On April 26, 2016, the Good Shepherd International Justice Peace Office (GSIJP) celebrated 20 years of Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Members of the office Winifred Doherty, Clare Nolan, Cecilie Kern and Barbara O’Carroll celebrated at the Church Center of the United Nations with Good Shepherd Sisters from the New York-Toronto Province and the Congregational Leadership Team, and partners from the UN NGO community. In her remarks at the event, main NGO Representative Winifred Doherty recounted some of the highlights and accomplishments of the office since 1996, including engaging with the Millennium Development Goals and the financing for development agenda, working to end human trafficking and all violence against girls and women, and advocating for the rights of girls and the needs of those living in extreme poverty. She also thanked the Congregation and UN partners for their support and collaboration. Congregational Leader Ellen Kelly spoke in appreciation of the work of the GSIJP Office in New York, as well as those working in Geneva and around the world.

As the GSIJP Office celebrates 20 years, it is also looking to the future, and envisioning what its presence at the UN will look like in the next 5 years. Zelna Oosthuizen, link counselor from the Congregational Leadership Team to the GSIJP Office, visited New York and joined the GSIJP team in New York for a series of meetings about the optimization and integration of the Office with the holistic mission and vision of the Congregation and the new Congregational Direction Statement, as well as with the Mission Development Office and the Spirituality Center. The outcome and recommendations from these meetings will be reviewed by the whole GSIJP team during their meeting in Angers, France in June, and will be shared with the international offices in the spirit of collaboration and integration.
The sixtyeth session of the Commission on the Status of Women took place at UN Headquarters in New York from March 14-24, 2016. It was preceded by a one day Consultation Day, organized by NGO CSW/NY on Sunday, March 15th. Representatives of Member States, UN entities, and NGOs from all regions of the world attended the session and accompanying side events and parallel events. The priority theme of the session was ‘Women’s empowerment and its link to sustainable development,’ and the review theme was ‘The elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls (agreed conclusions from the fifty-seventh session).’ After some difficult negotiations, the outcome document of CSW60 was finally agreed close to midnight on March 24.

The Good Shepherd Statement to the Commission is listed among the official document of the session. The statement addresses the issue of prostitution as a forms of violence against girls and women, noting: “A system of prostitution is ‘incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person,’ as stated in the United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (1949).” The continuance of the system of prostitution, which is enabled by patriarchal structures, including systems of corporate and financial power, undermines both dignity of the person and equality. The statement further elaborates: “Gender-based discrimination and inequalities, patriarchal structures that promote male sexual domination, and culturally imposed feminine gender stereotypes all contribute to the sexual exploitation of women and girls. These discriminatory attitudes inherently demean women, permitting objectification and commercialization and infringing their rights and dignity. The feminization of poverty and global migration patterns also foster the continuance of the system of prostitution of women and girls, abandoned widows and their daughters being a particularly vulnerable group.” The whole statement is available in the six UN languages.

During Consultation Day, Assistant NGO Representative Cecilie Kern presented the documentary featuring Good Shepherd projects in the Democratic Republic of Congo Maisha: A New Life Outside the Mines during the Poverty and Finance breakout session, facilitated by Main NGO Representative Winifred Doherty. Good Shepherd also co-sponsored three parallel events during the Commission. The first took place on March 17th, in collaboration with the Sisters of Mercy. ‘No Random Act: Human Trafficking and the Interplay between Systemic Oppression and the Individual Life Course’ featured research from Good Shepherd programs in Cebu City, Philippines. New York Mission Partner Nancy Fritsche-Eagan was instrumental in organizing the March 21st event ‘Transformation & Engagement in Human Rights Work: Story telling and Conversation Circles,’ which also featured a short clip from the Maisha documentary. The film made one last appearance on March 22nd, during the parallel event entitled ‘Economic Empowerment Strategies Addressing Systemic Issues affecting Girls and Women,’ which also featured a presentation from Mission Partners Yen-Chu Chen, Yu-Chia Chang and Cyan Chen on the empowerment projects for single mothers at the Good Shepherd Social Welfare Foundation in Taiwan and a presentation from scholar Emma Mackey on the impact of violence against women on economic empowerment in Bolivia. ⬇️
On February 9, 2016 the Group of Friends United Against Human Trafficking held an interactive discussion on the interdependence between the eradication of human trafficking and the achievement of the SDGs. Good Shepherd collaborated with the Sisters of Mercy and delivered a strong and clear message to Member States and policy makers, calling for a shift from understanding human trafficking as a ‘random act of victimization’ to ‘systemic oppression over the life course leading to vulnerability to exploitation’. Challenging the dominant discourse on trafficking focused on criminality and migration, the statement called for a focus on prevention, whereby children’s rights to safe housing, adequate schooling, and health and well-being are realized. The intervention by the Sisters of Mercy and the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd was covered in an article on catholicireland.net.

On March 8th, International Women’s Day, NGO Representative in Geneva Yolanda Sanchez delivered a statement to the Human Rights Council, in solidarity with all trafficked girls and women throughout the world. Zelna Oosthuizen, link counselor from the Congregational Leadership Team to the GSJP Office, was also present. The delivery of the statement, which was made in collaboration with the Sisters of Mercy, is available online. (Intervention begins at 2:23:20)

On April 7th, The Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the UN hosted an event in New York on Ending Human Trafficking by 2030. The event was made up of a keynote panel and panels on ‘The Scope of the Problem and the Opportunities it Provides,’ ‘What Is Being Done To Address the Problem in a Coordinated Way,’ ‘Insights from Member States,’ and a synthetic closing panel. The event is available for viewing in its entirety here. Highlights included remarks from Ambassador Macharia Kamau, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the UN and one of the Co-Chairs of Open Working Group on the SDGs, Ms. Donna Hubbard, a survivor of human trafficking and member of Airline Ambassadors International, and Sr. Imelda Poole, IBVM, President of RENATE, a network of religious throughout Europe engaged in ministry to trafficked persons.

There was significant reference to SDG Target 8.7, which calls on all to “take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of all forms of child labour.” SDG Alliance 8.7, a proposal of the International Labour Organization, aims to bring together a multi-stakeholder partnership to assist all UN Member States in achieving Target 8.7. ILO proposes that ending modern slavery will require integrated thinking, coordinated actions, effective policy-making and efficient use of resources. From the smallest grassroots groups to UN agencies, each can use their experience, outreach and resources to deliver results that can move societies closer to ending these human rights violations.

The conflicts in the Middle East have given rise to multiple sufferings such as the trafficking of women and girls. After months of struggles, research and risks, the Lebanese police was finally able to apprehend a big mob of traffickers. Thereby, 75 young women (girls) have been released from this hell as many of them testified. Some of these youths were sold by their relatives for money, others married off only to be deceived afterwards, others taken by force or trickery etc. The hardest part is that the majority of these girls are between 12, 13, 14 and 15 years old.

Currently, where are these 75 young women? The majority were directed to NGO professional shelters in order to assist them, some were sent to relatives, while others were arrested and under surveillance. 15 bars were closed by the police who remain on alert for any new attempts. It is true that prostitution exists in large hotels but we have never witnessed as much trafficking as in the last 4 years. The greater the efforts for women’s liberation, the more the traffickers are active. Let us put a stop to personal interests and arms trade for the sake of the innocent who pay heavily the price.
Core team for Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors come from all corners of the world. On the last day we were joined by Isabel Ortiz, Director, Social Protection Department of the International Labour Organization.

March 7 and 8, 2016, I attended a strategy meeting of the Core Team of the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors in Geneva. The meeting was hosted by the Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung Geneva Office (FES). I did not stay at the hotel with the other members but rather shared an apartment with Zelna Oosthuizen at the International Foyer in Geneva. Hedwig Joehl, Yolanda Sanchez and Marta Iris welcomed us to their apartment on arrival and for a meal.

The meeting provided an opportunity to review what has happened since 2014 and to strategize moving forward. The focus had been on advocating for a stand-alone goal in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A statement in September 2015 reads: ‘Do we need to be disappointed? As there is no stand-alone goal calling for universal, human rights based social protection floors among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s). No, we should be proud.’ Social Protection is a key component of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Read more HERE.

Did you know that that national floors of social protection are explicitly linked to Articles 22 and 25 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and Articles 9, 11 and 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and also in Goal 1, Target 3 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

The transformative vision of the 2030 Agenda is outlined in the following words: ‘We want a world free of poverty, hunger, disease and want, where all life can thrive. We envisage a world free from violence. A world of universal literacy. A world with equitable and universal access to quality education at all levels, to health care and social protection, where physical, mental and social well-being are assured. A world where we reaffirm our commitments regarding the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation and where there is improved hygiene: and where food is sufficient, safe, affordable and nutritious. A world where human habitats are safe, resilient and sustainable and where there is universal access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy.’ This echoes perfectly with our understanding of Social Protections Floors and implementation of national floors of social protections is a sure tool in achieving this vision.

There is an excellent guide prepared for use by civil society – a sort of tool kit. This might be very useful in your understanding of social protection floors and in doing some advocacy with your government. The Civil Society Guide for National Social Protection Floors and use it in discussion groups.

The guide will help you to take up the cause for Social Protection Floors (SPF’s) and to foster commitment among others. It will help you get a better understanding of SPF’s and know what is happening in other countries and regions. Check the website for further information.

The world of corruption makes it possible human trafficking and slavery in the city that is accustomed to rule and to exclude its inhabitants” "Trafficking in persons is really the most extensive slavery in this 21st century" - Pope Francis

The Committee to Support the Human Trafficking Victims (CAVITP), established in 2006, is one of the committees of the Conference of Religious Institutes in Portugal (CIRIP). Currently this lay and consecrated team who is mobilized for intervention in the field of human trafficking, based on faith, engaging in outreach projects and joint actions aiming to alert and engage every citizen in the consciousness of this reality. As this relates to the charism and mission of our Congregation, our Unit has been present since the establishment of this Commission by a sister who is part of this team. The Commission aims to (1) Inform, raise awareness and engage civil society and the consecrated life to the issue of human trafficking; (2) Raise awareness and stimulate public opinion in the detection and reporting of this form of exploitation; and (3) Develop multi-sectoral involvement actions and cooperation in preventing and blocking trafficking networks. This is done through developing monthly reflections, training and sharing, organizing seminars and conferences, listening and operating service centers, cooperation and coordination with entities involved in this issue and sharing materials from other organizations through social networking. The Commission works in partnership to organize national and international religious and civil society organizations.

(Continued on page 5)
First Financing for Development Follow-Up Forum Takes Place at the United Nations

The inaugural ECOSOC forum on Financing for Development follow-up was held from April 18-20 at UN Headquarters in New York. The Forum was mandated by the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia last July, and which adopted the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA). The theme of the Forum was “Financing for sustainable development: follow-up to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.” According to its mandate, the Forum was supposed to address the follow-up and review of the Financing for Development outcomes and the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Forum included the Special high-level meeting of the Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

The FFD process is supposed to play a pivotal role in advancing socio-economic transformation of developing countries, democratizing global economic governance, and advancing systemic reforms of global economic frameworks in order to realign them with the imperatives of human rights and sustainable development. The FFD process is supposed to unlock the means of implementation to realize the aspirations expressed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

However, this inaugural Follow-up Forum did not live up to expectations, and did not meet its potential usefulness. It is a missed opportunity to move the implementation of FFD agreements forward. Protracted negotiations over the Forum’s modalities ate into valuable time for negotiating an Outcome. The AAAA states that the FfD Forum could be held for “up to five days,” but in the end, the decision was to have it last only three days. This did not allow sufficient time to complete the tasks of the Forum that include “consideration of an expanded Financing for Development agenda [and] the additional consideration of the interlinkages between Financing for Development and the Agenda 2030.” Insufficient time was given to envisioning and organizing the follow-up process, including and with special emphasis on the necessary articulation of a medium term plan of work for the coming years.

The four-paragraph Agreed Conclusions and Recommendations, which will be fed into the overall follow-up and review of the implementation of the Agenda 2030 in the High-level Political Forum, is deeply unsatisfying – it does not go into the substance of very urgent issues and does not draw from the discussions that took place during the Forum. It fails to articulate clear mechanisms and steps for ensuring that concrete and decisive actions are taken towards realizing agreed aspirations. The FFD Forum was informed by the report of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development (IATF), but the first report limited itself to lay out the methodology for monitoring implementation in the future. Even as it did this, it narrowed down its framework to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, neglecting the previous FFD outcomes that the Addis Ababa Outcome actually reaffirmed. Civil society has asked that future reports the IATF consult a variety of sources of information and implement mechanisms for civil society engagement.

Confines of Human Trafficking (Continued)

Within the scope of activities, we highlight the seminar coordinated by Sister Gabriella Bottani - coordinator of Talitha Kum Network - last March 5 in Lisbon, with the theme "The Confines of Human Trafficking - A Multidimensional Approach". The seminar was very well attended. Present were members of many religious institutes, church and lay organizations. Sister Gabriella developed the theme with the ardor of those who are on the ground, and dynamics involved and sensitized to all. Particularly, reality was presented with a hopeful tone, despite the challenges involving the fight against human trafficking.

This seminar sprouted life! All of us who participated became more aware of what is going on in the world, sometimes so well-hidden and so acutely! Here emerged the commitment to hold hands so we can go further in tackling the serious problem of our time. People from other similar groups expressed a desire to partner with CAVITP, which will allow us to extend the work of the network that takes knowledge and awareness of this reality into more contexts of our society.

Respect and solidarity with our brothers and sisters commits us all, as stated by Pope Francis, to pray the Angelus, on last February 8, 2015 - Feast of Saint Bakhita - International Day of Prayer and Reflection on Trafficking in Persons: "We encourage all who are committed to help men, women and children who are enslaved, exploited and abused as a tool of labor or pleasure, tortured and maimed (...) that each of us feel committed to be spokespeople of these brothers and sisters, humiliated in their own dignity."

All of us in one way or another, by prayer or action, we are in solidarity with our brothers and sisters suffering, stimulated by our Shepherd who walks with us.
On April 22, International Mother Earth Day, world leaders gathered in New York for a high-level signing ceremony for the Paris Agreement, adopted at the end of COP21 in Paris last December. By signing the Agreement, countries signal their intention to launch the domestic processes for the ratification or acceptance of the Agreement. Once these processes are concluded, Governments will formally submit their instrument of ratification, by which they consent to be bound by the Agreement. On the 22nd, 175 countries signed the Agreement, and 15 submitted their instrument of ratification. The Agreement will enter into force on the thirtieth day after the date on which at least 55 Parties to the UNFCCC accounting in total for at least an estimated 55% of the total global greenhouse gas emissions have submitted their instruments of ratification.

In conjunction with the signing of the Paris Agreement, the Women's Global Call for Climate Justice and other women’s civil society organizations, including the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd joined women and girls from frontline communities, Indigenous Peoples, women environmental defenders and human rights activists to reaffirm the collective commitment to climate action, to give voice to the struggles of Indigenous Peoples, women activists, workers and farmers who have put their lives on the line for justice, and to demand real action for a just world for people and the planet.

The Fourth High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), convening under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), will take place on 11-15 July 2016, followed by a three-day ministerial meeting of the Forum on 18-20 July 2016. The theme of the 2016 session will be 'Ensuring that no one is left behind.' The 2016 HLPF is the first since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and will serve as the central platform for the follow-up and review of the SDGs. The HLPF will include voluntary reviews of 22 countries (China; Colombia; Egypt; Estonia; Finland; France; Georgia; Germany; Madagascar; Mexico; Montenegro; Morocco; Norway; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Samoa; Sierra Leone; Switzerland; Togo; Turkey; Uganda; Venezuela) and thematic reviews of progress on the SDGs, including cross-cutting issues, supported by reviews by the ECOSOC functional commissions (including the Commission on Social Development and the Commission on the Status of Women) and other inter-governmental bodies and forums (including the Financing for Development Follow-Up Forum). The HLPF will also include a range of side events relating to the implementation of the SDGs around the world.
World Humanitarian Summit & Upcoming High Level Meeting Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants

The first-ever World Humanitarian Summit took place on May 23-24, 2016 in Istanbul, Turkey. The Summit was held to reinvigorate international commitment to humanity and to the universality of humanitarian principles, to initiate a set of concrete actions and commitments aimed at enabling countries and communities to better prepare for and respond to crises, and be more resilient to shocks, and to share innovations and best practices that can help to save lives around the world, put affected people at the center of humanitarian action, and alleviate suffering. Unless we adopt more effective ways to address the suffering of millions of women, men and children affected by conflicts and disasters worldwide, we cannot aspire to a world of peace, security and sustainable development for all.

The World Humanitarian Summit is the main stepping stone to the UN General Assembly high-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, on 19 September 2016, immediately prior to the general debate of the 71st session. In January, the UN Secretary-General appointed a Special Adviser, Karen AbuZayd, to work with United Nations entities and undertake consultations with Member States and other relevant stakeholders in the lead up to the Summit. This includes overseeing the Secretary-General’s report on large movements of refugees and migrants, “In Safety and In Dignity”. In February, the President of the General Assembly appointed the ambassadors of Jordan and Ireland as co-facilitators to lead consultations with Member States to finalize the organizational arrangements, including on a possible outcome.

Editor’s Note: “Embrace the World” can be published thanks to each of your contributions of articles, stories and other news concerning justice & peace issues in the world-wide Good Shepherd community. We continue to count on you for upcoming editions of the journal. Please share with us activities, news and events from your Units and countries. Thanks to all who have contributed to the June 2016 issue.

Working to end poverty, human trafficking & gender-based violence
Advocating with women & girls, migrants & refugees
Recognizing our interconnectedness with the whole of creation, we seek to realize the rights of all and achieve gender equality

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