



# The Grail Link to the UN Network

Update on Grail and UFER activities

Newsletter #5, June/July 2011

“Women working together to bring about a world of peace, justice, equity and renewal of the earth”

## ★ Commission on Sustainable Development CSD-19 May 2 to May 13, 2011

Kate Twohy reporting

### Defining Development: Social, Economic and Environmental Demands

It is clear that representatives of the G77 nations, declaring their concerns for emerging and less developed countries are contesting the enormous power of the countries usually described as the G20. The three pillars of the Commission on Sustainable Development rest on the social, economic and environmental criteria which should act together in what is called "sustainable development. It is the agreed upon criteria of SOCIAL which is in danger, where ideally, local communities are consulted regarding land use, prepared for responsibility to handle greater environmental challenges and presumed the beneficiaries of the development project. There are too many examples of poor countries, resource rich, technology and educationally deprived, needing financial help, where the pact of assistance brings about subservience. Forces deemed "profitable" take over and minimize land rights, fair employment practices, and justify grievous environmental consequences. .

Hovering over the stated goals of Sustainable Development criteria is the influence, and the enormous economic power of the developed world. This power, represented in the corporations of the developed economies and their globally linked financial institutions is a critical issue. Without measures to insure more

small country control, fears are being expressed of a giant "earth grab" under the guise of "green economy". In other words unless there is a inter- governmental funding structure monitoring where funds and technology find their mark, outside actors have too much power aligned with a few local elites.

These economic controls have given a more sophisticated face to what the brutal Western colonial period produced. It is not in the for-profit motives of these large entities to concern themselves with community control, Without an international governmental body overseeing these funds, international capital interests will impact these communities with loss of political participation, more migration, more social unrest and environmental impact.

As citizens of the United States we are called to watch and advocate that our own corporate interests under the disguise of "green efforts" do not continue to force less powerful peoples into subservience. We should support the G77 demands for an intergovernmental body watching how and where development monies are applied assuring greater political control of local people. AND can anybody doubt the largest six worldwide corporations buying up 90% of the technology patents. and ergo, a worldwide plantation economy!!

## ★ CSD Multi-Year Programme of Work

**2004/2005 to 2016/2017---Seven Two-Year Cycles:** At its eleventh session, the Commission on Sustainable Development decided that its multi-year programme of work beyond 2003 would be organized on the basis of seven two-year cycles, with each cycle focusing on selected thematic clusters of issues.

The seven two-year cycles include Review and Policy Years. The Review Year will evaluate progress made in implementing sustainable development goals and identifying obstacles and constraints, while the Policy Year will decide on measures to speed up implementation and mobilize action to overcome these obstacles and constraints.

If you wish to attend any of these sessions, contact Mary Kay at [Grail-IPT@juno.com](mailto:Grail-IPT@juno.com) to get registered.

2010/2011\*CSD-18/CSD-19 Implementation Cycle #4 A Ten Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns: Transport, Chemicals, Waste Management (Hazardous & Solid Waste) ,Mining

Poverty eradication, Changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, Protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development, Sustainable development in a globalizing world, Health and sustainable development, Sustainable development of SIDS, Sustainable development for Africa, Other regional initiatives, Means of implementation, Institutional framework for sustainable development, Gender equality, and Education

2012/2013\*CSD-20/CSD21: Forests, mountains, biodiversity, biotechnology, tourism.

2014/2015\*CSD-22/CSD-23 Oceans and Seas, Marine Resources, Small Island Developing States, Disaster Management and Vulnerability



As well as Kate, Joy Garland and Trina Paulus attended CSD-17. A colleague of Trina's, Nancy Taiani, wrote the following for the bulletin of her church, St. Peter Claver Church Parishioners for Peace & Justice 6/26/11 Issue 27



### **Water Rights and Indigenous Peoples**

In their coming of age ceremony, the young women of the Winnemen Wintu Tribe of California swim across the McCloud River to join tribal dancers as full-fledged women. However, the area they traditionally used has been turned into a recreational campground by the United States Forest Services. Now tourists, campers and boaters threaten the continuation of tribal practices and intrude on the privacy and dignity of the young women. Describing the threat to this traditional practice, Catarina de Albuquerque, Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, added that like many "indigenous peoples, they have a special or even spiritual relationship with water."

She said, "The right to water and sanitation provides that everyone should have access to sufficient, safe, affordable and acceptable water and sanitation for personal and domestic uses. ...this means water for drinking, cooking, washing clothes and dishes, and basic personal hygiene." She also included water for agriculture and cultural and spiritual life. "Like with so many other human rights," she said, "indigenous peoples suffer disproportionate violations of their rights to water and sanitation."

Ms. de Albuquerque listed these facts—

- Nearly a billion people in the world do not have access to an improved water source.
- Many more do not have access to safe water.
- Over 2.5 billion people do not have access to improved sanitation facilities.

"We are facing a true crisis," she said, and pointed out that "the marginalized, the poor, those without political voice" are always the ones who are excluded. Lack of access to water and sanitation is a "direct result of policies and politics which exclude certain segments of the population," she said.

She expressed special concern about threats to the human rights of indigenous peoples through pollution of water sources by mining operations and energy project such as dams and geothermal exploration, that impact people's access to clean water.

"Talking about water, traditionally considered an 'economic, social and cultural right,' in the same breath as degrading treatment, generally known as a 'civil and political right' I think that too often we lose sight of the indivisibility of human rights. And especially for indigenous people, we need consider enjoyment of human rights in a holistic way. This holistic understanding is crucial for analyzing indigenous rights and the right to water and sanitation."

Ms. de Albuquerque supports activism at all levels to protect the rights of indigenous people while admitting the work does not proceed as quickly as people would like. "However," she says, "these efforts are crucial for ending ongoing violations of indigenous peoples' rights, including those rights related to water, and to improving their

enjoyment of all human rights." She quoted her favorite Portuguese Poet, Pessoa: "Stones on the path? I collect them all. One day I will build a castle."

Catarina de Albuquerque, "Statement to the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues," 5/24/2011, is at the following website: [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/session\\_10\\_statement\\_SR\\_water.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/session_10_statement_SR_water.pdf)

## **WATER- A Commodity to be sold for profit or is it a Human Right?**

by Joy Garland

One of the jobs of non-governmental representatives (NGOs) at the UN is to be a liaison between the members we represent and the member states of the UN. NGOs represent civil society and as such, we can make interventions with governments on behalf of human rights, sustainable development and the work of many agencies like UNICEF within the UN.

On July 28th, I went to a meeting at the UN called "Invitation to Member States to join a civil society roundtable discussion on The Human Right to Water and Sanitation" sponsored by the Council of Canadians Acting For Social Justice, Corporate Accountability International, and food & water watch. The keynote speakers were Ambassador Rafael Archondo of Bolivia and Maude Barlow of the Council of Canadians who was senior advisor on water to Father Miguel d'Scoto Brockmann, a Maryknoll priest, when he was the 63rd President of the UN General Assembly.

Maude Barlow distributed copies of "OUR RIGHT TO WATER: a People's Guide to Implementing the United Nations' Recognition of the Right to Water and Sanitation". Present at the meeting was KENZA KAOUAKIB-ROBINSON, the Chair of the UN Gender and Water Task Force. I brought along the DVD BLUE GOLD: World Water Wars from Amazon.com (\$19.99) that also featured Maude Barlow, and gave this to Ms. Robinson. I told her I hoped that the film could be shown at the UN during further meetings on water.

(I recommend to anyone planning a session on what's happening to our water that showing a DVD followed up by discussion with the audience is one of the best ways to provoke interest and response, especially if it is followed up by some group action such as petitioning government officials and demonstrating against polluting energy companies or officials that favor fracking etc.)

Ambassador Rafael Archondo of Bolivia told the group that he was a journalist and that his president, Evo Morales, was the first indigenous president of Bolivia. The Bolivian government has advocated the Rights of Mother Earth to be observed along with the UN Declaration of Human Rights. When Morales was in the legislature, his country took back control of their water from a transnational company, Tunari Waters, which in 2000 raised the price of water causing the people to unite around the Coalition for the Defense of Water and Life. A cooperative called Comuna, then took over the sale and distribution of water.

There is an increasing push, often aided by the World Bank, to privatize the world's water of which there is a diminishing supply. The non-governmental organizations present around the table, strongly oppose calling water, controlled by private corporations to be bought and sold for profit, a "commodity" and want it to be considered a human right.

During the lunch break, I was sharing a table with another NGO friend when I noticed Ambassadors Archondo was standing on the cafeteria line. I invited him to join us. I spoke about our efforts to stop the energy companies and state government from allowing the Halliburton technology known as hydrofracking or fracking from coming to New York. We told him of the use of all the chemicals, many of them toxic, that have polluted the water, land, and air causing serious health problems, explosions, tap water on fire, and the use of millions of gallons of fresh water.

The Ambassador started to tell us that gas was a very important industry in his country after they nationalized control away from Exxon and BP in 2006. We didn't have time to continue because he was called away. I would like to know what method they use to extract the gas, since there are other less polluting ways to extract it before Halliburton developed its technology which, since 2005, is presently exempt from the clean water and air acts.

We are trying to alert our members in other states and other countries to the dangers of multinational corporations exploiting their communities' resources and leaving pollution in their wake. Most people, even in the United States, are not aware of what's happening. Stay tuned.

## **The Tenth Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues met 16-27 May, 2011**

The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is an advisory body to the Economic and Social Council, with a mandate to discuss indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights. Water is an important aspect of indigenous peoples' spirituality and takes the form of many water bodies such as seas, rivers, lakes, rain, snow, fog and clouds and is an inseparable part of their estates. As well as underpinning their social and economic well-being, indigenous people's relationship with waters, lands and its resources is crucial to cultural vitality and resilience.

Indigenous rights to water are not adequately recognised in national laws and policies. Historically, indigenous peoples have been excluded from water management. The lack of engagement is compounded by the fact that indigenous peoples are marginalized from information pertaining to water institutions, technical information and regulations around water. Indigenous peoples' right to water is not limited to access to safe drinking water and sanitation but also closely linked to a range of other rights including self-determination, subsistence, health, land and resources and cultural and spiritual practices. Although the right to water is already protected in a wide range of human rights instruments, including the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, there is a growing concern that this right needs to be given greater attention.

*The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights believes that it is now time to consider access to safe drinking water and sanitation as a human right, defined as the right to equal and non-discriminatory access to a sufficient amount of safe drinking water for personal and domestic uses...2*



### **INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL**

In March 2011, Canadian Parliament passed a motion, supported by all political parties, declaring that Canada will lead the effort and propose a United Nations Resolution that will proclaim September 22 the International Day of the Girl. Lend support by contacting your local decision-makers and thus help Plan Canada to build momentum in encouraging the Canadian Government to make good on the intention to support the International Day of the Girl at the UN General Assembly this fall. For more information and a place to 'sign on' visit their website: <http://plancanada.ca>.

The International Day of the Girl will create a foundation for advocacy to ensure that girls get the investment and recognition they deserve as citizens and as powerful agents of change within their own families, communities and nations.

For more information you can also email them: at [contactus@becauseiamagirl.ca](mailto:contactus@becauseiamagirl.ca).



### **COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

The report of the fifty-fifth session of the CSW is now available. It includes the agreed conclusions on access and participation of women and girls in education, training and science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work, the report of the Working Group on Communications concerning the Status of Women and the resolutions adopted by the Commission.

To view the report (in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian or Spanish), visit: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/55sess.htm> .

**CSW-56** will take place Monday, 27 February to Friday, 9 March 2012

**Priority theme:** The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges

**Review theme:** Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women (agreed conclusions from the fifty-second session)

Start thinking now if you would like to attend. Contact Mary Kay if you are interested : [Grail-IPT@juno.com](mailto:Grail-IPT@juno.com)

NGO Committee on Migration

#### **Future Work**

Under the agenda item *Future Work*, two important events will be prominent: the Rio +20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development to take place in 2012; and the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples which is scheduled for 2014.

Both meetings are of great significance to indigenous peoples and the Permanent Forum and will be discussed during the second week of the tenth session. There will also be side events that will consider both events.