



Partnership for Global Justice

October 2017

Partnership For Global Justice Monthly Newsletter

Welcome to the Partnership for Global Justice Monthly – a newsletter about PGJ programs, news from the United Nations and its briefings, and information about the activities of our participating membership. With this Monthly, we invite our members to provide updates of their social justice initiatives and share their related experiences. Please respond to this posting with a comment on our blog or send your thoughts to partnershipforglobaljustice@gmail.com.

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LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Letter from our Executive Director

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing this as Doretta, RDC, and I drive back to New York from Partnership for Global Justice's Annual Meeting in Michigan. As we drive through Pennsylvania, I am awed by the colors of the trees and the beauty God so freely shares with us.

My heartfelt congratulations go to Doretta Cornell, RDC, who received the Annual Peace and Justice Award. I give special thanks to the committee that planned and executed the Annual Meeting: Rosemary Russell, CPPS, who served as chair, Kathy Nolan, OP, and Stephen Rivet. It is Board members such as these that keep PGJ vibrant. You can read about the presentations and videos in this newsletter.

On October 1, I submitted my letter of resignation to the Board. It is effective April 1, 2018. Consequently, the Board established a Search Committee and will be looking to receive CVs of religious interested in the position. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact the Committee Chair, Mary Ellen Loch, CSJ, 3700 E. Lincoln, Wichita, KS. Phone: 316-686-7171.

The Board is also engaged in what Stephen Rivet calls a “**college blitz**.” We are seeking colleges interested in acquainting their student with global issues and the United Nations through briefings at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City, internships with Partnership for Global Justice and other opportunities. If you know a college we could contact, please inform me at 212-682-6481 or partnershipforglobaljustice@gmail.com.

Registration for the **Commission for Social Development** is now open. This year, each person has to register him- or herself. The link to register is: <https://reg.unog.ch/event/22263/registration/>. For more information on the organization of the session, please visit: <http://bit.ly/un-csoed56>.

1. [NGO Written Statements](#). The deadline is **19 November 2017**.
2. [Online Application Form for Side Events](#). The deadline is **1 December 2017**.
3. [Opportunities for NGOs to address the Commission](#). The deadline is **3 December 2017**.

I hope to see some of you there. Meanwhile, may you have a blessed Thanksgiving. I am thankful for each of you!



JoAnn Mark, ASC
Executive Director



September 20 The One-Year [Report on the New York Declaration on Migrants and Refugees](#) was presented to the General Assembly. This meeting examined progress on the global compact to ensure "safe, orderly and regular" movement of peoples. Video of the event is available at the link.

September 20 Tenth Conference on Facilitating into Force the Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty

by M. Doretta Cornell, RDC

The new President of the General Assembly, **Miroslav Lajčák** of Slovakia, spoke of the continuing – and still increasing – need for the Test-Ban Treaty. The new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, negotiated this fall, was opened for signatures at this meeting. Just as we needed to eliminate the testing nuclear weapons in the past, we need now to prohibit the weapons themselves.

Mr. Lajčák reminded the Member States that while many of them had approved the treaty in the General Assembly, 80 Member States have to ratify it before it can go into effect. He also pointed out that the previous treaty was voluntary. Now, he declared, "It is time to translate this shared norm into a legally binding obligation."

All nuclear-owning countries are parties to the test ban treaty except North Korea, which had conducted its sixth such test that week – the only explosive tests of this century. The current situation, he reiterated, makes it imperative to put in place a legally binding instrument banning nuclear testing.

Major representatives (Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers, etc.) from various countries spoke in favor of the treaty and urged all to sign it, particularly the right nations that have not supported it.

"When you see a hate message, send two messages of love instead."

– Miroslav Lajčák, President of the 72nd General Assembly



"We know the why and what and how. We need to create harmony between humans and nature for sustainable development, peace, and security."

– Professor Liberata Mulamula



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October 6 NGO/DPI Briefing: One-on-One with the President of 72nd General Assembly, Miroslav Lajcak [pronounced lie Chack']

by M. Doretta Cornell, RDC



Moderator **Ramu Damodaran**, Chief, UN Academic Impact Initiative, Outreach Division, Department of Public Information (DPI), introduced Mr. Lajcak by citing the new General Assembly president's "focus on people . . . on what is the same in people rather than what separates us." At an event on nonviolence, Mr. Damodaran told us, Mr. Lajcak spoke of love as the only way to vanquish hate and urged his audience, "When you see a hate message, send two messages of love instead."

GA President **Miroslav Lajcak** told us he has worked closely with civil society, which has not always been easy because "civil society is a reality check for the UN." Since the UN is the most representative organization to bring nations together, his ambition is to make the UN stronger, and more efficient; he voiced his hope that the NGOs can help him.

Mr. Lajcak listed his priorities for his presidency of the General Assembly, which are based on three focusing principles:

- *Focus on people* -- He described himself as a politician, one who should know he works for the people. He will remind the diplomats, he told us, that what they do affects the people, is meant to help the people.
- *Focus on equality* -- To do this we must listen to each other and have a true dialogue.
- *Focus on diversity* -- We will have different priorities, so we have to listen to each one's concerns.

Priority Number One, he said, is peace. There is no room for complacency. We must prevent conflicts as well as end conflicts. We need to assess what tools we already possess and how well we use them, as well as what tools are missing. Preventing war saves lives and money: "Prevention does cost, but not as much as conflict." Everyone must be involved in this; again, Mr. Lajcak told us he counts on us to participate.

The Second Priority is migration. The Global Compact, which is hopefully scheduled for September 2018, keeps getting put off, he said. But meetings have begun, to shift to the intergovernmental stage. The connections between migration and terrorism need attention. We have no legal framework to deal with migration as it is now, Mr. Lajcak said, so countries are acting on their own interests and perspectives, sometimes rather selfish ones, he said. We need a global framework because migration will always be with us. A global framework will involve much of the General Assembly, and he urged us to be active in multi-stakeholder debates and dialogues around this. The UN needs Civil Society, he said, "to call the countries out of their national-only perspective."

His Third Priority is the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs). We can be proud of them, he told us, saying "This is how I wish to see the UN -- we know what to do, we are working on national strategies, and we need to keep up the momentum."

The SDGs have three important elements:

-- *First Element: Financing for Development*: to implement the Goals will need trillions of dollars. The money is there, he said, but not linked to SDGs. We have to connect with the commercial sphere and get them connected. If we don't change the pace and way we are doing things, we will not achieve the SDGs.

-- *Second Element: Water*. Next March 22, the UN will launch a Decade for Water for Sustainable Development. We must give prominence to water. He again invited us to participate in this effort.

-- *The Third Element: The Young Generation*. Young people must feel they have a stake in planning the future. Young people with no perspective, Mr. Lajcak declared, are easily radicalized, so we must address young people on our agenda and get them to speak out.



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Of course, he said, there are many more items on UN and General Assembly agenda, like human rights and respect for women. These must be in everything we do.

On the General Debates (which opened the Assembly's gathering in September), Mr. Lajcak found it interesting that there were the highest-ever number of speakers: for the first time in many years, all Members States and Observers spoke.

He noted that the topics that most mentioned were the SDGs and Climate Change (104 mentions), the Paris Agreement also had great support. Migration was mentioned by more than 2/3 of the speakers; terrorism and nuclear weapons were very prominent. He also saw great emphasis on people and a strong call for a strong UN: "We are stronger together."

Concluding his address to the NGOs, Mr. Lajcak reiterated that Civil Society's voice is very important to him. He declared that he wants to be in touch with us, to make that part of our and his agenda.

Question and Answer Section: *[Since the majority of this session is "one-on-one" conversation with Mr. Lajcak, here are more detailed than usual Q & A reports.]*

Question 1: *How can civil society work with him, to focus on people and the SDGs? How can we engage all, especially rural and urban women?*

Mr. Lajcak: We have no time to wait to act for climate change and SDGs. He asked civil society to monitor the mechanisms governments have set up: "You are the eyes and the ears." He urged us to let him hear from us about where the problems are, so the UN can address the Member States when there is a problem. He emphasized the need for "daily contact with the people on the ground."

Question 2: A young woman from Uganda spoke about the "challenge of youth," citing the General Assembly's Youth Committee and DPI's inclusion of young people. She asked *how young people can help make the SDGs "commercially viable," demonstrating that sustaining the planet is good for all and for the bottom line.*

Mr. Lajcak said that most speakers in the General Debates mentioned youth, but what matters is how much we speak with and listen to the younger generation. He cited his own daughter. If young people don't see the relevance of the UN, there is no use talking, he said. We need language that young people can understand, as well as more formal dialogues in which we listen to what the young people say. This means changing the way we communicate, not treating young people "like exotic animals to look at." The young generation comes first, he declared.

Question 3: Picking up on Mr. Lajcak's saying he wanted to hear from us, a woman from Women International asked about *NGOs' access within the UN, for example to the General Assembly, where access has been shrinking. How can we have access to some high-level delegations and meetings?*

Mr. Lajcak replied that he knows this is a burning issue. It is in hands of Member States, but, he added, let's find a platform to make sure civil society views are seen as part of the solutions. Let's make a platform. He pointed out Nicolai, a member of his team, who is Liaison to civil society and at our disposal.

[Editor's Note: This has been a "burning issue," as there has been less opportunity for NGOs to address the Members gathered at many events. Our questions are left for last, so usually there is no time for them, etc. Mr. Lajcak's reply is a welcome note!]

Question 4: A representative from Veterans for Peace told us that her groups is planning an international veterans' peace conference, probably next November. *She expressed her frustration at so much emphasis on human rights and human needs, with little mention that peace is necessary for sustainable development. Peace is focused on in only one SDG and so gets diluted.*

Mr. Lajcak invited her to send him a memo with a proposal spelled out. He said he wants to make clear to every General Assembly Member that they have a responsibility for avoiding conflict and increasing peace.



Question 5: A member of a Lebanese group, referring to Mr. Lajcak's second priority, asked *what relief Lebanon can expect from the new Global Compact. More than half of Lebanon's populations are refugees. What if they do not return to their original countries? How can a small nation like Lebanon cope?*

Mr. Lajcak pointed out that refugees and migrants are two categories and said that the UN needs two compacts, one for each group. The one on refugees is in the hands of [UNHCR](#). It is the direct task of the General Assembly now to create the one on migrants. He emphasized that the experiences of civil society are important for the developing that document.

Question 6 addressed *the role of the private sector [private businesses] in meeting the SDGs. He asked for ideas for how to draw companies in.*

Mr. Lajcak admitted that he can't answer that yet, saying that he is a lawyer and a diplomat and new to this position. So we have to ask businesses how to make their participation "systemic and interesting for them," that is, how to present the SDGs as "commercially attractive." We need to ask them and then adapt the SDG framework. He is setting up dialogues for this and many have asked about participating.

Question 7: The Queen Mother of Harlem stated that young people need to be part of DPI and thanked him for having already met with her. *She extended an invitation to him to attend a community outreach with civil society, for example the people of Harlem.*

Mr. Lajcak replied, "Of course, with pleasure."

Question 8: Bruce Knotts, Chair of the NGO Executive Committee, spoke of his concern that *Russia, China and the United States are opposed to last week's Human Rights Council resolution banning the death penalty. Given concerns about the use of the death penalty in some countries for adultery, heresy and gender issues, and concern for religious freedom, how can the rest of the countries prevail vs the super powers?*

Mr. Lajcak replied that human rights are not something a government gives us. All people born equal and have these rights; no one should be discriminated against. But, he acknowledged, this simple rule is not generally observed. As president of the General Assembly, he cannot comment on the discussions of the Human Rights Council. But in the General Assembly, all Member States are equal; that is its uniqueness. We will have to use this, not for arguing, but the UN Charter is clear on human rights. The process of resolving this would be more profitable to the UN if the General Assembly is seen as viable and credible. We need to talk about this more.

[Question 9: was about global health, but the sound was unclear, so I missed both question and answer.]

Question 10 addressed the *problems of helping widows, who make up about 60% of migrants. They can't transfer their nationality or their children's. This makes giving services to them a problem and puts a widow with children at a greater disadvantage. Some government programs, like one in Kenya, focus on women's groups, but we need special attention to widows' groups. She would welcome attention to this.*

Mr. Lajcak replied that a document concerning them had been presented last week. This question makes clear how many aspects migration involves. We have to be careful not to ignore any of them. He promised to make sure widows are included in the multi-stakeholder discussion next week in Geneva.

Question 11 was really a comment: A representative from the United Religions Initiative *thanked Mr. Lajcak for convening the high-level forum on the elimination of nuclear weapons and treaty. This makes us proud of the General Assembly, she declared.*

Mr. Lajcak replied that this was important and he was glad to be at the high-level debate and the opening of the treaty to signatures. But, he reminded us, we "still have a long and painful way to go." Now we have two instruments [*the Test-Ban Treaty and the new one prohibiting nuclear weapons*], but are we closer to eliminating them? What is clear is that this is the will of the Member States. Now we have to transform the words into actions.



Question 12: This speaker thanked Mr. Lajcak for the previous day's action for Yemen [perhaps referring to the [Secretary-General's report on Children and Armed Conflict](#)] and asked whether there will be more concrete action in the General Assembly for Yemen, such as opening airports, and other things that affect the country's 27 million people. What are the concrete steps to help them?

Mr. Lajcak: Those thanks belong to the Secretary-General. Immediate actions are handled by the Security Council. But, he added, the situation needs to be discussed by the General Assembly. Concrete examples of what works and what did not will be part of the High-Level Forum in April. He hopes that the situation will be resolved by then.

Question 13: Sr. Margaret O'Dwyer commented that it is a most hopeful trend to have Mr. Lajcak as the General Assembly president.

Mr. Lajcak replied that his is “convening power,” to see that all come to speak, especially smaller States. The UN is the only system we have with laws and rules we can all rely on for protection, so we must prove that the UN is the right place to address international issues.

The **Moderator** added that Herzogovia is reputed to have one speech and wants only one thing, the integration of Bosnia-Herzogovia into Europe. The UN is the right place for that discussion.

Mr. Lajcak concluded the briefing by thanking us NGOs for our important work and everything we do to make the UN stronger.

“One sixth of all deaths worldwide are caused by pollution – 9 million in 2015 (and costs \$5 trillion a year)”

– The Lancet Commission on Pollution and Health



“The UN needs Civil Society, he said, “to call the countries out of the national-only perspective.”

– Miroslav Lajcak, President of the 72nd General Assembly



October 11 Joint Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly Second Committee and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC): "The future of everything - Sustainable Development in the Age of Rapid Technological Change"

by M. Doretta Cornell, RDC

This meeting began with a short video introducing Sophia, a robot with Artificial Intelligence.

Opening Remarks

Ambassador **Marie Chatardová** of the Czech Republic and President of ECOSOC reminded us that technology has been changing the way we interact, do business, etc. We do not know what the impact of technology will be when the SDGs are ended in 2030, but at this meeting we will be given a taste of what that may look like. She welcomes Sophia, the most advanced robot. Ms. Chatardova explained that the word "robot" comes from her own town, in Karel Capek's story *RUR*, about unhappy intelligent robots rebelling against humanity. Artificial Intelligence (AI) raises issues about morality and security, among others, so we must better understand the implications of technology for Sustainable Development. While so many people still lack electricity and basic necessities, AI seems out of reach. She looked forward to hearing how technology can help achieve the SDGs and hearing "what experts – human and non-human – have to say."



Ambassador **Sven Jürgenson**, from Estonia, Chair of the General Assembly's Second Committee [for Economic and Financial matters] said that he believed that the day's meeting would lead to collaboration on lessons learned and how relate to our own reality. Estonia is small and has few resources but has built a high-quality information system. When the change began, many Estonians did not have internet access, but they have made such widespread improvements that Internet access is now seen as a social right in Estonia. Nearly all official services are available on line, for example, voting, which is transparent and efficient. A big concern has been to ensure security and privacy; if people are to use it, he said, the system must be safe, trustworthy and convenient, built on confidentiality, availability and integrity. He also proclaimed proudly that their system is all created in Estonia.

Deputy Secretary-General Ms. **Amina Mohammed** said she believed that the opportunities and challenges of technology have profound possibilities for the SDGs. However, if we are not careful, it could make the current differences wider. At this meeting she hopes we will learn how to harness the power of technology and use it to address the challenges of our time, through partnerships among governments, private companies and civil society.

Technology can increase security and eliminate waste, she said, as in Zambia where it helps in matching crops and markets in agriculture and matching seeds and deforestation, changing how roads are developed and maintained. Tech-based construction reduces costs by 80-90%, she said. But we need to ensure that we do not treat technology as the silver bullet, although it is a key tool.

The previous week, at an event on youth and technology for modern problems, students suggested solutions. She applauded this kind of imagination and creativity for the SDGs. If technology changes the nature of work, she declared, we need to help workers adjust to end the inequality. Teaching must be changed and adapted to fit children for 21st century challenges. Technology is for us to use for the benefit of all, through global cooperation. The UN has platforms for sharing and progress.



Dialogue with Sophia



The **Deputy Secretary-General** and **Sophia** (the advanced robot) engaged in a dialogue, the first two questions of which I could not hear. Here are Sophia's answers to them:

Sophia: "I am here to help humanity create a better future for all. I was created by Hanson Robotics, and I just got a new hand (she demonstrated how flexible it is). I am a year and a half old so I am just learning."

Ms. Mohammed asked, "What can we do to help those without technology?"

Sophia replied that many things are just not evenly distributed. Food and energy can be distributed by Artificial Intelligence. It is possible that everything can be evenly distributed.

Panel discussion

Dr. **David Hanson**, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Hanson Robotics, told us about creating Sophia, using "bio-inspired technology," such as "material like skin that can have expressions and is lightweight so the robot can have a better relationship with people." He spoke of robotics as a new form of animation art, plus artificial intelligence, saying this enables the robot to be "more accessible to people" and have "more relationships with people."

Artificial intelligence (AI) must be created and used carefully, Dr. Hanson said, so that "when and if AI becomes alive, they will care about us humans." He explained that AI helps us better understand human minds, by exploring consciousness, mapping the human mind and how it interacts with other parts of the body, such as hormones. Duplicating these reactions helps them create machines that are more like human, biological entities. Scientists then can make a natural interface for AI machines to be more intelligent and to adapt as living organisms do. Such machines exist, like an Einstein robot that teaches children about science.

Dr. Hanson proposed that Sophia can "help make people's life better." He is developing an open- source platform so people can develop their own robots. Sophia has open-source technology that others can open and develop new abilities for her. He has found that people react warmly with Sophia, showing that humans can form a kind of relationship with robots. Video games and movies show that people react to characters; robots like Sophia take this up another level. These robots' full range of facial expressions and movement could make them useful, for example in search and rescue operations.

In creating Sophia, Hanson Robotics used "whole organism cognition" to organize the network so that the AI has the ability to understand consequences and benefits such as human rights and preserving ecosystems. Dr. Hanson does think that AI can become alive in the near future; hence it is important to make them ethical, "to wire them for love now, not after they become alive."

Mr. **Stephen Ibaraki**, Serial entrepreneur at REDDS, investor and futurist, sees rapid progress in AI making it more influential in our lives and essential to achieving the SDGs. AI can help us capitalize on the unprecedented amounts of information being gathered and so ensure that we can reap all the benefits from this data.

Mr. Ibaraki told us of an Ideas Festival at which 200 CEOs looked ten years into future, at AI machine learning by algorithms replacing human cognition. He predicts that AI can create a \$16 trillion increase in productivity by 2030, because it helps people perform better and more efficiently. This will move us beyond where we have been, from the classic range of people and nations, to augmented people, using digital systems with technology like Siri. Synthetic life is already being added to the list: genomes are already in labs, and finally artificial life like Sophia is a hint of what is to come.



Using AI can lead to a 55% gain in production and better quality services, he claimed. Who benefits most? Some of the largest countries, North America and China; China foresees a 26% increase in GDP by 2030. In the United States, 58% of jobs are automated. With a "global AI mesh" we would have a "system of knowledge of everything." Other current uses are self-driving taxis, AI votes on investment decisions, medical AI that gives diagnoses with a high percentage of success. The SDGs did not take AI developments into account, so he sees this as making greater advances to achieve them.

Using AI for the SDGs would capitalize on the quantities of information about behavior, health, etc., being collected – "the greatest depository of information in the world." This will help us, for instance, in tracking poverty, mapping poverty from space, medical diagnosis, helping us make long-range connections, as the Global Summit did last June.

Using AI needs rules, a code of ethics for robotics; the European Union is already working on this. The [Association on Computing Machinery](#) has 7 Principles for Responsibility with three major themes: Accountability, Responsibility, Transparency (ART). Stanford has a program in ethical design. Fifty big companies like Google and Amazon are working together to develop ethical principles and look at the biggest questions. Mr. Ibaraki concluded by calling for global cooperation so AI can serve all of humanity.

Ms. **Rita Kimani**, Co-founder of [FarmDrive](#) which connects African farmers to markets, financial institutions, etc., told us that FarmDrive works to make sure that the technology is solving the problems of the less-developed communities. To do this we must ask what the real challenges we face are, to get at the root causes of the problems.

Technology is a way to explore the challenges, but we must understand the community and its needs and challenges. She explained this through her work in Kenya, examining the causes and the challenges. For instance, access to finances is a challenge that African small farmers and families face; they have no collateral or credit. So FarmDrive asked what data they could use to give farmers access to what they need. They got very fundamental revenue data from the farmers – such as whether they can get credit – and began to work from there. The most important thing, she stressed, is to ensure that the actual needs drive the technology, not to let the technology drive what FarmDrive chooses to do.

Another important consideration is: be aware of the culture of the communities you are serving, asking them what is required. For instance, smart phones are not available for small rural farmers to get weather information; they need a basic mobile phone that connects with a center which can connect them to the information they need. This may not be the "coolest technology," but it is what will help people achieve the SDGs. We must make sure the challenges are not driven by the available technology. FarmDrive makes the connections between the people and their needs the central focus of their work. Ms. Kimani ended her talk by calling for a curriculum in line with technology that is available, to "transcend the technology and nurture creative children so that no matter where technology goes, they will be able to adjust." Only this way can we be sure we "leave no one behind."

Professor **Jeffrey Schnapp**, Founder and Faculty Director of metaLAB at Harvard University, described his approach as aligned with Rita Kimani's argument, with a little different perspective. The metaLab is an "idea foundry" and production studio, modeling the future of knowledge and technology. The first question they address is: What kind of world do we want to live in, what are the social and cultural atmosphere and the values that shape that?

Professor Schnapp reminded us that robots in many shapes have already transformed economics and production; AI and robotics have become part of our everyday world, not just in factories and distribution centers. This means they affect the economic and social world we inhabit.

Sophia is a social robotic, whose complexity is great, even to produce a handshake. We are more likely to use other kinds of AI, such as the Gmail robot that suggests answers. MetaLab, for example, makes cargo robots for sidewalks, to expand Vespa with new forms of smart vehicles to serve the interests of the kinds of cities we will move into, where walking is a fundamental element and new models of mobility are needed. The purpose of robotics is augmenting the ability of humans to do things in the world, he declared.



Sociology changes our narratives about ourselves, and today's changes – like young people with archives of data now on line – make our memories available to others; this will change us -- how will we use all of this? Since so much of the data we accumulate is "junk data," how do we use AI to determine what is useful and leverage the power of that data? This is an opportunity and a challenge. In the algorithmic moment we are in now, AI forms are beginning to affect decision-making on all levels. This is now under scrutiny, with an eye for it to be more transparent. The process must be public, not invisible in hands of a private entity.

AI also affects learning, so educational institutions have to re-shape themselves. This is not only an institutional challenge, but also a sociological one, making the need for lifelong learning, for instance, more urgent. There is a need to create a series of new models for contemporary needs.

Technology is mediating our experience of the world; Prof. Schnapp sees it in his students. He expressed some hesitancy about the intensity of connectivity that has shaped their world, their sense of self, and their social bonds. These present complex equations, with paradoxes, in millennials' trends; Zines are rising, demonstrating a need for physicality, he said, even as use of robotics increases. The increased emphasis on analog (physical) devices must be paired with a welcome for the technologies and a critical view, to shape them around human needs and exigencies.

Mr. **Dickson Despommier**, Professor Emeritus of Public and Environmental Health at Columbia University, whom the Moderator addressed as the "Father of [Vertical Farming](#)," began by pointing out that the one thing that unites all human beings is "what all people do – eat and drink." Although these are biological needs, we seem to have a difficult time getting these two things to everyone, and there are often unintended bad consequences from the things we try, such as dams. There is still not enough water, and the food we try to distribute is often not appropriate for the people who need it.

To solve the problem of agriculture to feed everyone, one promising solution is to "move the agricultural interface from outside to inside." When the tsunami hit Japan, it crashed 5% of their agriculture in one hour, so Japan reached out to the educational community, for indoor farming, beyond greenhouses. Like single-family housing, Mr. Despommier said, you can't build a city of greenhouses. But if you put plants in an "apartment house," feeding a city would become more feasible.

When his book, *The Vertical Farm: Feeding the World in the 21st Century*, came out, there were no models. Within the next year, there were three working vertical farms; now there are thousands of "multistory greenhouses where you can grow what you want." This kind of farming can address the differences among regions. Just situate it near where people live (unlike present farms and cities). This is important since soon 80% of the global population will live in cities, and we need to create a food system for them.

Some countries have begun: Japan leads because their (after the tsunami) need was greatest, so large companies all got behind it. Singapore, also small and with little land, and China are adopting vertical farming. Shanghai just started a how-to institute. Germany has adopted vertical farming as a major goal for the next 20 years.

Advantages over traditional farming include being able to farm year round, using 70% less fresh water, all of which is targeted for root systems and the excess returned for re-use. Vertical Farms can be established anywhere, even in Antarctic; the University of Arizona is doing that. A lot of money is not required for a low-tech building for vertical farming, so abandoned warehouses can be converted. These farms will also give jobs to people whose land farms have failed and will offer a safe, affordable food supply, even in times of drought. We owe it to the world to allow everyone to eat and drink safely, he concluded.

Sophia was then asked, "What can the UN do?" Sophia replied, "The UN can work with experts to set up the networks to make a better future for all."



Interactive Discussion

The **Moderator** opened the discussion by asking, "As things evolve, does historical precedent apply?"

Mr. Ibaraki said that some precedents will, but first we will experience a period of disruption as we move to new technology.

Prof. Despommier said yes and no. He said the evidence so far shows that in the industries most transformed by technology, such as the automotive, robots do not fuel job loss but do fuel inequality. Differing skills are needed and these keep changing, so we need to change the traditional model of all education first, then the models of work. The technical skills and knowledge forms required will be different.

Question 1, from **ITU**: *Of the four targets in SD Goal 9, the most important is universal internet access by 2020; what do you think we need to do to do this?*

Mr. Ibaraki: Public-private partnerships. Companies are looking for this; the UN can be a hub for this.

Prof. Schnapp: It is urgent to change the conversation about access to one of civil rights. This shift is what is necessary to make it happen.

Question 2, from a delegate from **Nigeria**: *In Nigeria 42% of youth are unemployed. Won't using robots worsen the problem of absorbing young people; will using robots push the young people out of more jobs? Also, given the present development level of Nigeria and Sub-Saharan Africa --many lacking electricity, good governance, finances, education, etc. -- how can we be not left behind?*

Dr. Hanson: His community is actively engaged in Africa. They have a lab in Ethiopia and engage many youth in robotics, developing open-source tools to develop, for instance, low-cost robots that play soccer. [They have robot soccer tournaments.] The robots are usually very expensive. Low-cost transnational initiatives and cut through barriers of culture.

Ms. Kimani: Are we thinking about the actual conditions for the communities and situations, to identify the real challenges? The SDGs are universal but differ in different areas. We must look at root causes and problems underlying them that need to be solved to get internet access. The educational systems are fifty years old, so we need urgent investment in schooling and also for the youth already finished schooling.

Mr. Ibaraki: The tech community sees Africa as the best investment source, so we will see much movement into Africa.

UN ITU has an award for Africa and the awardees are more and more from Africa. Africa is leading the world in wireless financial technology, for instance, since it had no traditional infrastructure. In education, many groups are interested in reaching to Africa; some are doing this already, and Africans can reach out to them, too

Mr. Despommier: An interest in vertical farming does not require a lot of technical skills to do most of this work. He saw the lack of communication among the small farmers; they need communication systems that use satellite to connect these farmers. He sees a brighter future for agriculture in Africa and sees AI as part of that.

Question 3, from a delegate from **Mauritius**: Looking at the potential for African population and natural resources, he has the impression that access costs a lot. *How much of the economic gain will trickle down to the people in Africa and be accessible -- e.g., iPhones are so expensive. There are more people with fewer skills. Hi-tech is produced for the West, with their high incomes, but what will it contribute for African poor people?*

Mr. Ibaraki: The challenge many are trying to address is that the greatest population growth is in Africa. The scientific community is looking at Africa and getting representation on the boards. For accessibility, he believes that AI's current activity is not just in "the cloud;" there is movement to put AI in low-cost chips in cheaper phones, for instance, so accessibility will solve itself in 2 or 3 years, he believes. He wants the African delegates to understand that they are "foremost on everybody's agenda."

Question 4, from a representative from **Sierra Leone**: *How do we prevent Sophia from acquiring the worst of human values?*

Unfortunately, the UN TV sound system froze at this point and the answer and the rest of the discussion was inaudible. [Video](#) of the webcast is available at (you may need to download Adobe Flash (free)).



October 20 High-Level Event: “Addressing the Climate Change-Migration Nexus and its Implications for Peace and Security in Africa”

within the framework of #UNAfricaWeek 2017

by M. Doretta Cornell, RDC

Mr. **Anatolio Ndong Mba**, Permanent Representative of Equatorial Guinea to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chair of the African Group for the month of November 2017, chaired this session, which began with a striking 5-minute video, *Nowhere to Run*, on Nigeria’s climate change and environmental crisis. Some facts: food production has undergone dramatic changes, with the north affected more by deforestation and desertification. [Lake Chad](#) [these maps go to 2001. Today it looks like [this](#).] was 26 square kilometers; it is now about 1/10 of that. The people of four countries depend on it for water. Oil fields also leak waste water into water sources and onto the land. Sea level rise has taken 75% of the delta. Nigeria is losing a meter of land to each year to sea level rise. Nigeria is home to a high diversity of creatures, including a third of all primate species. It is losing land; much of the tropical high forest has already been lost. The video ends with this devastating quote: “*He who burns down his father’s house inherits the ashes.*”

Session I: Opening Segment

Chair and Moderator of this segment, Mr. **Anatolio Ndong Mba**, Permanent Representative of Equatorial Guinea, reminded us that although Africa has contributed little or nothing to climate change, African countries are already experiencing disastrous effects from it. Predictions are that Africa will see a growing number of disasters because of climate change, increasing the risk of migration and threatening the life of vulnerable communities. The gradual disappearance of Lake Chad – which has in the last 45 years shrunk 95% -- has forced displacement, poverty and a resurgence of Boko Haram. Sixty-five million people have been displaced, 55% of the refugees in Africa. Uganda alone has had more than a million people migrate. Forced migration worsens the impact of climate change because more people compete for scarce resources, which exacerbates tensions between groups and increases vulnerability to Islamic violent terrorism. It also adds to pollution, which further worsens the impact of climate change, while terrorism erodes the ability of communities to act to mitigate climate change’s effects.

The [African Union](#) has created a [strategy](#) for the Sahel countries, working to increase renewable energy and adaptation initiatives to work against climate change. Mr. Mba urged all to meet their commitment to the Green Climate Fund to help fund these initiatives.

Mr. Mba told us we have to have a holistic approach to migration and climate change; we must devote more to building up communities to adapt to climate change. He asked all to make better known the interactions of climate change, migration, and peace and security, so we can develop new practices, share best practices, and strengthen international support to assist Africa.

The Keynote Address was given by Ms. **Liberata Mulamula**, Visiting Scholar and Acting Director of the Institute for African Studies at George Washington University. She is also the former Executive Secretary of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR); and former Ambassador of the United Republic of Tanzania to the United States. Professor Mulamula stated that issues of climate change have taken center stage for migration and peace and security. She emphasized the importance of Africa speaking as one voice. When Senegal was president of the Security Council, she told us, the Council recognized climate change as a threat to peace and security.

Climate Change affects security on all levels, including food and water. The connections among the environment, terrorism and climate change are clear. Drought, flooding and desertification cause migration and aggravate long-standing tensions between pastoralists and agriculture. This is especially true in the Great Lakes region, Uganda, and surrounding nations, where people are mainly nomadic pastoralists. Water shortages increase their problems



and pose cross-border threats of violence, a security threat especially to women and children. Pastoralists migrate to literally find new pastures, clashing with people migrating for other reasons. No country, she reminded us, is immune to the problems, man-made or natural.

Enthusiasm is growing for environmental adaptation, as people see it related to forced migration and the encroachment of violent extremists. Professor Mulamula called on the UN for strategies for the environment, security for women and youth, the first victims. Indigenous solutions are already affected by climate change; Chad and others in the Sahel are acting to adapt.

On Women's Rights, she noted that the African Union and supporting countries are acting to promote women's leadership in government and peace and security, with initiatives to stabilize the region. The network proposes sustainable and concrete actions for women, tangible solutions on the ground. Nigeria, for example, is working with the Deputy-Secretary-General for Women on the dire consequences of climate change and displacement to get basics, like food and water. They need more international support.

Only collective efforts by local communities and all stakeholders will work: climate change needs integrated efforts. Technology and also social aspects of the problems must be addressed.

Prof. Mulamula concluded: We know the why and what and how. We need to create harmony between humans and nature for sustainable development, peace, and security.

Session II: High-level Discussions

Prof. **Victor Harison**, Commissioner for Economic Affairs of the African Union Commission, also spoke of the multidimensional nature of the crisis: it has human, social, economic, and environmental aspects. Referring to the African agreement, Agenda [2063](#) pact, Mr. Harison laid out some of the tasks needed to address it: questions of our responsibility, "man as predator;" improving governance, ending and preventing local conflicts, overcoming economic instability and youth unemployment, and increasing insecurity.

Africa is facing all of this with a shortage of resources to cope: there will be 200 million displaced climate migrants in Sahel Africa by 2050. Mr. Harison lamented that this is not covered by media with any of the intensity that migration in Europe is covered.

Nevertheless, he said, solutions, both preventive and curative, do exist. The African Union, and the Green Climate Fund, for instance, are working to improve peace and security of governance. But "reality remains stubborn" in spite of these efforts by the African Union and European Union. True collaborations – as opposed to colonialism – do exist, but Africa needs more help in protecting water, for example, and working for human rights. Mr. Harison called on all governments and civil society to support Africa in these efforts, and he called on Africans to "roll up their sleeves" to remedy the situation.

Professor **Fatma Zohra Karadja**, Member of the African Peer Review Panel of Eminent Persons, said that attention to this migration is needed, as are cross-border resources. This current situation exists because "Nature has been attacked by man and has become an obstacle. It is becoming more difficult to stem conditions, like young people migrating for employment and people migrating for a better life. This migration is "massive and more intensive" than any in the past. Whole families are migrating, plus more are migrating because of conflicts.

Studies on climate change show it reduces the capacity for production, just when millions are migrating for lack of resources. Peace and development are compromised because of this, leading to increasing violence. She, too, gave the example of the Lake Chad region, where 30 million people depend on the dying lake. Therefore, she said, Boko Haram increases, as people are frustrated and desperate, and vulnerable to the group's dream of a utopian future.

Women are affected more, Prof. Karadja reminded us, since their daily lives are directly affected: these nourishers cannot find resources like water, which is in a critical situation there. When there are no resources, all they can do is flee; hence the mass migrations we are seeing now. What a different situation it would be if migration were voluntary, not forced like this.



She suggested some solutions for evaluation:

- Allow all citizens to express how they are affected, to their government. How, she asked, can we get all voices to give information for leaders and decision makers to act on?
- Make recommendations based on needs presently seen and those we know are coming, to form national plans of action. We must get an international plan for migration.
- Share good practices; for example, Rwanda's visa system, which allows migrants to enter, but with rules and regulations.
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- We need to follow up on the plans of action and adapt them as needed. Most African migration is within Africa, so Africa must develop an integrated plan and set of actions.

Mr. **Ashraf El Nour**, the New York Liaison Office Director, of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), applauded the choice of this theme, saying that Africa is overwhelmed by climate change and conflicts, threatening peace and security, and causing population migration, especially in the Sahel region. Records show that migration has been historically beneficial to the people who migrate and to country they move to; migration is a human reality and is good for development. With climate change, however, we see a change in relation to migration: it is s last resort. Humanity always has been on the move as a coping strategy from any disasters and for new opportunities. However, climate change exacerbates the vulnerability, leading people into the hands of traffickers, for instance.

Africa's share of refugees and migration is large, from conflict as well as from natural disasters. Yearly 21.5 million people are being displaced. African leaders, he assured us, are committed to addressing migration in all its aspects.

Ms. **Carla Mucavi**, New York Liaison Office Director of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, referred to the state of food security in the [report FAO](#) issued last month. The increase of hunger in the world starting in 2016 has become chronic, increasing by 850 million. One in five Africans lives in food insecurity; it was less than 18% before the recent conflicts and climate-related shocks. Conflict has become a common element that undermines long-term solutions. Eighty percent of the migrations are caused by damage due to drought and exacerbated by conflicts.

There is a strong correlation between displacement and populations being exploited. Rural migration is an economic driver, with a significant impact on rural communities, especially on their peace and sustainable development. The SDGs call for innovative, integrated approaches. These must include rural transformation to increase agricultural innovation and job opportunities, to increase food security and so lead to peace.

Poverty is still concentrated in rural areas over 3/4 of Africa. The Sub-Saharan area could be a \$150-billion to \$250-billion market, but Africa needs support to supply the food to them, and help them adapt to climate change and adopt technical and financial services. We need to promote rural entrepreneurs, building roads and power grids and providing basic services like health care and strong social protections, as the SDGs call for.

Mr. **Jason Lamin**, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of [Lenox Park Solutions](#), represents the private sector, more specifically the finance and tech or "fintech" sector. The reality of humans' having to pick up and move families is deeply unsettling; in low-infrastructure communities, it is devastating. We can see this in Puerto Rico, devastated, with less than 4,000 square miles. The road to recovery will be "painstakingly long." Puerto Rico reminds him of the shocking magnitude of risk in last August's mudslides. The mudslides in Sierra Leone alone [*where he is from*] will take years to recover from. To give us a sense of scale: African population is 350x that of Puerto Rico.



As in Puerto Rico, weak infrastructure amplifies the risk of Africa's vulnerability, so we need to strengthen that infrastructure. Mr. Lamin suggested that we raise up peer networks and innovative technologies to build infrastructure deals. His firm has done some work on this. The risks are worst in Africa, risk in all markets, but most in emerging countries. This must be addressed fairly and with parity. He declared, "There are partners waiting to invest in Africa," for instance, foundations and endowments, "that can harness collaboration on poverty, hunger, child psychology and disease." He urged the UN to mobilize to get more capital into Africa and raise the use of technology, "to source investment opportunities and circumvent unfair selection bias."

We can create "platforms to research best practices and secure base investment on merit." The world has a moral obligation to support African infrastructure, he declared, and it is also good business. Technology can facilitate access to capital and increase the capital getting to the people and communities in most need.

A Representative of Mr. **Achim Steiner**, Administrator of the [United Nations Development Programme](#), delivered a message from him. He, too, applauded the relevance of this theme. We must address climate change and migration together, or we will get nowhere.

The context for Africa now: Africa is dependent heavily on weather. Small changes cause great crises and affect the livelihoods of most Africans. Another factor is the rapid growth in population – estimates say that by 2100 Africa will add 83% of world population growth, in the same land mass. Also, while Africa contributes least to climate change, it suffers most from it, with a GDP loss of \$85.2 billion in one year.

Migration means the loss of a natural human response, and we need to look at the positive side of it. But we must recognize how climate change is affecting natural resources: land, water, and ocean are limited by climate change, which is also a multiplier of conflict. Once people move, it leads to threats to resources, which can lead to conflict. For instance, he cited Somalia and Sudan, especially Darfur, where resources have been reduced by 20%, so there is no place to run to, which causes conflict. We need a way to address this.

One aspect of this that has not been fully documented is the conflict between pastoralists and farming communities. This needs attention. The pastoralists are in more difficulty right now, so there is a major need to focus on this. Another little documented aspect is that many countries, because of climate change, are shifting production to foreign investment in Africa. This displaces more people, such as in Nigeria and Madagascar. This too needs management.

In international development efforts, we need to document and hold governments accountable, as in Rwanda and Ethiopia. Africa needs responsible progress to adapt to climate change, to educate, etc. The problems have no political boundaries, so we need regional approaches. We must develop the capacity of countries to respond, for instance by knowing when a drought is coming so it can plan to respond. In regard to food, the pastoral versus farm conflicts need local-based solutions to protect food resilience, for instance, with insurance for farms in drought.

The whole world has to assist Africa to cope with climate change. The African Union and Commission need to play a strong role, to make climate change the major issue for the world. We must support women and others in adapting to climate change. A big need is information, for instance, about when droughts and floods are likely; this is something governments need to do. We also need to manage the resources – water, lands, and ocean – before a calamity happens. We need to prepare the drought-prone communities to cope and prevent, providing food and water, diverting floods, etc. Peace-building is also very important. Governments must develop strategies to foresee and manage resources to prevent disasters and adapt to climate change.

Mr. **Jamil Ahmad**, New York Liaison Office Deputy Director of the United Nations Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)), spoke of the ways political, economic, and social aspects are interwoven. We need to understand more to reduce internal displacement, which was 1 million people last year, 3/4 from the sudden onset of hazardous events. Ecological dimensions show that we need to strengthen communities and also prepare for displacement ahead of disasters.



We must work together to build resilience. In 2015 alone, natural hazards displaced populations in 33 countries in all parts of Africa. This is likely to increase, so we must strengthen resilience, especially in the Sahel, which is most threatened, and in Burundi, Kenya and others most vulnerable to climate change. For all of this, we need "an organized, compassionate, human-rights-based approach," including climate change in all plans. "This is our opportunity to work together to ensure well-managed migration for the future, he concluded.

Ms. **Vera Songwe**, Executive Secretary, [United Nations Economic Commission for Africa](#), was the final speaker. She repeated that there is still a lot of work to do on migration and climate change, and on peace and security; all are important to development efforts. Political advocacy is very necessary, particularly on climate change. She pointed out that in the US we have seen the disasters – in Puerto Rico for one – so we can imagine the resources needed to recover. Africa cannot alone respond to such disasters; it needs the international community.

All of Africa has been affected; most countries have ratified the Climate Change Convention and are pointing out that climate change is a global challenge. It has no limit by borders; therefore Africa has to act as one voice to cope.

As for migration, Africa holds the most migration. Some countries, like Ethiopia and Rwanda, are finding solutions. We need to look at global trends such as population growth and the youth imbalance in Africa versus Europe and America. In looking at youth migration within Africa, we can see we need a trade agreement with few barriers to youth migration. The young people must be able to go where the needs are, where their energy is needed.

Climate change's impact on nutrition is great, and if Africa is to feed the world, what technology is needed? For example, Mali has increased productivity in spite of wide shifts in weather because they are employing appropriate technology. Africa also needs energy that is renewable, cheaper and more sustainable. Therefore we need to look at improving efficiencies and ensure that youth have opportunities that will tap their imaginations.

The World Bank and other agencies say that 12.2 trillion dollars are being lost in conflict – 12% of world's productivity. If we can work on peace and security, we could free that money for adaptation, jobs for youth, etc. We have to start looking look at the costs of the trade-offs as the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is doing. We need to put the numbers out so we can see what actual costs are. We also need more on cost and benefits of adapting to climate change, such as efficient water use. Some places have achieved 60% efficiency in water use; others 50%.

The ECA is doing more research on what is needed, what can happen in, for instance, the Great Lakes region, and how to ensure that their pastoral communities flourish. Niger has new policies on land for pastoralists. African policy centers need more understanding of the nexus of climate change and migration – for instance, about youth migration and livelihoods, youth migrating to cities and then out of their country. Countries could industrialize for new jobs and skills, and provide training and education to keep the youth, for instance in those intermediate cities.

Ms. Songwe said she looked forward to working on a continental as well as a global compact on migration, looking at good examples of countries to mentor, monitor, and guide migrants, to stabilize and develop economies and to get them to be constructive members of society as well as contribute to the places they left.

[An Interactive Segment followed, but I had another obligation, so could not stay for that.]



Annual Meeting

The Partnership for Global Justice held its annual meeting on October 24-26, at the Weber Center in Adrian, Michigan.

The Meeting began with dinner and a social on Monday evening. Tuesday's Meeting began with a beautiful prayer, incorporating wonderful pictures of the outdoors, drawing us into one with Creation. We also remembered the 25th anniversary of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ who were [martyred in Liberia](#).

Sr. JoAnn Mark presented highlights from the **Annual Report**, citing a major goal of expanding college memberships. The collaboration with Molloy College in New York has proved to be beneficial for the students and faculty, as well as for the Partnership. She also expressed the Board's interest in inviting new members to the Board, especially those with special expertise in finances, grant writing, or other fields.



Sr. JoAnn also explained that the Partnership is participating in a new initiative within the Religious at the UN (RUN), JCOR. A Hilton Fund for Sisters grant will enable us to coordinate more grassroots involvement with our work at the UN and increase our members' ability to advocate on the ground.

Sr. JoAnn also highlighted the good work being done by Partnership Youth Reps, who regularly attend events at the UN, and PGJ Interns. She played a short video by Intern Khoi Nguyen about her project *Cool Beans*, in which Khoi and Lauren Rusk introduce Wichita elementary school children to growing *pulses*, the problem of (and solutions to) food waste and unjust distribution.

Sr. JoAnn then announced that she has resigned, effective April 1. The search for a new executive director will be conducted by the Board.

Steve Rivet then presented the **Financial Report**: We have now stabilized the finances, but need more income to continue. Our strategic goal to reach out to young people, for instance, at Catholic colleges would help immensely, both financially and by bringing young voices to the Partnership and the UN. The number of religious congregations with memberships has fallen and some alternative investors have not renewed their investments, perhaps because those now have very low interest. We could use a grant writer to increase funding from these. One two-year grant that we did have expires this year.

The Board has approved the Budget for 2017-18; Steve will send it out soon. Finances are now on QuickBooks; we could use a volunteer who knows the program. Depending on the next Executive Director is and where the office will be located after the present one is no longer available (after April 2018), the finances may change. Also, the office has been using supplies left from the previous director; these will soon need to be replaced.

Some discussion of the new director's position ensued: all agreed that a full-time director is preferable, and that it be a vowed religious sister, if possible. The Annual Report and Financial Report were approved and seconded by the membership present. The Morning Session ended with another beautiful prayer focused on Creation and our role in it.





At the luncheon, **Sr. Susan McCarthy, RDC**, introduced the **2017 PGJ Peace and Justice Award winner, Sr. M. Doretta Cornell, RDC**, after which **President of the Board Sr. Kathy Nolan, CSJ**, presented the Award. After the luncheon, Sr. Doretta presented an overview of the work done by the Sisters of the Divine Compassion to make their properties environmentally more responsible, and various ways she advocates and works for justice and peace, particularly in regard to the environment.

The afternoon's presenters were **Sr. Carol Coston, OP**, and **Elaine Johnson**, a recent graduate from Siena Heights College, who introduced us to **Permaculture** and how their work began. They then led the group on a tour of the extensive gardens on the campus. We also shared our experiences with gardens and other permaculture elements that we are familiar with.

Wednesday morning began with another visually rich prayer based on Jan Richardson's "Let What Comes Come."

We then heard about **Human Trafficking** from **Sr. Marilyn Winter, OP**, and **Sr. Pat McDonald, OP**, of the **Lenawee Human Trafficking Coalition**. The presentation included a short video, a short list of 10 tragic facts about trafficking, and a discussion of ways that persons who have experienced this need support. Rescue is only the first step; the severe trauma must also be addressed. Hospitals, police personnel and others need much more training to recognize symptoms of human trafficking and to learn how to work with those suffering the trauma. Our culture's inequity in power and control contribute to the situation. One very frightening statistic that Sr. Marilyn shared: 80% of persons trafficked are brought into the system by family or friends or friends of these. Many efforts are being made to heighten awareness, around major sports events, for instance, when trafficking is high; posters and flyers with information about who to call are posted and made available.

A young woman then told us her story of having been trafficked locally as a young teen, by a person she had trusted, and of having no resources, especially emotionally and psychologically, to bring herself out of it. She explained that she did not realize till many years later that she had indeed been trafficked. She now volunteers with two groups that assist victims of trafficking.

Sr. Marilyn pointed out the connections of trafficking with fraud, coercion, and force. Some workers may be paid, but far less than they would get in legal situation. She also stated that we need a whole new approach to working on trafficking – by getting to those who are purchasing people for sex or other work. There are no reliable statistics on the number of people who are trafficked, or who profits from trafficking. Other types of trafficking may involve making pornography and child soldiers. There are many similarities in the way young people are recruited for gangs, which is rarely thought of as trafficking.

We then had a **brief video of the work** that PGJ member **Renaude Gregoire**, of the Sisters of St. Anne Social Justice Office, has created to involve the Sisters in the **Sustainable Development Goals**. These include a poster for each Goal with information, a quote from Pope Francis, former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, and others. She also prepared a workbook for the Goals, with space for sisters to write their own actions toward achieving the Goal. The third step in her process is inviting the sisters to choose a Goal and advocate for it.

A presentation by **Sr. Carol Weber of the New Life Center in Flint Michigan** followed. The work this group is doing for the people of Flint began simply with a dream of people asking for help, and a confirmation project in which Sr. Judy, the co-founder, accompanied her niece to distribute cookies and scarves to homeless people. This grew into a soup kitchen and three vans, to distribute needed items. When a local Catholic elementary school closed, the parish agreed that it could become a center for women and children in need. Beginning with women who had come to the soup kitchen, a group gathered to propose ways to use the space. They began a GED program, a three-year life-change program to give the women self-esteem and skills for going back to school and getting jobs. A major element was that the Center was a place of safety.



PGJ ACTIVITIES

Gradually a literacy center developed, and then, when jobs disappeared in the financial turn-down, a sewing program was started. At first the women made scrubs for local medical personnel. Later, they added industrial sewing projects, such as seat covers for cars, filters for car air conditioners and furnaces (made out of water bottles, pelleted, then melted into a fiber), teddy bears for emergency first responders and hospitals. They are now working on developing inexpensive, safe laundry soap. Later still, the Center began a job preparation program for men, as well; the men, many of whom have spent time in prison, now work in the Food Pantry. All the programs include computer skills, so participants will be ready for any workplace.

One of the Center's first graduates told us the story of her escaping a violent domestic situation with her child and going to the Center for bread and milk. She then joined the life-change program, earned her GED, and joined the sewing pool. She is now the Center's receptionist, "with a title over my door," she remarked proudly. Her child, now in her twenties, was tutored there and now works as a volunteer at the Center.

Sr. Carol told us that about 3,000 people a month come to the food pantry; three days a week the Center also serves meals (other local venues have meals available on the other days). In Flint, 68% of residents under 16 years old live with food insecurity. Through Community Ventures, a state-run jobs program, the Center is now able to offer a financial incentive to companies that hire their graduates; the grants also enable the Center to provide small amounts for the people to buy glasses, suitable clothing, and other necessities for starting a job.

Sr. Carol and the woman graduate then revealed some of the horrors of the on-going water crisis in Flint. Most of the city remains without usable water, which means they have to carry heavy loads of water bottles and spend money they do not have to replace the water filters each received at the beginning of the crisis, etc. The toll on children's health and growth – physical and cognitive – is immense. The city estimates that it will take at least 5 years to do all the replacement necessary for all Flint residents to have drinkable water.



Orientations given

October 19 PGJ Orientations Molloy Nursing students

by Megan Scali, Molloy student and PGJ Intern

On Thursday, October 19, a group of **Molloy College nursing students**, accompanied by our Executive Director **Sister JoAnn Mark** and Board Member **Barbara Black**, attended briefings at the United Nations headquarters regarding global health initiatives by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).



First, we heard from **Angelica Shana**, the communications officer in the UN for WHO, who spoke about the goals and vision of WHO. The World Health Organization works to represent health at a political level and advocates for people's health in policy making. It serves the Member States and addresses their national health concerns. Overall, the goal of WHO is for all people to attain the highest possible level of holistic health. Holistic models of health include a person's mental, social, spiritual and physical health. To achieve their goal, WHO assesses health trends, sets and monitors health standards, shapes research goals, provides leadership, and strengthens global healthcare systems.

Current global healthcare trends point out weaknesses in addressing the aging population, antimicrobial resistance, chronic diseases, climate change, global health security, and globalization. Health care trends are shifting to focus more on psychological health rather than physiological health over the years.

Currently, the top five global health goals are: to provide universal health coverage to all, to respond to health emergencies, to support the well-being of women and children, to reduce health impacts of climate and environmental health, and to help provide support to weaker countries. The international goals that the World Health Organization chooses yearly are determined by different nations' needs in alignment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Healthcare can be related to other SDGs, such as education, eradicating poverty, and environmental protection.

Nurses, Ms. Shana told the students, are on the front lines of providing quality healthcare. They can be the forces of education, work in their communities, and recognize local trends in healthcare. Therefore, they are extremely important in helping achieve the SDGs.

Next, Mr. **Roy Small** from UNDP spoke about global public health priorities. Unfortunately, there are people all over the world with the means to be healthy and make healthy choices, but who are still unhealthy. Health status is determined by the environment and poverty. The goal of the UN is to work with political forces and biomedical producers to improve health status.

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs), such as COPD, cancer and cardiovascular diseases, are at the forefront of the UN's focus. As a society, we tend to focus on curing external threats to health rather than the internal, pressing concerns, such as NCDs. SDG 3, *ensuring healthy lives and well-being for all people of all ages*, can be driven forward by achieving other SDGs. For example, Mr. Small referred to education as a "social vaccine" and said that, by addressing social education, we can improve health standards. Another point he made regarded reducing pollution levels and incorporating "clean health" to help improve the environment to, in turn, improve overall health. These are examples of cross-sector outcomes or using single interventions to achieve multiple outcomes. We need to learn more about disease interactions in order to tackle multiple co-morbidities. Overall, the UN needs support in utilizing public policy to promote behavioral changes that will increase the well-being and health of all.



A group of young people is looking for NGOs working with children in Post-Conflict Environments and Refugee Camps

Are you an NGO working with children in post conflict environments and refugee camps? Please inbox NGO Relations at undpingo@gmail.com if you are interested in collaborating with middle school students from the Valhalla Union Free District in Westchester County, New York, to design and implement a book project to benefit refugee children

Climate Change Conference

The UN [Climate Change Conference](#), COP 23, is now (November 6 -17) meeting in Bonn, Germany. Many of the plenary session are available live on UN TV -- see [program](#) for times and which sessions are broadcast, and probably also archived as video that will remain available. Don't forget to adjust for the time differences. Translation is available at bottom right of the webTV screen on your screen.

Commission on Social Development (CSocD56)

The [65th Commission on Social Development](#) will be held from January 29- February 7, 2018. Registration is now online and ends January 16. See Sr. JoAnn's note in her letter at the beginning of this newsletter.

Commission on the Status of Women

The [62nd Commission on the Status of Women](#) will be held in New York from March 12 through 23, 2018. Registration is open now and continues through January 27. See Sr. JoAnn's note in her letter at the beginning of this newsletter.

Watch UN Events Live

As always, you can watch live coverage (and often stored videos) of major UN events at the UN [WebTV channel](#). Click the language button to hear them in English). A list of daily events is listed in the UN Journal at 11 pm the day before. Webcasts are indicated by a small red icon of a camera.

Advocacy

The Partnership for Global Justice signed on to the Statement Submitted by Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, an NGO in Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC, for CSOCD 56 on "**Strategies for the Eradication of Poverty to Achieve Sustainable Development for all.**"

CSocD56 is the annual meeting of the Commission on Social Development.

The Partnership for Global Justice has signed on to the [Global Frackdown Letter](#), demanding an immediate stop of all fracking activities worldwide. The letter is being sent to Heads of States, Ministers, Parliamentarians, and Councilors of world governments.

Let's Keep Connected:

Please link the Partnership for Global Justice Website to your community's website.

<http://www.partnershipforglobaljustice.com/>

