

# MERCY INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION



## MERCY GLOBAL ACTION

Source: MIA GA UN

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### NEWS FROM THE MIA GLOBAL ACTION OFFICE UN

As August is the height of summer in New York, the MIA Global Action Office at the United Nations had few visitors. This provided the opportunity to reflect on future directions and make preparations for the coming United Nations Calendar year. Many NGO committees took summer holidays in August, and once September arrived, faith-based organizations and other NGOs alike returned refreshed and ready to advocate for justice once again.

#### GRACE BLACKLER OF VILLA MARIA COLLEGE IN NEW ZEALAND REFLECTS ON HER VISIT TO THE MIA GLOBAL ACTION OFFICE AT THE UN

In the July school holidays a group of girls from Villa Maria College travelled to United States to get an insight on American commerce. A couple of days into the trip we were able to visit the Mercy Sisters work at the United Nations.

We had a presentation from Colleen Cloonan (Fellow, MIA) who discussed the works that the Mercy Sisters do with the United Nations. The presentation included a discussion about the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. These goals were adopted in 2015 in order to reduce and end the issue of global poverty, as well as, to protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all. These goals involved social, environmental and economic implications for our world. As a group, we really enjoyed learning about these goals since this may impact our future, particularly the fifth goal on gender equality. Another part of the presentation included information on the global issue of human trafficking. We learnt about different ways of tackling this issue including through a human rights approach, law enforcement, and prevention. This was a great learning experience for us as we were able to learn what the Mercy Sisters do globally. We would really like to thank Colleen for giving us this amazing learning experience.

\*The Sisters of Mercy have held special consultative status within the United Nations Economic and Social Council since 1998

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# THROUGH OUR ECOSOC\* EYES...

## *MIA Global Action at the UN attends the Culture of Peace Forum*

In September of 1999, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 53/243 the Declaration and Programme of Action on Culture of Peace. Along with other resolutions, this declaration became the motivation behind the UN-declared International Decade for Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010). Over the decades, through annual resolutions, the General Assembly emphasizes the universal implementation of this agenda.

On September 7th, the UN held its second High-Level Forum on the Culture of Peace with a theme “Sowing the Seeds of the Culture of Peace: Early Childhood Development is the Beginning”.



To begin this year’s forum, President of the General Assembly, H.E. Peter Thomson highlighted a quote by Mahatma Gandhi stating, “If we are to teach real peace in this world, we shall have to begin with children”. While it is important to have peace begin with children, it is also imperative that those children are able to grow up in a state free from violence. We need to first see our nation’s leaders as champions and models of peace so that we can teach the children of the world “values of peace, tolerance, equality and respect” by example, not as an imaginary concept. Thomson emphasized that “to meet these challenges and sustain peace will require the very best of humanity. Fostering a culture of peace requires all of us

—individuals, nations and international organisations—to work together to promote understanding of our common humanity. We must promote intercultural respect, strengthen interreligious understanding, and inspire people’s hopes for the future. Above all we must unite for peace.” In addition to his statement, Thomson encouraged the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a key model for promoting and sustaining peace in the world.

Keynote speaker, Betty Williams, Nobel Peace Laureate in 1976 and advocate for children, gave a heart rendering account of how she began her work towards promoting a world of peace for children. Reminiscing on a time in Northern Ireland with the "Troubles" and witnessing the death of three children in Belfast, she wanted to ensure that those children did not die in vain—she committed herself to a life advocating for peace and justice. Williams highlighted the importance of encouraging education for children’s rights as well as the right for children to have a voice. With this, we can build future generations, cities, and a global culture of peace.

To view the September 7th High-Level Forum on the Culture of Peace sessions at the United Nations, click the links below!

Watch Opening Session  
& Plenary Discussion



Watch Panel Discussion  
on "Sowing the Seeds of  
the Culture of Peace:  
Early Childhood  
Development is the  
beginning"





# THEMATIC AREAS

*Continued*



## DEGRADATION OF THE EARTH

• **Special Rapporteur calls for a Human Rights Framework for Water and Sanitation in the SDG's**

UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, Mr Leo Heller, mandated the implementation and necessity of a human rights monitoring framework in a statement at a meeting with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF). Heller was asked to address the two organization's Joint Monitoring Program (JMP) for their recent publication titled "Progress on drinking water, sanitation and hygiene: 2017 update and SDG baselines". Heller conveyed his deep disappointment that in this latest report on water, sanitation and hygiene, no human rights language was incorporated. Sustainable Development Goal targets relating to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) must be guided by a human rights framework which is currently lacking in language and the agenda. As this was the first report on WASH and the SDGs, he expressed his hope that future editions will support and incorporate a human rights framework within their reporting and monitoring process.

Within his statement, Heller details that "the human rights to water and sanitation are one set among few rights mentioned in "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" and "the adoption of the SDGs on WASH was a great achievement for those committed to the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation"; however, he "personally advocated for the Agenda to be aligned with the normative content of the human rights to water and sanitation and the principles of the human rights". While he wants to continue to coordinate and work with these influential organizations, Heller wants to ensure that they work collaboratively to "reach our common aim of providing universal, affordable, and safe access to water and sanitation to all". It is in the hopes that, in addition to the SDG's of water and sanitation, that all SDG's will be guided by similar human rights mechanisms. MIA GA at the UN advocated strongly for the human right to water to be named during the intergovernmental negotiations for the 2030 Agenda.

Read SR Leo Heller's statement made at the WHO/UNICEF Meeting



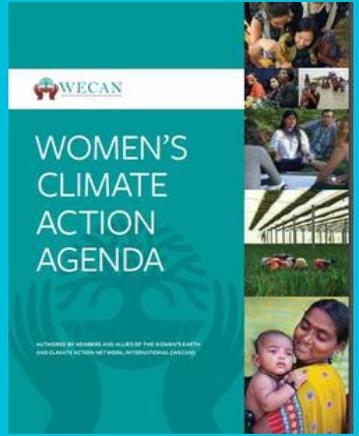
WHO/UNICEF's Publication "Progress on drinking water, sanitation and hygiene: 2017 update and SDG baselines"



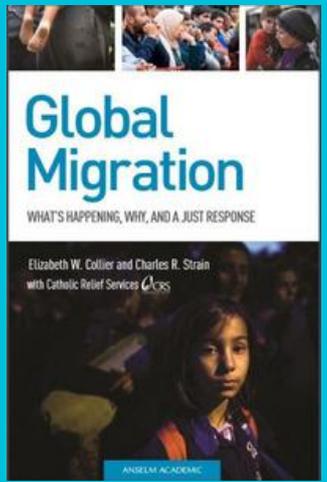
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## USEFUL RESOURCES

Women's Earth & Climate Action Network International publication of "Women's Climate Action Agenda"



Catholic Relief Service's publication of "Global Migration: What's happening, why, and a just response"



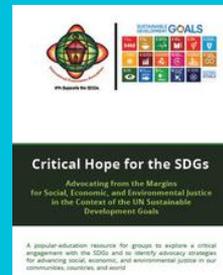
In light of the 'Season of Creation', MIA Mercy Global Action have published a pamphlet on "SDG 12"



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# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



## • "Critical Hope for the SDG's": Unraveling Step 3: Judge

Last month's edition highlighted "Step 2: See". This honed in on ways to determine the specifics of an issue and disparities between groups as a means of grounding priorities for advocacy. "Step 3: Judge" calls upon our abilities of determining root causes as well as the risks and opportunities related to the Sustainable Development Goals. "You'll remember the focus of this guide is to promote advocacy before the State to improve public policy and practice. In this section, we want to assist your group to explore how the State is doing in terms of transforming the structural causes of the injustices we have observed." (Pg. 29). To ensure that we "judge" accurately, it is important to "address structural causes and not just symptoms [and] be aware of power imbalances influencing a situation" (pg. 26). Without these focal points, it is easy to lose sight of key factors which might be impacting a specific community or country. These factors include: economic, political, social, legal, ideological, historical, ecological, and theological/religious. But we must not forget that we are seeking out how states have put forth their own efforts. Therefore we may ask the following: Is the country proceeding through the proper processes or are there certain constraints beyond the states' control? Are there clear laws, policies, practices and resources in place? If this is not the case, there are benefits to using the international framework of human rights that has defined instruments to measure accountability, as well as requirements and objectives to expose inequalities. To analyze a state's actions, "Step 3: Judge" introduces a tool to help do so called a "Rights-based Litmus Test". This test utilizes an international human rights framework for "communities and policymakers to assess possible gaps and unintended consequences of sustainable development policies [while also integrating] environmental concerns and the rights of future generations" (Pg. 30). The test can be found on page 31; thoroughly examine each segment. Once completed, this tool operates as the final caveat for "Step 4: Act".



## USEFUL RESOURCES

As Civil Society is an integral part of the work of the United Nations, the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner releases weekly updates for Civil Society participation and inclusion in the processes. Included within the weekly updates are segments regarding invitations to webinars and events, meetings of treaty bodies, where special procedures experts are traveling and reports from these experts, Human Rights Council updates from UN Member States, news, and further resources! To subscribe and/or view the website, [click here!](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

*MIA at the UN will be attending*

- 12th-25th September - 72nd Session of the UN General Assembly
- 18th-24th September - Climate Week
- 25th September - Side event titled "Children on the Move" co-sponsored by MIA Global Action at the UN
- 27th-28th September - UNGA High Level Meeting on Global Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons

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# NEWS FROM MIA GLOBAL ACTION (INTERNATIONAL CENTRE)

August was a productive month for Sr. Denise Boyle fmdm (Leader of the Global Action Team) and Betty Lacey (Researcher, part-time). Denise ran sessions with the Mercy Ethos Pilgrimage Group from Australia and New Zealand, which evoked good discussion and interest in the Global Action (GA) programme. As there are few meetings during August, it was a good opportunity to catch up with reading, do some writing and prepare for upcoming events, as the following reflects:

- 1. Regular communication with Global Mercy Family** especially with members working in the areas of ‘Opposing Human Trafficking / Modern Slavery’; and ‘Cosmology / Eco-Justice’ Through this network ideas are exchanged, resources and programme reports shared, urgent issues of concern addressed and ‘meetings’ held via conference calls.
- 2. Issued UN SDG Pamphlet number 12:** ‘Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns’, to coincide with the beginning of the ‘Season of Creation’ on September 1st. This is number six of the series the MIA-GA Team are doing on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the central plank of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. (See "Useful Resources" on Page 4)
- 3. Submission to the Irish Citizen’s Assembly** who consider important issues facing Ireland’s future. During two weekends, the Assembly will discuss: ‘How the State can make Ireland a Leader in Tackling Climate Change.’ Conscious that many scientists and academics are making submissions, we focused on one specific issue related to Climate Change i.e. Plastic Pollution, recommending actions that are achievable at both personal and government level. ([Click here](#))
- 4. Season of Creation, September 1st – October 4th.** We are participating in this important season and sharing the valuable resources available on the MIA website: [www.mercyworld.org](http://www.mercyworld.org). In 2015 Pope Francis invited everyone to join the Orthodox Church in celebrating this ‘Season’, as it focuses on the gift of creation and the urgent need for us individually and collectively to protect, respect, work and pray together, to preserve our ‘wounded’ world. Pope Francis and the Patriarch Bartholomew released a strong message on September 1st: *‘We urgently appeal to those in positions of social and economic, as well as political and cultural, responsibility, to hear the cry of the earth and to attend to the needs of the marginalized.....and to support the consensus of the world for the healing of our wounded creation.’*
- 5. Field Visits in the Western and South Central Provinces of Ireland in October.** Sr. Angela Reed from the NY office and Sr. Denise will visit these two Provinces using the opportunity to: a) Meet members of the Mercy Family; b) See their work for justice firsthand; c) Share the global GA Programme; d) Exchange ideas, strengthen collaboration and broaden justice networks.
- 6. Upcoming events:** Participate in meetings and conferences with the Irish coalitions focusing on: a) Migrants and Asylum Seekers; and 2) The Sustainable Development Goals.

**Mercy International Association (MIA) maintains a comprehensive and up to date website and produces an informative weekly e-newsletter (MercyNews). Visit our website to discover more about MIA and our global activities: [www.mercyworld.org](http://www.mercyworld.org)**

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