



Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary

NGO in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations since 2013 and with the Department of Public Information since 2006.

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RSHM at the UN

September 2017

United Nations General Assembly 72



September 12th marked the opening of the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly (GA) with the incoming President of UNGA 72, Miroslav Lajčák of Slovakia, identifying key priorities for the year. The high-level week brought together world leaders from all 193 Member States, and addressed the chosen theme, **'Focusing on people: striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet.'** In addition to wide ranging interventions during the General Debate, special high-level events highlighted international issues including Migration, climate change, resources for Africa and the Middle East, youth engagement, preventing sexual exploitation and HIV treatment. In addition to the events in the UN Headquarters, there were many side events organized by member states, UN offices, and civil society. Overall, the opening days of UNGA were an exciting time, full of discussion and debate with a common goal of peace for all.



[Watch a message](#) from Secretary General Antonio Guterres.:



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Welcoming the Stranger and Rights and Needs of Refugee Girls and Women

On September 21st, we attended two events centered around addressing the needs of refugees. The first event was organized by Caritas and Catholic Relief Services entitled **"Welcoming the Stranger: making lives better for refugees in host countries."** The panel highlighted many issues relating to refugees and their host communities. One of the highlighted needs for improvement is ensuring that we are also helping and easing pressure on host communities. Communities cannot take care of others if they cannot take care of themselves. There is also a need for increasing social acceptance of refugees and reducing xenophobia. As social acceptance increases, so does the willingness to share information and foster friendships.



The second event of the day was entitled **Addressing the Rights and Needs of Refugee Girls and Women**, hosted by UNICEF, Plan International, the Women's Refugee Commission, and the Permanent Mission of Zambia. This session stressed the need to address sexual violence toward children. In situations of vulnerability, child marriage may appeal to parents as a promising protection for the daughters of many families. However, we cannot ignore that these girls are still children and they need to be treated as individuals with their own rights—not only as an extension of their male family members. Women and girls need to have just as much access to information and services as men do. We cannot ignore the majority of girls and women who make up over half of the refugee population.

With both of these panels, the need for communication and collaboration is key to providing a safe environment for people fleeing their homes. As the **Minister of Home Affairs, Zambia** said, *"There is no one who wants to leave their home. When someone is forced to leave their home, there is an inescapable responsibility to help them."*



[Watch the video](#)

Human Trafficking: An Appraisal of the Global Plan of Action

A two day High Level meeting of the UN General Assembly that was held on 27th – 28th September. It was convened to appraise the progress that has been made over the last 7 years since the **Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons** was adopted in 2010. It also aimed to address the ongoing challenges and gaps in implementation and strengthen partnerships. Member states made statements, re-iterated commitments and adopted a negotiated political **Declaration**. During the main sessions, survivors of human trafficking shared their powerful testimony and representatives of Civil Society highlighted specific initiatives to address the scourge of human trafficking.



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[An interesting blog...](#)

Some fast facts from the ILO Report

- Over the past **5 years, 89 million people** have experienced some form of modern slavery.
- **Women and girls** are disproportionately affected by modern slavery, being **71% of all victims**
- **25 million people** were victims of **modern slavery** and **15 million people** in forced marriage.
- Of those forced into commercial sexual exploitation, **99% are women and girls.**
- **One in four victims** of modern slavery was a **child; one in three** of every person forced into a marriage was a child.
- **90% of children in child labour** live in Africa or the Asia-Pacific region
- **84% of those forced into marriage** without their consent are **women and girls.**

Smuggling of Migrants: Trafficking in Persons



In early September, our international RSHM JPIC Coordinator, **Sr. Mary Jo McElroy** RSHM represented RSHM NGO by participating in a two day Thematic Session at the **UN Center in Vienna, Austria**, as part of the preparatory work and consultation towards the Global Compact on Migration to be agreed by member states in 2018. The meeting addressed the theme ‘**Smuggling of migrants, trafficking in persons and contemporary forms of slavery**’. As Mary Jo notes. “*this has been our concern as a Congregation for many years now and which is affecting all the countries where we are present, with shocking examples in the news every day*”.

Three main sessions guided the work. The first focused on ‘**Smuggling of migrants**’, the second session on ‘**Trafficking of persons and Contemporary forms of Slavery**’, and the third on ‘**Appropriate identification, protection and assistance to migrants and trafficking victims**’. In a special session with the UN Co-Facilitators of the Global Compact, Mary Jo presented our RSHM NGO oral statement..



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[Watch the video](#)

RSHM NGO Update

We are happy to welcome **Nolie Wagner** from Granville, Ohio, an International Relations major at **Marymount Manhattan College** who is interning with us for the period September – December 2017. She is already contributing towards our News from the UN, participating in multiple UN and NGO Committee meetings, as well as helping to update our RSHM NGO social media. **Welcome Nolie!**



The tradition of holding a **JPIC Social Forum** each year is now well established in our network of **RSHM schools in Brazil**. This year, “**Colegio Sagrado Coração de Maria**” in **Brasilia** adopted a novel approach to the organization of this important three-day event. Every class was invited to prepare an informative and enjoyable session for another grade in the school using creative means to develop an issue linked to the overall theme of Sustainability.



September 21st marked the **International Day of Peace**, - - a day in which we were united with our members around the world in reflection, prayer and action for Peace. RSHM joined with 131 other NGOs in co-signing the Joint

Statement prepared by the Quakers which calls on the international community and the UN General Assembly to fully embrace the commitments to peace in the 2030 Agenda and focus on long term work to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies.



[Read the statement](#)



On 27th September Pope Francis launched the “**Share the Journey**” Migration Campaign. The 2-year **Caritas Internationalis** campaign aims to promote the strengthening of relationships between migrants, refugees and receiving communities and is designed to respond to Pope Francis’ call for a culture of encounter, in which we see people on the move with open hearts and minds. On the day of the launch, Veronica RSHM was invited to a reception at the Holy See Mission to the UN and a conversation with **Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States**.



[Read more](#)



[Watch the video](#)

Distribution:

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