



# Update

January - March 2018



## **New Year Letter from the Executive Director's Desk**

Greetings, Dear Sisters, Family, Associates and Friends of UNANIMA International.



As we head into spring in this hemisphere and into the season of journeying with our risen God in the Church, I want to send each one of you warm greetings wherever you are in our world, with many blessings for this new time and space. From where we are now in our fractured world and communities, it seems that each of us must do something for our world and peoples: we need to find a way for peace in our troubled world. We need to find a way to create both security and sanctuary for the children, the daring and those who are really desperate - all those who hope in us right now.

The late David Stevens, leader of the Corrymeela Community in Northern Ireland, said there is a prevalence of the peace of truce over the deeper peace of transformation where attitudes and relationships can be changed. The former is largely accomplished through political means, whereas faith and spirituality can help bring the shift from the peace of truce to the peace of transformation. This will only become a reality for us when attitudes change. Attitudes can be changed gradually by building relationships with those who are different from us; by taking the risk to be open and vulnerable; and by taking the courage of inviting some across the threshold of our lives, our communities, our regions and our countries.

Here in the UNANIMA office, we are also in a time of reflection, transformation, and growth. A key priority for myself and UNANIMA International for this year will be to hear first-hand

stories from our grassroots people, those working daily on the ground in very difficult circumstance and who bring hope to people who sometimes live out of despair. The Staff and Board will also be examining ways to build and strengthen bridges among our members and the many tremendous ministries in which you are engaged. As we focus our energies on blazing new pathways and connections for the future work of our coalition, we will not be sending out the Update every month as we have in the past. To keep abreast of our work during this time, we invite all our members to follow our activities on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/unanimaintl](http://www.facebook.com/unanimaintl)). Those interested in migration issues are also encouraged to subscribe to the weekly newsletter we create and distribute on behalf of the NGO Committee on Migration (see migration article below for details).

It is a privilege to be working with UNANIMA International and other faith - based organizations at the UN. We have much to contribute in working collaboratively with each other to bring about a more just and peaceful world and bring our voiced to bear on our local, national and international leaders. Collaborative working is definitely the call of the spirit.

I look forward to meeting you on this journey we are all taking together.

Let me conclude with a few lines from the Irish writer John O'Donoghue:

*“Though your destination is not yet clear  
You can trust the promise of this opening;  
Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning  
That is one with your life’s desire.*

*Awaken your spirit to adventure;  
Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk;  
Soon you will be home in a new rhythm  
For your soul senses the world that awaits you.”*



Sincerely,

*Jean Quinn*

## Global Agreement on Migration Turns a Corner from Dialogue to Negotiation

You will recall from previous issues of the *Update* that the UN is currently in the midst of a two-year process that aims to adopt a “Global Compact for Safe, Regular, and Orderly Migration” (GCM) by the end of 2018. Though it will not be legally binding, this document aims to bring the governments of the world to some agreement on basic principles that must be upheld and strategies to



improve the methods by which they manage their respective immigration systems. Most of the first year in this process was dedicated to a series of regional consultations with non-government groups around the world and thematic dialogues at UN Headquarters in New York. The themes covered in the New York-based dialogues included the human rights of migrants; migrants’ contributions to their countries of origin and destination; labor-related migration issues; smuggling and trafficking; international cooperation for the management of migration; and root causes of involuntary migration, including environmental degradation and violence. In addition to contributing our own statements to this process, UNANIMA has taken a lead role in helping to coordinate the efforts of the roughly 50 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of the NGO Committee on Migration, all of whom work to ensure the human rights of migrants are upheld and advanced in UN processes like the development and implementation of the GCM. By



operating as a committee, this group of NGOs has garnered credibility and opportunities for intimate dialogue with the ambassadors leading the GCM development process (pictured at far right above and in center here).

In December, UNANIMA sent our representative for migration, Teresa Blumenstein (pictured here at far left with delegates of Vivat International, the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, and the Mennonite Central Committee), to a conference in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico that marked the turning point in the GCM process. The meeting provided an opportunity for government delegates and NGOs to voice their priorities in light of the year of preliminary dialogues for the GCM. It was also a time for NGOs to meet and organize themselves for the pursuit of those priorities throughout the negotiations of the document itself. There, Teresa met leaders of other NGO networks from around the world who had been participating in the GCM process since it emerged from the New York Declaration in 2016. Together, they strategized for the months of negotiations to follow and engaged delegates of over 80 governments in candid discussion about their own priorities and concerns. These personal connections allowed all NGOs present to get a better sense of the positions of various governments following the year of dialogues. It also helped us to determine which issues will need the strongest support from us and how best to approach them in the GCM negotiations.



The negotiations of the Global Compact for Migration began in late February and will continue through July 2018. The initial draft of the document included many of the points that the NGO community had raised consistently throughout the year of dialogues. We would have liked to see more specific strategies and time-bound

commitments in the text, especially related to inhumane reception and detention of migrants, expulsion (deportation) of migrants without a fair legal hearing, and access to basic social services (food, water, shelter, education) and justice systems for all migrants regardless of their documentation status. Still, many NGOs were pleased with the text overall and know that our primary work throughout the negotiations will be to protect the strong language that it already contains from governments who wish to weaken any commitments it requires of them.

Throughout the process, UNANIMA has placed an emphasis on the cause of people who are forced to migrate due to climate change, natural disasters, and the overall degradation of their home environments. Right now, this group does not qualify for protection and social support that are offered to people fleeing war or persecution.

We are working with a group of NGOs dedicated to ensuring protections for this group, and serious action to prevent future “climate-induced displacement,” are both included in the GCM. At the meeting in Mexico and the first round of negotiations, we learned that we have some strong allies on this issue within governments of Latina America and South Asia. Of course, we also know that we have some strong opponents, especially among those countries with high incomes, high rates of resource consumption, and high rates of carbon emission that fuel climate change. In the months ahead, we will work in coalition to arrange private meetings with both our allies and our opponents. In this way, we hope to fortify the positions of those with whom we agree and to help others to see the human face and cost of inaction.

We will keep you informed on the GCM throughout the negotiations. Those who would like to follow the process more closely and in real time are encouraged to subscribe to the Weekly Update (subscription form here: <http://eepurl.com/cc-rD5>), a newsletter produced by UNANIMA International for the NGO Committee on Migration. It is designed to keep UN-based migrant advocates informed about the latest news, events, resources, and opportunities for individual and collective action within the UN system.



**NGO Committee on Migration**  
Weekly Update

<p><b>IOIM Dialogue Week:</b></p> <p>The International Organization for Migration will host its <a href="#">Academic and Professional Dialogue Migration</a> on Monday and Tuesday, 26-27 March 2018, at UN Headquarters. The theme of the two-day workshop will be 'Inclusión y Participación para un Objetivo Global: Gobernanza para la Migración'. It will be followed by a two-hour 'Civil Society Dialogue' with IOIM's New York Office on Wednesday. For more on the agenda for both or details on both events and to RSVP to the Wednesday dialogue program, visit the call for details available for anyone who would like to participate remotely in the Civil Society Dialogue.</p>	<p><b>Upcoming Events</b></p> <p><b>Next meeting:</b></p> <p>12 April 2018 11:00AM-1:30PM Location: TBD</p> <p><b>Other events:</b></p> <p>28 March: SMY-CHS Round-up conference call, 2pm (New York time) <a href="#">Details</a></p>
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## UNANIMA International’s 2018 Woman of Courage: María Elena Herrera Magdaleno



Each year, the Board of UNANIMA brings forth a host of nominations for the coalition’s Woman of Courage Award. The honor is bestowed upon a woman who has taken a stance for justice despite significant obstacles, tremendous grief, or threats to her personal safety. The 2018 recipient of this award is María Elena Herrera Magdaleno. María lives with the tragedy of having lost four children to enforced disappearances in the fallout of the Mexican “War Against Drug Trafficking,” which was organized in 2006 in order to fight drug cartels but has unleashed a wave of violence, insecurity, and human trafficking. In her transit through this deep pain, María Herrera Magdaleno has transformed herself from a victim to a seeker of missing persons, a human rights defender, a promoter of unity and mutual support among groups of families seeking a loved one who disappeared in Mexico. Together with her husband and children, Maria has created the association “Familiares en búsqueda María Herrera” (“Relatives in Search”), which aims to “organize, embrace, strengthen and empower people [who] share the pain of the disappearance of loved ones. She has become a symbol of peaceful and tenacious resistance whose presence gives security and comfort to other mothers who suffer the same pain. With strength and clarity,

she has led other relatives of missing people to confront the Mexican government in many ways, including by meeting with Felipe Calderón in 2011 and joining the Caravan for Peace movement throughout Mexico and the United States. We are thrilled to honor the strength and commitment of this phenomenal Woman of Courage.

## **My Prayerful Journey: Final Reflection on the Catherine Ferguson Scholarship Experience**

*By Carmen Soto, CCV*



Where should I begin in describing the profound experience I had during my three months at the UNANIMA International Internship, months that came and went by so quickly?

Having been raised in Lower Manhattan, I revisited the New York spirit and energy that filled my being upon arriving in Manhattan in September. It was a wonderful experience as a fellow New Yorker returning to the city that is forever alive. I witnessed so many people being helpful and supportive of one another in the midst of the street rush and at train stations and bus stops (e. g. instances of kindness toward homeless persons, even musicians filling subway stations with joy and life in the hope their gift touches others enough to be generous towards them).

The UNANIMA Internship was a rewarding and enriching experience filling me with wonder about UNANIMA International. The Internship offered the opportunity to attend meetings at the United Nations to listen, learn, appreciate, and question the work being done on behalf of

people internationally. The variety of sessions provided an extensive worldwide view of the pain and suffering our sisters and brothers are living through. Life is overbearing for so many!

Through the Internship experience, I saw the great work and dedication of our UNANIMA International team and their capacity to attend to the enormous amount of commitments. I believe our presence is counter-cultural in a city that lives and breathes so many contradictions, especially as a wealthy city in which there is so much poverty. The commitment and dedication of UNANIMA gives voice to so many injustices ranging from food insecurity and the immigration crisis to human trafficking (modern slavery). UNANIMA, as an NGO, contributes to solutions of world problems by promoting care of our planet and by collaborating in the development of statements and briefs to UN Member States (national governments recognized by the UN system). An important aspect of UNANIMA is the networking and relationship building with NGOs, Religious at the UN, and UN Member States' representatives. All these and many more have been occasions to see ways the Word of the Gospel is put into action at an international level, ways that I would not have imagined prior to the internship.

The great challenge for the United Nations now, as I see it, is the need for accountability from each UN Member State following commitments they have made, not only to the institution of the United Nations, but also to the people they represent and to the world. Accountability is necessary and key to ensuring that actions are completed and commitments are kept. While the UN is a vast, complex, and important international institution, it still relies on each Member State to fulfill their commitments by creating the actions that will lead to the peace they are intended to promote. Hopefully, that peace will be achieved, a peace which can only come from having just relationships with their own peoples and other nations.

On another note, my sourced of life-giving inspiration while on this journey were my many intense experiences of the presence of Jesus through everyday contact with the homeless, those commuting to and from work, the UNANIMA team, those participating in the NGO meetings and various UN celebrations I attended (International Day of the Eradication of Poverty, the International Day of the Girl Child, World Cities Day), and so many others.

All of these special moments in the internship led me to reflect on the next steps to be taken as I returned to my community and ministry with immigrants and the anti-trafficking coalition in which I participate. For sure, I feel that, after this experience at UNANIMA, I am invited to explore how to further develop the services we offer. I pray for the grace of listening needed to be open to the invitations of the Spirit of God and to continue planting seeds of hope, peace, and justice.

[In the photo above, Carmen is in the midst of Jesus' joyful presence at the celebration of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, which brought persons who have experienced extreme poverty to the center of attention at the UN podium. She is situated in the second row immediately to the right of the cubic stone honoring victims of poverty.]

## Bringing Homelessness into the Light at the UN Commission on Social Development



Several NGOs in our network have come together in the past few months to lay the first groundwork for a new NGO Working Group on Homelessness. At this early stage, the majority of participating NGOs are those representing Catholic Religious. The group's formation is being led by Guillermo Campuzano, UN representative of the Congregation of the Mission of the Vincentian Family. The Vincentian Family of congregations has adopted street homelessness as a key issue for their social justice mission for the next 15 years, and they have already organized an event on the subject this year.

UI Executive Director Jean Quinn has assumed the role of Vice Chair for the new Working Group at the invitation of UN colleagues who recognize her significant background experience as the founder and long-time Director of Sophia Housing in Ireland. Jean approaches homelessness as multi-faceted issue. Because a home is much more than shelter, Jean says, homelessness involves many deeper and more complex challenges than being without a house.

Given the far-reaching social causes and implications of homelessness, the members of the Working Group were surprised to learn that no UN conventions directly address this critical issue. At this year's UN Commission on Social Development, the annual UN conference on social inequalities, they took the first small steps toward correcting that omission. They made several interventions to get homelessness included in the Civil Society (NGO) Declaration for the conference. They also put together a proposal for the government delegates to elevate the issue of homelessness in the Commission's resolution (document produced by the governments who are members of the Commission at the end of their annual meeting). The proposal focused on three major elements of the issue of homelessness on which the group intends to advocate:



1. Promotion of the right to adequate housing
2. Agreement on a basic, global definition of homelessness
3. Measurement of homelessness (especially street homelessness)

The group has also begun organizing an initiative to promote the naming of homelessness as one of the themes of next year's Commission on Social Development.

Photo above: UNANIMA's delegates to the UN Commission on Social Development (from left): Stacy Hanrahan, CND; Jean Quinn, DW, UI Executive Director; Regina O'Connor, SSA; Lucille Goulet, SSA; Teresa Blumenstein, UI Executive Asst; Barbara Spears, SNJM

### **Help Us Track Mining Practices and Our Communities' Responses**



The NGO Mining Working Group, the coalition with whom UNANIMA works on mining-related infringements on human rights and earth justice, is currently circulating two questionnaires. You are invited and encouraged to complete either or both forms as you are able.

The first questionnaire relates specifically to the mining practice of "fracking," the extraction of natural gas from rock by injecting the rock with water and chemicals at very high pressure. It has become one of the leading means of fossil fuel extraction over the last decade. In this time, it has also become increasingly clear that this method of extraction causes great harm to the surrounding environment and to the health and well-being of those who live there. The questionnaire is available in English (<https://bit.ly/2IcoZHO>) and in roughly translated Spanish (<https://bit.ly/2qkmaA4>), French (<https://bit.ly/2v1BhnE>), and Portuguese (<https://bit.ly/2Hox5Rs>). Responses may be submitted in any of those four languages. They will be used to create a map of fracking activity and opposition as it affects, and is affected by, our Group's members around the world. Any personal testimonies of experiences with the negative effects of fracking may also be cited in written or oral statement we submit to the UN system. If you are willing to be contacted for more information or interested in receiving the

results of the questionnaire, please be sure to leave your name and e-mail address at the bottom of the form. Responses will be accepted until 31 May 2018.

The second questionnaire (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MXKFZYK>) pertains to mining and human rights more broadly. As you will see, the instructions and questions are written in English, Spanish, and French on a single survey form. You may answer in whichever of those three languages is best for you. Responses to this questionnaire will be used in a report from the MWG to this July's High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. This conference is part of the annual review process intended to track countries' progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. Responses will be accepted until 30 April 2018. (Photo credit: Marcellus Protest via Flickr)

### Flashpoints:

- Since 1986, Sr. Margot, a **Sister of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin** from the Timiskaming district of Ontario Canada, has organized twelve-day mission trips with groups of 15-18 yr olds. They have traveled to Haiti, Mexico, the Dominican Republic and most often to Jamaica.



The mission of the project, which is called “One Love,” is to open the minds and hearts of teens to realities among the poorest in our world. The Gospel from Matthew has been the guiding inspiration: “I was hungry, you fed me...I was thirsty, you gave me a drink...I was a stranger and you invited me into your home...” The group takes part in a formation program for a year to prepare them for this experience. They also pray, fast and raise funds for the project, which includes providing building materials used to construct basic shelters in the slum area of Kingston, Jamaica.



Upon arrival, these young people have many opportunities for engaging encounters with the Jamaican community. Besides working in collaboration with local people to construct simple homes, the teens also take time to interact with children while visiting schools, hospitals, and orphanages. “One Love” continues to make a difference!

- Late in 2017, the **Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart** received word from the New York City Council that a section of New York’s 19<sup>th</sup> Street would be dedicated to

their foundress, Mother Frances Cabrini. The dedication commemorates the tireless work of Mother Cabrini and the legacy of the Cabrini Sisters in service of poor immigrant communities of New York. Since 1889, the congregation has established schools, orphanages, and medical centers. Today, in a time of great fear and uncertainty for immigrants in the United States, the Cabrini Sisters continue to support this community through two Cabrini Immigrant Services centers still operating in New York City.



- **Ursuline Sister of Mt. St.**

**Joseph** Larraine Lauter founded the organization Water With Blessings in 2011 after years of medical mission trips spent treating the symptoms of recurring water-borne diseases. The organization distributes water filters to communities in desperate need of



clean water using a model of training mothers to use the filters for their families *and* their communities. She recently received publicity for her ambitious new initiative to scale up their efforts in Haiti to a level that can eradicate cholera, a disease that much publicity, many years, and many more dollars have failed to defeat despite having a simple cure. See this article from the Leo Weekly to learn more about Water With Blessings and their new focus on Haiti: <https://bit.ly/FfiLKm>.



*May this Easter be a season of personal reawakening and renewed embrace of gospel justice for each of you.*

*-The UNANIMA Office Team, New York*