

UN Update - Sister Helen Martinez - Journal for February 14-20, 2015
Shorter "News and Views" Version

- From Tuesday to Friday the General Assembly led by co-facilitators from Kenya and Ireland, discussed the declaration that is to accompany the sustainable development goals. The majority of states prefer a short (two to three pages), inspirational, visionary statement. However, many, if not most, states think there is some specific item that needs to be included. A point of contention is current suggested wording that speaks of "shared responsibility." Less developed nations want that phrase changed to "common but differentiated responsibility" because they feel the disparity of power between nations make impossible a "shared responsibility." Reference to gender equity is frequently mentioned as a crucial component. The co-facilitators invited delegates to consider how the world should look in 2030, and what challenges must be overcome to make their vision a reality.
- There was an interactive panel discussion on sustainable consumption and production. There is general recognition that current consumption patterns cannot continue. Earth will be irreparably damaged and poverty cannot be eradicated if the world continues to do "business as usual." Food safety, good nutrition and care of the planet are addressed in the sustainable development goals.
- An event was held in commemoration of World Day of Social Justice. The discussion focused on the vulnerability of workers to modern forms of forced labor. There are 21 million trafficked workers world-wide.
- An informative session was sponsored by the International Council for Science and the International Social Science Council. Experts highlighted the need for clearer, more measurable targets for the sustainable development goals. Their research found that of the 169 targets beneath the 17 draft goals, only 29% are well defined and based on the latest scientific evidence while 54% need more work and 17% are weak or non-essential. The measurement experts found that the targets suffer from a lack of integration, repetition and vagueness.