

# MERCY INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION



## MERCY GLOBAL ACTION

Source: MIA MGA UN

Contributors to this issue: Angela Reed rsm, Colleen Cloonan, Denise Boyle fndm, and Betty Lacey

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## NEWS FROM THE MIA MERCY GLOBAL ACTION OFFICE UN

### IRELAND'S UN CAMPAIGN

Last week I attended the launch of Ireland's Candidature to gain a non- permanent seat on the UN Security Council for 2021-2022 term.

The launch was held on the North Lawn of the United Nations headquarters in New York. It was an impressive event, with Irish flags strewn liberally across white marquis and a great spread of traditional Irish fare, along with Irish music and dancing, not to mention the Guinness.

Present on stage for the official launch was the Prime Minister of Ireland, Leo Varadkar, Irish Foreign Minister, Simon Coveney, former Irish President, Mary Robinson and Irish rock singer, Bono. Moderating the event was Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason, the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations.

The Irish campaign focuses on three key themes: Empathy, Partnership and Independence. The speeches were passionate and convincing, it didn't feel like a 'power pitch' there was something inherently earthy in the delivery of each one's speech. What struck me most powerfully, was the strong message of solidarity with other smaller nation States. There was a strong reminder from the podium not to forget the stories of Ireland, that is, the story of a small island nation off the coast of Europe that was colonized, experienced famine, as well as mass outward migration and poverty.



Photo: MIA: MGA at the UN

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

777 UN PLAZA, 6TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10017 T: 1 646 227 1878

MGA UN COORDINATOR: SR. ANGELA REED RSM PHD E: [MERCYREP@MERCYINTERNATIONAL.IE](mailto:MERCYREP@MERCYINTERNATIONAL.IE)

# IRELAND'S UN CAMPAIGN...CONTINUED

In speaking of the contribution of Ireland to the United Nations, Prime Minister, Leo Varadkar stated “Like the United Nations, we were born out of war and violence. It has shaped how we view the world and our responsibilities as global citizens. Our membership of the United Nations helped us to take our place among the nations of the world. We support a rules-based order in international affairs. We have acted as a voice for the disadvantaged and defenceless, promoting freedom and defending human rights.”



Photo: MIA: MGA at the UN



Following his words, Mary Robinson reflected on what a seat on the Security Council involves. “It is a hard, hard labour of love if you really love what the UN stands for and I think Ireland really does,” she said. Bono followed with further inspirational words about the UN in general, claiming, “It’s about its future and indeed whether it has one, whether its values still matter - and they better; whether peace is still possible and who will speak for those normal ideas when the heat is on,” he said. He urged the UN to “all become storytellers of a future we want to share” and that the story needed to be told “with imagination and passion and conviction.” “We are storytellers but this is the best story ever,” he said of the UN.

I couldn’t help but think of the work of the Sisters of Mercy and our Irish heritage, a ministry first sown by an Irish woman who responded to the needs of her time and whose charism now spreads across the globe, calling all of us to respond to our world with compassion and love.

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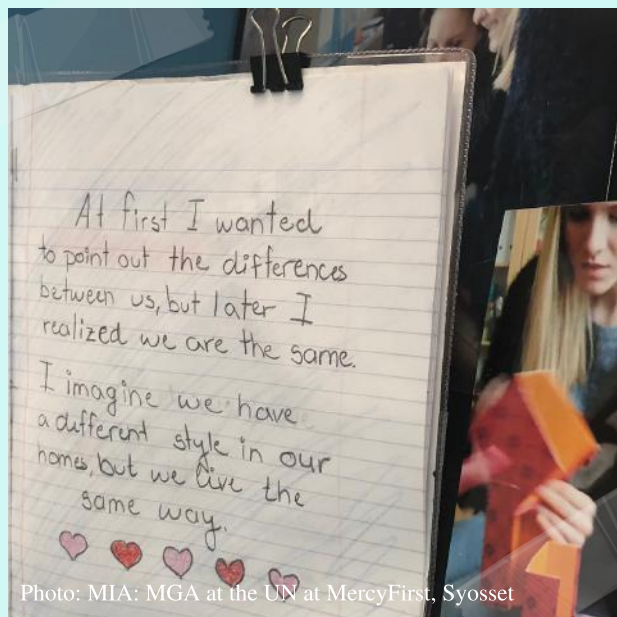
777 UN PLAZA, 6TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10017 T: 1 646 227 1878

MGA UN COORDINATOR: SR. ANGELA REED RSM PHD E: [mercyrep@mercyinternational.ie](mailto:mercyrep@mercyinternational.ie)

# THROUGH OUR ECOSOC\* EYES...

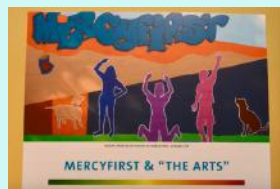
## World Refugee Day

June 20th marked World Refugee Day. First observed in 2001, this day commemorates the strength, resilience, courage and perseverance of the millions of refugees on the move.



In a statement regarding the international day, Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres highlighted how "Today, more than 68 million people around the world are refugees or internally displaced as a result of conflict or persecution...we must all think about what more we can do to help. The answer begins with unity and solidarity." Offering a way forward, the Global Compact on Refugees will be presented to the General Assembly later this year. The Global Compact recognizes the contributions and benefits that refugees make to our societies and in return, it is integral to ensure that those seeking refuge receive the assistance and protection they need. To listen to Antonio Guterres' full video message, click [here](#).

## WAYS TO STAND WITH REFUGEES



MercyFirst in Syosset, New York is home to unaccompanied minors ages 6-12 from Central American

countries, including Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras. Last year, some of the children took part in an art therapy project entitled "Hope Holds No Borders" in which they sent positive messages to refugee children living in Turkey. This art exchange was on display at the United Nations. This World Refugee Day, MIA: Mercy Global Action at the UN visited MercyFirst to learn more about their work. Read a recent article about them [here](#).



A micro site of *News Deeply*, *Refugees Deeply*, is

dedicated to reporting in dept coverage of the global refugee crisis. Follow this link for articles, events, background information and more!



Inspired by Pope Francis' call to encounter refugees and migrants, 'Share the

Journey' seeks to "change people's hearts and minds about migrants, mobilize the time and talent of Catholics...[and] inspire people to advocate for better policies". To learn more about this project of Caritas Internationalis, click [here](#)!



To defend human rights, it is important to stand up against racism and intolerance in our communities. The United Nations

has been encouraging us all to #FightRacism and advocate for the rights of racial or other minorities. For more information to promote and defend human rights go to <http://www.un.org/en/letsfightracism/>

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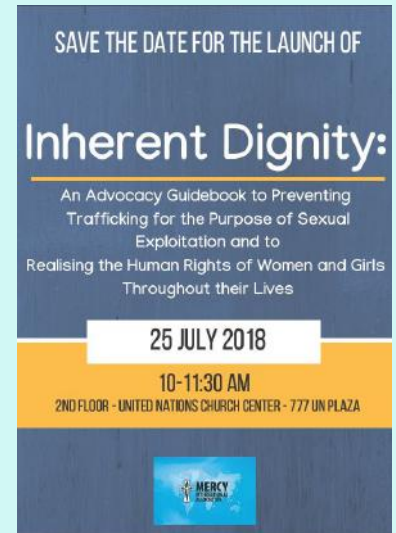
# THEMATIC AREAS

## DISPLACED PERSONS



- ***Mercy International Association: Mercy Global Action at the UN invites you to the launch of 'Inherent Dignity: An Advocacy Guidebook to Preventing Trafficking for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation and to Realising the Human Rights of Women and Girls Throughout their Lives***

Mercy International Association: Mercy Global Action at the UN has the pleasure in inviting you to the launch of our recent publication entitled *Inherent Dignity* on 25 July from 10-11:30am on the 2nd floor of the Church Center of the United Nations. This publication serves as an advocacy guidebook to preventing trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation and to realising the human rights of women and girls throughout their lives.



Our guide was born from extensive research which exposed how most survivors of human trafficking experience cumulative disadvantage and marginalization over their lifetime caused by multiple breaches in international human rights law. Parallel to this, there are many existing international human rights mechanisms available to address areas of vulnerability and assert rights. This guide aims to challenge the current discourse on human trafficking which more than often describes trafficking as a single isolated event. Violations of human rights often occur prior to the experience of trafficking and render women and girls more vulnerable to exploitation; therefore, it is imperative that states take responsibility for ensuring the realization of human rights over the life course. The guide focuses on how the existing international human rights framework can be applied to prevention of human trafficking and how key to any preventative response is listening to the experiences of formerly trafficked women.

Together, we are calling on our members worldwide to engage this issue at the local level while at the international level we continue to highlight the interconnectedness between prevention of human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation over the life course through human rights mechanisms in UN spaces.

This guide will be available in both hard copy, for those in attendance at the event, and online.

## NOTABLE ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INFORMATION RELATING TO MIGRATION

- ***New Drafts of the Global Compact on Migration and Global Compact on Refugees released!***

The final round of negotiations towards a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration will take place from July 9th- 13th. Ahead of the last round, the Co-Facilitators published a new draft of the Compact, Rev. 3. Read the Global Compact on Migration Revision 3 [here!](#)

Negotiations towards a Global Compact on Refugees took place July 3-4th in Geneva. The final draft was released June 26th. Read the final draft [here!](#)

- ***International Organization for Migration Elects New Director General***

On June 29th, the International Organisation for Migration elected Portuguese nominee, António Manuel de Carvalho Ferreira Vitorino, as its next Director General. Mr. Vitorino will assume the Directorship in October 2018. Click [here](#) for more information regarding his background and role.

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# THEMATIC AREAS

*Continued*

## DEGRADATION OF THE EARTH



- ***Sub-Committee of NGO Mining Working Group Launches Companion Document to 'Water and Sanitation- A People's Guide to SDG 6'***

Sub-Committee of the NGO Mining Working Group focusing on the gendered impacts of mining published a paper entitled 'Water, Women and Wisdom'. This two page document serves as a companion to '**Water and Sanitation: A People's Guide to SDG 6'**.

"Women, Water and Wisdom' recognizes that "Women and girls, especially rural and indigenous women, have knowledge and experience that is critical for the achievement of SDG 6, and as such need to play a central role in the provision, management, and safeguarding of water. A gender-sensitive approach to SDG 6 would not only contribute to women's and girls' enjoyment of their human rights to water and sanitation, but also contribute to their economic and political empowerment, improve opportunities for girls to go to school, and reduce gender-based violence and the gendered impacts of illnesses and food insecurity." Further exploring a gendered lens to water and sanitation, this document delves into the educational and economic dimensions, along with components such as health, gender based violence, food security and agriculture, and lastly recommendations to states and stakeholders.

To read this document and distribute to your networks, click **here!**

- ***CIDSE blog on extractivism***

To read further about the gendered impacts of mining and extractivism, CIDSE, the International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity, has a Gender Equality Blog which discusses areas in which women are threatened by extractivism. Click **here** to read one account from the Tsilhqot'in Nation in British Columbia.

## BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

- ***Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See Intervention at Human Rights Council***

His Excellency Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Permanent Observer of the Holy See made an intervention at the Human Rights Council in favor of international corporate regulation and a UN binding treaty. Key to his statement is the need for an "ethical approach that can ensure a decent standard of living realized through respect of human dignity, rather than a mere economic interest." Read his full statement **here**.



***To learn more about the process towards a binding treaty, read Harris Gleckman's publication "Options for a UN Treaty on Business and Human Rights".***

## “USEFUL RESOURCES

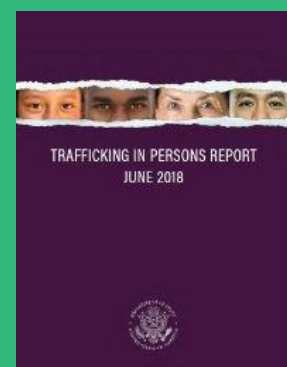
NGO Committee on Migration  
"I am a Child!"



**OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement in the Extractive Sector**



**U.S. Department of State  
"Trafficking in Persons Report 2018"**



**DW Documentary "The Rich, the Poor and the Trash"**



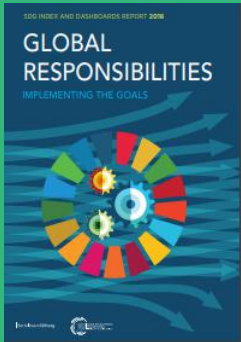
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# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- ***The United Nations High Level Political Forum (HLPF) is underway in New York***

On July 9th, the United Nations High Level Political Forum began in New York and will finish on July 18th. The High Level Political Forum is the United Nations follow-up and review platform on Sustainable Development, reviewing the implementation and commitments made in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This year, the theme is "transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies" and will review Sustainable Development Goals 6, 7, 11, 12, 15, and 17. To tune in and watch the events at the High Level Political Forum go to <http://webtv.un.org/>.



With the HLPF underway, the Bertelsmann Stiftung and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) released their annual SDG Report "Global Responsibilities-Implementing the Goals". This publication introduces an assessment of government efforts to achieve the SDGs, demonstrating which countries have taken the most significant steps and which need to increase their efforts to achieving the goals by 2030. Read more about this publication [here](#).

The United Nations has also released their own "Sustainable Development Goals Report 2018" with an overview of each of the goals, interlinkages, and delves into the goals that are under review for the HLPF. This Report is available online in all six United Nations languages, click [here](#) to read!



## USEFUL RESOURCES

***On June 19th, UN Women, in partnership with Justice Rapid Response, launched an interactive website to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict. This website highlights ways in which UN Women is working towards ending impunity for sexual and gender-based violence as they are pervasive human rights violations. In addition to the strides that UN Women has been taking, the website includes facts, figures and case studies about war crimes, along with voices from survivors and investigators. To access this website click [here](#)!***

## UPCOMING EVENTS

*Some events MIA at the UN will be participating in*

- **9th July- 18th July -High Level Political Forum**
- **9th July- 13th July- Intergovernmental Negotiations for the Global Compact on Migration**
- **18th July- MIA: MGA at the UN Valuing Water Side Event**
- **25th July -MIA: MGA at the UN Launch of Human Rights and Human Trafficking Guide**
- **31st July-3rd August- Young Mercy Leaders Conference**

# NEWS FROM THE MIA GLOBAL ACTION (INTERNATIONAL CENTRE)

## NEWS UPDATE

As I write we are basking in beautiful summer weather that has lasted for two weeks, an unusual reality in Ireland! If it continues too much longer, there is genuine concern for the farmers as water shortage is a possibility.

I was delighted to be invited to participate in the International Conference on 'Laudato Si' in the Vatican, to mark three years since the publication of Pope Francis' ground breaking ecological encyclical. There were 400 participants from across the globe, including a significant number of young people, thus ensuring that it was a lively event as we discussed with enthusiasm and hope, working towards the full implementation of the central message of Laudato Si – On Care for Our Common Home! The audience with Pope Francis was the highpoint of the conference, see a short extract from his address to us below. To our delight, Francis said that he would like to greet everyone and he did, shaking hands with all 400! Prior to doing this Francis told Cardinal Turkson, who hosted the Conference that greeting each person is a sacramental moment, as he knows how far people have travelled and what it means for him and them to greet each other.... In late August Pope Francis is coming to Ireland to close the World Meeting of Families that is being held in Dublin. See Betty Lacey's article on this important visit. Denise was present at the launch of the Jesuit Refugee Services Report: 'Sharing Responsibility, Saving Lives' see her article on this, highlighting the urgency of all Governments to address the critical issue of refugees.

Peace,  
Denise Boyle fmdm  
Team Leader Mercy Global Action



## SHARING RESPONSIBILITY, SAVING LIVES – JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE

On 22nd June, the Jesuit Refugee Service launched their report 'Sharing Responsibility, Saving Lives' critically analysing the EU and Ireland's response to the Refugee Crisis, between September 2015 and December 2017.

Among the key findings is the fact that the EU failed miserably to deliver on its relatively modest commitments during this period. Collectively the EU promised to relocate 160,000 refugees, but in reality only one in five of these promised places were delivered by the end of 2017!

In launching the report Fr. Leonard Moloney SJ, the Jesuit Provincial in Ireland shared the UNHCR statistic that globally there are a record 68.5 million migrants, who have been forcibly displaced. Of these 25 million were forced out of their own countries, reflecting that leaving their homes or countries was one of desperation, because of conflict, religious persecution or de-humanising poverty.

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# NEWS FROM THE

## MIA GLOBAL ACTION (INTERNATIONAL CENTRE)

### Humanising the Refugee Crisis

Speakers throughout the launch emphasised the reality that behind each asylum seeker, refugee, or forced economic migrant, is the human face of a real person. Where communities or individuals welcomed refugees and got to know them, friendship, integration and mutual enrichment followed. In contrast is the attitude of fear towards migrants that is being generated among sections of the general public, who believe that there will be an 'invasion of migrants'. Speakers believe this myth is being promulgated by certain elements in the popular media.

### Myth versus Fact in Relation to Refugees

Fintan O'Toole, a renowned political analyst recently wrote about the enormous disjunction between perception and fact re refugee issues (Irish Times 7th July, 2018). This was confirmed by a question posed to citizens in several European countries and the USA: 'What percentage of your country's population will be Muslim by 2020?' The following responses under 'guess' versus the 'reality' reflect according to O'Toole 'wildly distorted perceptions':

	GUESS	REALITY
France:	40%	8.5%
Italy:	31%	4.9%
Germany:	31%	6.9%
Belgium:	32%	7.5%
Hungary:	14%	0.1%
USA:	23%	1.1%

O'Toole believes that this hyperinflation of facts is the result of 'bad politics'. This is reflected in decisions to close borders, construct walls and renege on previous promises to accept refugees, leaving thousands of desperate and vulnerable refugees literally with nowhere to go! Conscious of the dramatic change in attitude versus Germany opening its borders to all migrants in 2015, there was a massive 44% decline in the number of asylum seekers entering the EU in 2017 compared to 2016. This is in stark contrast to countries like Lebanon, Jordan (25% of its population) Pakistan, Germany, Iran, Ethiopia and Uganda who 'welcome the stranger'. Mt.25:35

Fr. Chad Gonzaga SJ from the Philippines, through some very moving slides, shared the statistic that in the three year period 2015-17 one and half million people seeking refuge in Europe arrived by sea. Tragically 11,986 women, men and children seeking refuge in Europe, lost their lives at sea making these perilous journeys.

In a particularly thought provoking slide, Fr Chad showed a photo of Alan Kurdi, the three year old toddler found dead on a beach close to a tourist resort in Turkey, in September 2015. The slide shows Alan's little body looking as if he is asleep, superimposed on a small bed in a child's bedroom. Fr. Chad simply said Alan's parents set out for Europe in the hope that they would find security for their family...

### Refugee Issue – Addressing Root Causes.

During the wide ranging discussion following the launch of the report, reference was made to the importance of the UN, EU and individual countries addressing the root causes underlying the global mass movement of migrants. It was agreed that conflict and endemic or systemic poverty are complex issues and not easy to address. The UN Global Compacts endeavouring to share responsibility fairly and equally for migrants globally are a sign of hope, however the fact that countries opted to make these non-binding agreements, is very disappointing.

# NEWS FROM THE

## MIA GLOBAL ACTION (INTERNATIONAL CENTRE)

In countries facing a significant housing crisis it was agreed that Governments must approach the reality not with an either/or mentality, rather seek to find a solution whereby citizens and refugees can be catered for together. One obvious way is to permit refugees to work within six months of arrival i.e. once their papers reflect that there is a strong possibility they will be granted asylum status in the country.

### Conclusion

The launch of this excellent and thought provoking report: 'Sharing Responsibility, Saving Lives', served to highlight the critical situation that migrants are facing today. Whilst Governments play a key role in facilitating a positive response to the plight of those seeking asylum in their countries, citizens have an important role in ensuring this is the reality. Projects whereby a community in many of the small towns in Ireland for example, welcome a number of families into their midst, providing essential services underpinned by a genuine welcome and respect, is proving very effective.

This welcoming hospitality reflects Pope Francis' words:

*'Faced with the tragedy of tens of thousands of refugees who are fleeing death by war and by hunger, and who are on a path toward a hope for life, the Gospel calls us to be neighbours to the smallest and most abandoned to give them concrete hope...'* Pope Francis, September 2015.

See: <https://jrs.ie/index.php/jesuit-refugee-news/488-sharing-responsibility-saving-lives>

## UPDATE ON THE WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES 2018 in Dublin, Ireland

In 1994 the United Nations declared that year the "International Year of the Family". The Pope at the time, John Paul II wanted the Church to celebrate this event so the first World Meeting of Families (WMOF) was held in Rome in 1994.

This was followed three years later by Rio de Janeiro (1997), Rome again (2000), Manila (2003), Valencia (2006), Mexico City (2009), Milan (2012), and Philadelphia (2015). This year, 2018 sees the event moving to Dublin beginning on August 21st, culminating with the Papal Mass in the Phoenix Park on Sunday August 26th.



Although the visit of Pope Francis is short 25-26th, prior to this a three-day Pastoral Congress will take place at the RDS (Royal Dublin Society) from August 21st to 24th. During this time there will be a daily programme of workshops and discussions as well as fun and prayerful activities for individuals, families and children. The highlight of each day will be the celebration of the Eucharist in the main arena.

The World Meeting of Families will focus on key issues related to family drawn from Pope Francis' teachings in 'The Joy of Love' (Amoris Laetitia). Some of these include:

1. The role of education in raising families out of poverty
2. The impact of conflict on families and children
3. The role of technology i.e. mobile phones and computers on Family life.
4. Building a more sustainable approach to the environment, faith, family and the economy.
5. Women's leadership roles, globally and locally

# NEWS FROM THE MIA GLOBAL ACTION (INTERNATIONAL CENTRE)

## The WMOF in 2018 is going green with the 'Our Common Home' project.



In response to this call from Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*, the WMOF2018 is going green and is inviting everyone into a conversation about how we can all care for 'Our Common Home'. This is in response to Pope Francis' call to each one of us to listen to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. Pope Francis reminds us that it is the poor who suffer the most from environmental destruction. He urges each of us to think deeply about our relationship with nature, and to examine our lifestyles and current way of living. Is it

sustainable and does it lead to environmental degradation or is it time to develop a new sustainable path?

Guest speakers from around the world will be in attendance to discuss what we can do as communities and individuals to help the environment. The Archbishop of Yangon, Myanmar is moderator for a discussion on "Care for our Common Home – Why The Family Matters To The Future Of The Planet". Panelists on this discussion include Dr. Lorna Gold and Mr. Eamon Meehan both from Trocaire, Ireland.

Senator George Mitchell who was the facilitator for the negotiations that led to the Good Friday Agreement, is a panellist on a very topical theme namely "The Family as an Agent of Peace in a Turbulent World". The keynote speaker for this session will be Cardinal Mario Zenari, Apostolic Nuncio to Syria." Others include Dr Monica Mc Williams, Academic and Former Politician, Ireland (North) and Sr Annie Demerjian, Aid to the Church in Need, Syria.

Other issues directly related to MIA include a discussion on "The reality of Human Trafficking – a Tragedy for Families and Society". Mr. Kevin Hyland, the former head of the Metropolitan Police Service's Human Trafficking Unit and also the first Anti-Slavery Commissioner in the UK is the keynote speaker. The panel discussion following this will be chaired by Sr. Mary Ryan rsm and the panellists include Ann Mara and J.P. O'Sullivan, both from the Irish MECPATH campaign. A representative from Ruhama (a Dublin-based NGO that works with women affected by prostitution and commercial sexual exploitation) will also participate.

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, Archbishop of Manila, Philippines will deliver a keynote speech on a topic that Pope Francis addresses in *Laudato Si'*, namely the 'throwaway culture'. Titled "Choose life: Pope Francis on the Throw-away Culture", this talk will address the very important driver of over production and the disposal of everyday goods.

All the issues addressed at the Papal Congress are a matter of urgency. The world must react immediately to the crucial issues of climate change and the disposal of waste, which pose as undeniable risks to our common home.

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis issued the challenge to move away from the 'dominant technocratic paradigm associated with the 'superdevelopment' of a wasteful and consumerist kind' LS 109 - to care for Earth and all creation. The time has come therefore, to inspire a massive movement to protect and nurture our imperilled common, planetary home. Every step, big or small, plays a significant role in helping us prevent the destruction of our fragile earth. This is one of the most important messages that WMOF 2018 wants to deliver.

**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](http://www.mercyworld.org)**

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