Cork Social Housing Forum in Ireland
(of which two Good Shepherd Services are affiliated) recommends the establishment of a city-wide Strategic Housing Forum to address housing issues. This was the key recommendation in the Forum’s submission to the local housing strategy review.

The Submission is available on the Forum’s website:
www.corksocialhousingforum.com

The Forum says that a city-wide Forum needs the participation of Local Government, Voluntary Housing providers and other relevant parties to drive the implementation of the Housing Strategy, and to ensure that it is done in a coordinated way.

At the end 2012 Cork Social Housing Forum members met with the City Lord Mayor Cllr. John Buttimer to discuss how to promote, develop and strengthen a partnership approach to address social housing needs in the city.

The Forum members represent some of the key providers of social housing and services in the city. In March representatives of the Forum met with members of local government to discuss the proposal. Cork Social Housing Forum believes that access to housing is a basic human right as well as a human need with inherent implications for economic, social, cultural and political needs. A house is first and foremost a home and not just a market commodity. Cork Social Housing Forum brought this human rights issue to the attention of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, during Ireland’s Universal Periodic Review in 2011.

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**UN Declaration on the Right to Development at 25th Anniversary**

**By Hedwig Johl, GS NGO Representative in Geneva**

Did you hear about the right to development? The UN has been speaking about it for 25 years. A legally binding instrument takes a generation to come to pass. Those who work for change need much patience.

Prior to the Open-ended Working Group on the Right to Development this week (13-17 May), I attended an informal Session on 18/19 April open to Member States and Civil Society, with a view to improving its effectiveness.


The following is an overview of the 10 Articles of the Declaration:

1…every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic...

Read more>>>>>
The principles of Justice, when applied to ministry, provide a strong foundation for mission relevance. In 2013 this has been evident from Sri Lanka to Hungary to Indonesia, where the Units have requested training as part of ministry evaluation and Unit chapter preparation, as they seek to respond more effectively, in line with the congregational directions.

Issues of human rights, good policy formation, and raising the GS voice in Advocacy all have been part of recent training done on local levels. Sisters and staff are moving these issues forward toward an integrated vision of their chapter work. Often this is only the beginning as units make decisions toward comprehensive evaluations and integration of deeper human rights methodology, appropriate to the social needs of today.

Likewise, JP training is now going hand in hand with Mission Development initiatives in new programming. A prime example is being planned with the mission in DR Congo where JP training will begin on the ground with core staff, reinforcing the vision and values of Good Shepherd.

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**Vibrant Mission supported by JP Training**

By Clare Nolan, Training Facilitator

The celebration of the International Women’s Day 2013 was unique and I think that a message was given and this is a hope for the future!
Exposure visit to the UN Human Rights during Germany’s UPR
By Sr. Rosa Virginia Madan, RGS, Province of Germany/Albania

I want to share my visit to the UN headquarters in Geneva, as a follow-up to Germany’s UPR Report. On April 25th, I went with Sr. Hedwig to the Palais des Nations in Geneva. A large German delegation was present, headed by Markus Loening, Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Aid at the Federal Foreign Office. An interactive dialogue began following the opening speech.

I would like to highlight some key points that struck me as important: human trafficking, minority protection, Roma and Sinty (also Sinta or Sinte, a Romani people of central Europe), children's rights protection, domestic violence, racism, criticism of police behavior towards women, equality in the workplace and equal pay, migrants, religious freedom, religious symbols (headscarf), and prostitution among others.

In the afternoon, I attended a side event held by the "German Human Rights Forum" (Berlin).

Some documents were available, e.g. a press release by FIAN (International human rights organization for the right to feed oneself)… The contributions were quite interesting. They concerned "tables" (food), which are used by 1.5 million people in Germany; that the government takes the necessary social and political decisions so as to help single families. Other important issues were: health care, inability to work, racism in the workplace, violence against women, child abuse, and corruption.

We took part in another side event on Canada's indigenous people. This was about violence against their women and girls. Even at age 12, girls are harassed. They are snatched on the way to school, kidnapped in the city, abused and even murdered. 7-12 year olds are victims of human trafficking. Indigenous women suffer 3 times more violence than others.

By the end of the day, I could take nothing more "in", since almost everything was in English, except when Mr. Loening spoke in German.

More information on the UPR of Germany:
http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/Highlights25April2013am.aspx

NEW MEASURES TO COMBAT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
By Ana Yussara Silva Pozo, JP Contact Bolivia

Throughout history, the Bolivian woman has lived in a situation of inequality and abuse as a result of the patriarchal system which has, -through its objective and symbolic permanence in behaviors, attitudes, roles, myths, prejudices and values - in some way justified violence against women.

This still happens today, despite numerous actions and efforts undertaken by several organizations. Bolivia heads the ranking of violence against women among 13 Latin American countries, according to data provided by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Center for Disease Control, emerging from a study conducted and based on demographic surveys of sexual and reproductive health in thirteen countries in the region. The Center for information and development of women (CIDEM) also points out that in 2012 a woman was killed every three days because of domestic violence.

In the campaign “Unite to End Violence against Women” of the United Nations, Bolivia comes second only to Haiti on levels of sexual violence. The result of surveys of women showed that the three more serious forms of violence to which they are subjected are: the physical punishment (83%) forced or unwanted sex (72%) and no appreciation for their work (44%). These forms of violence can lead to physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health problems, as well as increase vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

The scourge of violence in Bolivia affects 7 out of 10 women. In 88% of cases it is not reported because of fear, fear of being separated from... Read more>>>>>
International Women’s Day
“To treat every woman with respect, honor and dignity”

By Sr. Pushpa Louis, RGS, India

Our whole Country is shocked by the many incidents of violence against women. We are all aware of the tragedy that has happened in Delhi and the many events that are taking place which have caused public outrage. These events have also raised many questions with respect to law and proceedings in the Court. We, as a Good Shepherd Sisters and as concerned citizens, involved in legal awareness activities, thought it was our duty to provide general information and create awareness on the rights of women; and, what better day to start than on International Women’s Day!

“STOP DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN. UNITE TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & CHILDREN. GENDER JUSTICE & EQUALITY SHOULD BE PRACTISED & TAUGHT AT HOME AND SCHOOL LEVELS. EMPOWERED WOMEN WILL CREATE AN EMPOWERED SOCIETY. WOMAN IS A DAUGHTER, A MOTHER, A SISTER & SHE IS PRECIOUS.”

These were the slogans that we shouted on 8th March 2013 -International Women’s Day- as we rallied on the streets of Andheri slums, Mumbai and the surrounding areas. There was a very big crowd of about 1000 of women and children. The procession included Sisters of the Good Shepherd, Staff and Lay Partners, who were the main organizers and leaders of the rally with the BANNER CAMPAIGN: STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN!. Following them were Women’s groups (Mahila Mandals) from different slums.…. Read more>>>>>

A New Global Development Agenda in the making!

By Winifred Doherty, GS NGO Representative in NY

Many discussion are taking place at the United Nations, New York, with regard to a new global development agenda to replace the Millennium Development Goals in 2015*. The new development agenda is seeking to have people’s well being and sustainability at it center.

The Panel was established by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and co-chaired by Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and UK Prime Minister David Cameron. The President of Indonesia hand over the report to the Secretary General on May 30, 2013.

While there is recognition and acclaim for the report, it is felt by many NGO’s that it did not go far enough in presenting a bold yet practical agenda. In particular, the structural causes of the present crises have not been addressed. It seems to be “business as usual” for corporations and a small percentage of people amassing profits. On page 4 of the report we read ‘Of all the goods and services consumed in the world each year, the 1.2 billion people living in extreme poverty only account for one per cent while the richest 1 billion people consume 72 per cent. Every year, one billion women are subject to sexual or physical violence because they lack equal protection under the law, and 200 million young people despair because they lack equal opportunities to acquire skills they need to get decent jobs and livelihoods.’

People living in poverty, women, girls and young people are at the heart of Good Shepherd ministries throughout the world. Participation in the global discussion is no longer an option. Girls and women participating, speaking up, becoming involved in decision making is critical to bring about the necessary change at the local and national level.

More information: http://winifredd.wordpress.com

Good Shepherd Australia /New Zealand Social Justice activities: Switch Off on Saturday Night: We invited GS people to switch lights off around Australia and jointed the globe for Earth Hour at 8:30pm on Saturday 23rd March 2013.

2013 Easter Chocolate campaign - The campaign is only in Lent time: Buy, eat and talk about Fair Trade chocolate….. Read more>>>>>
By Winifred Doherty, GS NGO Representative in NY

What are you doing to promote Social Protection Floors?

In June 2012, one year ago the International Labour Conference adopted Recommendation 202 concerning National Floors of Social Protection. This is a tripartite agreement between governments, unions and workers. Social protection is a human right and is embedded in international human rights law. Social protection is universal, non discriminatory promoting gender equality and responsiveness to special needs. Social protection floors are nationally defined. Social protection floors secure basic income coupled with universal access to essential affordable social.

Winifred Doherty is a member of a Global Coalition of NGO’s promoting implementation of Social Protection Floors. Implementation of social protection floors would indeed be a bold and practical way of eradicating poverty. The newly released report of the High Level Panel has referenced ‘social protection as a way to help people build resilience to life’s uncertainties and reduce inequalities. The report further noted universal social protection floors as examples of issues surfaced under the themes of inequality and other vulnerable groups see pages 60 and 63 of the report. Go to: http://www.post2015hlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/UN-Report.pdf

Don’t forget to promote the on line signature campaign, go to http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/signature-campaign-social-protection-floor.html

If you need material to create awareness about the social protection floor and develop training session contact Winifred at winifreddohertyrgs@gmail.com

http://www.buonpastoreint.org/jp-en

The Open Working Group of the General Assembly comprising 30 member states was established on 22nd of January 2013. It is charged with developing sustainable development goals to replace the millennium development goals. From June 17 – 19, 2013 the fourth 3 day meeting will take place. The topics; “Employment and decent work for all, social protection, youth, education and culture” and “Health, Population dynamics”. Poverty Eradication was the topic of the second session. Winifred Doherty was able to make an intervention during this meeting on behalf of the Sub Committee for Poverty Eradication. See http://gsijpoffice.com/2013/04/22/discussion-on-a-new-global-development-agenda-have-begun-at-the-un/ for text and webcast of the event.

Women Major Group making a statement to the Open Working Group. Winifred Doherty in the background.
I had the pleasure of attending The Twelfth Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at the UN in New York, which began on May 20, 2013 and will continue to run until May 31, 2013. UNPFII is an advisory body to Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to specifically discuss indigenous issues relating to economic development, social development, culture, environment, education, health and human rights, which are topics all briefly mentioned in the opening ceremony.

The opening ceremony began with a beautiful soothing traditional flute song followed by the welcoming of Todadaho Sid Hill, who is the traditional Chief of the Onondaga Nation. The room was filled with many colorful representatives of indigenous people from all over the world. During the ceremony the election took place of the new Chair of the UN Permanent Forum Mr. Paul Kanyinke Sena. He stressed that human rights are everyone's rights and that includes indigenous people, he also mentioned that this year's Forum will start to shape the first World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in September 2014, which will correspond with the discussion of a post-2015 development agenda. Later that day I attended the side event entitled Violence against Indigenous Women: Sharing Testimony and Strategies, sponsored by MADRE and co-sponsored by many organizations such as Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas de las Americas (ECMIA) and FIMI. It presented five distinguished panelists, of which one stood out to me due to her emotional courageous story, Ms. Silvia Perez Yescas.

Silvia is a human rights activist from Mexico and was there to discuss the survival of the “protectors” of the indigenous. She explained how these “protectors” or human right activists were constantly living with persecution and she was personally a victim of such persecution. She explained how the “Red” National Network of Communication and Urgent Action of Human Rights Defenders are currently in pursuit of those who on January 18, 2013 threatened her and her son’s lives, due to her being an active member of the indigenous women group CIARENA.

With her head held high she began to tell her story. She described how twenty armed men surrounded her house and threatened to shoot down her door. She was petrified not only for her life but for her son’s life. She paused but with a few sips of water she again proceeded to tell her story, “I was sure I was going to die…” Luckily her neighbors intervened and were able to protect her and her son from what was sure to be their execution. For her protection, she sadly said, “I was taken out of my community.” But from a dark experience some light was left with her because this experience had shown her she is not alone, “Somos un chingo,” (we are many)! She concluded her story by naming victims of similar cases and saying how grateful she was for them for still fighting the good fight, but also to show that the problem still exists and something must be done. She seemed to feel somewhat guilty and saddened that she wasn’t there fighting with them but stressed how we must ensure the right to defend the human rights of indigenous and non-indigenous women activists, and defenders of human rights in the State of Oaxaca, a city in Mexico where more than thirty murders of human rights activists have occurred. 🙏

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:
OTHER NEWS

♦ 23rd session of the Human Rights Council: Reports

♦ The Three Heroines of Guatemala: The Judge, the Attorney General and the Nobel Peace Laureate, by Amy Goodman

Former Guatemalan President Efrain Rios Montt was hauled off to prison...

NEW SPACE FOR GSIJPO IN NEW YORK

New Postal Address:
Sisters of the Good Shepherd –GSIJPO
60 East 42nd street,
Suite # 1438, New York,
NY 10165 USA

Editor’s Note:
“Embrace the World” can be published, thanks to each of your contributions with articles, stories and other news concerning justice peace issues in the world-wide Good Shepherd Congregation. We continue to count on you for the next editions of the journal. Share with us your activities, news and events in your Units and countries. I take the opportunity to say thanks to all who were helping with translations and proof reading and especially to those who sent articles for this edition of June.

“*We commit ourselves to work zealously with women and children, especially those who are trafficked, forced to migrate or oppressed by abject poverty*”

Journal notes edited and prepared by
Yolanda Sanchez:
yolasanco@gmail.com
Original in English:
Translated to Spanish by Victor Carrasco
Translated to French by: Yolanda Sanchez and Sr. Marie Helene Halligon (France)
Please distribute to all communities, programs, and Good Shepherd Friends in your Unit.

NEW GSIJPO in NY # 1438

Winifred’s space
Barbara & Yolanda’s space
Clare’s space