

MERCY INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION



MERCY GLOBAL ACTION

Source: MIA MGA UN

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COLLEEN CLOONAN PRESENTS AT SALVE REGINA UNIVERSITY IN NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND AND FEATURES IN VIDEO

Colleen Cloonan, current Fellow at the MIA Global Action Office at the UN and '16 & '17 graduate of Salve Regina University in Newport, RI, returned to her Alma Mater October 11th and 12th to share about the work of the Sisters of Mercy at the United Nations and her experiences since starting last September.

The Mercy Center for Spiritual Life at the University invited Cloonan to speak the evening of October 11th on the work that the Sisters of Mercy do to defend the rights and dignity of migrants and refugees at the United Nations, in lieu of Pope Francis's week of prayer for refugees and migrants. She shared about the Sisters of Mercy's focus on addressing situations of the displacement of persons, the participation of MIA's Global Action office at the UN in the current processes for the Global Compact on Migration, and ways in which the University community can stay involved.



Photo: Jaime McGuire Salve Regina

Cloonan was also invited to address two of Dr. Jayme Hennessy's classes, "The Quest for the Ultimate" and

"University Seminar: Broken Halos". While she discussed her background at Salve Regina University and involvement in the work that the Sisters of Mercy at the United Nations, she also described the founding of the Sisters of Mercy and Catherine's teachings of poverty and how this has shaped the mission and ministry of their position at the United Nations. In addition, she guided the students on advocacy at the UN and its dimensions—first and foremost representing the experience of the most disadvantaged.

The two days ended on an encouraging note for students to continue their engagement with the social justice issues that the Sisters of Mercy advocate for at the UN and be an example for others. Congratulations Colleen!



Photo: Jaime McGuire Salve Regina

*The Sisters of Mercy have held special consultative status within the United Nations Economic and Social Council since 1998

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THROUGH OUR ECOSOC* EYES...

UN Celebration for the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

On October 17th, the MIA Global Action Office at the UN attended an event for the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. This year, marked an especially important year as it was the 25th anniversary since the General Assembly passed resolution 47/196 calling for an International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. The event was organized by the International Movement ATD Fourth World who's founder, Fr. Joseph Wresinski, inspired the observance of the international day 30 years ago with a celebration of the World Day for Overcoming Extreme Poverty. On October 17th of 1987, Fr Wresinski gathered one hundred thousand people in Paris to witness this call to action of ending poverty, which has been recorded on the Commemorative Stone. He stated, "Wherever men and women are condemned to live in extreme poverty, human rights are violated. To come together to ensure that these rights be respected is our solemn duty." This year's theme reminded us all of the call to action that was pledged 30 years ago in addition to ensuring that a "Call of October 17 to end poverty: [is also] A path toward peaceful and inclusive societies".

Sponsored by the Member States of Burkina Faso and France, ATD Fourth World commemorated the day with a two fold program. Paramount to the program were the accounts of activists and human rights defenders from across the world sharing their own experiences of poverty, exclusion, humiliation, disrespect and marginalization within their own communities. While they shared stories of their trials, they also shared how their experiences were humbling. For example, one activist, Alex Begay detailed "the little we had, we offered to share". Their testimonies broke the silence of poverty and demonstrated the importance of upholding the dignity and human rights of each and every person.



Photo: MIA GA at the UN



Photo: MIA GA at the UN

The celebration for the day ended with musical accompaniment and a visit to the Commemorative Stone which now is located on the grounds of the UN. Members of the NGO community, delegations and secretariat alike gathered to share in the commitments made 30 years ago to end poverty and exclusion. In the spirit of the 2030 Agenda, we call upon respecting the human rights and dignity of each and every person as a means to ensure no one gets left behind.

For a regional account of celebrations for the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, read Betty Lacey's testimony from the Poverty Stone on Custom House Quay in Dublin on page 7.



Watch ATD Fourth World's Event
Celebrating the International Day for the
Eradication of Poverty

Source: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/socialperspectiveondevelopment/international-day-for-the-eradication-of-poverty-homepage/idep2017.html>

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THEMATIC AREAS

Continued



DEGRADATION OF THE EARTH

• *MIA GA Office at the UN Meets with Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development*

Mr. Saad Alfarargi, Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development, was appointed to his position this past March of 2017. To gain more insight on his new position, Mr. Saad Alfarargi organized a meeting of Civil Society to hear concerns, existing gaps, and guidance of best practices so that he could respond to the needs of those on the ground. He detailed his plans for the full inclusion of Civil Society in all areas of the right to development as to both exchange ideas and integrate them at a policy level.

Many members of Civil Society that were present expressed their concern of the power of the market and private sector in issues of development as well as the politicization of development. Angela Reed rsm addressed the Special Rapporteur detailing the mission of the Sisters of Mercy and how we must focus on people over profit. In addition, Sr. Angela offered the NGO Mining Working Group's "Water and Sanitation: A People's Guide to SDG 6" as a best practice to adhere to.



Photo: MIA GA at the UN



Read Mr. Saad Alfarargi's mandate as Special Rapporteur



Watch Mr. Saad Alfarargi address to the Third Committee

• *Keeping Our Eye on Extractives*

In our last newsletter we alerted readers to the October 2017 UN process in Geneva in which negotiations continue towards a UN Treaty on business and human rights. A key reason for such a treaty is to stop corporate impunity and allow justice to those who are subject to human rights abuses on account of corporate actions. There are numerous examples throughout the world of mining operations that have proved to violate the human rights of communities. One example, is the Mariana case in Brazil which has resulted in disastrous outcomes for the people.

We highly recommend that you read this **linked dossier** produced by CIDSE, an international alliance of Catholic Development agencies working together for global justice. This **report** provides a comprehensive and compelling story on the impacts of extractives industries. This is a story that must be told.

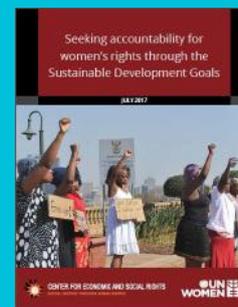
At Mercy Global Action at the UN, we continue to work toward bringing these cases to the global table and working to ensure that multinational corporations are accountable for their actions. See also, Pax Christi's Position Paper on Extractives.

“USEFUL RESOURCES

OXFAM's "An Economy for the 99%"



UN Women & Center for Economic and Social Rights: Seeking Accountability for Women's Rights through the Sustainable Development Goals



NGO Committee on Migration's "Debunking Myths to End Xenophobia"



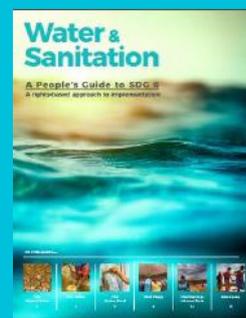
Pax Christi International Position Paper on Extractives in Latin America



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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



• *Taking a Closer Look at SDG 6 "Water and Sanitation for All"*

For the next four issues of the newsletter the SDG focus will be on our recent publication “Water and Sanitation: A People’s Guide to SDG 6 – A Rights –based approach to Implementation. This guide was produced to enable readers to ‘dig deep’ into the significant global issue of water and sanitation with a particular focus on SDG 6 : Water and Sanitation for All. Interpretation of SDG 6 is guided by the Preamble to the 2030 Agenda which explicitly recognizes the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation. Former UN Deputy Secretary General, Jan Eliasson congratulated Member States for acknowledging water as a human right. He claims, ‘Safe drinking water and adequate sanitation are not only essential human rights, but are integrally linked to broader efforts to provide well-being and dignity to all people. I commend Member States for recognizing the right to water and to sanitation in the 2030 Agenda and for adopting Sustainable Development Goal 6 to realize it’.

The Guide begins by reminding the reader that in order to be true to the global pledge of ‘leaving no-one behind’, SDG 6 must have a rights based implementation. This means: Preventing the commodification of water, Increasing public finance and Promoting commons- based Water Resource Management. The Guide is divided into six sections which include: The Water Crisis, The SDG’s, The Water Goal, Red Flags, Monitoring through the use of a Litmus Test and Advocacy. Each of these sections explores the above issues in some detail.

The issue we will focus on for this edition of the newsletter is the section entitled “The Water Crisis” (P.3). In this section, the reader is given an overview of current water issues and policy decisions that have led to the unsustainable use of water, the unjust distribution of water and inequitable access to water. Attention is drawn to the interests of powerful private interests to the detriment of human rights. A Case Study in which the human right to water and sanitation is violated is cited. There is also a discussion of the implications of trade deals and investment treaties which ‘restrict state sovereignty and policy space to make decisions and uphold their human rights obligations. See Spotlight on Investor-State Dispute Settlements: El Salvador. This section concludes with a clear call for correcting systemic policy failures and focusing on water justice. Click above to read the guide.



USEFUL RESOURCES

Do you want to learn more about ways to address climate justice, finance and development, just food, business and human rights, and ways to rethink development from a Catholic Social Teaching perspective? Follow CIDSE, the International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity, an international alliance of Catholic development agencies. [Click here for more information!](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

MIA at the UN will be attending

- **14th November- Sr. Angela presenting to the Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons**
- **25th November - International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women**
- **25th November - 10th December -16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence**

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It was a busy yet productive month as outlined below. Betty Lacey was on leave for two weeks during this period.

1. 'Field Visits' to Western and South Central Provinces in Ireland

The Global Action Team conducts a 'field visit' in different parts of the MIA world each year. This visit has a threefold aim: to meet the Sisters and Co-workers; to hear about and see firsthand their work for justice; and to share the Global Action programme, which includes highlighting the justice issues being addressed at the UN, on behalf of the Mercy Family. In October Sr. Denise Boyle fmdm, MIA-Global Action office in Dublin, was joined by Sr. Angela Reed rsm from our office in NY, for two field visits in Ireland, the first was to the Western Province and the second to the South Central Province. Both visits proved to be inspiring, informative and most enjoyable. Download the report that was recently published in Mercy E-News [here](#).

2. Meeting with John Weakliam and Ciara Feehely of 'VITA' Fighting Hunger and Climate Change in Africa'

On behalf of MIA-GA Denise Boyle had a productive meeting with John Weakliam, CEO, VITA and Ciara Feehely, Head of Communications on 26th October. VITA is a development NGO that works to address food and energy security, plus agricultural development and climate change in the Horn of Africa. The programme is developed one village at a time, with villagers committing to share their newly acquired skills with the next village and so on, proving to be an effective and sustainable development model. Simultaneously VITA has established strong partnerships in a number of countries, facilitating exchange of best practice and the sourcing of financial support for the project. The Mercy Sisters of the Western Province in Ireland are working in partnership with VITA in Ethiopia. Following the meeting Denise agreed to work with the VITA Team, to develop significant partnerships that could assist in extending the VITA programme into other African countries. <http://www.vita.ie/>

3. 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence, November 25th – December 10th.

In preparation for this important international event, we have been working on preparing a focus for each day of the campaign. With our colleagues in the 'Future We Need' (an Inter-Congregational justice group) we have prepared drafts that start on the first day with 'The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women' and ends on December 10th with 'The UN International Human Rights Day'. The resources will be uploaded prior to Nov 25th to www.mercyworld.org

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY

On October 17th, the ‘UN International Day for the Eradication of Poverty’, Betty Lacey on behalf of Mercy Global Action, attended an event in Dublin to mark this day. Participants gathered at the Poverty Stone on Custom House Quay where in 2008 a commemorative stone was unveiled here in Dublin. This coincided with the worldwide initiative to end poverty, which was inspired by Fr. Joseph Wresinski 30 years previously in Paris.



This year the theme of the Eradication of Poverty event focused primarily on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Goal 1 “End poverty in all its forms everywhere”. Mercy Global Action were keen to participate in this event as we had worked on the development of the SDG Agenda. Currently the Global Action Team is producing a series of pamphlets on the goals. An introduction pamphlet to the SDGs can be accessed [here](#). SDG 1 concentrates on poverty and is entitled End Poverty for All while Goal 2 is entitled Freedom from Hunger. The pamphlet covering both can be accessed at this [link](#).

As part of the celebrations at the Quay, seventeen “Global Mini boats of Hope” were launched on the River Liffey. These boats were built by communities and schools from across the country and each one represented one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Every boat was accompanied by a statement of hope, read by one of the school children or community members as they were launched.

Speeches followed including one from MR. Micheal MacDonnacha, Lord Mayor of Dublin. H.E. David O’Donoghue, former Irish Ambassador to the UN addressed the audience about the hope and responsibility generated by the 2030 Agenda. Having shared the role of co-facilitator with Kenya on these intergovernmental negotiations, O’Donoghue was in a key position to give a passionate talk on the importance of the SDGs. A minute’s silence was then observed to pay homage to all the victims of poverty, as these facts reflect:

- 22,000 children die each day due to poverty (UNICEF)
- 27-28% of all children in developing countries are underweight or stunted



The minute’s silence was followed by music and pertinent songs highlighting the seriousness of the event.

Mercy International Association (MIA) maintains a comprehensive and up to date website and produces an informative weekly e-newsletter (MercyNews).

Visit our website to discover more about MIA and our global activities: www.mercyworld.org

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