

Spring 2017



Dominicans at the UN

“Cry out as if you had a million voices, for it is silence that kills the world.”

St. Catherine of Siena



Dominican Sisters International at the United Nations

Commission on the Status of Women

Once again *Dominican Sisters International* (DSI) was well represented at the UN Commission on the Status of Women which was held from March 13-27 in New York. This Commission is one of the largest annual gatherings of global leaders, non-governmental organizations, United Nations partners and activists from around the world. The entire focus of this Commission is on the status of rights and empowerment of all women and girls, everywhere. This year's theme was **women's economic empowerment in a changing world of work**. The topic was a timely one, given the rapid pace of change in our world which is driven by globalization and the increasing rate of global mobility.

In her opening statement at the Commission, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women, acknowledged the progress that has been made in many areas to improve the condition of women and girls worldwide. However, the rate of progress has been slow, calling for a sense of **constructive impatience** on the part of those among us who advocate for a world free from gender discrimination and inequality; and a world free from violence of all sorts against women and girls.

Women and girls and the SDGs

It is frequently noted that the empowerment of women and girls is key if the UN is to realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The rallying cry of the SDG agenda is **leave no one behind and reach those furthest behind, first**. The Commission attempts to do this by exploring the challenges faced by women and girls worldwide regarding education and vocational training; access to land and credit; freedom from discrimination and harassment in the workplace; and under-representation of women in decision-making at all levels.

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In his address to the Commission, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said *“In a male-dominated world, the empowerment of women and girls must be a key priority. Women already have what it takes to succeed. Empowerment is about breaking structural barriers.”* He went on to say *“Discrimination against women sounds a loud alarm that our common values are under threat. Women’s rights are human rights – and attacks on women are attacks on us all.”* Our hope is that each year we move closer towards the goal – a world where both women and men; girls and boys are able to exercise their rights to the fullest extent possible..

Our unique, yet common experience

Our Sisters entered into the Commission and its many events with great enthusiasm. They brought with them their own unique experiences as well as their deep desire to help advance the condition of women and girls where they live. There were many opportunities to share with one another the realities in each of the countries represented: the dangerous situation of Christians and of women and girls in Pakistan; the poverty in many parts of Colombia as well as the hope that the fragile peace accord will move forward; the difficulties faced by our Sisters in Vietnam, living under a Communist government which limits their options for ministry; the deep desire of Native Americans in the United States to retrieve their native languages and a sense of their identity; the fear imposed by Boko Haram in Nigeria, and the excessive interference of the government in schools; the struggle of the indigenous women of Chiapas to receive appropriate recognition and fair payment for their beautiful crafts; and the ongoing struggles of women in Ireland and the United States for greater recognition of their gifts and their call to fuller ministry within our Church. While each Sister’s experience was unique, the common threads were many; and together we wove a beautiful tapestry of Dominican life and mission as lived by our Sisters around the world!

During our days together, we reflected on the women who journeyed to the tomb in the hours before dawn to anoint the body of Jesus as a metaphor for each of us in our efforts to improve the condition of women and girls right where we are. The task is huge, with many obstacles along the way. Nonetheless, we each have an important contribution to make. Perhaps Sister Juliana Idoko’s words can speak for all of us who were graced to be together for this experience:

“Just like the women who, knew that the stone would be too heavy for them to remove to gain access to the body of Jesus, went all the same – the task of changing the mentality of men and even of many women to accept the notion of gender equality and the rights of women, is an enormous one. But all the same, I will do my part to bring about the positive change and the empowerment of women that is inevitable if we are to attain the Sustainable Development Goals. On my part, I cannot do the big jobs involved, but I can begin with myself. I will share the knowledge I have gained from these experiences with my Sisters and with others.”

We are all so much richer for having had this experience together, as Sisters, united in our love for our Dominican life and mission! May the preaching continue in our very lives!!

Dominican Sisters Who Attended the CSW 2017



Clementina Oti, OP
Congregation of
St. Catherine of Siena
Lagos, Nigeria
Principal



Emmanuel Yen Do, OP
Congregation of
St. Catherine of Siena
Thamh Tan, Vietnam
Congregational Leadership



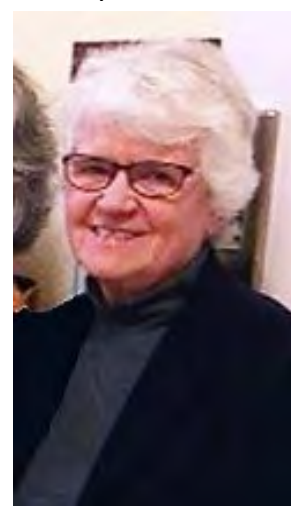
Judy Morris, OP
Dominican Sisters of Peace
Kentucky, USA
Former Justice Promoter, De-
velopment Director at St.
Mary's Center



Ruhksana Yaqoob, OP
Congregation of St. Catherine
of Siena
Karachi, Pakistan
Principal



Helena Im, OP
Mission San Jose
Chiapas, Mexico
Pastoral Care, Women/
Indigenous Empowerment



Margaret Hillary, OP
Grand Rapids Dominicans
Montana, USA
Native American Ministry



Helen Mary Harmey, OP
Cabra Dominican
Dublin, Ireland
Currently on Sabbatical



Juliana Idoko, OP
Congregation of
St. Catherine of Siena of
Gusau
Gusau, Nigeria
Director of Novices



Laura Ines Nino Martinez
Dominican Sisters of the
Presentation
Bogota, Colombia
Educator



*Dominican Sisters represented at the Commission
on the Status of Women 2017*

Summer 2017 Events of Interest at the United Nations



UN Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards their Total Elimination

June 15 - July 7, 2017

The goal of these meetings is to address legal measures, provisions, and norms needed for disarmament and the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. Any legally binding document would be composed of prohibitions and obligations for member states, as well as some sort of political commitments in the goal of achieving a nuclear weapons-free world.



Thematic Sessions for the Global Compact on Migration

May - September 2017

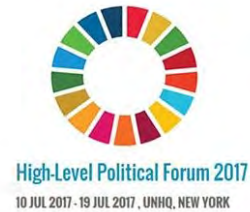
This series of thematic discussions will help to collect information, concrete recommendations, and substantive input from member states, civil society organizations, and private sector partners to prepare for the upcoming Global Compact on Migration, an outcome of the New York Declaration. The thematic sessions will include consultations on human rights, root causes of migration, international cooperation and governance, contributions of migrant and diaspora communities to society at large, smuggling and trafficking of migrants, and remedies for irregular migration based on labor needs. The Dominican Leadership Conference will be involved as part of the NGO Committee on Migration.



Oceans Conference

June 5-9, 2017

The Oceans Conference at the United Nations this year will urge member states to commit to fulfilling Sustainable Development Goal 14: “Conserve and sustainably use oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development.” Topics to be discussed will include sustainable fishing, ocean acidification, the futures of Small Island Developing States, marine pollution, and international law relating to bodies of water. The Dominican Leadership Conference will be present for the talks and will follow up in any ways deemed necessary or relevant.



High Level Political Forum

July 10-19, 2017

The High Level Political Forum is a voluntary opportunity for member states to report their progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. Sustainable Development Goals 1 (ending poverty), 2 (ending hunger), 3 (ensure healthy lives and wellbeing), 5 (gender equality), 9 (resilient infrastructure) and 14 (care for marine resources) will be discussed and reported on. Forty-four countries have opted to present their progress, including many in which Dominicans are present, including Nigeria, Sweden, Italy, Brazil, and India. The Dominican Leadership Conference will be present at the High Level Political Forum as an observer, and will report on the outcomes.

Upcoming International Days

May 29—International Day for UN Peacekeepers

May 31—World No-Tobacco Day

June 1—Global Day of Parents

June 4—International Day for Innocent Children Victims of Aggression

June 5—World Environment Day

June 8—World Oceans Day

June 12—World Day Against Child Labour

June 15—Elder Abuse Awareness Day

June 16—World Day of Family Remittances

June 17—World Desertification and Drought

June 19—International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict

June 20—World Refugee Day

June 26—International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

June 26—International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

Dominican Leadership Conference

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“Leave No One Behind”