



*In this issue of News from the UN we highlight recent events relating to **SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.***

Diverse pathways to people-centered justice.



One of the most contested goals of the **Sustainable Development “Agenda 2030”** during the 2015 negotiations was finally accepted as **SDG 16**. Many member states argued that issues of human rights and justice should be left to the UN bodies with specific competency for this, such

as the **Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR)** in Geneva and the **Human Rights Council**. However, there has been a growing recognition by member states over recent years that Development is inseparable from human rights and that people’s access to justice (**SDG 16.3**) is vital to addressing all the SDGs.

A recent event at the UN addressed this and launched a report sharing some of these diverse pathways. Stressing the urgency of the issue, the **UN Special Rapporteur on Access to Justice** noted that 5.1 billion people – or of **64%** of the world population - lack access to meaningful justice. How can this be addressed? One of the key ways is to integrate customary and informal justice systems, often effective in their local constituencies but seldom integrated into the formal justice framework. The panel, including **Chief Mary Larteh of Liberia**, provided valuable examples of how the civil society groups are partnering with UN to work towards people-centered justice. These initiatives include the empowerment and training of local women as para-legals in marginalized communities and the establishment varied programmes to raise awareness among women about their human rights and how to protect them. [➡ Watch the short video](#)



Women Peace and Security

23 years have passed since the **UN Security Council** adopted **Resolution 1325** unanimously on 31st October 2000. The resolution is an important policy framework which recognizes the crucial importance of women to efforts to achieve sustainable peace and security and calls for women’s equal and meaningful participation in all peace processes, in peacebuilding efforts and in international security. Several events held at and around the UN in October highlighted the importance of this approach and the “unfinished business” reflected in the slow process of implementation as revealed by the ‘fast facts’ listed here. Several events were held at the UN and NGO CSW organized a Peace Rally in Dag Hammarskjold Plaza in which we joined other NGOs in calling for a strong and active inclusion. [➡ Watch the video.](#)



Several events were held at the UN and NGO CSW organized a Peace Rally in Dag Hammarskjold Plaza in which we joined other NGOs in calling for a strong and active inclusion. [➡ Watch the video.](#)

Rally for Peace

A **rally for Peace** was organized by **NGO Commission on the Status of Women** in the Dag Hammarskjold square near the UN on **25th October**. The rally was intended to raise awareness, foster dialogue, and drive positive change around the **Women, Peace and Security Agenda**. The landmark **UN Security Council Resolution #1325** not only highlights the importance of the participation of women but also the inclusion of gender perspectives in peace negotiations, humanitarian planning, peacekeeping operations, as well as post-conflict peacebuilding and governance. [#womenpeaceandsecurity](#) Agenda. A crowd of women joined by a small number of men came together in solidarity to amplify the importance of building a more peaceful and inclusive society and solidarity. [➡ Read the Open Letter](#) addressed to the Permanent Representatives in advance of the Security Council Debate. [➡ Watch a short video.](#)



Fast facts

- **Of 18 peace agreements reached in 2022, only one** was signed or witnessed by a representative of a women’s group or organization.
- In 2022, **women participated** as conflict party negotiators or delegates in **four of five active** United Nations–led or –co-led **peace processes**. However, women represented only **16%** of the negotiators.
- In 2022, **6 out of 18 peace agreements** reached (33 %) included provisions referencing women, girls, and gender.
- The events of political violence targeting women has **increased by 1.5 times** between 2020 and 2022
- the **United Nations Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF)** has supported more than **1,000 local women’s civil society organizations** in **46** crisis- and conflict-affected countries,
- **Bilateral aid supporting feminist, women-led, and women’s rights organizations and movements** in fragile and conflict-affected countries represented only **0.3% of bilateral aid in 2021.**

Dialogue with Security Council President



On October 5th 2023, the **World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA)** convened the **fiftieth instalment** in a series of monthly dialogues between the **President of the UN Security Council** and Civil Society organizations. **Brazil** held the role of President of the UN Security Council during the month of October, following Presidency which changes on a monthly basis. During the month, the Presidency holds a briefing with Civil Society NGO representatives in which they share their proposed priorities for the month and the programme, detailing how they intend to address them. Signature events are often featured in the calendar.

Dialogue and questions from NGOs follow the briefing, many of them relating to areas not highlighted in the briefing.

The **October 5th** meeting provided insights into the Brazilian Government's perspectives on global issues and provided a rich opportunity for engagement. Sadly, the planned programme for the month of November had to be radically changed in light of the crisis following the bombing of civilians in Israel and the dramatic escalation of the Israeli retaliation in Gaza. The changes highlighted the fragility of the international peace in the Middle East. ➡ [Read more....](#)



LAW not War

What are the **legal alternatives to War?** How can the **International Court of Justice (ICJ)** be more effective and more widely used? The new global campaign "**LAW not War**" was launched by a coalition of NGO Civil Society organizations at an event on **23rd October**. The ICJ provides a non-politicized mechanism to resolve conflict and ensure accountability. The campaign aims to enhance the jurisdiction and use of the ICJ to help countries resolve international disputes peacefully rather than by having recourse to the threat or actual use of force. Concrete objectives include increasing the number of States accepting the compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ and encouraging the more frequent use of the ICJ as a dispute resolution. It also aims to support UN bodies in requesting **Advisory Opinions** on critical issues such as the recent example in relation to the UNGA resolution relating to climate change. [The UN Summit of the Future](#), which will take place in **September 2024**, will provide an opportunity to highlight the role of the ICJ and build support for universal acceptance of its jurisdiction. ➡ [Watch the short video](#)



"From the smallest village to the global stage, the rule of law is all that stands between peace and stability and a brutal struggle for power and resources. I note the importance of accepting the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court and call on all Member States to do so without any reservations."
(Antonio Guterres).

➡ [Watch the short video](#)

RSHM Schools BRIEFS



As the new school year started, **CSCM Fatima** received good news: they had been awarded their 16th **Green Flag**. The flag is awarded by the Blue Flag Association of Europe (ABAE) in recognition of the work

done in the area of sustainability education and practice geared to the conservation of nature. Special thanks to the ECO team and partners from the SCM family and community who contributed their efforts. The Eco-Schools program involves the entire school community and families. It aims to encourage action and recognize the quality work carried out by schools in the field of Environmental Education for Sustainability. ➡ [Watch a short video](#)

RSHM Schools - Leadership Conference

On 9 October, Middle school students from **Marymount International School Rome**, joined forces with fellow Marymount schools for the 2023/2024 RSHM Leadership Conference focusing on how we address the Issue of Poverty and Inequality. The Deputy Director of the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**, Dr. Divine Njie, gave an opening speech and students visited the Caritas Centre for the Homeless, reaching out a hand of compassion and support to those in need.



Distribution

Institute Leadership Team; Area Leader, JPIC Animators;
Global Network of RSHM Schools;
UN Interest Group

Portuguese translation by Maria Luisa Pinho RSHM