alliance. They were followed by a *Moderated Conversation: Contextualizing and Framing* which touched on the importance of the topic, the foundations for the conversation, the multiple root causes of migration and the resulting political crisis.

After a short break, there were presentations and discussion on the “Moral and Ethical Dimensions of Forced Migration” focusing on two questions: What moral and ethical dimensions should be considered crucial in relation to forced migration and displacement? How should gender, concerns for security, race, ethnicity, anecdotal evidence and dignity be considered in this context? The Moderator for this session was Rev. Dr. **Katalina Tahaafe Williams**, Program Executive, Mission from the Margins, world Council of Churches. Participants were Ms. **Sana Mustafa**, Founding Member, the Network for Refugee Voices; Dr. **Lester Edwin Ruiz**, Advisor, Churches Witnessing with Migrants, and senior Director of Accreditation and Institutional evaluation, Association of Theological Schools, Ms. **Elizabeta Kitanovic**, Executive Secretary for Human Rights, conference of European Churches, and Formal Respondent Mr. **Sacha Sergio Llorentty Soliz**, Permanent Representative of Bolivia to the United Nations.

All the morning sessions provided valuable content, but I want to concentrate on the afternoon sessions, the first of which was titled “Rule of Law and Political Perspectives” and had the following objective: What makes for a global compact on migration that is undergirded by human rights, based on peoples’ needs, and governed by the rule of law? Based on available public documents serving as inputs to the drafting of the Global Compact on Migration, including the UN Secretary General’s Report; Making Migration Work, the Civil Society’s Now and How: Ten Acts for the Global Compact, and the Talking and Doing Points of Churches Witness with Migrants, what remains problematic, missing, or weak?

I will state a few of the comments by the speakers that were especially meaningful to me. Mr. **Martin Mauthe-Kater**, Counselor, Migration and sustainable development, European Union Delegation to the UN, said migration is not a problem but migration that is not orderly, not safe and not regular is a problem. He also reminded all those present that while there is the “right to movement; migration is negotiated between states.”

Dr. **Agshin Mehdiyev**, Permanent Observer of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation(OIC) to the UN in NY, presented statistics that revealed the OIC countries host most of the migrants and refugees while they have only about 8% of world’s GDP. He also said that the countries that have caused the most conflict are now trying to limit the number of migrants and refugees they accept.

Ms. **Eni Lestari Andayani Adi**, Chairperson, International Migrants Alliance, who has been a migrant worker, said that domestic laws generally do not work in favor of migrants. In her views laws should 1) be in accordance with human rights laws, 2) provide for freedom of movement, 3) pay attention to uneven economic development, and 4) assure that all parties have clear responsibilities and accountability. She said migrants speak for themselves.



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Here are some comments by Dr. **Afe Adogame**, Senior Lecturer in World Christianity and Religious Studies at the Princeton Theological Seminary: Religion is sometimes a motive for migration; much of the money from African corruption is kept in Europe or US, thus those countries are aiding the very corruption they claim to condemn; today's migration theories are not the old "push/pull"; the real problem lies with the macro structure; NGOs are in between micro and macro structures.

Faith-based NGOs give voice to the marginalized and can speak against attitudes that criminalize migrants and prevent the integration of those who return to their sending country. They can also confront the illusion about walls. We are needed to keep telling the other side of the story; we can speak when migrants cannot speak for themselves; we can help to create integrated communities and combat xenophobia. We represent the soul of the people and of the nation. Faith-based NGOs must continue services to all, and treat migrants and refugees as partners.

The second afternoon session was titled "Development, Humanitarian, and Human Rights Perspectives" and had the following objective: *Examine best practice responses to migration, from both a humanitarian and human rights perspective.* Issues include criminalization, securitization, gender-based violence, trafficking, "management of migration." The moderator was Ms. **Simona Cruciana**, Political Affairs Officer, UN Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect. She presented questions to each of the speakers which changed the interaction. Her first question for Dr. **Jonathan Duffy**, President, Adventist Development Relief Agency International, was "What do you think is the contribution faith-related organizations bring to forced migration?" Mr. Duffy said his organization encourages working with faith-based organizations (FBOs) which are a subset of NGOs and the strongest part of civil society. FBOs have close connections with the people and so have a great deal to contribute; churches are places of safety; in time of crisis people go to what is familiar to them and often that is FBO. He indicated that FBOs need to strengthen their influence on policy, moving from service to voice.

I did not note the question to each of the speakers, but **Christian Wolff** from ACT Alliance, characterized predominant migration in several geographic areas: South Asia is mostly focused on labor migration; the Middle East is the destination for a lot of labor migrants; Central America has almost no ways for regular migration. Pakistan is hosting the most refugees. **Jason Cone** of MSF USA (Doctors without Borders) spoke to the principle that guides this group: making no distinction to country of origin, etc., but providing service for any person in need. He also noted that smuggler markets are fueled by government policies: the more rigid they are, the more people seek nonlegal migration paths.

Verena Knaus of UNICEF identified six priority areas as they relate to children: 1) Protect children's lives – we need national systems that include persons, places, and procedures, 2) End detention of children, 3) Provide appropriate education, 4) Give access to health services including trauma care, 5) Keep families together and 6) Stop the degrading conversations. Of the 65 million displaced persons, every other one is a child; they need to be treated as subjects, not as objects.

P L DeSilva, specialist on Libya, spoke about organ trafficking, the route to a large organ transplant center, and the part played by the Sicilian Mafia. He said that what is happening is reminiscent of the years leading up to World War II. The main challenge for Libya is the continued destabilization by exterior forces: France and Italy have used news about slave markets to increase their military presence in Libya; the US has a drone center in Indonesia and Russia has special forces embedded in Indonesia.

Here are a couple of comments from the **Q&A session**: 84% of civil societies are Faith-Based Organization and they are not using their voice; a receiving country should not force migrants to return to the sending country; and the accountability remains with the returning country; there should be an end to policies that put people in greater danger.



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January 22 Special Event: Peace is . . . Acceptance

This event was part of the [Together Campaign](#), the sixth in a series of *Peace Is...* programs, usually centered in the arts. Each program elaborates on the many things that *Peace Is* to people from around the world. [Click here to see and hear the video of the event.](#)

Ambassador Koro Bessho, Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations gave the welcome and introduced the Moderator, who introduced the Master (sic) of Ceremonies, **Alison Smale**, the Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications,

Ambassador Bessho explained that the *Peace Is. . .* series is part of the [Together Campaign](#) and aims to use arts and culture to bring people together. This program features a collaboration with Japanese artists living in New York, with a special focus on empowerment of refugees.

The backdrop of the stage was a huge blank white wall. Throughout the music and talks, **Fantasia Utamaro**, a Japanese painter based in New York, wrote and decorated the statements about peace made by Syrian children in refugee camps visited by [Myavi](#), a UN High Commissioner for Refugees Goodwill Ambassador. Some of the children's statements were:

"Sharing peace is fun," "Don't beat each other," "Mama and Dad," "War end," "We receive shelter." Each was enclosed in a cloud and embellished by the artist, until the whole wall was covered with the children's words.



Most of the program consisted of music by [Myavi](#), two back-up musicians, and **Sonita Alizadeh**, an Afghani refugee herself and a talented rapper who works extensively against the practice of child brides. [Myavi](#) also spoke of performing in refugee camps and singing with the children. Their songs conveyed the hopes and longing for peace. One of the most touching was "What's My Name?"

Under-Secretary-General Smale spoke of the enormous preventive effect of art and culture. Cultural diversity, expressed through the arts, can be experienced as "a richness, not a threat." All the arts are "uniting factors," so we need to give more importance to sharing the diversity of art in today's world. The arts can also be a healing factor in this world, to counter the level of psychological trauma. "terrible levels of trauma," suffered especially by the children.

UNHCR Director **Nanette Kelly** told of being at a refugee camp in Lebanon when [Miyavi](#) sang for and with over a million Syrian refugees. He "played for them, heard them play their music, and listened to them," she told us and "for a moment they forgot their hardship."

Ambassador Bessho concluded the program by reminding us that "Art is a power," and invited all present to write peace messages in their own languages on the Peace Wall.



The 56th Session of the Commission on Social Development (CSocD 56)

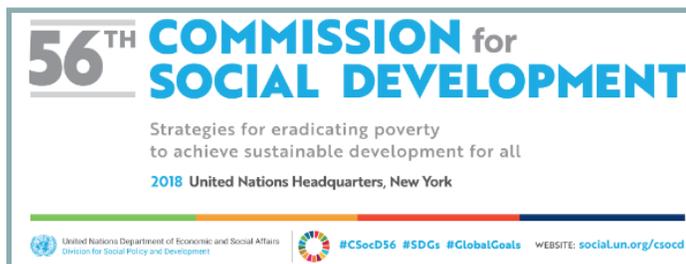
January 29 CSocD 56 Morning General Session

by M. Doretta Cornell, RDC

The 56th Session of the Commission on Social Development (CSoc D56) opened with the election of the chair of CSocD 56, **Nikulas Hannigan**, Deputy Permanent Representative of Iceland, and the election of other officers, one from each region of the world.

In his introductory remarks, Mr. Hannigan noted that regard for young people, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, older people, and families is essential for the 2030 agenda. The current resurgence of inequality is a major concern: the top 1% got 82% of gains in recent years, while the bottom 50% got no increased benefits. He reminded us that we must work for the benefit of all, and “Leave No one Behind” (the slogan of the 2030 Agenda).

He stated that the outcome of CSocD 56 must be an action-oriented resolution with strong emphasis on public strategies that have proved effective in reducing extreme poverty.



President of the Economic and Social Council **Marie Chatardová**

reviewed the purpose of the 2030 Agenda: to be sure most vulnerable are addressed. She emphasized the importance of this commission and the outcomes, as the policy recommendations will matter for countries.

Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations **Amina J. Mohammed** of Nigeria noted that there have been improvements: national policies are now more likely to put people at the center, and “impressive gains” have been made against extreme poverty. However, millions are still dropping into poverty, unemployment for women and youth continues to be scarce or provide only “unsupportable” jobs, inequality between and within countries is rising and a growing threat. Climate change and migrations are making people increasingly vulnerable: only 45% of the people who need social protection have one aspect of it; the rest have none.

This Commission can help the Secretary-General reposition ECOSOC to be more effective in helping countries and especially young people to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

Under-Secretary-General for DESA **Liu Zhenmin** of China spoke of the multi-faceted nature of the problems facing us. He noted that the global economy has shown some signs of improvement, but economic growth is not enough. Many people are still barely above the extreme poverty line and lack social protections. Preliminary findings show good progress toward the SDGs, but millions who do have employment do not have jobs that will raise them from poverty, and many lack social protections.

The Civil Society Representative to the Commission was **Daniel Perell**, chair of the NGO Committee for Social Development. He pointed out that the 2030 Agenda agreements [SDGs, Paris Agreement, Madrid Plan, etc.] show that the international community recognizes that when one country suffers, all are affected. He suggested that we emphasize SDG 19, on eliminating inequality – e.g., focusing on human dignity - which will lead to social protections and enhance the economic and social lives of communities. We have now a broad consensus that each person has human dignity; governments have the responsibility to protect this dignity.



We must heed the needs and challenges but also the aspirations of local populations. We must work to create societies that nurture a sense of responsibility for each other and promote a greater understanding that the well-being of individuals translates into the well-being of all. Social protections hinge on the question of values: the kind of “society in which all fair-minded people wish to live, without fear for themselves and their children.”

The Youth Representative **Louis Alvarado Martinez** of Europe urged more attention to measuring young people’s progress. Young people are 25% more likely to be poor than the general population. Employment is of particular concern, especially for young people living in poverty: almost of 70% young people do not have access to jobs of quality; too many are working and still in poverty. He spoke of a peculiar discrimination against young people: in many places, they are “expected to be flexible and entrepreneurial, even with no access to supports for these.” He urged us to build an economy that will work for all. This is also true for politics: to eradicate poverty, young people must have full participation in policy decisions, and in the implementation and measuring of them, Mr. Martinez argued.

Daniela Bas, Director of The Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD), part of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) of the UN Secretariat reviewed the [World Social Forum Report](#). She noted emerging issues at the Forum were innovation and technology. Robust policy recommendations called for proactive ethics policies to promote responsibility and anticipate job loss and erosion.

The Commission then began hearing **Statements by Member States** and regional groups of States reporting on progress and obstacles on the priority themes of “Strategies for Social Protection, Including Floors as a preeminent strategy to eradicate poverty and achieve social development for all.” They also include “Emerging issues: towards sustainable and resilient societies: innovation and interconnectivity for social development.” These statements continued throughout the week.

First to speak was **Ghada Wali**, Minister of Social Solidarity of Egypt, speaking on behalf of the [Group of 77 and China](#). As most of the following speakers would, she began by declaring that the Group affirmed the various 2030 Agenda agreements and pledge to work for the protection of the vulnerable, eradicate poverty and strive to provide full employment and decent work for all.

In particular, Ms. Wali said, we must remove obstacles to self-determination for those in colonialism and illegal occupation. Empowering the aging population is important, specifically the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing. The aim is to create an “inclusive, prosperous and equitable world.” To achieve this we must recognize the “crucial role of international cooperation among all groups and regions.”

The Representative of the **European Union, Georgi Velikov Panayotov** of Bulgaria, noted that the 2030 Agenda is being fully integrated into EU policy frameworks. He pointed to the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) agreed to in November 2017, which laid out twenty principles and rights, including decent employment, a minimum income, and lifelong education, includes a guarantee for youth, addresses equal treatment of women in the marketplace and work environments adapted to the needs of those with disabilities.

We need to do better, Mr. Panayotov said, and provide skills and training for new demands, as well as adult learning. This is now available for only c. 11% of the working population, making the others half as likely to participate in employment.

An interesting initiative is the European Youth Development Policy, which creates structured dialogues to include young people politically. They plan to widen this to develop youth goals and continue structured dialog with youth in decisions on all levels. This includes experiences for international learning, both informal and formal, to lower discrimination and



misunderstanding and fosters relationships. This program targets the lowest- and also middle-access groups.

Nguyen Thi Phuong Nga, Permanent Representative of Vietnam, representing the Association of South East Asian Nations ([ASEAN](#)), told us that poverty has dropped in the region, from 138 million to 125 million. This has been accomplished through with international cooperation working through ASEAN's the region, from 138 million to 125 million. This has been accomplished through with international cooperation working through ASEAN's regional framework and other regional agreements. Women were the focus of 2017 agreements, investing in programs to support women in the workforce, including management. Other aspects being addressed are promotion of the rights of women and children, eliminating child marriage, social impacts of climate change on women and children, and bullying online and in the classroom.

Also included is a business framework, for community-building efforts for small and micro business initiatives. Eradicating poverty and building resilience are the highest priorities. This means intensifying local, national, and regional efforts to raise the level of the economy in the region. Partnerships for mutual support among ASEAN and with other countries like the US, Australia, and India have helped ASEAN nations address root causes of poverty and its effects.

Deputy Ambassador of Equatorial Guinea **Victoriana Mbasogo Mangué** spoke on behalf of the African Group. The major challenge facing the African Union is managing conflict, "silencing the guns." Development is focused largely on women, especially addressing inequality. Inequality between nations has increased, she told us, "slowing economic development to a stop." Conflict and lack of development reduce social mobility, trapping segments of society in poverty and further slowing economic growth.

The outlook for job creation right now is pessimistic and getting worse for youth, many of whom have no jobs or education or relevant skills, which traps them in the informal economy with poor salaries and is a major cause of migration. Education for all is therefore vital, as is addressing the children not in school. Infrastructure for education for persons with disabilities is also a great need.

Ms. Mangué called for greater international support for research in Africa as well as support from the private sector, civil society and the UN to achieve economic development. Irregular migration and violations of these migrants' human rights are huge problems; she declared that the Global Compacts must have clear commitments to migrants at home and in their new countries.

Other challenges are the need to improve maternal and baby health to lower child mortality; support for a basic family income; and addressing HIV/AIDS. Lack of infrastructure and effects of climate change are also major obstacles. Ms. Mangué concluded by asking partners to redouble their efforts to support African development.

The Vice President of Costa Rica, **Ana Helena Chacón Echeverri**, representing the [Group of Friends](#) of Older Persons, told us that by 2030 there will be 1.4 billion older persons globally, and by 2050, it is projected that older persons will roughly equal the number of children, so it is imperative to address their needs. Older persons are more vulnerable to poverty and must be enabled to contribute to society in all aspects of civil, cultural, economic and social life. They must not be just recipients of care. Ms. Echeverri called for international cooperation to support this.

Ms. Echeverri then spoke more personally, as this will be her last participation as vice president of Costa Rica. She said she had found "inspiration and like-minded partners" at the Commission but said we are not quick enough to act. She invited all to reflect on what we are trying to do: Are we really heading to achieve the human development of our people?



Costa Rica has embraced this commitment, she told us. It has created a robust plan to tackle poverty and an international poverty index. They have reduced poverty in Costa Rica. Success stories lie in education and technological advances, a home program connects the world wide web to all; human rights of vulnerable groups are being addressed. State policies ensure that these will be implemented regardless of who is in office.

Minister of Development of Peru, Permanent Representative Ambassador **Gustavo Meza-Cuadra** told us of his indigenous background on the Amazon, then said that poverty in Peru has dropped for more than 6 million people, from 58.4% to 20.8%. Still, 43.6% of children, or 1.2 million, still live in extreme poverty, while 128 districts have higher than 40% poverty rates. Fewer than 50% of people in many areas have running water. The high Andes communities have little economic development and are “invisible.” Peru is very vulnerable to climate change; after the recent El Nino many families are in worse poverty, in spite of efforts to help them.

Peru is committed to sustainable development, Mr. Meza-Cuadra said, and has set goals to reduce extreme poverty to 15% by 2021, and to ensure that all have water, sanitation, electricity and telecommunications. Other targeted areas are early childhood nutrition and opportunities for native communities particularly in the Amazon region. Some initiatives are: creating mobile hubs for essential public services, efforts to prevent anemia in the first 1,000 days of life, and new policies to support families to keep them from falling back into poverty especially after disasters. To accomplish these, Peru will need to mobilize resources to have everyone have a voice in development, as well as the international community’s support. Like all middle-income countries, he said, Peru cannot do it alone.



January 29 CSocD 2018 Afternoon General Session

by JoAnn Mark, ASC

The keynote speaker, **Juan Somavia**, began the afternoon session by speaking to the obstacles countries face in seeking to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and the eradication of poverty in particular. He referenced the 2030 Agenda's 3-legged stool: social, economic and environmental, stating that the economic leg is flimsy.



What is the economy of sustainable development? There is no one simple answer to this question. It needs more study, and DESA is a group that can pull together the resources to engage in such a study. It is time to deepen the notion of multi-dimensional poverty since it is not just financial. How does a country or the UN manage the various dimensions? It is often said that “integrated policies” are needed to work with the multi-dimensional problems, but what does “integrated policies” mean and how do we develop them, since we all come from education that is sectorial. He noted that, in his view, it would be best to create integrated policies at the regional level before expecting this to occur at the UN level, since every region is different and the UN cannot tell them all “You should do it this way.”

The High Level Political Forum (HLPF) is an “interesting animal,” Mr. Somavia said, but it eliminated the Commission on Sustainable Development and has lost its technical discussion. This makes the future of CSocD even more important than in the past. It is also important to have delegates on the Commission who are very committed to social development.

In seeking to eradicate poverty, there is a need for participation beyond governments; representative government is in crisis and there is a surge for participative governments. Gender equality is at the heart of this. The quest to empower people needs to respect people's fragility and vulnerability; they have not become a statistic. Don't say “I understand the way you feel” because we really cannot understand. “Do we feel?” is the question we need to ask ourselves.

Here are two statements Mr. Somavia made in closing: We all carry poverty in our DNA, as every person comes from a once-poor family; and We have an enormous job, a beautiful job: look at it with caring eyes.

Following this presentation by Mr. Somavia, a **Panel of High-Level Persons** [senior government officials] from Costa Rica, Egypt, Germany and the Institute of Global Homelessness shared how their country/organization is responding to the challenge of eradicating poverty in all its dimensions.

Ms. Ana Helena Chacon, Vice President of Costa Rica, described their efforts to locate people living in extreme poverty and then helping them to establish a family plan that helps to manage economically but also to build skills: “educate, educate, educate.”

Dr. Ghada Waly, Minister of Social Solidarity in Egypt, said the poverty in Egypt is mostly rural and in upper Egypt, so they have concentrated on people, especially women and children, in that area. They built a database that identifies 25 million people, with the type of poverty each is experiencing. Technology has been used to roll out the program which gives first priority to housing, water and sewage.

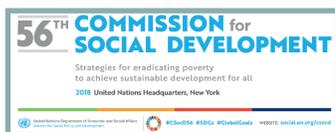
Mr. Mark Kamperhoff of Germany indicated that Germany considers poverty to be a relative concept and they have adopted a national sustainable development strategy. They are focusing on family life, providing financial support for the mother after giving birth as well as for those who provide care. They are looking ahead and realize that poverty during childhood puts future generations at risk of living in poverty. Thus, they provide a free ride to care for children up to age 1. Children of single parents are a high-risk group, so they are providing assistance to that population. They raised the minimum wage and passed the Equal Pay Transparency Act.

Mr. Mark McGreevy from the Institute of Global Homelessness, DePaul University, spoke to the street homelessness population which is often overlooked. Shelter and housing are critical for this group. Street children can be split into two groups: 1) those who have families and 2) those who have no idea of family.



January 31 CSocD 56 General Session morning High-level panel discussion on "The third Review and Appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing"

by M. Doretta Cornell, RDC



[Editor's Note: One of the major topics of review in this Commission is how countries have acted on the [Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing](#)..The reports in this session begin the review. The Madrid Plan was drawn up 15 years ago, under then-Secretary-General Kofi Annan. This review is the first time the recommendations in the Madrid Plan have been considered in the wider

context of Sustainable Development, rather than as individual initiatives. This integration is a key feature of the 2030 Agenda. Since I was unable to identify each of the speakers, I will refer to some only by the countries they represent.]

A minister from **Paraguay** informed us that Latin America and the Caribbean is the first group to hold a regional meeting on the rights of older persons, in 2012, in [San Jose, Costa Rica](#), which focused on evaluating compliance on policies and services. A [Charter on the rights of older persons](#) in the region resulted. The number of older persons will double by 2020 in this region, to comprise 30% of the population. Those who live in Small Island nations or land-locked ones are especially vulnerable. Civil Society has been very active in ensuring the rights of older persons, issuing their own separate statement in support of the elderly.

Great progress has been made in the past five years, he told us: national plans have been drawn up, with policies to help the aging, including long-term health care, mental health services, and initiatives to ensure their human rights. Punishments for violations were also established.

The Minister appealed to all nations to include human rights protections and provisions to promote gender equality as they develop national and regional agreements. He also spoke of the importance of collecting data and disaggregating them *[distinguishing among regions, ages, etc., rather than just looking at an average for a nation]*. Other topics must also be considered within wider policies, such as the different risks older persons face in disasters, and other risks that older persons face, such as dementia. He also emphasized the importance of regional conferences and agreements to facilitate implementation and minimize duplication of work.

The next speaker spoke of **Europe's** [Ministerial Conference on Ageing: A Sustainable Society for All Ages: Realizing the potential of living longer](#), held last September in Lisbon, Portugal. This Conference identified three goals for Europe: to recognize the potential of aging persons; to enable longer working lives; and to ensure the dignity of aging persons, including access to older persons' full human rights. The Declaration from the Conference is designed to be flexible to demographic changes, include older persons in policy decisions, and increase the use of technology to ensure development and access for all. Implementation challenges differ, as resources, access to social services, and even rights vary among the Member States.

This representative warned that we must change our concepts of aging, to see older persons not as burdens but as persons with potential to achieve sustainable development. Potential contributions of the aging are not sufficiently taken into account.

He outlined a few challenges that Europe wants to meet by 2020: to empower individuals to contribute to society; realize older persons' contributions in positive images; create market incentives for hiring older workers; make early retirement less attractive; increase availability of quality health care and social services for older persons; to address needs like isolation and dementia; and to develop more intergenerational activity, which is important for society.

Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Speaker of Parliament of **Bangladesh** spoke of the significant poverty reduction that has been taking place in Asia, with decreasing fertility rates



of child mortality, while the aging population is rapidly increasing. This increase is closing a window of opportunity in some less advanced countries, which have difficulty coping with the challenges.

Most Asian countries now have national policies on aging, Ms. Chaudhury told us; this was clear at the Madrid Plan Asian Appraisal last September. Major focuses are: combating abuse, ensuring employment, ensuring income security, and reducing poverty. To accomplish the latter two items, Bangladesh has instituted a national allowance pension system. A national health care system is available to all. The nation also supports caregivers and provides long-term care and aging-in-place support. Bangladesh also has a Parents Maintenance Act, a law requiring intergenerational support.

Major challenges are affordable housing, tapping the human resources of the aging population, and closing the remaining gaps in income security, a need which will be greater as people are living longer. Ms. Chaudhury emphasized the importance of the aging population to achieving the SDGs.

The next report was by an official from **Zambia**, representing **Africa**. Fifty-Four African Member States participate, with 32 of them already reviewed. The age structure of African peoples is changing, he told us: in 2015 only about 4.9% of the population was over 60; that tripled to 7.6% in 2016. The numbers are even higher in some countries: to over 50% in Mauritius and Réunion, 11% in the Seychelles by 2015, 8% in South Africa. Other countries in the region have low numbers of people over 60, such as Angola and Burkino Faso, each with less than 4%.

The recent review shows that more African nations have a national policy than not, but all face the problem of inadequate resources to implement them. Human rights, discrimination, gaps in social services, and lack of legal protections complicate the situation. A lack of data is another hindrance: only three nations have usable data. This prevents adequate understanding of needs and implementation.

Almost all African countries do involve elders in decision-making, but most have no technical or other life-long education opportunities. Finances are another challenge: fewer than 5% of elder Africans have pensions, and most of the nations do not have health care provisions for the elderly, nor resources to train health care workers. There is almost no support for long-term care or services for disabled persons. Ecological transitions [*climate change*] have led to high levels of disease, with no prevention and inadequate health care systems.

The Madrid Plan has led Zambia to include the aging in their food security programs. It also has created a Ministry to oversee housing and provide care. Africa, he stated, needs to address the barriers to implementation, such as financial resources, political will, and human resources, and increase collaboration between ministries, especially creating and sharing data.

Abla Sibai of the American University in Beirut gave an overview of the **Mideast** region's demographics: the number of those 60 or older has doubled in the past 20 years; by 2050, it will have quadrupled. By 2030, 10 countries will have more people over 60 than below. This is a challenge to family and social structures.

War, of course, is the greatest challenge, disrupting traditional family structures that supported elders. Increased migration of young people leaves older migrants to fend for themselves. Inequality adds to this: for instance, in Yemen, 80% of the women are illiterate. There are few social protections for anyone. Most countries have no retirement pension system, and women in the informal economy are most vulnerable. There is almost no provision for the elderly in emergencies. The Mideast region needs much more regional collaboration and recognition of the benefits of longer lives, Dr. Sibai concluded.



The floor was then opened for **Questions and Comments**. The questions were not addressed during this session, but reserved for the end of the reviews several days later. Several country representatives (whose programs are not under review this year) used this time to explain initiatives they have taken. I will include just a few of the statements.

Argentina, for instance, provides universal social security and medical benefits to 90% of its older people. A Ministry has been created for this, and new training is provided in human rights. Public policies are in place for older persons, and they are encouraging intergenerational transmission of knowledge.

A representative from **Guatemala** spoke of the impact of violence, as well as lack of income and pensions. Freedom and quality of life are grave challenges, as is changing people's attitudes to ensure that discrimination by age becomes unacceptable.

A representative of **Brazil** said that 208 million people, 14.8% of the population, is over 60, with great variation among provinces. The Governance Model they have developed comprises councils of government and civil society to monitor policy-making. Brazil has a minimum income program, with 38 million families receiving cash transfers, and a cash benefits program for those over 65 whose families cannot provide for them.

The **Russian Federation's** representative spoke of their recognition that needs of older persons vary, and they are creating strategies to address the needs of those over 80 differently from the needs of people in their 60s, for instance. This includes professional training especially in technology so that those able can continue to work.

The representative from **South Africa** spoke of the importance of regional agreements and of including the rights and needs of the elderly in national plane. South Africa's Constitution includes the rights of elders, and several ministries oversee their needs.

A representative from **Kenya** told us that his country has just completed a national plan that includes the elderly, including comprehensive social protections for those over 70, with health care and more social services provided. A cash transfer plan is in process; it serves about 1.6 million people and they hope to expand this. Benefits begin at age 55.

A delegate from **Namibia** spoke of high income inequality and the great need for the influence of older persons. Finances within families are often a problem, with the younger people robbing the older of their savings. He asked if others had suggestions for curbing this and of investors exploiting the elderly.

A representative from **Austria** suggested a Global Assessment on the aging in 2022.



January 31 CSocD Side Event A Systemic Approach to Eliminating Homelessness

by Susan McCarthy, RDC



I attended this side event sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the UN in collaboration with the Vincentian Family. (This was part of the education efforts of NGOs at the 56th Commission on Social Development.)

Two of the speakers at the event had been homeless themselves. Both of them were quite articulate and were able to help the audience understand the many, many complications of homelessness in our world. One of the speakers spoke of not being able to use food stamps for hot food and of being afraid to drink too much water because of lack of access to a bathroom. Both speakers made the situation of homeless people REAL to me. I was pleased to hear the efforts of the Vincentian family to address homelessness throughout the world.

That evening, the Board of PGJ met by phone. We began our meeting with a prayer that addressed the Sustainable Development Goal of 'No Poverty.' These were the words we prayed:

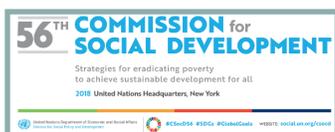
Loving God, we come before you today, seeking your face. Our world is riddled by a horrible, debilitating scourge – extreme poverty, where men, women and children are suffering its terrible consequences, from imprisonment to alienation to desperation. The psalmist reminds us. 'The Lord is known for His justice (Ps. 9:16) and 'The Lord hears the cries of the needy.' (ps. 69:33).

I joined my prayer that evening to our two speakers and all who are trapped in extreme poverty and feel hopeless and helpless. And I rejoiced at those, like the Vincentian family, who are making a difference in eradicating poverty.



January 31 CSocD Side Event Report on the World Situation - Social Protections

by M. Doretta Cornell, RDC



Wenyan Yang, Chief of the Social Perspective on Development Branch (SPDB) of DESA (Department of Social and Economic Affairs), moderated this session. Ms. Yang pointed out that Social Protections are a “potent policy tool” to challenge poverty and inequality. The *2017 Report on the World Situation*, which this session introduces, will be out soon. DESA has been focusing most recently on assuring that all are included in social justice actions and policies, the heart of the SDGs.

Juan Somavia, Director of the Diplomatic Academy of Chile, Former Director-General of the ILO and former Permanent Representative to the UN from Chile, gave us a historical overview of understanding poverty and social justice over the decades. For most of human history, he reminded us, people living in poverty were seen as needing charity and looked to churches or other institutions for assistance. After the Industrial Revolution, as industry needed healthy and educated workers, some social policies began to appear. The crisis of the Depression in the 1930s demonstrated the lack of social protections, and social policy emerged as important for society.



After World War II, we began to look at how the world is organized, Mr. Somavia said, and from the 1940s through the 1980s, we began to combine economic and social policies. In Europe, the United States and Japan, especially, the middle class benefitted from this integration.

Beginning in the 1980s however, under Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, the economics became the center. When financial consideration take over an economy, Mr. Somavia explained, inequality is the result, which has led to the social problems we have today. We know how to combine economic and social policy, but, with finance predominating, the need for more work on social development became clear. At the [World Summit on Social Development](#) [Ms. Yang calls Mr. Somavia the Father of the World Summit] in Copenhagen in 1995, world leaders agreed that we needed to “put people in the center of development,” which would entail overcoming poverty, achieving full employment and fostering social integration as the goal of development.

Today, he said, there is no way to discuss social policy without acknowledging social rights. The [2030 Agenda](#) defines the problem well, he pointed out, but the gaps are still enormous. The International Labor Organization (ILO) proposed Social Protection Floors [the least that everyone has a right to]; the concept has taken hold rapidly. The basic question, Mr. Somavia challenged us, is: Do you or do you not believe that every society should have a social protection floor? Unfortunately, some say, “Yes, but...” Once you accept that every society should have these, we “move to the logic of the 2030 Agenda.” All of the SDGs are integral to each other; this is a new way of looking at the world, one that he says would have been unthinkable even a few years ago. We are still learning how to integrate social, economic, and environmental needs. The challenge is enormous, and there is no model for this.

Civil Society has a large role to play in shifting focus to the people; we have to make sure that the needs we see are included in government planning and policies. We have to organize so that the human dimension – “understanding the people behind the statistics” – stays at the forefront.



One author of the Report, **Marta Roig**, of the Division for Social Policy and Development at UN DESA, then told us about developing the Report, which was first issued in 1952. In affirming the 2030 Agenda, all UN Member States agreed in principle to protect the poor and vulnerable, especially focusing on those left behind. Without social protections, poverty eradication is impossible; in fact, poverty rates would be 20% higher, and without protection floors, there would be little or no incentive to improve. All the other SDGs are affected by social protections, e.g., education and gender equality. The Report shows the gaps: 18% of African peoples, for instance, have no social protections. [*not in the mainstream economy*], etc.

Another author of the Report, **Maren Jimenez**, of the same DESA department, noted that they could probably devote a full report to each group of people. The main issues, Ms. Jimenez said, are ensuring regular employment, with social protections for those who are not regularly employed. Tax and finance schemes could create coverage, but often the middle-income people are left uncovered by these. The rich control the economy, with some supplements for the poor but leaving those in the informal economy with no coverage.

As examples, Ms. Jimenez spoke of the lack of education and access to programs of assistance, which are supposed to be universal but do not reach everyone. The displacement of people, like the Rohingya, adds to the problem; these people often lack even basic identity documents, so are ineligible for what assistance may exist. Tax benefits, another strategy, also are not available for all, and in many cases, benefits are too low to help people out of poverty.

Jonathan Perry, yet another Report author from the same DESA department, spoke of the need for protections to be available to people of all ages; contribution systems [*sources of funding*] are not always sufficient to cover everyone, especially migrants and mothers. Key pillars to social development, Mr. Perry asserted, are universal health care and retirement benefits. The elderly often are not aware of their rights, so a legal framework is necessary to secure them. The cost of administering programs is often a barrier to implementation. There is a great need to simplify programs, especially by consulting with the beneficiary groups, and to set up channels to deal with corruption and exclusion.

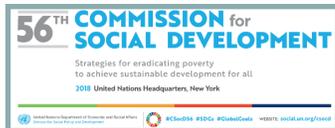
A major consideration in regard to benefits is whether they are adequate to ensure stability and a life with dignity. A society needs the full support of its government to ensure this. There is always a balance between stability and sustainability: will the program keep citizens stable, and can the government sustain this support? Other considerations: even if the system is inclusive, public attitudes and discrimination can exclude some people. Mr. Perry also stated that countries need to invest more in collecting data about the effectiveness and inclusiveness of their social protections.

The program concluded with a vigorous Question and Answer period.



February 7 CSocD56 final meeting

by M. Doretta Cornell, RDC



Chair of the Commission, **Nikulás Hannigan**, led this final session, which considered resolutions based on the work of the Commission. Among these were recommendations in regard to Persons with Disabilities and the SDGs, presented by Aziz Ansari, and the draft resolution on [future proceeding of the Commission](#). There was a consensus of those present affirming these.

The **Representative from the United States** said that the US joins the consensus but has some reservations, concerning assertions that all countries had a role to play in the 2030 Agenda's development. He said that the Agenda "must be in concert with their policies and precedents."

The draft [resolution for Africa](#) was presented by the representative of Egypt and the [Group of 77 and China](#). It targets investment for the empowerment of women and children, including education, safe water, etc.

The **Representative from the United States** said the US was disappointed because language in the preamble paragraph 9 calling for "all countries' public policies, mobilization and public use of resources, underscored by the principle of public ownership" had not been changed according to his objections previously stated. The Resolution was adopted as written.

The Draft [Resolution on Strategies for Eradicating Poverty](#) to achieve sustainable development for all was adopted.

In a statement after the adoption, the **Representative from El Salvador** said that in order to eradicate poverty, all must keep the commitments to this resolution. He was pleased to see the elimination of duplication in addressing similar issues was included. He noted that DESA has good regional programs and invited DESA to contribute their activities.

The **United States Representative** said that the US joins the consensus on this resolution and looks forward to working with others. He mentioned the importance of eradicating poverty, but sees the resolution as "duplicative." He does not agree with language about strengthening government. He called for shared responsibility, especially national responsibility. He also declared much of the trade-related language "taken over by event of July 2015" and objected to the language on climate change. He also expressed concern about the reduction of food imports to Africa.

He continued, saying that, while the United States is committed to the principles of the [Beijing Declaration](#), the document creates new international rights such as abortion, which the US does not support. He also said he did not agree with language expanding the right to quality education as national governments' responsibility. In the US, education is determined at state and local levels. So he sees the language about education for women, etc., as "only aspirational" and as something not upheld in US courts.

An **Observer Representative from the Holy See** expressed concern for the most vulnerable and said that economic and social policy are important to uphold community. He objected to provisions that "can be misinterpreted to harm the most vulnerable," especially in references to sexual and reproductive health. He declared that abortion is not an aspect of health.

Next to be considered for adoption was the draft resolution on the Third Review and Appraisal of the [Madrid Plan of Action](#). This was adopted with no comments before or after.

Mr. Hannigan noted that some documents were not reflected in the final resolutions, such as one on the [Year of the Family](#) and one on [emerging issues](#): towards sustainable and resilient societies, innovation and interconnectivity for social development.



The assembly then approved the provisional agenda for the 57th session of the Commission on Social Development.

In his final comments, Mr. Hannigan called this a good session because it integrated the Civil Society Forum into its agenda. He said it also introduced new ground, the integration of social policies. He noted the overflow attendance for side events as a good thing.

Of course, he said, the Commission can be better, talk more about those most vulnerable and marginalized – and “deliver on our agenda.” The Commission has already started on new working methods, derived from those used at the World Summit on Social Issues, to determine the annual priority theme. He promised to develop an “action-oriented resolution” to propose to ECOSOC next year, which will set the program of work and “how to make best use of time” at the Commission in New York with “the best international support.”

It will be important to have inequality as a major theme. Inequality harms all those excluded and undermines the fabric of society. All countries face it, he said, and so all must work with-in as well as between countries. It requires collaborative action. SDG 10, on inequality, has no set of institutions to support it, which could cause it to be forgotten. The Commission can be important in supporting it. Perhaps it could be the priority theme for next year or 2019 or both.

He then declared the 56th session of the Commission on Social Development closed. He then, as the mandate for the CSocD requires, opened the 57th session, which began by preparing to elect officers.

As nominations began, the sound on the broadcast failed.



February 8 Expanding Social Media as a Space for Social Dialogue

by Janet Kinney, CSJ

As part of [Interfaith Harmony Week](#), UNICEF and the International Dialogue Center ([KAICIID](#)) organized this side event entitled "Expanding Social Media as a Space for Constructive Encounter for Young People." The event's purpose was to raise awareness of social media's importance in promoting pluralism, diversity, and peace, as well as about the challenges and the potential dangers young people face in using social media. It was co-sponsored by the Permanent Missions of Austria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Spain, and the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See.

In her Welcome Remarks, Ambassador **Sima Sami Bahous** of Jordan expressed the belief that social media "is a powerful tool for change that when used well can promote the public good, and can create a new narrative to counter balance violence, becoming a space for real dialogue."

Msgr. Tomasz Grysa, Deputy Permanent Observer of the Holy See Mission, echoed these sentiments when he stated that "Social media can be an enormous force for good But they can also be used to divide, to mock, to deceive and to recruit and train others for evil."

Faisal Bin Muaammar, Secretary General of KAICIID, indicated the important role religious figures have in influencing young people: "Religious leaders are influencers and community leaders. We must empower them to take on this role in the digital sphere. We must provide young people guidance on how to live in peace with their neighbors by using these media to popularize dialogue and common citizenship education."

There were two panels in which staff of both UNICEF and KAICIID participated; the panels focused on how social media can promote interfaith harmony and the challenges and risks of using social media. One participant indicated that story telling can be an effective means to build collective good will and a way for youth to share on the issues that impact them.

Examples were shared from the trainings that KAICIID has developed and delivered in the Arab Region to encourage young religious leaders and civil society activists to work together to disseminate a message of peace and mutual respect. Since the program began in 2015 over 400 youth from 12 countries have participated, which they believe has fostered positive dialogue and has encouraged more peaceful dialogue among religious and ethnic groups.

Participants received copies of UNICEF's report "[State of the World's Children 2017](#)" which examines the ways in which digital technology has changed children's lives and, if leveraged in the right way, can be a game changer for children being left behind as well as connect them to opportunities and provide them with the skills to succeed in our digital world.



February 12 Global Compacts for Migration and Refugees. Meeting held at the Holy See Mission

by Janet Kinney, CSJ

The Partnership was invited to attend a presentation held on February 12 on the status and ongoing work on the Global Compacts for Migration and Refugees. Prior to the meeting we were provided with the Zero Drafts on the [Global Compact for Migration](#) (GCM) and the [Global Compact on Refugees](#) (GCR), as well as the Holy See's [20 Action Points for the Global Compacts](#). The goal of the GCR is to assure for the equitable sharing of the burden and responsibility for hosting and supporting the world's refugees, while the goal of the GCM is to assure that migration is safe, orderly and regular.

Archbishop **Bernardito Auza**, Apostolic Nuncio to the UN, welcomed the group and announced that a new website specific to the Global Compacts is to be launched shortly. After his remarks, a presentation was made by **Timothy Herrmann** of the Holy See Mission.

Mr. Herrmann summarized the work that had been accomplished to date. At the preparatory meeting held in December 2017 in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, there were close to 900 participants from 136 delegations whose goal was to make proposals on actionable commitments that would be included in the GCM. This group, in making their report, worked with the data and information culled during the prior consultative phase.

Shortly after this meeting **Secretary-General Antonio Guterres** also provided his report and recommendations for the GCM. The two working documents, the Zero Compact for Migration and the Zero Compact on Refugees, were released on February 5th. The intergovernmental negotiation sessions will begin in February and continue through this July.

Mr. Herrmann noted that the Holy See, with the approval of Pope Francis, had made its own [Twenty Action Points](#) on the two global compacts and were pleased to see that a good deal of this input was incorporated in the zero documents. The areas of most concern for the Holy See are these: the Right to Remain; the Right to Immigrate; the Right to Life; Unaccompanied Minors/Family Reunification, and Human Trafficking and Smuggling. Also, the financial implications of the actionable commitments put into the two reports have not yet been addressed.

During the time for **Comments and Questions**, a few of the participants raised the issue that the Compact on Refugees was limited in details and actionable targets, compared to the Compact on Migration, which was much more detailed, aspirational in its scope and breadth, and was pushing the conversation in areas that needed to be addressed. Also the issue of Sovereignty was raised and the challenge that this brings. While everything is "on the table," the question also becomes: Where do we want to focus our energy?

In conclusion, Mr. Herrmann encouraged all in attendance to engage in this discourse so that the fullest and most representative documents will be crafted, and additional meetings will be forthcoming.



February 15 Briefing DPINGO Town Hall on NGO Conference

by M. Doretta Cornell, RDC

Chief of NGO Relations in the Department of Public Information **Jeff Brez** explained that they are starting to organize the next NGO Conference and invited input. We would begin by, start by looking at the best and worst in the last conferences, which have now been held for 66 years. He invited all to take the online survey at outreach.un.org/relations [If you have ever attended one of the conferences, please take the survey.]

The last two conferences were fantastic, said Mr. Brez, with about 3,000 participants from about 700 NGOs in Korea. Participants said they felt a huge “value added.” At the 2014 conference in New York, about the SDGs, in the slightly smaller venue, we had over 2,000 people from more than 700 NGOs.

Bruce Knotts, of the DPINGO Executive Committee, declared that civil society engagement makes the UN work as well as it does. He told us that a group is carrying on the work of the Conference in Korea, promoting education for global citizenship and is planning a day as follow up. *[The telecast sound dissolved, so I missed the rest of his talk.]*

Saphira Rameshfar, youth representative, thought the New York conference was particularly effective because of the positive preparation, especially the youth subcommittees. These engaged a wide range of youth, not just at the conference. Before it, they had a chance to hear what the others felt about the SDGs and made the youth realize the place of the conference as a part of an ongoing process of working together. Some of the same youth subcommittees still are working together for the SDGs, Ms. Rameshfar said.

She hopes for more this time, clear, consistent, reliable communication. First we should engage people on line, then face to face in smaller settings to brainstorm. Be sure the networks continue to grow and expand.

During the conference at 7:30 am every morning groups met to strategize youth interventions for presentation during the conference. This built capacity for youth to contribute then and there, which generated enthusiasm to engage beyond the conference. They worked on the Youth Declaration draft daily; this was a first for NGO conferences.

Looking back, we can extract from it: we need youth in the decision making and collaborating. We need new systems in the search for truth and for a vital role everyone can play in a better world. The feeling of making a difference, representing your own situation and being heard – attracts young people to be integrated into the proceeding. Youth bring vibrancy; we need more occasions to get together to discuss. And it should not be limited to just youth talking to each; we need new structures for the outcome documents, roundtable discussions and planning conferences.

Shamina De Gonzaga, who chaired the Paris Conference in 2008, the first to be held outside of New York, spoke next, reviewing the mandate of the DPI NGO conferences, to take the issues of UN and communicate them to the public. In 2008, many UN departments felt that NGOs did not have sufficient expertise about the topics for the conference. Since the 2008 topic was Human Rights, this proved wrong, since NGO’s own work is based on with human rights. She told us that she was appalled that no student in her college class had even heard of the Declaration of Human Rights. So, she said, the work of NGOs does matter.

NGOs also have autonomy that official agencies and governments do not: we can keep stretching the boundaries of what can be done. This can bring the UN work further. The UN documents are norms that we can use to call governments, etc., to live up to them.

In organizing the conference, we need more awareness that all the events have financial responsibilities that underlie them. So we need fundraising to bring in speakers, etc. We need a



working system so we will not have to reinvent it each time. We need to set up some mechanisms about who covers what and is responsible for what. Most NGOs don't have financial or professional resources. We need to know what governments will give and what UNESCO, e.g., might be able to give. We should engage young people to strategize to get the funding.

She concluded by saying we need to ask what it means to "modernize" a conference, and to clarify what are we working for and who is working for that so we can multiply their voices. The pyramid model (all workers at bottom, money at top) is collapsing. How can we create a new model that would be more efficient?

For the rest of the session, Mr. Brez invited the audience to engage in the conversation about:

1. What is the value of these conferences?
2. What kind of impact do we want for the conference, on participants and beyond?
3. Any ideas about the planning process?
4. What are important key themes that we might address?

Richard Jordan, chair of the 2007 Conference on Climate Change, offered several points:

- The conferences can bring together civil society and private sector groups such as the World Bank.
- As for impact, the 2007 conference featured the International Climate Change Panel, to show world what the UN was doing.
- Mr. Jordan said university students, are essential.
- He suggested that each conference needs a content manager and a process manager.
- He also suggested that we need a global process to prepare, perhaps with regional conferences.

As for the theme, he suggests Disruptive Technologies: are they really disruptive? We could invite, for instance, blockchain currencies to talk about how they work. This could be in collaboration with UNITAR's monthly workshops.

George Hayes commented that timing is an issue. Last time, many students were unable to attend because of scheduling. If we want it to be multi-generational, we have to provide for that.

On the planning process of planning: that could be coordinated with Briefings, on a regular schedule; again, young people can be excluded if the scheduling is "all over the place."

Fanny Munlin, who chaired the third conference, said that the value of the conference is that we bring to our communities the value of the UN's work. Her group, for instance, reaches out to 4 million women, who then go to their Congress people with UN concerns. The UN is the only institution that can deal with today's complex world problems.

Sr. **Cecilia O'Dwyer** said the value lies in the people we bring in from around the world. The grassroots know nothing about the UN. It is important to introduce it. The value also lies in what happens when they go home to their countries.

For a theme: this is the 70th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights. We could link that with the SDG agenda. We need to get started right away, to have as much time as possible for preparation, to ensure youth participation. We also need to invite online participation.

Other suggestions included:

- a more open preparation process, so that things can be presented to DPI, the NGO Committee, and conference committees.
- some way of getting input from areas remote from the conference, through social media or through regional UN centers.
- we need to hold a conference in Africa, on African concerns such as peace and security other theme suggestions: Robotics, e.g., in education; Women, drivers of the culture of peace; where the UN should go next; something that will challenge our paradigms e.g., OneEarth community; nonviolent ways to address current conflicts.



The Korean co-chair of last year's conference said that the conference fueled increasing momentum among NGOs and it "helped the whole Asian community."

Mr. Brez summarized some points he heard: the value of bringing the UN to communities through NGOs, and NGOs bring partners that don't know about the UN. A perennial issue is finances, including the difficulty of getting to the conference. Therefore it is best to hold them in different places. Resources are more of an issue now with budget cuts; we need to find a good way to show the return on investment to potential donors. On the planning process, we have been grappling with lead time, resources, online, remote locations. We need some concrete ideas about how to overcome distance to make them meaningful for both sides and get resources for it.

Bruce Knotts heard that we need modernized use of technology for the conferences. On finances, the committee will meet soon to find ways to creatively finance this conference, maybe even charging, though that right now is a "no-go area." As for different locations, the committee has been in conversation with Nigeria, China and Canada. Cities are eager to host, as are the businesses. But for the UN to have the conference, we must have the agreement of the national government. They are the ones who have said no in the past. So NGOs should lobby their governments to host the conference.

More conversation followed, with support for youth involvement and connecting with grassroots people around the world.



"The 2030 Agenda agreements show that the international community recognizes that when one country suffers, all are affected."

– Daniel Perell, Chair, NGO Committee on Social Development



February 21 Ending the Detention of Migrants and Refugee Children: Best Interest Determination and Alternatives to Detention sponsored by Holy See

by M. Doretta Cornell, RDC



After the welcome by **Archbishop Bernadito Auza**, Observer Representative from the Holy See to the Vatican, Moderator **Fr. Michael Czerny** noted that this Side Event reflects Pope Francis' "passionate concern for vulnerable people on the move."

The human rights of migrant and refugee children are guaranteed in the [Declaration of the Rights of the](#)

[Child](#); being a migrant or refugee does not diminish these rights. There is a growing widespread consensus that even short-term detention is not in the best interests of children. Protecting borders must be balanced with the rights of the children.

He then showed a short **video of Pope Francis** on refugee children. Pope Francis explained our common responsibility toward these children in four action verbs: *Welcome*; *Protect* (ensure their inalienable rights and freedoms); *Promote* (their integral human development in families and home communities who have the rights to choose to emigrate); *Integrate*, not assimilate, them into the society they are in. The Pope urged world leaders, "The [Global] Compact must be based on compassion."

Dr. Donald M Kerwin, Jr., of the [Center for Migration Studies](#), NY, reiterated that best practice is widely recognized as no detention for children. He also told us that 50% of world refugees are under 18. Many children are detained in the United States, fleeing from Mexico and the Central American triangle, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Many children are also held in Indonesia and other nations, not counting those in refugee camps. These nations have not put many alternatives in place.

Mr. Ted Chaiban of UNICEF told us that studies show children who are detained even for short time show the effects on their health and development, suffer depression and anxiety, with PTSD-like symptoms, as well as effects on their long-term cognitive and physical development.

Therefore, *any* detention is against the rights of the child.

Why are we not there yet? He said many still argue that detention works, even though data show there are more effective and less expensive other ways, like community-based housing. Detention also drives children and their families underground, which increases their danger of being trafficked. The [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) [Editor's Note: which the United States signed but never ratified] does allow detention of a child, though only as a "last resort," Mr. Chaiban said, but this was intended for juvenile justice situations. The Convention clearly states that migrant and refugee children are not to be treated as juvenile offenders.

Others argue that there is no effective alternative to detention, but many countries show there are alternatives. The UNICEF [Beyond Borders](#) Report demonstrates that cheaper, effective alternatives not only exist but work even in last state of the removal process, after asylum has been refused. Ireland, for example, does not allow detention of children; Spain, Portugal and Italy do allow it but are moving away from it. Zambia has clear protocols for authorities; children are referred to child care services, not immigration authorities. Sweden offers housing for families applying for asylum; Belgium has open accommodation facilities.

What all these alternatives have in common is that the host nation works closely with the child and family, and there is clear communication about what is provided and expected, which continues throughout the process.



How can we put an end to detention for children? We have to focus on moving forward, build on the Zero Draft of the Compact (which says end migrant detention), and encourage Member States to develop policies to end it. Since there are clear examples of how to end detention of children, by working together we can get there. The standards should prohibit any detention of migrants unless the individual threatens public safety, order or health, and then the individual should be detained only for a short term. Detaining anyone seeking asylum is not acceptable. States have a legal obligation, he said, to find alternatives and detain people only when alternatives prove not sufficient to accomplish the purpose.

In 2015 the [U.S. Bishops spoke out against](#) the massive detention system in this country, urging the government to reduce the number of detainees and end the use of private prisons. They also echoed the Convention in saying that under no circumstances should migrants and refugees be detained.

Mr. Chaiban concluded by reminding us that any time a child is alone in the world, he or she is at risk for exploitation; this vulnerability takes precedence over other excuses. Deprivation of a child's liberty because of the refugee status of his or her parents is cruel and unusual. Countries must offer alternatives for the family, and the alternatives must not be so restrictive (e.g., leg monitors) that they seem like detention.

Ashley Feasley, Director of Policy for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Migration and Refugee Services Offices, spoke of the United States' detention practices. In the United States, detention was initially meant for deterrence. Right now, 1,300 families are being detained in the Tilley, Texas, family facility. Families are often separated at the border, by Border Patrol officers, who then claim they are not a family. Currently, more male-led households are being processed and then released to civil society shelters.

At the federal level now, there is "extreme pressure to end restrictions of what the government can do," Ms. Feasley said. The [Flores Settlement](#) is being undermined, and authorities are questioning whether children with parents are eligible for protection, as well as proposing legislation to keep children in detention and make it more restrictive.

There are some positive steps being taken by organizations to inform of immigrants and refugees of their rights and offer language help. She said that Homeland Security, too, is working for alternatives like community support. This kind of program has served 952 heads of households and has been very successful, with a high court-appearance rate of 99% and check-in rate of 97%. Homeland Security has canceled the program, but data about this could be a model for the future. The Ninth Circuit Court has been active in demanding more protections and more courts are defending children's rights.

Msgr. Robert Vitillo, Secretary General of the International Catholic Migration Commission, said that, especially for unaccompanied children, the best interests of the child must be primary, regardless of refugee or migrant status. A formal process for best interests must be put in place, with, for example, clear explanations of what constitutes proper identification and documents. A case file should be set up for each child, and provision made and monitored for temporary care, as well as discussion with the children on their future best interests. This must be overseen by legal and social experts.

Msgr. Vitillo recommended a [video](#) on the ICMC website, under Resources, showing children in the Shiraz refugee camp. He told us of a new law in Italy that gives refugee children certainty and could serve as a model for other countries. Unaccompanied children should not be returned if that will cause them harm. Time in detention must be reduced, using regional child care, foster care and host families. We must also establish minimum standards for reception centers.

Caritas Belgium has found that family involvement is necessary for long-term planning for children, in spite of the difficulties of tracing and contacting families in remote areas and the



language barriers. He then showed a short humorous and heart-rending clip of two Syrian 10-year-old cousins arguing about whether Jordan (where they are refugees) is better than their home in Syria. The clip ends with them promising to keep in touch by phone if each gets his wish.

A series of **Respondents** then spoke of what constitutes the best interests of the child.

Amb. Dr. Adonia Ayebare, Head of Mission from Uganda and Permanent Representative, said his work in South Sudan taught him that camps are not in children's best interests. He also said we have to "look after the children's dreams and provide conditions so they can dream" and go to school in the local community, not in the camps, so they can make friends outside the refugee community. The Compact must be "really concrete" and protect the children's rights.

The Permanent Representative from Germany, **Christoph Heusgen**, said that preventing detention of children is "dear to German hearts." In the last two years, Germany has received more than 2 million refugees; they were "not used to this magnitude." Unaccompanied children are referred to the Youth Welfare Office, where each is assigned to a local officer who does placement and finds places for them in a suitable German state, for instance, one with a community that speaks the child's language. This officer does the primary screening, helps identify a foster family, and then oversees the child's health, education, etc.

Minister councilor **Ricardo Monteiro** of Brazil said that Brazil agrees with the strong opposition to child detention in the Zero Draft of the Compact. Brazil places priority on rights of the child and does not criminalize refugees. A new immigration law last May 2017 defends the best interests of children and adolescents and provides for placement of them with child protection services. He hopes these will be in Global Compact.

Other Respondents reiterated that "migration is not a crime" and detention is not an acceptable solution, especially for children. A spokesperson from the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees noted that a choice between detention and return is not a voluntary choice. A person from IOM said that international cooperation is essential, citing the 12 American nations that have developed common guidelines for migrant children. Another reminded us that these children have suffered abuse, violence and trauma, so we must address these.

A lively Question and answer period followed.



"By 2030 there will be 1.4 billion older persons globally, and by 2050, it is projected that older persons will roughly equal the number of children."

– Vice President of Costa Rica Ana Helena Chacón Echeverri



February 23: Justice Coalition for Religious (JCoR) Meeting,

February 23, 2018

by JoAnn Mark, ASC

[JCoR is a new initiative of member communities of RUN (Religious at the UN) to engage our grassroots members in several developing countries more closely with the United Nations.]

The JCoR Board of which Partnership for Global Justice is a member met on Friday, February 23 to further its efforts to “build a global advocacy coalition of women and men Religious that will utilize and build upon existing infrastructure and engage strategic partners to

1. Strengthen advocacy skills of JCoR members on each level of ministry (local, national, regional and global.)
2. Systematize and enhance advocacy communication among congregations and among levels of ministry
3. Establish advocacy labor-and resource-sharing mechanisms among congregations on each level of ministry and
4. Execute coordinated, inter-congregational advocacy campaigns aimed at policy-makers on multiple levels.

Based on a recommendation of the JCoR Capacity-Building Site subcommittee, the group selected the continent of Latin America, and the Region of East African Nations: Tanzania, Mozambique, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe as areas on which to focus. The country will be selected after a review of data and will be either India or Philippines.

In order to continue its work, JCoR will be hiring a coordinator. Job description will be forthcoming. (If you think you might wish to apply, contact the PGJ office.)

The Working Group on Communications presented a summary of survey responses. It is obvious that members utilize technology and that future communications will build on their experience in this area. Members will continue to add to the list of Potential Strategic Partners.

The Board then reviewed the 20 logo designs which had been created for them. Based on comments the graphic designer will be asked to narrow the options and submit one or two options to the Board.

In the remaining time, the Board briefly discussed the proposed Travel and Transportation Sponsorship Protocol.



“The current resurgence of inequality is a major concern: the top 1% got 82% of gains in recent years, while the bottom 50% got no increased benefits.”

– Nikulas Hannigan, Chair CSocD 56



Executive Director's Presentation on What the Partnership Has to Offer Colleges

February 28, 2018 to the Lower Hudson Valley Catholic Colleges and University Consortium by JoAnn Mark, ASC

How would the world be different if all college graduates acted out of a global consciousness and a commitment to Catholic Social Teaching and human rights? What would that require and how can you help to make that world a reality?

It requires knowledge – knowledge that moves the heart and the mind to engage, to become involved. How are you assisting your students in the acquisition of such a heart and mind? Most likely you have some educational experiences in place that work towards that end. I am here to share with you what Partnership for Global Justice has to offer as we live our mission of “standing in solidarity with those who are oppressed, those who foster justice for earth and those who reverence diversity of cultures, and of developing global consciousness through educating, advocating and participating at the United Nations.” I will return to these three prongs of our mission later. But now, I will tell you a little about the Partnership for Global Justice.

Partnership for Global Justice, which I will call PGJ, is a network of organizations and persons who are deeply concerned about justice for all people and for the environment. In order to further our mission at the global level, we maintain two certifications at the United Nations. The first is certification with the Department of Public Information. The Department provides us with information about workings at the UN – workings with which you do not otherwise have access

This certification allows PGJ to have two youth representatives and requires that we spread word about the UN and its workings such as all it is doing to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. In order to assure that we are fulfilling our commitment in this regard, we are required to submit an annual report of activities such as the newsletter, the webpage, social media, etc.

The second certification is with the Economic and Social Council, ECOSOC. This certification makes it possible for us to speak at Commission meetings, to submit statements and to have input on statements prepared by Commissions on topics such as gender equality, environmental issues, and social protection floors. This certification requires that we submit a comprehensive report every 4 year. ECOSOC hosts a 2-day Youth Forum each year. This year it was held January 30-31 and was focused on the role of youth in building sustainable and resilient urban and rural communities

Earlier I mentioned the [Sustainable Development Goals](#), or SDGs. There are 17 of these, with each having several targets. These Goals were established using a process that lasted several years and encouraged participation of every person on the globe. They were approved by the General Assembly in September of 2015 and are also called agenda 2030.

The UN speaks often to the fact that all the goals are intertwined and that working to achieve any one will include efforts toward all, and that *Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere* is an overarching goal that relates to all the other goals. Note that this Goal makes poverty more than an economic issue. Poverty can also mean lack of access to education and inability to access services that others take for granted such as transportation and nutritious food.

Goal 1 is one of the three Goals chosen by PGJ for emphasis. The other two goals are *Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls* and *Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*.

In an effort to keep members abreast of issues at the UN, PGJ publishes a monthly newsletter which is emailed to the contact person for each member organization, who has the responsibility for sharing it with their members. Each newsletter contains a letter from either the PGJ Board or Executive Director, along with articles by Sister Doretta Cornell, interns and others. Newsletters are available on the website.

So, what do we provide to colleges and universities?



PRESENTATION GIVEN

Educating: Your mission is focused on educating, and we are able to provide briefings by informed UN individuals on almost any topic. Topics are selected by you and submitted to the PGJ contact at the UN, who arranges for speakers and presentation space. UN tours are part of the briefings. PGJ has arranged for more than 30 speakers since September 2015, including Ms. Angelica Spraggins, of the World Health Organization, and Mr. Roy Small, of the United Nations Development Program.

In PGJ's view, education needs to encourage involvement, which we name advocacy and participation. Some advocacy opportunities are provided as we share documents to sign such as statements to the General Assembly or to one of the Commissions. Participation in gatherings of various types at the UN are also a way of making one's voice heard. One can join an NGO Committee or attend a special youth event, a Commission meeting, a High Level Political Forum (HLPF) and side events. All of these provide education and opportunities to speak – to make one's voice heard.

It is my belief that the global dimensions need to be integrated in the curriculum. Sometimes trips abroad are meaningful experiences but are seen as isolated from the rest of the student's studies. Here are a couple of examples of how students integrate UN experiences with their studies: Graduate nursing students that are developing a protocol for treating persons who have experienced trauma have an opportunity to attend a panel of experts speaking on the topic. This means that they will not be working on this topic in isolation. Ed. D. students take advantage of free research reports that relate to topics they are studying. Students studying the environment could attend the Ocean Conference, NGO group on Mining and presentations on forests.

PGJ has also provided colleges with internships. These have resulted in a student providing micro-financing loans to women in Ghana, presentations in middle school classes, a week on the empowerment of women, articles in the newsletter, presentations on trafficking, and using plastic bags to prepare mats for the homeless. Interns engaged their campus communities and, in some instances, the broader civic community.

The micro-financing loans were made available through donations secured by the newly established micro-financing club on the campus. This project included developing the criteria for the loans as well as reviewing applications. Loan recipients are not charged interest, but they are asked to repay the loans for future recipients. The first loans were awarded this past year, and all were repaid in full. The students who made the presentation "Cool Beans" in middle school classes prepared a video describing the project and the involvement of students.

Please contact the office of the Partnership for Global Justice for more information on internships.



The Partnership signed on to these:

- ◇ Statement Submitted by Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, an NGO in Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC, for CSOCD 56 on “Strategies for the Eradication of Poverty to Achieve Sustainable Development for all. *This was delivered as an oral statement to the Commission.*
- ◇ A letter to Governor Jerry Brown urging him to put an immediate halt to new fossil fuel projects in California and initiate a quick and just phase-out of fossil fuel production all together.



“The Partnership has played a significant role in the program and Mission [of Molloy College Honors Program], impacting well over 100 students directly - the ripple effect is hard to estimate, though we h Prof. Daniel McGann, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies and Director, Honors Program, Molloy College ear and receive feedback from other students, parents and outside organizations about the work with Partnership and how this translates to what our students do and who they are.”

– Prof. Daniel McGann, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies and Director, Honors Program, Molloy College



OPPORTUNITIES TO JOIN US



SAVE THE DATE

The **Annual Meeting** of the Partnership for Global Justice will be held October 12 & 13, 2018, at Maryknoll Sisters 10 Pinesbridge Rd, Ossining, NY 10562. The annual Peace and Justice Award recipient is **Rev. James Martin, S.J.** **United Nations Opportunity:** International Day of the Girl Child October 11, 2018. *Watch for this page in the monthly newsletter for updates and details.*



“We have had a student develop an ongoing microfinancing program in Africa, living the mission of the college and the sustainable goals of the UN. This too, was developed through the collaboration with the Partnership. We have had several students intern at the UN and the effect on how they will further live in this world continues to develop as they are a part of the global community and have learned to know their power and advocacy.”

– Prof. Daniel McGann, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies and
Director, Honors Program, Molloy College





The 62nd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62) will take place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from March 12 to 23, 2018. The Priority Theme is “*Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls.*” The Review Theme (which monitors progress on recommendations from previous CSWs and the Beijing Declaration on Women) is *Participation in and access of women to the media, and information and communications technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women*.

This is one of the largest and most interesting events of the year. Thousands of women (mostly women) from around the world gather to share what is happening in their part of the world. If you cannot come to New York for this, I urge you to tune in on [UNwebTV](#). All the [Official Events](#) (presented by the Commission, on the Themes) and many of the [Side Events](#) (usually on a narrower topic) will be broadcast.

Read the [Document of recommendations](#) to be amended during the Commission and presented to ECOSOC for implementation. This document is the results of months of consultation in preparation for the Commission.

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.

Let’s Keep Connected:

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

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

