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## Update: August 2017

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### **HLPF: A Season of Reflection and Projection on SDG Progress**



At the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015, the Member States of the UN agreed to monitor their national progress toward the Goals at an annual conference to be held at UN Headquarters in New York for ten days each July. The conference was named the High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development and is commonly referred to as the HLPF. Each year, the HLPF focuses on a few specific SDGs and offers a space for about 40 nations to present their progress on the overall 2030 Agenda and on SDG 17, international partnerships for the achievement of all SDGs. At the second HLPF last month, the spotlight was on SDGs 1 (eradication of poverty), 2 (ending hunger), 3 (healthcare for all), 5 (gender equality), 9 (sustainable and inclusive innovation, industrialization, and infrastructure), and 14 (conservation of oceans).



One of the key features of the HLPF (and of the SDGs it seeks to monitor) is the emphasis on the interconnectedness of issues that may appear distinct on their surface. Given the areas of focus for this year, many events were highlighting the relationships between poverty and gender equality, gender equality and hunger, hunger and health, human health and ocean health, ocean health and sustainable industrialization, and sustainable industrialization and poverty. Among the inter-SDG issues being considered were soil health (as it relates to nutrition, hunger, human health, healthy waterways, and sustainable industrialization), sustainable transportation infrastructure (as it relates to sustainable infrastructure, waterway health, human safety and health, and access to other pathways for development), and migration (as it relates to poverty, health, gender equality, industrialization and innovation, and waterway health). One event even offered a workshop on the application of scientific analysis to SDG interactions in order to systematically quantify and map the relationships between various targets of the SDGs and the extent to which they promote or constrain one another. The idea behind this method is to offer governments a scientific strategy by which to create their national development plans that allow development projects aimed at different targets to help rather than hinder one another. More information about this approach is available on the [website of the International Council for Science](#) and in an article that appeared in the [scientific journal \*Nature\*](#).

Amid this rush of activity at UN Headquarters, UNANIMA co-sponsored an event with several of our faith-based NGO partners highlighting the

contributions of Catholic Sisters to the achievement of the SDGs at the grassroots level. The event was held at the Irish Permanent Mission to the UN and opened with remarks from Irish Ambassador David Donahue, who was one of the co-facilitators of the SDG negotiations in 2015.



It then continued with a panel of Sisters who spoke of their work to generating economic opportunities for women and girls in Kenya, providing vocational training and support to women in India, and combatting malnutrition and communicable disease in Mexico. The panelists' presentation painted a rather impressive picture of hope that stood in stark contrast to much of the grim conversation in human rights work. The event was an inspiration and an energizing call to all present to persist toward justice with strength and devotion of great love. A [full recording of the event](#) is available on our Facebook page.



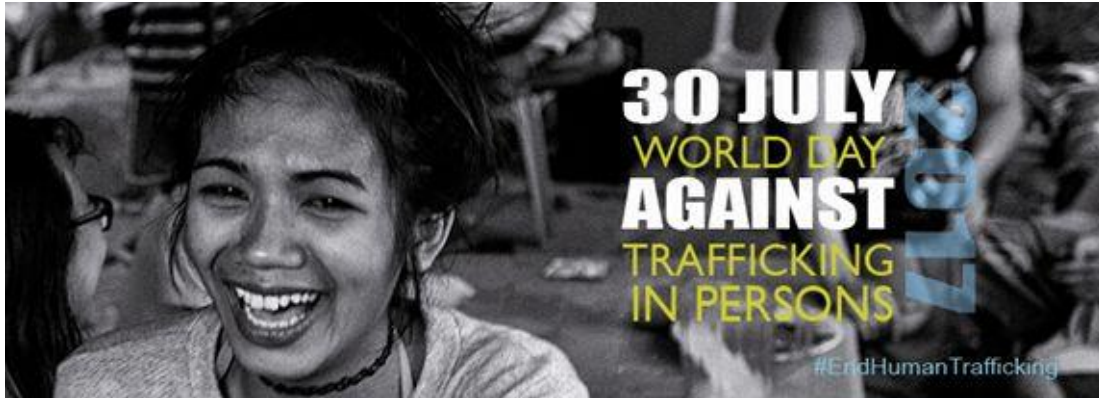
## **New civil society paper on child migrants and refugees**



The NGO Committee on Migration has published a new paper on the particular precariousness of life in poverty for child migrants and refugees entitled *An Overlooked Emergency: The Poverty of Forced Migrant Children*. This new report joins several others produced by the Committee in the past couple years in relation to the particular vulnerabilities of children in migration. The Committee's last two reports on this subject were cited by TheirWorld and Best Start in their discussion of the importance of early childhood development for refugee children in a report on creating safe spaces in emergencies and disasters.

Read the Committee's [newest child-focused publication](#) in English. (Photo source: Greek Reporter)

## **UI and Talitha Kum Unite to Commemorate World Day Against Trafficking**



In preparation for the World Day Against Trafficking, commemorated annually on 30 July, UNANIMA collaborated with a slew of other faith-based organizations in an effort led by Talitha Kum (former initiative of UISG). The group drafted a letter to the UN Secretary General that encouraged continued and increased attention to the prevention of human trafficking and provision of appropriate aid and rehabilitation services to its victims. The letter offers data on the scope of trafficking's impact in the world today, especially on migrants and asylum-seekers facing closed borders and becoming exposed to dangerous channels of irregular migration. It is available in five languages, and everyone in the UNANIMA family is encouraged to share it widely with her or his networks in: [English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#), [Portuguese](#), or [Italian](#).

#### **The Global Compact on Migration Process Marches Onward: Thematic Session #4**



As a continuation of the process in preparation for negotiations of a Global Compact on Migration (GCM), the 4th pre-negotiation thematic session was held in New York in late July. The topic covered in this set of panel discussions and commentary from governments was "contributions of migrants and diaspora to all dimensions of sustainable development, including remittances and portability of earned benefits." (Note: "remittance" is the term used in UN discussions for funds earned by migrant workers that are sent to support family or friends in their countries of origin.) The panel discussions highlighted the massive financial contributions migrants make to the regions in greatest need of capital to support sustainable development. Migrant remittances, they stated, amount to USD \$575 billion annually, of which USD \$429 billion goes to developing countries. In response, most countries reiterated in one fashion or another that migrants a) make significant financial remittances and should be fully included in destination countries' economic structures in order to maximize their monetary contributions to development in countries of both origin and destination and b) make significant "social remittances" by facilitating an exchange of knowledge and culture between countries of origin and destination. One glaring exception to this pattern was the intervention made by the US, which essentially stated that if migrants want to have access to labor markets and the rights afforded to workers in the US, the onus is on them to *find* a safe, regular, and orderly path by which to migrate. As in previous sessions, it seems many States are in favor of creating more international schemes for "circular migration," which would allow for the regular migration of laborers on a seasonal or temporary basis in response to skills and labor needs.



A side-event to the thematic discussion highlighted States who identify primarily as countries of origin who are harnessing the skills and contributions of their diaspora. The session focused on Morocco and several countries in Eastern Europe from which we rarely hear. Representatives of each country spoke of an agency or NGO dedicated to mapping, contacting, and enlisting the skills or other contributions from persons born in their country who had gone abroad temporarily or permanently. Moldova had a particularly interesting initiative called a "Global Excellence Groups" as a part of their broader Diaspora Engagement Hub. The Groups are meant to be comprised of highly educated and experienced Moldovans abroad who have been enlisted to work with Moldova residents as consultants on local-level development projects. This initiative is one example of what States envision when they call for creative "brain circulation" schemes to prevent "brain drain" from countries that identify primarily as countries of origin.

On the topic of this fourth thematic session, UNANIMA submitted the following statement to the co-facilitators of the GCM process:



"On behalf of UNANIMA International, a member of the NGO Committee on Migration, we wish to highlight the critical importance of attention to gender and the particular contributions of the female half of the migrant population in the drafting and implementation of a Global Compact on Migration. On the topic of financial remittances, it bears repeating that women, as both senders and recipients of funds, are more likely than their male counterparts to invest in nutrition, health, and education, which is to say, in the direct achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 2, 3, and 4. Furthermore, women sending remittances have been found to do so with great frequency and predictability than men and to send a larger percentage of their income to their countries of origin. They do so despite the fact that, in dozens of countries, they still face gender-based legal obstacles to passport acquisition, independent mobility, conferral of citizenship to their families, registration of new businesses, access to formal labor markets, access to financial services, and access to just wages. A Global Compact that does not explicitly call for the removal of such legal obstacles and a close in the gender wage gap cannot legitimately be said to have made an effort at recognizing or supporting the development contributions of migrants.





Having spoken of financial remittances, it would be grossly remiss not to emphasize the critical importance of migrants' contributions to social development in their role as living bridges and network-builders between their countries of origin and destination. Human migration is the primary phenomenon by which people of different geographical and cultural origins have come to encounter one another, hear one another, and recognize one another as radically human. On the local level, migrants facilitate the cohesion of an international community bound by universal principles and shared values. Indeed, whatever agreements are reached among Member States in New York, Geneva, or Vienna, most assuredly began as seeds of human solidarity sewn at the grassroots by communities of migrants. It is on this solidarity that the UN was founded and on which the entire notion of sustainable development relies. To deny the value of this contribution would thus be to deny the value of the UN system itself. "

(Photo sources: Associated Free Press, Texas Instruments, World Bank, Commisceo Global)

**Flashpoints:**



- The NGO Committee on Migration is still seeking the expertise of persons working directly with migrants. Please **share your knowledge and experiences of promoting social inclusion and combatting xenophobia** by [completing this survey](#) by **14 September 2017**. (Illustration credit: Jeff Crosby)



- The UN's Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons has issued an **invitation to NGOs aiding victims of human trafficking to submit a request for funding** for their work. If you are working with this population and have a specific project that could benefit from a small grant, you are encouraged to submit a proposal, following the guidelines available in English, Spanish, French, and Arabic in [our online file, Trust Fund for TIP](#). Also in the file are a template proposal and the forms to be submitted with each proposal. (Photo source: UN News Centre)



- The Parisian association Champs de Booz, was created in 2003 to support women asylum-seekers who are seeking protection and integration in France. Alongside lay people, three **Daughters of Wisdom** have been active in the work of this association since its creation. The group welcomes women from all continents, but have found a particular ministry with the women of the seldom-publicized migration from Tibet to France. The women have been persecuted and tortured in their country by Chinese repression. They often arrive in Paris without training in any language other than their home dialect. At the Champs de Booz, they are offered hospitality, French language training, medical consultations, clothing, sewing training, and creative workshops designed to facilitate self-expression and processing of their experiences. The association receives an average of 500 women per year. (Photo source: Champs de Booz)



**Calling all UNANIMA Sisters and associates!**

We want to hear about the work you are doing and the people you serve.

Share a story from your corner of the world by submitting a "flashpoint" to [info@unanima-international.org](mailto:info@unanima-international.org).

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