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New High Commissioner for Human Rights

By Winifred Doherty

Prince Zeid Ra’ad Zeid al-Hussein, is the new U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights. His Excellency is from Jordan and had been Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the United Nations in New York. During CSW 57 (2013) His Excellency was a member of the panel of Jurists during the girls’ tribunal on violence hosted by the Working Group on Girls. In his inaugural address to the UN Human Rights Council on September 8th he quoted Pope Francis. Prince Zeid began his address reflecting on his own experiences of war and what he had learned. Then he went on to a second point “Another lesson for me, twenty years ago, was equally clear: there is no justification ever, for the degrading, the debasing or the exploitation of other human beings – on whatever basis: nationality, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age or caste.

Yet today, the international news — however it is streamed to us — is still filled with the sobbing of victims, of the oppressed, of the poor alongside the remains and the ashes of the killed. This remains a most pathetic stain on humanity’s record of achievement.

We must therefore persevere together until we bend the course of humanity’s future into a destination more hopeful and enlightened, in which human decency is the only currency of human interaction, and is valued above and beyond material wealth or cleverness alone. After all, the world is not in need of an even greater number of highly intelligent people, nor politically powerful or extremely rich people; many of them are consequential, yes, but they alone will not save us. To rescue this blue, marble-looking sphere, our planet, we need — and here we must agree with His Holiness Pope Francis — we need more compassionate, profoundly considerate and wise people piloting our collective fate, and they must be courageous too.” Prince Zeid paid tribute to Navi Pillay saying that she “was one of the greatest senior officials the UN has ever had, and one of the most able, formidable High Commissioners for Human Rights.” Read the full speech on this link: [http://blog.unwatch.org/index.php/2014/09/08/jordanian-prince-zeids-inaugural-speech-as-the-uns-new-high-commissioner-for-human-rights/](http://blog.unwatch.org/index.php/2014/09/08/jordanian-prince-zeids-inaugural-speech-as-the-uns-new-high-commissioner-for-human-rights/)

Justice Peace Workshop: “A call to take bold steps…”

By Ana Yussara Silva, JP Contact Bolivia/Chile

In the context of considering justice as an integral part of the Mission of Reconciliation of the Good Shepherd Congregation, the Foundation: Woman ‘Rise Up’, of the Province of Bolivia/Chile, a workshop took place in the city of La Paz-Bolivia from Sept. 16 to 18, 2014. Sr Clare Nolan, Training Facilitator of the Good Shepherd International Justice Peace Office (GSIJPO), facilitated this gathering.

Sisters and Mission Partners from Bolivia and Chile participated. We began our “journey” from the vantage point of personal expectations and their connection with the Good Shepherd Congregation. From there, we explored the true meaning of justice within the mission, through reflection and analysis of various individual and group experiences.

We ended our four-day “journey” with a general review of human rights, CEDAW and the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. This helped deepen our understanding of the international methods and functions which might enable us to more effectively hear the voice of those populations whom we serve.

This final point also led us to highlight our Congregation’s affiliation with the UN, beginning in 1996. It was further emphasized that the UN is a valuable resource which we should utilize more fully, since actions on that level can also influence change that leads to the promotion and implementation of policies which can greatly benefit the vulnerable populations within individual countries.

Each participant was very enriched by the various topics addressed at this workshop and worked enthusiastically on each assigned activity. But most importantly, we experienced a sense of community as two countries with very similar realities “that are calling us to take bold steps. . .”
The 69th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations opened on the afternoon of September 16th. The newly elected president was selected from the African region and is from Uganda. H.E. Mr. Sam Kutesa is a lawyer, and has had experience as a parliamentarian, finance minister and foreign minister. Following the election Mr. Ban Ki Moon, Secretary General made some remarks acknowledging the experiences that the new president brings to the position, identifying some of the skills required and noting the momentous agenda items for the upcoming session which will have great consequences for the well-being of all people and the planet. The Secretary General concluded with the desire that all member states work together to end extreme poverty and set the world on a path to peace, justice and sustainability through dialogue, decision and actions, to bring about the world we want and a life of dignity for all.

So often, in the Island of Reunion, we hear in the news that women are victims of beatings on the part of their partners, and sometimes these injuries cause death. They also suffer verbal violence. When the situation worsens, they go to the Court to complain about their aggressors. In these cases, they can no longer return to their homes, and they seek refuge with a social worker. There is a shelter which hosts these women, and if necessary - their children. This home, Movement to Support Women in Distress, was founded by Sister Agnes Schuler with a few other persons. Currently, this facility is conducted by lay people. Girls, even young girls, are victims of many kinds of violence, such as rape, aggression, etc.

We Sisters of the Good Shepherd, are working with families whose children attend Catechism Classes with us. We find that many of them are disturbed by their family situations - verbal or physical abuse suffered by their moms. We are sad to learn that the children are witnesses of these situations. In cases of shared custody, the children are bewildered. During the hour of Catechism Class, they are present physically, but their minds are elsewhere. Those who witnessed household violence are traumatized. It is worse when the catechist is a man, as the children believe all men are violent (like their fathers).

Our role in this painful situation is to be available to listen to children and parents, and help them understand that the love of God is always present, infinite. We try to be architects of reconciliation in this world of disarray. We carry them in prayer and encourage them. When we see that the children are unable to concentrate during the Catechism Class, we approach them discreetly and ask if they have something special to say. There are some who share, but others feel guilty. They think they are the cause of separation or divorce of their parents, and this causes them to suffer. Women come to talk about their difficulties at any time, even on the road or at Church.

We feel that our presence is a great support for the families, as we are so often requested to help. We accompany them in the discernment of the problem and possible options, including support for the children. We attempt to facilitate dialogue and when possible, to seek reconciliation. In some cases the situation has deteriorated to the extent that this is not possible.

New Special Rapporteurs

By Winifred Doherty

Over the past few months there have been changes in personnel in various UN Offices. There is a new Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human Rights – Mr. Philip Alston. He was appointed by the Human Rights Council on May 7th. He has a distinguished career in international law and international human rights law. The Special Rapporteur is an independent expert appointed by the Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a country situation or a specific human rights theme. The position is honorary and the expert is not a staff of the United Nations nor paid for his work.

Another new rapporteur is Ms. Maria Grazie Giammarinaro from Italy, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially in women and children. She replaces Ms. Joy Ngozi Ezeilo who served from 2008 until 2014.

Ms. Maria Grazie Giammarinaro has been a judge at the criminal court of Rome since 1991. In January 2010 she became Coordinator for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. (OSCE) She received a Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Hero Award in 2012 to honor her significant contributions in the struggle to end modern-day slavery.
2015 will be a significant year, encompassing the adoption of the post 2015 development framework, the 15th anniversary of United Nations Security Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Women’s Conference. UNSCR 1325 is a landmark international level framework that addresses not only the inordinate impact of war on women, but also the pivotal role women should and do play in conflict management, conflict resolution and sustainable peace. The discussion on a new set of development goals - **Sustainable Development Goals** - to replace the Millennium Development Goals has been taking place over the past two years. A set of 17 goals has been determined by the **Open Working Group** (with a membership of almost 90 member states) and adopted in a resolution of the General Assembly indicating that ‘the report shall be the basis for integrating sustainable development goals into the post 2015 development agenda.’

Here in New York, I engaged in a few topics related to poverty eradication and gender equality. Unlike the Millennium Development Goals which were very specific and generally isolated issues without a connecting framework specifying the how and the who the proposed new sustainable development goals are very broad and interconnected specifying the what and the means of implementation. They are built on the 3 pillars of sustainable development – **the social, the environment and the economic** and how the three are interrelated and interconnected. The report of the High Level Panel of Eminent Person on the Post 2015 Development Agenda (2013) named five big, transformative shifts:1. ‘Leave no one behind’; 2. Put sustainable development at the core; 3. Transform economies for jobs and inclusive growth, 4. Build peace and effective open and accountable institutions for all and 5. Forge a new global partnership. The new agenda is for all, it is universal. There is one world and one sustainable development agenda. In my work I specifically advocated for goals on - **poverty eradication, national floors of social protection, girls human rights and gender equality**. In reality what has happened is that there is a goal on poverty eradication and there is a goal on Gender Equality for women and girls. Determining targets under the goals was the next stage so national floors of social protection are under the poverty eradication goal and the various targets for girls are included under the gender equality goal and other goals. When you see the list of goals you will see how complex it is.

**Goal 1.** End poverty in all its forms everywhere  
**Goal 2.** End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture  
**Goal 3.** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages  
**Goal 4.** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all  
**Goal 5.** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls  
**Goal 6.** Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all  
**Goal 7.** Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all  
**Goal 8.** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all  
**Goal 9.** Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation  
**Goal 10.** Reduce inequality within and among countries  
**Goal 11.** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable  
**Goal 12.** Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns  
**Goal 13.** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts  
**Goal 14.** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development  
**Goal 15.** Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss  
**Goal 16.** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels  
**Goal 17.** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development
The Foundation Rise Up Woman joins the group “Fly free” who is seeking a childhood free of commercial sexual violence. This is a space for social mobilization that promotes the meeting of various stakeholders, the complementarity of actions, reflection and learning for the defense of the dignity and the fundamental rights of children and adolescents.

The movement was created to respond to the need of stopping a form of violence that affects more and more children and adolescents in our country every day. It is made up of organizations, and people committed to this issue. Its field of action is diverse and it constitutes the impulse and origin of this group that seeks to involve the Bolivian society as a whole for the collective construction of solutions. So in the month of June, this movement, after a process, began the training and development of women leaders within the project, “Women to promote the exercise of their rights as citizens and in communication”. They held four workshops on the themes of gender, domestic violence, consequences of violence and feminicide. It concluded with the process of training to former leaders.

We could see the motivation of women leaders that shows their commitment to be part of this project. The members are women who have broken the cycle of violence and others that are in this process. They express that they want to help other women to get out of this circle of violence and they wish to perform actions of advocacy and ways of assistance for the organization.

They launched the first training in the city of La Paz on May 28 and the city of Santa Cruz on June 27, being responsible for the organization in coordination with the departmental table of conversation against human trafficking. This space, of which we are part, moves us to visualize the situation of girls and adolescents who are still victims of commercial sexual violence. We want to be an active part to involve important actors of society with the aim to cope jointly, to large organized networks that are taking advantage on this situation of vulnerability. We are committed to a safe Bolivia for children.

I commented the work of the Co-Chairs, Ambassador Kamau from Kenya and Ambassador Körösi from Hungary for holding the whole process together and bringing it to completion. Interventions from NGO was made through the 9 major groups – one of them being the Women’s Major Group. If you visit the website of the Women’s Major Group you can see something of the work that has gone into bringing the best policy to further women’s rights throughout the world.

While always contributing the women’s major group have constantly kept the weaknesses of the outcome document before the member states. They insist that the proposed goals are still not sufficiently ambitious, transformative or rights-based – all words used in the lead up to describe the sort of development agenda desired. They published a statements outlining 8 red flag areas: 1. Absence of Human Rights; 2. Sexual and Reproductive Health Targets don’t go far enough; 3. Concentration of power and wealth imbalances that deepen poverty and inequalities within and between countries are not sufficiently addressed, and the agenda lacks targets to reverse this trend; 4. The burden of unpaid domestic and care work still rely on women; 5. Lack of recognition of women as farmers, fishers, indigenous peoples and key for sustainable natural resource management; 6. Insufficient attention to women’s role in peace and justice; 7. Concern around “partnership(s)” and 8. Technology focus remains on trade and private access.

At the same time the Commission on the Status of Women 59th session will review the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in March 2015. The Declaration and Platform was indeed visionary and largely remains unfulfilled. Growing inequality and increased criminal activity resulting from a globalized world has put at risk women and girls exposure to violence in ever new ways – whether that violence be poverty or physical or sexual abuse or human trafficking. The continual denial of girls and women’s human rights at national level creates a cycle of violence where even women human rights defenders give their lives.
The day starts. Looking out for the precious stones on one side of the river... Nobody gets exempted. Children will either work or watch over the babies as older children or mothers work (dig, collect, clean/wash or sort out stones).

Cleaning the stones, and doing laundry on another side... Good Shepherd Staff (Child Protection Officer and Social Worker) make visits in following up some of the Programme beneficiaries as well as meeting new community members.

"Building Hope, Justice and Peace with Mining Community in Kolwezi" - Good Shepherd Kolwezi, DR Congo

Washing the stone means standing/bending in water from 6am to 6pm, with neither food nor water; and under the scourging sun the whole day. The water is as dirty as it seems, and contaminated with uranium. Many women are sick (add arthritis) and many give birth to malformed babies due to the effects of uranium.

End result – all sorts of stones: Cobalt, Copper, Melkite

Rocks / stones for construction – laying foundation, etc.

http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Poverty/Pages/DGPIntroduction.aspx

Once the principles have been adopted the next phase of the work is to use them in our ministries. How can we do that? ATD4th World and Franciscan International have prepared this handbook to share some approaches and actions that are possible. Do you and your local authority understand the situation of people living in extreme poverty from a human rights perspective? What does that mean? This handbook addresses this very issue – understanding extreme poverty from a human rights perspective. The handbook is 52 pages and divided into 4 parts:

1. The Basics.
2. Key Principles For Engaging with People Living in Poverty.
3. How Can We Help People in Extreme Poverty To Claim Their Rights?
4. Monitoring and Ensuring Accountability.

Part 3 has 8 sections with each section subdivided into hearing experiences of people living in extreme poverty from all around the world coupled with recommended actions divided into three step processes. The experiences are further reinforced with case studies. Page 41 has a useful tool “The Litmus Test on Business and Human Rights” from the Mining Working Group at the UN. There are 4 steps, each step enunciates a principle with questions focusing assessment. The Principles are: Do No Harm; Eradicate Root Causes of Poverty; People as Rights-Holders; Sustainability. Overall the book is colorfully laid out, has pictures and with inserted pages to record your own learning and insights after each section.

Visit the regularly updated Good Shepherd JP website for news, events, JP training resources, and so on. Go to: http://www.buonpastoreint.org/jp-en

“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 those who were helping with translations and proof reading and especially to those who sent articles for this edition of October 2014.

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