



NGO NEWS

BY TERESA KOTTURAN SCN FEBRUARY 2018

56th Commission for Social Development

As usual, Sisters of Charity Federation NGO Liaisons and members took time to participate in the 56th Commission for Social Development which took place from January 29 to February 7. The theme of the Commission was “Strategies for eradication poverty to achieve sustainable development for all.”

In the opening remarks, Deputy Secretary General Amina Mohammed “welcomed achievements in reducing extreme poverty, providing access to health care and education and promoting the empowerment of women, youth, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and older persons.” She went on to state that progress on extreme poverty is still a major issue for many countries. With over 750 million people still living in abject poverty, eradication of poverty in all its dimensions will remain as one of the greatest challenges. She called on the countries to address unemployment and underemployment among the world’s youth and the need for ‘social policies and protection that ensure everyone shares the benefits of economic growth and globalization.’

For the past two years, the Civil Society Declaration has been focusing on Social Protection as a coherent strategy for not only eradicating poverty and shared prosperity, but also as a means to undo systemic injustices. Social Protection is not a privilege; it is a right governments of the world have agreed to uphold. Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: “everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international cooperation...” This was reaffirmed in the Social Protection Floors Recommendation of ILO, unanimously adopted by 184 countries in 2012. Sustainable Development Goal 1.3 asks countries to “implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors to achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.”

Universal Social Protection systems would serve as a stabilizing force in a world of instability. Inequalities within and between countries are growing faster than ever; in fact, the extreme wealthy are accumulating wealth at faster rate than the people at the bottom. According to the latest Oxfam report, “Reward work, not wealth, 82% of all the wealth

created in the last year went to the top 1%, while the bottom 50% saw no increase at all.” Countries should adopt a life-cycle approach, starting with social protection for children, followed by schemes for women and men in working age, including protection in maternity, unemployment, employment injury and disability, and pensions for older persons. It would also embrace universal coverage in health.

According to the International Labor Organization, only 45% of the global population are effectively covered by at least one social protection benefit, while the remaining 55% - 4 billion people are left unprotected. Just 29% of the world’s working population has access to comprehensive social protection.

Lack of funding/resources is the excuse that most governments give for not initiating or implementing Social Protection measures. Studies have shown that 3.5% - 5% of GDP is sufficient to cover social protection floor gaps. Governments could reduce their military/defense funding and channel them to uphold the human rights of the people. Since poverty is multidimensional, to eradicate it, Social Protection Systems should develop an integrated approach - social, economic and environmental. Above all, to ‘leave no one behind’ and promote social cohesion and inclusion, political will and adequate budgetary allocations are a must.

The Commission concluded the 56th session by four draft resolutions to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on ageing, future organization and methods of work of the commission strategies for eradicating poverty and Africa’s development. The priority theme for the 2019 Commission will be “**Addressing inequalities and challenges to social inclusion through fiscal, wage and social protection policies.**”

Resources

[Listen to the talk given by Juan Somavia, former Director of International Labor Organization.](#)

[Read the talk given at Commission by Civil Society Representative, Daniel Perell.](#)



Participants of the 56th Commission for Social Development (L to R): Sister Teresa Kotturan SCN, Sister Carol De Angelo SCNY, Melissa Gibilaro with SC-H, and Sister Marion Sheridan CSM

Thoughts from Melissa Gibilaro

Attending the Commission for Social Development for the second year in a row, it was once again an eye-opening experience to hear from nations grappling with development issues attempting to become more sustainable, from those who work with the most vulnerable of the world advocating on their behalf, as well as from global experts suggesting what steps and commitments we must make in order to achieve sustainable development.

I was able to attend a side event on Global Goals and Sustainable Textile Industry. After hearing from designers and agencies that are working to make the textile/fashion industry sustainable, I was able to engage them on their thoughts regarding environmental sustainability and human trafficking which sparked a lengthy and lively discussion in the room. That ease of access to experts doesn't happen in other arenas. I was also able to attend the Vincentian Family side event on Eliminating Homelessness. I was proud to sit in a room with dozens of people from around the world interested in hearing the ideas our Vincentian Family has to get people off the street and into housing.

CSocD and the Civil Society Forum are two of the most important events the SC Federation NGO Liaisons can participate in. Those who attend are able to participate in a forum where we can speak to the issues of those we serve in ministry at the grassroots level. The ability to network and build relationship with those who also care deeply about social inclusion, social protections and human development is incredibly affirming to the work I do each day. The scope of my work with the Sisters of Charity – Halifax might be limited, but I know there are others doing what they can in their corner of the world working to build societies of justice and peace.

Thoughts from Sr. Marion Sheridan

Participation in the 56th Commission for Social Development was a pocket of hope in our troubled world. While hearing the advances many countries have made in eliminating poverty, it also included looking at the obstacles to the implementation of the SDGs as presented in the key note speech by Juan Somavia of Chile. The bottom line to most presentations was the focus on the dignity of each person so no one is left behind in our world. This filtered through the Commission dialogue. Most of the presentations called forth the need for each of us to help implement the SDGs where we live and contribute to the voluntary review which each of our countries will present, at some point, to the High Level Political Forum. It was helpful to be with Sister Teresa and other members of the Sisters of Charity Federation. It is my hope we can dialogue about this Commission when we meet in June.



Some of the Vincentian Family participants at the 56th Commission for Social Development

Global Compact on Migration

Four Fundamental Considerations for Making Migration Work for All

At the United Nations, the Member States are preparing the intergovernmental negotiations on a Global Compact on Migration from February to July 2018. In this context, the Secretary-General Antonio Guterres released a report – ‘Making Migration Work For All’ in which he offers a constructive vision and practical steps for international cooperation to make migration ‘productive, fair and humane for all.’

He is urging the Governments to have a respectful and realistic debate about migration, for a truly global response to enable migrants to achieve their full potential. For migration is an expanding global reality. There are an estimated 258 million international migrants, majority of whom live and work legally; some do live in the shadows, while a desperate minority put their lives at risk to enter countries in an irregular manner.

He is asking the Member States to keep ‘four fundamental considerations in view while preparing for the global compact:

- Maximize the benefits of migration rather than obsess about minimizing risks... migration is beneficial both for migrants and host communities in economic and social terms...
- Strengthen the rule of law at all levels: migrants should respect the need for legal pathways, and move between countries in an orderly fashion, but to make it possible, Governments need to open routes for regular migration that respond to the realities of labor demand and supply....
- Security matters: States and the members of the public have legitimate reasons to demand secure borders and the capacity to determine who enters and stays on their territory...
- Migration should never be an act of desperation: migration works for all when those who travel make an informed and voluntary choice to go abroad through legal means...

You can read this report here: Making Migration work for All <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/N1743962.pdf>

On February 5th the Co-facilitators of the negotiations on the global compact presented a zero draft to the UN Member States. The zero draft, based on the Thematic negotiations of 2017, offers a 360-degree vision of international migration and reflects a sense of common purpose. The compact will have a non-legally binding, cooperative framework, building on the previous commitments. It will be based on ten guiding principles: people centered, international cooperation, national sovereignty, rule of law and due process, sustainable development, human rights, gender responsive, child sensitive, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. It has 22 actionable objectives for the cooperative framework.

The negotiations will begin on February 20 and will have six rounds – till July when the final text will be readied. It will be adopted during an intergovernmental conference in Morocco from December 10 - 11, 2018.

Ms. Louise Arbour a former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, appointed as the Special Representative of Secretary-General for International Migration will serve as the Secretary to the Intergovernmental

Negotiations. The Civil Society is given sufficient opportunities to give their inputs and concerns to the co-facilitators and the Special representative. The UN and the Member States creating platforms to engage everyone and members of the NGO Committee on Migration is working on strategies for advocacy with the UN Missions. The Holy See has invited Faith-Based NGOs to collaborate with them to focus on core issues.



Global Compact FOR Migration

Connecting Development and Human Rights



Federation NGO Representative Teresa Kotturan SCN was a panelist in a Side Event co-sponsored by the Holy See on Connecting Development and Human Rights in the Eradication of extreme poverty: Strategies for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda on January 30, 2018.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to Step Down

As the world celebrates the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, atrocities against human rights defenders around the globe are on the increase. More than 120 activists campaigning to protect their land, environment and labor rights from business were killed during the last year. The London based Business & Human Rights Resource Centre have seen a 34% increase in violence against human rights defenders. NGOs in many countries are facing restrictions targeting their funding and operations. There are increased attacks on activists and civic freedoms in general around the world. 2017 has seen a dangerous movement towards more populist, nationalist and authoritarian governments around the world.

Speaking to truth to power impacts not only activists at the grassroots, but also those at the top echelons. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein have been outspoken about human rights violations committed by the powerful and mighty – the Russian-backed government of Syria, Chinese-backed government of Myanmar, and travel ban against citizens of Muslim-majority countries by the US government. His willingness to speak up in the face of human rights violations has consequences – he is not seeking a second term when his four-term ends in September. In an email



to his staff he expressed his concern that his voice would be silenced in an age 'when world powers are retreating from their historical commitment to human rights.' He further stated: "After reflection, I have decided not to seek a second four-year term. To do so, in the current geopolitical context, might involve bending a knee in supplication; muting a statement of advocacy; lessening the independence and integrity of my voice..."

This hard reality is a poor reflection of our times...it is time for us to step up to be leaders and champions of human rights, whatever way possible.

Flippin' (Pancakes) for a Cause

Raising Funds to Assist in Building a Safe House for Trafficked Women



Written by:
Sister Faith Colligan DC

The Daughters of Charity at St. Louise House in Albany, NY have been raising funds to assist building a safe house for trafficked women to be located in their area. The first, on the DePaul Campus, was a pancake breakfast, which included a 50/50 drawing.

The collaborative project began as the Sisters, aware of the Province of St.

Louise Corporate Stance on Human Trafficking, listened to the personal dream of their invited speaker, Debbie Fowler. Debbie spoke of her years in Kuwait where her husband was on work assignment. It was in that desert country that she learned from maids who had been lured from their native countries to obtain employment but had their papers taken and who found themselves working with little or no pay, beaten, and sexually assaulted. After volunteering in a shelter for these women, Debbie returned to New York, and upon further research, learned of the great numbers of women being trafficked and their horrific circumstances right here in the United States. That is when she decided she must do something.

Activities coordinator, Linda Rivard, volunteered at "Her Treasure Box", where she met Debbie and became acquainted with her fledgling project. This thrift store provides "creative arts with a purpose-- to provide hope and healing. It operates solely with volunteers from the nonprofit arm, Eyes Wide Open NENY, an organization with a mission to provide restorative care and a sanctuary of healing and hope for women survivors of human trafficking".

An ongoing supportive effort is collecting yarn and other appropriate items for use in the craft classes offered and/or to be sold in the thrift store.



Want to visit the United Nations? Contact Sr. Teresa Kotturan to set up an orientation.

- UPCOMING - EVENTS & NEWS

March 12 -18, 2018 – 62nd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

April 9 – 13, 2018 – 51st Session of the Commission on Population and Development

April 16 – 27, 2018 – 17th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

April 23 -26, 2018 – ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development

July 9-18, 2018 – High Level Political Forum

Your prayers are required for the Intergovernmental Negotiations on the Global Compact on Migration: February 20 -23; March 12-15; April 3-6; May 14-18; June 4-8; July 9-13



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