



Update: April 2017

Easter Blessings



from the UNANIMA Staff

Spotlight on the 61st Commission on the Status of Women



The theme of this year's Commission on the Status of Women (CSW61) was "economic empowerment of women in the changing world of work." UI Staff were joined by 11 delegates from our member congregations. Over the course of the two-week Commission, UNANIMA co-sponsored two side-events as an organization, supported two events as a member of the NGO Committee on Migration, and supported three more as a member of the NGO Mining Working Group. Executive Director Jean Quinn found that attending CSW61 offered her a fresh, global perspective on the gender-based obstacles women face to achieving financial independence or economic security. Here are a few of the powerful points she took away from her experience at the Commission:

As we know, the world of work has changed dramatically. Jobs are less likely to be life-long careers, technology has taken over in positive and challenging ways, and many people are creating their own businesses – but sadly the gender gap remains.



According to UN Women, 76.1% of working-age men are in the work force, but only 49.6% of working-age women are. 61.5% of women are engaged in the service sector and 25 percent in the agricultural sector, while just 13.5% work in industry. Globally, women make 77 cents for every dollar earned by men for work of equal value. Only 63 countries comply with the International Labor Organization's minimum maternity leave standards, which recommend that mothers be granted at least 14 weeks of paid maternity leave. Only 67 countries have laws against gender discrimination in hiring practices. In 18 countries, husbands can prevent their wives from working.

Women and girls typically spend more than double the time spent by men and boys on household responsibilities such as looking after siblings, older family members, caring for the sick, and managing the household.

Phumzile Mlambo- Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women, describes this phenomenon as "the unchanging world of unrewarded work, a globally familiar scene of withered futures, where girls and their mothers sustain the family with free labor, with lives whose trajectories are very different from the men of the household."

It is clear that changes are needed in the world of work in order to eliminate the unjust inequalities in the futures of today's male and female children. The former UN Secretary General's report on this topic can be found [here](#) in all six UN languages.

An excellent [collection of articles, photos, videos, and other tools](#) emerging from CSW61 can be found here in English, Spanish, and French.

Town Hall Event with UN SG Antonio Guterres



The new UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres continued breaking new ground at this year's Commission on the Status of Women (CSW61). Keeping a promise to do things differently, Guterres held an unprecedented "Town Hall" meeting at which civil society representatives were given the opportunity to share their most pressing concerns with him directly and to hear his candid responses. Throughout the meeting, Guterres kept his comments frank and short in order to maximize the number of speakers from civil society. Many of these speakers expressed gratitude to the Secretary for his appointment of a woman to several high-ranking positions within UN leadership. The women he appointed to the offices of Deputy Secretary General, Chief of Cabinet, and Special Advisor on Policy were also present at the meeting (see our February Update for introductions of these three officers). [Video of the full session](#) is available in English.

Presentation of 2017 Woman of Courage Award at CSW Event



One of the highlights of CSW61 was an event co-sponsored by UNANIMA, the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, the Sisters of Mercy, the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the NGO Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons, and the U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking entitled *Inherent Dignity, Real Choices*.



Before the panel discussion on the relationship between economic empowerment of women and human trafficking, UI Executive Director Jean Quinn had the opportunity to open the event with the presentation of our 2017 Woman of Courage Award to panelist Marietta Latonio. Jean commended Marietta for her relentless pursuit of justice for trafficked women in the streets of Cebu in the Philippines and acknowledged the personal sacrifice it required. A representative of the Filipino government and a friend of Marietta's was also present to make remarks of admiration and gratitude for her contribution to the anti-trafficking effort in Cebu. As a panelist, Marietta spoke not only of the substance of her work as an officer at the Good Shepherd Welcome House for trafficking survivors in Cebu, but also of the challenge of balancing her trafficking interventions with her responsibilities as a mother and caregiver.



The panel was rounded out by Winifred Doherty, RGS (see article below) and Mariana Vanin of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, and it drew roaring applause from the audience. (Pictured, clockwise from top left: Angela Reed, RSM; Cecilia O'Dwyer, IBVM; Jean Quinn, DW; Marietta Latonio; Winifred Doherty, RGS; Mariana Vanin)

Good Shepherd Sister Speaks Passionately on Human Trafficking at CSW61



At the CSW61 event during which UI presented our 2017 Woman of Courage Award (see article above) Winifred Doherty, RGS, spoke critically about how women are

conditioned from a young age to undervalue themselves and understand their bodies as objects and themselves as commodities. Drawing on examples and expertise of her Sisters work at the grassroots, Winifred detailed what can practically be done to eradicate human trafficking through preventive empowerment. Her presentation can be found here: <http://bit.ly/2oaEcn3>

RJM Students from Mexico Visit UN and UNANIMA



In early March, a group of young women from a secondary school in Mexico run by the Religious of Jesus and Mary, traveled to New York City to compete in a "Model UN" competition being held near UN Headquarters. Model UN is an extra-curricular activity in which secondary schools around the world are engaged. Schools form clubs much like debate teams that meet to practice constructing convincing arguments on an assigned topic. The difference between debate clubs and Model UN teams is that the topics assigned for discussion in Model UN focus specifically on the issues that were addressed at some point in history by the UN system. Students are thus placed in the roles of diplomats of a specific government or UN agency leaders and called upon to diplomatically resolve the issue at hand.

UNANIMA's Executive Director, Jean Quinn, and Executive Assistant, Teresa Blumenstein, had the pleasure of meeting with the RJM students while they were in New York. The group gathered in a hotel lounge and discussed what UNANIMA is,

what purpose it serves at the UN, and what it is like to represent an NGO at the UN rather than a government or agency. The young women were full of questions, making the exchange a true delight for the UI Staff.

If your congregation is sending young people to the UN in the future, you are encourage to put their trip leaders in touch with the UI Staff to arrange a possible meeting during their stay. The Staff would love to get to know them!

War Zone, USA: Hardship and Healing for Indigenous Water Protectors

By Ariana Alvarez, Loretto at the UN intern & NGO Mining Working Group member



When you think of war zones, it is easy to think of something far off. Growing up in the Bay Area of California, I recognized that I would most likely never have to enter a war zone in my life. Yet, you could say I stepped into one in November of 2016. When I arrived to Standing Rock in North Dakota, as I entered Oceti Sakowin camp, a young man said to me, "you're entering a war zone, but don't worry, we're not the ones with weapons." His name was Dakota. Dakota's comment completely shook me. How is it possible that right in the United States, native people - people who belonged to this land first - can feel so attacked to point of warfare? It seems impossible, right? Yet, the most crippling part is that this warfare isn't new- it's been happening for centuries to all of our native, indigenous, First Nations people. And somehow, we've all played a role.

The stories that stretch from Standing Rock's legacy are stories of triumph, unity, spirituality, resistance, but also of trauma. During my stay at Oceti Sakowin (pictured below, source: Matika Wilbur for Indian Country Today), I witnessed police enforcement spray down Water Protectors with fire hoses during a prayer circle we held at Turtle Island (a sacred burial mound) on Thanksgiving Day. This was only a quick peek into the series of attacks that were put onto Water Protectors throughout the duration of people at camp.



What I feel most media outlets failed to highlight about the Standing Rock movement was how spirituality was at the core of it all. Prayer was held every morning and continued throughout the day; prayer for our water, Mother Earth, the Seven Generations to come, and more. Everyone's water was being prayed for; even the water of those enforcing such pain and trauma onto the Water Protectors. That's how selfless the movement was, and still is.

Because of all the trauma that many Water Protectors now carry with them, a beautiful demonstration of support and solidarity has been conceptualized in the form of Earth Mother Community Education Camp in Iowa...The camp identifies itself as a progressive "think tank," with indigenous roots and practice at the core of it all. With sustainable technology and infrastructure, the camp will implement indigenous agricultural practices, and more, to promote a self-sufficient community and camp.

The camp will provide resources and opportunities for professional and personal development through a community of indigenous teachers, community experts, and academic educators...The camp aims to carry the momentum of Standing Rock, but to also provide healing through community. The camp will have sweat lodges and other indigenous outlets for healing and spirituality growth. This is essential for the healing of all who are protecting our water, especially native and indigenous peoples. It is essential that we support outlets that support their well-being, for, they have been constantly knocked down for our comfort for far too long.

2016 UI Woman of Courage Briefs UNANIMA on the role of NGOs in the Global Water Crisis



At their recent meeting, the UNANIMA Board was joined by Meera Karunanathan (pictured at left with Jean Quinn) for the formal presentation of the 2016 Woman of Courage Award. In addition to expressing her gratitude for the honor of being recognized by a group of women of strong conviction, Meera graced the group with a presentation on her work as a defender of the human right to water. Meera shared that her passion for the defense of water was awakened when she learned of the

Cochabamba Water War and thought it outrageous that something as precious as water could be commodified. She then began working for the Council of Canadians' Blue Planet Project (BPP) alongside Maude Barlow, who is known for her victory in getting water named as a human right by UN in 2010.

When the NGO Mining Working Group (MWG) at the UN, of which UNANIMA is a member, needed support in their efforts to defend the human right to water within the text of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Maude referred the group to Meera. Meera was hesitant to step into the bureaucracy of the UN, but was quickly put at ease by the MWG's integrity and willingness to put forth critical analysis and be uncompromising in its demands of the UN system. Together, Meera and the MWG had great success in bringing water to the forefront of a conversation where it had not existed before and securing a reference to "the human right to water and sanitation" into UN 2030 Agenda.

In addition to sharing this success story, Meera gave the group an update on the current status of the global water crisis. She explained that, at this moment in history, water shortage is increasingly being recognized as our biggest emerging humanitarian crisis. Politicians approach this crisis by focusing on shortcomings in science and technology, activist groups like BPP approach it as a political problem and a product of poor decision-making, and corporations approach it as a threat to the perpetual growth model on which they rely and as a critical entry point for expansion of their influence in government. Several corporations with the greatest responsibility for water privatization on a global scale (Coca Cola, Dow Chemical, Nestle, etc.) have created consortium called the 2030 Water Resources Group, which is working through the World Bank to advocate for public-private partnerships (PPPs) that would expand corporate ownership of water resources, writing water policy that bases the value of water on its profitability rather than its intrinsic value, and proposing their policies to low-income States who are desperate for the financial investments those corporations can offer.

Moving forward, Meera stated, it will remain critical that groups like UNANIMA and other members of MWG keep a vigilant watch over this large-scale cooption of water

resources at the UN. BPP is also leading a response at the local level through the [Blue Communities Project](#), which circumvents the difficulty of getting national governments to recognize water as a human right and leverages the fact that local governments are actually responsible for management of water and sanitation. The Project's organizers work with individual communities to get their local governments to commit to recognizing water as a human right; promoting publicly financed, owned and operated water and wastewater services; and banning the sale of bottled water in public facilities and at municipal events. The Project has already succeeded in 20 localities worldwide and sparked a parallel "Blue Churches Movement." Meera closed by welcoming members of the UNANIMA network to act as ambassadors of this BPP project in their respective communities. Anyone interested in taking up this project in her or his locality should [contact UNANIMA](#) to be put in touch with Meera.

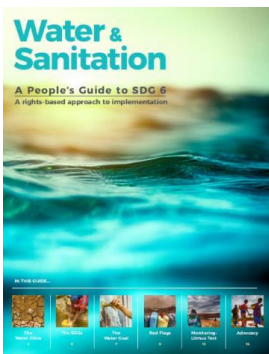
A Call from the UN and Response from NGOs on Climate Change and Water Protection



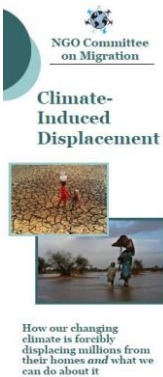
The UN system did not forget to acknowledge the environment in the midst of all the activity focused on women last month. On 23 March, the President of the General Assembly held a High-level Event on Climate Change in the Sustainable Development Agenda. Several governments made statements about the effects of climate change already being experienced by their nations as well as the steps they are taking to mitigate and adapt to those effects. The event opened with a call from SG Guterres to all governments and citizens to join the global effort needed to preserve the only planet we have. Video of Guterres' full comments is available in [English](#), [French](#), and [Spanish](#).

As the SG called for commitment to sustainability from the world's governments,

NGOs were already at work responding to the earth’s cry for justice. On World Water Day (22 March), the Southeast Indigenous Peoples and Feminist Task Force issued a statement highlighting the correlation of exploitation of the world’s water resources with the exploitation of its women, particularly through government-sponsored violence against indigenous women water defenders. The statement also cited the rich tradition of indigenous women’s water protection wisdom as a resource for climate protection that is too rarely utilized by local and national initiatives on water conservation. ([Full statement in English](#))



Two NGO Committees on which UNANIMA serves also released new resources on water and climate justice last month. The NGO Mining Working Group (MWG) published ***Water and Sanitation: A People’s Guide to SDG 6***, which offers grassroots water defenders a rights-based legal framework on which to build their organizing efforts. This water justice guide draws on the expertise on human rights lawyers as well as UNANIMA’s 2017 Woman of Courage, Meera Karunanathan (see article below). The [full guide](#) is available online.



The NGO Committee on Migration has also just published a brochure that

provides an introduction to climate-induced displacement, the phenomenon of climate change and disaster making human habitats unlivable and forcing them to migrate for survival. In addition to describing the scope of this problem, the brochure offers practical recommendations for both governments and individuals who seek to diminish their contributions to it. UI Staff were instrumental in the creation of this resource, which will be distributed directly to every one of the twenty governments the Committee hopes to meet with in the coming month. The brochure is available [here](#).

Both documents are currently only available in English, but the MWG and CoM hope to translate them when funds become available. Please share them widely with your networks!

UNANIMA Board Meeting

Your faithful representatives to the UNANIMA International Board convened in New York for three days in early March. The group engaged in a review of our work of the past six months and our trajectory as we move into the future.



(Pictured from left to right, front: Nonata Bezerra, SND; Karol Brewer (MSC); Ces

Martin, NDS; Maureen Foltz, CV; Mary Akinwale, SHJC; Josée Therrien, RJM; back: Barbara Spears, SNJM; Suzette Clark, RSC; Lucille Goulet, SSA; Stacy Hanrahan, CND; Fran Gorsuch, CBS; Anne McCabe, SM; Jean Quinn, DW; Ellen Sinclair, SDS; Margaret Fyfe, CSB; Barbara Jean Head, OSU; Judy Curley, SASV; Mary Jean Audette, SUSC; Sally Ann Brickner, OSF (CSA); Mary Kaye Nealen, SP)

Flashpoints:



- The UNANIMA Family sends thoughts and prayers of solidarity to the Sisters of the Divine Savior and the members of their community in the Democratic Republic of the Congo who were recently lost their home to the growing conflict in the DRC. Our hearts are with you in this difficult time.
- Hostility toward Anglophones in Cameroon has forced a strike that has now kept Anglophone children out of school for nearly two months. The strike is a response to the repression of English language in the media, internet, and other public and political fora. Cathy Molloy, **CND** who served in Kumbo, Cameroon for 30 years, participated in a recent demonstration against this Anglophone discrimination outside UN Headquarters and was warmly received by the Cameroonians leading the action. Anyone with information on the Anglophone-Francophone tension from Sisters on the ground in Cameroon is asked to contact Stacy Hanrahan, CND (stacyhcnd@gmail.com).



- **Catholic Relief Services** is planning to strengthen their child protection work in Haiti and have asked for our help with data collection, the first step in designing a program. Through an online survey, CRS hopes to better understand what Catholics in the U.S. are currently doing around child health and well-being in Haiti. CRS staff in Haiti are also gathering data in Haiti. **Sisters in the U.S. doing work to support Haitian communities** are invited to assist by completing the 15-minute online survey here: <http://svy.mk/2oQqCrP>. (Photo: CRS)



- **Evangelizing for a more Vibrant, Alert and Aware Church (E-VAAC)** has made three resources available that may prove useful to the strategic planning of Religious congregations with communities in India. They were shared with us by a Sister of Charity at the UN and are available here:
 - *Appreciating the Bursar Situation* <http://bit.ly/2nWmlz8>
 - *Building Credibility: Narrowing the Say-Do Gap* <http://bit.ly/2oQcMFK>
 - *Study on Catholic Families in West Bengal and Sikkim* <http://bit.ly/2ocuBhb>(Photo: AsiaNews)

- **The Samaritan Women** is hosting a conference at the Bon Secours Conference Center in Marriottsville, MD, USA on 11-13 May 2017 for women Religious who work with domestic human trafficking survivors. Scholarships are available. More details here: <http://bit.ly/2nrrDGV>



- A word of inspiration from Maureen Foltz, **CCV** and member of the UI Board: "If the women (young and old) in Syria can persist, then so can we!" (Photo: Amnesty International)

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