

MERCY INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION



MERCY GLOBAL ACTION

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NEWS FROM THE MIA: MERCY GLOBAL ACTION OFFICE UN

COLLEEN TIES THE KNOT!

A huge congratulations to our office 'Fellow', Colleen Cloonan who married Austin Swain on Friday, November 17th! Surrounded by their loving family and friends, Colleen and Austin were married in a moving wedding ceremony at Sts Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Hoboken. A beautiful reception followed at the Hyatt Regency in New Jersey overlooking the Manhattan Skyline. We wish Colleen and Austin all the very best as they journey together into the future.



Images: Colleen Cloonan Swain



Megan Williams



Merry Christmas!

Wishing you all a joyous Advent season and a happy and healthy New Year! May this reflective time inspire us to continue to do God's own work for justice and peace within our world and in our own hearts.

"May the light that we celebrate this coming Christmas help us to see, to widen our vision to all the ways that God shows up in darkness and in daylight. When you have need of it, may you find a welcoming fire and shelter in the shadows, and may you offer these in turn." -Jan L. Richardson *Through the Advent Door: Entering a Contemplative Christmas*

*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...

International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

On November 22nd, the United Nations hosted an event in the Economic and Social Council Chamber commemorating the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, which is celebrated on November 25th. This year's theme was "Leaving No one Behind: End Violence against Women and Girls". Identified within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations strives to uphold its commitment to the empowerment of women and girls. Violence against women happens every day throughout the world and is a stark violation of human rights. Yet, on the other side, women and girls around the world have the right to live free of violence.

In a powerful remark at the event, Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, detailed the alarming statistics that are rupturing every community and how "violence against women is a major barrier to the fulfillment of human rights, and a direct challenge to women's inclusion and participation in sustainable development and sustaining peace...[while] initiatives should help us deliver transformative change...more needs to be done. We need strong political will, increased resources and coordinated action. Violence against women is fundamentally about power. It will only end when gender equality and the full empowerment of women will be a reality." To read his full statement click [here!](#)



Watch the UN event here!

We are encouraged to rise up and speak out against all forms of violence and human rights abuses against women and girls.

Ways to Engage in the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

• *The Secret Slaves of the Middle East*

This 45 minute documentary produced by Al Jazeera is a very confronting video that depicts young women being exploited as domestic workers in Lebanon. It exposes the way in which people with resources exploit those rendered poor and features numerous young women sharing their stories of racism, sexism, classism and other forms of marginalization. Worth watching to gain insight into the ways in which young women are being treated as modern day slaves.

• *OXFAM Video "What She Makes"*

OXFAM's video "What She Makes", in addition to the "What She Makes pledge", was produced as a means of advocacy to tackle poverty and exploitation within the fashion industry. We all buy clothes. Many women who participate in these sectors do not receive a living wage and even risk their lives speaking out. We must be mindful of the brands we buy and ensure that those who are making our clothes are paid a living wage and the corporations are held accountable.

• *"16 Days 16 Stories"*

Watch MIA: Mercy Global Action at the UN's 2016 Campaign "16 Days 16 Stories" produced for the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.

• *Nadia Murad Book Release at the United Nations*

On November 11th, Nadia Murad, Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) presented her new book, *The Last Girl: My Story of Captivity, and My Fight Against the Islamic State*. Watch UN event here!



• *Spotlight Initiative EU-UN*

In line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the European Union, partnering with the United Nations, are investing in a global initiative that primarily focuses on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls. This multi-year initiative aims to respond "to all forms of violence against women and girls, with a particular focus on domestic and family violence, sexual and gender based violence and harmful practices, femicide, trafficking in human beings and sexual and economic labour exploitation". To read more click here: www.un.org/en/spotlight-initiative

• *MIA: MGA & 'Future We Need' 16 Leaflets*

Developed a resource of 16 leaflets for the campaign. Read more on page 6.

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THEMATIC AREAS DISPLACED PERSONS



• 'How and Now: Ten ACTS for the Global Compact'

As recently published in Mercy E-News, Mercy International Association, Mercy Global Action at the UN is a member of the NGO Committee on Migration. Much of our work this year has focused on participating in UN migration meetings and contributing to the Global Compact on Migration which is to be adopted in 2018.

There has been a Civil Society advocacy document 'Now and How: Ten ACTS for the Global Compact' which has been compiled by a core group of members of, and in consultation with 50 organizations and networks that are part of the Civil Society Action Committee (established in 2016 for the UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants and its follow up) and the International Steering Committee of Civil Society for the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD). The NGO Committee on Migration has made major contributions to this document which lays out a civil society vision for human mobility, migration, implementation and development. These 'Ten ACTS' (**full document attached**) are key to addressing the critical issues of migration today and comprehensively address issues of human rights. It is hoped that these '10 ACTS' will be incorporated, in an actionable manner, into the upcoming 2018 Global Compact on Migration.



What aspects of migration do the "Ten Acts" encompass?

- ACT 1.** Drivers of human mobility: Act to end the drivers of forced displacement and normalize and facilitate migration by choice.
- ACT 2.** Safe pathways for human mobility: Act to enhance safe, regular and affordable pathways and opportunities for human mobility that comply with human rights.
- ACT 3.** Protection: Act to meet the needs and respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of all migrants and refugees in distress, in transit, at borders and at destination, and end their criminalization and detention.
- ACT 4.** Decent work and labor rights: Act to promote safe and decent labor mobility, working conditions and labor rights for migrants and refugees.
- ACT 5.** Decent living conditions and access to justice: Act to ensure safe and decent living conditions and access to social services and justice for all migrants and refugees.

ACT 6. Education and skills: Act to provide quality education and developmental care for all children, and improve student mobility, learning opportunities and recognition of skills and qualifications.

ACT 7. Inclusion and action against discrimination: Act to promote social cohesion and inclusion of migrants and refugees into societies and combat all forms of xenophobia, racism and discrimination.

ACT 8. Transnational and sustainable development: Act to foster transnational connections and contributions of migrants, refugees and diaspora to sustainable development, and reduce transaction costs for remittances and investments.

ACT 9. Rights, return and reintegration: Act to develop global principles on the governance of return, reintegration and alternatives to return that guarantee the rights, safety and dignity of all migrants and refugees in these contexts

ACT 10. Governance, implementation and monitoring: Act to create transparent, accountable and participatory mechanisms and means of implementation for rights-based global governance of human mobility and migration.

In its entirety, the "Now and How: Ten ACTS for the Global Compact" reflects the issues and concerns of migration that were shared through MIRP. Those of you that are directly involved in working with migrants and refugees, will also recognize common calls and concerns that you have been raising over many years. In addition, there is a template for an advocacy letter to be sent to your governments outlining the "Now and How: Ten ACTS for the Global Compact". You may also want to speak to your Congregation or institution about sending this. To read further information about this very comprehensive Civil Society response, please follow this link <http://madenetwork.org/ten-acts>

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THEMATIC AREAS



Continued

DEGRADATION OF THE EARTH

• *Civil Society and UN Member States Meet in Bonn for COP 23 Climate Summit*

From November 6th to the 17th, members of the United Nations Delegations, along with Civil Society and other Stakeholders, met in Bonn, Germany for the 23rd annual "conference of the parties" under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to make preparations for the implementation of the Paris Agreement. This year, marked the first time that a Pacific Island nation--Fiji--chaired the meetings. It was significant as many of these nations are put in a dangerous position due to climate change and face critical risks of sea-level rise and destructive storms.



Image: UN Environment Twitter

The momentum was high as nations agreed to begin drafting the processes for the Paris Agreement to come into action and review their progression through the "Talanoa Dialogue" in Poland in 2018. The approach for these meetings were

recorded on page 7 of the Official Outcome Document as detailed below.

Key Outcomes of COP 23 Climate Conference:

- Member States agreed on the practical and political aim to bring the full and equal role of local communities and Indigenous Peoples in climate action.
- The Ocean Pathway Partnership was launched to "strengthen action and funding that links climate change action with healthy oceans including through the UN Climate change process and via more explicit aims and ambitions in national climate action plans".
- A notable outcome has been made over the issues with climate change and agriculture. As a means to address a demand for food across the world, countries have been asked to submit their views on improving soil carbon, assess adaptation, and resilience and the creation of better livestock management systems.
- The Bonn-Fiji Commitment, a commitment with 20 climate action initiatives, was signed by over 300 local and regional leaders. [Read here.](#)

Our colleague at the United Nations, Veronica Brand rshm, was recently interviewed in the National Catholic Reporter: Global Sisters Report regarding her observations at COP 23 in Bonn. Congratulations! [Click here](#) to read further.

Ways to inform yourself...



Three things to now about the latest UN Climate Talks



Read the COP 23 Outcome Document



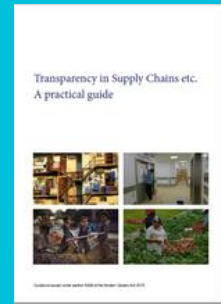
What needs to happen to keep the Paris Agreement on track?

Source: <https://cop23.unfccc.int/news/bonn-climate-conference-becomes-launch-pad-for-higher-ambition>

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“ USEFUL RESOURCES

UK Government's "Transparency in Supply Chains: A Practical Guide"



UNICEF's "State of the World's Children 2017: Children in a Digital World"



NGO Committee on Migration "Putting Words into ACTION: Concrete Policies and Practices for the Implementation of a Civil Society Vision for the Global Compact"



Explore the UN's "Ocean Action Hub" filled with resources, networks and other data working towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 14: Life Below Water



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



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

Section two of the Water and Sanitation guide is entitled 'The SDG's'. It begins by discussing monitoring and advocating in SDG implementation by reminding the reader of a simple truth; 'It is ill-advised for governments who wish to comply with their international human rights obligations and who seek to ensure development outcomes for the most vulnerable to abdicate human rights responsibilities to the private sector' (p.5). This is a great challenge for we must ask ourselves what are the roles of government when it comes to ensuring human rights. Can you think of examples where a government has abdicated their responsibility for human rights?

The section continues by raising a concern about implementation of the SDG's and the current trend of privatization and market based solutions in relation to water. It appears that the practice of SDG implementation contradicts its purpose which is to address major social and environmental ills. Once again, this section warns 'The emphasis on profit in the delivery of essential services results in predictable and systemic human rights violations for vulnerable populations' (p. 5). Are you aware of who is responsible for the water services in your local region, nation?

Transnational corporations are discussed with attention to the fact that legal frameworks for their accountability for human rights abuses are almost nonexistent. The section highlights facts from a UN DESA report released in 2016 which notes that 'private-public partnerships are more costly than public-sector alternatives from a social and financial standpoint' (p.5).

Human rights in the SDG's

Specific facts about the responsibilities of States in relation to human rights are discussed and information about the binding parameters for development processes, policies and efforts are outlined. Essentially the SDG's are grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Human Rights Treaties. Reference is made to the preamble of the 2030 agenda which commits to the realization of human rights for all indicating that the SDG's are grounded in a human rights approach. Attention is given to Goal 16 which is seen as an important guide for 'interpreting the proper implementation and orientation of all other goals, especially targets' (p.6) .

Reaffirming the human rights to water sanitation in and the SDG's

The role of civil society in the negotiation of the SDG's is briefly mentioned in this section. Significantly, 'Civil society campaigned for explicit recognition of the human rights to water and sanitation as a crucial lynchpin to safeguard against corporate abuses, uphold the sovereignty of local communities over their natural resources, and promote universal access to public water and sanitation services.' (p6). Can you think of ways in which the human right to water and sanitation is not being upheld?

It is important to note that despite opposition, in the final hours of negotiation of the SDG's, States included 'the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation' in the preamble. This is very significant as it requires states to uphold this commitment to human rights. What role do you believe that Civil Society can play to ensure that states uphold their commitment to the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation?

UPCOMING EVENTS

MIA at the UN will be attending

- **25th November - 10th December -16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence**
- **10th December- Human Rights Day**
- **18th -International Migration Day & Informal Interactive multi-stakeholder hearing for the Global Compact on Migration**



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MIA: MERCY GLOBAL ACTION (INTERNATIONAL CENTRE)

As the programme of courses and field visits have finished for 2017, Denise Boyle fmdm had time to co-edit with Sr. Maureen O'Connell PBVM the resource for the '16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence', see link below. We continue our involvement in the programme of the 'Irish Refugee and Migration Coalition' (IRMC) and the 'Coalition 2030 on the Sustainable Development Agenda' (Coalition 2030) as both groups are linked into Europe and the International community on several issues, as reflected in our report.

MIA-Mercy Global Action (GA) conference call meeting with the Mercy Global Action Network (MGAN), November 9th

Most MGAN members coordinate the justice programme for their respective groups. In an interesting conversation with participants from New Zealand through to Washington DC, we exchanged ideas, shared progress and commented on upcoming events. An important discussion developed around how best to implement the justice themes that emerged from the Mercy International Reflection Progress (MIRP). These are degradation of earth and displacement of persons. Both these issues are underpinned by a rights based approach, with an emphasis on eradicating poverty and a special focus on women and children. As we move into developing these two themes across the Mercy World, we will report our activities under these two headings.

DISPLACEMENT OF PERSONS:

1. Resource for '16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence' Campaign, 25th November – December 10th.

Working with members of the 'Future We Need' (FWN) group, we developed a resource of 16 leaflets, one for each day of the campaign. These were published and distributed widely through the websites of the different members' organisations, one being our website www.mercyworld.org. The leaflets were designed both for reading on-line or printing. Leaflet 16 designed to commemorate the UN International Human Rights Day on December 10th – see here / attached – also highlighted the beginning of the year long celebrations, to mark the 70th year since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was passed in 1948. The theme for the year is: 'Let's Make Human Rights a Fact and Not a Dream'. See all 16 pamphlets for the Campaign on: http://mercyworld.org/mercy_global_action/view-post.cfm?id=899

2. 'Stand Against Domestic Violence – Your community Will Stand With YOU!'

Denise Boyle was invited to participate in this important awareness raising initiative on December 5th to coincide with the 16 Days Campaign. Organised by the 'Inchicore Outreach-Domestic Violence Centre' in Dublin, we walked through the streets of this inner city suburb with a large banner, en route to the Kilmainham College of Further Education. Here students and staff welcomed us and accepted the book marks with important information about reporting domestic violence. In the college canteen Rita Fagin the Director of the Family Resource Centre, addressed the crowd in an informative and engaging manner with some harsh statistics to support her cause. From there we walked to the Kilmainham Garda or Police Station. Here Kate McCarthy, Team Leader in the Domestic Violence Centre, took the opportunity of sharing the message with Sergeant Stephen Perry and Garda Christine Kelly, who then availed of a photo op by joining the group holding the banner, as seen here.



Image: Denise Boyle fmdm

DISPLACEMENT OF PERSONS CONTINUED...



Image: Public Domain

What to do, if you suspect someone is being abused?

Herewith the 4 steps each of us should take:

1. Ask her if she is being harmed? Does she feel unsafe? Listen, believe and offer support.
2. Contact the Police if you think a woman or child is in danger.
3. Give her information and a phone number on the nearest Domestic Violence Centre and relevant support services.
4. Don't judge or put pressure on her to take action, as leaving a domestic violence relationship can be the most dangerous time for a women.

(From the Bookmark of the Inchicore Outreach Domestic Violence Centre)

3. A Civil Society Vision for a UN Global Compact for Human Mobility and Migration in TEN ACTS

MIA-MGA as a member of the Irish Refugee and Migration Coalition, (IRMC) has contributed to the IRMC submission to the 'UN Global Compact on Migration' that will be adopted in 2018. The Compact, incorporating 10 Acts, reflects a vision of civil society for a transformative agenda to cover human mobility, migration and development. The Coalition has endorsed the Ten Acts of the Compact, seeing them as a means of developing clear, long-term policies that will facilitate regular migration, whilst ensuring the fundamental rights of migrants are always upheld.

Crosscutting or underpinning all Ten Acts, are the rights of children and gender responsive policies [see earlier reference on page 3].

IRMC recognises the importance of all Ten Acts that were formulated after months of negotiation. Whilst the Acts are best considered holistically, Coalition members believe some acts should be stressed i.e. **Act 3 – Protection**, designed 'to protect and fulfil the human rights of all migrants, refugees and refugees in distress, in transit, at borders and at destination, and end their criminalization'. Additionally, Act 3 promotes ending child immigration without delay, because of the detrimental effect of migration on children's psychological and physical well being. Numerous studies support this finding, which has been upheld by the European Court of Human Rights.

The IRMC is advocating meaningful consultation between Governments and civil society in the negotiation and implementation phase 'to find responses to the challenges and the opportunities posed by international migration.' We support a reporting and monitoring system in the Compact to ensure that agreed standards are met. Finally, the Coalition believes as stated in Act 10.3 there must be an implementation guide attached to the compact, to ensure it goes beyond declarations. This in turn must be developed at regional and national level into clear action plans.

MIA: MERCY GLOBAL ACTION (INTERNATIONAL CENTRE)

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS):

The Coalition 2030, of which MIA-GA is a member through Denise Boyle is preparing a response to the 'Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment' who have just released Ireland's National Implementation Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It incorporates the vision for Ireland 'to fully implement the SDGs at home and to contribute to their achievement internationally, through our role as responsible global citizens so that no one is left behind.' The plan will be complemented with a framework reflecting how the SDGs will be implemented in the period 2018-2020. It is anticipated that this will support national policies and facilitate multi-stake participation.



Image: Public Domain

DEGRADATION OF THE EARTH:

Outcome of Citizens Assembly held in November to Discuss Climate Change

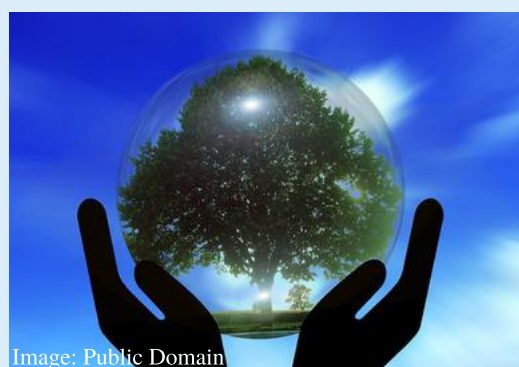


Image: Public Domain

The outcome of the Citizen's Assembly was radical, with the Assembly members calling for a complete overhaul of how the Irish State tackles climate change. Chosen from across the community, the 100 citizens discussed the submissions received from all sectors of Irish Society. MIA-MGA made a submission through Denise Boyle, strongly encouraging the abolition of 'one-use plastic' by introducing a tax on it that could be used to research an environmentally friendly option. At the end of their discussions, **the Assembly voted in favour of 13 recommendations** to the Irish Government, which can be grouped under the following:

1. Prioritise public transport investment over new road infrastructure spending at a ratio of no less than 2-to-1. Currently the majority of state investment goes to road building which means more cars and more emissions.
2. The Citizens' expressed willingness to pay higher taxes on carbon pollution and recommended that the agriculture sector should also apply the 'polluter pays principle' to its emissions. The resulting revenue should be reinvested to support climate friendly agricultural practices.
3. An end to all State subsidies for peat extraction on a phased basis over the next five years. This would bring peat-firing for electricity to an end a lot sooner than 2030, the current target.
4. Establishment of an independent watchdog with clear powers to make sure the State sets and meets five-yearly targets for emissions reductions. The introduction of such targets was removed from climate legislation by the government before it was passed in 2015.

Civil society and environmental organisations lauded the outcome as a "**clarion call**" for the government to step up their action to tackle climate change. This was particularly appropriate given the fact that the release of the 2018 Climate Performance **Index singled out Ireland as the worst performing country in Europe** for taking concrete action to tackle climate change.

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

Subscribe to our e-newsletter to learn about our vision in action and the ministries carried out by our member congregations: www.mercyworld.org/subscribe