



# Geneva Reporter

Quaker United Nations Office Geneva

## QUNO Engagement with Climate Talks

### In this issue

QUNO  
Engagement with  
Climate Talks  
pages 1 & 2

Natural  
Resources,  
Conflict and  
Cooperation  
page 2

Standard  
Minimum  
Rules for the  
Treatment of  
Prisoners page 3

Highlights from  
QUNO New York  
page 4

*In December 2012, QUNO attended the 18th Climate Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in the Qatari capital Doha.*



Photo: Michael Oko

### Qatar at the Final Plenary Session, COP18

This was the first Climate Conference attended by QUNO, which, having heard the call from Friends and others to work more directly on climate change, has been engaging with the UN climate talks over the last year. We attended the annual United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) intersessional meeting in May and held informal discussions with diplomats and other key stakeholders in Geneva, New York and elsewhere.

Our aim in flying to Doha was to better understand whether and how QUNO could help the UNFCCC process to move forwards, for instance through activities to build trust among delegates; we weren't lobbying for a particular outcome. With seven parallel negotiating streams in Doha, it was impossible to follow everything. Instead, the QUNO staff who attended (QUNO Geneva Director Jonathan Woolley and Associate Representative Oliver Robertson) focused on just two main issues: equity and monitoring. Equity

is critical to achieving a fair outcome in terms of emission reductions and support for adaptation, but different states or country blocs have very different ideas about what 'fair' means. Effective monitoring of State party commitments can help to build confidence that all countries will fulfil any obligations that they sign up to. In advance of the Conference, QUNO published a short briefing paper exploring the positive elements of other multilateral monitoring systems in order to demonstrate existing good practices, and the good outcomes these can have. This was well-received, as was our publication *Diverting the flow: Cooperation over international water resources*.

In Doha, we also attended meetings on agriculture and climate change, migration and displacement linked to natural disasters, and the links between climate change, conflict and cooperation. Significantly, we had many private meetings with diplomats, officials and other participants in the process. Several identified the same issues – in particular, the difficulty of bringing together people who are physically so far apart and only meet for a few weeks of intense negotiation each year.

The problem is not a lack of good ideas – in Doha, there was some considered and insightful commentary about equity in particular – but that they aren't getting

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Continued on page two



# Natural Resources, Conflict and Cooperation: a new approach

*QUNO's broad range of programmes offers unique opportunities for taking fresh perspectives. We present a current example.*

Photo: Martin Kunz



For some years QUNO has touched on issues of natural resource management through its work on food and sustainability and the human impacts of climate change. This work has recently focused on cooperation over international water resources and the impact of large scale agricultural investment on small farmers and local communities. QUNO staff have now formed a 'cluster' on natural resources, conflict, and cooperation, drawing on expertise from QUNO's work on climate change, food, peacebuilding and human rights.

The cluster seeks to respond to the complexities surrounding natural resource management. Its creation has been particularly inspired by calls from the Quaker community to recognize the links between peace and sustainability. These calls have also led us to form a virtual Peace and Environment Group for different Quaker organizations to share knowledge and experience.

QUNO is increasingly aware of the links between environment and peacebuilding work, and therefore seeks to encourage more dialogue and cooperation between these two fields at the international level. While resource scarcity does not inevitably lead to violent conflict, it can act as a conflict multiplier by exacerbating existing social tensions. Meanwhile poor resource management can worsen marginalisation, particularly among the poorest social groups. Top-down policies can fail to take local needs into account, large-scale agricultural investment can displace and disrupt small farmers, and hydropower dams, while positive in terms of cleaner energy production, can have a negative impact on both downstream and upstream communities.

In order to address the social injustice and inequality that often act as seeds of violent conflict, equitable resource management should be part of peacebuilding and peacekeeping activities. QUNO's specific role in this area continues to emerge from a discernment process in which we have sought to identify where our methods can make the most valuable contribution to UN practices.

As part of the cluster's work, we hope to raise awareness of the complexities surrounding resource management among policy-makers at the international level, as well as to explore how international policy can better support local communities to peacefully and equitably manage their natural resources.

## QUNO Engagement with Climate Talks *Continued from page one*

heard or accepted by the right people. The next step for QUNO is to reflect internally on what we have learnt from participating in the UNFCCC process and discern what our future involvement should be.

### *Recent Publication:*

*Increasing Trust and Effectiveness under the UNFCCC: Learning from International Monitoring Processes.* Ellie Roberts, November 2012.

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



# Reviewing the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners

*The UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (SMRs) were adopted in the 1950s. Since then, many new standards relating to prisoners have been adopted, including various human rights treaties. We reflect on why the time has come to review the Standard Minimum Rules.*



Photo: Andrea Huber

***Kimmett Edgar and Rachel Brett at the Intergovernmental Expert Group on the review of the SMRs, Buenos Aires.***

New standards relating to prisoners, including human rights treaties, have both resulted from, and encouraged, changes in countries' laws, policies and practices.

Significant amongst these are the 2010 UN Rules on the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the 'Bangkok Rules'), that QUNO was heavily involved in drafting.

The Bangkok Rules complement and supplement the SMRs to make them specifically applicable to women. In the course of their drafting, there was considerable discussion about many of the Rules and whether some of the proposals for inclusion in the Bangkok Rules were not equally applicable to men.

This is one of the main factors that led several States and non-governmental organizations (including QUNO) to identify the need for reviewing the SMRs.

Rachel Brett from QUNO accompanied Kimmett Edgar, Quaker representative to the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, to the second meeting of an Intergovernmental Expert Group on the review of the SMRs in Buenos Aires, Argentina in December. The issues considered by the Expert Group included: respect for prisoners' inherent dignity and value as human beings, medical and health services, and the right of access to legal representation.

There was a considerable agreement on the need for some targeted revisions of the SMRs, and there are plans to hold a further meeting to work on the actual text of revisions.

## *Further Reading:*

*The UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners*  
[www2.ohchr.org/english/law/treatmentprisoners.htm](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/treatmentprisoners.htm)

*Briefing on the UN Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders - "Bangkok Rules".* QUNO & Penal Reform International. February 2011.  
[www.quno.org/geneva/pdf/humanrights/women-in-prison/PRI-QUNO\\_English.pdf](http://www.quno.org/geneva/pdf/humanrights/women-in-prison/PRI-QUNO_English.pdf)



## Update from QUNO New York

In late 2012, QUNO New York collaborated with members of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) in Burundi on a list of advocacy points from local Burundi civil society organisations.

The list called for actions such as the strengthening of institutions and greater respect for human rights in Burundi. These points were shared with representatives from member States, UN agencies, donor agencies, and the Burundian government as they converged on Geneva in October for a donor conference with the goal of reducing poverty and creating sustainable livelihoods in Burundi.

Burundi has recently emerged from a protracted conflict and is currently one of the countries on the agenda of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission. Framing for the donor conference came from Burundi's second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP II), which highlighted government commitments to topics such as strengthening the rule of law, access to justice, and good governance.



UN Photo/Jean-Marc Ferré

*Burundi Minister of Foreign Affairs speaks at Geneva Donor Conference*

The conference was a huge success with a wide range of donors pledging over \$2 billion in aid commitments, two times Burundi's initial goal. As implementation of the PRSP II rolls out, QUNO will continue to engage on Burundi in the upcoming months, closely monitoring discussions on the shifting nature of UN engagement in the country while continuing to lift up the perspectives of local voices and their views on how peacebuilding should be supported in their country.

## News in Brief

Applications for this year's **Summer School** are now open until **11 March 2013**. The Summer School provides an introduction to the work of the United Nations, as seen through the programmes of QUNO Geneva. It is for all 20-26 year olds who have a keen interest in international affairs and the United Nations. This year's summer school will take place between 7 - **19 July 2013** in Geneva. For an application pack or more information please see [www.quno.org/getInvolved/index.html](http://www.quno.org/getInvolved/index.html) or contact Helen Bradford [helenb@quaker.org.uk](mailto:helenb@quaker.org.uk).

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**Programme Assistant vacancies:** the Programme Assistant (PA) position is a one-year placement that gives a young person the opportunity to live and work in Geneva contributing to the work of the Quaker United Nations Office. Each year at least two PAs are appointed. QUNO will be posting the full details of the next vacancies by March 2013, please visit our website [www.quno.org](http://www.quno.org) for more details.

This year, the QUNO Geneva PAs, together with Quaker Peace and Social Witness Peaceworkers in London and Burundi, are keeping a blog called 'PO Box Peace'. Each week a different Peacemaker shares their experiences of their placement. To follow the blog please visit [www.poboxpeace.wordpress.com](http://www.poboxpeace.wordpress.com).

If you would like to donate to QUNO's work, please visit our website at [www.quno.org](http://www.quno.org) for our bank details or to make a donation by credit card. Many thanks!