

MERCY GLOBAL ACTION NEWSLETTER

APRIL/MAY 2019 | VOLUME 3 ISSUE 5



NEWS FROM THE MERCY GLOBAL ACTION OFFICE

'Happy Easter to each one of you. In New York, Spring is emerging and many budding flowers are bursting forth with colour and bringing life to the city.

This past month the MGA staff have been on the move both internationally and within the US. Angela travelled to Rome to represent MGA at a Vatican Conference in Rome and Colleen made a road trip to Salve Regina in Rhode Island to spend numerous days sharing the Eco justice agenda of MGA. Marian Kept the homefires burning in New York and represented MGA at the ECOSOC youth forum. We hope you enjoy reading of these events and more in this edition of the newsletter.



IN THIS ISSUE

THEMATIC AREAS

INSIDE THE UN: THROUGH OUR ECOSOC EYES

MGA HLPF SERIES

MGA A WAY FORWARD

USEFUL RESOURCES

UPCOMING EVENTS

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE:
ANGELA REED RSM, COLLEEN
SWAIN, AND MARIAN GARDNER





THEMATIC AREAS

DEGRADATION OF EARTH



Photo: MGA
Left to Right: Amy Cady, Colleen Swain, Matthew Kelly

• *Colleen Swain Shares MGA's Eco- Justice Agenda to Salve Regina University!*

During Earth Week on Salve Regina University's campus, Colleen Swain ('16, '17 MA alumnus) was invited to headline several events. Colleen presented at an event entitled "Environmental Justice as a Work of Mercy" and highlighted Mercy Global Justice and Advocacy in action through her participation as delegate to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 24th Conference of Parties in Poland last December. She encouraged students to "have the courage to face the realities of our time and allow ourselves to feel deeply enough that it transforms us and our future".

In addition, Colleen hosted a luncheon dialogue for faculty, staff and community partners on "Call of Mercy and Care for the Earth" and was a keynote presenter at the Navigator Program's Symposium and discussed "Discerning Vocation in Response to the World's Needs: Mercy Justice Advocacy".

• *The Mercy Asia Pacific gathering in Samoa inspires a meeting with the Ambassador of the Permanent Mission of the Independent State of Samoa to the United Nations*

The MGA team met with H.E. Mr. Aliioaiga Feturi Elisaia, Permanent Representative of the Independent State of Samoa to the United Nations. The meeting's agenda included a report on the gathering of the Sisters of Mercy in Samoa and an offer of solidarity to the Asia Pacific initiatives on climate change. Ambassador Elisaia expressed great gratitude for the Sisters of Mercy and agreed to collaborate on numerous levels, including at grassroots level with the Sisters and with MGA at the UN High Level Political Forum in July 2019.



Photo: MGA
Left to Right: Ambassador Elisaia, Angela Reed, Colleen Swain, and Marian Gardner

DEGRADATION OF EARTH

CONTINUED...

- *Responding to the Cries of the Amazon*

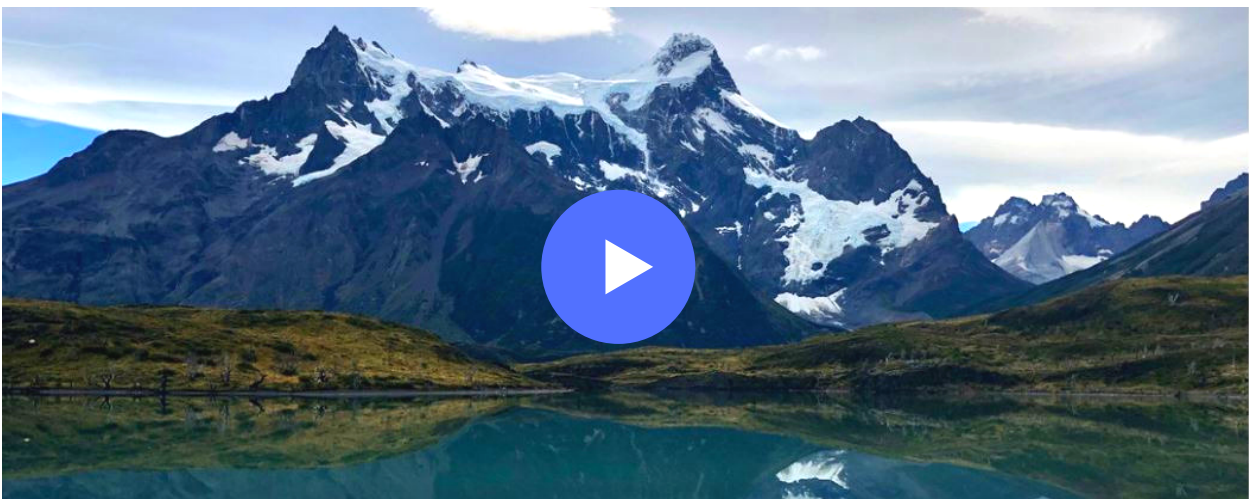
The United Nations NGO Mining Working Group, which Mercy Global Action is a member of, co-sponsored an event titled “Towards an Integral Ecology: responding to the Urgent Cries and Horizons of the Amazon” during the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the UN hosted the event, and other co-sponsors included, Red Ecclesial Pan Amazónica (REPAM), Conselho Indigenista Missionário of Brazil, and the Justice Coalition of Religious.



The event took place in preparation for the upcoming Synod on the Amazon: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology, which will take place at the Vatican October 6-27, 2019. During his remarks, Fr. Justino Rezende, a member of the Pre-Synodal Council of the Synod of the Amazon and the only indigenous priest participating in the pre-Synodal meetings, stated “Often when we defend our land and culture, we are blamed for preventing progress, but we cannot have progress equal to destruction. Progress needs to be defending humanity, not destroying it.” Read more about the event [here](#).

- *United Nations Chief Calls for the Protection of the Planet on Earth Day!*

To Mark Earth Day on 21 April, UN Secretary General, António Guterres tweeted "This Video is a poignant reminder of the urgent need to protect the planet. On #Earthday & every day, take #ClimateAction in every way you can. " Watch the video below! President of the General Assembly, Maria Fernanda Espinosa, also called for immediate action tweeting "We are the last generation that can prevent irreparable damages to the planet and to its inhabitants."





THEMATIC AREAS

DISPLACEMENT OF PERSONS

- ***Mercy Global Action Presents at Vatican Conference on Trafficking***

Angela Reed rsm presented a paper entitled 'Responding to Survivors of Human Trafficking', at a recent International Conference. The Conference was held in Rome from 9-11 April and was convened by the Migrants and Refugees Section of the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. Focused on the newly published '[Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking](#)', the conference brought together 200 service providers, academics, policy makers and pastoral agents. At the heart of the conference was the aim of sharing best pastoral practice in relation to working on the issue of human trafficking and with survivors. The conference concluded with a private audience with Pope Francis in which he addressed all the delegates. He stated 'The numerous initiatives that place you in the front line in preventing trafficking, protecting survivors and prosecuting perpetrators are worthy of admiration...much has been done and is being done...but their remains much yet to do'. Address to Participants given by Pope Francis can be accessed [here](#).



- ***Mercy Global Action Co-Sponsors Event on Traditional Knowledge Sharing on Human Trafficking***



Mercy Global Action co-sponsored an event entitled "Grandmother Council: Anishnabe Training Bundle for Sharing Knowledge on Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation" during the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII). Panelists included, Jessica Desmond-Solon, a trafficking survivor advocate, Grandmother Isabelle Measwasige, and Dr. Cindy Gaudet, assistant professor in Indigenous Studies, University of Alberta, Canada. Sheila Smith, UN-NGO Representative Society of the Sacred Heart, and a long time advocate for the Ojibwe community, moderated the panel discussion. The event highlighted how indigenous women and girls are disproportionately impacted by human trafficking and the significance of a culture-based response to trafficking.

The historical roots of trafficking in indigenous communities include, loss of identity and hope, control and fear, and loss of family ties, when family and friends reject victims or due to shame. The training bundle was created in partnership between Persons Against the Crime of Trafficking in Persons (PACT) and the Grandmothers. The creation of the training bundle began with a Indigenous led research project in Ottawa, Canada, where the Grandmother's created a coalition to understand the issue of human trafficking in their communities. The research used a relational methodology, which respects indigenous perspective and their way of living. Indigenous women's work is often underfunded, so the Grandmothers are filling the gaps through using traditional knowledge to prevent trafficking and heal survivors. Watch the event on Facebook live [here](#)

- ***Register for Inherent Dignity Webinar Session Two!***

Session Two of the Inherent Dignity Webinar Series titled, 'Governments' Obligations to Prevent Trafficking', will take place on Friday, 24 May, 9:00 A.M. - 10:00 A.M. [New York Time]. Please click [here](#) to register!

At the United Nations **THROUGH OUR ECOSOC EYES...**



- *Marian Attends Youth EcoSoc Forum*

On 8 and 9 April, Marian Gardner, Mercy Global Action intern, along with nearly 1,000 youth advocates from around the world, was selected to participate in the 8th Annual Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum at the United Nations in New York. The Forum was co-organized by ECOSOC and the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. With the theme, "Empowered, Included and Equal" this year's Forum aimed to focus on ways to empower, include and ensure equal opportunities for young people. The two-day forum included discussions on empowerment and engagement of youth in the 2030 Agenda, interactive round-tables on youth, peace and security, breakout session on key regional concerns and priorities for youth, among other discussions. During one of her remarks, Jayathma Wickramanayake, the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, stated, "Let us make sure that youth participation is the rule not the exception. Make sure you're not the lucky ones to have a seat at the table, but rather let us be a door opener."

MGA HLPF SERIES



- *Inputs to the High-Level Political Forum*

In our last month's newsletter issue, we provided a brief introduction to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), which is the central platform for reviewing and following up on the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the global level.

The main feature of the HLPF are Voluntary National Reviews or VNRs. The 2030 Agenda encourages Member States to "conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country driven" (Paragraph 79). VNRs aim to facilitate the sharing of experience, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, as well as mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the SDGs (Paragraph 84 of the 2030 Agenda). For the 2019 HLPF meeting, 48 countries will be presenting their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). Click [here](#) to see the list of reporting countries.

In addition to the VNRs, there are various processes and meetings that provide inputs to the SDGs being reviewed in-depth (SDG 4, 8, 10, 13, 16, and 17). These include, Expert Group Meetings (EGMs) and Stakeholders E-Consultations on each of the SDGs under review; Regional Preparations, where each region hosts a sustainable development forum to collect inputs from the local, national, and regional levels; the Secretary General's SDG Progress Report; Inputs from UN System; and Inputs from Major Groups and other Stakeholders.

In accordance with Paragraph 89 of the 2030 Agenda, nine major groups and other stakeholder organizations are invited to submit coordinated sectoral position papers related to the theme of the HLPF and the SDGs under in-depth review. These inputs are not official documents of the HLPF, but they are posted on the HLPF website, which can be found [here](#). Among the nine Major Groups are; Women, Children and Youth, Indigenous People, and Non-Governmental Organizations. Mercy Global Action is a member of the NGO Major Group, which is the main mechanism through which MGA follows and contributes to the HLPF.

Source: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>

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

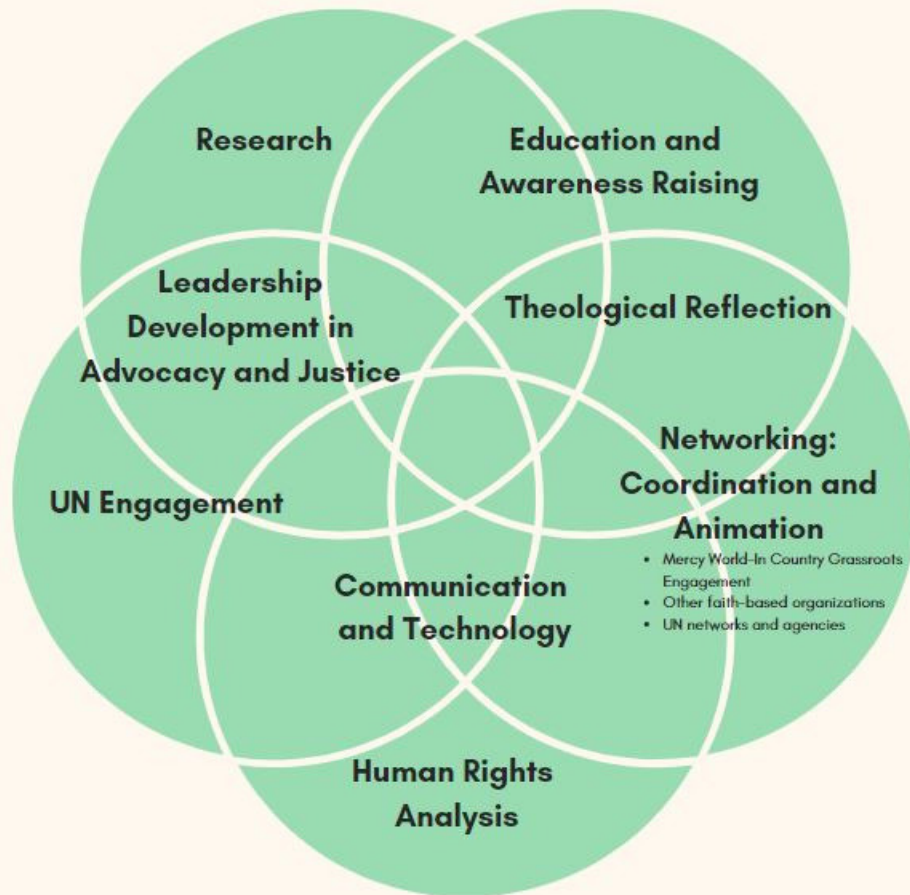
777 UN PLAZA, 6TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10017 T: 1 646 227 1878 E: MERCYREP@MERCYINTERNATIONAL.IE

MGA A WAY FORWARD...

As in past Newsletters we are featuring a section from the "MGA: A Way Forward" document. See [here](#).

LOCATION AND CORE STRATEGIES

Since March 1, 2019, Mercy Global Action has been operating out of and has been coordinated from New York. While it is strategic for MGA to be located in close proximity to the UN, the work of MGA extends well beyond UN processes to international NGOs, faith-based coalitions, and academic institutions. The figure below illustrates the multiplicity of tasks and responsibilities of the office.



COLLEEN ATTENDS ANTI-RACISM ANALYSIS WORKSHOP

Colleen Swain participated in a two-and-a-half day Anti-Racism Analysis Workshop at Cranaleith Spiritual Center in Philadelphia in early April. The Anti-Racism Analysis Workshop was facilitated by the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas' Institute Anti-Racism Team and CrossRoads, an organization focused on dismantling systemic racism and build anti-racist multicultural diversity within institutions and communities. Three analysis workshops are planned for the coming year. Stay tuned for the dates!

STUDENTS FROM CARLOW UNIVERSITY VISIT MGA OFFICE!

On April 5th, twenty students from Carlow University's Honors Program came to the Mercy Global Action Office! Students and Faculty met with Colleen Swain and Marian Gardner to learn more about the ministry of the Sisters of Mercy in international advocacy and justice.

Upcoming later in May, select students from Carlow University, other Mercy Universities, and NY based Mercy Volunteer Corps will come to the MGA Office for intensive two-and-a-half day Mercy Advocacy Days sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas' Conference for Mercy Higher Education.

“USEFUL RESOURCES

Healing Earth Website



2019 State of Civil Society Report Overview and Full



White Fragility (Short Video)



Ecumenical Advocacy Days - Recorded Live Stream of Sessions

2019 National Gathering



Troubling the Waters for the Healing of the



UPCOMING EVENTS AND INTERNATIONAL DAYS

- 11th May World Migratory Bird Day
- 13th-17th May Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction
- 14th May High Level Debate on Inclusive Development and Inequality within and among Countries
- 21st May Event Mining and Gender Equity: Promoting Women's Inclusion
- 22nd May International Day for Biological Diversity
- 21 to 23 May 2019 African Dialogue Series (ADS 2019) at UNHQ in New York "Theme: "Towards durable solutions for forcibly displaced persons in Africa"
- 24th May Mercy Global Action Webinar on Human Trafficking
- 28-30th May Mercy Global Action Mercy University Education in Advocacy Days
- 5th June World Environment Day
- 8th June World Ocean's Day

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

Subscribe to our e-newsletter to learn about our vision in action and the ministries carried out by our member congregations: www.mercyworld.org/subscribe