

UN UPDATE FROM SISTER HELEN MARTINEZ – Journal for December 1-5, 2014

- Promoting and celebrating International Year of the Family Holy See, Qatar, Nigeria and sponsored this program to mark the 20th anniversary. The ambassadors and the panelists highlighted the importance of family in Post 2015 agenda. They stated that the family is the center of all and it is the power house for development and growth in preventing conflicts, gender equality, promoting harmony, ensures security, eradication of poverty and caring for all vulnerable society. Family was, is, always forefront. A new approach to family will strengthen and nurture the development in all nations. Family is not part of the problem but solution. Develop governments family oriented policies and program which will bring contribute to development. Each speaker emphasized that : a) the family is the center of sustainable development, b) the family is the fundamental unit of society, and c) governments should support the family in meeting its responsibilities and not replace parents as guardians and caregivers of their children. While single-parent households need to be supported, one ought not to minimize the importance of the two-parent family for optimal human development.

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There was an interactive discussion on participatory monitoring and accountability. The panelists were the ambassadors of permanent missions to Korea, Canada, Peru and UNICEF director of post 2015. The speakers stated that the monitoring and accountability should be inclusive of all people including women ,people in poverty ,children ,youth and marginalized . The three main concepts to be given importance such as better information (health indicators and innovations in terms of technology),better track of resources (to avoid duplication and complication ,reaching out to all women and children) and better oversight of results at regional, national and international levels. The UNICEF Director for post 2015 stressed the peoples' participation in monitoring and they should be center of new agenda. When people are included there is always development and merging new ways of collaborating; building partnership will give positive results. People should know what gaps are so there should be levels of functional literacy which gives knowledge to participate in all planning and evaluation.

- Religious at the United Nations [RUN]: The modified RUN's goals and purpose was appreciated by the participants. The purpose of RUN is to reflect upon common NGO mission in view of charism and mission. The new coordinating team was selected for one year. Sr. Deirdre, RSM, informed about the pilot project on Feeding and Nutrition program which is available to six countries:

Sudan, Papua New Guinea India, Philippines, Haiti and Democratic Republic of Korea.

- Financing for Development (FfD) Committee meeting: the committee announced the side event on FFD post 2015 Global Growing importance of Multi stakeholders' partnership in Developing countries. NGLS and FfD representatives provided a briefing to the NGO Committee on Financing for Development. A concise, general foundational paper, "Putting People and Planet First: Financing Sustainable Development Requires Political Courage," was discussed. Following incorporation of some editorial and some substantive comment, the paper will be brought back to the committee for adoption.
- Working Group on Girls: The task force updated the participants with information Sr. Winifred gave information on post 2015 which included the release of the Secretary General's synthesis report. Eileen and Susan share their experience on attending NGO Forum in Geneva where 53 countries involved out of 93 countries. The announcement that pre- registration for CSW 59 to be held from 9- 20th March at UNHQ in New York. All the participants must be registered by 27th of January 2015. IPA is registered for this event.
- UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon released an advance version of his synthesis report on the post-2015 development agenda, titled 'The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet.' In the report, Ban proposes an integrated set of six essential elements: dignity; people; prosperity; planet; justice; and partnership. In implementing a new agenda, the report recommends: committing to a universal approach with solutions that address all countries and groups; integrating sustainability in all activities; addressing inequalities in all areas; ensuring that all actions advance and respect human rights; addressing climate change drivers and consequences; basing analysis in credible data and evidence; expanding a global partnership for means of implementation (MOI); and anchoring the new compact in a renewed commitment to international solidarity. He concluded his report by emphasizing 2015 as a single year with the "unequivocal opportunity and responsibility to adopt sustainable development, to restructure the global financial system in line with our needs, and to respond finally and urgently to the challenge of human-induced climate change." He emphasized that such a unique opportunity will not come again and called for acting "boldly, vigorously and expeditiously to turn reality into a life of dignity for all, leaving no one behind." The report will be officially released on 31 December 2014 with translation into all UN languages, and will be formally presented in January 2015.
- ECOSOC Special meeting on Ebola: a threat to Sustainable Development. ECOSOC President, Martin Sajdik, who convened the meeting, said Council members stand ready to help mobilize all partners, including a network of non-governmental organizations, to ensure that economic and social recovery efforts help stabilize the worst-affected countries and strengthen their preparedness to prevent future outbreaks. "While the Security Council and the General Assembly are focused on mobilizing international support for stopping the outbreak in the

short-term, the ECOSOC must begin to plan for a post-Ebola response that will ensure that the affected countries do not fall too far off track from progress already achieved towards the MDGs [Millennium Development Goals].

- The NGOs New York County Psychiatric Association and International Psychoanalytic Association sponsored a showing of the film “Which Way Home.” The 2009 award-winning documentary follows several Central American and Mexican boys ages 10-17 and one 9 year-old girl) seeking to enter the US traveling—for the most part—atop freight trains through Mexico.
- The General Assembly voted on resolutions—most by roll call. Many resolutions had to do with some aspect of elimination of nuclear weapons or control of other weapons of war. The only country voting against the total elimination of nuclear weapons was North Korea (although there were 14 abstentions).
- Canada, Korea, Peru and UNICEF sponsored a panel on monitoring and accountability. Successful monitoring requires good information, pertinent indicators, innovation, and tracking of resources. Social accountability is the engagement of citizen groups in overseeing the government. SDGs will succeed only if people involved; functional literacy essential; ignorance feeds into lack of accountability. Commitment is a political decision; UN decisions not legally binding. If civil society presses for something, government will respond.
- Ambassadors and DESA staff were invited to a breakfast “collaborative conversation” meeting with the NGO Committee on Sustainable Development and the NGO Committee on Financing for Development. The 2015 theme Rethinking and Strengthening Social Development in the Contemporary World was discussed. Romania, France, Peru, China, and Mexico were in attendance. The ambassador of Romania and the Director of the DESA Division for Social Policy and Development spoke briefly. They noted that the labor market needs to be improved through participation, skill development and legal protections; data are needed to make good decision; “inclusion” is being replaced by “integration” in social development negotiations.
- NGLS and FfD representatives provided a briefing to the NGO Committee on Financing for Development. A concise, general foundational paper, “Putting People and Plant First: Financing Sustainable Development Requires Political Courage,” was discussed. Following incorporation of some editorial and some substantive comment, the paper will be brought back to the committee for adoption.
- NGO Committee on Mental Health presented a panel in recognition of International Human Rights Day. Three topics were presented—Disappeared of Lebanon, video documentation of human rights in Syria, and LGBTQ in Iran.
- The launch of the book **Fatal Journeys: Tracking lives lost during migration.** It is estimated that at least 3000 migrants died in 2014, including a significant

number of children. It seems that Europe has the highest figures for reported deaths. Since the beginning of this year, more than 3000 migrants are dead by trying to reach Europe—either by land or by sea. Some discussion centered on the use of Facebook and social media. Information is given to people in the camps so that they can make more informed choices. To the question about what the international community should do to keep people safe who don't have access to social media, the Diaspora has a role to play in bringing investment and guidance. Suggestion we look and economic development and strengthen education. Children's voices need to be heard about why they are crossing borders. There must be safety features in place to mitigate risks. There are psychosocial impacts on children. There needs to be an alternative for care plan for children who are separated from families. There are orphaned children in Europe resulting from the Syrian conflict and not just in the USA.

- We attended an Anglican Women's Empowerment Lunch and Learn with Rev. David Copley whose **topic was on** The Global Mission of the Episcopal Church in relations to UN Committee on Status of Women and Anglican Women's Empowerment. Several videos were shown; available on internet We are all missionaries. He also used a video with song by Beyonce I Was Here.
- The exhibit, "**The Long Journey**" was held in the main gallery of the Visitors' Lobby. The photographs told the life and history of the Palestine refugees since 1948. It was done via a selection of iconic pictures and videos from the archives. It showed images of Palestinians forced to leave their homes in 1948; the establishment of camps in the 1950s; the second flight during the 1967 war; the war in Lebanon; and the unrest and hardship from the second half of the 1980s through 2006. With the focus on this human tragedy which is connected to forced migration, it demonstrated the challenges Palestine refugees face and including the ingenuity, resilience and steadfastness with which they continue to respond.
- A special exhibit whose focus was on the Philippines called **Resilience by Design**. It created post-disaster architectural designs. The devastation caused by typhoon Haiyan last year stressed the need for sustainable solutions in response to the increasingly adverse effects of climate change. There were models for resilient schools and emergency shelters which would be useful in helping people affected by war and natural disasters. The exhibit said that the designs were affordable and easy to construct.
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