

# MERCY GLOBAL ACTION AT THE UNITED NATIONS

(MGA UN)



Source: MGA UN

Contributors to this issue: Angela Reed RSM and Colleen Cloonan

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## OFFICE NEWS

Greetings from the MGA office at the UN. Once again we have had a busy month preparing for and attending relevant meetings. Along with our day to day interaction with UN processes, this month we welcomed numerous international visitors. It was lovely to meet with Ms Catherine O’Kane, who is the Principal of All Hallows’ School, a large Mercy School in Brisbane, Australia. Catherine shared with us the vision and hopes for their school and likewise was able to hear about our Mercy Mission here at the UN. We discussed possible collaborations into the future.



L to R: Ms. Catherine O’Kane and Ms Colleen Cloonan

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L to R: Ms. Nicole Christensen, Sr. Angela Reed, Mr. Stephen Walsh, Ms. Marie Wood, and Ms. Jacquie Magurren

We were also delighted to welcome other Mercy leaders from Australia including Principal, Mr. Stephen Walsh and Deputy Principal, Ms. Marie Wood who are from Our Lady of Mercy College in Parramatta, Australia. Joining them were Principal, Ms. Nicole Christensen from Monte Sant Angelo, North Sydney, Australia and Deputy Principal, Ms. Jacquie Magurren. Once again we had a robust conversation about our Mercy International Justice pursuits and the wonderful opportunities we have to collaborate with Mercy schools throughout the world. Our office looks forward to further networking into the future.

*\*The Sisters of Mercy have held special consultative status within the United Nations Economic and Social Council since 1998*

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# THROUGH OUR ECOSOC\* EYES...

## *MGA at the UN Participates in Review of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking*

At the 64th Session of the General Assembly July of 2010, the United Nations adopted the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. This action plan stated the commitments of UN Member Delegations to end human trafficking in all of its forms through the implementation of measures to prevent, protect, prosecute, and promote strong partnerships for creating effective anti-trafficking obligations and legislation in their own country.

Within the Global Plan of Action resolution 70/179, the United Nations General Assembly agreed to convene a high-level meeting in September of 2017 in order to review the progress made on these commitments and address the gaps and challenges that countries have witnessed with implementation and construction of legal instruments. This year, Member Delegations have been convening to produce an outcome document, drafting both modalities and political declarations, which will be adopted at the opening plenary meeting in September.

On Friday, June 23rd 2017, the UN had a Multi-Stakeholder meeting with members of Civil Society regarding the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. This meeting marked an imperative segment of the review process with the engagement of Civil Society members; it gave an opportunity for NGO's to offer vast input from grassroots experiences working with survivors and also offer practical steps to move forward in the review process. Ambassador of Fiji Peter Thomson, President of the General Assembly, remarked "Today's meeting is an important opportunity for the international community to hear directly from experts working across our world to prevent, address and respond to trafficking in persons".

Mercy Global Action at the UN is an active member of the NGO Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons (CSTIP), which, with other members of Civil Society organizations, created an advocacy document detailing specific points that Member States should include within the review process of the Global Plan of Action. Advocacy points were presented on behalf of the NGO Committee by Sr. Winifred Doherty of the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd. They include:

- **Adopt** an action oriented outcome document committing to the full implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, specifically adhering to the requirements of Targets 5.2, 8.7 and 16.2.
- **Adhere** to the recommendations of the United Nations Global Plan of Action, specifically the universal ratification of the UN TIP Protocol.
- **Actualize** by December 2018 a robust review mechanism for the UN TIP Protocol, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.
- **Allocate** significant resources at the national and international levels towards prevention strategies and exit services to reverse what "constitutes a serious threat to human dignity, human rights, and development.
- **Address** demand. Without demand there is no trafficking of persons. Addressing this root cause is essential. Demand for high profits, cheap goods and labor, and commercialized sex is the driving force behind human trafficking.



Watch Session



Advocacy  
Points



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# THEMATIC AREAS

## DISPLACED PERSONS



- **Colleen Cloonan (MGA Intern) makes joint statement on behalf of the Sisters of Mercy (MIA) at important migration meeting in Geneva**



MGA at the UN's representative Colleen Cloonan (Intern) attended the Third Thematic Session on facilitating safe, orderly and regular migration in Geneva June 19-20. The theme for the meeting was “international cooperation and governance of migration in all its dimensions, including at borders, on transit, entry, return, readmission, integration and reintegration”. The two-day session consisted of a variety of panels that presented an overview of best practices, policy gaps, and offered potential solutions to Member States on the subject of migration; an interactive exchange with criticisms, recommendations, and support between the Member States and Civil Society Stakeholders followed each panel. It is in the hopes that through these interactive discussions, Member States can come to a deeper understanding of the issues at hand from both a grassroots and policy level in order to develop a stronger consensus on international migration.

Colleen Cloonan, along with Cecilie Kern of the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, delivered a joint statement on behalf of both organizations at an informal dialogue with the Co-Facilitators of the Session, the Ambassadors of Mexico and Switzerland (Read Here). Some key components within their statement included: the “human rights of all must be upheld throughout the migration process, regardless of status”; “border management policies must be human right-based and gender and age-sensitive”; “authorities, including border agents, police, military and other security forces, must be held accountable for human rights violations, including exploitation and corruption”; and that “families should never be separated by policy enforcement, and children, including unaccompanied and separated children, should never be placed into detention or criminalized for their migratory status or that of their parents”.

In conclusion, some key outcomes of conversation, consensus and challenges from the Member States at the end of the Thematic Session were that more international cooperation is needed on a basis of borders, entry, return, readmission, integration and reintegration, and that the Global Compact on Migration must: uphold national sovereignty; support human rights; build upon existing frameworks; learn and develop best practices; consist of stronger data, monitoring, and evaluation; and use the International Organization on Migration (IOM) as a critical actor throughout the process.



L to R: Ms. Cecilie Kern and Ms. Colleen Cloonan

Three more Thematic Sessions remain this year before the Co-Facilitators will draft the Global Compact on Migration. Mercy Global Action at the UN stands committed to following and participating in these negotiations.

- **MercyFirst exhibition at the United Nations**

MGA at the UN attended an exhibition featuring the artwork of two MercyFirst projects "About Me" and "Hope Holds No Borders" within the halls of the United Nations. MercyFirst is a ministry of the Sisters of Mercy in New York that inspires hope and promotes healing for children and families (link to website). The images on display detailed a collection of drawings created by children refugees, migrants, and U.S. citizens participating in art therapy programs. The exhibition was well attended and was supported by the Permanent Mission of Mexico and Switzerland (co-facilitators of the negotiations on migration) and the UN TOGETHER campaign. Such beautiful work done by the children; and congratulations to all participating in this ministry!



Source MGA UN

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# THEMATIC AREAS

*Continued*



## DEGRADATION OF THE EARTH

### • MGA at the UN attends first UN World Oceans Conference

World Oceans Day, June 8th stands as an annual reminder for the world to protect, honor and conserve the oceans across the globe. This year, World Oceans Day marked the commencement of the first Oceans Conference at the United Nations. In celebration, a three-hour event featuring speakers ranging from world-renowned ocean experts and explorers, representatives from coastal communities, celebrities, and voices from current and future generations was held in order to raise awareness and highlight the beauty and fragility of the oceans. The active presence of United Nations member states demonstrated their commitment to promoting the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, conserving our world's oceans.

The speakers shared impactful experiences and wisdom. Quotes include:

- It is a **"heartbreak to be a witness of this degradation...we are up against some monumental challenges"**- Fabian Cousteau, Ocean Conservationist, and Documentary Filmmaker
- **"We are all connected to the sea and tied to its fate; listen to the ocean and hear what it's saying to us"**-Brian Skerry, National Geographic Photographer
- We must ask ourselves, **"Do we have the courage to face the realities of our time and allow ourselves to feel deeply enough that it transforms us and our future?"**-Chris Jordan, Artist, Photographer, Filmmaker "Midway"
- **"Reasons for hope? I am looking at it right now...now is the time to make a difference"**-Sylvia Earle, Marine Biologist, Explorer, Author, and Lecturer



Watch the Oceans Conference Plenary Meeting



- Inside the Oceans Conference Plenary Meeting in the General Assembly



- An Exhibition at the UN was the whale tail made of beach plastic by the non-profit organization "Washed Ashore"

### • Last Drop Film

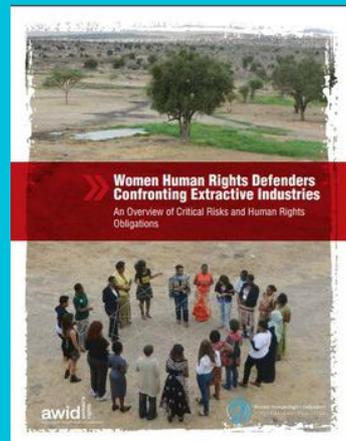
Recently shown at a meeting attended by MGA at the UN, the short film "Last Drop", displays the urgency of water scarcity, but also signifies the importance of encouraging and empowering young people to make change. It is thought provoking and invokes multiple interpretations. To view this film, [click here](#).

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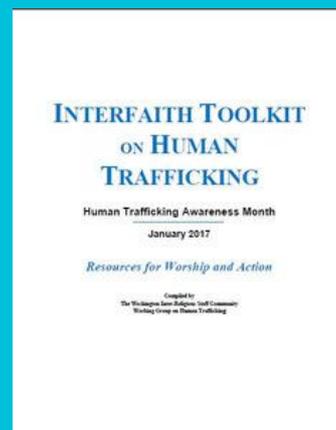
## USEFUL RESOURCES

**\*MGA at the UN highly Recommends\***

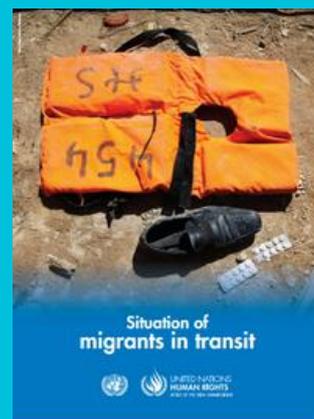
**Women Human Rights Defenders confronting extractive industries**



### "Interfaith Toolkit on Human Trafficking"



### UNHCR's Report on the "Situation of migrants in transit"

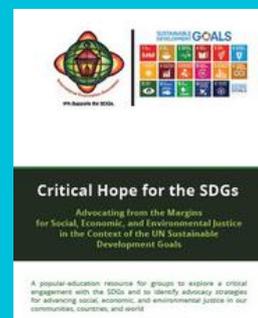


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Update on the

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



- **"Critical Hope for the SDG's": Unraveling Step 1. Imagine**

Since you have received the guide in the last newsletter, we will delve into the first tool for justice and advocacy of the Sustainable Development Goals--Imagine. When beginning advocacy for social, economic and environmental justice, it is imperative to truly understand the context in which it will be done. Therefore, when seeking to achieve action with the SDG's we need to understand development, understand the goals put forth by the United Nations, understand how various social movements have reacted to the SDG's, and understand how your vision and passion fits within these processes. Through reflecting and contemplating on this guide, notice the challenges and gaps that have already arisen in the development process either at a local, national or global level. Imagine what could be your next steps. Through discussion with other individuals, gather key insights, common themes, and differences. Learn from their own understanding of development and its challenges and seek to make the connections with the SDG's and its targets. "A risk of the format of goals and targets is that we may be distracted or become myopic focusing only on specific outcomes in one dimension of development or the other. This would keep us from identifying, exposing, and addressing the deep, structural changes that are necessary to eradicate the root causes of poverty, inequality, and violence." Stay focused and motivated on what you want to achieve. Stay tuned for a break down of "Step 2: See" in our next issue.



## USEFUL RESOURCES

The "What is it?" series was produced by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) as an informational tool to educate the public on human rights, the human rights council, and human rights treaty bodies. These important platforms can be used to teach and empower others to advocate for their own rights and know the mechanisms by which they are used. To view, [click here](#) to visit their YouTube channel and subsequent short videos.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

*MGA at the UN will be attending*

- **July 10-19: High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development: Reviewing Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 14, and 17**
- **July 24-25: Fourth Thematic Session For the Global Compact on Migration**

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## CONTINUED...

It was a delight to welcome Mercy Sisters from the Philippines to the Mercy UN office. Sisters Virgencita (Jen Jen )Alegado RSM, Hilda Montecillo Jimenez RSM, and Rosie Maulas RSM were participants at the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Chapter in June and were in New York before departing home for the Philippines. In many ways it was a reunion, as Angela Reed RSM had lived with two of these sisters in Cebu, Philippines in 2008. The sisters enjoyed lunch together and then relished taking pictures at the UN office and sharing ideas about joining the dots and making links with their ministries. It was a wonderful afternoon and we send our blessings to all the sisters in the Philippines as we stand in solidarity with them during these difficult times.



Source: MGA at the UN  
L to R: Sr. Virgencita, Sr. Hilda, and Sr. Rosie

## INSIGHTS

### CLAUDIA BROCK REFLECTS ON HER VISIT TO MGA AT THE UN

Throughout our year with the Mercy Volunteer Corps, my community and I have been involved in a variety of direct services. Whether it's providing information about college to a foster care youth, starting an immigrant's naturalization paperwork, or escorting children to a dance recital downtown, all six of us have been immersed into the realm of social services. So in May when my community and I had a chance to visit the Mercy Global Action office at the United Nations, it was interesting to learn about a different ministry the Sisters of Mercy are engaged in.

Catherine McAuley, the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, certainly did plenty of both direct service and advocacy in her lifetime. She created a home for vulnerable women and children taking measures to care for and educate them. At the same time, she brought the plight of the poor to the forefront of the minds of Ireland's elite. I enjoyed hearing more about the modern day advocacy that the Sisters of Mercy undertake on behalf of people experiencing poverty. It was also interesting to hear how they work with United Nation diplomats to influence policy.

I was first introduced to the Sisters of Mercy when I attended a Mercy High School in Omaha, Nebraska. After a year with the Mercy Volunteer Corps I became aware of the many ministries of the Sisters of Mercy. The vast international scope of Mercy ministries only really began to sink in when I was looking at the map on the wall inside the Mercy Global Action office. This displays the international network of Mercy ministries. The name "Mercy Global Action" certainly makes sense with Sisters of Mercy working for human rights in 46 different countries around the world.

After our introduction in the Church Center we went across the street for an official United Nations tour. We visited different council chambers and learned more about the history of the United Nations and the role it plays in current global diplomacy. My favorite tidbit of the day was learning that the icon for the United Nations is the world drawn from the point of view of the North Pole, symbolizing that no country in particular is in the center and therefore no country is more or less important than others. Each country in the General Assembly gets one vote, regardless of size or wealth of the nation, making for a truly global community.

I think that this vision of all having equal say and equal importance is God's Kingdom on Earth. So often it is those with the most money or the most privileged that are given the most power and influence. But we are all God's children called to create a just world for one another, called to relinquish our privilege so that others may too have a voice. I've seen this through my work this year at a community center in the South Bronx and it was incredible to see the same idea being played out in an international arena.

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