



# Notes from the field...



## Highlights from the 56<sup>th</sup> Commission on Social Development

And they're off! The 56<sup>th</sup> Commission on Social Development took off on Monday, January 29<sup>th</sup> with a welcome from the Deputy Secretary General, Ms. Amina J. Mohammed. She began her statement by highlighting the progress that has been made since the 1995 World Summit for Social Development, stating the impressive reduction in extreme poverty, major improvements to access to healthcare and education, and the increased practice of creating policies that put people at the center of development. While there has been great progress made, she emphasized the need to build on the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals to fully recognize the 2030 Agenda.



Deputy Secretary General, Amina J. Mohammed. Photo Credit; UN DESA

Mohammed reminded the audience that the decrease in poverty has not been even and we have seen an increase in inequalities within and across countries as well

as across various social groups. Women, children, older persons, indigenous people, and persons with disabilities all face poverty at a disproportionate rate. She encouraged the commission to promote inclusiveness and equitable economic growth by empowering all people living in poverty, looking at root causes of poverty, working with countries and regions in the context of challenges they face, and creating policies and protections that will ensure that economic growth is just and shared by all. Finally, Mohammed reminded the Commission of the

importance of social protections, stating that 45% of those who need it have at least one protection and only 29% have comprehensive social protection. That leaves over 4 billion people with no support.

Another inspiring moment of the Commission was the opening day keynote address by Juan Somavia, previously Director of the International Labour Organization and former President of ECOSOC. During his captivating speech, he highlighted the need to recognize the multidimensionality of poverty, stating that lack of income is not the only factor which contributes to poverty. According to Somavia, UN agencies, especially the eight separate divisions of the Department of Social and Economic Affairs (DESA) must work together to address the multiple driving factors of poverty and work with member states to develop regionally appropriate interventions to eradicate it.

Somavia reminded the audience that in order to achieve the 2030 agenda, we must be working on environmental, social, and economic issues simultaneously and shift our global values away from the importance of financial wealth and towards human wealth. This would mean measuring a state's economy, not by the amount of money it may produce, but by the overall welfare of its people.

The panel discussion on the Wednesday January 31<sup>st</sup> morning session focused on the global aging population and the need to respond. Speakers highlighted the priorities, challenges, and best practices from their global region. Common themes were the growing population of older people and the continuation of the trend. For this growing population there are insufficient resources, data, cooperation among governments, and finances to support their needs. Priorities include creating cross-cutting aging into all policies. This means including specific language to address the rights of



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older persons in policies related to housing, healthcare, employment, etc. The overall message was that the Madrid International Plan of Action for Ageing (MIPAA) should be anchored into the 2030 Agenda to strengthen its implementation and ensure that no one is left behind.

The Commission also included two panel discussions which focused on the rights of persons with disabilities and young people with disabilities. Highlights from these discussions included the need for international non-governmental organizations, national non-government organizations, and UN agencies to communicate with one another more. Speakers proposed creating a UN agency specifically for addressing the needs of persons with disabilities globally. This agency could collect appropriate data, identify barriers, and ensure that all countries have access to the tools needed to do the same. Speakers emphasized the need for relevant data to identify the needs of disabled persons in specific countries and reminded the audience that with the right technologies or resources, the barriers faced by persons with disabilities are diminished. Professor Mary Crock, Faculty of Law, University of Sydney, made this concept almost universally relatable with the analogy “You take away my glasses, I am impaired. You give me back my glasses, I have no impairment. So, Disability is impairment plus context...the rights of people with disabilities apply in every context.”

The final takeaway from these discussions was that while the data collection in countries varies, the number of countries collecting data is increasing and is being used for developing programs and policies to address the needs of persons with disabilities.

On February 7, the Commission wrapped up its work by voting on and adopting four resolutions, the outcome of the session. Links to these resolutions are given below. Following the Chair’s closing remarks, the 56<sup>th</sup> Commission on Social Development was adjourned and the first meeting for the 57<sup>th</sup> Commission on Social Development was opened.

Catch all the exciting details of the 56<sup>th</sup> Commission on Social Development at their website! Check out press releases, watch archived webcasts, and learn more on the vital involvement of civil society at <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/United-Nations-commission-for-social-development-csod-social-policy-and-development-division/csod56.html>

To view the adopted resolutions please see the links below.

<http://undocs.org/E/CN.5/2018/L.5> - Future Working Methods

<http://undocs.org/E/CN.5/2018/L.3> - Aging (Madrid International Plan of Action on Aging)

<http://undocs.org/E/CN.5/2018/L.4> - Social Dimensions of the New partnership for Africa’s Development

<http://undocs.org/E/CN.5/2018/3> - Strategies for eradicating poverty to achieve sustainable development for all

### **Social Protection is the Theme of IASSW Co-Sponsored Side Event**

Participants from more than 15 countries attended the side event co-sponsored by IASSW with ICSW at the 56<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations Commission for Social Development on February 2. The session explored expansive issues in social protection’s role in poverty eradication. The idea for the workshop was initiated by Sergei Zelenev, Executive Director of the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW); he proposed the final title of “Strengthening the institutional structures for sustainable development: role of social protection” in consultation with IASSW Main Representative Lynne Healy. The topic was introduced by Moderator Ms Wenyan Yang of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Dr. Valerie Schmitt, Deputy Director Social Protection department, International Labour Organization (ILO) then led off the panel, presenting data from the ILO’s just released *World Report on Social Protection*. Social Protection refers to policies and programs designed to blunt or remove the impact of life’s risks from birth to old age. These include but



are not limited to maternity, childhood, unemployment, disability, insufficient income, illness, and old age. A set of minimum guaranteed protections is referred to as a social protection floor—a level that no one should fall below. According to ILO data, only 29% of the world’s people are covered by comprehensive social protection and 55% have no protections. Dr. Timu Voipio of Finland added lessons learned from the European Union-Social Protection Systems (EU-SPS) Project.



*IASSW/ICSW co-sponsored side event. Left to right. Shirley Gatenio Gabel (IASSW), Timo Voipio (EU Social Protection Programme), Sergei Zelenev (ICSW), Lynne Healy (IASSW), Valerie Schmitt (ILO), Wenyang Yang (DESA)*

The final 3 speakers, Zelenev and IASSW representatives Healy and Shirley Gatenio Gabel further explored the concept of social protection and laid out challenges moving forward. Gatenio Gabel interrogated the meaning of universality. Healy identified the challenge of the 2030 Agenda’s promise to leave no one behind. Covering informal workers, migrants and those who are permanently without formal work will require new policies and models of social provision while also addressing the issues of cost, data requirements, and ideology. Governments, international organizations and civil society all have roles to play. ILO has led the way with Recommendation 202 on Social Protection Floors adopted in 2012. The Global Coalition for Social Protection brings its 90+ NGO members together to advocate for more effective plans and contribute data. The Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda include 4 targets on expanding social protection, especially floors. Social Protection is identified as an important strategy for poverty eradication (Goal 1) and reducing inequalities (Goal

5 and Goal 10). Universal access to health care (Goal 3) is also part of social protection. IASSW is a member of the Global Coalition. The Coalition met informally at the Social Development Commission session to explain its work to members not on the executive committee. Lynne Healy attended on behalf of IASSW. An interesting feature of the meeting were the contributions of delegates attending from the Africa Platform for Social Protection, an active group with 30 national members promoting social protection as a tool to reduce vulnerability. Our African member schools may want to investigate opportunities for collaboration.

The ILO World Report on Social Protection 2017-2019 is available at:

<http://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/world-social-security-report/2017-19/lang--en/index.htm>

### **More CSocD 56 Side Events!**

#### **Social Protections**

Have you ever tried to walk on a safety net? That was speaker Juan Somavia’s way of arguing that the social protection floor is superior as a way of protecting against poverty. He made this comment in a side event entitled “Promoting Inclusion through Social Protection” hosted by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). The moderator introduced the theme of Social Protection as a way to address poverty and income inequality in conjunction with the UN’s promotion of, “No one left behind”. Mr. Somavia, who was previously the Ambassador to the UN from Chile, head of the International Labor Organization, as well as ECOSOC President, talked about the history of Social Protection floors. He explained that during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the idea of social protections came from a charity perspective. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, economics drove social protections, because factories and industry needed healthy workers. It was during the 1980’s, the age of Reagan and Thatcher and Neoliberal Globalization, with a total emphasis on the economy, that social





spending was reduced, contributing to the massive inequalities which exist today. He questioned how we organize our society and what importance people’s rights and social rights play. He described universal social protection as an extraordinary challenge which the UN must consider now or else will “miss the boat.” Two members of DESA then presented some findings included in the 2018 World Social Situation report. This report provides data on people who are at great risk for falling into poverty and hopefully will influence improved social protection policies.



Mr. Juan Somavia & Dr. Rebecca Thomas (IASSW) following a side event at CSocD

The authors of the report explain that their goal in performing this research is to end poverty as stated in SDG 1. They talked about the vast

inequalities experienced throughout the globe and described how disabilities, race, ethnicity and gender are all factors which play a role in people being left out from society and social protections. For example, only 18% of the population in all of Sub Saharan Africa have access to social protections. The panel discussed how protections need to be more inclusive, more accessible and how countries will need to invest in more resources for data collection. The two panelists felt that there was insufficient data, which is a fact I have heard many times throughout discussions at the UN. It is impossible to develop policies and programs if the facts surrounding populations are not adequately known.

### Interfaith and Intercultural Cooperation

On the last day of the Commission for Social Development, I found myself following a colleague into a meeting with no prior knowledge of what was taking place. We were escorted into the Church on the first floor of the Church Center, a building across the street from the main UN buildings that

hosts many NGO events. You enter into a very modern space with dark wood paneling enclosing two huge stain glass windows in the style of Marc Chagall. The pews are positioned in a square around a stark white marble podium. When I first entered the room, I was struck by a sea of color in the audience: the pink and orange turbans of the Sikh men in the audience as well as the tangerine robes of the Buddhists monks and the beauty of the pheasant headdress worn by the Native American standing in the corner. As I studied the crowd, I noticed men with yarmulke, women in hijabs, priests as well as female clergy. This important and well attended meeting was to discuss interfaith/intercultural cooperation in helping to promote the Sustainable Development Goals throughout the world. The Hungarian Ambassador got up to speak about the importance of diversity and how we must dream of a better world. She quoted Shakespeare’s Hamlet with, “Time is out of joint.” She stressed the importance of dialogue and cooperation amongst different cultures and religions in order to solve global issues or what she called, preventive diplomacy.

To everyone's surprise, the Buddhist monk got up and introduced Jesse Jackson, the American civil rights leader, to say a few words. He explained that he was in town for a world religious leaders conference and he was on his way to meet with Nikki Haley, the US Ambassador to the UN, about North Korea. He spoke of the current “Tug of war for the soul of America” and the need to break down walls instead of building walls. He said we need to build bridges between North and South Korea, not use nuclear weapons.

The Ambassador from the Holy See then stated that even with all our differences, there is a common denominator amongst us all: Humanity.

The event ended with a children’s choir. It was a lovely experience and I left the meeting feeling very hopeful.



## The Age of Aging

The global population is changing, and we should celebrate! This was the message promoted by the January 31<sup>st</sup> side event to the Commission on Social Development. Hosted by Korea Statistics (KOSTAT) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), this event highlighted the take-aways from the Global Symposium on Aging in Seoul, which took place October 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of last year and presented the transitions of populations and the challenges related to it in Cuba, the Czech Republic, and the Eastern European/ Central Asian region.

“Population ageing, together with fertility decline, is the result of immense social and economic progress, which leads to a demographic transition, and both should thus be seen first and foremost as an achievement of development.” This was one of the opening statements on the event’s concept note and the feeling was conveyed throughout the event. According to the UNFPA, currently 12.3% of the global population is 60 years of age or older and that number is expected to rise to 22% by 2050. This is the result of advances in science and technology, access to nutrition and healthcare, and other economic and social developments. While we can celebrate our advances and the extended life expectancies as a result, we must also respond to these changing populations.

Professor Asghar Zaidi from the University of South Hampton presented the five take-aways he observed at the Global Symposium on Aging in Seoul last fall. These five points were

- This is an issue that should be celebrated; We are seeing an increase in life expectancies in all countries and even though fertility decline is contributing to a shrinking workforce, we are seeing an increase in women’s emancipation, and access to family planning resources.
- This is a Global Phenomenon; aging populations are occurring in all countries. Some regions, such as the Asian Pacific

are facing a more rapid transition, which makes them the leaders in responding to this changing population.

- This change is occurring in all segments of society; there is a general concern related to rising pension and healthcare expenditures.
- Policy change; emphasis needs to shift from reactive to proactive, integrated, and positive approaches
- Structural and cultural change; need to allow a nuanced life approach, intergenerational approach, and young people should be involved with responding to aging populations.

In addition to presenting statistics and information from the Global Symposium, the panel emphasized the need for countries, especially emerging or developing states, to strengthen their collection of data to develop evidence-based responses. Finally, the panel reminded the audience that this phenomenon is an opportunity for mutual learning from one another in every stage of aging.

To learn more on aging, please visit - <https://www.unfpa.org/ageing>

## Resiliency in Rural and Farming Communities

One side event at the 56<sup>th</sup> Commission on Social Development had everyone buzzing with excitement. Aside from the wonderful treats provided by Aldo Cristiano from Ferrero, a producer of Nutella and Ferrero Roche chocolates, the room was also eager to hear the innovative ideas presented by key stakeholders in rural farming communities around the world. The focus of the event was highlighting the need to support sustainable agriculture and small-scale farmers to eradicate poverty in rural communities. By bringing stakeholders from the private sector, academia, and the agricultural community together to exchange ideas, sponsors hope to develop a multi-stakeholder partnership to positively impact vulnerable rural farming communities.



John Mathiason provided opening remarks including the need to address Target 2.3 of the SDGs. It states, “By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.” He also provided statistics depicting the decline in numbers of small scale farmers since the 1970’s and recognized that the majority of farmers today are women.

The panel included Mr. Thomas Magnusson, president of European Agri-cooperative who represented the voice of the rural farmer; Mr. Aldo Cristiano, Head of Global Procurement of Raw Materials and Sustainability of Ferrero who discussed utilizing sustainable farming methods as best business practices for corporations; Ms. Carla Mucavi, director of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and Mr. Paul Garnett, the senior director of Microsoft Airband Initiative, which focuses on increasing access to energy and internet for rural communities.

Some of the key themes that came out of the discussion were making farming technologies more accessible and affordable to small-scale farmers through cooperatives or shared equipment programs. The importance of access to energy and especially internet was emphasized as necessary for not only keeping rural farmers informed on up to date information and “Agribusiness” technology but to also spread knowledge of best practices among and within rural farming communities.

The final key issue that was addressed was the fact that young people are moving away from rural areas into urban regions and not pursuing farming as a career. This group proposed that in order to make small scale farming an appealing career for young people, there is a need to make it more economical and interesting. This can be done by making technology more accessible and relevant to needs of rural farmers, which could improve production and

reduce waste. There also needs to be a clear definition of land ownership, which is affordable, so young people can invest in farming. Finally, there is a need for rural farmers to have food sovereignty; this would allow them to choose crops that best fit the needs of their communities rather than the demands from large agribusinesses.

By building resiliency in rural communities through these initiatives, we can work to eradicate poverty. Overall, the meeting seemed effective in bringing together ideas from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds. It will be interesting to see what may be implemented as a result of this multi-stakeholder partnership.

### IASSW Role in Social Development Side Event on Awareness of SDGs



Grassroots Taskforce team members, (Left to right) Justice Konowe, Marie D'Amato-Rizzi, and Shrevie Shepherd preparing for the CSocD Side event.

Awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals and the processes of assessing and reporting on progress is a necessary precondition to meaningful contributions by

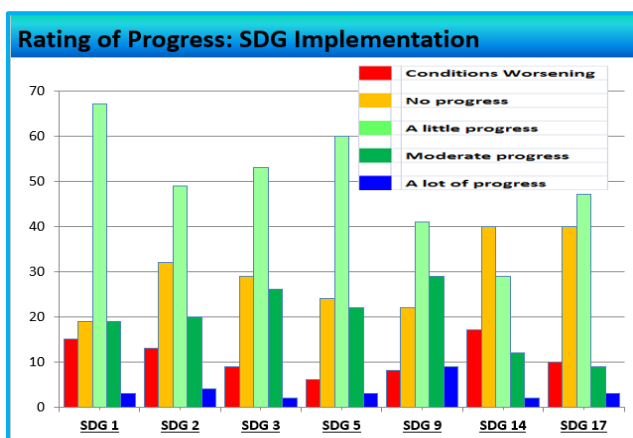
NGOs and social workers. This point was underscored in the February side event organized by the Grassroots Task Force of the NGO Committee on Social Development and co-sponsored by IASSW. Results of the NGO survey were summarized in 3 briefs launched at the side event; these address overall awareness, preliminary assessment of SDG implementation; and role of partnerships. IASSW representatives Lynne Healy, Shrevie Shepherd and Justice Konowe worked on the briefs and the side event presentation. As reported in the October newsletter, the 2017 survey found general awareness of the SDGs among NGOs in the 44 countries submitting voluntary reviews in 2017, but very limited knowledge of the review process. This suggests the need for much more





The Grassroots Task force meets in the UN Café in preparation for the CSocD Side event.

outreach and engagement between governments and civil society. An interesting part of the survey asked NGO respondents to rate progress to date in their countries on SDGs 1,2,3,5,9,14 and 17. This assessment yielded missed results. The most common response was that “a little progress” had been made. In some cases, however, NGO respondents believed that situations had worsened. The most negative assessment was on Goal 14 on water and oceans. The table is reproduced here.



For more information, visit the website of the NGO Committee on Social Development:

[www.ngosocdev.org](http://www.ngosocdev.org)

### The United Nations as an Art Gallery

As you enter the United Nations, you are welcomed by banners and posters alerting the visitor or employee to future events being held in conjunction

with work being done at the United Nations. This includes showings of documentaries, book signings as well as week- long events in conjunction with a specific theme, such as Africa Week. In my time interning at the UN, I have been particularly interested in the rotating art exhibitions both in the main visitor center as well as in the areas off limits to the general public

These rotating art exhibits feature issues on the UN agenda as well as issues pertaining to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. These include: sustainable development, human rights, climate change, children in conflict, violence against women, refugees and more. Before the holidays, the main visitor center had two photographic exhibitions on display, one on the people of Palestine and one entitled, *Dream Big, Princess*, featuring photographs of empowered women and girls who can serve as role models for girls around the world. This particular exhibit features approximately forty large color photographs on display on four intersecting walls. Many of these women have overcome adversity, such as one young woman who has aggressive bone cancer but is training to be an Olympian and another of a young woman in rural Kenya who has become the first Samburu woman to become a wildlife ranger. Other examples are a young girl covered in mud after a soccer match and a photograph of a Chinese female fencing champion.

The photographers featured in this exhibition are all women and many are award winning photographers from national publications. The photographs are beautiful and inspirational. This series is part of the Disney Corporation’s Dream Big, Princess Initiative which aims to encourage children everywhere to dream big, believe in themselves and pursue their dreams. Disney has encouraged the public to post their own inspirational photographs on social media. For every like for a post including the hashtag #DreamBigPrincess, Disney will donate \$1 to Girl Up, the UN Foundation’s program supporting empowerment of adolescent girls.

Recently, another small art exhibit has been installed near the UN entrance. It is entitled, The Butterfly



Project: Remembering Children of the Holocaust and has been sponsored by the Houston Museum of Art. It features butterflies which have been made by children shown in waves along the white walls. The colorful butterflies seem to fly and because they are so colorful, catch your attention. Each butterfly represents a child who was affected by the Holocaust. The exhibition includes texts on the history of the Holocaust with a focus on children. The exhibit and exercise of making the butterflies is meant to educate children about the horrors of the Holocaust.

These photographic exhibits as well as past exhibits at the UN can be found on the website, UN Exhibits, or <https://outreach.un.org/exhibits/content/now-view> I hope you will enjoy these art shows as much as I do.

### ***Big News on Migration!***

#### **Long Awaited Release of the Zero Draft!**

During the last year a committee made up of several member states with the consultation of civil society has been hard at work drafting the Global Compact on Migration (GCM). On February 5<sup>th</sup> the Zero Draft for the GCM was released. Since its release, several stakeholder hearings and intergovernmental negotiations have taken place to ensure that all voices and perspectives are being heard. This work will continue until September 2018 at which time the Compact will be voted on to be adopted. For more information and to view the Zero Draft please visit <https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/migration-compact>

#### **Making Migration Work for All**

I started the New Year attending my first meeting of the General Assembly which was held in the Trusteeship Council Room. The room was packed. Most countries had representatives in attendance, who were all seated in large semi circles organized in alphabetical order.

This meeting of the General Assembly was held in conjunction with the Secretary General's official statement on Making Migration Work for All, with an emphasis on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. This statement follows the stakeholder meeting in December on Migration that took place in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. This meeting represented the beginning of the UN negotiation on the Global Compact on Migration, scheduled for the end of the year. The Secretary General is a soft-spoken man who spoke eloquently, and his speech was full of empathy. He emphasized the positive impacts that migrants have on societies such as hard work, varying points of view, impacts that ultimately decrease inequality. He expressed hope for a truly global response to migration that is people centered. He spoke about his country, Portugal, and the wonderful addition immigrants have been to the fabric of society. He told the audience that his elderly mother is taken care of by twenty-four-hour nurses and how not one of these wonderful caretakers are Portuguese.

The President of the UN, then went on to encourage countries when negotiating on the compact to be flexible, to be able to compromise, to show vision, compassion and leadership, not to use fear mongering and to find mutually acceptable solutions to better the lives of people everywhere.

Individual countries' responses to the speech of the Secretary General and President were all very supportive of the Global Compact on Migration. They all praised the work of the International Migration Organization (IMO) and its recommendations. Many of the speakers denounced the idea that this compact will affect individual countries' sovereignty. As the Secretary General commented, every country has a right to manage their borders and decide who can enter their respective countries, but regular managed migration policies directly decrease illegal immigration. He ended the meeting expressing hope for successful negotiations in preparation for an inclusive and successful Global Compact on Migration.





## Xenophobia and Migration

Two films were shown in January by the Xenophobia Subcommittee of the NGO Committee on Migration. The films were: *Not Anymore: A Story of Revolution*, and, *There are No Monsters in Berlin*. The first film is a documentary showing life during the bombing of Aleppo and the second film focuses on the lives of Syrian Refugees in Berlin. Seen together, the two films were very powerful, as they deliberately detail conflict, displacement and migration and effects on individuals. I highly recommend trying to watch these excellent short films. The actors in the film, *There Are No Monsters in Berlin*, are recently arrived Syrian refugees in Berlin.

## Other News from the Field

### UN General Assembly President's Priorities for 2018

Wide ranging issues such as peace, the SDGs and migration were among the priorities set out by the President of the General Assembly, Miroslav Lajcak in his first presentation of the year. Mr. Lajcak outlined the progress the General Assembly accomplished in the first couple of months of the year which include: two hundred and fifty resolutions have been passed, reforms to the UN have been put in place as well as the initiation of morning dialogues which bring together member states for interactive discussion. In the next eight months, he highlighted four key areas which need attention. First is the work to be done on the Global Compact on Migration. He explained that the member states need to be realistic in negotiations because there are serious areas of contention surrounding this Compact. February 20 is the start date for member state negotiations. The second priority is sustaining peace with the focus on conflict prevention, fostering partnerships, making sure peacekeeping endeavors are properly funded and the vital inclusion of women and young people in the peace process. Interestingly, he noted that today men are the only people securing peace initiatives and he expressed his opinion that this is

not sustainable without the involvement of women. The third priority is the implementation of the SDGs with a particular focus on water, youth dialogue and developing public/private partnerships for financial security for development programs. Lastly, the President outlined the events scheduled for 2018 which include meetings on particular subjects such as: sustainable oceans, indigenous groups, ending TB and the prevention of non-communicable diseases.

He ended the meeting stating that, "Multilateralism is under threat and the very purpose of the UN is being questioned." He expressed the idea that we are more successful working together than each of us working alone. His words were very powerful.

### Stop Sexual Exploitation and Abuse: One on One with Assistant Secretary General, Victim Rights Advocate, Ms. Jane Connors

The first DPI (UN Department of Public Information) briefing of the New Year featured the newly appointed Assistant Secretary General, Victim's Rights Advocate for the United Nations, Jane Connors. She was introduced by Ms. Raeshem Nijhon, a women's and victim's rights activist and founder of the media company, Fictionless. This meeting was in conversational format, with the two speakers in chairs at right angles on a stage as opposed to the standard panel format. Ms. Connors spoke of her new role and how her position fits within the Secretary General's priorities including gender parity and a human rights approach towards victims of sexual abuse and exploitation. She explained that she believes that most UN workers throughout the world uphold the values of the UN, but there have been allegations and reports of abuse and exploitation by peacekeepers towards the most vulnerable in society. Most of these allegations involve abuse of people seeking and receiving humanitarian aid. She explained that most of her work will focus on mitigating the effects of this abuse, changing the culture which allowed this to happen and proactively working with communities to prevent future incidents. Her priorities include: mapping victim's rights approaches throughout the



UN system, follow up for victims, setting up a panel of consultants and experts and awareness raising. Ms. Connors is an excellent speaker. She is humorous, down to earth and obviously passionate about victim's rights. I think she will be very effective in her new role. The audience was very enthusiastic about her appointment to this position.

### Social Workers get into the Trash!



*Dr. Shirley Gatenio-Gabel (IASSW) & Dr. Michael Cronin (IFSW) preparing to present at Fordham University on the SDGs*

What does social work have to do with sanitation? Quite a lot it seems! On February 8 the IASSW and the IFSW co-sponsored an event at Fordham University that explored New York City's Department of Sanitation and how it is working to join communities and create a more sustainable city. IASSW Representative Dr. Shirley Gatenio-Gabel and IFSW Representative Dr. Michael Cronin gave a joint report to students, faculty, and social work professionals about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) followed by a presentation by Dr. Samantha MacBride, Director of Research and Operations for the Bureau of Recycling and Sustainability of the NYC Department of Sanitation. MacBride highlighted the importance of sustainable sanitation practices (Goal 6) and the innovative programs being implemented in NYC neighborhoods such as a curbside organic waste pick-up system which collects compostable waste that can be re-used in a number of ways. One interesting fact MacBride mentioned was that the gas produced by composing materials is the same natural gas that the fracking industry seeks to obtain. One must begin to wonder, if it is possible to reduce our waste while simultaneously increase access to renewable energy, what are we waiting for? MacBride emphasized the bureaucratic barriers that the city and department face in creating a large-scale systemic change to sustainability but highlighted the ways in which local communities could come

together to advocate for change. The NYC Department of Sanitation even has an Outreach and Education department to help local groups move forward with improving their neighborhoods! To learn more about NYC's Community Composting initiatives and other sanitation projects impacting communities, please visit <http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dsny/site/our-work/reduce-reuse-recycle/community-composting>

### REMINDER:

### UN Commission on the Status of Women, March 2018



The UN Commission on the Status of Women will meet in UN Headquarters in New York from 12-23 March, 2018. To follow the work being done, please visit <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw62-2018>

Respectfully,

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