

UFER

International Movement for Fraternal
Union Among Races and Peoples



An Idea in Action

UFER News 01/ December 2014

The International Movement for Fraternal Union among Races and Peoples (UFER) is a federation of organizations and persons involved in the promotion of understanding, dialogue and cooperation between peoples, ethnic and cultural groups, in the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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Happy New Year 2015

EDITORIAL

Par Raymonde Martineau, Secretary-General

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give
Sir Winston Churchill

Without the voluntary work of its members during its 64 years of existence, UFER would have long been out of existence and, in fact, would not even have seen the light of day. In addition, UFER's existence depends essentially on the financial contributions of its members and on some rare subsidies. Like many other organizations of civil society, national and international NGO, basic community movements and associations of all types, UFER does not have the means to pay the individuals who take charge of its administration, organize seminars and training sessions and ensure its representation in several instances of the United Nations where it can interact thanks to the consultative status it enjoys with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations.

In 2011, researchers at the John Hopkins University estimated that almost one billion people in the world volunteer their time every year.¹ Women and retirees constitute the majority of the volunteers. Volunteer work contributes largely to the economy of the countries, even if statistics on this are hard to find.

Most people do volunteer work for altruistic reasons, but according to a Canadian study² most of them also recognize that they receive substantial benefits from it such as an improvement of their communication and interpersonal skills, as well as their management and technical abilities. Volunteer work also provides them with the possibility of acquiring new knowledge in various areas including on political issues. I can personally confirm this.

One of the difficulties with volunteering is to ensure continuity. This is what UFER, like many other organizations, is confronted with for the past few years. The majority of the members of the Board of Directors and the representatives at the United Nations are over 70. Some would like to withdraw. They will need to be replaced. This is the challenge that we have to take up for the General Assembly next October. We call on the people of good will within UFER to take up certain tasks and functions of responsibility in order to enable our organization to pursue its mission, which is to promote understanding, dialogue and cooperation between peoples and ethnic and cultural groups in the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a mission that is ever more important in this time of great tensions and misunderstandings between cultures and religions.

That is why you will find with this Newsletter a short questionnaire on the future of UFER in preparation of the next General Assembly. We would be grateful if you could reply to it and send it back to us. Your reactions will enable the participants in the General Assembly to see if UFER is still relevant and to take the appropriate decisions for its future.

¹ An economist's case for volunteering: Opinion TD Bank Economics:
<http://www.td.com/document/PDF/economics/special/AnEconomistsCaseForVolunteering.pdf>

² Statistics Canada *Volunteering in Canada*: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-008-x/2012001/article/11638-eng.htm#a20>

NEWS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Our representatives at the United Nations in Geneva are drawing our attention to some issues discussed during the last two sessions of the Human Rights Council (HRC).

➤ **26 Session (10-27 June 2014)**

by Berhane Raswork

Human Trafficking - Presenting her report³ the Special Rapporteur (SR), Ms. Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, said that she held consultations with various UN entities such as ILO, UNICEF and UNHCR as well as with the International Committee of Red Cross, governments, NGOs, victims of trafficking and other stakeholders. Her intention has been to "reach out, listen, learn and share good practices around the world".

Trafficking has become a serious challenge worldwide victimizing women, children and men. The emerging issue is also trafficking for removal of organs. The Special Rapporteur recommends legislation to punish traffickers, protect victims and to develop access to remedies. The remedies can include restitution, compensation, recovery, satisfaction and guarantee of non-repetition.

Safe and legal migration, public education and sensitization could be part of the solution to control trafficking. In the discussion, government delegates seemed to agree on these principles except on the issue of free migration. Some of them questioned their capacity to accommodate all migrants entering their countries. The delegate of Canada said that the government is taking initiatives to stop trafficking. It would be interesting to learn more about these initiative.

Trafficking is drawing more and more attention both from the countries of origin and the receiving ones. My disappointment was the political complacency regarding the treatment of trafficked persons from Africa to the Middle East. There was no open discussion on the issue, which is very urgent. A resolution was finally adopted on human trafficking in which the mandate of the SR was renewed for another three years⁴.

Women's Rights - A high level panel was held on the identification of good practices in combatting Female Genital Mutilations (FGM). The holding of such a panel shows how far we have come in our campaign against the practices.

Discussions were also held on the report of the Working Group on Discrimination Against Women in Law. June 17 was devoted to a discussion on political and economic rights of women, access to health services and education. Women's rights seem to have gained more and more recognition as government delegates spoke of policies and measures to promote these rights in all fields of activities including political participation.

Protection of the family - This issue was again raised and debated especially on the definition of the family unit. This time the conservative group won the debate and a resolution was adopted to protect the family.⁵ At the 27th session of the HRC a panel will be held on this subject.

³ Report : A/HRC/26/37:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session26/Pages/ListReports.aspx>

⁴ A/HRC/26/L.19: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/G14/060/33/PDF/G1406033.pdf?OpenElement>

⁵ A/HRC/ 26/L.20/Rev.1: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/G14/065/59/PDF/G1406559.pdf?OpenElement>

Rights of peasants This issue, which is gaining more and more attention, was discussed as an essential element for peace and development. Rural women are also given due focus in the debate. A Working Group is drafting a declaration on the rights of peasants. A resolution was adopted.⁶ This is an important development for peasants in countries like Ethiopia where land grabbing by investors is displacing many peasants.

Eritrea & Ethiopia - Eritrea was one of the countries that required particular attention on the part of the Council. The government was accused of forced labour, lack of freedom of association and expression, detention in life threatening conditions and other forms of violations. The Special Rapporteur was not allowed to enter the country to carry out investigation. After the discussion a strong resolution was adopted⁷.

Although the Government of **Ethiopia** was accused of violation of freedom of association and expression, in particular the detention of journalists and bloggers, no resolution was tabled against the government because of political interest on the part of some governments.

Child, early and forced marriage - In a panel discussing ways to prevent and eliminate such violations of children's rights, participants recognized that 14 million girls are forced to marriage every year before they reach 18. Every day, 39,000 girls are married without their consent. This continues to be a serious problem and one of the main causes of maternal and child mortality.

Parallel events

One of the events I attended was entitled "the Power of Empowered Women" and was organized by women ambassadors in Geneva. These were outstanding women who became successful by working on their private business. They gave the example of economic empowerment of women by working hard in private business.

➤ 27th Session – 8 to 26 September 2014

by C.M. Eya Nchama

The activities of vulture fund - The negative impact of the activities of vulture funds on international debt relief efforts and on the human rights of affected populations was hotly debated. In a resolution⁸ the HRC condemned the activities of these funds and "encouraged all States to participate in the negotiations aimed at establishing a multilateral legal framework for sovereign debt restructuring process ... and ensure that such a multilateral legal framework will be compatible with existing international human rights obligations standards". The resolution adopted by 33 votes in favour, 5 against and 9 abstentions, also requested the Advisory Committee (of the HRC) to prepare a report on the activities of vulture funds and the impact on human rights. The General Assembly just adopted, at its 69th session, a resolution in which it decided to launch such negotiations on a multilateral legal framework.

Protection of the family - As decided at the 26th session, a panel discussion was held on the protection of the family and its members. The different conceptions of what a family is was present throughout the panel discussion. Since current international treaties are based on the fact that definition of family is up to each State, it is very difficult to come up with a common policy towards family protection. All States insist on the necessity to protect families, but as one can see in the very instructive debate that took place, the conception of the family is very much influenced by cultural, religious and also political factors.⁹

⁶A/HCR/26/L.13: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/G14/061/70/PDF/G1406170.pdf?OpenElement>

⁷A/HCR/26/L.6: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/G14/062/46/PDF/G1406246.pdf?OpenElement>

⁸A/HRC/27/L.26 : http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/HRC/27/L.26

⁹ UN Press Release of 15/09/2014 :

[http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/\(httpNewsByYear_en\)/F24B8D65AC1AD15EC1257D5400397500?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/(httpNewsByYear_en)/F24B8D65AC1AD15EC1257D5400397500?OpenDocument)

Parallel event

The *Organisation internationale de la francophonie* and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights organized an experts meeting on violence and discrimination against persons with albinism. Several representatives of organizations of people with albinism or working for their rights were among the panellists.¹⁰ Albinism is very often assimilated with witchcraft in Africa particularly. The General Assembly has just adopted at its current session a resolution in which it decided to proclaim 13 June as International Albinism Awareness Day (A/RES/69/170). It was tabled by Somalia¹¹.

- A new High Commissioner for Human Rights has taken his function on 1 September 2014. Prince Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein from Jordan succeeded Mrs. Navi Pillay from South Africa. To know more about him see:
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/Pages/HighCommissioner.aspx>
- OHCHR has put together a very interesting, short and simple guide for civil society to explain this concept and the challenges faced by civil society actors. It also contains a list of useful links and documents.
http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/AboutUs/CivilSociety/CS_space_UNHRSysystem_Guide.pdf

TWENTY YEARS AFTER THE BEIJING CONFERENCE ON WOMEN

By Elly Koenig, President

To mark the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Conference on Women in 2015, the United Nations is holding a series of evaluation meetings at regional levels. On 6 & 7 November 2014, the Economic Commission for Europe, which also includes Canada and the United States as well as Israel on a temporary basis, organized its review meeting in Geneva. An NGO Forum that took place on 3 & 4 November preceded this meeting. Together with Berhane Raswork and two Grail members, Patricia Camisao and Marina Sangali, I took part in both of these meetings.

At the beginning of the **NGO Forum**, Michael Moller, Acting Director General of the United Nations Office in Geneva, stated that "*The Beijing+20 Regional Review Meeting is a key component of the United Nations' efforts towards strengthening gender equality, and these efforts cannot bear fruit without the participation of NGOs and civil society actors such as the ones that will be present at the Geneva NGO Forum.*" The forum was a lively gathering of women who, for years, have been struggling together for women's rights. The discussions were inspiring and the Forum adopted recommendations on the twelve areas of concern of the 1995 Beijing Platform of Action that were presented to the official ECE meeting two days later.¹²

¹⁰ Albinos sans frontières : <http://www.ritimo.org/article5020.html>

The National Organization for Albinism and Hypopigmentation: <http://www.albinism.org>

Under the Same Sun: <http://http://www.underthesamesun.com>

¹¹ <http://www.kismaayo24.com/2014/11/26/somalia-makes-landmark-historic-victory-at-the-un-general-assembly>

¹² See website : <http://beijinr20.ngocsw-geneva.ch/2014/11/geneva-ngo-forum-beijing20-declaration/>

Although a lot has been achieved in these twenty years with regard to the situation of women and girls in many countries, much more need to be done. World wide we see a growing fundamentalism. It shows the importance of the monitoring mechanism in the countries and the urgency of the role of NGO's.

The ECE regional review meeting itself focused on the long-term trends as well as emerging obstacles in gender equality and the empowerment of women. For more information on the meeting see: Press release of 13 November: <http://www.unece.org/unece-main/info-resources/presscurrent-press-h/gender/2014/member-states-issue-urgent-call-for-action-to-achieve-gender-equality-at-beijing-20-regional-review-meeting/member-states-issue-urgent-call-for-action-to-achieve-gender-equality-at-beijing-20-regional-review-meeting.html>

I would like to share with you some thoughts from the Hungarian philosopher Ervin Laszlo, who challenges us women to play the role of "hopeful monsters"¹³, that is the part women can play nowadays. He argued that changes come from the periphery, from the grassroots. The dominant idea of the center is going to be replaced by the idea from the periphery. The world needs a paradigm shift from masculine energy, money and success to women's craft care taking and community values. We have to learn to work like a healthy human body, all the organs working together. With that in mind working together on a paradigm shift, women and men together we can hope for a brighter future.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Joy Garland, UFER representative at the UN in New York

UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES - MAY 2014¹⁴

As always, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at the United Nations from May 12 to May 23, 2014 was both a colorful spectacle and a moving drama of the human rights issues that afflict indigenous communities around the globe. A small group of indigenous young people from different nations came together to document in film the achievement of the first delegation of indigenous peoples who were received at the United Nations in Geneva in 1977, to bring the UN and the world's attention to the disregard of their human rights by the occupier nations. In 1981, another gathering focused on the theme "Indigenous Peoples and the Land". In 2007, a "Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" was finally adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations. The film, "Bridge to the Future", (Un Puente Al Futuro) was produced by the DOCIP (Indigenous Peoples' Center for Documentation, research and Information - <http://www.docip.org>) who gave out free copies to the attendees after the film was shown. I sent a copy to UFER Secretary General, Raymonde Martineau, who was at Geneva in 1977 to witness and assist at the first event.¹⁵

On Friday, May 16, UFER partnered with The Grail, Yachay Wasi and the Mothers Project to premiere in New York the documentary film "Can't Stop The Water". This is the story told by Chief Albert White Buffalo Naquin of the Isle de Jean Charles Band of Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw, who is struggling with his people off the Gulf Coast of Southern Louisiana to keep their land from being swallowed up by the sea. The US Federal government has told the Chief that it is not feasible to renew the barrier island that was a defense against the storms that swept over their lands, nor to replace the wetlands and barriers that the Army Corps of Engineers had removed to enlarge the space for ships including oil rigs to go through, because it was too expensive. The BP Oil Spill ruined the livelihood of the tribes which relied on shrimping and fishing. The tribe knows they will need to move, but do not have the financial resources to do so. Although their tribe is recognized by the state, they can't get recognition from the Federal government because they are unable to furnish papers or documentation to "prove" their tribal identity. Like many indigenous people, in the early days, they fled and hid from fear of capture and an unknown future.¹⁶

¹³ See following website on this theory : http://rationalwiki.org/wiki/Hopeful_monster

¹⁴ For more information see: <http://undesadspd.org/IndigenousPeoples/UNPFIIISessions/Thirteenth.aspx>

¹⁵ To see the film go to : <http://youtu.be/KqtyUrPqQDs>

¹⁶ See: Tribes & Climate change: <http://www4.nau.edu/tribalclimatechange/tribes/gulfcoast.asp>

Now that the Forum is over, Mpanda Kalala, Lillian Wall, Sharon Joslyn and I continue to meet the third Thursday of every month with other members of the NGO Committee on the UN's International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. Please keep us informed about indigenous issues, which you may be aware of where you are, and let us know if we might be of help at the UN.

WORLD CONFERENCE ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES - SEPTEMBER 2014¹⁷

On September 23, the day after the People's Climate March in New York City of some 400,000 people addressing the devastating effects of fossil fuels in affecting climate change, rising sea levels and pollution, the United Nations began its two-day World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS

Some highlights¹⁸ of the round table discussions were remarks by Pita Sharples, Minister of Maori Affairs of **New Zealand**, who spoke of the loss of traditional lands and resources by indigenous people due to colonization and the need for sustainable economic development in line with their cultural values.

Joan Carling, representing the **Asia Indigenous Region**, maintained that while there was some progress made in certain countries about honoring indigenous legal rights, there was still dispossession, destruction, and militarization of lands and resources that indigenous peoples depended on. More must be done to protect their rights.

Gabriel Quijandria of **Peru** said over 30% of Peru's indigenous people have proof showing property rights over their land, but more indigenous people need to acquire such rights to own land.

Roger Cho of the **Pacific Caucus** hoped that in the future there would be established a post for a High Commissioner for the rights of indigenous peoples.

PANEL DISCUSSION

"Indigenous priorities for the post-2015 sustainable agenda" was the panel co-chaired by Patricia Balbuena, Vice-Minister for Interculturality of the Ministry of Culture of **Peru** and Jannie Lasimbang of the **Asia Indigenous Region**. Ms. Balbuena said that Peru was the first country in Latin America to comply with International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169 about the rights of indigenous peoples. Six meetings between Peru's indigenous peoples and state authorities led to agreements that were satisfactory in regard to land titles and use of natural resources. A commission to combat violence against indigenous communities was set up by the Prime Minister.

Ms. Lasimbang, said indigenous people were 15% of the world's poor but only 5 percent of its total population. They were directly impacted by extractive industry practices and non-sustainable development. She believed that the World Conference's Outcome Document must be aligned with and integrated into the post-2015 goals.

Ms. Saoudata Aboubacrine of the Tuareg tribe of the Saharan interior of **North Africa** stated that even before colonization by the western world, indigenous people's rights were disregarded to make way for development. She expressed tribute and solidarity with the Tuareg civilians and those detained in Burkina Faso.

A representative from **Guatemala** told of a national agenda for 2032 called Plan K'atun that supported indigenous peoples' "life, customs, traditions, and forms of social organizations." To eliminate inequality, the plan focused on racism, interculturalism, environment, crime prevention, migration and other concerns.

¹⁷ For more information see: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/69/meetings/indigenous/ - &panel1-1>

¹⁸ Taken from UN Press Release: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2014/ga11558.doc.htm>

Nepal's representative told of “constitutional, legal and administrative steps” taken in his country such as the National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities to protect indigenous peoples from discrimination and to ensure their proportionate representation in education and the labour market.”

Papua New Guinea's representative told that on several island States the survival of indigenous populations was threatened by a rise in sea-level due to climate change.

The Indian Law Resource Center representative stated that violence against indigenous women in the **United States** and elsewhere must be mentioned. In the United States it was said that one in three indigenous women would be raped in their lifetimes.

CLOSING REMARKS

Mr. Jan Eliasson, **UN Deputy Secretary General**, said that the text of the 2007 Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was “the foundation and guiding star, while the Conference Outcome Document was an inspiration and the path forward.”

Ms. Carling, **Co-Chair of an interactive round-table discussion**, remarked that “in many instances, indigenous lands had been occupied, and activities such as timber and mining and the creation of national parks, among others, had led to forced evacuation, without prior informed consent.” As reflected in the Outcome Document, states should establish impartial ways to determine indigenous rights over resources.

Setareki Macanawai, **Indigenous Disabilities representative**, stressed the importance of including persons with disabilities in full participation in deciding policies which would affect them and stated that they must be included in the post-2015 development agenda.

Ms. Laurie Phipps, **Vice-President of the General Assembly** from the United States, believed that the action-oriented provisions of the Outcome document would lead to “broad changes for current and future generations of indigenous peoples, with its focus on the rights of indigenous women and the intractable problem of violence against them, as well as the challenges faced by indigenous youth.” Another core issue was “the difficulty in sustaining indigenous languages, the need to preserve traditional knowledge and the requirement to ensure sustainable livelihoods.”

As the Conference was ending, Mr. Sharples of New Zealand delivered a closing prayer.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The outcome documents of the seminar organized on this issue by UFER in cooperation with Shakti Samuha and Pourakhi, two Nepalese organizations, in March 2014, received positive feedbacks. Some participants and members have sent us reflections and information we would like to share with you. The final documents of the seminar can be found on our website: <http://ufer-international.org/tagged/events>

EVALUATIONS & REFLECTIONS

Karina Sarmiento from Ecuador - This was a unique experience because the aim of this Seminar was how everyone could make a change in their own work and how these individual efforts could later be integrated into a global network. Participants from the different countries were extremely open to listening and to sharing the concerns of this horrible crime of human trafficking.

Nelly Delcid from Honduras - This experience has been a great opportunity to learn about the realities lived in different countries. I feel profoundly grateful for having been able to hear about the work and commitment of the participants in the struggle to eliminate this nightmare of human trafficking.

Rosie Martin from India - This indeed is an enriching learning experience to meet such committed persons and to listen to what actually goes on in different parts of the world ... I believe that many hands and many organizations have to work together to make a difference in the plight of the oppressed and exploited women and children as well as men. Centuries old structures and mindset are not changed overnight. But the constant and incessant collective efforts should pave the way to changes.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE SEMINAR

- ✚ Shakti Samuha together with AATWIN (Alliance Against Trafficking in Women and Children in Nepal) and the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare of Nepal organized the Third National Conference of Trafficking Survivor Women, in Lalitpur, Nepal, on 4-5 June 2014. Shakti Samuha and ATTWIN both participated actively in the UFER seminar on human trafficking in March and were encouraged to organize the Conference of survivors. Participants in the UFER seminar contributed financially to the holding of the Conference as an expression of solidarity with their Nepalese sisters. For the report see: <http://shaktisamuha.org.np/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Third-National-Conference-of-Trafficking-Survivor-Women-Edited-and-Final.pdf>



- ✚ The report of the seminar has been sent to the UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons and to the one on the human rights of migrants. The latter has undertaken a visit in Nepal in the first week of December.
- ✚ UFER members from Italy have transmitted the report of the seminar to the Vatican and to the Global Freedom Network Office, created in 2014 by representatives of major faiths to eradicate modern slavery and human trafficking: <http://www.globalfreedomnetwork.org/about/>
- ✚ Fernand Bajikile of the Union for the Development of Humanity from DRC sent a report of a workshop on human trafficking, with emphasis on the situation of children that took place in Kinshasa on 9 & 10 October 2014. Issues such as illegal adoption, forced marriage, sale and kidnaping of children, illegal migration, forced labour, sexual abuse were discussed. Recommendations were adopted to be sent to various ministries.
- ✚ Els Van Hoecke and her daughter from Bolivia have translated the report of our seminar in Spanish.

- ✦ Louise Dionne made a PowerPoint presentation of the outcome of the Seminar for her organization CATHII (*Comité d'action contre la traite humaine interne et internationale*) and published an article in their Newsletter (in French): <http://www.cathii.org/sites/www.cathii.org/files/Cathiinfojuilaout2014.pdf>. (Page 3).
- ✦ Alison Berna has written on her blog about her experience in Nepal (scroll down the page): http://blog.appleseedsplay.com/2014_04_01_archive.html

MISCELLANEOUS

- ✦ The present session of the **UN General Assembly** has adopted a twelve-page resolution on trafficking in women and girls¹⁹
- ✦ The **International Labour Conference** adopted, in May 2014, a protocol to the Forced Labour Convention of 1930 aiming at combatting such practices as human trafficking.²⁰
- ✦ A Conference on Human Trafficking and Smuggling in the **Horn of Africa** was organized in Khartoum, from 13 to 16 October 2014: <http://sa.au.int/en/content/au-regional-conference-human-trafficking-and-smuggling-horn-africa>
- ✦ **Labour Ministers from Gulf and Asian countries** meeting in Abu Dhabi, on 26 & 27 November 2014, adopted a new minimum contract aiming at improving the working conditions of the 2.4 millions foreign domestic workers in this region. This new contract would provide for a one day-off a week, an annual holiday, a maximum of eight hours of work per day and the right to live outside of the home of the employer. These measures, although limited, have been adopted thanks to the work done by 90 NGOs and trade unions, which will have to follow closely their implementation.²¹
- ✦ On 4 June 2014, the **Canadian Parliament** passed the *Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act*. The Act criminalises those who purchase sexual services but safeguard those who sell their own sexual services from criminal liability. The law entered into force on 5 December 2014.²²
- ✦ The first International **Day of Prayer and Awareness** against Human Trafficking will take place on 8 February 2015. <http://www.news.va/en/news/vatican-the-first-international-day-of-prayer-and>
- ✦ Rosie Joseph from India has shared with us the courageous action of **catholic nuns in India** who lead raids on brothels to save young girls and help put traffickers behind bars: <http://www.ucanindia.in/news/catholic-nuns-lead-raids-on-brothels-in-india/27212/daily>.
- ✦ Lieke Coenegrachts from **Cambodia** draws our attention to the work of Sister Helene O'Sullivan who promotes education as a way for Cambodian women to escape sex-trade: <http://globalsistersreport.org/news/trafficking/education-way-cambodian-women-escaping-sex-trade-5131>
- ✦ C.M. Eya Nchama informs us that the Department of Security and Economy of the **Republic and Canton of Geneva (Switzerland)** has put on line on its website information related to the struggle against human trafficking (in French): <http://www.ge.ch/traite-etres-humains/>
- ✦ Nalini Nayak from India has drawn our attention to a research on how the **money to combat human trafficking** is spent. This money does not always benefit the victims but they may even suffer as a result of anti-trafficking spending. See: *Anti-trafficking Review*, Issue 3, September 2014: <http://www.antitraffickingreview.org/index.php/atrjournal>
- ✦ Ms. Sunita Danuwar is one of the winners of the **C10 award 2014**²³ granted by three Swedish NGOs to ten exceptional leaders, reinventing the fight against trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children. The award has been given in a ceremony in Stockholm, on 3 November 2014. Ms. Danuwar is the first person in Nepal receiving this award.
- ✦ Luisa Moruzzi informs us that **Slaves No More**, an Italian organization, held a one-day conference entitled "Redefine the policy for the struggle against human trafficking", on 21 October 2014, in Rome. <http://www.slavesnomore.it>

¹⁹ A/RES/69/149 :

²⁰ See ILO Website : http://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/103/reports/committee-reports/WCMS_248900/lang-en/index.htm

²¹ See Website of International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC): <http://www.ituc-csi.org/gulf-countries-increase-migrant>

²² See : <http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Language=E&Mode=1&DocId=6767128>

²³ See : <http://reachforchange.org/child10>

MIGRATION

"There is no such thing as an illegal human being. On the contrary, all migrants - regular or irregular - have an inalienable claim to dignity, to justice, to freedom and to all human rights".

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein

Asylum Access and the protection of refugees in Latin America

Karina Sarmiento, Regional Director, Asylum Access Latin America²⁴

This December 2014, governments of Latin America will adopt a new Declaration and Plan of action, which is expected to be a tool to tackle the needs for international protection and offer a more practical framework for the identification of solutions in the continent. Cartagena+30 is the process that has helped to identify new challenges and strategies that lie ahead in terms of protection for refugees and the internally displaced in the region. Asylum Access Latin America (AALA) has been very active in these discussions, stressing the need to come UP with effective solutions to overcome those pressing needs of refugees in Latin America (see [Cartagena +30 Initiative: a proposal from civil society](#)).

AALA is currently working in Ecuador and by early 2015, will also be in Panama and Mexico. Our work is needed in order to offer protection in cases that would otherwise remain in silence. The story of Julia is one example: she fled the civil war in Colombia, seeking safety in Ecuador. Unfortunately, she arrived when asylum laws were highly restrictive, and was denied protection by Ecuador's refugee office. Already having endured displacement and violence in Colombia, Julia now had to fight for her international legal right to a safe haven. Her request for asylum and the appeal of her denial for refugee status were denied. A well-argued legal brief written by AALA, paired with Julia's tireless advocacy (including letters to cabinet members and the President), won Julia the legal protection she deserved. Her case is one of many that Asylum Access has to deal with every day that would otherwise be hopeless.

Statistics from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility of Ecuador indicate that Ecuador has received 164,528 applications for recognition of refugee status and of these, only 55,282 have been granted. The majority of these are from Colombian (aprox. 80%). However, currently the pressure for international protection in the region includes Central America and Mexico as well. The current trend of violence in this sub-region is caused by the impact of transnational organized crime and gang violence, among others. As usual, the most affected groups are women, children and LBGTI (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender) people.

Despite the fact that Central America can be acknowledged for its old tradition of refugee protection, challenges still persist. These include lack or weak due process and judicial guarantees in the refugee status determination process, inadequate identification of needs of international protection at the entry points, increasing practices of detention of migrants and effective social inclusion. The new Brasilia Declaration and Plan of Action should prevail for the strengthening of national asylum systems by implementing high standards of due process and measures for improving management control and quality; the measures for the acceptance of the extraterritorial recognition of the refugee status; the compliance with the principle of *non-refoulement*; and, above all, the implementation of effective measure for social inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers.

²⁴ www.asylumaccess.org

Migrants from Honduras in the Bronx, USA

By Sharon Joslyn, the Grail USA

Recently in the Bronx we have had a great influx of Honduran migrants from the Garifuna communities fleeing from violence, extreme poverty and racial injustice. In their flight the women have also experienced sexual abuse and trafficking.

Five hundred migrants arrived in the Bronx in August. They are mainly women and children. Their documents were taken from them at the border and security anklets were placed on the women's legs to monitor their movement. Beside the inconvenience and shame caused, these anklets restrict freedom of movement, as they must be connected to electrical outlets every three hours to report the women's location. Subway travel is not possible as the device causes an alarm when they enter the train creating a disturbance among the passengers. Health care has been denied since the anklets mark them as criminals.

I have been working with several groups and churches that have combined resources to provide food, clothing, shelter and legal aid. We have also found some community clinics willing to provide medical services. We have managed to register all the children in school.

Garifunas are descendants of slave trade from West Africa, and Central Africa, Island Caribbean and Arawak people. They have their own language and culture. They live now along the Caribbean coast in Belize, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras, with the largest community in Honduras. Many live in San Pedro Sula, Honduras known as the "murder capital" of the world. Their lives are threatened by the "Maras" (Mara Salvatruch Street Gang), a large and destructive force.

Garifunas traditionally hold land communally. With migration from the country by youth this land is rapidly eroding. The constitution previously protected these lands, but in 1990 a reform allowed for its sale to individuals.

Two organizations working with these problems are ONECA (Central American Black Organization) and ASAFROVA (Association of Afro-Descendants of Sula Valley). ONECA held their annual international meeting in the Bronx this year precisely because of the recent migration to New York. There are other pockets in New York and the USA receiving the Garifunas. They are a concrete reminder of the Global discussion in our day of the forced movement of peoples.

Reflections on immigration

By Colette Pasquis, member of the Editorial Board

Catherine Wihtol de Wende²⁵, research director of CNRS and external expert of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and consultant to various European organizations, has done some interesting research on the subject of immigration. A jurist with a PhD in political science, she examines the globalization of migration and the links between it and international relations.

Backed by statistics, Catherine de Wenden demonstrates the failure and the exorbitant cost of border controls. She argues that open borders would lead to the regulation of migratory fluctuations, the people knowing that they could return home at any time once their economic situation was bettered. She cites the famous example of the Polish plumbers supposed to invade Europe following the creation of the EU. The invasion never took place; on the contrary, Poles eventually returned home. She warns against fear created by polls – worldwide immigration is only around 3,8% -- and states: *Il est bon que la planète circule*, -- it is good that the planet circulates.

²⁵ For more information on the author, see : http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catherine_Wihtol_de_Wenden

To summarize, her thesis is that migrations aid the development of Southern as well as Northern countries. Her conclusions coincide with those of the UN High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development held on October 3 & 4, 2013 ²⁶, particularly the necessity of world governance of migrations and the participation of diverse social representatives from the South as well as from the North.

Migrant workers and trade unions

By Nalini Nayak from India

Migrants are also workers and contributing to the economy – despite the fact that they are exploited. The countries do not actually book the traffickers because so many people are benefitting from this cheap labour. Hence only if such workers are helped to organise as workers can they get recognized and get some rights. Local trade unions should also understand this. Trade unions can force their governments to enter into bi lateral and multi lateral agreements for labour. When there are bilateral agreements, workers rights are safeguarded and labour can migrate with dignity without falling into the hands of traffickers. Since the agreements control passage, the workers will return to their home countries and not desire to stay abroad. They will remit money back home which will facilitate developments in their home areas and in this way some level of equity can grow...like is happening in the state of Kerala in India. If migrant workers are paid correct wages, the local workers need not feel threatened either.

UFER CHRONICLE

UFER GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2015

The next General Assembly of UFER will take place in **Brussels, from 4 to 9 October 2015**, at the Maison Notre-Dame du Chant d'Oiseau, Avenue des Franciscains, 3A, 1150 Brussels, Belgium. You will receive the agenda and the program in the next months.

In preparation of this General Assembly, we would like to have the views of the members on **UFER's Future**. That is why you will find attached a short questionnaire; we would be grateful if you could reply to it. Your opinion is very important for the future of UFER.

NEWS FROM MEMBERS & PARTNERS

- **Nelly Delcid from Honduras** shares with us her sorrow over the assassination, on 27 August 2014, in Villanueva, Cortés (northern Honduras), of **Margarita Murillo** (56 years old) by hooded, armed men while she was working on a plot of land of the Peasant Business Association "Windows of Production". She is the 140th peasant victim assassinated in the last three and a half years in the country, according to statistics of peasant organizations.²⁷

²⁶ See : <http://www.un.org/en/ga/68/meetings/migration/>

²⁷ ERIC, *Margarita Murillo murió como vivió: sembrando semilla en la tierra por la que siempre luchó*, <http://radioprogresoohn.net/index.php/comunicaciones/noticias/item/1294-margarita-murillo-muri%C3%B3-como-vivi%C3%B3-sembrando-semilla-en-la-tierra-por-la-que-siempre-luch%C3%B3>

She was the beneficiary of precautionary measures granted by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights after the coup d'état of 2009, measures which were never implemented²⁸.

Margarita Murillo struggled all her life for the rights and life conditions of peasant men and women. In 1975, she participated in the struggle for access to the land as part of the “march of desperation and hunger”, organized by the National Peasant Union (UNC). Victim of repression, rape and repeated torture, she never abandoned her activism.

“All that she had to live in the 1980s, the tortures to which she was submitted, which almost left her as disappeared and dead, whomever else would have wanted to remain outside the country. She could have stayed away but nonetheless returned and took up the struggle again because she really had a dream, that the land could be of the people in the rural areas, of the peasant men and women who worked it. For that she gave her life”, confesses Nelly.

With the coup, Margarita took up an active part in the National Front of Popular Resistance (FNRP), and contributed to the foundation of the political party Liberty and Refoundation (LIBRE). It was at this time that Nelly got to know Margarita, and became very good friends with her. *“During the coup, she was a very clear voice, a voice that motivated us not to give up, to keep moving ahead in the struggle. In that moment, she was a prophetic voice for us, we believed in her.”*

Many organizations have paid homage to Margarita and called for justice from the government so that her murder does not remain in impunity. *“That memory of love that she had for the people, and that the people had for her, is always where I want to stay. She is a symbol of struggle of an entire life. She is the kind of woman of struggle whom we need in this moment. We need to be like Margarita Murillo in order to be able to resist.”*

- In August 2014, after a search of 36 years, **Estella de Carlotto**, President of the Grand Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, has found the grandchild she had been looking for, Guido Montoya Carlotto. Her daughter Laura was arrested by the military regime together with her husband Oscar Montoya, both human rights activists. She was pregnant and gave birth to a son in prison. She and her husband were both murdered by the junta. Guido was given in adoption to a family of farm workers and raised under the name of Ignacio Hurban. Having doubts about his origins, he presented himself voluntarily at the DNA bank that the Grandmothers have set up with the blood samples of all the group's members. UFER has provided support to the Grandmothers since 1981, giving them access to the floor of the Human Rights Commission and Council where they could present their case publicly and assisting them in different ways. We all share the happiness of Estella and her son. Pope Francis, a compatriot, received both of them in November in the Vatican.



28 Amnesty International, Acción urgente: Honduras: Campesino leader shot dead in Honduras: Margarita Murillo, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AMR37/010/2014/en/fd46995b-3998-4264-a2ad-e71cd6d272b1/amr370102014es.html>

- In June 2014, **Cruz Melchor Eya Nchama** was invited to Argentina to receive a decoration from the government for the support that he and UFER provided to the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo since the beginning of the 80s. In his acceptance speech, he recalled the years of struggle of Argentinian human rights defenders in the United Nations in Geneva where they were facing the intimidations and threats of the representatives of the military dictatorship. He praised the Grandmothers who have contributed through their determination to improving the legislation and setting up new mechanisms to better protect and restore human rights. Their struggle, he said, was a non-violent one, following the examples of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King. He also congratulated the Argentinian authorities for their contribution to enhancing democracy and respect for human rights since the fall of the dictatorship.

- **Bijay Singh** from India (Odisha) writes that his organization Solidarity for Developing Communities (SFDC) organized a meeting for celebrating the International Migrants Day on 18 December 2014. More than 200 domestic and migrant women workers attended the meeting as well as representatives from different government offices. Several speakers expressed their concerns about the large number of people who migrate in unsafe conditions. They called on the competent local authorities to monitor these activities of migration and keep proper record of migration happening in the local areas and coordinate with the relevant district officials such as the police, the labour office, etc. The representative of the labour office explained specific provisions available for migrant workers for their safety and safe migration. Issues such as sexual exploitation and physical abuse were also raised. At the end of the meeting, district authorities gave their telephone numbers to participants and encouraged them to contact them whenever they need.

- The **Union for the Development of Humanity** from the DRC continues to extend its antennas throughout the country (Dongo & Basankusu /Equateur, Kisangani, Lukalaba/Kasai oriental, Kananga/Kasai occidental, Goma) and to assist those in these areas who are victims of violations of human rights such as torture, inhumane conditions of detention, human trafficking, rapes and discriminations of all sorts, especially against indigenous peoples (Pygmies). The organization deplores and denounces the lack of actions of the authorities in these cases. Too often perpetrators go unpunished.

Berhane Raswork has recently published a book, "The Unbidden Pain" (Janus Publishing Co, 2014), about her 27 years of struggle against female genital mutilations. The book was presented in a side event during the Seventh session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime that took place in Vienna, from 6 to 10 October 2014. The side event can be followed on a video to be seen on:

<https://abugidawien11.wordpress.com/2014/10/13/book-presentation-of-ms-berhane-ras-work-the-unbidden-pain/>

A Reminder

The annual membership for 2014 is of 35 € or 50US\$. It can be:

- # sent to the following account in Belgium
Banque Fortis: IBAN: BE50 0013 6970 0018 BIC: GEBABEBB
- # or transmitted to a member of the Board of Directors or the IS of AFI/ICA

We need your support for our future activities