



Partnership for Global Justice

March 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.

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LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Readers,

I trust that you are seeing some first signs of spring. Certainly the spring and the Easter seasons are a time to reflect on LIFE—life given, life renewed and life restored.

At the beginning of April, I will have been the Executive Director of Partnership for Global Justice for one year. What a difference a year makes for me and for the United Nations. During this past year, the Third International Conference on Funding for Development (FfD) was held in Addis Ababa, the General Assembly approved the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and COP21 in Paris resulted in the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Of course, there were many other achievements, but these are the most striking as they set forth the path to 2030. Now the UN is seeking to make the vision affirmed in words become a reality in every country. It is time for us to “advocate, educate and participate” to assure that UN member states put forth their best efforts to guarantee that this happens.

What are you doing to support the achievement of the SDGs? Each of your efforts is important and sharing about what you are doing can be the spark that ignites a flame in others. Just a sentence or two is all you need to send to partnershipforglobaljustice@gmail.com to have your efforts recognized in the monthly newsletter. Let’s set our area of the world on fire with our combined energy. Here are a few items for starters.

Maternidad, a maternity clinic in Chimbote, Peru, sponsored by the Grand Rapids Dominicans serves 250 mothers and children on a daily basis. The outpatient service, Postmedica, treats 150 people each day with lab work, maternal deliveries, or classes and programs such as: prenatal stimulation, Lamaze, and nutrition and TB programs.

In Bolivia, the Precious Blood Sisters of O’Fallon provide education to elementary school age children who are blind. In this way they make education available to those who otherwise would not receive any education.

I look forward to hearing from you. May you experience much new life during this Easter Season!

JoAnn Mark, ASC

Executive Director



International Women’s Day March 8, 2016

by Sr. JoAnn Mark, ASC



Sr. Joann Mark, ASC, Sr. Emily Baylon, OSR. Sr. Connie Kennedy, CSJ

Here are a few statements from the opening celebration of International Women’s Day:

Secretary-General Ban

Ki-Moon: We must use our power to advance women – the best person for a position is often a woman” . . . “Woman’s empowerment means development.” . . . “Every women deserves full human dignity.”

H. E. Mogens Lykkesot, President, 70th Session of the General Assembly: A big step forward is that equality of women and girls is at heart of the SDGs. The question remains: How to empower women and girls: include the right to vote in each constitution; create strong networks to take care of women who in the past did invisible work for children and elders; attack gender- based violence head-on; engage actors across all sectors. “Too long we have talked about gender equality, but now we must act.”

Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, United Nations Under-Secretary -General and Executive Director of UN Women: “We must be coordinated in our efforts.” Gender equality is key, including equal pay; these are issues that face women in different parts of the world. “United we can move forward to [Planet 50-50.](#)”

Ambassador Antonio Patriota of Brazil: The [Beijing Document](#) remains key to achieving equality, yet no country has fully realized the goals of the Beijing Document goals. The success of the Agenda 2030 requires gender equality. We must all work to achieve equality, men as well as women.



AT THE UN IN MARCH...CONTINUED

Ambassador Lans Nusseibeh of the United Arab Emirates: Equality is the core cross-cutting element of all the SDGs. The UAE stresses the importance of education. By UAE law, all public boards must have female representation. The Ambassador celebrates the achievements toward equality of many countries and the UN.

Ms. Barbara Adams, Advisor, Global Policy Forum and Social Watch: Civil society's part is to ensure that institutional changes enhance participation and that no government agency is left behind in the effort. Obstacles to equality: financial support, resistance of powerful players to funding. No policies must be left behind; only 50-50 balance will lead to zero tolerance of violence against women and girls.

Ms. Tara Nathan, of Master Card: The private sector has a key role in attacking the world's issues. How do we tackle these issues? We need to bring together private and public sectors, on not just goals but specific initiatives. Governments are critical in creating climates in which business can thrive; the private sector brings creativity and sustainable development.

Master Card has a 3-pronged program to empower women: 1) create leadership, 2) create educational opportunities for women and girls around the world, especially in STEM subjects, and 3) lifting our core competency. She sees financial competency as empowering women.

Master Card has formed a new partnership with UN Women, bringing the knowledge and technology of Master Card to the UN knowledge of gender. They hope this will be a model for public/private initiatives.

Ms. Fatima Ptacek (age 13), Youth Actor on *Dora the Explorer*: She has a passion for making a difference in the world. She is working with UN Women, to uplift women and free men. "Let's not disparage any man. We have to realize both are valuable and can make a difference. We cannot solve our problems with the same old ways."

Ms. Monica Singh, acid attack survivor: In her powerful statement, she declared that her life has a purpose: to stand for young women. "I was a victim once, but no more." Millions of women asking us to take a stand, being raped, afraid of being attacked by acid. She calls upon everyone to respect women and girls.

This session was enhanced by several musical interludes.



THE 60TH COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW60)

Each year, the Commission brings together reports on women's lives, struggles and progress to the UN. At the end of the Session, a document of Agreed Conclusions is presented to the President of the General Assembly for action in the coming year. A summary appears after the event reports.

(More accounts of events at the Commission will appear in next month's newsletter.)

CSW60 Youth Forum March 11, 2016

by Ashlee Yearwood, PGJ Youth Representative

On March 11, I attended the inaugural Youth Forum at the 60th Commission on Status of Women. We began the forum with a song by Tennille Amor called "I am a girl". This was a beautiful way to begin the forum by empowering the young women in the room. She used background dancers of all ages to inspire the youth in the room, including "He for she" men and, of course, young women.



The panel of speakers to begin the forum consisted of six influential people who each spoke about how important it is that we pass the planet 50/50 agenda on to the youth of the world – especially young women who are not only the leaders of today but also the leaders of tomorrow.

The forum was presented in such a way that made the space open and safe for every young woman and young man in the room. Young women and men alike were included in the briefing on the sustainable development goals. Each person read off a card about what the SDGs stand for and what they meant to them personally.

Sadly, during the keynote speeches, we heard some shocking statistics about the lack of women representatives in government. Women account for 52 percent of the population in the United States but only 18 percent of representatives in the United States government are women. We are currently behind China and Afghanistan for percent of women representatives. This statistic shocked me and made me realize that gender inequality exists in every country of the world. It may be more prevalent or violent in developing countries but even in my own neighborhood I have unknowingly witnessed gender inequality. Being aware of what I have witnessed has now inspired me to help others understand what gender inequality looks like in all forms. Many people understand that genital mutilation and forced sterilization in females are clearly a problem that plagues the modern world, but there are subtler problems surrounding rape culture, unequal pay and representation, and also existing as intolerance to transgender people.



The most important fact I brought with me from the CSW60 Youth Forum was to spread the knowledge and be conscious that what was decided at the end of the conference must be modified to fit into cultural boundaries across the world. It was inspiring to see men and women alike sharing stories that they have personally experienced and sharing possible solutions to said problems.

One opinion that struck me as very important and very easy was shared by a young woman; all she said was to vote. To get involved in your government and make the difference for yourself. Young people very often feel like they do not have a say, but taking advantage of democracy in the United States is one thing that young people can do to make a difference. In order to do that, young people must be made aware of the issues they are voting on, and that is the true purpose of a Youth Forum: To Educate and utilize young people's minds.

Another point that stood out to me was to create a safe space. Gender inequality can be a sensitive issue. Women, men and transgender people deserve a safe place to discuss their experiences. The Youth Forum is one strategy to create that safe space. Another is online forums. CSW60 conducted an online survey asking how we could solve the gender inequality problem in our world; people of any gender or age could participate anonymously and share their opinions in a safe space where they could not be judged. Online forums like this are an easy way to get a worldwide opinion on issues such as gender inequality. These are the resources that we as a world must utilize to spread the knowledge and ideas and achieve 50/50 by 2030.

The Youth Forum was eye opening for me personally. As a generally shy person, I was surprised by my ability to be open about my opinions, and I truly believe many other young people had that same experience. The Youth Forum does not solve the problem, however. We as a world need to spread the knowledge to any person who will listen and we will be able to achieve our goals.



CSW60 EVENTS OF MARCH 16

By Sr. M. Doretta Cornell, RDC

In What Ways Can Increased Engagement of Women in Interfaith Dialogues Contribute to Advances in the Search for Sustainable Peace?

CSW60 Side Event March 16, 2016

Ms. Salif Kader, founder and president of the United Federation for Peacekeeping and Sustainable Development, opened by commenting on how disheartening she finds all the hate in the media. In our effort to fight all aggression, the only way we have is communication, dialogue. Women suffer most from aggression, but we can make difference to stop all atrocities in name of religion.

Rabbi Danielle Stillman, director of Jewish Student Life and Chaplain at Lehigh University, shared her varied experiences of Jewish, Hinduism (her degree topic at Harvard Divinity School) and religion of Tibet. Rabbi Stillman began with a traditional Hebrew saying: “Who is wise? The one who learns from all people.” She certainly embodies that! Her interest in religions began when she was an undergraduate, she explained, watching the dedication with which Tibetan women went about picking up worms at the Dalai Lama’s house, to keep them from injury.

On another excursion, to Jerusalem, she learned from Israeli and Palestinian women who were eager to learn about each other’s religion, visiting each other’s churches and synagogues.

In interfaith dialogue, she concluded, we learn that every person is really in the image of God.

Mrs. Guang Guo Shih, a Buddhist abbess originally from Taiwan but now for a long time in New York, shared some Buddhist concepts about women. Feminine attributes exist in both men and women, she said, but women excel in interdependent relationality, compassion, caring for and loving others. In Chinese, compassion means easing the obstacles of others and so seeing the balance of the world. Practices of compassion, she said, will lead to relationships and harmony, and ultimately to recognition of the interdependence of all humans. Meditation brings inner peace to each individual; this grounds the peace of all humanity

Several women from the Moroccan parliament commented through translators. One spoke of the need to find common goods and needs, instead of focusing on differences. The main role of humans, she said, is to further the natural evolution of the world.

In Morocco, she said, all religions have a right to practice their own beliefs. To make interfaith dialogue possible and fruitful, we must go back to core of each religion, to see it without the cultural and ideological interpretations. Such dialogue is necessary to recognize the diversity of perspectives so the people can practice different religions within the same culture. This can build up the common culture. Many Islamic leaders are looking back to the core of Islam and at the core of other religions, to see that they share the same basic beliefs.

The moderator mentioned that one of the Moroccan women saw their interfaith beliefs in her own life when her Muslim child was nursed by a Jewish woman.

The final panelist, **Rev. Dionne Boissiere**, is head of the ecumenical Church Center at the United Nations, run by United Methodist Women. [We have many of our meetings at the Center.] Rev. Boissiere began by inviting us into a moment of silence, citing our tendency as women to “move around a lot.” She then declared that women absolutely must be included in the work for sustainable development and peace with justice. We have to stand as who we are, with our complex experiences, to be part of all the dialogues. We must break down the walls of hate and prejudice, of extremism, which does not lend itself to reasonable thinking or to true religious practice. She is frustrated when dialogue ends with talk; we must listen and then work together toward an interfaith life.

Mrs. Kopila Thapa, of Katmandu, is Hindu and works in gender and development in South Asia, especially Thailand and Cambodia. Mrs. Thapa explained that peace is an essential part of Hinduism, a part of the beauty and unity in diversity essential in Nepal’s constitution. Some tenets of Hindu belief emphasize peace. For instance, belief in reincarnation leads to understanding that the violence we do will bring harm to us. Another is that inner peace must precede public peace.

CSW60 PARALLEL EVENTS MARCH 22, 2016

By Sr. JoAnn Mark, ASC

Women and Girls: Victims of Rape and Other Forms of Sexual Violence in Situations of Conflict

Tuesday, March 22, 2016, Parallel Event at CSW60

In the 1900s, 5% of all fatalities were civilians; by June, 2015, that had risen to around 90%. According to the Report of Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, there are 19 countries in which systematic violence is used as an instrument of war. Why is sexual violence not a reason, like torture, to warrant sanctions?

Speakers included a religious Sister who ministers in North Uganda and a sexual violence survivor from the Republic of Congo. In the Karamojong culture of Uganda, a man must rape a girl he has identified as a wife. After the rape, the girl must go to his house. If she goes home, she is beaten and told that no one else will marry her. The motivation here is the cows that the rapist gives the family. Because rape is rewarded by cows, the sign of wealth, it is very difficult to change the culture. However Sister, the archbishop, priests and others are spending nights at places where girls may be raped. Sister is rescuing children, counseling and sensitizing the community, making home visits and engaging in research.

In the fighting in the Congo, there is no pity on children. Pregnant women will have their womb disorged. Women who were taken into the bush by men were forced to see a man's throat slit and then to eat his flesh if they wanted any food.

I left this session overwhelmed by the inhumanity of the treatment of women and girls.

The Dynamics and Challenges of Assisting Human Trafficking Survivors to Take Control of Their Lives Through the Combined Efforts of NGOs and Government Agencies. Tuesday, March 22, 2016, Parallel Event at CSW60

This was the most encouraging session I attended on March 22. In 2004-2005, no one cared or thought trafficking was an issue. Now people are more sensitized and there are many efforts to stop trafficking and to assist those who were trafficked. This session focused on such efforts in Philadelphia. There were speakers from Society of Catholic Missionaries, Salvation Army, Covenant House, FBI, and advocates for stronger laws. The importance of cooperation among such groups was stressed.

A couple of red flags were shared: hotel keys, unexplained amounts of cash, a woman's belief that she has no value. It is also important to ask questions in a way that encourages trust, such as "Who is taking care of you?" Children are good at not revealing information as they will only answer questions asked, not volunteering any information.

World Water Day (March 22) came during the CSW60 meetings. Here are reports of two events commemorating this devoted to the Human Right to Water

The S Word –Putting the Human Rights to Sanitation and Water at the Forefront of Sustainable Development for Women's Empowerment.

World Water Day: Tuesday, March 22, 2016 Parallel Event at CSW60

by Sr. JoAnn Mark, ASC

Water and sanitation should be viewed as human rights; instead they are viewed as commodities and as such people want to sell and some want to make money off the sale. There was also a summit at the White House at the same time as this event.

Speakers included women from Cochabamba, Bolivia; We the People Detroit; New York on behalf of the homeless; US state of Georgia; Flint, Michigan; Human Rights Watch on behalf of indigenous people; and Water Aid, Washington Heights NYC. I was somewhat aware of the water issues in the global South, but I was saddened and surprised by the issues surrounding water in the United States. This is truly an issue that touches us all.

WOMEN, WATER, AND WELL-BEING

The Human Right to Water and Sanitation

CSW60 Event World Water Day March 22, 2016

(Technical difficulties in the webcast prevented my hearing the first portion of this event.)

Meera Karunanathan of the Blue Planet Project spoke of the many ways water policies work against gender equality, adding to the suffering caused by poverty, race, and indigenous status. Privatizing water raises the cost of water (to pay shareholders), decreases quality, and often leaves out – or charges excessive rates to – poor communities. In poorer countries, lack of pure water increases child mortality. Lack of adequate sanitation also causes many women and girls to skip school or miss work during menstruation.

“Free market” principles offer no incentives for private sector and public services to operate in poorer communities. The good news is that many people are becoming aware of the problems and fighting to expose the connections between water problems and private water companies (e.g., in Flint). Around the world, women are leading the fight to defend watersheds. One Latin American activist summed up the work: “They tried to bury us but they did not know we were seeds.”

Mark Gruin, of International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), an action of the Orthodox Bishops of the United States, told of his experiences working in more than 30 countries developing water projects. IOCC is too small to influence policy, he told us, so they concentrate on developing local community projects, with a special focus in schools. He found that schools and clinics cited clean water as their first need. One particularly successful project was in Tanzania. Instead of digging a big well, the churches bought a well-digging rig and sent it to the Tanzanian archdiocese, who are now the main well-diggers in Tanzania!

Christiana Peppard of Fordham University and author of *Just Water*, began by emphasizing that water is essential to all beings, “including nonliving beings like corporations and governments.” She spoke of the “relentless non-replaceability” of water and the fact that we are now using more water used than is being replaced in watersheds. We see this in the shrinking of the Aral Sea, in Mexico City’s sinking (it is built over an aquifer,) and the intrusion of salt water into potable water in island nations like Palau, sponsor of this panel.

Dr. Peppard emphasized the moral and ethical aspects of water: who gets water, how much, and when are moral and ethical issues, and failure to preserve the rights of poorer communities shows the “structures of privilege and pathology of our relationships with all beings.” She asked why it took so long for the international community to notice the problems of treating water as a commodity.

She praised the Catholic Church for recognizing water as a “right to life issue,” and reminded us that any discussion of water must include the most vulnerable and marginalized and women. This, she stated, is the beginning of water ethics.



The full document is available [here](#)

The 14-page “outcome document,” revised throughout the meetings and approved by the Commission, reaffirms all previous documents about the rights of and need to eliminate violence against women and girls. Expressing concern particularly for the continued feminization of poverty and the inordinate effects of violence and conflict on women and children, the members of the Commission call for increased attention, policy-making, and funding to advance the equality of women and men and to end discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Noting the increased recognition of equality as essential for a better world, “The Commission welcomes the commitments to achieve gender equality and to empower all women and girls in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, recognizes that women play a vital role as agents of development and acknowledges that realizing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls is not only a goal in itself but will make a crucial contribution to progress across all Sustainable Development Goals and targets.”

The Commission also acknowledged the importance of the newly-instituted Youth Forum and strongly advocated for the inclusion of women’s and young people’s voices in all implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and for gender equality as a central element of all implementing of the Agenda.

Resources for our Mission

Talitha Kum

An initiative of the Union of International Superiors General, Talitha Kum is “a network of Consecrated Life against trafficking in persons. Working as a network facilitates collaboration and the interchange of information between consecrated men and women in 70 countries.” (from www.talithakum.info). Through this network you can benefit from the work of others and you can share your wisdom and experience with them. Check it out!



PGJ ACTIVITIES

Advocacy for Action on Climate Change

The Partnership for Global Justice has joined other Catholic organization in sending a letter about the need for action on Climate Change to the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft of Denmark.

“The Statement also serves to renew the strong commitment of the faith community to remain active in defining the moral responsibility to care for the Earth and encourages its own communities to reduce emissions and to divest and reinvest in renewables.”

Here is the link to the full document, prepared by the InterFaith Statement Working Group

<http://www.interfaithstatement2016.org/>

Molloy College Presentation on Laudato Si’

Molloy College highlighted its collaboration with the Partnership for the February 17 presentation “Catholics, Capitalism, and Climate,” with keynote speaker Cardinal Peter Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and Primary Contributor to the Recent Encyclical, Laudato Sí (Praise Be to You: On Care for Our Common Home).

<http://www.molloy.edu/about-molloy-college/news-and-events/news-archive/cardinal-peter-turkson>

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

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 is 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 DPINGO Conference to be held in Asia. For more information, see the press re-lease Registration and other information is available through the Conference logo icon at <http://outreach.un.org/ngorelations/>

