



Partnership for Global Justice

October 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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LETTER FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

Dear Partners for Global Justice,

Recently, during the 70th anniversary of the U.N., we were privileged to have Pope Francis visit the United States and speak to world leaders. He expressed his appreciation for their “efforts to ensure world peace, respect for human dignity, the protection of persons, especially the poorest and most vulnerable, and harmonious economic and social development.”

While recognizing that the Millennium Development Goals were not accomplished as desired, he cited the value of “working together in achieving results thus far, especially in terms of education and the decrease in extreme poverty.” He expressed hope for the future in the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Pope Francis listed certain situations in the world which needed our attention: the misuse and destruction of the environment, the exclusion of the weak and disadvantaged, the right of all to live in dignity and to create and support a family, spiritual freedom, the right to education which includes girls in all countries, access for everyone to essential material and spiritual goods: housing, dignified and properly remunerated employment, adequate food and drinking water; and respect for the sacredness of every human life.

“Our world demands of all government leaders a will which is effective, practical and constant, concrete steps and immediate measures for preserving and improving the natural environment and thus putting an end as quickly as possible to the phenomenon of social and economic exclusion, with its baneful consequences: human trafficking, the marketing of human organs and tissues, the sexual exploitation of boys and girls, slave labor, including prostitution, the drug and weapons trade, terrorism and international organized crime. . . It must never be forgotten that we are dealing with real men and women who live, struggle and suffer, and are often forced to live in great poverty, deprived of all rights” (Pope Francis).

Does this not sound like our work in our Partnership for Global Justice? Our own goals:

Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere;

Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; and

Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

Pope Francis has faith in the U.N. and so do we. That is why we are there, working together to bring justice to the earth. Thank you for your support.

Peace,

Mary Ellen Loch, CSJ

Mary Ellen Loch, CSJ, PGJ Board Chair



AT THE UN IN OCTOBER

Pope Francis at the United Nations

September 25, 2015

With United Nations Staff:

Pope Francis always makes a point to greet people from all walks of life – and this was true for his visit to the United Nations. On Friday morning, before addressing the General Assembly, Pope Francis met with the staff – from fieldworkers to cooks and cleaners – calling them *“the backbone of this organization”* and thanking them for all their work to prepare for his visit.

As he often does, the Pope asked them to do something: *“Today, and every day, I would ask each of you, whatever your capacity, to care for one another. Be close to one another, respect one another, and so embody among yourselves this organization's ideal of a united human family, living in harmony, working not only for peace, but in peace; working not only for justice, but in a spirit of justice.”*

In his final words, while blessing them and promising to pray for them and their families, he asked the staff members to pray for him, and, acknowledging that not all are believers, asked the others to wish him well. This was vintage Francis, including everyone!



Address to the General Assembly:

Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon welcomed Pope Francis, declaring, “*As people of the world, we are here to listen,*” and **President of the General Assembly Mogens Lykketoft** welcomed him as the “*defender of humanity and the life systems*” we depend on. Mr. Lykketoft also compared the heart of *Laudato Si’* with the heart of Sustainable Development Goals and expressed his hope that Pope Francis’ address would inspire the unity, “*wisdom and courage to find an agreement for climate and to end conflicts in many parts of the world*” at the Paris Climate Conference this December.

Pope Francis began by calling the work of the United Nations “*lights which help to dispel the darkness of the disorder caused by unrestrained ambitions and collective forms of selfishness.*” Without the UN, he said, “*Mankind would not have been able to survive the unchecked use of its own possibilities.*”

Pope Francis zeroed in on a major theme of the Post-2015 Agenda, the necessity of the rule of law and called for distribution of all the kinds of power which, “*badly exercised*” have left “*broad sectors . . . vulnerable . . . for example, the natural environment and the vast ranks of the excluded. These sectors are closely interconnected and made increasingly fragile by dominant political and economic relationships. That is why their rights must be forcefully affirmed, by working to protect the environment and by putting an end to exclusion.*”

As he often does, Pope Francis cited the founding principles of the body he is addressing, reminding the world leaders of the Preamble and Charter of the United Nations they had committed themselves to and urged them to make the needed “*reform and adaptation to the times*” to be true to these principles. In making changes, Pope Francis reminded the leaders to keep remembering that they are talking about living people.

With visible passion, Pope Francis challenged them: “*When the Charter of the United Nations is respected and applied with transparency and sincerity, and without ulterior motives, as an obligatory reference point of justice and not as a means of masking spurious intentions, peaceful results will be obtained.*”

He continued: “*War is the negation of all rights and a dramatic assault on the environment. If we want true integral human development for all, we must work tirelessly to avoid war between nations and between peoples . . . Strongly opposed to such statements, and in practice denying them, is the constant tendency to the proliferation of arms, especially weapons of mass destruction, such as nuclear weapons. An ethics and a law based on the threat of mutual destruction - and possibly the destruction of all mankind - are self-contradictory and an affront to the entire framework of the United Nations.*”

Pope Francis expressed particular concern about the conflicts in the Middle East and Africa, citing especially the plight of those persecuted for their religion. Again he called the leaders to account for their failure to end the conflicts peacefully, calling for “*an examination of conscience on the part of those charged with the conduct of international affairs.*”



All of this depends on maintaining the Rule of Law, which is needed for justice: *“no human individual or group can consider itself absolute, permitted to bypass the dignity and the rights of other individuals or their social groupings.”*

Equity, or having an equal voice, is especially important in *“those bodies with effective executive capability, such as the Security Council, the Financial Agencies and the groups or mechanisms specifically created to deal with economic crises.”* Pope Francis cried out against the *“selfish and boundless thirst for power and material prosperity”* which lead to the abuse of both the environment and those excluded in much of society. He acknowledged the Sustainable Development Agenda as a sign of hope and said he trusts that the Paris Conference will lead to strong commitments for the Agenda’s implementation.

Finally, Pope Francis held out a vision of a just world:

The common home of all men and women must continue to rise on the foundations of a right understanding of universal fraternity and respect for the sacredness of every human life . . . This common home of all men and women must also be built on the understanding of a certain sacredness of created nature. Such understanding and respect call for a higher degree of wisdom, one which accepts transcendence, rejects the creation of an all-powerful elite, and recognizes that the full meaning of individual and collective life is found in selfless service to others and in the sage and respectful use of creation for the common good.

Once again, he expressed confidence that United Nations, while needing improvement, *“can be the pledge of a secure and happy future for future generations. And so it will, if the representatives of the States can set aside partisan and ideological interests, and sincerely strive to serve the common good.”* He ended by asking God to bless *“this Institution, all its member States, and each of its officials, [so they] will always render an effective service to mankind, a service respectful of diversity and capable of bringing out, for sake of the common good, the best in each people and in every individual. Upon all of you, and the peoples you represent, I invoke the blessing of the Most High, and all peace and prosperity.”*

[Watch Pope Francis’ talk to the General Assembly](#)



UN DPINGO BRIEFING, OCTOBER 8, 2015: AGENDA 2030 FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

By Theresa Bissex, PGJYouth Representative

The UN Department of Public Of Information and the Non-Governmental Organizations Committee (DPINGO) offer “Thursday Briefings for the NGOs on various topics every few weeks.

On October 8, UN DPINGO hosted a briefing entitled “Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development: Advocacy for Implementation and Global Partnership.” Held in the ECOSOC chamber, the briefing consisted of a moderator, five panelists, numerous NGO reps, and other guests. Also in attendance were students from Lehigh University, PA, visiting and observing for the day. The horde of young people, invested in and curious about the SDGs, lent vibrant momentum to the atmosphere.

The moderator, **Maher Nasser** (Director, Outreach Division, DPI), opened by remarking that the Sustainable Development Goals do not negate, but rather expand upon the Millennium Development Goals. However, Nasser noted that since Agenda 2030 comprises a more ambitious agenda than its predecessor, its success hinges on all-or-nothing support at every level of society. Emphasizing collaboration and commitment, Mr. Nasser gave Agenda 2030 the pithy title “declaration of interdependence.”

Mr. Nasser turned the floor over to His Excellency Mr. **Antonio de Aguiar Patriota** (Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations). Mr. Patriota was well-equipped to articulate Brazil’s pivotal role in the implementation of the MDGs and renewed commitment to the SDGs. Brazil’s local government, businesses, and private citizens are active participants, especially in the development of tools and technology needed to implement the goals. Mr. Patriota called for a departure from a “North vs. South” paradigm, since the SDGs require equal and universal responsibility from every nation, regardless of economic or social structure.

Next, Ms. **Frances Simpson-Allen**, (Coordinator, Post-2015 Strategy Hub), recommended education about and practical application of the SDGs. Calling for transparency, engagement, and collective partnership, she remarked that “global understanding is the bedrock of accountability.” After stressing the importance of public consciousness and engagement, Ms. Simpson-Allen followed up with promotional and educational resources for sustainable development. (See below.)

The third speaker, **Natalia Vega-Berry** (Founder, The Global Brain; Campaign Director, The People + Planet Project) presented [The People + Planet Project](#), an innovative networking hub for NGOs, businesses, and private individuals to connect and share ideas about sustainable development. Operating similarly to Facebook, the PPP is essentially a social media community combined with a database for the prioritization of the SDGs. Ms. Vega-Berry acknowledged the importance of utilizing social media and technology to foster Agenda 2030.



Maruxa Cardama (Executive Project Coordinator, Communitas Coalition for Sustainable Cities and Regions in the New United Nations Development Agenda) echoed her colleagues, reminding her listeners to shoulder individual responsibility in their daily lives. She encouraged all global citizens attempting to achieve sustainable development goals to tackle the goals which are most difficult and challenging for their particular, unique community. Ms. Cardama remarked that localized growth will allow the goals expand globally.

The final panelist, Mr. **Juan E. Chebly** (Lead Adviser, UNEP) impressed with an understated but powerful presentation. He first commended Brazil's contributions to development goals, challenging all nations to follow Brazil's model of multi-level participation. He remarked that an endeavor with the import and scale of the SDGs achieves better outcomes when all communities are consulted and participating.

Mr. Chebly also commented that, while SDGs may appear unattainable, they are easily achievable if priorities are realigned on the national and local level. Citing the statistics on international military spending, he questioned why humanity finds it easier to destroy than to preserve. He strongly emphasized the need to counteract the paradigm of waste and destruction that prevents the world and its people from sustaining itself.

Although each panelist offered a unique perspective on the SDGs, they shared a common message, suggesting practical tools for implementation of the goals, particularly stressing civic engagement. All participants implicitly agreed that success of Agenda 2030 depends on interdependent commitment, created at the local level and expanding beyond.

Resources offered by Ms. Simpson-Allen:

Video -

[UN YouTube channel](#), featuring videos such as "Earth from Space," "The Story You Are Shaping," etc.

(I'd also recommend the TED talks YouTube channel, for educational purposes. Obviously not everything on the channel applies to the SDGs, but there's plenty of inspiration to be found from many of the featured speakers. For example, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kSQmogtwKEE&list=LLx9BAGc-2MkCXJc_XhGJtKw&index=7)

Documentary - *He Named Me Malala*, the story of Malala Yousafzai

Informational and Educational Websites -

Elyx - <http://www.elyx70days.org/>

World's Largest Lesson - <https://www.tes.com/worldslargestlesson/>

Radio Everyone - <http://www.globalgoals.org/radio-everyone/>

Impact 2030 - <http://www.impact2030.com/>

People + Planet Project - <http://peopleplanetproject.org/>

Urban Thinkers Campus - <http://unhabitat.org/urbanthinkers/>

My UNEA - <https://www.myunea.org/>

EXAMINING FACES

By Theresa Bissex PGJ Youth Representative

On the spectrum of opinion on climate change, we encounter both those who deny or dismiss environmental problems, and those whose great fear of these problems constrains them to helplessness. Clearly, to amend such extreme attitudes, climate change must be examined from all sides, all perspectives. A holistic understanding of climate change and environmental issues should be sought by every global citizen, and not merely through political forums, academic circles, and scientific research hubs, but through the everyday lives of individuals and communities, where critical effects of climate change are most clearly seen.

On September 21, during Climate Week, the **NGO Tzu Chi USA** hosted an event called **FACES**, a screening of Tzu Chi's three short films which focus on three different communities affected by climate change.

The first film, ***The Disappearing Frontier***, examined Alaskan communities endangered by melting ice and changes in landscape caused by rising temperatures. ***Keep It Grand***, the second film, focused on the Grand Canyon and the Colorado River, particularly emphasizing the precarious situation of the Navajo community living in that area. The final film, and perhaps the most fascinating, ***Stung By Climate***, dealt with beekeepers around the globe, and their concerns about keeping bees alive and crops pollinated.

The beginning of *The Disappearing Frontier* points out that discussions of climate change often lack one vital element: the personal perspective. All three films went on to provide that missing element, telling the stories of both individuals and larger communities. *Keep it Grand* delves deeply into the challenges which arise when small social units and larger communities conflict over climate change, acknowledging the need to arrive at mutually beneficial agreements. *Stung By Climate* beautifully “zooms in” on the unique story of each beekeeper and his/her bees, but also “zooms out” to capture the interconnection of the global beekeeping community.

Each film accepts the reality of climate change. Nonetheless, on a hopeful note, many of the FACES in the films, people most heavily impacted by climate change and most familiar with the challenges it presents, were confident that climate change is a soluble problem. If individuals, communities, corporations, and governments are willing to share perspectives, make sacrifices, and form partnerships, solutions can and will be found.

For more information about Tzu Chi USA, and to view clips from the three films presented, go to <https://www.tzuchi.us>.



INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY 2015 EVENT

World Food Day Program October 16, 2015: “Building a sustainable future: coming together to end poverty and discrimination”

Presentations by children and high school students from the South Bronx, a collaborative reading about living in poverty, video clips of women’s struggles in poverty, and a musical interlude comprised this year’s World Food Day program.

The event anticipated World Food Day – October 17 – and was cosponsored by the Permanent Missions of Burkina Faso and France, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the International Movement ATD Fourth World and the NGO Committee for Social Development.

Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management **Tegegnetwork Gettu** delivered a message from **Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon**, who was out of the country.

He reminded us that, although over a billion people have been raised out of extreme poverty over recent decades, 900 million more need help. Many more people are at risk of extreme poverty because of climate change and violent conflict. Mr. Ban urged us to work especially to end discrimination against migrants and those with disabilities in the efforts to end poverty. He ended with this hope: *“Ours can be the first generation to witness a world without extreme poverty.”*

Part 1: Messages from the poor around the world

Vena Grimes and **Henry Wilson** of the [Fourth World Movement](#) read the collective writing by twenty-five writers from all walks of life, from New York City, Ireland, Mauritius, Brazil, El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala, on what a sustainable future would mean to them and their children. A few highlights to give you a taste:

“To build a sustainable future, our struggle must be recognized.”

(from Latin America): *“We are making a better planet because we take millions of tons of garbage out of the system.”*

“When you are poor, your life, your kids’ life, your family life, is out of your control.”

“I don’t want other people’s crumbs. [Given the opportunity] I can provide for my family . . . forget those crumbs! We are going to earn cake and cornbread!”

“What keeps me going, gives me inner strength, is knowing that one day our voices will be heard.”

Steve in case you need it: <http://4thworldmovement.org/>

ADVOCACY

Part 2 : Video message from the Philippines

Via video, a woman from the Philippines told of working twelve to fourteen hours a day in Jordan to support her family back home. She now lives in a cemetery in the Philippines and volunteers to give alternative learning for children whose families cannot afford the fees for supplies and uniforms required by the schools, or who do not have food for the day. She does this, she says, *“because the one thing people can’t take from one another is education.”*

Part 3: Statement from the High [Heights?] Leadership program in the South Bronx

Two young women from this program spoke of the need for quality education for all and also for recognizing that people living in poverty are not worthless and must be treated with dignity.

One student explained that ending-poverty programs need to tap into the many skills that people living in poverty already possess. She cited a village in Kenya, where the women were connected to markets for the beautiful jewelry they made. They now support themselves and their village with their skill. Another successful program in Hunt’s Point, the Bronx, offered jobs in video testing, which used people’s skills and provided career development. *“Don’t squander the skills of people in high-poverty communities,”* she pleaded.

The other student spoke of the importance of high quality education. She described a Global Solutions program in their school, through which they worked to help people in other countries as well as getting their education. Her motto: *“More education equals less poverty.”*

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY 2015 EVENT

Part 4 Video message from Guatemala- Obstacles Parents Face in Getting Their Children to School

This woman is a street vendor with seven children. She borrows books and reads with her children because the many fees and cost of supplies keep them from continuing in school.

She herself left school early to support her family. Even with an education, things are not easy. Her sister is a teacher but can't get a job; her brother has a college education but works in construction because he can't get work using that education.

She told of parents taking in laundry, cleaning houses, collecting up garbage, or sorting through junk for things to sell to get food for their children. She worries that family alone will not be able to reinforce good values as a school might. She is afraid "they will learn wrong things" without a good education.

Part 5 : A Collaborative Message from South Bronx Children

Two elementary school children, **Jasmin** and **Edison** presented this message. Jasmin told of their school's efforts to end bullying and discrimination against children who live in shelters or suffer other differences. "We want to stop it," she said, and that takes a lot of effort and responsibility, "working together on positive behavior" and "sticking up for others."

Edison told a story: Once when he was riding on the ferry, a boy was coming back into the city after running away. He was hungry and had no money. Edison spent the lunch money his mother had given him to buy lunch for the boy and also spent some time just talking to him.

Jasmin explained how friendship is a way to help end poverty, lifting sad spirits and, for instance, doing homework together to encourage each other.

The children ended their presentation by displaying a poster their class had made of their dreams for the future.

Part 6: Another Video Message from Guatemala

After brief messages on the needs of people living in poverty, from the **Ambassadors from France and Burkina Faso**, we saw another video.

The young woman in this video lives in a Guatemalan *colonia*. Now a wife and student, she had always wanted to be a doctor. Her first obstacle was finding a high school that offered the necessary programs; there were few and all too expensive. After two years in public high school, she took the entrance exam for medical study but soon discovered another obstacle: the many fees and costs of supplies, plus the heavy schedule that would leave no time for her to also work. So, abandoning her dream, she is pursuing a career in social work. She is able to continue her studies only because her mother babysits for her child..

She spoke of the great need for better quality education in Guatemala. Many students are not prepared for college-level work and so go into professions that need no education. This severely limits their chances of escaping poverty.

Conclusion of the program:

After a beautiful interlude by a vocalist and a guitarist, singing a haunting song of the hard life of a Gypsy in Spain and another longing for peace, **Donald Lee**, president of the [International Committee for October 17](#) pointed out that "Every preceding generation had the ability to end poverty," although they "lacked the vision, compassion and political will" to make it happen. He exhorted us, "We must not fail in this."

Mr. Lee sees a strong link between poverty and discrimination, saying that in spite of the strides to end poverty, discrimination and inequality have grown. To ensure these are ended, people living in poverty must be allowed to participate in programs and policies affecting them. "*Only such collaboration will enable us to achieve a sustainable future for this and future generations,*" he concluded.

OCTOBER EVENTS RELATED TO WOMEN

The UN and Women's Issues

by JoAnn Mark, ASC

During October, the UN focused a great deal of attention on women. This included interaction at the **Security Council on Women, Peace, and Security**. Statements described violence perpetrated against women in areas of conflict and stressed that women must be part of the decision process if any peace agreement is to endure.

Fifteen years ago, [Resolution 1325](#) on Women, Peace, and Security was approved by the Security Council. Since that time progress has been made, but women are still excluded from peace negotiations, and rape of women is still used as a weapon of war.

On October 13, the Security Council unanimously adopted [Resolution 2242](#) to address some of the current difficulties, by doubling the number of women in Peacekeeping Operations over the next five years and integrating “women, peace and security concerns across all country-specific situations on its agenda.”

The Security Council will also initiate consultations and meetings with experts and civil society both on the general issues and in country-specific situations. The Council also “urged the Secretary-General and United Nations bodies to better integrate gender perspectives into their work so as to address accountability deficits, including through the addition of gender targets as an indicator of individual performance in all compacts with senior managers at Headquarters and in the field.”

For women to take their place at the negotiation table, they have to be educated. Hence the importance of SDG 4. Education empowers.

At the **International Day of Older Persons** (IDOP), speakers shared statistics on older persons (persons over 60). The data supported the well-known fact that the “older population is and will remain predominantly female” (Population Facts, No 2014/2). As the population is ageing, it is also becoming “highly urbanized,” hence the need to “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” (SDG 11). I know for myself I have different needs than I did when I came to New York City just 3 years ago.

On Friday, October 23, **Committee Three** encouraged sharing on **Promotion and Protection of Human Rights**, targeting the rights of migrants and their families, and trafficked women and children. Again women were in the forefront. One speaker suggested that all issues at the UN be viewed through the lens of gender. While some may not agree with this suggestion, the gender lens gives additional insight to each of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In summary, this month's presentations affirm our choice of “SDG 5: Attain gender equality and empower women and girls” as a priority issue. In keeping with that choice I remind you of the **Orange the World Campaign from November 25-December 10**. Please let the office know of any activities you plan and implement.



An Invitation to Participate in the Commission on the Status of Women

For those of you interested in attending the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW60) from March 14 – 24, **pre-registration begins in November**. Please send to the Office names of persons who are interested in attending and the days of attendance. The Partnership can then begin the process of registration.

Don't forget **Orange Day November 25!**

Please let the Partnership Office know about any activities you plan and implement.

November 2015 Theme: *Orange the world: End violence against women and girls*

See more at: [Orange Day website](#)

As always, you can watch live coverage (and often stored videos) of **major UN events** at the UN [WebTV channel](#). 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.

