

# MERCY INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION



## MERCY GLOBAL ACTION

Source: MIA MGA UN

Contributors to this issue: Angela Reed rsm, Denise Boyle fmdm, and Colleen Cloonan

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## NEWS FROM THE MIA GLOBAL ACTION OFFICE UN

### MIA GLOBAL ACTION AT THE UN SIGNS ON TO TWO STATEMENTS



International Day  
of Peace



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### ANGELA REED RSM VISITS CARLOW UNIVERSITY, PITTSBURGH ON THE EVE OF MERCY DAY

It was a privilege to visit Carlow University in Pittsburgh. Founded by the Sisters of Mercy, whose first US mission was to Pittsburgh, the university carries a strong legacy of seven bold Mercy women in 1843 responding to a call to serve beyond their Irish shore. Sr Sheila Kearney rsm was a warm and welcoming host who is proud of the Mercy Heritage at Carlow. She provided a wonderful overview of the sisters contribution to the local Pittsburgh Community and the ways in which this legacy lives on.

As part of Founders week celebrations at Carlow, Angela was invited to present an overview of the work of Mercy International Association, Mercy Global Action at the UN. The Carlow Community, comprising Students, teachers and sisters of Mercy were enthusiastic about Mercy's contribution to the

global agenda and engaged in an interesting discussion on water, fracking, human trafficking and human rights.

### MIA GLOBAL ACTION AT THE UN INVITED TO LUNCHEON AT THE HOLY SEE MISSION

On Wednesday 27 September, Angela Reed rsm and Colleen Cloonan represented MIA at the UN at a reception hosted by the Holy See Mission Office. Archbishop Bernardito Auza, Papal Nuncio to the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the UN extended the invitation to engage in a conversation with His Excellency Archbishop Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States of the Holy See. The reception was very welcoming, informative, and a great opportunity to dialogue with Archbishop Gallagher who expressed high regard for religious sisters whose collective efforts have supported victims of trafficking and exploitation. Angela Reed rsm had the privilege to personally



Source: MIA MGA UN

address His Excellency on the work of religious NGOs at the UN and contributions to particular themes such as human trafficking and the displacement of persons. Angela Reed rsm emphasized that as religious NGOs "We believe in the human dignity and human rights of all people...[and] our faith in a God of Mercy impels us to act, to speak out, to work to ensure that we look at every global policy issue through the lens of the most disadvantaged".

*\*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 Review of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons*

September 27th and 28th marked the High Level Meeting of the General Assembly for the appraisal of the UN Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. Every four years the progress, achievements, gaps, and challenges are assessed by UN Member States and Civil Society Stakeholders in order to adopt a Ministerial Declaration. ([click here](#))

Opening the first session, President of the General Assembly, H.E. Miroslav Lajčák stressed that in order to work collaboratively to eliminate trafficking in persons. He called for Member States to pledge to respect the human rights of everyone. This can be done by taking a survivor centered and human rights approach. In addition, he stressed prevention efforts must work towards addressing root causes, because we see a stark chasm between peace and war, migration, and human suffering. He also claimed that we must open our eyes and protect those that are the most vulnerable, as too often there is a lack of regard for those experiencing poverty, human rights violations and issues of food security. Lastly, he stated that it is imperative that the international community works toward the realization of the 2030 Agenda, particularly Sustainable Development Goals 5, 8, and 16. Ending his statement, Lajčák detailed that "trafficking knows no borders"... "we have made progress but we have much further to go. Our goal is zero trafficking. Let us commit to stronger cooperation for decisive global action. Let us leave the abhorrent trade in human beings in the past forever!" To read his full statement click [here](#).

Key to the discussion at the opening segment of the meeting are the voices of those survivors of human trafficking. Ms. Grizelda Grootboom, a civil society representative and survivor of human trafficking, shared her story. It was a profound and moving moment. When speaking about her trafficker she said 'She took my hope and turned it into a nightmare...'. She described her circumstances of being exploited for sexual exploitation, she spoke of her loss of dignity, her inhumane treatment. She said, "I didn't have an identity and everyone knew my nudity...". Now, while she will never forget these horrors of her past, she feels blessed to be alive and feel alive. You can listen to Grizelda's address to the UN [here](#), starting at (34:32).



The second panel discussion focused on "effective partnerships for the protection of and assistance to victims...also taking into consideration the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals". Members of Civil Society were invited to provide insight and best practices. At this session, a powerful intervention was delivered by Sr. Winifred Doherty of the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd who accentuated the priorities of "addressing root causes...examining and unmasking the links between trafficking and policies related to economic justice, violence against women, discrimination against the girl child...recognition that women, girls and children are disproportionately affected, and the commitment to intensify efforts to eliminate DEMAND". She also highlighted the "Optimal Life Course Course Conditions" of Dr. Angela Reed rsm of Mercy International Association, Global Action at the UN, as a promising model for UN Member States to incorporate into their policies. The "Optimal Life Course Conditions" "recognizes that the interplay between the personal life story and systemic oppression renders persons vulnerable to human trafficking...[and] could be fully realized with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, eliminating vulnerabilities to traffickers and restoring dignity and hope to already-exploited persons". To watch Sr. Winifred's intervention click [here](#) (56:58).

Furthermore, at these sessions, some UN Member States and Permanent Observer Mission's emphasized and reaffirmed the important work done by religious communities around the world, particularly the work done by Catholic Sisters at the grassroots level. This was a significant remark and achievement for all as people of faith, people of Church, and ultimately people of hope. We are confident that through collaborative efforts across our Church, we can work for a better world in which each human being can flourish and live to their full potential. To hear some of these remarks by UN Member States watch at **34:32** and **1:03:39**.

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# THEMATIC AREAS

## DISPLACED PERSONS



- *MIA MGA at the UN Co-Sponsors and Participates in Trafficking Side-Event*



Source: UN WebTV

On Monday September the 25th, Mercy International Association, Global Action at the UN, co-sponsored an event at the United Nations, entitled, ‘Children on the Move: Preventing Child Trafficking by Implementing the UN Global Plan of Action’. This event was strategically timed, as it was held two days prior to the UN General Assembly High-level Meeting on the appraisal of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

It was a great privilege to have H.E. Jorge Skinner-Kleen, Ambassador of Guatemala and H.E. Kornelios S. Korneliou, Ambassador of Cyprus, co-sponsor the event and address all present. Central to the panel discussion were strategies to prevent child trafficking and a focus on the particular vulnerabilities of children on the move. It was acknowledged that at this time of mass global displacement, unaccompanied minors and homeless children are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking. Angela Reed rsm was a panelist and stressed three points: 1) Prevention is key, 2) Trafficking survivors must contribute to global policy and practice 3) The Global Plan of Action on human trafficking must be integrally related to the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Moderated by Salesian Father, Tom Brennan, the event was well attended by representatives of Member States as well as Civil Society. A link to the webcast version can be viewed [here](#).



Source: MIA MGA UN

L to R: Yu Ping Chan, H.E. Kornelios S Korneliou, H.E. Jorge Skinner-Kleen, Angela Reed rsm, Dr. Vasileia Digidki, Fr. Thomas Brennan, Ms. Jayne Bigelson, Mr. Kieran Gorman-Best

- *The NGO Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons (CSTIP) Produces Educational Advocacy Sheets*

The NGO Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons has three working groups advocating for justice in human trafficking. Members of the three working groups, including Forced Labor, Corporate and Social Responsibility and Sexual Exploitation, produced information sheets containing case studies, survivor stories, and recommendations. These Advocacy points are shared with UN officials, Member States, Individuals, Communities, and businesses. To read, click the photos below!



Forced Labor Working Group Information Sheet

Corporate and Social Responsibility Working Group Information Sheet



Sexual Exploitation Working Group Information Sheet



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# THEMATIC AREAS

*Continued*



## DEGRADATION OF THE EARTH

### • *MIA Global Action at the UN Attends Event Moderated by Former President Mary Robinson*

On September 18th, Angela Reed rsm and Colleen Cloonan, attended an event titled "Modern slavery in the Americas: From here to elimination" hosted by the Business and Human Rights Resource Center at the Roosevelt House in NYC. While the conversation was directed towards tackling modern slavery and human trafficking in industries around the world, the Resource Center wanted to recognize that, "modern slavery is the sharp edge of a far more endemic problem: deep inequality that leads to widespread exploitation of workers, many of whom are migrants and refugees who face intimidation in a climate of growing xenophobia". Speakers highlighted the importance of due diligence throughout the supply chain as well as buying food from transparent and ethically sound companies that have made commitments to stop slavery.

Keynote speaker, Leonardo Sakamoto-journalist, director of NGO Reporter Brasil, and TIP Person of the year- spoke about his efforts educating individuals across Brazil by providing financial and technical support for communities vulnerable to forced labor. We, ourselves, must take a stand against companies that are not meeting ethical requirements and commitments, including food and clothing companies. **What is your footprint?**



L to R: Beth Blissman, Sheila Smith, H.E. Mary Robinson, Angela Reed rsm, Colleen Cloonan

Source: <https://business-humanrights.org/en/modern-slavery-in-the-americas-from-here-to-elimination>

### • *NGO Mining Working Group Sub-committee Meetings*

MIA Global Action at the UN are members of two sub-committee's within the NGO Mining Working Group focusing on issues surrounding Corporate Accountability and the Human Right to Water.

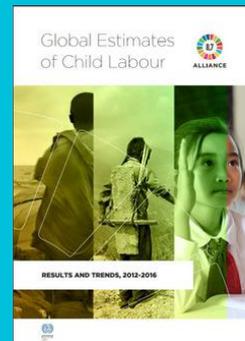
Key outcomes from sub-committee meetings this month involve following the UN treaty process on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights. A particular focus will be: the intergovernmental sessions in Geneva in October 2017, the UN Global Compact, and specific cases of human rights and mining violations. Furthermore, the group seeks to provide input regarding the meeting of the High Level Water Panel at the UN Headquarters that happened this past week in New York. Many of the materials and outcomes will be highlighted at next year's High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development focusing on UN Member States that will be submitting Voluntary National Reviews.

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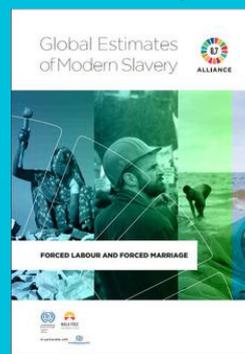
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## USEFUL RESOURCES

### Global Estimates of Child Labor: Results and Trends 2012-2016



### Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labor and Forced Marriage



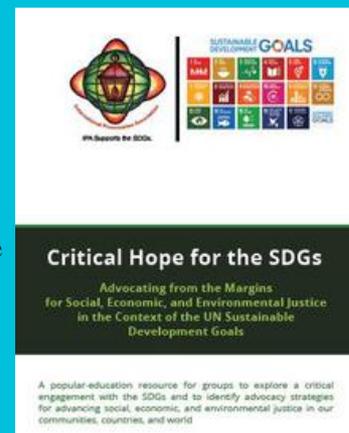
### NGO Committee on Migration's "Climate Induced Displacement" Pamphlet



### IOM Online Bookstore : "Migrant Smuggling Data and Research: A global review of emerging evidence basis"



# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



- **"Critical Hope for the SDGs" Step 4: Act**

As we reviewed within the last section "Step 3: Judge", there are certain ways in which we can enhance our abilities of judging a situation, one for example, can be determined through using a "Rights-Based Litmus Test". Applying these skills with an international human-rights framework can assist us in "Step 4: Act" where we must tie together all of the previous steps to formulate successful action and advocacy for justice.

So what does 'action' truly include? Remembering that this guide primarily focuses on grassroots advocacy before the state, actions must "be designed to pressure those actors with influence over a situation to make the structural changes necessary to address social and environmental injustices" (pg. 33). First, we must monitor and gather the relevant information learned within the previous steps; this may mean going back to "SEE and JUDGE steps and going deeper, seeking out additional sources of information and expertise" (pg. 34). Second, mobilize those that are going to be the voice for your cause and begin raising awareness; this can include reaching out to schools or even organizing workshops and forums. Third, use direct advocacy. Direct advocacy comes in many forms such as appeals through social media or requesting meetings with relevant officials. Fourth, work towards international 'boomerang' advocacy which includes partnering with allies and networks within the UN system or even write a submission for an upcoming UPR process. Fifth, it is important to gain the public opinion; write letters to the editor, educate journalists on the subject and host debates. Lastly, evaluate your results and continue the good work! While this is the last step within the advocacy process, advocacy for justice does not stop here. For more learnings on issue specific advocacy, such as for health or the environment, "A Critical Hope for the SDGs" has just what you are looking for! Continue your efforts for other causes and give support and guidance to educate others.



## USEFUL RESOURCES

The International Organization on Migration's innovative campaign IOM X, in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) produced a series of educational fact sheets to provide insight on safe and regular migration to encourage public action against trafficking in persons.

- [Who are human traffickers? \(Click\)](#)
- [Debt Bondage \(Click\)](#)
- [Forced Begging \(Click\)](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

*MIA at the UN will be attending*

- 5th - 13th October - MIA Field Visits in Ireland
- 11th October - International Day of the Girl Child- UN HQ
- 11-12th October - Presentations at Salve Regina University
- 17th October - International Day for the Eradication of Poverty -UN HQ

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**1. The MIA-Global Action (GA) ‘Cosmology / Eco-justice Working Group’** met via conference call on Thursday, 14th September. Twelve members from Australia, South Africa, Ireland, Newfoundland and the United States discussed their activities and future plans.

**2. Workshop on Asylum Seekers Right to Work**, 21st September, was timely following the Irish Supreme Court ruling in March 2017 that asylum seekers living in ‘Direct Provision Centres’ were deemed to have the right to work. Speakers reflecting on this life-changing ruling for those denied the right to work, sometimes for as long as nine years: included: Catherine McGuinness, former Supreme Court Judge; Emily Logan, Chief Commissioner, Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and Christiana Obaro, an Asylum Seeker Resident at Mosney Direct Provision Centre. They all referred to the loss of dignity and psychological problems caused by the denial of the right to work. A disturbing fact revealed that most European Countries whilst claiming to allow asylum seekers to work after six months ‘ring fence’ this with many restrictions, thereby making it very difficult to gain access to the work force!

**3. Workshop on ‘Culture, Faith, Cohesion – Moving from Tolerance to Inclusion’** was organised by the Inter-Faith Forum. Government and local authority personnel together with politicians, faith community leaders and representatives from the NGO Community listened to examples that successfully challenged prejudice and intolerance. These reflected the positive consequence for communities and cities, when there is genuine dialogue and an acceptance of diversity, culture and religion. It is recognised that faith communities play a unique role in forming a new kind of citizenship that is based on trust and acceptance. Cities welcome new citizens differently, which in turn facilitates the integration of ethnic and religious diversity and determines how they deal with political challenges and differing economic status.

[www.dublincityinterfaithforum.org](http://www.dublincityinterfaithforum.org)

**4. Meeting with Ms Caroline the Deputy Director of the UN’s Regional Information Centre** to discuss the promotion of the SDGs. As members of the ‘SDG Coalition 2030’ we heard how many European countries are implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). On September 25th we participated in an event in the city, to commemorate the second anniversary of the passing of the UN SDGs by 193 Government Leaders

at the UN. We marched with banners encouraging the Irish Government to continue to ‘lead the way’ along the River Liffey from Rosie Hackett bridge, finishing at the famine memorial. This highlighted the urgent need to eradicate global poverty and homelessness, in the context of the biggest global, mass movement of migrants since WW11.



Source: Denise Boyle

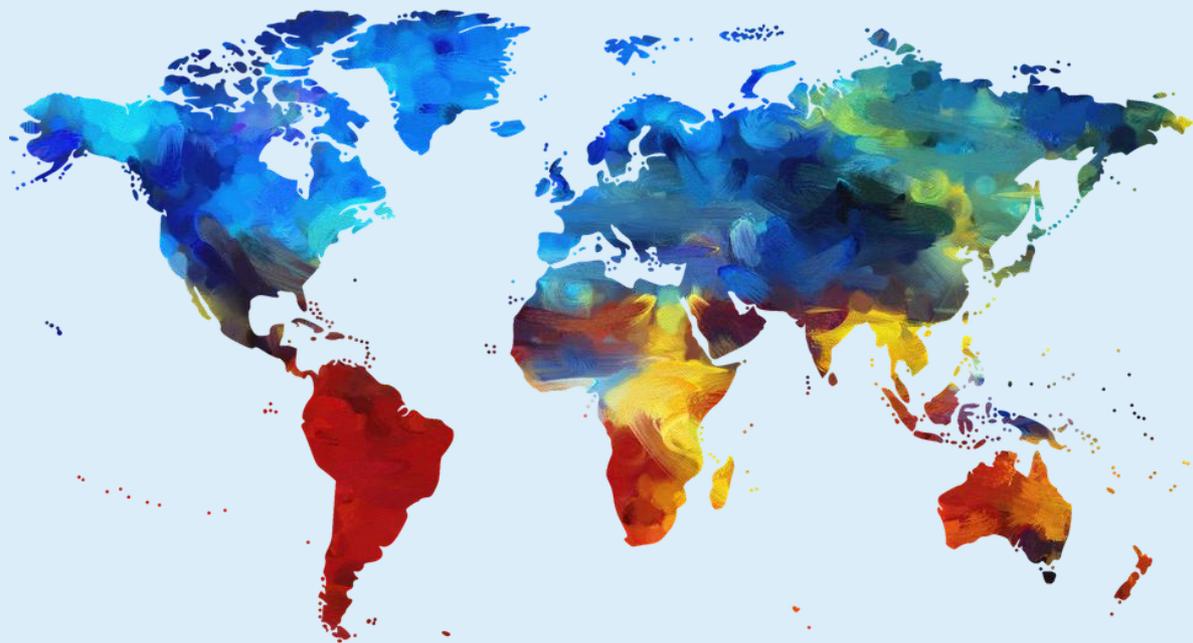
**5. Future We Need (FWN)** group met to discuss their programme of action. This is an inter-congregational group comprising participants from the Columbans; Franciscans; Mercy Family; Presentation; and Salesian orders or institutes. A short term action agreed by the group is to work on a series to coincide with the upcoming 'UN 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence'.

**6. MIA-GA is supporting the Campaign of 'People4Soil'** who are calling on the European Commission to pass a Soil Directive to safeguard soils. Soil is valuable and a precious natural resource that we depend on for healthy food, clean water, storing carbon, preventing floods, and ultimately supporting all life. Despite this over the last half century, Europe's soils have come under increasing threat from pesticides, afforestation, land use changes, over-farming, erosion and overgrazing, industry and urbanisation. And soil is essentially non-renewable...

### **7. Season of Creation, September 1st – October 4th**

As in previous years MIA-Global Action has participated in this important worldwide event, focusing on the theme: "Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor" from Pope Francis' global letter 'Laudato Si', paragraph 49. We are united with Christians worldwide to pray and take concrete action, to raise awareness of the threats to Earth and to care for creation. See valuable resources for the Season.

[http://mercyworld.org/news\\_centre/view\\_article.cfm?loadref=1&id=1805](http://mercyworld.org/news_centre/view_article.cfm?loadref=1&id=1805)



**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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