

MERCY GLOBAL ACTION NEWSLETTER

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MARY REYNOLDS RSM VISITS MERCY GLOBAL ACTION OFFICE!

Angela Reed rsm , Coordinator of Mercy Global Action, was pleased to welcome Mary Reynolds rsm (Executive Director of MIA) as she visited from Ireland to mark the beginning of the newly consolidated Mercy Global Action office in New York. The week hosted by Angela Reed, Colleen Swain and Marian Gardner provided an opportunity for evaluation, forward planning and celebration.



Left to right: Colleen Swain, Mary Reynolds rsm, Angela Reed rsm,
and Marian Gardner

MGA A WAY FORWARD...

THEMATIC AREAS

Degradation of Earth and Displacement of Persons are the two main thematic areas of Mercy International Association. These issues are complex and intersecting. Ultimately, while the naming of specific issues is important, it is critical for Mercy Global Action to focus on root causes. In many instances root cause analysis intersects across all the issues. Outlined below are the issues identified through the Mercy International Reflection Process ([MIRP](#)) as well as those identified by Mercy Global Action.

ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

- 
- Ecological abuse and the effects of catastrophic climate change on people and the planet
 - Fossil Fuel Extraction
 - Garbage & Pollution
 - Mining & Fracking
 - Oceans
 - Sustainable living
 - Violations Against Human Rights Defenders
 - Water

DISPLACEMENT OF PERSONS

- 
- Asylum seekers
 - Family Violence
 - Homelessness
 - Human Trafficking
 - Mental Illness-Dementia
 - Migration
 - Refugees
 - Violation of indigenous people's territorial rights

These concerns are critiqued and informed by Mercy Charism, Mercy Justice Advocacy Approach, Mercy International Reflection Process, Catholic Social Teaching, Laudato Si' and other relevant materials.



THEMATIC AREAS

DISPLACEMENT OF PERSONS

• *Ending Homelessness, a Key Focus for Mercy Global Action*

Steps Mercy Global Action has taken to advocate for the eradication of homelessness

- Joined the NGO Working Group to End Homelessness (WGEH)
- Signed on to a written statement to urge the 57th Commission on Social Development (CSocD57) to address the multifaceted problem of housing exclusion and street homelessness
- Co-sponsored a side event at the United Nations, which examined the underlying causes of homelessness.
- Participated in a two-day conference to discuss strategies and tools for strengthening global advocacy efforts to end homelessness
- Lobbied United Nations Member States to vote for homelessness as the priority theme the 58th meeting of CSocD in 2020.

Under the umbrella of Displacement of Persons, one of the thematic areas identified during the Mercy International Reflection Process ([MIRP](#)), homelessness has emerged as a key advocacy concern for Mercy Global Action (MGA). In 2018, MGA joined the United Nations NGO Working Group to End Homelessness (WGEH) to bolster its advocacy for the eradication of homelessness and the realisation of the human right to adequate, safe and affordable housing for all.

As a member of the WGEH, MGA signed on to a written statement for the 57th Commission on Social Development (CSocD57). The statement urges the Commission to address the multifaceted problem of housing exclusion and street homelessness. Read the full statement [here](#). In addition, MGA helped organise WGEH side-event titled “Homelessness: A prominent Sign of Social inequalities” during CSocD57 with the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations and Institute of Global Homelessness as co-sponsors. The event brought together advocates, researchers, policy makers and people living on the streets to explore the structural causes of homelessness and advocate for a human rights-based response to homelessness.

In February 2019, through WGEH, MGA participated in a two-day conference to discuss opportunities for coordinating existing efforts around ending homelessness and strategizing for effective advocacy at the United Nations. The conference brought together six members of the WGEH, representatives from Institute for Global Homelessness (IGH), National Alliance to End Homelessness, Depaul International, Community Solutions, and a representative from FEANTSA, the European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless.



DISPLACEMENT OF PERSONS

CONTINUED...

The discussions throughout the two-day conference focused on concrete actions in the areas of advocacy, research, education and engagement. Some of the agreed initial strategies include; raise the global profile of homelessness, push for a global measurement of homelessness, and achieve agreement on a global goals related to homelessness. After sharing and unpacking the lessons and outcomes from the conference, the WGEH has drafted a strategic matrix document, which outlines our advocacy priorities, operational and functional structure, and our partnerships moving forward. A final draft of this document will soon be available for sharing.

Following the conference, Mercy Global Action along with members of the WGEH continued our efforts to mobilize support among UN Member States to vote for homelessness as the priority theme for the 58th meeting of the UN Commission on Social Development (CSocD58), which will take place in 2020. The negotiations among member states were contentions as there were five other issues competing to be the priority theme. We are happy to share that the selected priority theme for CSocD58 is “Affordable Housing and Social Protection for All to Address Homelessness.” This gives MGA about a twelve-month lead in to set our advocacy points and policy recommendations in order to effectively advocate and influence the outcome of the Draft resolution.

As a priority theme of next year’s CSocD, the urgent need to address global homelessness will be on the UN Agenda for the first time. As is the practice, the Secretary General will release a report on the priority theme, this means the global situation of homelessness and the need for affordable housing and social protection will be brought to the forefront. Additionally, at the end of CSocD58, a draft resolution will hopefully be passed, which will seek to establish agreed language and a common definition of homelessness. WGEH has started working on a zero draft resolution, which we will provide to the CSocD58 committee responsible for drafting the UN resolution. Additionally, WGEH hopes to build a partnership with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the department responsible for facilitating agreement on resolutions for the Commission for Social Development, in order to move our advocacy agenda forward during CSocD58.

Mercy Global Action is encouraged by this critical step the UN has taken to recognise homeless as a global issue. We will continue to ensure that the grassroots experiences of Mercy Sisters and affiliates across the Mercy World influence global policies on homelessness. As the MIRP report states, we envision “cities and towns where homelessness is prevented, treated and resolved for all; safe, affordable housing is basic in giving people dignity, hope and a sense of belonging.”

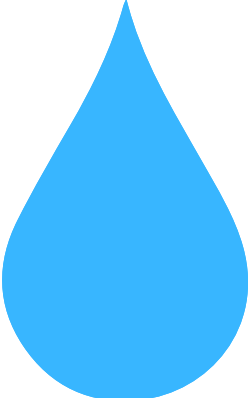




THEMATIC AREAS

DEGRADATION OF EARTH

- *Urgent Words from Pope Francis on World Water Day*



At a meeting of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development in commemoration of World Water Day (March 22nd), Pope Francis sent an urgent appeal to the participants on the issue of water and sanitation. As the United Nations aptly chooses an annual theme for World Water Day, the Dicastery also supported the symbolic theme of "Leaving No One Behind".

The theme comes to life through "evangelical teachings on the loving care for the poor, the humble, and the marginalized; and the social implications of the Christian faith make us long for truly nobody to be left behind in terms of access to water". And in his encyclical, *Laudato si'*, re-iterates "access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights. Our world has a grave

social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water, because they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity". Pope Francis calls on all generations "together with all the inhabitants of the planet --to value and defend what is good." Which "also means being aware of the need to respond with concrete facts; not only with the maintenance or improvement of water structures, but also by investing in the future...[and] overcoming the notion of turning water into a mere commodity, regulated exclusively by the laws of the market."

Read Pope Francis' full statement [here](#).

- *Mercy Global Action to Co-Sponsor Side Events During the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues*

The 18th Session of United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII) will take place April 22nd-May 3rd in New York. This Year's theme is "Traditional knowledge: Generation, transmission and protection".

Mercy Global Action will be Co-Sponsoring an event entitled "Grandmother Council: Anishnabe Training Bundle for Sharing Knowledge on Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation". The Grandmothers Training Bundle is a tool that offers an Anishnabek perspective to those doing the work of protection and prevention of human trafficking. In addition, Mercy Global Action, through the NGO Mining Working Group, will be Co-sponsoring events with the Amazonian Ecclesial Network (REPAM) and the NGO Committee on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on the rights of nature.

As we learn from traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples, Alma Jean Migwans, Ashinabe Grandmother states "we need to know each other's truths and understand each other. We are in a time in the world today, there is powerful energy in every kind of movement. It is challenging us to move forward to pick up our bundles and take over in governance, politics, and healing". Stay turned for a report on these events in the May newsletter.

- *Integral Ecology and the Synod for the Amazon Region - October 2019*

Connecting the theme of the PFII of traditional knowledge, the theme of the 2019 Synod of Bishops for the Amazon region is "The Amazon: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology".

REPAM is a key advisor for the Synod and its "field teams are holding 45 assemblies across nine countries in preparation, with indigenous peoples, rural communities, social movements and pastoral workers. In the words of Pope Francis, 'We need the native peoples to shape the culture of the local churches in the Amazon'". See 'Useful Resources'.

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

- ***Mercy Global Action at CSW!***

On 18 March, 2019, Mercy Global Action, Mercy International Association, along with three other co-sponsoring NGOs including, UNANIMA International, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, and the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, organized a parallel event entitled “Addressing Vulnerability: Collaborative Approaches to Trafficking Prevention through a Human Rights Lens” during the 63rd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The event was also endorsed by the NGO Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons.



Jean Quinn, Executive Director of UNANIMA International, moderated the panel discussions. Panelists included, Ambassador Mr. Valentin Rybakov, Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations, Mely Lenario, a human trafficking survivor advocate, Marietta Latonia, a Professor of Social Work, and Ms. Simone Monasebian, Chief of the New York Office of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Panelists discussed the significance of reducing the vulnerabilities of women and girls to trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation and ensuring that survivor advocates' voices are central to preventive policy. Additionally, panelists called for effective prevention and treatment services, and for the implementation of the Trafficking Protocol and the UN Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. Thank you to all of our panelists and our moderator for participating in this critical discussion and thank you to our engaged attendees. Watch the event on the MIA Facebook page [here](#).

- ***CSTIP CSW event!***

On March 12, 2019, Sister Angela Reed, Coordinator of Mercy Global Action, participated as a panelist in another parallel event for the 63rd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The event entitled “Using The SDGS Preventing Women and Girls' Vulnerabilities to Trafficking” was organized by the NGO Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons (CSTIP), where Sister Angela serves as a member of the steering committee. The other panelists included, Ruchira Gupta, founder/president of Apne Aap, a grassroots Indian organization that works to empower girls and women to resist and end sex trafficking, and Shandra Woworuntu, a survivor leader and executive director of Mentari, a human trafficking survivor empowerment program.

During her presentation, Angela shared about her decade long work with survivors of human trafficking from the Philippines and called on all governments to address the “multiplicity of vulnerabilities” including poverty, lack of access to adequate education, drug and alcohol abuse, community and family violence, and sexual abuse, which put women and girls at a higher risk for being trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

- ***Mercy Meets Mercy during the Commission on the Status of Women!***

Mercy Global Action had a large delegation this year at the Commission on the Status of Women, including staff of MGA, survivor advocates, academia, and staff of MercyFirst in Syosset, New York. In addition, MGA had support at event on "Addressing Vulnerabilities" from Sr. Michele Schroeck rsm and seven youth from the House of Mercy in Erie, Pennsylvania! Thank you!

Reflection of Eileen McGann, MercyFirst Syosset Delegate to CSW

"I wanted to thank you again for all the generous support in facilitating our group from MercyFirst to attend the CSW at the United Nations last week. The programs and side events give us much to consider in our work, and how to move forward to help the mission of the Sisters of Mercy and the values of the UN integrate with the work we are doing at MercyFirst. The art therapy staff was inspired, and we are looking at ways to incorporate through the arts, interventions needed to help keep our youth safe and find ways to heal..."

It was an honor to attend the side event on "Addressing Vulnerability: Collaborative Approaches to Trafficking Prevention Through A Human Rights Lens". The perspective of all the speakers was interesting and valuable. The most moving part of the day was hearing Mely Lenario, Survivor Advocate, share some of her experiences. She is courageous, kind and has a gentle presence, I am so glad you introduced us after the talk."



- *Mercy Global Action and CSW Delegates at St. John's University!*

Angela Reed RSM, coordinator of Mercy Global Action, and Mely Lenario, a human trafficking survivor advocate, Marietta Latonia, a Professor of Social Work, who were Mercy Global Action's delegates for the 63rd Session for the Commission on the Status of Women, presented at "Human Trafficking Unveiled: Women Speak Out" event at St. John's University on 19 March, 2019. The event was organized by Catholic Relief Services, Ladies of Charity, St. John's Vincentian Center for Church and Society and Mercy Global Action. Click [here](#) to read an article about the event, which was published on the The Torch, an independent student newspaper of St. John's University.

Introducing MGA HLPF SERIES



- *What is the HLPF?*

The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) is the central platform for reviewing and following up on the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals at the global level. The HLPF meets every four years under the auspices of the General Assembly (also called the SDG Summit) for two days. The next meeting is taking place 24 - 25 September 2019. Additionally, the HLPF meets annually under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for eight days.

The 2019 HLPF meeting under the auspices of ECOSOC will be held from 9 July to 18 July 2019. This includes the three-day ministerial meeting of the forum from 16 July to 18 July 2019. This year's HLPF theme is "Empowering People and Ensuring Inclusiveness and Equality" and the following goals are being reviewed:

- Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
- Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Mercy Global Action will be paying close attention to the reviews on Goal 10 and 13 while recognizing the interlinkages between all the Goals. Click [here](#) to learn more about HLPF. Please stay tuned for next month's discussion on Voluntary National Reviews and how major groups and other stakeholders participate in the HLPF!

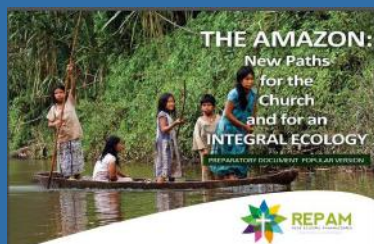
Source: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>

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

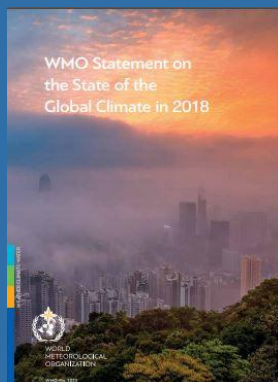
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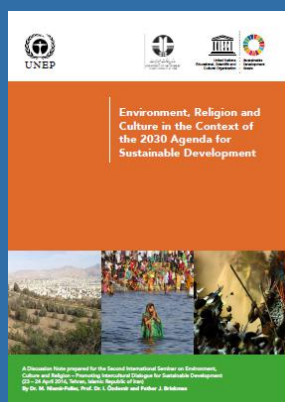
The Amazon: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology



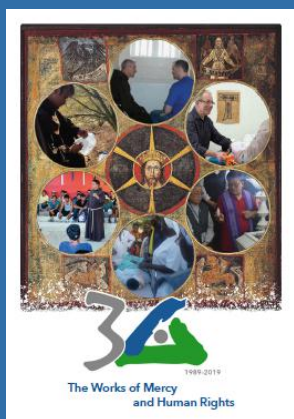
The UN Global Climate Report



Environment, Religion and Culture in the Context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development



The Works of Mercy and Human Rights



UPCOMING EVENTS AND INTERNATIONAL DAYS

- 8-11th April 2019 Angela Reed rsm Moderates Panel at "Releasing those Unjustly Bound: International Conference Pastoral Orientations of Human Trafficking for the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development at the Vatican in Rome
- 7 April 2019 World Health Day
- 15 April 2019 Prevention, Liability and Rights of the Victims: Discussing towards the first Draft of a legally binding Treaty on TNCs and other Business Enterprises with Respect to Human Rights
- 22nd April International Mother Earth Day
- 22 April - 3 May 2019 Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
- 23 April 2019 Mercy Global Action Co-Sponsoring "Grandmother Council: Anishnabe Training Bundle for Sharing Knowledge on Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation"
- 24-25th April 2019 Colleen Swain Presenting during Earth Week at Salve Regina University in Newport, Rhode Island
- 2nd May World Tuna 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

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