



Order of St Augustine at The United Nations

"Restless for Justice, Peace and Development for All"

Newsletter

2015 is a landmark for the United Nations for various reasons. This year marks the seventieth anniversary of its founding. More important, the community of nations would by September this year adopt another fifteen year timeline development agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that would replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted fifteen years ago. The process of selecting these transformative goals, hoped to "free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want and to heal and secure our planet for present and future generations," pervades all discussions and events at the UN and its associated agencies and organizations these days. Augustinians International has been deeply involved in this process and is glad to present in this edition of its newsletter highlights of the process.

I am grateful to the AI team and all those who have contributed articles to this edition. I also thank all the members of the Augustinian family for your support. Enjoy the reading and remember your suggestions, corrections and articles are always welcome.

You can always contact us at augustiniansint@gmail.com or kettyelvire@yahoo.fr.
Emeka Xris Obiezu, OSA



WHEN IN ROME, LEARN THE LANGUAGE - KETTY TOCO-MOUME"

This past March, the Prior General of the Augustinian Order, Fr. Alejandro Moral, was in New York City. He stayed at Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish, across from where I live, and we were privileged to have him visit the Augustinians International office at the United Nations. As we toured the UN building and looked over exhibits and the plentiful flags, I found Fr. Moral to be a tall and imposing man for certain, but more than that, he is a very humorous and easy-going man, who enjoys pictures and selfies as much as the next person. We were invited to the Holy See to meet with Archbishop Bernadito Auza, head of the Holy See Observer Mission to the UN. The Archbishop ran late, because of a speech he was delivering, but he received us with great enthusiasm, as we did him. As the conversation went along, one thing became clear, I really must learn Italian. When in Rome, you could ignore the old adage and do as you like, but certainly you ought speak the language. After our visit to the Holy See, we met colleagues with whom we share the office for dinner at an Italian restaurant (Fr Emeka's choice). It was a truly wonderful evening, with lively hearts, great food, laughter and conversation. It isn't every day that one gets to meet the Prior General of any organization, much less share his steak. I am grateful to have had this opportunity.



Myself, Archbishop Auza, Fr Moral, and Favio Ramirez at the Holy See Mission at the UN.

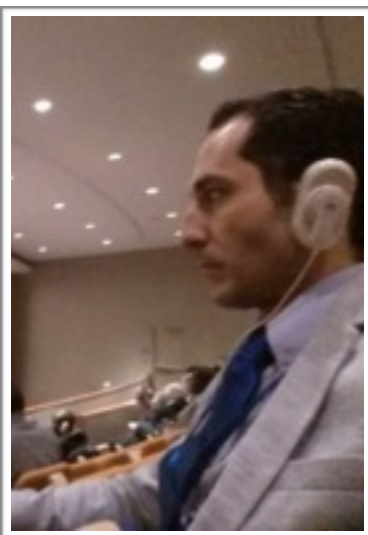


Fr Emeka, Archbishop Auza, and Fr Moral at the Holy See Mission at the UN.



The 59th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was well attended this year. As expected, it brought people (females and males) from all around the world, to discuss the pressing issues that women still face all over the globe. At AI, we were able to register 15 people, who attended the events with joy, curiosity, and fervor. Along with CSW, the UN held some major events such as the 53rd Commission for Social Development (CSOCD), and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Integration Segment, to name a few. While these events focused on different issues, at their core, they all relate to our common goal of creating a better world. A world where rights such as food and shelter, but also work and peace, are seen as human rights, and are afforded to all regardless of race, gender, creed, sex, or other distinctions.

**RETHINKING AND STRENGTHENING SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE
CONTEMPORARY WORLD - FAVIO RAMIREZ (pictured below)"**



The 53rd Session of the Commission for Social Development took place at United Nations Headquarters in New York, between February 4th and 13th 2015, with the slogan “Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world”. Previously, on February 3rd, the UN-DESA Division for Social Policy and Development (UNDESA-DSPD), the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and the NGO Committee for Social Development (where Augustinians International is an active member), sponsored a Civil Society Forum. Its theme was: “Civil Society Perspectives: Re-Centering Social Development in a Sustainable World”.

Despite the high level panel discussions on the priority theme, the Commission had time to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development with an event called “2015 Time for Global Action, For Inclusion, For Equality, For People”. Also, on Friday June 6th the Commission organized a Panel discussion on the emerging issue concerning the “Contributions of social development to the transition from Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)”. Here they carefully analyzed the UN’s perspective of the challenges facing new goals for the coming years.

Missions of a lot of countries participated and demonstrated their commitment to Social Development. Create an integrated and global point of view is the new paradigm; the great challenge is making a world more accessible, egalitarian and with respect for the human rights of all the people.

To take part in the construction of an integrated and peaceful world is, also, to do God’s will.



BEIJING+ 20: RURAL WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES - KETTY TOCO-MOUME"

The World Food Programme (WFP), the Food And Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) joined efforts in order to achieve their goal of “empowering rural women to achieve food and nutrition security.” The Rome-based agencies came together during the 59th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women to promote their message, and express the plight of rural women around the globe.

Mr. Amir Abdulla, Deputy executive director of WFP, spoke on the issue and emphasized the importance of supporting girls' education, women's literacy programs, and child maternal nutrition/healthcare education. He mentioned that while rural women make up about 70% of the agricultural workforce, they are one of the most disadvantaged groups, experiencing biased inter-household food distribution as they receive less than men and often feed their children before themselves.

Mildred Crawford, the Vice-President of Caribbean women, was adamant in her message to include rural women in the dialogue, decision-making process, and the language of agricultural policies. According to her, a “farmer's health is his/her wealth,” and as such, access to social benefits is crucial in ensuring that rural women's lives and livelihoods are protected. Being from the Caribbean herself, Mrs Crawford knows well the effects of natural disasters and the devastating impacts they have on those who have little to begin with and even less after a hurricane.

As the chairperson of the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development, Lynn Brown gave an overview of the status of rural women looking back at the last 20 years since Beijing. She expressed that agriculture is failing to provide affordable, nutritional meals for all,



What can you do to prepare for Peace Day on September 21st?

- Have your community commit to a plan for action, program or activity on or around September 21st (concert, poem, peace march, sports event, liturgical service, festivals)
- Spread the word about your plans and this global day through social media using our Facebook www.facebook.com/Augustiniansinternational
- Promote using the graphic and theme information found on www.un.org/peaceday
- Follow @peaceday on twitter, like the international day of peace on Facebook at www.facebook.com/peaceday www.facebook.com/AugustiniansInternational and share peace day content
- Register your project to be counted among 1 billion Acts of peace in campaign led by 13 noble peace laureates at www.1billionacts.org
- Schools interested in collaborating on some event for peace day may contact Stephanie Green of St. Monica's school Cumbria at stephaniegreen@austinfriars.cumbria.sch.uk



leaving 50% of pregnant women anemic, and 20% of infant mortality a result of anemia. Echoing Mr Abdulla, Lynn Brown highlighted the gender disparity in food distribution, but also in the different reasons why women and men grow crops and the way they spend their marginal income (with women focusing more on children).

Considering that the greater majority of extreme poor are in rural areas, one can imagine that rural women therefore find themselves at the very bottom of the proverbial and literal food chain. It is strange then to have learned that they are not part of the 12 critical areas of concern in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. While I would venture to say that they are also oft forgotten in most discussions on economics, it is clear to me that rural women play a key role in global economies. As such, any sound plans of sustainability and development around the world must include a path for them to achieve food and nutrition security. While CSW as a whole focused on women, this event shed light on a part of the world's female population even more marginalized than what we usually think of when we think of poverty and hunger. It made me ask myself, if the face of hunger is starving child in Africa, what must her/his mother's face look like?

IMPLEMENTING THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION - SR. NKECHI LILIAN IWUOHA, PHJC (pictured below) "

The fifty-ninth session of the United Nations (UN) commission on the status of women was held at the UN headquarters in New York from 9 – 20 March, 2015. The purpose of the conference is to review the progress made in the implementation of the Beijing platform for action adopted 20 years ago at the 4th world conference on women in 1995. The extent to which programs were implemented, the challenges faced by member states and adoption of strategic future plans were discussed.



The overall theme focused on the empowerment of women with the slogan: educate a woman and you have educated a nation. Obviously, the presentations from various countries depicted some socio-economic, political and educational improvements made in the last 20 years in addressing the problems that women face. However, it was acknowledged that what has been so far achieved, is still a drop in the ocean compared to the magnitude of the issues and challenges facing women empowerment. The three



areas that spoke most to my heart were women and children in conflict and post-conflict, women and Poverty; and women empowerment as it relates to the advancement of children's rights.

Women and children endure enormous suffering and pain in conflict and post-conflict situations. They are caught in the war, are raped, tortured and killed. A UN soldier was quoted to have said that "It is now more dangerous to be a woman than to be a soldier in modern conflict" (UN peace keeping General). The trauma of war women suffer often lingers for a very long period of time, affecting them physically, emotionally, psychological and socio-economically. This chain of suffering borne by women and subsequently children cannot be stopped without political will, co-operation and commitment of men to peace and disarmament. I do have an opinion that some countries and multinationals are benefitting from the sale of arms and scramble for natural resources in especially developing nations.

Although women make up to 60% of the world's population, they are still the most marginalized members of every society. Unequal pay, stereotypes, lack of budgeting for women advancement and women in parliament in different nations, preference of boy-children to girl-children are at the root cause of socio-economic and political discrimination of women. Interventions for business-friendly-environment that would assist women in using their resources to care for their needs and the needs of their children were recommended by the conference.

Gender empowerment according to two presenters at the conference, an Austrian (male) journalist and a South African (male) women empowerment activist, is holistic and not just a concern for women alone. This conviction led them into engaging men and boys in the dialogue, changing attitude; and equal opportunity discussion. One of the speakers described the project: "MEN MOVE" founded in the Philippines by men actively involved in the National and sub-national mechanisms responding to gender-based violence. The project explores attitudinal change among men, which the conference saw as a valuable innovation that will achieve speedy change and bring about gender justice. The 59th session ended with the emphasis that development that 'leaves no one behind' envisioned by post-2015 agenda is only possible when every woman is full empowered as proposed in Beijing platform.

For all new insight and the experience gained at this conference, I am thankful to AI and the provincial leadership of my religious congregation: the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ (PHJC) for giving me the opportunity to participate.



MIGRATION AND MOBILITY FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - KETTY TOCO-MOUME

The Troika of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, in partnership with the Global Migration Group and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for International Affairs convened at the United Nations, to discuss the ways in which migration affects development. The event, "From Cairo to Addis: Migration, labor mobility and the renewed global partnership for sustainable development," focused on how much of a positive impact labor mobility can have economically and socially, and how detrimental the barriers that have been imposed by governments are to the ideas of sustainable development and poverty eradication. Michael Clemens, a senior fellow at the Center for Global Development, was the keynote speaker.

While migration is often mentioned in negative terms, and too often economists miss it when assessing means of global economic growth, Michael Clemens' presentation at this event made clear the invaluable contributions of migrants and of the labor they supply. When people think of Silicon Valley, Mr. Clemens said, they think it's built on engineers; but Silicon Valley is built on salad pickers, nannies, and other menial laborers who more often than not are migrant workers. Another important fact that the presentation pointed out is that remittances are greater than foreign aid. Although I was surprised to learn this, as a migrant myself, it reinforced the idea that while getting help from others is useful, migrants can do much more for their home countries than anyone else. This event highlighted just how much of a role migration can play in the global economy and in global sustainable development, as it allows for such things as technology transfers, trade, and a flow of not just foreign direct investment, but also, institutions and norms. Studies have found that when returning home from more developed countries, women are more likely to adapt the fertility norms of the latter, reducing the fertility rate of the home country. Also, migrants who return from advanced host countries bring with them norms that are more closely aligned with democracy, and become catalysts to social changes in the home countries. The latter are just a few examples of the positive effects of migration, both of which are integral in plans for sustainable development.

Apart from the effects of migration, the presentation also explored the difference in wages around the world. It revealed just how much or little workers are paid for the same work, depending on where they find themselves on the globe by comparing US and non-US workers. It addressed the question of whether migration and development are antithetical. In order to reduce or deter immigration, governments and policies of developed countries often focus on improving economic conditions in origin countries. Contrary to popular belief however, the data that Mr. Clemens presented showed an inverted relationship between development and migration. It would seem that once a developing country has reached a certain level of development, and income levels rise, migration actually increases as people who possess the means seek to migrate to more advanced countries.

It's clear that labor mobility is crucial in order to reduce poverty around the world. In fact, according to Michael Clemens, it can prove to be the principal source of poverty reduction. "Trillion Dollar Bills on The Sidewalk" sounds like the title to a rap song, but it is actually a fetching and compelling article by Michael Clemens, examining in depth the possible economic impact of allowing easier, less costly, and less constrained labor mobility. This event and the issues of migration and labor mobility should inform discussions on migration, sustainable development, as well as global economics.



UNITED NATIONS ECOSOC INTEGRATION SEGMENT, ANDREA SOFIA RODRIGUEZ-LEBRON"

We would like to thank Andrea Rodriguez-Lebron for her contribution to AI and congratulate her as she will attend Columbia University in the fall for a master's degree. Andrea has been our youth representative and while we are sad to see her go, we know that she will excel and flourish, and hope to see her continue to pursue our common goal of a better world for all.



Andrea (left) with Dr Joseph Stiglitz, Nobel Laureate and Professor of Economics at Columbia University, with fellow attendee, at ECOSOC Integration Segment

On March 30th, 2015, I was able to attend one of the most amazing conferences at the United Nations: the Economic and Social Council, ECOSOC, Integration Segment. This conference focused on achieving the sustainability of labor, and ensuring employment and decent work for all. When referring to the improvement of international labor standards key terms such as equity, security, and dignity were brought up. Towards the beginning of the session, the committee made clear that their main focus would be geared towards unemployment and the need to promote capacity and decent work for all. However, the challenge was whether or not it were possible to increase employment and create a decent work environment while being sustainable, inclusive, equitable, and achieving economic growth. The end point was to reach the millennium development goals and attain sustainability. These jobs that had to be created needed to enable people to have better opportunities of receiving improved incomes.

The new goal of the International Labor Organization is to create 6 million jobs. This has become a very difficult task because since 2008 unemployment has increased. There are 200 million people unemployed and this number is on the rise. Over 900 million workers earn less than \$2.00 a day, and women and youth are affected the most. Recent data has showed that inequality has been increasing and the gap between the rich and the poor has broadened.

The first keynote speaker was the President of Tanzania Hon. Kikwete. He talked about the importance of decent work and job creations. He remarked that stability within nations is necessary to accomplish equity. The second speaker was Hon. Perry, Prime Minister of The Bahamas and Chair of the Caribbean Community Secretariat, also known as CARICOM. Hon. Perry focused on climate change as a global and local issue. This is a very dear issue to The Bahamas given that it is an archipelago that has been affected by the increase in sea levels. He mentioned that if the sea rises 5 ft., 80% of the



country will disappear. The final speaker, the Prime Minister of Sweden, Hon. Stefan Löfven, brought the work-related hazards into the discussion by providing death statistics of work-related injuries. According to him 2 million people die at work every year because of detrimental working conditions. Additionally children work or are forced into labor, and trade union members are persecuted or killed. Hon. Löfven stated “a world that builds on exploitation is not ethical nor profitable... and in order to reduce debt by ¼ we have to create resources that correspond to 1% of the world’s GDP, and allow women to work.” He pointed out that people will be ethically correct and economically smart if they embrace social justice. The three speakers were in consensus that fair working conditions are essential to achieving equality and improving labor-working conditions. There is need for a new global concept of cooperative labor that touch upon the right to organize, negotiate, and strike, to promote peace in the labor market, and to promulgate competition with the means of achieving economic stability in order to realize the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals.

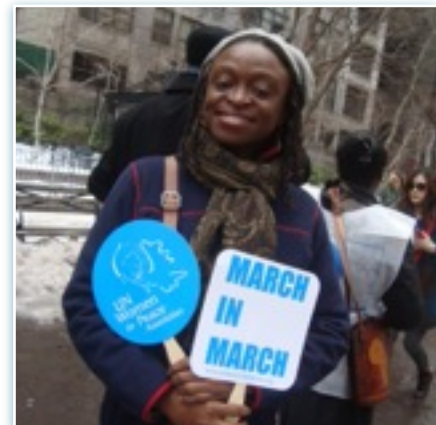
Following the three keynote speakers, there was a panel moderated by Mr. Richard Quest, the CNN International reporter. This panel discussed the challenges faced by the international labor market.

This conference provided me with great insight about issues concerning labor rights and safety, unemployment, climate change, and sustainable development. It was great to be able to see how heads of state, ambassadors, and the personnel from multilateral and bilateral organizations are handling these issues.

GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMENS’ RIGHTS: 20 YEARS AFTER “BEIJING DECLARATION”- Ms. UKPEME AKPAN

The CSW 59 was an auspicious event, in commemoration of the 20 year anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action. I am thankful to Augustinians International for according me the opportunity to attend.

On Sunday, March 8, the International Women’s Day, a march for Gender Equality and Women’s Rights began with an assemblage of participants and goodwill messages delivered by the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, Chirlane McCray, wife of the New York City Mayor, celebrities, officials and activists. Music performances enlivened the arena and set the tone for the march which culminated at Times Square.



The Convention comprised of many sessions on critical areas, which focused on the Beijing Platform for Action. On Technology and Economic Empowerment, I learned that it is advisable to be mindful of digital divide and inaccessible technology in certain areas. Also, vocational training programs in



Information Communications Technology are relevant to tackling digital divide, and simple systems should be adopted to ensure women are not frightened by terminologies. Education is important in building society and must be accessible. Holistic technology development programs will aid in lifting barriers of literacy and marketing issues.



A side-event on Women Promoting Human Dignity sponsored by the Holy See Mission to the UN noted that conflicts have resulted in a large number of refugees worldwide. Systemic solutions, which include transformative and sustainable emergency relief, peace building, governance and gender integration, promote the good of the whole person. Women, men, boys, girls should be engaged to fulfill their roles as equal, yet distinct members of the communities. “Faithful House” structure of promoting communication and developing positive outcomes was considered essential in

constructive family outcomes. Collaboration with religious leaders to gain endorsement for girls’ education was encouraged. Also, applying alternatives to harmful traditions was emphasized. Participants were inspired to commit to this strategy: MEAL – Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning.

CSW 59 sought to ascertain the global progress so far since the Beijing Declaration. Indeed, there were progress stories, but more action is still required. As the UN progresses from Millennium Development Goals to a post-2015 Agenda on Sustainable Development Goals, a further strengthening of the UN System is required. Deeper and broader inter-agency cooperation and partnerships are timely for policy response. Every person has a role to play in building a culture of globalizing the protection of human rights and advancing women’s rights. I anticipate more progress when the world converges on the United Nations for CSW 60.