



# GRAIL LINK TO THE UNITED NATIONS NETWORK

NEWSLETTER May/June 2019

*February 1, 2019, the UN launched the International Year of Indigenous Languages. This 'launch' follows the September 2007 resolution that provides a comprehensive framework of minimum standards for economic, social and cultural well-being and rights of the world's indigenous peoples to revitalize, use, protect, preserve and transmit their histories, languages and oral traditions to future generations. It grants the right to indigenous people to establish their own media and educational systems in their own languages.*



2019 | INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF  
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

## United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

The theme for the 18th session of UNPFII (22 April to 03 May, 2019 at the UN in New York) was Tradition Knowledge: Generation, Transmission and Protection with a focus on 2019 being the UN International Year of Indigenous Languages.

The Grail/UFER cosponsored a Panel event which was organized and moderated by **Abida Jamal** (Grail, Moçambique) and **Maya Gallardo** (Grail, Mexico). The theme was entitled: Our Elders have taught us: Translating tradition and culture into a sustainable economy for future generations. We were fortunate to have as panelists **Veronica Guajan**, **Shirlei Aparecida da Silva** and **Anna-Maria Ahlén**. Veronica lead us in an opening prayer/reflection making a cross from seeds and fruits of the earth. Shirlei ended the session with another reflection that included a dance.



**From Maya Gallardo (Mexico)** This is the third time I've been in New York City and the UN Headquarters. Rooms and halls inside and outside the UN have become familiar and even comfortable. But topics and issues can never become comfortable. The colors are present everywhere in the clothes, bags, necklaces and of course the skin, in their deep penetrating eyes ('miradas profundas') and the tattoos that embrace the face or the arms of the native people from all around the world.

We all may have different levels of understanding of what the UN does, or lots of disagreements with the States and governments, but this space allows us to see what is going on not only in the high levels but on the ground, where men and mostly women, transform their realities and fight every day to survive.

As the Grail Link to the UN Network we attend CSW, UNPFII, UNGA, CSocD, the HLPF and It reminds us that we aren't attending these Forums as average people but as Grail women and that, for me, is the GLUNN spirit. It is finding ourselves on the ground with the things in common and the differences; it is standing against the inequalities and the injustices; it is to dance, sing, pray and work for the World and for our land, for our languages, our wisdom and our survival.



Grail panel: Abida, Shirlei, Veronica, Maya, Anna-Maria

**From Sharon Joslyn (USA)** Indigenous peoples participated from all over the world emphasizing the importance of Indigenous world view today with the urgent need to recognize our interdependence as human beings with Mother Earth and all of nature. During the sessions it was noted that there are 6,700 languages in the world. They each represent a worldview and a culture. Of these, 43% (mostly Indigenous) are endangered.

Shirlei, Brazilian Grail member, is an activist with the Women’s Economic Solidarity Movement. She has many years of experience in popular education and specialization in the Pedagogy of Cooperative/ Collaborative Methodologies. Shirlei focused on the Cosmivision of the community and the origins of the Pedagogy of Cooperation Methodology.

Veronica, Ecuadoran Grail member but currently living in Washington, DC where her husband is engaged in a development project. Veronica is native of the Quichua people, Cotacachi, Ecuador. She obtained her MA in Gender and Development in Ecuador and has a vast experience advising Indigenous communities on Human Rights and Gender Equity issues. She spoke of the strategies of Indigenous cultures to protect Mother Earth and how these cultures can be a source of life and growth for all.

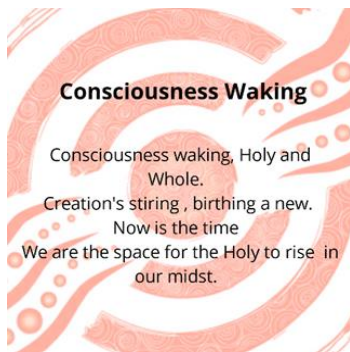
Anna-Maria, Swedish Grail, is an educator/journalist who lives and works on the Swedish side of Sápmi, the cultural region of the Sámi people. For the past 11 years she has been working as a Radio/TV journalist and producer for the Sámi radio and TV that is a part of the public service broadcasts in Sweden. She has been focusing on the Sámi language. Anna-Maria spoke on challenges of making accessible to Sámi children the Sámi inter-generational knowledge and linguistic skills. Her presentation is on facebook: “Grail at the UN”, (<https://www.facebook.com/grailgirls2030/videos/1024539794408629/>)

We are all grateful for the wisdom and the commitment of the panelists and moderators who have inspired us to maintain our efforts toward realization of the : UN 2030 Agenda: Transforming our World for Sustainable Development.

**From: Anna-Maria Ahlén, Sweden** *(Her complete article is in the ILT International newsletter but we add again here her personal reflection)* Indigenous issues are the most important issues in the world today. Why? Because it would benefit the whole planet, to live in a world with great cultural and linguistic diversity that recognizes and honors indigenous societies ways of living, their unique languages which bring a unique understanding of our planet and life on it. We should be honoring the indigenous societies traditional knowledge that unites in living in close connection with and understanding of our mother, the Earth. I believe we have much to learn from the traditional indigenous societies in how to live in economical and emotional sustainable ways.

**From: Lisa Petro (USA/Mexico)** While attending a workshop at the Indigenous Forum, “Seminar on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”, I began to think about how lack of access exists inside of the UN, the forum, and the Grail. I learned a great deal from the workshop. The syllabus included knowledgeable and dedicated individuals, most indigenous, some from Ivy League and some from UN agencies. We explored the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, policies, mandates, and personal experiences. What stood out to me after the learning, was the realization that I was the only representative from an NGO in the room and a white woman at that. Most of the participants were from the UN and affiliated governments, and so many representatives just were not present. I began to think about the reasons why: the lack of social connections, funding, and visibility, and these are just the reasons that I can see from my vantage point. I also thought about how I was able to be there because I had an annual pass from the Grail Link to the United Nations (GLUNN). I am grateful for this opportunity, to learn, to be present, and I recognize that it is my proximity to New York Headquarters that makes me eligible.

This prompted me to think about how everyone, all of us in The Grail, could at least access the knowledge that I was able to glean that day from the workshop. I decided I would take some time to write about ways we can access information and learning. Not just the sometimes dry, rhetoric that can be put out in UN reports and long statements, but also dynamic, engaged ways to know more about the issues. I reeled back a bit, and thought about how I discovered this event in the first place. *(Lisa’s complete article will be in the July/August issue of the GLUNN newsletter)*



We began our presentation with this beautiful song of Jan Novotka.



Veronica was asked to speak at another panel:

Language as the lifeline of Indigenous identity and Transmission of culture: an open discourse sponsored by permanent missions of Ecuador and the Philippines, Presentation Sisters, Maryknoll Sisters and NGO Committee on Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

During the Forum we were invited to a tobacco ceremony of the Lenape People in New Jersey. Abida, Mary Kay, Maya, Sharon and Tina attended. Ramapough Lenape Nation Chief Dwaine Perry, in the red shirt welcomed us. As we entered the Sacred Circle, each of us was smudged. Seen here: **Tina Kalala** entering and Sharon Joslyn in the background.



# HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM 2019



## HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

*"The 2030 Agenda is our roadmap and its goals and targets are tools to get there." - Secretary-General Antonio Guterres*

The meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2019, will be held from Tuesday, 9 July, to Thursday, 18 July 2019. The theme will be "*Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality*". The set of SDGs to be reviewed in depth is the following: 4, 8, 10, 13, 16 17. Member States as well as relevant UN entities and other stakeholders carry out regular voluntary reviews of the 2030 Agenda. The reviews are state-led, involving ministerial and other relevant high-level participants, and provide a platform for partnership, including through the participation of major groups and other relevant stakeholders. In 2019, 47 countries (7 for the second time) have volunteered to present their national voluntary reviews to the HLPF. Among them are 3 Grail countries namely, Philippines, South Africa and Tanzania. If you have information to share or any comments on these goals, please forward them to Abida.

## CSW64/Beijing+25 (2020)

Next year will be a 'big' year. Why? CSW64/Beijing+25. The event will take place at UN Headquarters in New York from 9 to 20 March 2020.

**CSW-64 (March 2020)** The main focus of the session will be reviewing the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. How is this contributing toward achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and full realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. For more information visit: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw64-2020>.

... We are looking for two **interns**, January through March, to help in the variety of preparations for the CSW. This is not a paid position but flight, room and board, local transportation are covered. It is a great opportunity for a young Grail woman 22 to 32 years of age to grow in the Grail as well as serve a very important role in the Grail's presence at CSW! Interested young women should contact Mary Kay at [grail-IPT@juno.com](mailto:grail-IPT@juno.com) by August 30<sup>th</sup>.

... **Participants:** In 2020 we will need to limit our numbers: 5 girls, 14 to 18 years; and 5 young women, 19-28 years old; possibly 5 adults as chaperones. If the young women can serve as chaperones, this gives opportunity for more to participate. In both cases, it is important that 1) applicants have a passport, 2) fill out the application before the end of October, 3) start working on visas as soon as accepted to be part of CSW.

**Beijing+25 (2020):** Celebrating 25 years of championing women's rights. The Fourth World Conference on Women marked a significant turning point in achieving the global goal of gender equality. An unprecedented 17,000 participants attended, including 6,000 government delegates, 4,000 accredited NGO representatives, a multitude of international civil servants and around 4,000 media representatives. Due to its empowering and long-term impact on women's rights, the Platform for Action is reviewed every five years. 2020 is a time to review. For more information visit: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/get-involved/beijing-plus-25>



**GENERATION  
EQUALITY**  
REALIZING  
WOMEN'S  
RIGHTS FOR AN  
EQUAL FUTURE

**THINGS HAPPENING IN  
OUR NETWORK**

Look for this headline in our July/August issue. We will be sharing from backhome projects of CSW-63 participants as well as the Young Women's Leadership Training Program in Moçambique a year ago.