

MERCY GLOBAL ACTION AT THE UNITED NATIONS

(MGA UN)



Source: MGA UN

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OFFICE NEWS

The office has been blessed with many visits throughout the last months.

Sr. Bridget Crisp from New Zealand arrived in the office in January. She has dedicated five months of her sabbatical to participate and reflect on many UN commissions, meetings and forums, including the Civil Society Forum, Commission on Social and Economic Development, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII). One of her biggest accomplishments has been the Water and Ocean Reflection Series in which she has highlighted many ecological issues present in our seas and oceans, and calls upon Pope Francis' encyclical, personal reflections, prayer, and UN Sustainable Development Goals for invoking critical thinking and action.

Ms. Marietta Latonio, a Registered Social Worker, friend, colleague, and anti-trafficking advocate from the Philippines, visited the office for the CSW. She presented her trafficking work a MGA co-sponsored event during the CSW and was presented with the UNANIMA Woman of Courage Award for her commitment to supporting women and girls. Congratulations Marietta--a wonderful tribute to your work! Hover cursor to watch our event!

Sr. Judith Moroney from New Zealand, stopped by the office on her way to Ireland and England. This visit permitted her to attend a few days of the PFII and see the workings of the UN office. It was lovely being able to spend time with these women and we send them our blessings.

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L to R Ms. Marietta Latonio, Ms. Colleen Cloonan, Sr. Angela Reed, Sr. Bridget Crisp, and Sr. Judith Moroney

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

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THROUGH OUR ECOSOC* EYES...

*Reporting on the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
16th Session (24th April to 5 May 2017)*

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) is held annually at the UN in New York for two weeks and has been part of the Economic and Social Council processes since 2000.

Indigenous representatives from around the globe join with member states and other representatives of civil society to share ideas, discuss policy and present issues of concern. Its purpose is to report on and advise the Council on economic and social, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights relating to Indigenous people and communities. The Sixteenth Session took place from April 24th- 5 May 2017. The Special theme for this year's forum was 'Tenth Anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: measures taken to implement the Declaration'. MGA at the UN was represented by Colleen Cloonan, Bridget Crisp RSM and Angela Reed RSM.

The Sisters of Mercy recognize that many issues facing Indigenous Peoples relate to land and water rights as well as sovereignty and self-determination. Our participation at the Permanent Forum on Indigenous issues involved observing the formal dialogues of the 16th session, attending side events and listening intently to the needs and concerns of indigenous people and informally meeting indigenous representatives from across the globe.

A significant event that MGA attended was one in which Indigenous Peoples' presented human rights cases from the Amazonian region and beyond. This side event was sponsored and organized by Pan Amazon Ecclesial network (REPAM) and the NGO Mining Working Group (MWG) of which Mercy Global Action is a member. Four Indigenous Peoples from the affected Amazon region spoke on issues related to mining company actions. They expressed their concern that these mining companies operated with virtual impunity given that they have government support.

Contaminated water and excessive deforestation by mining companies were two key areas of concern expressed by the indigenous speakers. They spoke of how this impacted their daily lives and the health and livelihood of the community. The impact of land degradation on the Amazonian Indigenous Peoples, like the Yanomani community, extends beyond the physical into the mental and spiritual regions of the body. The Yanomani consider themselves 'one with the forest' – they are unable to survive anywhere else. This is reflective of all the indigenous cultures within the Amazon.

Also during the forum was an event, to celebrate World Tuna Day (2nd May), sponsored and organized by Austria, Nauru (on behalf of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement) and the Marshall Islands. The focus was on the importance of the Tuna Fishing Industry which is a vital economic resource for many Small Island Developing States in the Pacific. Many of the Small Island Nation Indigenous Peoples' depend on fishing for an income source, but large fishing companies' operations in the world's oceans have impacted significantly on stock rates of many fish species that these countries rely on. One point that had an impact on listeners was that if the dollar value of Tuna caught in the region was transferred directly to the Small Island Nations, then they would be amongst the wealthiest nations on the planet...instead the majority of small island nations rely on aid.

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THEMATIC AREAS

DISPLACED PERSONS



- *Towards a UN Global Impact on Migration*

During the September 2016 UN Summit in New York, Member States agreed on a powerful set of plans to address the issue of Migration. The outcome document is referred to as the New York Declaration and can be viewed here: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/71/L.1

A key initiative within this declaration for Refugees and Migrants was the commitment to undertake intergovernmental negotiations during 2017 in order to create a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular migration. This Global Impact is set to be adopted at an international migration conference in 2018.

Mercy Global Action at the UN will represent the Sisters of Mercy worldwide at these governmental negotiations which will consist of thematic sessions and multi-stakeholder sessions beginning in May 2017.

The themes for the sessions include the following:

- 1) Addressing drivers of migration, including adverse effects of climate change, natural disasters and human-made crises, through protection and assistance, sustainable development, poverty eradication, conflict prevention and resolution (May 2017).
- 2) International cooperation and governance of migration in all its dimensions, including at borders, on transit, entry, return, readmission, integration and reintegration (June 2017).
- 3) Contributions of migrants and diasporas to all dimensions of sustainable development, including remittances and portability of earned benefits (July 2017).
- 4) Smuggling of migrants, trafficking in persons and contemporary forms of slavery, including appropriate identification, protection and assistance to migrants and trafficking victims (September 2017).
- 5) Irregular migration and regular pathways including decent work, labour mobility, recognition of skills and qualifications and other relevant matters (October 2017).

THEMATIC AREAS

Continued

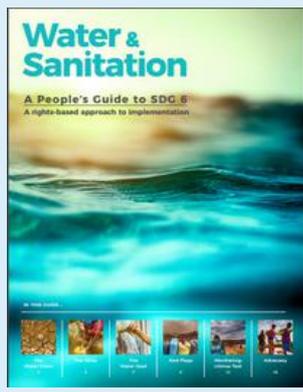
DEGRADATION OF THE EARTH



• *Have you been following our Water and Ocean Reflection Series?*

-See http://mercyworld.org/mercy_global_action/view-post.cfm?id=875 to view parts 1-7

• *Mercy Global Action at the UN, in collaboration with members of the NGO Mining Working Group, have produced a water justice guide titled 'Water and Sanitation: A peoples guide to SDG6, a rights based approach to implementation'. This guide is now available as an online resource.*



-See <https://miningwg.files.wordpress.com/2017/03/water-guide-final-pdf.pdf>

MERCY INTERNATIONAL REFLECTION PROCESS

Hover cursor on title to view the MIRP Review

In 2016, in line with Pope Francis call for 'The year of Mercy,' the leadership of Mercy International Association called for a Mercy international Reflection Process (MIRP). Engaging Sisters and associates all over the world, small groups were called to name the issues of our time and to discern together a shared response to the cry of the Earth and cry of the Poor, in the light of theological reflection and social analysis. In April, a report of this process was disseminated widely to Mercy Sisters, Associates and Colleagues. See link

An excerpt from the report states:
 ' Out of the Sacred listening and contemplative dialogue in which the groups engaged came a focus on two key themes (I) Displacement of Persons, and (II) Degradation of Earth'.

This report provides a clear mandate for Mercy Global Action at the UN. It is within this context that featured in this regular newsletter will be information as well as advocacy steps taken by MGA at the UN in regard to Displaced Persons and the Degradation of the Earth

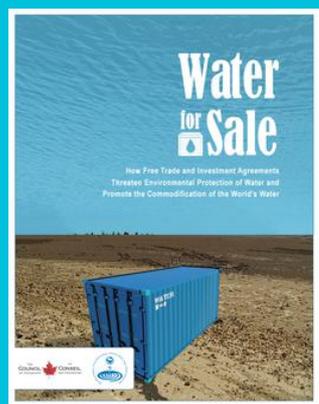
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USEFUL RESOURCES

2016 Report on the World Social Situation:



Maude Barlow's report on the sale of water in the age of free trade and investment agreements:



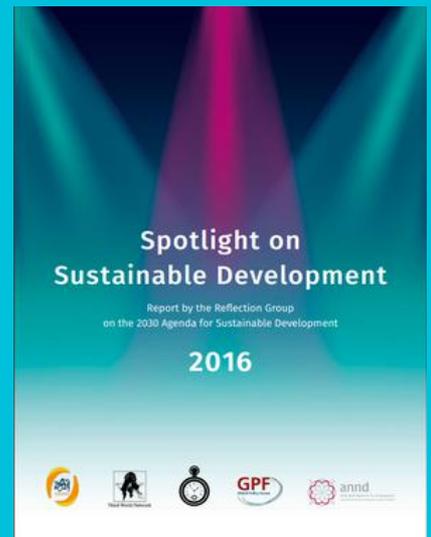
The International Organization for Migration's review on human trafficking and other forms of exploitation:



Update on the SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- *For a comprehensive analysis of the SDG's, the 'Spotlight on Sustainable Development'.*

-This *Spotlight Report 2016* was a collaborative project produced by networks of civil society organizations to assess the policies framed within the 2030 Agenda from a human rights perspective and highlights the important actors and partnerships needed to achieve the goals. Key collaborators are MGA UN colleagues Meera Karunanathan from the Council of Canadians and Blue Planet Project, and Devin Tellatin, former MGA UN intern representing the NGO Mining Working Group.



USEFUL RESOURCES

Pay \$1 to watch *Awake: A Dream from Standing Rock*. "100% of the proceeds will go to an Indigenous Media Fund and a Pipeline Fighters Fund supervised by the film's creators and a council of indigenous leaders to support direct actions, indigenous filmmakers and journalists".
<https://awakethefilm.org/>
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UPCOMING EVENTS

MGA at the UN will be attending

- **5 - 9 June: United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development**
- **22 - 25 May: 2017 Financing for Development (FfD) Forum**
- **22 - 23 May: 2017 Thematic Consultations for the Global Compact on Migration**

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A Beacon of Hope

Mercy Global Action at the UN Intern, Colleen Cloonan, published an article in Salve Regina University's 'Report from Newport' on her experience at the UN office. Read the article below...

What is mercy? Some may define it by words such as forgiveness, compassion, love, grace, humility and kindness, but I think it depends on the day or moment. Everyone experiences mercy differently, but I believe it comes when you need it most. The more I try to define mercy, the more I realize the answer is in experiencing it.

No matter how you define mercy, in my own experience, I've realized the end result is hope. Our human connection teaches us to grow and learn through these experiences with others. Mercy is the reason I wholeheartedly believe people are inherently good, despite the evil, war and hatred in the world.

At Salve Regina, I discovered mercy all around me. In many ways, I could say mercy found me. Hope found me, light found me, trust found me and I began seeking out mercy as well. I realized that when I stop focusing on the negatives, I am truly happiest when I give myself to the service of others, and that is what I want to do.

My Salve Regina education helped me discover my true passion. After being selected to attend the Young Mercy Leaders Conference in Dublin in 2014, I recognized that my passion for social and environmental justice, sustainable development and human rights would become my life's work.

Three months after I graduated with degrees in Global Studies and Spanish, I accepted an internship with the Sisters of Mercy in their Global Action Office at the United Nations in New York City.

My internship began last September, just as the U.N.'s Global Summit of 2016 was underway, drawing heads of state from around the world to discuss the themes of refugees and migrants. This high-level summit begged for leaders to take a humane approach to the large movements of migrants and refugees in our ever-changing world. Keynote speakers such as Yazidi genocide survivor Nadia Murad emphasized that we must put human dignity first; or in other words, be merciful.

I believe my Salve Regina education led me to this moment – the opportunity to put humanity first on a global scale. That is why we are all here.

While working with the Sisters of Mercy over the past six months, I've been exposed to remarkable people. The Sisters are extremely active at the U.N., from advocating for the right to universal access to clean drinking water to actively working against human trafficking. We are involved in various subcommittees such as Religious at the U.N., the Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons, and the NGO Mining Working Group, where we collaborate with other nongovernmental organizations to increase our impact within the greater United Nations.

One of the most influential projects I've worked on thus far has been with the U.N.'s 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, where I helped develop our own global campaign, “#16Days16Stories: Trafficked Women and Girls in Their Own Words.” This series of 16 videos was based on a publication by Angela Reed, RSM, and Marietta Latonio – “I Have a Voice: Trafficked Women in their Own Words” – which discloses the stories of women and girls who have been trafficked and proposes steps for action. Such narratives from survivor advocates teach us so much and have the power to influence global policies. The campaign was extremely successful, reaching over 40 countries around the world.

Each day the opportunities to make a difference have been endless, and I am proud of the work I am doing with the Sisters of Mercy. Mercy allows us to recognize both the humanity and the divine existing in each of us. Look into the face of a friend or stranger and you might feel an instant connection or realize you are both unique and beautiful and here to serve each other by sharing your gifts. When wondering what you can do, know that comforting someone, giving a poncho to a homeless man sitting in the pouring rain, donating clothes, volunteering at a shelter, singing at church or simply holding the door for someone are all small expressions of mercy. But mercy is to be distinguished from charity; it's too personal for that. Mercy runs deeper, and while it comes from charity, it's also a special virtue that allows us to connect with others and be beacons of hope. It is through mercy that we can come to a greater understanding of humankind.

– Colleen Cloonan '16

Editor's Note: Colleen Cloonan '16 is enrolled in Salve Regina's fast-track master's degree program in international relations. Visit <http://16days16stories.online/> to see the videos she co-produced at the U.N.