



Partnership for Global Justice

February 2016

# 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](mailto:partnershipforglobaljustice@gmail.com).

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## LETTER FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

Dear Partners for Global Justice,

Soon I will be attending the UN Commission on the Status of Women (March 13-18). The theme for 2016 is “Women’s Empowerment and Its Link to Sustainable Development”. As you know, even though the Millennium goals have largely been met, there is still a long way to go, especially in developing countries. Women and girls, who make up more than half the world’s population, are often more deeply impacted than men and boys when the goals are not achieved, thus, their contributions and leadership are central to finding a solution.

This leads me to consider the SDG # 5, “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”, as being very central if women and girls are to assume leadership and make major contributions to our goals. **Two of its Targets that are so important are to “end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere” and to “eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.”**

How do we, as “Partners of Global Justice,” help to bring this about? Educating ourselves is a great first step. Knowing the conditions under which women, all over the world, are facing in the struggle to achieve equality. PGJ can help with this.

Other actions can include: supporting women in their struggle for equality, ensuring that our own congregations and institutions have a balance in whom we employ and that women receive equal pay for equal work, educating girls and training them to be leaders, sponsoring girls in attaining higher education and contributing to the building and maintaining of primary and high schools in developing countries, ministering to women who have been trafficked or abused in their homes, contributing to organizations that directly assist in those countries and perhaps, most of all, fostering a spirit of equality and justice for all among those with whom we associate.

I know many Congregations are doing all of these things already. We invite you to share what your Congregation is doing or what you are doing personally. Send a summary of your work to JoAnn, and we will post your work on our website. Our work then can influence even more.

I am suggesting that you visit the website: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-and-the-sdgs/sdg-5-gender-equality#sthash.GDvpMKvP.dpuf>, where the UN has published all of the SDGs and shown how they affect women especially. The website gives important suggestions as to what is being done to empower women and to relieve poverty in our world. Thank you for your work and your concern for justice. We will share more with you after the Commission on the Status of Women.

Peace,

Mary Ellen Loch, CSJ  
Board Chair



**The 54th Session of the Commission on Social Development  
(CSocD54):**

**“Rethinking and Strengthening Social Development in the Contemporary World”**



*The most important UN event in February was the 54th Session of the Commission on Social Development (CSocD54). This was a two-week long meeting of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to prepare for implementation of the 2030 Development Agenda. In preparation for CSocD, the [Civil Society Forum](#) was held on February 1 and 2, putting final touches on the [Civil Society Declaration 2016](#) which was presented at the opening of CSocD 54.*

**Opening Session**

At the **Opening Session**, ECOSOC Commission Chair **Ion Jinga** of Romania introduced the priority theme “Rethinking and Strengthening Social Development in the Contemporary World,”

stressing the importance of paying attention to the planet and to engage all sectors of society in all development. He cited the “milestone agreements” of 2015 for making the 2030 Agenda “the most comprehensive ever,” with the needs of “people and planet” at the center of the Agenda.

In spite of the success of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS), Mr. Jinga noted, the world is still feeling the effects of the global financial crisis. Some lingering issues are the need to create 600 million jobs by 2030, the lack of full political access for the aged, youth, women, and people with disabilities.

In order for the 2030 Agenda to succeed, universal policies must link social, economic, and environmental concerns. Special attention must be given to:

- governments must provide social protection and public services for all, especially the most vulnerable and excluded groups; sharing examples of policies that work; careful monitoring of progress, by including participants; local resources must be developed, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa; education, political stability, investment in agriculture, small holders and family farmers, especially women; and progress toward peace and security is impeded by drugs, weapons, and human trafficking.

## AT THE UN IN FEBRUARY CONTINUED...

A persistent theme in all the presentations was the need to move from discussion to action, to begin the work of changing policies and practices to make the world better.

Dominican sister **Margaret Mayce**, as **chair of the NGO Committee on Social Development**, presented the Civil Society (NGO) declaration, which calls for “shifting the world to a sustainable and resilient path” by moving out of “silo thinking.” Social, economic and environmental development must all be created together for a sustainable future.

generation to end poverty or the last to save the planet. The world will be a better place, she concluded, **WHEN** we succeed. Civil Society is ready to act in support of these goals.

**A Youth Representative** called on the members of the Commission and Member States to include young people in all aspects of planning, implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda, and to include youth in regional and high-level discussions. She implored them to see youth as partners in social development.

The Chair reminded us of Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliassen’s statement, “Young people are not just the future, they are the present.”

A general discussion from the floor followed, citing specific needs of various sectors of society and some actions for change that nations are undertaking.

### **Outcomes of CSocD54**

During the course of the two weeks of meetings, three resolutions were considered and finally approved at the closing session. For the full official summary of the resolutions, see <http://www.un.org/press/en/2016/soc4837.doc.htm>

*The first resolution* the Commission approved was “**Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development**,” which calls for comprehensive economic and social policies to combat the “increasingly unacceptable poverty,” inequality and social exclusion. The document stresses the need for African countries “to prioritize structural transformation, modernize smallholder agriculture, add value to primary commodities and improve public and private governance institutions.” The United States and eleven other countries voted against this resolution because of lack of clarity about trade and “the right to development.”

*The second resolution* focused on the theme of the meetings, “**Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world.**” According to this resolution, “the Council would recognize that each country bore the primary responsibility for its own economic and social development” committing “significant” additional domestic public resources along with necessary international aid. To accomplish this, “the United Nations will to continue to support national efforts to strengthen social development at the local, national, subregional, regional and international levels.”

*The third resolution* concerned the Economic and Social Council’s organization and methods of work, including the priority theme for the 2017-2018 review and policy cycle, “Strategies for the eradication of poverty to achieve sustainable development for all. It also proposes that resolutions be made every two years to avoid duplication of General Assembly issues, and will reconsider that cycle of reviews at next year’s session.



# BRIEFING PROMOTING PEACE TO COUNTER VIOLENT EXTREMISM

By Theresa Bissex, PGJ Youth Representative

On Thursday, February 4, I attended a DPINGO briefing in the Focus of Faith series. The topic for the day was “Promoting Peace to Counter Violent Extremism” and addressed the responsibility of religious leaders, faith-based communities, and individuals of faith to advocate for peace and solidarity. The excellent panel addressed a myriad of crucial issues, including the need for accurate interpretations of religious texts and teachings, respect for the inherent dignity of each and every individual, and consensus among faith groups that they can seek a common goal without losing the sense of who they are. However, one point raised by the first panelist, Fr. Roger Landry, particularly resonated with me.

Fr. Landry emphasized the need for active promulgation of the immense good for which religious institutions and faith-based organizations have been responsible. He highlighted certain precepts promoted by religious faith throughout the centuries, including the tradition of forgiveness and reconciliation, the respect for human dignity, the culture of solidarity and charity, the education of scholars, citizens, and peacemakers, and the categorical condemnation of evil. However, Fr. Landry further pointed out that all too often, humanity, forgetting the great goods which people of faith have wrought, notices only the immorality of those who do not truly live by their faith. Citing Marc Antony from Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*, Fr. Landry summarized: “The evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones (*Julius Caesar*, III, ii).

Antony’s statement is sadly accurate, but perhaps we should endeavor to prove him wrong. Evil cannot be ignored, but neither should goodness be stifled. Unfortunately, our modern world has taken Antony’s/Shakespeare’s words all too seriously. Our media feeds on scandal. Our politicians thrive on their ability to shock. Our citizens associate the violence of a few extremists with entire religious groups. In the meantime, deeds of honor and integrity pass relatively unnoticed. The quiet charity of “ordinary” people is ignored. The message of peace promoted by religious faiths is overshadowed. Antony’s speech (“Friends, Romans, countrymen!”) consists of rhetorical devices and psychological manipulation intended to incite a crowd to serve his purposes, but it also poses some profoundly frightening questions. Why do we seek to broadcast the transgressions of our fellow human beings rather than acknowledging their goodness? Why is immorality so much more appealing than virtue? Why does negativity sell?

These questions need to be asked, but I can’t pretend to have the wisdom to answer them. The only answer I can arrive at is this: human beings possess a paralyzing fear of the faults, failings, and darkness within ourselves. We are so afraid of self-reflection that we constantly turn outwards, searching for distractions, and what better distraction than the faults of others? By establishing scapegoats, we attempt to vindicate ourselves. If we continue to soothe our own egos by censoring others, we cannot promote peace, much less attain it. We must instead seek to bring ourselves to peace, and thereby grow in our capacity to spread peace to others and to our world.



# BRIEFING ON THE NEW ILO REPORT ON WORLD EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL OUTLOOK

For the full report see [www.ilo.org/weso](http://www.ilo.org/weso)

In his opening remarks, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, UN-DESA, **Lenni Montiel** described the new ILO report as part of a global initiative for decent jobs. Presented on February 1 to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the report shows weak global growth in employment globally

Mr. Montiel foresees more challenging conditions to come, due to greater problems in economic, social and environmental areas. For instance, recent falling commodity prices (such as oil) have left 27 million more people unemployed than on the eve of the financial crisis. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 60% of jobs are “volatile” rather than stable, leaving women even more vulnerable, as with few social supports.

Mr. Montiel believes that we need to rethink international employment policies to solve the problems. Citing the remarkable international agreements, he called 2015 “a startling year of promises” and challenged us to act on those promises.

Guest Speaker **Raymond Torres**, Director, ILO Research Department and lead author of the ILO report, explained some of the trends and their risks, and proposed some policies for solutions.

DESA projections predict that growth for the next few years will be much less than in 2007-8. One million more people became unemployed last year, with deterioration more pronounced in developing countries. Another 5.4 million working people do not participate in the labor market, including 75% of women. Europe and the United States show better statistics, but more people there are underemployed or have given up looking for work.

One particularly disturbing trend is that many young people are neither employed nor in school; unemployed educated youth create a risk of social unrest, as we are seeing in many places. Another is that there has been no decline in the numbers of people in “working poverty” and almost half – 46% – of workers have no contract or benefits.

A consequence of these trends is a risk of a depressed world economy as a result of the depressed labor market. One social consequence is the slowing growth of a middle class, from 3% to 2%. Political consequences could include a fragmentation of political systems and difficulty in reaching agreement on policy.

The ILO report shows some “mechanical” causes, such as weakening economies in China and Latin America. “Structural causes” include low demand and investments not increasing consumption, so the world economy is not growing sufficiently. A major consequence of this is growing inequality, with its risk of social instability and unrest.



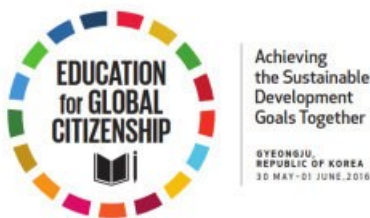
Another cause of the problems is that capital (e.g., foreign investments) moves quickly in and out of a country. An influx of capital appears for a short time and then investments cease, causing instability in job creation and development.

As a result of the global financial crisis, banks have not received enough to function globally and policy responses have been inadequate. Too many financial policies are made without long-term fiscal planning, such as investing in infrastructure, which would create jobs. Also, many financial policies lessen social protections, instead of investing in job-creating practices such as providing training for unskilled workers or help in finding jobs. Low taxation on high-income persons also means fewer jobs are created and inequality is increased.

Labor policies leave much to be desired in working conditions; policies are developed without conversation with workers. Lack of international coordination on job policies create very different policies and no attention to the global picture. International coordination on economies and job creation could make major steps toward the success of the SDGs.

A **representative from UNDP** responded with a few observations: Work has been essential for all the progress made toward the MDGs and will be for the SDGs. The global situation is now more urgent, as technological advances occur rapidly, and challenges to democracy and the environment are increasingly difficult. We have more global job markets, but skilled work is disappearing with, for instance, increased use of robotics. Methods that brought success for the MDGs may not work for the SDGs. Also, projected demographic trends like the doubling of elderly people in China are creating new needs for elder care, which may affect advances for women in the workforce and gender equity, as will ending some forms of child labor, such as working with hazardous recycled material. He suggested that the lower cost of fossil fuels might generate revenue that could be used to shift workers to new jobs and to make sure that the poorest people have access to technology (and jobs related to) such as solar energy. He encouraged us to remember that improvements in work must be coherent with changes locally and globally.

### Update on 66th DPINGO Conference May 30-June 1 in Korea



The Department of Public Information/NGO Conference will be held in Gyeongju, Korea,

from May 30 through June 1. The theme of the conference, “Education for Global Citizenship: Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals Together,” will explore all methods of educating from formal classroom to the most informal varieties.

This is the first time a DPINGO conference will be held in Asia. The NGO Executive Committee visited the site in January and report that the venue is accessible from three international airports and a bullet train. In a recent video chat, Mr. YuKang Choi, the Korean co-chair of the conference, described the many advances in education Korea has undertaken over the years and the advanced technology that will support the conference. Planning will take place collaboratively between New York and Korean shared committees. For the Press release, see <http://www.un.org/press/en/2016/ngo826.doc.htm>.



# PGJ MISSION: EDUCATING FOR GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

## Orientation to the UN February 12, 2016

By Eileen P McGann, ATR-C, LCAT Director of the Arts and Creative Therapies Office at MercyFirst and adjunct professor at Molloy College.



On Friday, February 12, 2016, the Partnership for Global Justice sponsored a program to educate students on issues of **Sustainable Development and Migration**. UN speakers addressed a full audience of participants who included students and faculty from **Molloy College** Honors program and **St. Francis College** faculty and students. Gracious hosts and participants also included students and staff from **The Family School** at Dag Hammarskjold Plaza.



**Dr. Donald Lee**, chair of the International Committee October 17, *International Day for Eradication of Poverty*, spoke to the group about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with special emphasis on the first goal, Eradicate Extreme Poverty. His talk provided clear descriptions of the overt and subtle ways in which poverty impacts all of us and the ‘invisibility and violence’ that is inherent in experiences of persons who live in poverty. With clarity and compassion, Dr. Lee’s presentation had strong impact on those who were in attendance.

Participation from the upper elementary students of the Family School certainly highlighted the common commitment to humanitarian concerns and how each one of us has the ability to make change. These students described their experiences with the Global Citizenship Action Project (**GCAP**) and how they raised money to provide rain catchments to schools in developing countries. Their understanding and social action impressed not only the college students but faculty as well.



A second and equally compelling presentation on **Migration and its effect/relation to Sustainability** (SDG) was provided by **Clare Menozzi**, Chief, Migration section, Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). This comprehensive presentation illuminated the patterns and demographics of worldwide migration, providing clarity for often misunderstood perspectives.

The morning presentations were followed by a guided **Tour of the United Nations**. On one of the coldest days this winter, the group was not deterred; energized by the morning and eager for more, the group gathered to see first hand where much of this work occurs. For many this was a first time at the United Nations and the scope of programs, assemblies and world wide collaborations clearly was awe inspiring.



## PGJ ACTIVITIES

### PGJ on YouTube

#### Sr. JoAnn Mark at St. Francis College

On January 28, Sr. JoAnn gave a presentation, “The United Nation's Work Towards a Sustainable Future,” at St. Francis College in Brooklyn Heights, which was video taped. When she was finished, they asked if they could put it on YouTube. Here is the link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6jWt7LZlhbo>

#### 2016 PGJ Annual Meeting

Don't Forget to sign up for the **2016 PGJ 2016 Annual Meeting** will be held at the Maryknoll Mission Center in Ossining, NY on October 15, 2016. (The first Global Justice Foundation Member attendant receives complimentary registration.)

Registrations are due by October 1. More details in JoAnn's letter to members, or contact her at [partnershipforglobaljustice@gmail.com](mailto:partnershipforglobaljustice@gmail.com)

#### 2016 PGJ Annual Peace and Justice Award

PGJ is collecting nominations for our **Annual Peace and Justice Award**, which will be presented at our Annual Meeting. See Sr. JoAnn's letter for more de-tails or contact her at [partnershipforglobaljustice@gmail.com](mailto:partnershipforglobaljustice@gmail.com)

#### Show Your Membership

Please include a link the Partnership website on your congregation'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 are listed in the UN Journal at 11pm the day before. Webcasts are indicated by a small red icon of a camera.

#### DPI/NGO Conference in Korea – May 30 through June 1.

We hope that some members of the Partnership will attend this first DPIN-NGO Conference to be held in Asia. For more information, see the [press release](#). Registration and other information will be available soon through the Conference logo icon at <http://outreach.un.org/ngorelations/>

