



Update

April 2016

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY AT CSW

In New York City, dozens of women (including **Sion** sister Sylvia Obrigewitsch **NDS** below) marked International Women's Day by rallying outside the Honduras Mission to the United Nations to demand justice for the murder of Honduran environmental



activist Berta Cáceres. She was gunned down in her home last week, less than a year after she won the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize.



The activists also demanded the release of Gustavo Castro Soto, another well-known environmental campaigner from Mexico, who witnessed the shooting and was shot twice. Just days ago, Nelson Garcia, another leader in Berta's organization, was killed. In response, the Finnish and Dutch co-financiers of the controversial dam project have pulled out, but more than 40 more dam

projects are planned. Large groups of indigenous and black Hondurans organizations are mobilizing in protest.

A SURPRISE FOR THE MAY UPDATE

UNANIMA is now 21 congregations! Learn about our new member next month.

WOMEN HOLD UP HALF THE SKY

Or maybe even more than half! The energy level of New York City was tripled from March 13- 25 during the UN Commission on the Status of Women. We will report on this in the May *Update* issue, when the final document is available.



WORLD WATER DAY

To celebrate this day, our NGO Mining Working Group joined others to co-sponsor a side event on 22nd March, entitled ***Women, Water and Wellbeing***. The event honored Ambassador Caleb Otto (Mission of Palau to the UN) for his ongoing commitment to champion the Human Right to Water and Sanitation, it recognized the role women play defending land and water globally, and it honored Berta Cáceres. Ambassador Otto reminded us that access to clean water is essential to the empowerment of women; Emem Okon (*WoMin*) described the impacts of pollution caused by extractive industries on the health, socio-economic rights and power of women in the Niger Delta; **Meera Karanathan** from *Blue Planet Project* (and UNANIMA's 2016 Woman of Courage



recipient) discussed how the privatization of water and sanitation services adversely affects poor women: Mark Gruin, from the *International Orthodox Christian Charities* told about their water partnership with grassroots people in Tanzania; and Christina Peppard of *Fordham University* discussed the importance of the Human Right to Water and Sanitation to counter water commodification and as a catalyst for action and accountability. Pictured are Aine O'Conner RSM with the speakers.

--Contributed by Celia Martin **NDS**

Link to watch the event - <http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/watch/women-water-and-wellbeing-the-human-right-to-water-and-sanitation-csw60-side-event/4812361021001>

UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW (UPR)

Another action by our NGO Mining Working Group was the co-submission of a statement to the Human Rights Council in Geneva for the Australian UPR. The statement described the devastating impacts on local community members of coal

seam gas mining in Chinchilla, New South Wales—especially damage to potable water. The statement can be read in UN documents (A/HRC/31/14) or watched on <http://webtv.un.org/watch/australia-upr-report-consideration-45th-meeting-31st-regular-session-human-rights-council/4805086318001> (at 1.08:47.30) Other religious NGO groups spoke at the same session.

-- Contributed by Celia Martin **NDS**

We are looking forward to hearing about the Haiti UPR report, coming later this year.

TALITHA KUM VISITS

Sister Gabriella Bottani CMS visited the Religious at the UN (RUN) to study how religious interact with the UN, and particularly to visit with groups who are working against human trafficking. She is the Director of *Talitha Kum*, the anti-trafficking organization created by the UISG (International Union of Superiors General). UNANIMA had a good visit with her, and we have been selected to serve as her contact with the religious at the UN.



TRAFFICKING RESOURCES

January (Human Trafficking Awareness Month) may be behind us, but it is still a good time to check the resources (English, some Spanish) available from [U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking](#) (USCSAHT). UNANIMA is an active member of this group, which has recently posted new educational study modules including modules on “Human Trafficking and Children,” “Human Trafficking and Environmental Refugees,” and “Addressing Human Trafficking in the Healthcare Setting.” On the “Faith Resources” page, monthly parish bulletin inserts or short announcements in English and Spanish can help inform the Catholic community about the sin of human trafficking.

The group now has more than 76 members, including religious congregations, anti-trafficking coalitions, and individual partners. Many new representatives are actively participating in the work groups (Communications, Educational Resources, Legislative Advocacy and Survivor Support). Information posted on the Facebook page is reaching between 3,000 - 4,000 people each week. They invite more congregations and coalitions to join in this work. See: <http://www.sistersagainsttrafficking.org/join-us/>

Another resource is the attached toolkit produced by an interfaith group—it includes a number of links to USCSAHT: http://www.ucc.org/justice_womens-issues_human-trafficking.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDG) RESOURCES

Remember that the work on the SDGs will go forward under the direction of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF)? A new website for the 2016 HLPF is now available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2016>. The website includes a list of the countries that have thus far volunteered to present the first national reviews during the 2016 HLPF. This list will be updated to reflect any additions. We note that this site (though a UN site) is not translated, so we will lodge a complaint! But here are more resources on the SDGs:

Here is a UN Site for SDG symbols we can use and SDG “Knowledge Platform.” When you click on each SDG, you get the targets, lists of documents, commitments by nations, and other resources. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics>

Here is the YouTube list of videos on the SDGs:

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Sustainable+Development+Goals

FLASH POINTS:

- ✓ While the United Nations Member States were preparing to attend COP21, the December Climate Change Conference in Paris, a general movement toward a collective stand on climate change was taking shape in the **Congrégation de Notre-Dame**. Hearing the warning call of trustworthy global voices (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, World Energy Agency, the World Health Organization) they were aware of issues like food security, access to safe drinking water, human health, the integrity of territories, the survival of populations, and the fate of women—who are largely responsible for agriculture, food, health and the development of their societies.

Their most important action was the declaration made by the Congregation’s leadership team, which was signed by about 95% of the members able to do so and the majority of associates, and then sent to the heads of states of their respective countries. This communal stand was based on the fact that the Congregation is present in some vulnerable regions of the world (Africa and Central America), and that the plight of women is one of their biggest concerns. Echoing the International Social Justice Network, they pledge “to work with others in a spirit of dialogue to safeguard the earth...promote the equitable sharing of resources, and ensure quality of life for all humanity and for all creation.”

--Celine Beaulieu **CND**

(This will count as our Climate Change piece for the month!)

Thank you to all of you who have been sending community news items related to the UNANIMA mission! If you don't see what you sent right away, it is because we try to "take turns" from community to community, to ensure that all appear in the Update in a given year! We have put what you sent "in the bank" for later, if we did not use it right away. Do you know of some wonderful thing going on in your community ministry? We invite you to send us a paragraph or so—with a picture, of course!

- ✓ Many UNANIMA congregations and women / girls they recommended to us were registered by UNANIMA for CSW. See if you recognize any! Hint: they include **CCV, CND, DW, NDS, OSU, RSC, SNJM**, and **friends** of other congregations...



“They tried to bury us, but they did not know we were SEEDS!” (Berta Cásares)