



# 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.

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RSHM at the UN

November 2019

Thirty years have passed since the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** came into force on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1989. With 195 parties to the treaty it has the distinction of being the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history. All but one member state of the United Nations has signed it: namely the United States of America. Celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary was a highlight of the month of November. The **United Nations’ Children’s Fund (UNICEF)** produced several new reports, outlining the achievements made and identifying the gaps that still exist in the implementation of children’s rights. In this issue of *News from the UN* we feature some recent events at the UN HQ and beyond it, that highlight the rights of children.



## 20 November – World Children’s Day

RSHM NGO started off the day attending a panel organized by the NGO Committee on UNICEF. Included among the speakers were teachers, social workers, organizational representatives and most importantly, children who spoke of the importance and relevance of the **Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC)**. There is still have a long way to go to reach its goals - “for every child, every right”. There is no “one size fits all” strategy. Often these conversations take place FOR children without children being involved in the planning. The importance of ensuring that all children’s rights are respected was stressed, so that they can thrive and be in the best possible position to create the future we all want to see.



The official UN commemoration gave a privileged role to children from around the world through a stunning light / sound / multi media presentation which brough the voices and actions of children from around the globe to the General Assembly Hall. Children as young as 11 years old were featured on panels, and served as moderators and speakers at the podium. **➔ Watch a short video...**

UNICEF invited member states to renew their commitment to the full implementation of the Convention that came into effect 30 years ago, by signing the pledge to the children of the world to implement child rights in the 21st century. To date, 105 member states have signed the pledge.

**➔ Watch the short video**

### Did you know that

- **Children are twice as likely** as adults to live in **poverty**
- Globally, at least **1 in 2 children under 5** suffers from **hidden hunger** due to deficiencies in vitamins and other essential nutrients.
- **30 million children** are currently forcibly displaced by conflict and violence
- **2 out of 3 children** are **NOT covered by social protection** and coverage is lowest where child poverty is highest
- On average countries spend only **1.1% of the Gross Domestic poverty on child benefits.**
- **72 countries** – mostly in **Africa and South East Asia** - have no child benefit scheme that is anchored in law.

**“We make this pledge directly to children themselves all around the world: for every child, every right, and our collective action today to reach this goal “.....signatories to the Member State Pledge**



## Social Good: Children and the Sustainable Development Goals.

RSHM NGO attended an event prepared by the NGO Sustainable Development Committee entitled **“Social Good: Having an Impact Locally and Globally”** which featured many representatives of Civil Society Organizations, small businesses, and urban programming representatives who talked about their innovative local work to support the implementation of the SDGs. Organizations such as

**“The Money Hub”**, who are providing financial literacy programming to first generation and low-income children in New York, were featured. A teacher from the **“Bicultural School of the Americas”** in the **Dominican Republic** spoke of how they are engaging their children in implementable projects to make their school (and therefore the world) more sustainable. Currently they are working on a water recycling re-filtration system to prevent water waste and to lower their carbon footprint.



## UNITE : Eradication of Violence Against Women

Through the Secretary General's programme "UNITE", Governments, civil society, business and the media are working together to stop the pandemic of violence against women and girls. On **November 25<sup>th</sup>**, the first day of the **16 days of activism** against gender based violence the office of the Secretary General and UN women hosted the official commemoration of the **International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women** at UN Headquarters. Within a sea of orange, the official color for the "UNITE" campaign, stakeholders came together to discuss best practices for eliminating gender based violence against women and girls throughout the world. One of the



LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND:  
END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

most important lessons learned thus far in the campaign is that violence against women not only affects women, but children and entire communities as well. **Ajna Jusic**, received the person of the year award in **Bosnia- Herzegovina** for her work with "forgotten children", or children born of conflict violence. She uses art and advocacy to enable the voices of these children and their mothers to be heard. Despite the global outreach of campaigns over the last 3 decades, much still needs to be done to break through the culture of violence in the social, cultural, and political sphere in order to achieve gender equality and the Sustainable Development Goals. → [Read more .....](#)

### Opus Prize – Sr. Catherine Mutindi Bon Pasteur



On 21<sup>st</sup> November, **Sr. Catherine Mutindi**, a sister of our **Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd**, was awarded the prestigious **Opus Prize** for the work with widows and orphans she founded in the city of Kolwezi, **Democratic Republic of the Congo**. The **million dollar prize** is awarded to a faith-based organization that has shown an extraordinary social entrepreneurship and humanitarian innovation. Invited by the local bishop, she listened to the needs of the community in this impoverished area of the country which is dependent on artisanal mining of products for cell phones, and is known for its high rate of child labour. From that listening survey, the "Bon Pasteur" project was born.

Over the last 7 years the sisters have been able to run projects to address modern slavery involving children as young as 4 or 5 yrs of age. **The Bon Pasteur** has provided alternative livelihoods for people dependent on artisanal mining, addressed the scourge of gender-based violence and the physical abuse of children and provided schooling for nearly 3,000 children from the mines. Through these programmes they have strengthened the civic engagement of the local people. The approach adopted by Bon Pasteur to mitigate child slavery has been recognized by UNICEF, ILO and other UN bodies as a best practice initiative. → Watch the [video](#). → Read [more about it...](#)



### RSHM News Briefs

In mid November **Archbishop Bernadito Auza** completed his term as Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, a position he has held for 5 years. Together with other NGO representatives who have collaborated in side events Veronica RSHM was invited to a farewell reception at the Nuncio's residence.



Two recent **social media campaigns** have focused on the girl child. In preparation for the **International Day of the Girl** (October 11<sup>th</sup>) the **RSHM NGO** joined with the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, the School Sisters of Notre Dame and two other NGOs in organizing a **twitter chat** on October 4<sup>th</sup>. From **November 25<sup>th</sup> – December 10<sup>th</sup>**, we joined the **NGO Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons** in disseminating information about the theme during the **16 days of Action** leading up to the **International Human Rights Day**.

Students and faculty at **Marymount International School in Rome** turned the campus "blue" on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> November in their anticipated celebration of **World Children's Day** (November 20<sup>th</sup>). They marked the day on which **UNICEF's** petitions were to be handed over to world leaders commemorating the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Convention of the Rights of the Child. Included in the celebration was a **Children's Rights exhibition**, creative art projects and a **Blue Zumba Dance Party**. **#MMIGoBlue** was aimed at raising awareness for children's rights and promoting stronger commitments to fulfilling them.

→ Watch [the short video](#)



**Distribution:**  
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