



**Grail Link to the
United Nations Network**

**July-August 2017
Newsletter**

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From Mary Kay: A 'computer crash' caused my resolve to get the GLUNN newsletter out quarterly to also crash! You recently read the June newsletter, but, here is another: trying to catch up! Joy's article was written months ago, but is still very relevant. Lori, a member of the Southeast Indigenous Peoples, often stays at the Bronx Grail Center. The HLPF was a very informative, challenging meeting and is helpful to reflect on while 'taking home our IGA resolutions', preparing for the October 11th International Day of the Girl and the October 17th International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

United Nations High Level Political Forum 2017 by Sharon Joslyn

The meeting of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development was held at the UN Headquarters from 10 July to 19 July to present the regular voluntary reviews of the 2030 Agenda. The theme was: *Eradication of Poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world.*

The set of SDG Goals reviewed were:

Goal 1- End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

Goal 2- End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

Goal 3- Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages.

Goal 5- Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Goal 9- Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.

Goal 14- Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

Goal 17- Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global partnership for sustainable development.

Of particular interest was the presentation by Roberto Bissio (Social Watch) on privatization partnerships, corporate capture and their impact on sustainability and inequality. Following are some highlights.

In 2011 *The Reflection Group on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (www.reflectiongroup.org) was organized to regularly watch and assess the implementation of the Agenda and the structural obstacles to its realization.

They note that the move towards the privatization and the promotion of public-private partnerships (PPPs) began in the 1980's with de-regulation and privatization promoted by neo-liberal policies of Western Governments. It was moved forward by the transition from centrally planned to market economies in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. It was then imposed by the structural adjustment programmes of the IMF and the World Bank in highly indebted countries of the Global South.

Today it is being touted as the best alternative solution to world economic disorder. However, the public sector is too weak to be an equal partner in meeting the challenges of the 2030 Agenda. This lack of capacity and dearth of financial resources in the public sector has been caused by deliberate political decisions. It is time to take back our public space.

An exhaustive and most interesting report: **Spotlight on Sustainable Development 2017 ...Reclaiming policies for the public**, has been published by the *Civil Society Reflection Group on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. It is available on line.

The report gives an overview of our current political status with a view of the obstacles and weaknesses in achievement of each of the SDGs arising from the privatization phenomenon.

It can be a veritable workbook for us as we engage in our own local realities and seek to guide youth on the path to the realization of the Agenda which will be directly affecting their future. It is a “must read”. You will not be disappointed.

The Grail and UFER at the United Nations by Joy Garland

Human Rights are at the center of the United Nations, and it is generally agreed that Indigenous communities throughout the World lead the list of those peoples who have been under the grip of nations who came after them and who managed to take their land, their mineral rights, and subject them to human rights abuses that continue to this day. The GRAIL and U.F.E.R. (name change proposed for a vote in October: United For Equity And Ending Racism) have non-governmental status (NGOs) and under ECOSOC can make interventions when they perceive that aspects of the UN Charter that guarantee human rights are being ignored or trampled upon. Annually in May, two weeks at the UN are given over to the situation of the world's Indigenous peoples who come to the United Nations to give testimony and to seek justice for human rights offenses based upon the Charter of the United Nations. Though many indigenous peoples are represented as NGOs, some have expressed that they should be represented as nations in the General Assembly. In 2,010, Grail member Theresa Dardar of the Pointe-au-Chien tribe in Montegut La., was at the UN advocating for her tribe when the British Petroleum oil rig blew up in the Gulf of Mexico. Now we have another problem with drilling oil pipelines that threaten our water supply.

Following are excerpts from Minutes of a January NGO Committee on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:

Standing Rock (a native American reservation in North and South Dakota in the USA where an oil pipe line is being constructed though native peoples' land) Rick Chavolla recently returned from Standing Rock and he spoke about the challenges that Indigenous people faced in the middle of the winter and with continual police presence. Drew Gentile, a youth representative for Peace Day 365, also spoke about his experiences in witnessing police brutality at Standing Rock and what a profound effect the visit to Standing Rock had on him. President Obama helped to bring a temporary halt to drilling, but there is concern that Trump who has strong financial ties to oil companies will reverse this decision. Rick spoke about how people with many different philosophies have all come together to work toward a common goal. The issue of drilling, taking away indigenous lands and water also have occurred in Florida, New Jersey and many other places.

Indigenous Recognition at the UN It was reported that there is current discussion among indigenous peoples about wanting to be recognized as a nation not just as tribes and as NGOs. An advisory group of first nations has been formed to study this proposal.

On February 16th, Chief Dwain C. Perry, President of the Ramapough Lunaape Nation in Mahway, NJ, attended our monthly meeting and spoke of efforts of the local police and others to have their tribe leave the land they were on where they had a tepee for prayer. Chief Perry has brought their case to the court.

On February 17th, the Grail Politics and Spirituality group hosted Sonia Ingram, a Lakota Sioux. Sonia described her December 2016 spiritual journey and witness of the oil industry economic blockade of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. The drilling of an oil pipeline threatens land and fresh drinking water for 17 million people along the Missouri River. This was an historic gathering in solidarity of 250 tribes and allies to protect water.

For some Grail members who may not be aware, UFER is an alliance of the Grail with AFI (an International Fraternal Association). Representing the Grail/UFER in NYC are: Sharon Joslyn, Lillian Wall, Mpanda Kalala, Yvie Renda, Nancy Rhodes (Explorer) and myself. Grail members Monica Maher and Patricia Camiscao are members of the UFER board.

Southeast Indigenous Peoples' Center by Lori Johnson

Our ecosystems provide opportunity for food, health, shelter, and education opportunities. For Indigenous Peoples, all of the UN SDGs are related to our ability to safely access healthy ecosystems. These systems are not 'natural capital' to be depleted, but systems we participate in, giving and taking with respect. Emerging indigenous issues include ecological debt and predatory lending. Ecological debt is the price Indigenous Peoples pay for unscrupulous developers who plunder our land without upholding the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the principle of Free Prior and Informed Consent. We are left with poisoned waters and bodies while we watch our great grandmother Earth suffer to recover from her injuries. Meanwhile the developers who profit from the aggression of colonial powers against Indigenous Peoples take our place in decision-making forums. There are instances of Indigenous Peoples having to buy back their own water that they protected since time immemorial. Predatory debt is similar to the 'cash advance' shops on the street. They lend \$100 and you pay back \$150 in a week. (This was referenced frequently during the HLPF)

A method for enforcing sustainable consumption and production with binding human rights, trade, and social agreements is needed to reduce ecological debt and predatory lending. In general, we can prevent human rights' violators from profiting by weapons, drug, mineral, money trafficking (predatory debt collection included) by streamlining into targets and indicators implementation of various existing UN conventions and declarations.

Negotiation for Indigenous Peoples' Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) to access our resources that will reduce pollution and violence. The FPIC process is a learning and peace process. Indigenous Peoples' knowledge and labor is governed by formal institutions. By negotiating for our FPIC, the colonial powers can formally recognize Indigenous Peoples' human rights instruments protecting ecosystems and all its participants, including Indigenous Peoples and our neighbors. SDGs must facilitate transfer of technology to decolonizing nations, including Indigenous Peoples, allowing for capacity development and deployment of SDG programs. If the UN continues its founding purpose of decolonization we will fulfill the 2030 Agenda. Reminder: Indigenous Peoples achieved sustainability long before UN Member States existed.

LOOKING AHEAD

GLUNN interns: Are you or do you know of any young Grail member or one exploring Grail membership, age 22-32, who might like to serve as the GLUNN intern in 2018? The internship is January through March so the weather in New York City can be very cold. But, we'll keep you so busy you'll warm up real fast! We ask interns to be in NYC by January 2nd. In that way, you don't miss any important monthly meetings and you can get acclimated to the Bronx Grail team and New York City. The internship isn't a paid position but we do provide room and board and local transportation. If you already have all the details, write to Mary Kay for an application. If you need more information, also write to her and she will send the 'job description' out to you. We ask that all applications for internship are returned by August 30th. The sooner we know who is coming, the better prepared you and we can be, etc. Write to Mary Kay at Grail-IPT@juno.com.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Living across 90 countries, indigenous peoples make up less than five per center of the world's population, represent some 5,000 different cultures and speak a majority of the world's estimate 7,000 languages. August 9th is celebrated internationally as a day to pay tribute to indigenous communities around the globe.

CSW 62, March 12-23, 2018. Priority Theme: Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls. Review theme: participation in and access of women to the media, information and communications technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women. Google CSW 2018 for more information.

We ask that any girls with whom you work be considered for participation in CSW-62. Girls are 18 years or younger. They make such a powerful and inspirational contribution during CSW. We also need to know as early as possible who is coming because, even though last year we had access to St. Luke's Convent, by next March the convent may be sold so we have to negotiate housing elsewhere. Anyone who plans to attend should advise us by the end of November.

BOTH FOR INTERNS AND CSW PARTICIPANTS, THE SOONER YOU KNOW, THE BETTER. GETTING VISAS CAN BE COMPLEX, MARY KAY NEEDS TIME TO WRITE INVITATION LETTERS, ETC.

On this 25th anniversary of the **International Day for the Eradication of Poverty**, the theme is: Answering the Call of **October 17** to end poverty: "A path toward peaceful and inclusive societies". The theme reminds us of the importance of the values of dignity, solidarity and voice underscored in the Call to Action to fight to end poverty everywhere. These values are also evident in the SDGs. More information is available at un.org.

International Day of the Girl 2017 GIRLS SPEAK OUT

Call for Submissions...Attention girls of the world! This year marks the sixth anniversary of the International Day of the Girl (IDG 2017)! We are looking for creative work by girls to be featured on October 11th at the United Nations. We want to know: **What is it like for you to be a girl facing injustice?** Tell us a story about how you – **or a girl in your community** – handled a specific crisis or injustice. It could be a community crisis or injustice such as unfairness in education, violence, sexism, war, climate change, or so many others. Whatever "crisis" or "injustice" means to you, is the right definition. We will select a diverse set of bold, funny, sensitive, and powerful everyday stories from girls to showcase during IDG 2017 on Wednesday, October 11 at the UN in New York City!

IDG 2017 is our day to celebrate girls everywhere--to celebrate our power, our voices, and our unique place in this world. Help us showcase the creative and collective voice of girls everywhere and the unique role girls play in our world. The leaders of today need to hear from you. Let's inspire everyone with our stories of girl power.

We need your voice! Here's how:

- 1. Be a girl (or group of girls) between 13-18 years old.
- 2. Describe the whole situation in any format that you want to express yourself. Use art, pictures, poetry, songs, video. Be creative! v what happened? v who was there? v when was it? v where were you? v why did you do what you did? v who supported you? v what was the outcome?
- 3. Send us your inspirational story! Email your submission and consent form to: IDGsubmissions@gmail.com with your name, age, country, and contact information no later than Friday, August 18th 11:59PM US EST! (also email Abida and Mary Kay so we know what you are doing too azeja72@gmail.com, Grail-IPT@juno.com)
- Everyone who submits her work will be featured during the month of October on the DayoftheGirlSummit.org website, in our IDG2017 Webcast, or Shoutout Page! Please make sure your submission is in one of these formats: Poetry or monologue (maximum 250 words) Video or song (maximum length of 2 minutes) Photograph (jpeg files of at least 500 x 500 pixels) Art or graphic design (jpeg files of at least 500 x 500 pixels)
- IDG (International Day of the Girl) October 11, 2017: "Girls' Progress=Goals' Progress: A Global Girl Data Movement". Google unwomen.org or International Day of the Girl for more info.

Go to the website of the Working Group on Girls: girlsrights.org. Not only is there an informative newsletter, there is a video featuring girls speaking about the SDGs. You will see some of 'our girls' too!