



Partnership for Global Justice

August 2015

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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MEET PGJ'S NEW YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE, THERESA MARY BISSEX



THE PARTNERSHIP FOR GLOBAL JUSTICE ENGAGES YOUTH AT THE UNITED NATIONS THROUGH THE UN'S YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE PROGRAM. WE ARE EXCITED TO HAVE ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS REPRESENTING TODAY'S YOUTH ON BEHALF OF PGJ AT THE UN.

My name is Theresa Mary Bissex, and I am thrilled to introduce myself as your new youth representative to the United Nations.

“Surreal” is the perfect word to describe Tuesday, August 25, my first day on UN grounds, where so much history has been made. My own great-grandmother was an active member of the People’s Section of the UN in the 1940’s and 50’s, so in a way, I am carrying on a family tradition!

I am entering my second year at Molloy College on full academic scholarship, pursuing a B.S. in Music Performance with an Italian minor. I am also a member of the Molloy Honors Program, which provides interdisciplinary curriculum and many opportunities for service, education, and personal improvement. Chosen to speak at the Northeast Regional Honors Conference in Gettysburg, PA, I presented my paper, “The Ethics of Virtual Reality,” in April 2015. As part of the June 2015 honors’ trip to Germany and Austria, I participated in the Salzburg Global Seminar’s Global Citizenship Program, dedicated to discussing solutions for global concerns.

I am passionate about the effects the arts can have on society, and invested in finding moral solutions to issues of poverty, healthcare, education, and the environment. Thank you for the opportunity to represent the Partnership! I look forward to honing my interests for the betterment of society and the world at large.





UPDATE ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Throughout the summer, High-Level Forum sessions on the SDGs were held, with various nations identifying the importance of Goals to their future. On August 12, the UN Statistical Commission began its work of crafting clear, measurable indicators of how the progress toward the Goals is occurring.

On August 4, the 193 member nations approved that the 29-page text, "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," to be brought to the General Assembly for adoption during the September 25-27 Summit, when heads of nations will gather in New York for the opening of General Assembly for 2015-16. The document is the result of the two years of international consultations about the needs and necessary changes to create a better world.

Read the [Official Press Release](http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2015/our-world-document-adoption/) here: **<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2015/our-world-document-adoption/>**



why do I care

L'appel des consciences pour le climat



On July 21, The Alliance of Religions and Conservation convened a [Summit of Conscience](#), in Paris. The premise underlying the Summit was: “It is only a mobilization of conscience on a global scale that will enable humanity to meet this great challenge confronting us: how to limit global warming by taking real action, including reducing our consumption of fossil fuels. Time is short. This is not only a political economic or ecological issue. It is the future of humanity that is at stake.” The topic of the day was “Why Do I Care?”

The participants then issued a “Call to Conscience,” challenging everyone to consider the question and to make a response. Hear the [statements by some of the religious](#) and cultural leaders at the Summit of Conscience.

The following day, the French government agreed to send the Call to Conscience to the heads of the 195 delegations who will attend the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP) on September 25-27 in New York. By doing this, they said, “We hope that in answering this question, you will come to the COP primarily as a conscious human being not just a representative of a Government or agency. In the end the most important element of this is that we hear from you as a person, a member of the human family who has for a time a uniquely significant role to play in protecting the world.”

Join the reflection [by posting your reasons for caring](#) about Climate Change.

For more information:

Summit of Conscience: <https://www.whydoicare.org/en/news/the-summit-of-conscience-in-3-minutes>

Response of Religious Leaders: https://www.whydoicare.org/en/home?set_language=en

Post Your Reasons for Caring About Climate Change
https://www.whydoicare.org/take-part/formulaire.php?set_language=en



THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND POPE FRANCIS' LAUDATO SI'

Many ideas in Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*, especially those in Chapter Two, find echoes in the Sustainable Development Goals. Underlying both documents is the belief that we can change the world. The United Nations has concrete evidence in the success of the concerted effort of nations in the Millennium Development Goals. Pope Francis notes: "The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change." We know we can do this if we do it together.

Basic to both documents is the understanding that everyone and everything are interrelated, and that all our actions have consequences for each other and for our planet. As Pope Francis puts it: "God has joined us so closely to the world around us that we can feel the desertification of the soil almost as a physical ailment, and the extinction of a species as a painful disfigurement".

Pope Francis roots this in our belief in God, the example and teaching of Jesus, and the love for one another we are called to as believers; the United Nations uses the language of human rights, the essential dignity of each person on which the Charter of the United Nations rests. Both share the desire to see all understand the interconnections and live according to our mutual truly best interests.

Another strong point of similarity is the insistence that human activity – predominantly that of the developed, wealthier nations – has caused and accelerated climate change and therefore action to improve the lot of poorer peoples and to protect and restore the environment is a moral obligation, and has moral, ethical and spiritual dimensions, as well as technological, sociological and scientific ones. Chapter Three of the encyclical enumerates some of the specifics of this, while the SDGs aim to reverse these destructive practices and institutions.

Equally strong is the need for the wealthier nations to accept responsibility for the damage caused by both their exploitation of fossil fuels and the imbalance inherent in international financial and social structures, both within countries and between them.

Both documents also cite the same major issues, with Francis focusing on the needs and the SDGs on proposed solutions.

Here is an outline of the correlation, using Pope Francis's headings:

Pollution and climate change – Goals 6, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17

The issue of water – Goals 6, 14, 15

Loss of biodiversity – Goals 15

Decline in the quality of human life; breakdown of society Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 16

Global inequality – Goals 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 16

Perhaps most striking in the encyclical is Pope Francis' call for the kind of international effort and framework of action which constitutes the Sustainable Development Goals, in fact the whole Post-2015 Development Agenda: In highlighting the "Weak Responses" to the needs of the poorest, he says, "The problem is that we still lack the culture needed to confront this crisis. We lack leadership capable of striking out on new paths and meeting the needs of the present with concern for all and without prejudice towards coming generations. The establishment of a legal framework which can set clear boundaries and ensure the protection of ecosystems has become indispensable." Both the process and purpose of the SDGs strive to answer these needs.

Pope Francis also says that a major cause of the weak response is the "fact that many professionals, opinion makers, communications media and centres of power . . . are far removed from the poor, with little direct contact with their problems." The SDGs were developed from the stated needs of people from all walks and conditions of life, from the people themselves, and those in "direct contact with their problems."

Finally, Pope Francis challenges us to become a "Universal Communion." This is also clearly, if in more pragmatic terms, Goal 16: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels."

As Catholics, we have in *Laudato Si'* a powerful resource for prayer and motivation in working to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.



USEFUL TIPS FOR FOLLOWING EVENTS AT THE UN—INCLUDING POPE FRANCIS' TALK

Consult the [UN Journal](#), which posts times for all events at the UN for a day; Information is posted late in the evening before, usually by 11 pm.



Watch the Pope (and other speakers) on the [UN WebTV](#)'s live broadcast.

Notes:



UN events tend to start about 10 to 15 minutes late, so don't get discouraged if nothing is on the screen when you tune in. At the lower right corner of the video screen, you can choose the language in which you will hear the broadcast; speakers, especially at this event, often use their own languages.



UN EVENTS OF INTEREST: 2015

September 9	High-Level Forum on Culture of Peace Women-led open briefing on recent initiatives in East and West Africa and the Middle East aimed at countering terrorism and violent extremism
September 15	General Assembly opens
September 21	International Day of Peace
September 25-27	United Nations Summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda
September 29	2015 Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
October 1	International Day of Older Persons
October 11	International Day of the Girl Child
October 16	World Food Day
October 17	International Day for the Eradication of Poverty 2015
October 19	Second World Summit on the Information Society
October 24	United Nations Day
November 19	International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
November 23	Observance of International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (Nov. 29)
December 10	Human Rights Day

COMING IN 2016

February 1-2	Economic and Security Council Youth Forum
March 14-24	Commission on the Status of Women
May 9-20	Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
June 14-16	Conference on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
July 11-22	High-level Political Forum on sustainable development

