



Update

November 2015

WE HAVE A NEW PHONE NUMBER:

Now you can call us at **1 917 426 8285**, or fax our office building at **1 646 290 5001**. And of course you can e-mail us at info@unanima-international.org

This information will be on our website and Facebook page as well. We love to hear from you!



UNANIMA IS COMING TO PARIS!

UNANIMA Board Chair Stacy Hanrahan **CND**, Coalition Coordinator Michele Morek **OSU**, and some other UNANIMA community representatives (e.g. **SNJM**) will attend the UN Climate Change Conference from November 30th to December 11th. If there are any UNANIMA groups who would like for us to give a presentation on *your* work at the United Nations while we are there, please notify Michele at morek.michele@gmail.com. In Paris we will be staying with the **Sisters of Notre Dame de Sion**, but hope to meet other UNANIMA members who might be attending the conference...would you please contact us if you plan to attend? Maybe we can meet for tea.

The Conference Centre where the UN will meet (in Le Bourget, Paris) will not be accessible to all, but France has built a lovely big place for the general public, right next to the Conference Centre. This vast space is open to all, and will host debates, conferences, cultural exhibitions, film screenings, and civil society displays on climate change. For more information check the French government's website (in French, English and Spanish) at <http://www.cop21.gouv.fr/en>

UNFCCC, COP21...WHAT???

France is hosting the 21st Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), otherwise known as COP21. "COP" is made up of the 196 countries who have ratified the UNFCCC. The COP held in Paris will be the 21st, so it is "COP21." This meeting's goal is to achieve a

universal, legally binding agreement to keep global warming below 2°C. It gives industrialized countries the major responsibility for combating it, and will attempt to facilitate a transition to low-carbon societies and economies for all.

The agreement, which will go into effect in 2020, will focus on mitigation—that is, efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions—and societies' adaptation to existing climate changes. It will have to take into account the different needs and capacities of each country. Before COP21 each country must publish its national contribution and describe its national efforts.

Another key objective of COP21 is the mobilization of \$100 billion per year by developed countries, from public and private sources, to help developing countries combat climate change while promoting fair and sustainable development.

BUT CAN WE DO IT?

The Pope called for real climate action, the G7 leaders have already committed to phase out fossil fuels, and the cost of renewable energy is dropping every year. All over the world, national agendas are including clean energy, and millions of dollars are being moved out of fossil fuel investments. A giant climate march will be held in Paris on November 29th; similar expressions of solidarity are being planned all over the world.

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY:

At the UN celebration of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (October 17), people living in poverty from around the world shared messages of hope and progress in spite of struggle and obstacles, with live and videotaped messages. One woman from Ireland said "What keeps me going day after day? I suppose it's what's inside: self-pride, inner strength, and knowing that one day our voice will have to be heard." The day was sponsored by member states France and Burkina Faso, by Franciscans International, ATD



Fourth World, and our NGO Committee for Social Development. There was music and poetry, and the release of a handbook on "Making Human Rights Work for People Living in Extreme Poverty." This publication seeks to translate the UN Guiding Principles on Human Rights and Extreme Poverty into an accessible format for use by people working at

the local level. The handbook and accompanying materials are available in French and English here: <http://franciscansinternational.org/handbook/>

REGISTRATION FOR COMMISSION ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT:

Registration is now open for the 54th Session of the Commission for Social Development, scheduled for February 3-12, 2016. The theme is "Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world." Though the registration deadline is January 25, UNANIMA has only five places left, so anyone wanting to register for the Commission should let us know as soon as possible. There also will be an NGO Forum on February 1-2, but information is not yet available on registration for the Forum. For more information check the website of UN DESA (Division of Economic and Social Affairs) at <http://csonet.org/> Remember that we have to register you for the Commission, but you can register yourselves for the Forum.

FORUM FOR COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW):

Registration for CSW is not open yet, but it is for the Forum; the NGO CSW60 Forum takes place simultaneously with the 60th Session of the Commission for the Status of Women (CSW60) from March 14-26 2016. Anyone wishing to attend the NGO CSW60 forum (including parallel events, regional caucuses, morning briefings) is required to register, but you can do this for yourselves. The theme for CSW60 is: "Women's empowerment and its link to sustainable development." For more information on the NGO CSW60 Forum check the NGO CSW/NY website (NGOCSW.ORG) regularly and for information regarding the Commission: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-and-the-sdgs>; <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw60-2016>

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL A SUCCESS!

If you've been following our updates, you'll remember that the Working Group on Girls has had a busy few months hosting the International Day of the Girl Speak Out at the UN, and many other girls' rights activities. All were huge successes!

On October 2nd, UNANIMA hosted a social media campaign on rethinking media to raise awareness about sexism and stereotyping, and how it affects girls. Dozens from around the world joined the conversation with great creative insight. This campaign was part of the 11 Days of Action, throughout which various organizations sponsored days centered on empowering girls everywhere to achieve their full potential and human rights. We're honored to have been included among such great company!

October 9th was the Speak Out at the UN, organized by the Working Group on Girls and co-sponsored by the missions of Canada, Peru and Turkey. Girls from around the world sent monologues, songs, poems, and art detailing the struggles they face as girls today, and what they would like to see change (in their lives, in their communities, and in the world). At the UN, these submissions became a performance, done by local high school girls, that was intelligent, fun, critical, and displayed incredible talent. You can watch the UN webcast of the Speak Out here: <http://webtv.un.org/search/international-day-of-the-girl-2015/4552639119001?term=International%20Day%20of%20the%20Girl>

Though the International Day of the Girl has passed this year, there are lots of ways to stay active with girls' rights all the time! One such way is to listen to girls, trust their voice, and empower them. You can do that by watching, and sharing, this short video produced by the Working Group on Girls that features girls from around the world discussing the change they need in their communities over the next 15 years: <https://youtu.be/cvaDQ0m3FWQ>



REPORT FROM OUR INTERNS:

Since our Internship started in mid-September we have had access to some of the most important committees / groups within the UN, including:

The Security Council: This body has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It responds to crises around the world on a case-by-case basis and uses a range of options to advance peace initiatives. Recently it unanimously adopted Resolution 2242(2015) on Women, Peace, and Security. The debate highlighted the need for women in leadership positions in peacekeeping.

The Third Committee: This Committee of the General Assembly (GA) deals with social, humanitarian and cultural issues, as well as human rights issues that affect people all over the world. This year they are discussing issues on youth, family, ageing, disability, crime prevention, criminal justice and international drug control. The debate has also included the advancement of women, protection of children, indigenous issues, the treatment of refugees, the promotion of basic freedoms through the elimination of racism and racial discrimination, and the right to self-determination. Two examples of events we attended follow:

Children in Conflict: Leila Zerrougui, Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) for Children and Armed Conflict gave her annual report to the Third Committee on the promotion and protection of the rights of children. She revealed that the plight of children involved in conflict has worsened since 2014, in the Central African Republic, Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Israel, Palestine, Yemen, and South Sudan. She noted the blatant disregard for international law and called on all parties to the conflicts to act in accordance with international humanitarian law. Approaches to solutions included education to counter extremist discourse, and reintegration of former child soldiers, with special attention paid to the needs of girls.

Sale of children and child pornography: Benyam Dawit Mezmur, Chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child drew attention to the challenges of extreme poverty, political and social instability and wide scale criminal violence. He noted the slow pace of ratification of the UN agreements on the sale of children, child

prostitution, child pornography and children in armed conflict. Maud de Boer-Bugucchio, Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children called on states to recover and integrate child victims by carefully selecting and training law enforcement officers, magistrates and social workers along with other trained professionals.

It is heart breaking to listen to these sessions, but the work of the Third Committee leaves no one in doubt about what is happening in our world. NGOs such as UNANIMA pass on information from the grassroots to the United Nations to help make states accountable, seek justice and empower the vulnerable.

--Susan Newland and Amila Rodrigo **SDS**

FLASH POINTS:

- ✓ Doris Testa **CSB**, a **Brigidine** sister from Australia, came for an intensive two-week experience at the UN. She made good use of her limited time, learning how the UN works and how UNANIMA fits into it, and networking with other people and



groups in her areas of interest. Doris serves on her community leadership team and is Senior Lecturer in Social Work at Victoria University. She is very involved in justice issues in Australia.

- ✓ Our **Religious of Jesus and Mary (RJM)** sisters sent detailed information about what it is like for them, still living with the Syrian people in Aleppo. Since the beginning of the crisis five years ago they have helped families—750 families between Aleppo and Alhassakeh—thanks to the support of their community and various charities. They are trying to stay in contact with displaced families whose homes have been destroyed. Winters are harsh, and the price of fuel is high so the people burn plastic and wet wood—even chopping up their furniture—to keep warm, and the fumes make them sick. They can't afford to eat or cook because of electricity and water shortages. Many parts of the city have had no water for a long time, meaning no baths, and sometimes contaminated drinking water. The sisters are buying food, water, fuel, and clothing for those in need. They order clothes from small factories to provide work for the employees.



Some of the women are forced to sell themselves in order to feed their families. The sisters are trying to help girls studying in the university so they can stay in school. So many sad stories! We will be using the individual stories in subsequent Updates to remind us to keep praying for that wounded country and its suffering people,

- ✓ At the opposite end of the Syrian refugee crisis stand the Sisters of **Notre Dame de Sion (NDS)** in Halle, Germany, who are volunteering at one of the refugee welcoming stations, translating, providing financial assistance, helping the children get in school, learn the language, and become integrated into new homes and social life. One of the sisters said that the whole country is thinking about the actions of its government 70 years ago, and is determined to welcome the estimated one million people coming in by the end of the year.

- ✓ UNANIMA Assistant Tori was invited to write a column for the Global Sisters Report.! This is a project of the National Catholic Reporter Online, and it's the third thing they have asked us to be involved in. Here it is: (sorry no translation...it is delightful) www.globalsistersreport.org/node/32886

[Global Climate March](#). Hundreds of thousands of them will be Catholics, organized by the [Global Catholic Climate Movement](#) (GCCM).

ES <https://catholicclimatemovement.global/es/>

FR <https://catholicclimatemovement.global/fr/>

PT <https://catholicclimatemovement.global/pt/>

and their corresponding march pages -

ES espera!

FR <http://catholicclimatemovement.global/la-marche-mondiale-pour-le-climat/>

PT <http://catholicclimatemovement.global/marcha-global-pelo-clima/>