

MERCY GLOBAL ACTION NEWSLETTER

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MERCY GLOBAL ACTION NEW YEARS GREETINGS!

The MIA Mercy Global Action office would like to wish you all a happy, healthy, and holy New Year as we kick off this new decade: the roaring 20s! In these challenging times, we invite you to join us in solidarity as we hope and pray for our world; especially for all displaced persons, and the Earth.

As the Christmas season comes to a close with the celebration of Epiphany, the words of David Whyte come to mind. Whyte writes, "The presence of the star does not excuse us from the difficult territory through which it is guiding us." Looking ahead to the work on our MGA horizon, we cannot help but feel like the wise travelers setting out in hope on a journey to an unknown destination. The road before us is long, and the territory is challenging. We keep traveling towards a more just reality for all. As a Mercy World we trust

the star that guides us, and we vision the just world waiting at journey's end. The wise women and men of Mercy keep bringing their gifts and skills to bear, and we keep our hope alive through the support and prayers of our sisters, coworkers, and partners in ministry around the world.





THEMATIC AREAS

DEGRADATION OF EARTH

• *Mercy Global Action at COP25*

Colleen Swain of MIA Mercy Global Action attended week two of the 25th Session of the Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), otherwise known as COP 25 in Madrid, Spain.

With strong continued actions, most significantly ‘Friday’s for the Future’ marches across the globe, as well as alarming updates from science, Mercy Global Action had high hopes for COP 25. The theme for this year was “Time for Action” and throughout 2019 Member States spoke of their increase ambition towards tackling climate change. The year 2019 brought more pollution, sea level rise, extreme fires, drought, deforestation, storms, increased impacts from extractive industries and more.

COP 25 was to be the COP where the countries were expected to submit stronger National Climate Plans and strengthen international cooperation before the realization of the Paris Agreement. Instead, Member States fell into the trap of prioritizing profits over people, blocking ambition, and using convenient loopholes during negotiations.

Mercy Global Action’s main concerns were: ensuring care for the Earth through the protection of human rights, strengthening ambitious commitments across the globe, advocating on behalf of local and indigenous communities, opposing the misuse of resources including extractivism, encouraging ecosystem based approaches and addressing the loss and damage of biodiversity.

Civil Society Action and Exhibits

COP 25 was filled with a myriad of ministerial dialogues, press conferences, technology showcases, events, and more.

With over 26,000 participants in attendance, one of the most empowered and empowering groups at COP 25 was civil society. Many civil society groups shared their concerns in striking ways, bringing forth the voices of the people who were far removed from the negotiations and urging delegates to increase ambition and take action. Powerful skits, press conferences, demonstrations and a climate march marked some of the most impactful ways people came together.

The ‘Pollution Pods’ created by Michael Pinsky was an incredibly moving exhibit highlighting the interconnectedness of the world and the damaging effects of pollution and consumerism. Within six domes, “the air quality of five global cities [was] recreated. A carefully mixed recipe emulate[ed] the relative presence of ozone, particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide which pollute these cities. Starting from the hosting city, the visitor pass[ed] through increasingly polluted cells, from dry and cold locations to hot and humid.” Read more about the ‘Pollution Pods’ here: <https://www.climart.info/pollutionpods>

continued on page 4...



Photos: Colleen Swain



Photos: Colleen Swain



THEMATIC AREAS

DISPLACEMENT OF PERSONS

- *MGA Commemorates International Migrants Day*

On December 18th, the United Nations commemorated International Migrants Day. This day offers us an opportunity to reflect on the struggles of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

Once people reach their new homes, social cohesion and integration are key to their and their host's success. For this reason, #WeTogether was the theme for December's commemoration of International Migrants Day. People migrate for many reasons including: hunger, persecution, conflict, and climate change. A significant number move for work and seek to contribute to their new communities. Media and political figures often focus on negative issues in relation to global migration. To show a holistic and hopeful view, the International Organization for Migration created a series of videos highlighting success stories of the contributions of migrants in their new communities.

Last year the United Nations estimated there were about 272 million migrants that relocated across international borders; that is 3.5% of the world's population [1]. Most migrants move to find better work, to study, or for the sake of their families. Our focus, however, must be on the people who frequently need assistance in their migration. Migrants who move because of disasters, wars, and other tragedies.

Permanent migration usually occurs within the context of several aggravating factors. One of these key issues has become environmental degradation, which is a complicated since climate change can be both a motivation for migration and a hindrance. "Sudden-onset disasters" (i.e. storms, floods, mudslides, earthquakes, etc) cause temporary migration which does not force people to move internationally.[2] Sudden disasters and weather events cause homelessness and damage but do not strip people of the livelihood permanently, also the damage may prevent people from leaving. "Slow-onset events" cause permanent international migration through the loss of land and livelihood.[3] Rising sea levels, global warming, ocean acidification, salination, land degradation, and desertification are just some examples of factors that cause migration. Not included under either category is food insecurity, which is commonly a result of environmental degradation.

The World Food Programme at the U.N. has studied the close link between food insecurity and migration. Hunger increases the probability of both migration and conflict (a common cause of migration). Once on the move food insecurity often forces migrants to keep moving. Food will continue to be scarce for migrants due to the cost and risk of moving, conflict, and a lack of resources available to them in a host country.

Mercy Global Action, along with Mercy ministries across the globe, continue to advocate, empower, give voice and walk with migrants and refugees. The social cohesion and integration of migrants and refugees gives us the opportunity to learn, share, and grow. Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, President of Caritas Internationalis said, "If we bond with refugees and migrants, we will break down the barriers with which some are trying to separate us."

[1] IOM, "World Migration Report 2020." IOM, Geneva Switzerland, 2019. P19

[2] UNHCR, "Key Concepts on Climate Change and Disaster Displacement."

[3] Ibid



At the United Nations

THROUGH OUR

ECOSOC EYES...

COP 25 Continued...

What were the Outcomes?

In a [statement](#) on the Outcomes of COP 25 by the Executive Secretary of the UN Climate Change, Patricia Espinosa stated, "We need to be clear that the conference did not result in agreement on the guidelines for a much-needed carbon market... Developed countries have yet to fully address the calls from developing countries for enhanced support in finance, technology and capacity building... [and] high-emitting countries did not send a clear enough signal that they are ready to improve their climate strategies and ramp up ambition through the Nationally Determined Contributions they will submit next year."



Photo: Colleen Swain

Observations

- While the Paris Agreement refers to several Human Rights Principles in its Preamble, it is not yet in its operational text. In many instances throughout COP 25, human rights, along with accountability for loss and damage, and violations of the human rights of impacted communities were put on the sidelines. However, the 'Work Plan of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples' Platform was adopted with efforts to strengthen indigenous and traditional knowledge sharing in climate action policies. In addition, the 'Gender Action Plan' was adopted with reference to the Preamble of the Paris Agreement, just transition, decent work and participation.
- It was discouraging to see a lack of commitment towards ambition on climate change. Countries did not agree on a time-frame for submission in the [final draft decision text of COP 25](#). Only a few countries took the opportunity for more ambitious plans which can be seen in the 'High Ambition Alliance'.
- Upon arriving at COP 25, Article 6 of the Paris Agreement on carbon markets was an area of contention. At the conclusion of COP 25, countries did not reach a negotiation and Article 6 will be negotiated further during the UNFCCC subsidiary body meeting this coming June 2020. Groups such as [CIDSE](#) "considered that an effective Article 6 would only work if it had all these elements: robust accounting rules, gender responsiveness, human rights safeguards, environmental integrity, no carryover of projects from earlier schemes, mandatory inclusive stakeholder consultation and an independent grievance mechanism."
- Finance, while a contentious theme at COP 24 in Poland, was again a contentious theme for COP 25. Wealthier Member States have not been stepping up to help those that are suffering the most impacts of climate change. Finances for quality and sufficient resources for adaptation, as well as loss and damage remain a challenge.
- Greta Thunberg delivered a strong statement to the Member States pressing "What we need is real drastic emission cuts at the source but of course, just reducing emissions is not enough. Our greenhouse gas emissions has to stop. To stay below 1.5 degrees. We need to keep the carbon in the ground. Only setting up distant dates and saying things which give the impression of the action is underway will most likely do more harm than good because the changes required are still nowhere in sight... Well, I'm telling you, there is hope. I have seen it but it does not come from the governments or corporations. It comes from the people." Watch her full speech [here](#).

What lies ahead for COP 26...

MIA Mercy Global Action is committed to increased action and urgency as we prepare for the Paris Agreement to come into force later this year at COP 26 in Glasgow. The year 2020 and this next decade provides various opportunities for increased action as we approach major milestones such as the fifth anniversary of Pope Francis' Encyclical *Laudato Si'* and the Paris Agreement, as well as the 50th celebration of Earth Day.

As Greta Thunberg stated, "there is hope...It comes from the people". It can be seen in small local steps or through large global movements. We continue to advocate and stand in solidarity with all those who share our concerns and values when it comes to responding to the displacement of peoples and degradation of the earth. We must empower others to respond with moral integrity as we continue to hold governments accountable for addressing the climate emergency.

REFLECTIONS ON THE MERCY GLOBAL ACTION EMERGING LEADERS FELLOWSHIP (MELF)

BY JULIA MORISI (MELF 2019-2020)

The Mercy Global Action Emerging Leaders Fellowship (MELF) has provided an important opportunity for me to develop my interests and perspectives through a global and multidimensional platform. The women in this fellowship hail from the United States, Papua New Guinea, Ireland, Peru, and Australia. They also come from a wide variety of professional and educational backgrounds and span a range of ages. This is truly a diverse group of women who each bring their unique experiences, opinions, and outlooks. The Mercy Fellowship has helped me expand my views, deepen my thinking, and has caused me to think more globally.



Photo: Colleen Swain/MIA MGA

Following our first meeting in Cambodia, our cohort has continued to explore— but instead of by airplane and tuk tuk, it has been through readings, webinars, podcasts, and discussions. Each month, there are new topics of study, some of which are mostly new to me and others with which I am more familiar. I have been a feminist since my childhood, and I have always been keenly interested in the experiences of women and girls. However, it has actually been the MELF topics related to gender which I have found the most illuminating and informative. Our readings on the Sustainable Development Goals, the Commission on the Status of Women, and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action all focus on the experiences of women around the world. The stories and perspectives that my colleagues share bring life and substance to these readings and initiatives. Our conversation and dialogue allows for a complex look at how women from different contexts strive for Mercy and justice. Engaging with my colleagues has caused me to think



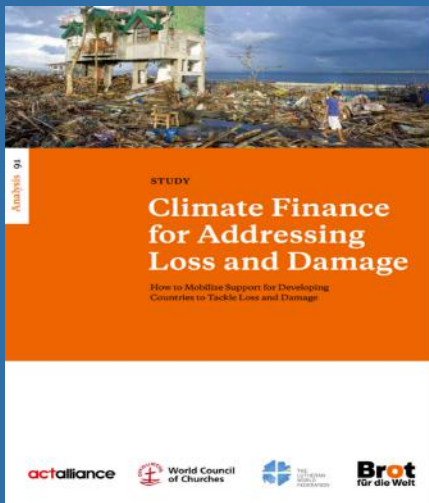
Photo: Colleen Swain/MIA MGA

more deeply at my own beliefs, opinions, and context. I am grateful to have this opportunity to develop friendships with women from countries I have never before visited, to engage in dialogue with women from cultures different from my own, and to share new experiences with women who teach and inspire me. It has truly been the women in the fellowship with whom I have found wisdom and achieved new progress, while still encountering the familiar face of Mercy.

“ USEFUL RESOURCES



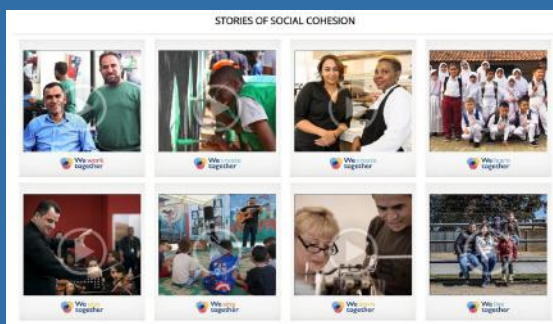
Climate Finance for Addressing Loss and Damage



Asia-Europe Environment Forum: Implementation Guide for the Sustainable Development Goals



Stories of Social Cohesion (Video Collection)



UPCOMING EVENTS AND INTERNATIONAL DAYS

- January 1st- New Years Day
- January 4th- World Braille Day
- January 6th- Epiphany
- January 20th- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- January 24th- International Day of Education
- January 25th- Lunar New Year
- January 27th- International Day of the Commemoration of the Victims of the Holocaust
- January 28th - UN@75 and Beijing+25: 2020 - A Defining Year for Multilateralism and Gender - 6th Symposium for Faith-Based Organizations
- January 31st - MELF 2020-2021 Application Deadline
- February 10th - 19th - Commission on Social Development

Mercy International Association (MIA) maintains a comprehensive and up to date website and produces an informative weekly e-newsletter (MercyNews).

Visit our website to discover more about MIA and our global activities: www.mercyworld.org

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