



Partnership for Global Justice

March 2017

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 Partners for Global Justice,

In this month of March we celebrate Women's History Month and on March 8th we celebrated, with people around the world, International Women's Day. The Commission on the Status of Women, which began on March 13th and continues through March 24th, has drawn women from all over the world to the UN to promote women's rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Although this is the sixty-first session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, in the United States, Women's History month is relatively new. President Jimmy Carter issued the first presidential proclamation which designated March 2-8, 1980 as National Women's History Week. He began his proclamation with these words: "From the first settlers who came to our shores, from the first American Indian families who befriended them, men and women have worked together to build this nation. Too often the women were unsung and sometimes their contributions went unnoticed. But the achievements, leadership, courage, strength and love of the women who built America was as vital as that of the men whose names we know so well."

The theme for both the Commission of the Status of Women and Women's History Month is economic empowerment of women and honoring those women who have been pioneers in business and labor. I recently attended a talk given by the former President of Ireland, Mary Robinson. She spoke of the important work that women are doing at the grassroots level all over the world to create resilient communities. I am sure we are all aware of the micro-lending programs that have contributed so much to the empowerment of women. The importance of this work cannot be underestimated. The ability of women to gain equality in the work place would add "\$12 trillion to global growth over the next decade," according to Antonio Guterres, Secretary General, in his opening remarks to the Commission on the Status of Women.

The Secretary General called on all men to "stand up for gender equality" and announced that he would be joining the International Gender Champions, a global network that brings women and men decision-makers together to break down gender barriers. He encouraged other senior leaders to do the same, concluding his speech by saying "we are all better off when we open doors of opportunity for women and girls; in classrooms and boardrooms, in military ranks and at peace talks, in all aspects of productive life."

Our efforts to provide education and advocacy for girls and women continue to be important work. Mary Robinson, in her recent talk, also noted that the world needs the UN, and added that it is more relevant than at any other time in its existence. She quoted Desmond Tutu: "I am not an optimist but a prisoner of hope." Let us all become "Prisoners of Hope."

Sincerely,

Kathleen Nolan, OP.

Chair of the Partnership for Global Justice Board



March 2, 2017 Nonviolence: A Style of Politics for Peace: A Discussion On Pope Francis' 2017 Message for the World Day of Peace

Sponsored by the Holy See (Vatican), Pax Christi International, Catholic Nonviolence Initiative, and Maryknoll

by M. Doretta Cornell, RDC

Archbishop **Bernardito Auza**, the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the UN, moderated the session and spoke on *Pope Francis on Nonviolence for Peace*. He outlined Pope Francis' teaching:

Peace is only direction of any human progress. Peace is in our hearts; it is first in us, then channels out to others. The family is where peace is learned

- Violence is not the cure for the broken world. Violence only leads to more suffering and will lead to our extinction. It is a myth to believe that only violence can stop violence.
- To be true followers of Christ means to embrace Jesus' teaching about nonviolence.
- Nonviolence does not mean passivity, does not mean giving up.



The logic of fear, the opposite of peace, underpins “nuclear deterrence,” said Archbishop Auza, calling attention to the recent majority vote in the General Assembly to begin negotiations to end nuclear dominance, noting that this was, of course, opposed by the most powerful countries, especially those having nuclear weapons. On March 28 (at the negotiations), the Holy See will present a paper on nuclear disarmament. He concluded by saying, “All of us want peace. We only have to choose nonviolent methods to achieve peace.” He then introduced the panelists to give examples of situations in which nonviolence has succeeded.



Marie Dennis, Co-President of [Pax Christi International](#), began *The Practicality of Active Nonviolence* by saying that, for Pax Christi members, nonviolence is a way of life, formed around Jesus, particularly his Sermon on the Mount. The question is: *How do we interpret this in light of our violent 21st century world, not just at a personal level, but what does it offer on the public level?*

The UN, she noted is “the fruit of the desire to move away from the destruction of World War 2, to use peaceful methods to resolve conflicts.” Pope Francis calls for nonviolent resistance and constructive nonviolent work for peace, and included in his Day of Peace address a wide spectrum of nonviolent methods for just and peaceful solutions. Fortunately, there is a growing recognition of active nonviolence as a powerful force toward social change, a process to end violence, transform it and protect the most vulnerable.



Nonviolence actively engages and transforms violence, to achieve justice, build community, and care for creation. It sides with those most affected by violence, mobilizing them to promote the things that make for peace, such as the Sustainable Development Goals.

Ms. Dennis cautioned that more people must be well trained in active nonviolence, to construct the society they want; when necessary, to disrupt the systems of injustice, and create a new restorative justice system. Much more “talent and treasure” are needed to train large numbers of people to engage in active nonviolence, but transformation will happen, just as other systems have changed. She reminded us that, for instance, we now depend on trial by jury rather than trial by combat, and dueling has been replaced by libel laws.

The second panelist was Fr. Francisco de Roux, S.J., Founder of the Magdalena Medio Development and Peace Program in the Magdalena Region of Colombia, spoke on The Practice of Nonviolence in a Conflict Zone, using the testimony of his own work. He noted that, after decades of civil war, 20,000 FARC members are working to de-arm guerillas and help them to become civilians again.

During the war between FARC and the Colombian army, Fr. de Roux worked to develop a process of nonviolence and confront the guerrillas. After any violent act, the group started development projects, growing crops, educational projects, etc. This was not easy: twenty-four of his companions were killed by the paramilitary and two more by guerillas.

For this, the Development and Peace Program received Colombia’s Peace award in 2001. Fr. deRoux asked families who had lost relatives to come and receive the prize in Bogota. One young man, Jesus, told the ambassadors and government about Alma Rosa, a lawyer who came to work with a group of small farmers who got land to develop projects. She was kidnapped by the paramilitary and found dead with her arms and legs cut off with a chainsaw. Jesus concluded, “Alma Rose was my mother and we will continue our efforts.” Hearing this, another woman offered to take Alma Rosa’s place; she is still working there.

Fr. Roux told us that many people voted against the first peace proposal because they were afraid; they had been hurt by the guerillas. In discussions to recover the process, victims came to Havana to testify. Before these discussions, the guerillas had demanded structural change, a socialist society, and an end to corruption. Their views changed when the victims speak. The victims said, yes, structural changes are needed, but first we must transform ourselves, end the violence, and respect each other. “Stop the war now,” they said; “with violence we will never find peace.”

Fr. deRoux concluded by noting that, because of this, the recent U. S. decision to increase the military budget “will affect everywhere – that is no way to get peace.”

Next was Gerry Lee, Director of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, spoke on The Proven Effectiveness of Nonviolence. He cited a recent book (Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict by Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan) demonstrating that between 1900 and 2006, nonviolent civil resistance actions were twice as likely to succeed as armed insurgency, even in extremely brutal situations. No nonviolent campaign that involved at least 3.5% of the population failed, while 75% of violent campaigns failed. The majority of nonviolent campaigns were successful, he said, because everyone can participate in nonviolent campaigns.

The best known example is People Power in Philippines in 1984. Marcos subdued the physical insurgency, Mr. Lee said, but the People Power movement mobilized over 2 million people in “tactics that eroded Marcos’ respect in the military and the business community.” Once People Power won over the army, former Marcos supporters fled, and so he fell. Other instances are the Iranian revolution and the more recent Burmese uprising.

Another instance Mr. Lee cited is the work of Maryknoll Sisters in Kenya, bringing victims and perpetrators of violence together and transformed the conflict. In Sao Paulo, Maryknoll Lay Missioners volunteer to bring about restorative justice. One effective Maryknoll technique



Lay Missioners volunteer to bring about restorative justice. One effective Maryknoll technique is interfaith dialogue. Other effective nonviolent groups are [Nonviolent Peaceforce](#), [Christian Peacemaker Teams](#), and The [White Helmets](#).

Each of these succeeded, Mr. Lee explained, because they mobilized large number of diverse populations. Violent measures can not do this; they divide the people, have narrow bases, and do not separate the regime from its supporters. Being nonviolent, of course, does not ensure success, however; any kind of campaign that is not well organized will fail.

https://www.cigionline.org/sites/default/files/diplomats_handbook_excerpt_o.pdf

Mr. Lee ended by asking, “Why do we assume violence is the only effective means against violence?” and calling us to “make active nonviolence our way of life and the core of our policies, to acknowledge one and other as having great dignity.”

Archbishop Auza thanked Mr. Lee for mentioning the Philippines: he had been part of that movement and recalled the decisive moment when 2 million people filled the avenue between the two camps at 2 am on the day the Marcos regime fell.

Maryann Cusimano Love, Associate Professor of International Relations at the Catholic University of America took as her topic *Nonviolence, Terrorism and the Responsibility to Protect*. She began with the encouraging news: **Peace and prosperity are breaking out all over the world**, Ms. Cusimano Love declared, with less conflict than ever by all measures, in spite of appearances. More people than ever before are living in peace, and there are fewer wars than ever before.

However, not everyone in every place lives in peace and prosperity. While in some areas like Europe, Colombia, Ireland, and South Africa, long-standing wars have ended, Syria and Iraq are now caught in terrible conflicts. Wars now are not between industrial countries, but between non-industrial nations and non-governmental groups, so there are fewer casualties. While there is far too much violence in the wars now, it is much less than in the past. More parts of the planet are in peace than ever before.

What we have learned about building peace:

- *Participation*: the primary element and the hardest to put into practice. This means participation, not just of the elite or combatants, but of women, youth, marginalized peoples, all those excluded from power politics and the life of that country, even – “and this is absolutely nonnegotiable” – people with blood on their hands. All have to make peace with those who shattered it and those who were violated.
- *Restoration*: repair not just of infrastructure but of human hearts. This calls for trauma healing education to deal with what was lost in human terms. “Just building roads,” she said, “will just make the next violence more possible. . . .If you are not at the table, you will be on the menu.”
- *Right relationship*: rebuild relationships among language groups, and respectful relationships among all nations.
- *Reconciliation*: healing the wounds of war between social groups. These might include Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, public apologies, and/or reparations – restoring justice to build a peace that will last
- *Sustainability*: building peace that will last, which will include relationships among people but also with our planet taking a long term view to build just peace.



Ms. Cusimano concluded by reminding us that we have lots of tools; we just have to remember that all wars end. *How they end depends on us, to build a better more just peace or not.*

The **Moderator** interjected, “You shocked us!” The UN says there are more wars now. Former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon inherited twenty conflicts when he began his term, and now there are thirty-nine, plus some tense situations that could erupt. *So we need your reminder.*

The final speaker, **Rima Salah**, Former Deputy Executive Director of [UNICEF](#), spoke on *Nonviolence and a Peaceful and Inclusive Society*. Based on her 25 years at the UN, as a member of high-level panel on peace operations and working in very difficult countries like Liberia and others in West Africa, Ms. Salah agreed that there are fewer wars now, but said that changed nature of war is disrupting the whole fabric of society. Violent extremism in the Middle East and Africa makes life particularly difficult for women and girls. The atrocities of war and sexual violence aim to disrupt the fabric of society and families.

What should continue to haunt us is people’s pain, suffering, courage and resilience. We need to ask about the impact of war on *your* family, on *your* children, and how we can change the tide of violence; what would help your family? Pope Francis’ message offers hope to all people who have lost hope in humanity, who feel that the rest of us have forgotten them.

Pope Francis calls us to move to a culture of dialogue and participation, not intrusion and dominance. Increasingly, we are beginning to understand the relation between peace and development; she cited the SDGs, which target the injustices that lead to violence.

Another aspect of wars today is the breaking of the level of trust between people and government. It falls on leaders to “leave no one behind,” she reminded us. Civil society must insist on this, and our politics must drive lasting peace through political solutions, not military. In Palestine, for example, peacekeepers have been there for 70 years, because there has been no political solution. However, The Gambia was on the verge of civil war but has moved away from that.

UN peace operations, Ms. Salah said, must be more people-centered and engage the people they are sent to defend, so that solutions will be more effective and relevant to the people’s needs. The UN prevents conflict but also protects civilians by unarmed intervention. She mentioned the growing voices of civil society, in Sierra Leone, for instance, where groups are transforming child soldiers into Youth Peace Officers. Thus, these children can see themselves, not just as victims, but also as agents of change. She said that the UN has for too long ignored the victims and must mobilize them for peace.

She recommended establishing local protocols for peace, engaging religious leaders to use their influence and resources to preach peace. The participation of women has a tangible impact on human security, and so they must be in the forefront of ending violence. In Cote D’Ivoire, for example, and even in Iran and Syria, women are defending their society and their children. Broad coalitions for peace are effective. We need an unfailing vision, plus member states must live up to the commitments they made to forge societies of inclusion, to rebuild the life of every member of the family in conflict zones, with long-term services like water, to protect and build communities.

[Editor’s note: In the midst of all the media focus on violence, in conflict, speech and policy-making, it was good to spend time considering the impact nonviolent action can have to create a more peaceful world.]



March 13-24, 2017 61st Meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW61): *Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work*

by M. Doretta Cornell, RDC



Introduction to CSW61

This meeting is part of an ongoing effort to empower women by ending discrimination and violence against women, achieving gender equality, expanding opportunities for women to fully participate in all spheres of national, local and person life. Some of the previous meetings and agreements on which CSW61 builds are: the [Beijing Platform](#) adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995; the [Twenty-third Special Session of the General Assembly](#), Entitled "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for The Twenty-first Century;" and the preparatory Expert Group Meeting on the priority theme held last September in Geneva.

Each CSW meeting monitors progress on the **twelve objectives for empowerment of women** laid out in the Beijing Plan of Action: Women and poverty; Education and training of women; Women and health; Violence against women; Women and armed conflict; Women and the economy; Women in power and decision-making; Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women; Human rights of women; Women and the media; Women and the environment; and The girl child.

*About a dozen members of PGJ attended CSW61 – see **Our Members** section for comments and more photos from a few of them.*

CSW61 focused on three areas:

- **The Priority theme:** Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work.
- **The Review theme:** Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls (how far we have come toward achieving the agreed conclusions of the fifty-eighth session).
- **Emerging issue/Focus area:** The empowerment of indigenous women.

The [Agreed Conclusions](#) approved at the final session recommend stronger, more concerted action for women's empowerment at work in these areas:

- Strengthening normative and legal frameworks for full employment and decent work for all women.
- Implementing economic and social policies for women's economic empowerment.
- Addressing the growing informality of work and mobility of women workers.
- Managing technological and digital change for women's economic empowerment.
- Strengthening women's collective voice, leadership and decision-making.
- Strengthening private sector role in women's economic empowerment.

UN Women has compiled graphics with [data about women and work](#) that are compelling and sad.

March 13: CSW61 The Opening Session



The newly-elected **Chair of the Commission, Antonio de Aguiar Patriota**, introduced several themes that recurred during the two weeks of meetings: that inequality between men and women continues to be an obstacle; that men and boys must recognize women as equal to men; and that changing the attitudes, cultural biases, and legislative and legal barriers to women's full participation in society are imperative and essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterrez announced that he has joined [Gender Champions](#), a group of international leaders working to include women at the highest levels of leadership. He invited everyone to join. A wry comment Mr. Guterrez made: *"True gender equality will not be reached until incompetent women are on the board."* Mr. Guterrez also noted the need for more women in the [UN Peacekeepers](#), as only 3% of Peacekeepers are women. The organization in increasingly recognizing the need for women, particularly in aiding women and children survivors of conflict.



President of the General Assembly, Mr. Peter Thomson, mentioned the exponential changes in employment and explained that, if women fully participated in the world economy, the economy would grow by **\$28 Trillion!** He pledged to keep the focus on women's equality, saying *"We will go on until gender inequality will be seen as an absurdity."*



Under-Secretary-General for Women, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, told us that 8,600 people were registered for CSW61, the largest meeting ever, and that 750 young people had gathered for the weekend Youth Program in preparation. She highlighted another theme that recurred in many talks: that in some countries, *90% of women work in the "informal sector,"* that is, working without pay or for very little pay, and without regulated working conditions or legal protections.

(Editor's Note: The United States is not listed as a participant, nor did I hear anything from any United States representative.)

The Under-Secretary-General also noted that more than *150 countries have laws that discriminate against women* and that, globally, *women must work three months more than men to earn the same amount.* The UN itself does not have gender equality, she mentioned, and the organization, led by Secretary-General Guterrez, are now working to change that.



Ms. Dalia Leinarte, Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women ([CEDAW](#)), reported that, while there has been progress in some areas such as child mortality and maternal deaths, most of the people living in poverty are still women. A great need is protecting women from violence, and the current surge of refugees and migrants is a great obstacle to achieving the SDGs.

She reiterated that progress on moving women from the informal to formal economy is slow, but held up hope that new opportunities for employment are stemming from the need to act on climate change.

The Special Rapporteur for Eliminating Violence against Women, Ms. Rosario G. Manalo,

reported on her world travels to monitor women's situations. She said that we are "not using all our tools" for equality. In one country she visited, *81.8% of the women* felt discriminated against, many citing psychological as well as physical violence. She called on all governments to make ending violence against women a priority.

Six young women reported on the [Youth CSW Forum](#). The Forum's [Outcome Document](#) is very impressive in its comprehensive vision of a world in which women are equal. They emphasized the need to include young women in discussions and decision-making to ensure their voices are heard. They spoke of the need for the private sector (private businesses) to be open to young workers, and especially access to a good education. The final speaker declared that youth are essential in the efforts for the environment, since "We are the last generation that can do anything about climate change."

The Official Meetings for the rest of the day and subsequent days, were spent hearing statements ("General Discussion," in UN lingo) from nations about what they are doing and challenges they face. Several countries noted high levels of domestic violence, and lack of opportunities for work kept many (sometimes as high as 70%) of these women dependent on their abusers. Other major issues were poverty-driven trafficking of human persons and lack of laws against it; lack of education, training, and technology for women; laws that prevent women from owning or inheriting the land they work.



March 13 Opening of CSW61 Afternoon Panel “Addressing the Gender Dimensions of Modern Day Slavery”

[Gwen Hines](#), of the United Kingdom Department of International Development, World Bank Group, sees little attention to the criminal networks that “prey on already vulnerable and desperate” women and girls.

Her recommendations:

- Bring the criminals to justice
- Reduce the vulnerability, for instance with job support, as the EU offers for garment workers in South East Asia.
- During crises, slavery must always be kept in view. She cited a post-earthquake operation during which UNICEF carefully monitored the shelters for this.
- Better evidence needs to be collected and shared; the UK is working on this.
- Greater cooperation among UN agencies and civil society, faith groups, charities, etc. to detect, rescue and prevent people being taken into slavery.



Keynote speaker, **Senator Aisha Alhassan**, Minister of Women’s Affairs of Nigeria, told of the escalating enslavement as people migrate to find work. She said that 9,000 Nigerians were traveling to Italy through Libya to find work, exacerbating the European refugee crisis. . A couple of situations Nigerians face: families being forced into poverty to pay off generational debt, and pregnant women being forced to give up their babies “for peanuts.” Traffickers then sell the babies to orphanage for profit. Boko Haram’s “merciless” abductions add to the vulnerability by making girls terrified of going to school, for instance. Because trafficking of human persons is a \$44 Billion industry, it persists.

Some efforts to stop trafficking include government monitoring airports working with immigration; collaborating with neighboring countries to which girls are abducted; sharing information among border patrol groups, Interpol, UNICEF and other agencies, along with providing help for victims, including shelters and vocational training.

The biggest need is for more awareness of the magnitude of modern day slavery, for instance in the media, and advocacy like marches and campaigns. She said that there is hope that some recent criminal prosecutions will deter some of the trafficking, but the aim must be zero tolerance of trafficking.



The Panel of Experts then addressed the Moderator’s first question: ***What are the primary risk factors?***

Judit Arenas, Director of External Relations of the [International Law Development Organization](#) and the organization’s Deputy Permanent Observer to the United Nations, stated that legislation is patchy in most nations and, even when present, weakly enforced. Gender discrimination and inequality must be addressed if we are to stop trafficking.



Risk factors include:

- Women and girls face violence and rape by traffickers, government workers and, often, family
- Most women have few chances of getting legal protection. Even if they can make it to the police, they are often ignored and have no legal support.
- High levels of physical violence without access to health care and often without legal status.
- Ms Arenas said we must have cooperation among judicial systems, border officials and others trained how to identify victims of trafficking.

Even where laws exist, it is difficult to prosecute if there are no witnesses other than the victim. There are few supports for victims.

The second speaker (whose name I could not read) named multiple risk factors of race, gender, age, group status, migration and refugee status, political and social conditions. The “push factors” are poverty and ensuing food insecurity and insurgencies. “Women’s bodies become the background of the battlefield,” she said, and this left women with the effects of violence as well as social stigma and difficulties of re-integrating into society, especially when the captivity has lasted for some time. States have failed to act, leaving traffickers free to attack with impunity.

The **Moderator** commented that this impunity is most disturbing, even where there is strong legislation against slavery

Matthew Luciano named as risk factors crises and unrest.

- Trafficking *within and to* crisis areas can be hidden, and the crisis exploited by traffickers can exploit it, as in the case of child soldiers.
- Trafficking *from* crisis areas victimizes already vulnerable migrants and refugees, both by violent captivity and by fraudulent offers of help.

The UN is monitoring major migration routes through Europe, but in other places the erosion of the rule of law and breakdown of legislative systems makes intervention difficult. One step is to make monitoring for trafficking part of any crisis response, as much as food and shelter.

Aidan McQuade, of [Anti-Slavery International](#), stated that slavery is about poverty and the exclusion of groups from power, often deliberate inequality. The problem is not fundamentally a police problem, he said, but a political one. To end it, we must change inequality and have coalitions of governments, civil society and all groups to work together on this.

Other conditions that are socially accepted in some places lead to and exacerbate slavery: child marriage, for instance (“*It’s not marriage, it’s slavery!*”) and child labor practices, and not enough schools. Education has to focus on girls and include education about human rights in all curricula, and offer access to vocational training. These reduce slavery where they are implemented.

A representative from the [International Labor Organization \(ILO\)](#), told us a sad story of how slavery can operate: a poor father is approached by an uncle offering a job for one daughter for \$1,000. Later the uncle returns, saying the daughter died; he offers the money back, but father tells him to take another daughter, hoping she will have opportunity. The uncle profits from sale of both girls.

The ILO estimates that *\$150 Billion are generated on the backs of slaves each year*. What can work? Good laws, strongly enforced, partnering with companies, programs in small villages, and consistent data, which we do not have. The ILO is developing a structure for data, with consistent definitions and baselines to judge success for next September.

The Question and Answer period raised some new issues, including calling businesses to account for their supply lines as well as their local facilities; increasing use of anti-money-laundering techniques to interrupt the profits of slavery; education of transportation workers and local police departments on how to deal with trafficking situations; a legal system for moving migrants that would circumvent traffickers; monitoring social media; and addressing the involvement of organized crime in trafficking.



CSW61 March 15 Reports from Member States on progress toward Gender Equality

Member States continued their reports from Monday's session on their movement toward, and challenges to, gender equality. Here are a few bits of information:

Ghana's Minister of Gender Equality, Children and Social Protection reported that Ghana just had peaceful elections, resulting in the *first female minister* and *first female chief of staff*, as well as many women in other high positions. There is still much to be done for women in rural areas, who have limited or no access to technology or economic empowerment. She mentioned the need to quantify unpaid women's work, such as nursing a child. Ghana now has a national gender policy and policies for social protections, affirmative action (for work), and against domestic violence.

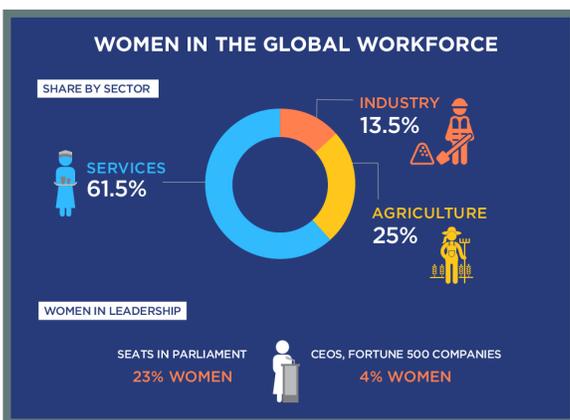
The Minister of Women and Child Support from **Sri Lanka** reported continued progress toward gender equality, including assessing needs of the community and women's rights in a chapter of the country's Rights Action Plan. Violence is being addressed by a multi-sectoral approach, with capacity-building for police, six centers for assisting victims, a new data base of information, and gender training for workplaces to reduce sexual harassment. The work of reconciliation includes ensuring women's rights, education, and development for rural women.



Peru's Minister of Women and Vulnerable Populations announced that 97% of workers now have a right to maternal and paternal leave, as well as breast-feeding rooms in workplaces. They have financed intervention in harassment situations and are working toward equal pay for work of equal value.

Sudan's Minister of Social Security reported that their constitution now has principles for equal pay, maternity leave of eight weeks, right to breastfeed, and work schedules suitable for parents raising a child. On economic rights, Sudan is working to move the 70% of women who are in the informal sector to the formal sector. Sudan is also working to increase protections from violence against women and for their participation in decision-making at all levels. Sudan is also financing for "positive discrimination," with special protections for women in the most vulnerable groups, such as technology and colleges access for rural women. Education is free for all children in Sudan, and the nation has made great progress against maternal and infant mortality.

The representative from the **Ukraine**, instead of just listing efforts made in the Ukraine, reminded us that none of the policy or legislative efforts will succeed unless there is an end to armed conflict and called for an end to all armed conflict.



March 16 CSW61 Interactive dialogue Empowerment of Indigenous Women: “Indigenous women in decision making processes”

[Note: I missed the first portion of this program.]

A **Ugandan Minister** of Gender, Labour and Social Development, spoke of the right to land as essential if people are to survive. The land is also inherent in their cultural spiritual relationship with rivers and lakes. Some change is needed to bring indigenous women into the market economy, and well as media education to bring women to public attention.

The next speaker, **Mariann Wollmann Magga**, a member of the **Norwegian Sami** Parliament, told of the importance of the Sami people having a place in parliament, and celebrated the fact that, this time, the chair is a Sami woman.



Michaelia Cash, Minister for Women and Minister for Employment, told us that **Australia** is working to close the gap between indigenous and non-indigenous people. Non-indigenous people have a 72.8% employment rate, while indigenous women have only a 48% rate. Education drives this difference, Ms. Cash said. Indigenous women need education in basic finance, literacy and employment skills. Last year, Australia pledged \$25 million to support young indigenous women in education. They have made 36,000 job placements (for indigenous men and women). Ms. Cash was firm in asserting that indigenous women have the ability and creativity to pull themselves and the community out of poverty, with some entrepreneurship support and training programs, some of which have been created by the indigenous women themselves.

Brazil's Minister of Policies for Women, **Fátima Pelaes**, explained that Brazil's challenges are very complex: there are 462 *indigenous lands* in Brazil, some larger than Germany, France, Belgium and Luxembourg together. Indigenous women are subject to discrimination in environmental, economic and social spheres. Last December, the assembly acted to boost indigenous women, allowing them to be “spokespersons of their own reality.” She was happy to have an indigenous woman as part of their delegation here

Agnes Leina identified herself as an indigenous woman; she is the Executive Director and founder of Il'laramatak Community Concerns (ICC), a group that promotes the human rights.

and development issues of Maasai pastoralist communities in northern and southern **Kenya**, with a special emphasis on women and girls. Preventing violence against indigenous women and girls, who face double or triple the rate of violence as other women, is a major challenge, in part because some forms of the violence are subtle and perceived as part of the culture. Her group is working hard to separate culture from some practices like female genital mutilation and early marriage, a form of violence that keeps girls from achieving their highest potential.

Some gains have been made, she told us, and the silence is broken. She sees herself as one of the “first beneficiaries” of the [UN Permanent Forum of Indigenous Peoples](#). Indigenous women had lots of input in the UN Paris Agreement. However, globally *each year some 15 million girls are married under age 16*. The greatest obstacles to development are war and armed conflicts, poverty and insecurity, which lead to illiteracy.



Pratima Gurung, of **Nepal**, spoke of the double violence against indigenous people with disabilities. Interpersonal forms of inequality include the state's separating children from their families to send them to state schools. The disabled are four times more likely to be victims of sex violence, assault, neglect and rape. Their other rights are also often denied.

Ms. Gurung said that they need to assess what has worked and what has not, and determine what needs to be changed. Indigenous women must be included in deciding what needs to be done. There must be paradigm shifts to meet the diverse needs and experiences of women and intervention against structures of violence, with policies to address the various ways the indigenous women suffer violence.

Mr. **Obed Bapela**, Deputy Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs in the **Republic of South Africa**, cited "strides" being made in empowering indigenous women. He introduced an **indigenous mother**, one of the "women left behind." The woman, from Natal Province, described a cooperative formed in 2007 to make arable land accessible to indigenous women. At present, 705 women are engaged in the project, producing milk and maize, both high in nutrition, for sale to their community and local businesses. The cooperative gives the women job security and a consistent income, partly through government investment in the community. The cooperative provides its members with education about adapting to climate change, safety and agriculture, connecting them with a local college for on-site training and help in "challenging stereotypes and mental chains."

Other speakers cited gains for indigenous women, including **Argentina**, where indigenous women are now a priority; 30% of the institute's national council are women and many of the local communities have elected women. **Mexico** sponsors programs on cultural diversity to reduce violence against indigenous women and indigenous women themselves provide culturally appropriate support to victims. Twenty-six houses and centers have been established to empower victims of violence, offering credit and other financial services. Other challenges include presenting new images of masculinity and including indigenous women in policy-making processes.

A representative of the Democratic Republic of Congo lamented that a contingent of indigenous students was unable to join him due to flight cancellations because of the snowstorm. He stated that familial or ethnic practices can no longer be acceptable barriers to women's participation in society. Indigenous women, such as Bantus who work mostly in agriculture with poor remuneration, contribute to the national economy, but have little access to, for instance, health care. Congo is developing interaction between Bantu and other indigenous peoples in implementing strategies about the environment. Congo is working for equal access to resources and full integration of indigenous women into society.



Dr. Khalida Bouzar, Director of the Near East, North Africa and Europe Division of the [International Fund for Agricultural Development](#), spoke of the great loss of forests, contributing to increased poverty. Indigenous women need the right to own land, especially as they are rehabilitating many of the lost forests. Youth and indigenous people are often grouped together as vulnerable, but they have different priorities and needs, which must be addressed separately

The International Fund provides legal support for land claims. Economic empowerment also requires better access to markets and collaboration with private sectors. Some of these have begun, for instance, with Whole Foods. Most important, the indigenous people must be allowed to give (or refuse) prior and informed consent in all decisions affecting their lives.

He also stressed the importance of indigenous women as "custodians of indigenous knowledge," which is essential to achieving the SDGs, which will require harnessing indigenous knowledge.

After these scheduled speakers, **the Moderator** opened the floor for statements by government organizations, then NGOs. Many of the same themes emerged, with similar examples of practices and needs.



Advocacy

The Partnership for Global Justice signed on to a petition from The Commission on the Status of Women NGO to **Secretary-General Antonio Guterrez**, asking him to meet with us. In the words of the petition: "These are troubled times and the world's women call on the UN to strengthen its commitment and support so that feminist and women's movements can have a strong, multi-cultural voice at the UN." The petition was presented to the Secretary-General during CSW61.



“We will go on until gender inequality will be seen as an absurdity.”

President of the General Assembly Peter Thomson



*“If women fully participated in the world economy, the economy would grow by **\$28 Trillion!**”*



“True gender equality will not be reached until incompetent women are on the board.”

Secretary-General Antonio Guterrez



Reflections on CSW61

About a dozen members of PGJ attended CSW61 Here are a few reflections on their experiences:

From Sr. Rose Ann Hefner, CSJ:

I was privileged to be one of more than 8,300 participants registered from all over the world. A large majority of them were women:

- Creative women who create forums where many voices could be heard;
- Intelligent, articulate women who find ways to educate and inform others;
- Inclusive women who create a welcoming space where all can feel valued and welcome;
- Generous women who graciously share their wisdom and insights with others;
- Compassionate women who work tirelessly for the victims they serve;
- Courageous women who are risking their lives paving the way for other, and defending the rights of women and children;
- And many, many young women who are creating a new world order of peace and justice for all.
- Also present were men who share the passion to bring about justice and equality for all
- Absent were women not allowed to come by their own country, or not granted a visa by the US.



The events were informative, challenging, and inspiring. I was especially touched by the conversations I had while standing in line or waiting for the next event to begin. People were anxious to share and connect. It was like being part of one large global community. The number of young women participating gave me a great sense of hope for our future.

from Judith Smith Wilkinson:

GRATITUDE, INSPIRATION, and HOPE are major emotions that surface as I reflect on my experiences with the Sisters, while in New York. Their kindness was evident and their peace was contagious. The time we shared was a gift.

However, at the United Nations Conference on the Status of Women, I at first felt overwhelmed and discouraged as the articulate speakers from all over the world reiterated over and over the many universal problems of gender inequities, poverty, gender violence, trafficking of women

and children, forced marriage, and on and on and on. The problems were assertively voiced, and I felt very sad.

And then a clear message became an invitation to "CONSTRUCTIVE IMPATIENCE." I began to hear proactive solutions from the articulate confident speakers: "IT IS TIME TO GET OUT OF OUR SILOS." NOW is the time for us to ORGANIZE, PRIORITIZE, PLAN, and TAKE ACTION to bring about the numerous positive changes that are needed all over the world -- and in our own communities.



Water is Life: Homecoming Farm's 6th Annual Spring Awakening

By Erika Sullivan PGJ Intern and Molloy College Student

(This event is related to SDG14 -Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.)

On March 25th of 2017, **Homecoming Farm** in Amityville, New York, held their sixth annual Spring Awakening, this year's theme being "Water is Life". It was not only a celebration of the sacred gift that is water, but also a memorial to **honor Berta Caceres**, the Martyr who gave her life defending the Gualcarque River in Honduras (click here for [an article](#) about her work and her death.): There was a [video tribute](#) to Berta Caceres, and in the spirit of her lifetime work, the day was spent discussing the sacredness of water all over the world and here on Long Island.

Suzanne Golas, the director of [WATERSPIRIT](#) was the keynote speaker of the event. She discussed the spiritual connection that we as human beings have to water, and how, as Berta Caceres would have said, the spirit of God can be found in water and everywhere in nature. Because of this connection, we should be more careful to take care of and appreciate the water that is all around us. She reflected on the fact that we come from water and we are dependent on water – That we are all a part of the water cycle and we are all profoundly interconnected.

During the first group discussion, Suzanne Golas prompted the participants to think about the first body of water they loved as a child and what the condition of that water is today. There was a variety of bodies of water mentioned from lakes in upstate New York to the Hudson River and the Atlantic Ocean at Coney Island.

Once the first group discussion had finished, Suzanne Golas moved on to discussing the current problems we are facing in regards to the cleanliness and health of our water, particularly freshwater. From there she discussed the UN's [sustainable development goals](#), primarily that by 2030 there will be sustainable water management for all. She described the fact that many people in developing countries, particularly parts of Africa, do not have access to clean water or even adequate waste disposal.

She continued on to describe issues that are happening here in the US, specifically, the amount of water that is used in industrial agriculture and the ways that marketing has influenced the amount of water people use for things such as keeping their lawns green.

The next woman to speak was **Adrienne Esposito** of [Citizen's Campaign](#). She described many of the problems facing Long Island's water, particularly the drinking water. One of the major problems is the Nitrogen pollution from sewage. There are thousands of cesspools on Long Island, all of which contribute to the nitrogen pollution, but Citizen's Campaign is working to get grants to change to newer, cleaner technology. Adrienne Esposito also described other common pollutants of the water, things that everyday people can work to stop. The two major pollutants are [1.4 Dioxane](#) and not-properly-disposed-of prescription drugs, and Citizen's Campaign offers an [interactive map](#) of locations on Long Island where one can drop off prescription drugs for safe disposal.

The afternoon ended with a mixing of the Long Island rivers ceremony. Water from each of the four major rivers, Carmans, Connetquot, Nissequogue, and Peconic, were represented and poured together. The closing ceremony reinforced the interconnectedness that had been mentioned countless times throughout the day and that has, and will continue to have, a lasting effect on everyone in attendance.



PGJ Annual Meeting 2017 – Save the Dates

The Partnership for Global Justice Annual Meeting will be held October 23-26, 2017 in Adrian, Michigan



[The People's Climate](#) March April 29 in Washington, D.C. and “sister marches” around the country. Join the [Global Catholic Climate Movement](#) and millions of other advocates for our planet!

Virtual Recap of CSW61:

For those who were unable to attend the Commission on the Status of Women, and for those who did, to see events you missed while there: Some of the talks, plus photos and commentary, from CSW61 are available at [UNWomen](#).



Committee for Teaching about the UN (CTAUN) will meet on April 8, at the University of Central Oklahoma. Details: [Empower Women: Change the World](#), April 8, 2017 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. University of Central Oklahoma, Nigh University Center – 3rd Floor Ballrooms

Keynote Speaker: Virginia Gamba, Assistant Secretary-General at the United Nations.

The conference is free, and no deadline to register is given on the website.

Orientation

Orientation on June 9 for individuals in formation with religious congregations. Please contact Sr. JoAnn for more information: 212-682-6481 Partnershipforglobaljustice@gmail.com

Let's Keep Connected:

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

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

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.

