



Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary

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

News from the UN - # 90

RSHM at the UN

February 2018

*Two major themes focused our work during the last part of January and throughout February 2018, namely **Migration** and the **Commission on Social Development**. In this issue of News from the UN we explore a few of the highlights as we focus through the lens of women and children on these pressing issues of our time. **RSHM NGO***

Strategies for Eradicating Poverty - Commission on Social Development – CSocD 56

In early February we participated in the annual session of the **Commission for Social Development (CSocD56)** which met for a 10 day period. The Commission has special responsibility for the social development “pillar” of global development, with a focus on youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, and inequality. Speaking at the opening of the Commission UN Deputy **Secretary-General Amina Mohammed** said “*At the global level, we have experienced impressive reductions in extreme poverty. Significant progress has also been made in improving access to schooling and healthcare, promoting the empowerment of women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons and indigenous populations. However, the drop in extreme poverty remains uneven across regions, within countries and between various social groups,*” she noted.



The Commission explored various strategies for eradicating poverty to achieve sustainable development for all, including the creation of social protection systems, that would help lift the millions of people still living in poverty, especially those in vulnerable situations. At the end of the CSocD 56 **four draft resolutions** were presented to the Economic and Social Council

(ECOSOC), on ageing, strategies for eradicating poverty, Africa’s development and future working methods. For the first time the Civil Society Forum was incorporated into the Commission’s work, with a very strong attendance. **A Civil Society Declaration** was launched, focusing on “Social protection” for all.

[Read the Civil Society Declaration](#)
[Watch the video on Social Protection](#)



RSHM participation in the Commission included collaboration with others in presenting a written statement and co-sponsoring a **Side Event where our Grassroots group** of the NGO Committee on Social Development **shared the results of a survey done in 2017 on SDG awareness and implementation**. From the 10 RSHM survey responses received, we were happy to be able to share one example in the form of a short video featuring initiatives taken by “**Projeto Vida – Irma Maria d’Aquino**”, Uba, Brazil. The before/after school programme for children on the periphery of the city showed how seriously they are taking the challenge to raise awareness and stimulate action to promote a more sustainable world. They focused on food security (SDG 2), efficiency in water use (SDG 6) and the 3 Rs of sustainable consumption: **Reduce, recycle and reuse**. (SDG 12).

[Watch the video](#) [Read our statement](#)

International Cooperation on MIGRATION : the Global Compact

Migration will be a major focus of concern at the UN throughout 2018 as member states start to negotiate the draft of a **Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular migration (GCM)**. The process will lead to an agreed framework for comprehensive international cooperation on migration, which addresses the humanitarian, development and human rights related aspects of human mobility. The two state co-facilitators, **Mexico and Switzerland**, oversee the process, working closely with the Office of the President of the UN General Assembly (PGA), and the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative for International Migration (SRSG). With 22 objectives and dozens more “actionable commitments,” the draft compact, though less detailed, resembles the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals framework. As the first week of negotiations revealed, there are widely divergent views to be harmonized.

Our **NGO Committee on Migration** had several briefings and ongoing dialogue with the co-facilitators, and the Special Representative of the Secretary General in February. Comments were submitted on the “zero draft”. During the first week of the intergovernmental negotiations an interactive multi-stakeholder hearing was held, - featuring 4 panels followed by interactive discussion on the theme “*Facts instead of perceptions: Promoting an evidence-based discussion on migration*”. We were happy to welcome



two of our members to the UN that day: **Srs. Fidelia Espin Palacios RSHM** (WAP - Mexico) and **Sr. Fernanda Marques de Oliveira RSHM** (EAP from Brazil) participated in most of the day as well as a lunch time event organized by the Holy See Mission to the UN which explored the imperative of ending child detention.

Refugee and Migrant Children

In their latest report entitled “**Uprooted**”, the **UN children’s agency, UNICEF**, reports that 50 million children are on the move in our world today. Of these, 28 million have been driven from their homes by conflict. It is children who are the first to be



affected by war, conflict, poverty and climate change. Vulnerability lies at the heart of today’s growing crisis, where migrating and displaced children are particularly at risk of some of the worst forms of harm, abuse and deprivation on their journeys. They can easily fall victim to human traffickers.

➔ [Watch the video](#)

UNICEF has named 6 priority areas

for their work on migration. These are

- Protecting children** from exploitation and violence.
- Keeping families together** and giving children legal status.
- Ending the detention** of refugee and migrant children
- Guaranteeing the right** to education & health for migrant and refugee children
- Pressing for action** on the causes that uproot children from their homes
- Combating xenophobia**, discrimination and marginalization.

Child migrants: The role of faith-based organisations

What is the unique contribution that faith based organisations can make to the situation of child migrants at this time when the Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees are being developed and negotiated? On January 23rd, Faith-Based Organizations and UNICEF partnered in a consultation to explore children’s rights in the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact for Migration. In the opening panel it was noted that

showing hospitality to the “stranger” or “sojourner” is an important value and a teaching that calls faith communities across all traditions to respond to the needs of the world’s most vulnerable groups. Faith communities have a shared responsibility to address the acute vulnerabilities of children and families on the move and their engagement on the ground offers many good practices. The goal was to explore avenues for greater collaboration between UNICEF and FBOs, building on existing initiatives and collaboration to ensure that the experience of migration is regular and safe for children, that their rights are upheld, regardless of their legal “status”. Information was shared about a wealth of existing initiatives around the world and the potential for greater collaboration and cooperation in advocacy and action.

➔ [Read more.....](#)

Did you know that:

- ✓ *Nearly **1 in every 200 children** in the world today is a child refugee.*
- ✓ *The number of **child refugees** under UNHCR’s mandate has **more than doubled in the last 10 yrs.***
- ✓ ***50 million children** have migrated across borders or been forcibly displaced; **28 million** having fled violence and insecurity.*
- ✓ ***The 10 countries** hosting the largest numbers of refugees are all in Asia and Africa with Turkey hosting the **largest number of child refugees globally.***
- ✓ ***86% of African refugees** find asylum in **other African countries.***

Visitors to the UN



In late January, the RSHM NGO welcomed the Director of Global Programmes at Marymount School of New York and a group of 9 girls from our **Global Network of RSHM Schools** to the UN. Four exchange students from **Marymount Medellin (Colombia)** and one each from **Colegio SCM in Vitoria** and in **Belo Horizonte (Brazil)** joined three from **Marymount School of New York** in a tour of the UN and an hour’s conversation about our global RSHM NGO mission and our work with other NGOs at the UN.

The Model UN programme is a valued initiative in our Global Network of RSHM Schools. In late February, a group of Grade 9 students from **Istituto Marymount (Rome)**, accompanied by two faculty members, came to New York to participate, along with many other international and national schools, in the annual **NHS (National High School) MUN Conference**. On Feb 28th this enthusiastic group of young advocates visited our office for an afternoon session to learn about our RSHM NGO presence at the UN. During their 3 day Conference in early March they participated in debates, contributing their policy statements as the delegation from the newest UN member state, - namely South Sudan.



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Srs. Fernanda
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RSHM at the UN

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