



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 # 102

RSHM at the UN

June / July 2019

High Level Political Forum



From July 9th – 19th the UN hosted the fourth High Level Political Forum under the auspices of ECOSOC on the theme “Empowering

people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”. This follow up and review of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals highlighted six SDGs - and a total of 47 member states presented the self-evaluation of their progress towards meeting the goals that are at the heart of the UN’s Agenda 2030.

Our RSHM NGO was ably represented at the HLPF by **Madison Weisend and Patricia Cole** while Veronica RSHM attended the RSHM General Chapter in Belo Horizonte, Brazil.



Global inequality and Climate Change emerged as the primary concerns of the Forum, according to a poll completed by HLPF attendees. Speakers agreed with these priorities, but highlighted the importance of addressing the issue financing them and providing adequate means of implementation.

➔ [Watch the short video](#)

The Sustainable Development Goal Report 2019

The 2019 SDG report was officially launched by the Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, on the opening day of the HLPF. Despite progress in a number of areas, the rate of improvement has been slow and in some cases, progress has been reversed. Noting that the global response has not been sufficiently ambitious, the Secretary General highlighted the fact that the most vulnerable peoples and countries continue to suffer the most. Although extreme poverty has reached its lowest point since tracking began, progress on eliminating it is not on track to meet the 2030 target. The health of “our common home” is deteriorating, despite positive actions taken by many countries to protect the environment.



Climate Justice

In her keynote speech, **Mary Robinson, Chair of The Elders** said that two recent climate reports have made it clear that a **1.5-degree Celsius** rise is the upper limit of safety for the world and that the **2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement** on climate change can no longer be considered voluntary. Failure to do this would lead to a world in which a privileged few live in comfort, surrounded by barbed wire fences, beyond which everyone else faces climate chaos, persecution and violence. For humanity to be able to avoid this future, she stressed the need for a focus on justice, which she identified

as the thread running through each of the 17 SDGs.

➔ [Watch the video](#)

The lifestyles of people in the richest nations are heavily dependent on resources extracted from poorer countries”

(Sustainable Development report 2019)

“The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all..... Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production and consumption....”

(Laudato Si, #23)

Did you know that?

- On average, countries obtain their worst scores on **SDG 13 (Climate Action)**, **SDG 14 (Life Below Water)** and **SDG 15 (Life on Land)**.
- The **per capita material footprint** of people in high income countries is more than **13 times the size** of the equivalent in low income countries.
- **9 out of 10 urban residents breathe polluted air and 1 out of 4 urban residents live in slum-like conditions.**
- **Investment in fossil fuels** continues to be higher than investment in climate activities.
- **More than half of the schools in Sub-Sahara Africa** do not have access to basic drinking water, handwashing facilities, the internet and computers.
- **Trends on corruption and freedom of press** are **worsening** in more than **50 countries** covered in the report – including in a number of middle income and high-income countries.

Lived Experiences of Inequality

On July 16th RSHM NGO intern **Madison Weisend** represented our RSHM NGO on a panel at a parallel event during the **High Level Political Forum in New York**, Together with Dr. Lynne Healy from the International Association of Schools of Social Work, she reported on the preliminary results of a **survey on inequality** which was completed by representatives of **209 grassroots groups from 44 countries** from around the world and included the contributions of **10 RSHM related groups in 4 countries**. The survey explored how **grassroots** communities experience inequality on a daily basis, changes that have occurred since 2015 and what practices are helping to reduce inequality. Three other speakers from Pakistan, Syria and the US shared moving stories of their own difficult experiences of inequality, both inside and outside the United States.



"Faces in the Fight Against Human Trafficking"



This was the title of a panel event hosted by the **Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations on July 29th** to commemorate the **World Day Against Trafficking in Persons**. The panel preceded the launch of a photography exhibition at the UN commemorating the 10th anniversary of the global network of women religious working against trafficking - **Talitha Kum Network**. The humanitarian photographer, Lisa Kristine, shared how she had come to use the medium of photography to document the lives of people who were enslaved in trafficking and forced labor. In the Exhibit "**Nuns healing hearts**" Lisa showed how sisters in the global network are addressing the heinous crime and restoring dignity to survivors. **Lifeway Network** was represented by Sr. Melissa Camardo SC who shared her speaking slot with a survivor of human trafficking, Ansa Noreen, who had passed through the safe housing programme.

A total of 12 RSHM, SHM Extended family and collaborators attended the panel event and the reception.

[➔ Read more about it....](#)



RSHM News Briefs

- ❖ In mid June the **Colegio Sacrado Coração de Maria, Brasilia**, held their multi-disciplinary **JPIC Social Forum** over a three day period. The Forum focused on the theme "**Public Policies**" in the areas of **Health, Education, Security and Social Service**. Students learnt about problems such as disease proliferation, urban violence, the situation of refugees and social inequality from the perspective of different countries and looked for solutions. Speaking via a video conference on the second day Veronica RSHM shared about the UN and the role of RSHM NGO and answered questions raised by students. Children from the Padre Gailhac project in Sao Sebastiao learnt from SCM students involved in the project and chemistry lab how soap could be made from used cooking oil gathered by students in the School – and how this was helping to protect the environment.
- ❖ During the **RSHM General Chapter held in Belo Horizonte in July**, our **JPIC NGO representatives Mary Jo McElroy RSHM and Veronica RSHM** had the opportunity to share a report and update on their work over the last six years. A short video was also prepared and various contributions from around the Institute were presented in an evening session. Veronica also gave a presentation on the RSHM NGO ministry at the General Chapter Open Day, focusing on the theme "**Nurturing Seeds of Hope – so that All may Have life**". ➔ [Watch a 5 minute video](#)
- ❖ **Madison Weisend** completed her internship with us at the end of July. We thank her for her invaluable contribution to our **RSHM NGO** over the last 6 months and wish her well as she begins her senior year at Marymount Manhattan College, majoring in **Environmental Studies** and **Politics & Human Rights**.



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