



The UN & You

BY DR. JIMMY WALTERS – MARCH 2024

From the NGO Desk

“Don’t you ever feel like giving up?”

This was a question posed to me earlier this week as I presented to two classes at [Seton Hill University](#), Greensburg, Pennsylvania. I was invited as a guest lecturer by Dr. Roni Kay O’Dell. Dr. O’Dell also facilitates the Model UN program.

This question was one of many, after the students heard me describe some of the horrific global statistics of injustices and violations of human rights and dignity. They heard of our work at the United Nations, and how we collaborate with other NGO representatives to strategically engage with member states and UN agencies. They also heard about the realities of the slow-moving process that is advocacy work within an international political system.

My response to the student’s question was, “It comes down to hope. Giving up isn’t an option because if we do, there is no chance that things will get better.”

I added, “I also feel responsible. I am responsible to the Sisters of Charity Federation, the generations of sisters who never gave up as they continue to serve and love. I represent them and their interests. I am responsible to all who are served by the sisters in the federation in their ministries. I am also responsible to the NGOs with whom I work, many who have dedicated their lives to advocacy and proclaiming the gospel. Finally, I am responsible to my daughters, and all children, who deserve a better world.”

We then discussed hope. We discussed how students like them bring hope as they use their courses in higher education and experiences to prepare themselves for a world that they can change.

This generation of young people grew up in a world where they served their communities in their schools and places of worship at a very young age. They



Seton Hill student Sarah Minghini, Dr. Roni Kay O’Dell, Jimmy Walters, Seton Hill students Kimberlyn Furajter and Pietro Porco. The students are a part of the Model UN program and will be visiting the UN in two weeks. Photo credit: Dr. Roni Kay O’Dell



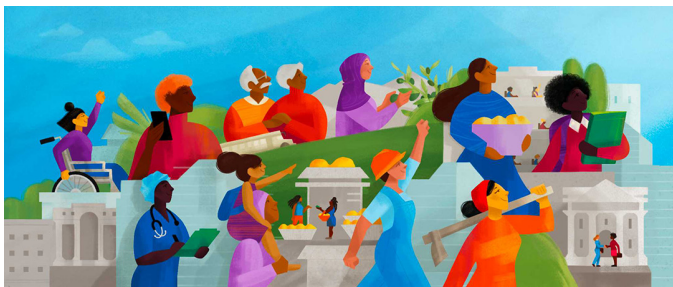
have an awareness of local and global injustices, and many of them have experienced significant trauma and struggle in their own lives. They believe that they can make a difference. We believe in them, too, and we will continue to support them in this pursuit. I reminded them during the class that as Seton Hill students, they now belong to an international, faith-filled family committed to service, justice, and peace.

It was evident that these students are being prepared to become citizens of the world. They have hearts for the Setonian/Vincentian charism and expressed a clear desire to learn and do more to battle the many injustices of our time.

My short visit included prayer, opportunities for learning more about the history of the Sisters of Charity and Seton Hill University. After meeting with other faculty, administrators, staff, and students, there was great hope in knowing that the Charism of Charity is alive and palpable. This was reinforced later that evening after an opportunity to visit and share the UN ministry with the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill. They overwhelmed me with hospitality, charity, and support.

As I reflect on this experience, I am reminded of these words from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton: “Do we serve God in Hope, looking to his promises, confiding in his love, seeking his Kingdom, and leaving the rest to Him?”

We look forward to continued opportunities to engage with young adults within our federation’s reach, including upcoming visits with St. Elizabeth University, Mount St. Vincent University, and some of these same Seton Hill Model UN students, who will visit the UN later this month.



CSW68

As the [Commission on the Status of Women](#) started this week, continue to follow our account on X (formerly Twitter) [@ngoscfederation](#). This is the best way to remain updated on our engagement as the UN gives attention to the rights of women and girls.

There is an urgency to this work. UN DESA reports that at the current rate of progress, it will take 300

years for gender equality. An astounding 10.3 percent of women worldwide live in extreme poverty, and according to the UN, if there is the political will and investment in women and girls, 100 million women can be lifted out of poverty. This requires prioritizing education, fair and equal wages, and expanded social benefits.

In the April edition of “The UN & You,” I will provide a greater update on the results of CSW68.

April at the UN

Next month, our attention will shift to the [Forum on Finance for Development \(FFD\)](#) and the [Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues](#). We will also continue to prepare for virtual engagement with the [2024 UN Civil Society Conference](#) in early May in Nairobi, Kenya.

I am also looking forward to visiting the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati this April. I will learn more about the congregation’s grassroots ministries and advocacy efforts, and spend time with the sisters and associates and the SC Federation board, which will be meeting there during that time.

My hope is to visit with all the SC Federation congregations in the coming months and years. I look forward to the opportunity to see you all in person, and to learn more about your ministries, histories, and to hear your stories of faith, service, and love.

Second World Summit

Thirty years after the first World Summit For Social Development in Copenhagen, the UN recently announced a [Second World Summit for Social Development](#) in 2025.

During a high-level meeting in February, we, the NGO for CSocD with Member States and global leaders discussed the gaps over the past 30 years in social development. Referencing the groundbreaking document, the Copenhagen Declaration, a report was generated to summarize the discussion. This [two-page report](#) is a summary of our greatest areas of need and direction as we move forward. The committee also prepared a [longer publication](#) to provide a comprehensive review of the past 30 years on social development.

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