

# NGO NEWS

Sisters of Charity Federation



Written by Teresa Kotturan SCN Volume 7 Issue 6 Fall 2015

## The United Nations Adopts Sustainable Development Goals



**The Sustainable Development Goals** officially adopted by the United Nations on September 25 provide a vision for the next 15 years for people, planet and prosperity. It is a vision that calls for the engagement of all people, for it is universal in nature. It is an ambitious vision that wants to transform our world, a world free of extreme poverty, hunger, disease, discrimination and violence against women and girls, human rights

to water and sanitation, illiteracy, inequality, exclusion, joblessness, affordable energy, fear, violence, degradation of the planet, where all life can thrive. It is a world which we seek to realize the human rights of all, especially gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls. It is a vision that wants to make sure “that no one will be left behind” and “all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives.”

How does one go about to implement 17 Goals with 169 targets? Do we cherry pick a few and leave out the rest? These goals and targets are the result of two years of consultation and engagement with civil society and other stakeholders around the world – along with the voices of the poorest and most vulnerable people. For the sustainable development of all, we need to regard the goals as a whole. We have to

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## Elena Mack Sheila Karpan

**SCLs** were in New York for UN Orientation from October 7 -9, 2015. They are the first participants of the personalized edition of UN Orientation. Lack of numbers is not an obstacle for an UN experience; it can be tailored to the needs and convenience of the participants.

## Impressions of the United Nations

The invitation to have an orientation to the United Nations touched me in a special way. In high school we had a model UN and I represented a country in Africa. I had to research and represent another nation than my home country and it was an enriching and insightful experience.

In Peru I have seen in action many programs for development on the part of the United Nations especially for children through UNICEF but the whole concept of learning about the workings and modern insights of countries working together on concerns which affect us all was beyond me. I have to admit I looked at the invitation and thought it was meant for others.

I am glad I decided that the invitation was also for me, especially as some world concerns have begun to touch my own heart. One of these is a concern about world migration and in particular the fate of migrant people. In Peru we witness migration within and outside of the country...our young seek opportunities beyond their own towns and villages but the reality of migration goes far beyond one country. During the UN orientation, besides learning much about trends and the effects of migration I was also became aware of all of the critical concerns of the world as expressed in 17 SDGs...sustainable development goals which are now the goals of the whole world for the next 15 years...the under-



standing that when these goals are reached it may well change a trend in migration as each country begins to commit to helping others arrive at a new phase in development and the need for people to leave home countries to satisfy basic needs is replaced by finding that critical needs are met in the country of origin. The need to allocate funding is also an important factor...as well as assuring that projects begun can continue through good planning and always in alliances with the people most affected by projects or programs, those who directly experience the critical needs.

I bring to our regional meeting in Piura this month some of the learnings and insights as well as a photo of Javier Perez Cuellar, a man of immense integrity and a Peruvian who served as Secretary General of the UN and then continued to accompany Peru, in a time of extreme political crisis. His example of being a person concerned with the common good continues to point in a most needed direction.

I want to thank Sister Teresa Kotturan for her help and sharing of experience, material and insight. She made it possible and I am grateful...

S. Elena Mack SCL  
Chuschi, Peru

## Upcoming Events

**United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change** – UNFCCC will take place in Paris, France from November 29 –December 11, 2015.

**54th Commission on Social Development** - February 3 - 12, 2016 and the Civil Society Forum is from February 1 – 2. Registration is open.

Theme is: **Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world.**

**60th Commission on the Status of Women** - March 14 - 24, 2016.

Theme is: **Women's Empowerment and its link to Sustainable Development**

**DPI NGO Conference 2016** is scheduled take place in Seoul Republic of Korea from May 30 – June 1, 2016.

## Take Advantage

Federation members/Associates – please contact Teresa Kotturan to fix a date for UN Orientation.

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develop an integrated approach for their implementation at the local, national and global level. Leaving out a goal will impact all other goals – they are woven together to address the social, economic and environmental issues of our times.

The adoption of these Goals and Targets address the concerns of People, Planet and Prosperity by member states do not guarantee an automatic implementation. What is critical to the implementation is the participation of the civil society, ordinary people around the world along with their governments and its institutions. This new agenda must be embraced by all people and involved in every step of the way. People are the real partners; they need to call for a political will and commitment from their governments to ensure adequate budgetary allocations and collaborative structures within various government structures/systems for a holistic approach to implementation. It should be a transparent process – implementation to follow up and evaluation. The measure of success will depend on the meaningful changes it brings about in the lives of the people living in poverty and on the margins along with the health of our planet.

SDGs and their targets can be accessed here: [click here](#).

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics>

Clicking on a goal will open up the window to display all the targets under that particular goal. Resources for education around the SDGs are not yet available. Indicators for the measurement of the goals and targets are in the process of being developed. In the coming months a particular goal and its targets can be taken up to study in detail and to make resources available.

## Pope Francis Calls on Global Leaders at the United Nations



**Pope Francis** urged the heads of States and Ambassadors to ‘re-distribute wealth from the rich to the poor’...to move away from an ‘economy of exclusion’ and to promote a worldwide ethical mobilization of solidarity with the poor in a new spirit of generosity. He asked UN for “reform and adaptation to the times” to grant all countries “a share in, and a genuine and equitable influence on decision making processes.” He pointed out that greater equity is needed “in the Security Council, Financial Agencies and the groups or mechanisms specifically created to deal with economic crisis... to limit abuse or

usury, especially where developing countries are concerned.” And to ensure that in the name of sustainable development, countries should not be subjected to oppressive lending systems, to avoid “greater poverty, exclusion and dependence.”

He called on everyone to work for “justice, an essential condition for achieving the ideal of universal fraternity”, and ensure no one should be “permitted to bypass the dignity and the rights of other individuals or their social groupings.”

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He emphasized the “right of the environment” in this manner – since we human beings are part of the environment and live in communion with it, any harm done to the environment is harm done to humanity. All living beings are endowed with intrinsic value and we are not authorized to abuse or destroy them. According to Pope Francis, “the misuse and destruction of the environment” through “selfish and boundless thirst for power and material prosperity is reflected in the “exclusion of the weak and disadvantaged. Economic and social exclusion is a complete denial of human fraternity and a grave offense against human rights and environment.” The poorest are “cast off by society, forced to live off what is discarded and suffer unjustly from the abuse of the environment.” It is reflected in the “culture of waste” we witness in our society.

The Pope asked world leaders to go beyond solemn commitments; to have the will to take effective, practical, concrete and immediate measures to preserve and improve the natural environment. He urged them to take steps to put an “end to social and economic exclusion and their consequences: human trafficking, the marketing of human organs and tissues, the sexual exploitation of boys and girls, slave labor, including prostitution, the drug and weapons trade, terrorism and international organized crime.” He urged them to enable “men and women to escape from extreme poverty, and allow them to be dignified agents of their own destiny.” Integral human development cannot be imposed from outside, but must unfold for each human being. This unfolding will happen if the right to education for all, especially for girls, is respected everywhere.

According to Pope Francis, “the simplest and best measure and indicator of the implementation

of the new Agenda for development will be effective, practical and immediate access, on the part of all, to essential material and spiritual goods: housing, dignified and properly remunerated employment, adequate food and drinking water, religious freedom and more generally, spiritual freedom and education.” This is the foundation for integral human development.

Since war is a negation of all rights, he called for an end to all wars and to work for a world free of nuclear weapons. “An ethics and a law based on the threat of mutual destruction – and possibly the destruction of all humankind – are self-contradictory and an affront to the entire framework of the United Nations, which would end up as ‘nations united by fear and distrust.’”

“The common home of all men and women must continue to rise on the foundations of a right understanding of universal fraternity and respect for the sacredness of every human life...this common house of all men and women must also be built on the understanding of a certain sacredness of created nature.”

While praising the UN for all its activities, the Pope invited the “representatives of the States to set aside partisan and ideological interests, and sincerely strive to serve the common good.” The Pope is calling for new models of development and lifestyle, and to preserve the sacredness of created nature.

Pope’s address to the United Nations and the Encyclical, *Laudato Si* can serve as our guiding posts to implement the Post 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



**Sangeeta Ayithamattam SCN** participated in the United Nations High Level Political Forum (HLPF) meetings in July, 2015.

This Forum replaces the Commission on Sustainable Development. A key message of the meeting was that we must urgently begin to implement the transformative development agenda that would be adopted in September.

It also stressed the importance of communication to accelerate implementation and to mobilize civil society and other stakeholders to put finance and technology at the service of Sustainable Development.

### **A Request:**

Please upload your activities related to the implementation of Millennium Development Goals during the year 2015 on to your Congregational websites. We need to give our annual report to the Department of Public Information (DPI) and our reports are to be found on websites.

Do not forget to follow the Federation NGO on FaceBook and Twitter.



## Interfaith Harmony Prayer for Peace

**The World Interfaith Harmony Week** was first proposed at the UN General Assembly on September 23, 2010 by His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan and was unanimously adopted as a resolution by the United Nations. Henceforth, the first week of February each year is observed as a World Interfaith Harmony Week. The purpose was to pray for peace.

The World Interfaith Harmony Week provides a platform – one week in a year- when all interfaith groups and other groups of good will can show the world what a powerful movement this is.

Since I am a Liaison to the UN NGO of the Federation of the Sisters of Charity, I brought this good news to Wellspring Centre on the St. Francis Xavier Campus in Antigonish, NS, Canada. We observed our First Interfaith Harmony gathering at Wellspring Centre on this campus in 2012

and 2013 this brought together three faith groups, which prayed weekly at Wellspring. Seeing that the University Campus was larger than Wellspring, we worked with Chaplaincy to bring together more groups of good will and different faith traditions to pray for peace. Bishop Brian Dunn, Vicar of the Founder of St. Francis Xavier University was part of the planning and did the introduction for this evening of prayer.

There were people, mostly students, offering prayer from seven faith traditions. This was a historic moment at St. Francis Xavier University. The evening was surrounded by the music of a string quartet from the University. A first we hope among many in the future. This is an example of taking something from the UN as an NGO to a wider field in the local area.

Marion Sheridan CSM

**Roma de Robertis SCIC** participated in the NGO Conference 2015 organized by the Friends of Ambassadors in New York from August 24 – 26, 2015. The Conference tried to bring together civil society members and other NGO Stakeholders from around the world to celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations and to build civil society's capacity to implement the SDGs.

### Interfaith Harmony prayer service at St. Francis Xavier University





**Carol De Angelo SC** (third from left) was one of the organizers of the Multi-faith Rally Supporting Pope Francis' call for Climate Action at Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, New York, on September 24, 2015. This was followed by the 'Under One Sky Vigil to Light the Way'.

Thousands of people gathered around the world the night before the Sustainable Development Goals were adopted and Pope Francis addressed the world leaders at the United Nations. Its focus was to let everyone in the world know about the Sustainable Development Goals and every leader to feel the pressure, demanding they become real. These Goals can transform the future of our people and planet – the opportunity it offers to bring an end to extreme poverty, inequality and to protect people and planet from climate change.

## Vincentian Family at the United Nations

During this year of Vincentian Family Collaboration, the NGO Representatives of the various branches are trying to articulate a new strategy to take collaboration for advocacy and systemic change to another level at the UN and with all members of the Vincentian Family around the globe.



Standing: Guillermo Campuzano CM, Joe Foley CM, Natalie Boone – Ladies of Charity, Margaret O'Dwyer DC  
Sitting: Ed Kean – Vincent de Paul Society, Catherine Prendergast DC and Teresa Kotturan SCN – Charity Federation.

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