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Executive Director's Reflection

Dear Friends,
Welcome to our October
Newsletter which as you
can see is full of good
news and important events
for UNANIMA International
and across all areas we

represent on your behalf. I am writing to you as we begin the month of October, and new beginnings as we start a new year at the United Nations.

We continue to seek solutions for the challenges of COVID-19, inequalities, discrimination, natural disasters, and lack of dignity. And so, it is both a time of challenge and a time of hope. As an organization we have found ways to communicate with each other via Zoom, letters, emails, and phone calls. Now we are looking forward to meeting each other in person at the end of 2021, and into 2022, albeit in a slightly different way for a time.

October is an important month for us at UNANIMA International as we have World Homeless Displacement Day, Mental Health Day, International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, and Urban Renewal. These are all important days for our organization, as over the past years, together with the Working Group to End Homelessness, we embarked on seeking a Resolution at the UN on Homelessness. We were warned we might be attempting the



impossible. We as a group of NGOs decided to try despite the odds! And now here we are, at the end of 2021, increasingly seeing the fruits of this endeavor. We now have a historic resolution on homelessness at the UN—the first in its 75-year history.

We continue to seek all kinds of ways, initiatives, and new opportunities to highlight areas of our focus at UNANIMA International, including issues around displacement, mental health, trauma (as it relates to homelessness and displacement), quality and affordable housing, quality healthcare, quality education, and employment for all. In this issue we highlight details of the High-Level Political Forum at the United Nations, our World Homeless Day statement, the work of congregations in Haiti, and announce the winner of UNANIMA International's 2022 Woman of Courage Award.

Warmly,
Jean

Upcoming Dates

October 10th - World Homeless Day

October 10th- Mental Health Day

October 15 - International Day for Rural Women

October 16 - World Food Day

October 17 - International Day for the
Eradication of Poverty

October 31 - World Cities Day

November 16 - International Day for Tolerance

November 20 - World Children's Day

November 25 - International Day for the
Elimination of Violence Against
Women

World Homelessness Day Statement

UNANIMA International's statement for this year's World Homelessness Day highlights the importance of having the most vulnerable voices heard, and urges Member States to center efforts to address homelessness /displacement at the heart of their sustainable development strategies. It implores our communities to consider how different manifestations of homelessness intersect with thematic and priority issues frequently brought up at the UN, and states that we cannot sufficiently meet the targets of Sustainable Development Goals without properly working to end homelessness across the globe.

To view UNANIMA International's full statement and recommendations please click on the following link: <https://unanima-international.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/World-Homelessness-Day-Statement.pdf>



What's Happening At the UN?

High Level Political Forum: July 6 - 15, 2021



Each year the United Nations, Member States, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and other Stakeholders meet at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) to review progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. This year's HLPF theme was:

"Sustainable and resilient recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery of sustainable development."

The HLPF gives the Global Community a place to reflect on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), their progress and their challenges, specifically in the context of the world presently. Taking place under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, the forum included an array of High-Level Events, Voluntary National Review Labs, Side Events, and a three-day Ministerial meeting of the Forum.

The NGO Committee for the Commission on Social Development (CSocD), of which UNANIMA International is a member and part of the organizing group, held two parallel events to the High Level Political Forum: "Breaking the Cycle of Poverty and Hunger: Our Asks," and "A Steeper Climb towards SDG 10: Grassroots views on Resilient Recovery Post Covid."

The first event, "Breaking the Cycle of Poverty and Hunger: Our Asks," brought together people with a "lived experience" from Ecuador, Kenya and the Philippines. These speakers shared their unique experience of poverty and hunger during or prior to Covid-19, and the solutions they created or proposed to overcome these difficulties. The respondents were experts from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO).

Breaking the Cycle of Poverty & Hunger: Our Asks

Highlighting synergies between HLPF 2021 theme of sustainable and resilient recovery and the CSocD 2022 theme on eradicating poverty and hunger, this webinar will host three grassroots speakers from Ecuador, Kenya and the Philippines and respondents from the UN system in order to engage in a real dialogue on lived experience leading to effective solutions to improve people's well-being.

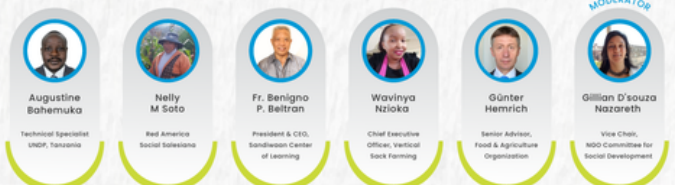
Date: 07th July 2021

Time: 07:30 - 09:00 am EDT

[Click here to register](#)



Speakers



NOTE: Webinar is in English with Spanish interpretation available.

You can access a recording of these events at the following link: : <https://youtu.be/e2bDxBYFiDY>

High Level Political Forum: July 6 - 15, 2021

The second event “A Steeper Climb Towards SDG10: Grassroots views on Resilient Recovery Post-Covid,” presented perspectives on the impact of Covid-19 and the deepening inequalities in communities in South and North America, Asia, and Europe. This event was a follow-up to a pre Covid-19 global survey on inequalities, offering a “before and after” assessment. This event was awe inspiring due to stories of the courage of people suffering from poverty and hunger, their seeking of their own solutions, and by the NGOs that, whether by themselves or with the support of UN Programs, implement services while governments appear unconcerned. UNANIMA International grassroots members participated in the survey.

You can access a recording of this event at the following link:

A Steeper Climb to Achieve SDG10: Grassroots Views on a Resilient Recovery post COVID-19_July 8, 2021:
<https://youtu.be/EfY8Y8CHH2M>



UNANIMA International was also involved in an event that partnered with Governments, the New York based Justice Coalition of Religious (JCOR), and REDES Spain (Red de entidades para el Desarrollo Solidario -Network of Entities for Solidarity Development). The event was titled: “Faith Without Borders: Partnerships of Governments and Catholic Organizations to Reduce Inequalities for the Post-Covid Era in Spain and Beyond.”

The panel discussion featured leaders from the UN system and Spanish Civil Society, and the Global Community of Catholic Religious who offered their perspective on the role of Religious NGOs in the achievement of the SDGs through advocacy initiatives and implementation of Best Practices among people with a lived experience of poverty.

For more information please see the JCOR website at:
<https://jcor2030.org>

Towards 2030: Grassroots Experiences with Inequalities Report Launching_March 1, 2021:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yORKdZhHg8w>

JPIC and the Sisters of Notre Dame

As the proverb says: “Many little people, in little places, doing little things, can change the world.” That is how I feel about our work as JPIC Animators for the Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame (SND). Even actions and initiatives that may seem small overall generally make a great difference and leave significant impacts in the world.

Despite all the difficulties and suffering that Covid-19 brought to people in different places and under different circumstances, we managed to hold a three-day online Conference with all the Animators of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) of the Provinces and Delegation of the Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame around the world. The invitation was extended to all communities, with the participation of more than 100 sisters. We had two speakers:

Sister Sheila Kinsey (FCJM), the Executive Co-Secretary for JPIC Commission in Rome, who spoke on the Campaign – “Sowing Hope for the Planet,” the Laudato Si Action platform, and the 7-year journey to total sustainability in the spirit of Laudato Si and the Laudato Si Goals – LSGs.

Sister Jean Quinn (DW), the Executive Director of UNANIMA International, spoke about UNANIMA International, what is happening at the UN, and the Family Homelessness Project. Sister Jean highlighted some important aspects such as:

- UNANIMA: who we are;
- UNANIMA : Vision and Mission and International Focus;
- UNANIMA at the UN as NGO;
- The main actions of UNANIMA;
- UNANIMA – Advocacy, Research and Publications;

The presentation and contribution of Sister Jean as Executive Director of UNANIMA International was excellent. The sisters were able to meet Sister Jean personally (via Zoom) and hear about the wonderful work that she and the entire UNANIMA Team has been doing in the field of education and advocacy, especially in defense of the most needy—women, children, homeless people and refugees, as well as in defense of the environment.

Thank you, dear Sister Jean, for your participation and contribution to our meeting. Our sisters really appreciated your presentation and testimony of dedication and service through UNANIMA International.

By Sr. Maria Nonata, Sisters of Notre Dame (SND)
Congregational JPIC Coordinator



2022 Woman of Courage Award



Helena Maleno Garzón

For many years now, UNANIMA International has presented an annual “Woman of Courage Award,” which honors Women from around the World who have exhibited exceptional courage and leadership to make a difference in their communities. Each year nominations are submitted by our member congregations, and a vote is held by UNANIMA International’s Board of Directors.

We are excited to announced that our 2022 award will go to Helena Maleno Garzón, a researcher, investigator, journalist, and activist who stands up for the rights of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and victims of human trafficking who attempt to reach Europe by sea and land. In her reporting she has denounced human rights violations on the Spanish Southern Border and works with migrant communities in defense of their rights.

In 2002 Helena founded Caminando Fronteras (Walking Borders), an organization that rescues sea vessels carrying migrants that are in danger of sinking, and provides support for them once they arrive in Europe. It is estimated that she has saved at least ten thousand lives through her work relaying the locations of sinking sea vessels to Spanish naval authorities. Helena continues to do this work despite ongoing judicial harassment and threats from the governments of Morocco and Spain, who have criminalized her efforts.

For more information about Caminando Fronteras (Walking Borders) click here: <https://caminandofronteras.org>



Women & Children



Homelessness/Displacement



Migrants & Refugees



Climate

Grassroots Stories: The Vedruna mission in Haiti

In Haiti, we Vedruna sisters, since 2006, have been trying different forms of intervention, in various fields and in very different ways: kitchen cooperatives, chicken coops, parish groups, construction of wells, etc. The only forms that remain stable, probably because they are the ones that the people accept and need the most, are the school, the purification/sales of water, and the health center.

The school, which began with a preschool class/group and annually added one classroom, now has preschool plus the first 6 years of primary school. The staff is fully Haitian. Breakfast and lunch are distributed each school day to each child and staff member. Almost every year a summer camp is held in July, in which Vedruna Volunteers collaborate.

The treated water was an essential project for health. The water from a well is made drinkable through a

reverse osmosis system and is distributed in carafes. The health center is more recent, still incipient. We perform consultations, treatments, and ultrasounds, and are in the process of setting up a laboratory. There is a great need for physical therapy. School and health centers attract people from all neighborhoods in and around Fond Parisien. The chicken cooperative had been running until lockdown. The situation of socio-political violence is making its continuity impossible.



the blessing of the health clinic



the all important kitchen of the school

On Sundays we bring communion to the elderly who cannot move from their homes. We pray with them, sometimes in collaboration with the other religious of Fond Parisien (Society of Daughters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary). In addition to these fundamental nuclei, we have worked on specific projects such as the construction and operation of the Belle Fontaine hospital (in the mountains), the

distribution of goats for the neediest families in Fond Parisien after the January 2010 earthquake, repairs of the main road of the Pinganot neighborhood after cyclone Mateo in October 2012, the construction of a water extraction pump for the neighborhood and, currently, the installation of solar panels to light the streets using solar energy lamps. At this time, after the latest earthquake, our Vedruna community has gone to the epicenter (in Les Cayes) to see and feel the needs, and assist with any help that we can provide.

You, our family and friends, can pray for us and for the entire Haitian people. Prayer is very powerful because it transmits the Love and Light of God over distance and time. Secondly, you can channel human aid (people who want to come and collaborate in the Vedruna volunteer service or other type of aid, knowing some French as a basis to speak Creole later). Thirdly, we always need economic aid to support the health center, which continuously requires materials, medicines, etc., and other humanitarian aid projects that arise.

by Sister Maria Leal, CCV, MD

Grassroots Stories:

The Daughters of Wisdom Sending Help to Haiti

Over the past few weeks, Sr. Sara Proctor, DW, of Ruskin, Florida, has been sorting donated medical supplies and packaging them in preparation for their final destination to areas in Haiti still recovering from the devastation of the recent earthquake. Most donations came from St. Anne Catholic Church parishioners in Ruskin, with surplus supplies coming from area clinics. Sr. Sara packed boxes with gauze, ace bandages, splints, wound care products, walkers, crutches, and wheelchairs. A representative from Village Partners International who makes medical mission trips to Haiti will safely transfer the supplies to areas in need. Thank you, Sr. Sara, St. Anne's Church, and Village Partners International!



Reflection from Molly Gerke on her time at UNANIMA International

Over the last three years I have had the distinct pleasure of journeying with UNANIMA International. As the Executive Assistant and Assistant UN Representative, I have been humbled a hundred times over by the opportunity to represent our members globally at a number of events and places I will never forget. From attending commissions and UN events, to putting together newsletters, and working with a vast range of stakeholders including interns, UN special rapporteurs, and Member States among many others, to simply waking the halls of the United Nations I feel blessed to have been a small part in the UNANIMA International story.

Among the many highlights of my time was the learning and a deep attachment I have found with the global family that is UNANIMA international. To connect with so many of you in person and, in more recent times virtually, and share stories of our passions, lives and ministries has been a priceless gift and one I will forever treasure. To have the opportunity to give voice to these stories at the United Nations when you were not able to be there yourself, has been even more special.

Coming into this role it was a personal goal of mine to contribute in some small way to advocacy for and with vulnerable women and children globally. Having been given the opportunity to be part of this wonderful team, I feel at a personal level this is something we as an organisation have contributed to greatly both at the UN and throughout our grassroots communities. I feel privileged to have been a part of connecting these two powerful forms of advocacy throughout my time at UNANIMA International.

I came into this role with a strong sense of social justice and willingness to throw myself in and learn as much as I possibly could. While travelling halfway around the world for a job has its risks, I moved willingly knowing this was the place to be. What I could never have envisaged was the vast impact and contribution UNANIMA International would, and continues to have, at the United Nations and on global advocacy. Through the leadership of Jean and the Board of Directors, as well as input from our members near and far, UNANIMA International continues to be a leader in advocating for and with women and children, specifically those with a lived experience of homelessness.

While as representatives we have the opportunity to share your stories, my fondest memories will always be seeing or helping facilitate the sharing of such emotion evoking stories told by our friends and colleagues with a lived experience, the true experts. One closest to my heart is that of my dear friend Keisy, who through the generosity of UNANIMA International was able to share her lived experience of Family Homelessness at the 58th Commission for Social Development. Never have I felt so proud as I did at this

particular event planned by UNANIMA International. It was moments like these that this role concreted and developed my deep passion for defending the human rights of all people.

As I look back at my time with UNANIMA International it brings a smile to my face and a tear to my eye. Being surrounded by such a nurturing organisation with such inspirational staff and members has allowed me to grow and strengthen my passion for social justice and advocacy and the skills needed to do well in these. Furthermore it drives me to continue in my own personal journey, one which will certainly be filled with my passion that found its home at UNANIMA International. Thank you for giving me the most amazing and enriching start to my professional career.

UNANIMA International was not only a job for me but an integral and meaningful part of my life that has forever changed me. It is a place I have felt at home and been encouraged to grow professionally and personally. While it breaks my heart to be moving on, I look forward to being a friend and seeing where the ever evolving journey of UNANIMA International takes us in the future. As I mentioned to the Board at my final board meeting please know that while I may be leaving physically I will certainly always be with you in spirit and advocacy.



Joining the Team: Lara Hicks

The team at UNANIMA International is excited to announce the recent appointment of Lara Hicks to the position of Executive Assistant and Assistant UN Representative. Lara recently earned her Master of Public Administration degree from Syracuse University, with a concentration in international development, along with a Certificate of Advanced Study in Civil Society Organizations. We are excited for the contributions, passion, and knowledge that Lara will bring to UNANIMA International.



The Board

at a recent meeting

Resources

- [Children in Migration Matter](#)
- [United Nations' Secretary-General's Report: "Our Common Agenda"](#)
- [Towards 2030: Grassroots Experiences with Inequalities](#)
- [NGO Committee on Migration: Climate Induced Displacement](#)
- [Debunking Myths to End Xenophobia](#)
- Our Publications: Click on the images!

