



Update August 2016

NEXT SECRETARY GENERAL?



Until this year the selection process for the UN Secretary General (SG) has been cloaked in secrecy and controlled by the “big five” of the Security Council—Britain, China, France, Russia, and the US. This year the process has been more open—there have been open interviews and debates, and on 21 July the first of a series of “straw polls” will be taken and will continue over the next few months in the Security Council. Even more exciting: there are six men and **six women** in the running. There has never been a woman SG!! The women candidates are from Argentina, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Croatia, Moldova, and New Zealand.

UNANIMA INTERNATIONAL (UI) TRANSITIONS

Tori Larson (pictured next page), Executive Assistant at UI since early 2014, is leaving to pursue a law degree at Berkeley this fall. In reflecting on her time at UNANIMA (UI) she wrote: “These two years have flown by. I have learned more than I ever could have expected -- not only about social justice, the UN, systemic change and bureaucracy -- but also about faith and love and kindness. I have become more passionate, articulate and refined in my interests, and also come to understand care, my place on the Earth, and the intersection of human rights and dignity in complex and changing ways. I leave UI with a heart full of gratitude and energy to continue on my path. UI has been the perfect transitional job for me. I am forever grateful.”



Teresa Blumenstein will replace Tori as Executive Assistant in late August. You will learn more about Teresa in the coming weeks, but we know that her experience and energy will be of great service to us and the greater NGO community at the UN.

THE HOLY SEE AT THE UNITED NATIONS on CHILD TRAFFICKING

See statement at link below.

<http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2016/07/19/160719a.html>

INTERN REFLECTIONS

UNANIMA was lucky to have two excellent helpers for a while this summer. Intern Nonata Bezerra **SND** (left) and volunteer Alex (Jennie) Satterfield (right), a student from Brescia University are shown here with Executive Assistant Tori Larson (center). Here they reflect on their time with us:



Nonata felt very welcomed by the entire NGO community at the UN, and by the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, with whom she lived in New York. She said that her time with UI showed her the importance of belonging to an NGO which acts in defense of those living in poverty, and illustrated the value of working in partnership with other NGOs, committees, civil society organizations and others for a single cause: to build a better, more just, and more humane world. Her internship also taught her the value of the unique feminine spirit that UNANIMA brings to the UN. She saw how UI is active across many committees and working groups, and often is integral to their influence and reputation.

One of her most important activities was participating in the Permanent Forum of Indigenous Peoples, (theme: conflict, peace, and resolution). There, she saw clearly how the focus of her Congregation, the **Sisters of Notre Dame** (on women, children, and elderly persons, immigration and human trafficking, and the integrity of creation) is very interconnected with UNANIMA's focus, and with many UN commissions and meetings. She was able to draw connections between the different organizations and UN meetings, understanding the integration of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation. She reflected that she is very grateful that her Congregation is a part of UNANIMA, and for her time spent in New York—learning the impressive cultural diversity and cultural riches the city has to offer.

–Nonata Bezerra

Alex: “My internship with UNANIMA International has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. Just learning that I have easy access to the information and meetings held by the UN every day completely changes my approach in my own civic engagement. I have learned more than I thought possible about my personal subject of interest, which is trafficking, but I have also been exposed to so many more issues and opportunities that I was unfamiliar with until now. The employees at UNANIMA have been more than supportive and taught me about the various cultures and backgrounds they come from to form a united front and fight global issues. The mission of this NGO is truly noble and I am honored to have been a part of it for this short time. I have learned the language of the UN, which provides a foundation for me to expand upon as I continue working toward my own career. I have also met some of the most inspiring people and learned of many more opportunities for me to eventually take my job in the field of law and apply it to fighting trafficking.”

“With everything that has occurred on a global scale these past few weeks, I cannot imagine a better time for me to have been here and working within the UN. The world is becoming a scary place, but UNANIMA’s work has inspired me to continue to look for the good in everyone and make sure no one is excluded or left behind. I want to thank everyone involved in making this happen for me and I truly hope I can continue to work with you in the near future.”
--Alex Satterfield

VICTORIES IN ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE

Child, early and forced marriage is a major human rights violation, and unfortunate reality around the world. In July, The Gambia and Tanzania made major strides as they banned child marriage, with strict penalties for violation. Read about these landmark steps towards ending child marriage worldwide [here](#). [The Working Group on Girls](#), an NGO committee of which UNANIMA is an active member, works actively at the UN advocating for an end to child marriage and other violence against girls. Significantly, WGG and the UN focus on the intersections of child marriage with other human rights violations against girls worldwide, including the right to a childhood, education, early pregnancy, poverty and gender inequality. Read more about the UN’s stance on child marriage through the [UNFPA website](#).
–Tori Larson

CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN: PERIODIC REVIEW FOR GABON

Sister Julienne **CCV** (picture) attended the periodic review for Gabon in Geneva this May, representing her congregation, **UNANIMA**, and another NGO, the Rainbow Association. Gabon is one of 196 member states that have signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and was subject to review by a committee of 18 experts. Sister Julienne explained that this periodic review was intended to strengthen



cooperation and improve the promotion / protection of child rights. The committee also reviewed Gabon’s implementation of other important legal instruments, such as the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and pornography of children. As part of the process, a dialogue was held between the committee and the Gabonese delegation (composed of representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and National Solidarity, and the permanent Mission of Gabon to the United Nations office in Geneva). To read the concluding

observations on the second periodic review for Gabon visit this link:

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fGAB%2fCO%2f2&Lang=en

--Tori Larson

HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM (HLPF)

It has been 10 months since 193 member states made a collective commitment to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Now the real test is to see what our nations will do to meet these commitments, and how they work in partnership with outside

groups like faith-based institutions. Some member states continue to view our civil society groups as adversaries, trying to suppress rather than empower them.

From 11-20 July the High Level Political Forum met to review the first group of countries (picture). UNANIMA volunteer Alex Satterfield attended the meeting and other events. “The most eye-opening side event for me was an event entitled, *Eliminating the Trafficking of Children and Youth*, which discussed the religious perspective of trafficking and the recent efforts of the Pope to combat trafficking, especially in youth. Trafficking is recognized in three different Sustainable



Development Goals (SDGs), but the event focused on Goal 16, Target 2, which is to eliminate trafficking and abuse against children by 2030—especially child victims of armed conflict, one of the best examples of who the SDGs are designed to protect. Of trafficking victims, 1/3 are children and of those, 2/3 are girls. The biggest factor in eliminating the trafficking of children is to gather baseline data on the purposes for which children are trafficked. Civil society must hold the UN accountable for leading the fight against trafficking; this message was affirmed by Sheila Simpkins, a trafficking victim who told her story. Her abuse started at age 6; now she is 47 and working on behalf of past, present, and future victims with an organization called End Slavery Tennessee. Their focus is on the laws surrounding trafficking; specifically, ensuring that traffickers are punished as rapists, not just traffickers. The power of her story came from hearing her tell it, but the message resonates with everyone. Sheila and the panel confirmed that fighting the demand is where our efforts must be focused in order to defeat the monster that is trafficking of children and youth.”

--Alex Satterfield

HELP US FIND A WOMAN OF COURAGE FOR 2017!

If you are a member of a UNANIMA congregation, please consider submitting a nomination for our annual Woman of Courage Award! Remember: our past recipients have been from Mexico (2), India (2), Kenya / Ireland, Canada (2) / Sri Lanka, Ghana, D. R. of Congo, and Peru. Wouldn't it be nice to have someone from the Middle East, Asia, the Philippines, or Oceania? Please send your nominations to morek.michele@gmail.com . Here are the criteria to consider and to use in your letter of nomination:

- That the awardee be a women, but not a member of our member congregations
- That she have displayed courage through her actions in the face of adversity: government, popular opinion, leaders
- That her actions reflect and support the values and principles promoted by the UN
- That they relate to one of the major areas of concern for UNANIMA International

- That they be proposed by one or more of the member congregations
- That there be geographical diversity

You can read about our past Women of Courage [here](#).

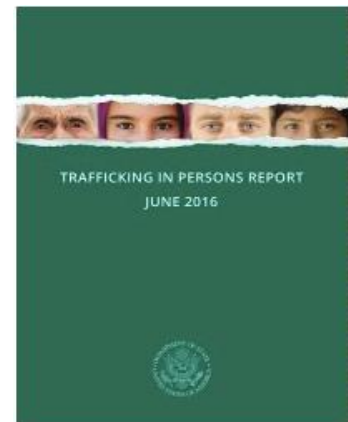
COALITION OF IMMOKALEE WORKERS RECOGNIZED

The James Beard Foundation has recognized Coalition of Immokalee Workers co-founders, Greg Asbed and Lucas Benitez with the James Beard Annual Leadership Award. Asbed and Benitez are recognized “for their innovative work in forging a new human rights model in the food industry supply chain...” Each year, the Foundation, which resides at the cross section of the country’s culinary and food justice communities, “Celebrates visionaries responsible for creating a healthier, safer, and more sustainable food world.” Read more about the Foundation and their awards [here](#). UNANIMA **Woman of Courage Nely Rodriguez** is active with the Immokalee workers.

--Tori Larson

2016 TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT

US Secretary of State Kerry released the 2016 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, which is now [available online](#). The TIP Report is one of the most important international tools on human trafficking for governments. He commented: “If there is a single theme to this year's Trafficking in Persons Report, it is the conviction that there is nothing inevitable about trafficking in human beings. That conviction is where the process of change really begins—with the realization that just because a certain abuse has taken place in the past doesn't mean that we have to tolerate that abuse in the future or that we can afford to avert our eyes. Instead, we should be asking ourselves-what if that victim of trafficking was my daughter, son, sister, or brother?”



"This year's TIP Report asks such questions, because ending modern slavery isn't just a fight we should attempt-it is a fight we can and must win." The TIP Report is significant not only for its diplomatic uses in government, but for NGOs and civil society actors engaged in the fight to end human trafficking.

–Tori Larson

FLASHPOINTS:

- ✓ News from São Luis, the capital of Maranhão, Brazil’s poorest state: in this major port city the **Sisters of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin (SASV)** live their mission in solidarity with the local community and in support of social pastoral movements and other networks including “*Justice on the Rails*.” This international organization confronts the socio-environmental injustices resulting from the

activities of Vale, one of the world's largest multinational mining corporations. The mining industry has had a devastating effect on the agriculture, water supply, fishing industry, land, and livelihood of the Brazilian people. *Justice on the Rails* raises up the voices of those living in extreme poverty, promotes their basic human rights, and addresses the cries of our planet. The **SASV** educational mission is lived among the people of São Luis as Presence, Hope, and Witness to a radical Gospel vision.



- ✓ Former Intern **Judy Padasas CCV** continues to actively fight against human trafficking in the Philippines. Earlier this year she helped facilitate parish trainings with the UISG anti-trafficking group *Talitha Kum*, educating parishioners so that they, too, can educate and speak on human trafficking.
- ✓ UNANIMA's newest community, the **Marist Sisters**, have active missions throughout the globe. In Ireland, for example, the sisters work in primary schools putting *Laudato Si'* into action, focusing on the intersections of poverty, inequality, social exclusion, and sustainability. In Italy the Marists live in Collegno, where they visit families, deliver catechesis, prepare children for the sacraments, work with parents to strengthen faith, visit the sick, and other caring home projects.

GREETINGS FROM NEW YORK!

--photo by
Alex Satterfield

