



# In & Around the UN

## An Update from the Quaker United Nations Office

June 2012

### New Directions: Exploring Alternatives for a Peaceful Solution in Somalia

Letter from the Director	2
The Joint QUNO Review	2
Consolidating Peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone	3
Sixth World Conference of Friends	3
Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues	4
Update from QUNO Geneva	5
Meet Elisabeth	6
PA Corner	6

A delegation from the Life & Peace Institute, Nairobi, and the Kroc Institute for International Studies at the University of Notre Dame traveled to Washington, DC, and New York in March to present a recent joint publication, *Somalia: Creating Space for Fresh Approaches to Peacebuilding*. QUNO was delighted to host their visit in New York. Over the course of two days, Quaker House provided a welcoming venue for our visitors to share their publication with UN colleagues and offer fresh perspectives and alternative approaches to conflict resolution in Somalia.

The publication makes a critical examination of isolationist strategies used in Somalia to deal with terrorist groups such as Al Shabaab. These strategies have included forbidding material assistance that might benefit terrorist groups, refusal to negotiate, imposition of sanctions, and the use of military force. By contrast, the report argues that long-term solutions will require opening space in which actors from the national, regional, and international level seek out and safely engage with civilians. The report places emphasis on civil society as a crucial linkage to “on the ground realities.”

In New York, QUNO arranged a series of meetings for the delegation to meet with diplomats, UN staff, and NGOs that are currently focused around work on Somalia. These discussions offered an opportunity for delegation members and participants to engage in a frank exchange of views on the sensitive topic of how to go about engaging with actors or organizations that have been labeled as “terrorists.” Our guests encouraged UN colleagues to think about the need

to engage with local Somali communities; strategies for de-escalation and use of less polarizing language; processes that promote trust-building, reconciliation, and national identity formation; the importance of taking a regional approach to problem-solving; and the need to look at lessons learned from



A Ugandan soldier serving with the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) carries water through the grounds of Mogadishu University. AMISOM forces captured the strategically important university following a major joint offensive against Al Shabaab. (23 January 2012, Mogadishu, Somalia. Source: UN News & Media)

past experiences. Meeting participants noted that the ideas and approaches discussed were important and not often heard in UN discussions around Somalia, and they were encouraged by the conversations.

We invite readers to access the LPI/Kroc report which is available online at the website of the Life & Peace Institute (<http://www.life-peace.org/resources/publications/other-publications/>). QUNO continues to follow the situation in Somalia, particularly around the upcoming political transition process, and will be looking for opportunities to uphold perspectives that encourage dialogue and peaceful solutions. ❖

Quaker UN Office  
777 UN Plaza  
5th Floor  
New York, NY 10017  
qunony@afsc.org  
www.quno.org

## Letter from the Director

Dear Friends:

As I write this, tragic violence continues to unfold in Syria. We are deeply concerned about reports of massacres and ongoing human rights abuses in the country, and similarly concerned for the regional implications of the ongoing and deepening violence. QUNO is supportive of efforts by the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States Kofi Annan, among others, who have been working hard to encourage a peaceful resolution to the current conflict.

As with any UN action, an effective response relies on agreement between the major actors, particularly members of the Security Council, as well as regional organizations. We hope and pray that the intense diplomatic work that is continuing behind the scenes will result in a

unified response by the international community in support of a peaceful solution to the crisis.

The world of peacebuilding and prevention continues to develop rapidly, and QUNO has been part of a series of high-level discussions on prevention, on mediation, and on the intersection between peacebuilding and development. We have also been following the debate over what development framework will replace the Millennium Development Goals after 2015, with a concern that the needs of fragile and conflict-affected communities are addressed.

In March, QUNO staff were in Beijing, working with our colleagues at the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) from Africa and China, talking to a number of local partners and planning the next steps on our China work at the UN and in Africa. In recent months we have

also hosted visits from peacebuilding organizations from outside the UN on the latest work in challenging environments such as West Africa and Somalia, bringing perspectives and lessons learned from peacebuilding practice on the ground.

In April we were privileged to take part in the 6th World Conference of Friends in central Kenya, a once-in-a-generation opportunity to gather with Quakers from all over the world. We were inspired by the love and dedication of Friends as they work for peace and justice in their communities.

Thank you for your support and encouragement.

In friendship,

*Andrew Tomlinson*

---

## The Joint QUNO Review – A New Chapter in Inter-Office Cooperation

This March, the Quaker UN offices in New York and Geneva released the first-ever *Joint QUNO Review*. The review is a 31-page publication detailing, in words and in images, the current work of Friends in the two principal locations of the United Nations.

Our goal was to detail the depth and breadth of current Quaker work at the UN and to illustrate how our programs complement and inform one another. The New York office wrote about our Peacebuilding and Prevention programs, as well as Palestine's bid for UN status, and the Geneva office wrote about Disarmament, Human Rights, and Food and Sustainability, among other topics.

Coordinating an intercontinen-

tal publication was an exciting challenge – different time zones, paper sizing, and printing companies required us to have a great deal of patience and humor. Ultimately, we are all very proud of the work we have done, and hope to make the *QUNO Review* an annual event.

*Interested in the QUNO Review? To download a copy, visit our website: [www.quno.org](http://www.quno.org). To receive a hard copy, send your name and mailing address to [qunony@afsc.org](mailto:qunony@afsc.org). ❖*



## Consolidating Peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone

Through our work on the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), QUNO has been engaging on the situation in Liberia over the past year by hosting informal, off-the-record meetings on various topics, including the post-elections situation and cross-regional peacebuilding in West Africa. We are particularly interested in lifting up the voices and work of local grassroots organizations, which is why we were so pleased to host a visit by two experts from Conciliation Resources (CR) to discuss their recent publication, *Consolidating Peace: Liberia and Sierra Leone*.

During their visit, Janet Adama Mohammed, West Africa Country Director for CR, and David Newton, Director of Policy, Practice, and Communications for CR, participated in a public event co-sponsored by QUNO, CR, and the Delegation of the European Union (EU) to the UN. The event was held in one of the lovely meeting spaces of the EU delegation. Tammi Sharpe, who works on Liberia with the UN Peacebuilding Support

Office also participated on the panel. Opening remarks were made by the Head of the EU delegation, Ambassador Thomas Mayr-Harting. The event was moderated by QUNO's Director Andrew Tomlinson.

The CR report, which Janet and David focused on during their presentations at the event, looks at building sustainable peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and highlights the major strides that have been made so far, as well as the challenges that remain, particularly in the areas of governance, justice, security, and reconciliation. The report is part of a broader project called the People's Peacemaking Perspectives, which brings in local voices to look at policy issues in different parts of the world affected by conflict.

The UN's engagement in Liberia and Sierra Leone over the years has been significant, with ongoing peacekeeping and political missions on the ground. Both countries are also cur-



Janet Adama Mohammed with Conciliation Resources (CR) speaks at an event on consolidating peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone, co-sponsored by QUNO, CR, and the Delegation of the EU to the UN. To her right are David Newton (CR) and Andrew Tomlinson (QUNO). (Source: QUNO)

rently on the agenda of the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). CR's visit was an important opportunity for UN experts, diplomats, and NGOs to reflect on the current situation in West Africa and take into account local perspectives for how the UN can further support peacebuilding in the region. ❖

## Sixth World Conference of Friends, Kabarak University, Kenya

The Directors of both the New York and Geneva Quaker UN Offices attended the 6th World Gathering of Friends in April at Kabarak University near Nakuru, in the Rift Valley of Kenya. Gatherings of Quakers on this scale happen only once in a generation, so this was a rare opportunity to connect with Friends from all over the world, to update them on our activities, and to hear their experiences and concerns.

It was a particular pleasure to link up with Friends doing peace and reconciliation work in their own communities. There was a large contingent of Friends from Burundi and Rwanda, including David Nyonzima, who first spoke at Quaker House some 17 years



Giraffe in Lake Nakuru National Park, Kenya. (Source: Andrew Tomlinson)

ago (bringing some of the first direct reports of the 1993 civil war and killings in Burundi to a UN audience), and Adrien Nyongabo, who will be visiting New York shortly to talk about Friends' trauma healing work in the Great Lakes region of Africa. There was also a strong representation of Friends from Western Kenya who have been working on community-level healing and reconciliation after the 2008 post-election violence in Kenya.

Each day we heard from Friends from different parts of the world, sharing their lives, their worship, and their concerns. Some of the most powerful moments of the gathering came during these sessions, such as the  
(continued on page 4)

## Eleventh Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Convenes in New York

The Eleventh Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues took place at the United Nations headquarters from May 7th to 18th. The theme of this year's Forum was "The Doctrine of Discovery," a legal concept that was used to legitimize the colonization of indigenous peoples in different regions of the world, and to dehumanize, exploit, and subjugate indigenous peoples throughout history. While faith traditions have begun to reject the doctrine, States around the world have not, and contemporary case law continues to draw on the Doctrine of Discovery.

Indigenous peoples are calling for an official revocation of the Doctrine, and this year's Forum was an opportunity for groups to dialogue with each other and with UN Member States on issues related to the Doctrine. Discus-



Todadaho Sid Hill (at center podium), Chief of the Onondaga Nation, delivers the ceremonial welcome at the opening of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)'s eleventh session. The session this year emphasizes the theme, "The Doctrine of Discovery: Its Enduring Impact on Indigenous Peoples and the Right to Redress for Past Conquests." (7 May 2012, United Nations, New York, Source: UN News & Media)

sions also covered a variety of other topics such as human rights issues, including the right to food, and concerns related to resource extraction.

Our colleagues from the Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC), Jennifer Preston, and CFSC volunteer, Monica Walters-Field, made the trek to New York City for their annual attendance of this event. Following a request by the Friends World Committee on Consultation, CFSC has carried out this work on behalf of

in a more personal and informal way, and in the afternoons we participated in workshops, called thread groups, on a variety of themes. QUNO facilitated a thread group entitled "Friends' witness on a global stage: working for the peace of all" that was well attended and resulted in some focused conversations about how such a small group as the Quakers can make an impact at a policy level.

We came away refreshed and renewed in our witness on behalf of Friends at the United Nations. ❖

Friends at the UN and collaborates closely with QUNO around their activities.

This year, two meetings were held at Quaker House, both of which gave representatives of the indigenous caucus and member states the chance to discuss key themes and issues brought up at the Forum. Jennifer and Monica reported that the proceedings at the Forum this year were rich and active, and that Member States seemed much more "animated" this year than in previous years. ❖

### How to Support QUNO

QUNO welcomes donations to help cover the cost of its work. We are happy to accept contributions towards two areas of our work:

*The Fund for Quaker House:* the endowment supports the maintenance and operation of Quaker House.

*QUNO Operating and Program Expenses:* contributions can be made toward the cost of our annual budget.

Please make your check payable to "QUNO." If you'd like your gift to go towards Quaker House, please write "Quaker House" in the memo portion of the check. For credit card gifts, call toll free 1-888-588-2372 ext. 1, or click the ["Donations" button](#) on our web site and follow the instructions provided.

Please send checks to:  
Quaker UN Office  
777 United Nations Plaza, 5th Fl.  
New York, NY 10017

Gifts made to QUNO within the United States are deductible for federal income tax purposes.

### World Conference

(continued from page 3)

presentation by Thomas Owen, a young Friend from Aotearoa, New Zealand, talking of the Maori name for Quakers — "the faith community that stands shaking in the wind of the spirit" — and speaking movingly to his topic of "a broken world." Also Esther Mombo from Kenya, powerfully rooting our discussions in the lived reality of today's Africa.

In the late morning we met in "home groups" and shared our lives

## Update from QUNO Geneva

April and May have been busy months for QUNO Geneva, with staff continuing ongoing work in areas such as children of incarcerated parents or human impacts of climate change, discerning possible new directions for work on peace and disarmament, delivering the Swarthmore lecture at Britain Yearly Meeting, and participating in the Friends World Conference in Kenya.

Amongst our many recent activities, in early May, we hosted a lively workshop, bringing together a dozen experts in human rights, agriculture, anthropology and intellectual property (IP), for a project that will assess the human rights impact of UPOV. UPOV is the International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants, which promotes IP protection for plants. QUNO Geneva is embarking on this project as part of its work on Food & Sustainability.

Workshop participants spent a challenging and enjoyable two days exploring the appropriate methodology and indicators for assessing whether more restrictive IP standards in agriculture will help or hinder realization of the right to food. Paying particular attention to the rights and interests of small-scale farmers, women and indigenous people, we asked ourselves questions such as whether affected stakehold-



Three workshop participants in QUNO Geneva's meeting room. (Source: QUNO)

ers have been sufficiently included in the formulation and application of IP policy for agriculture; whether small-scale marginalized farmers can access new, UPOV-protected seeds; and whether UPOV facilitates research on food security.

QUNO Geneva is taking the lead on this project together with the Berne Declaration (Switzerland), the Development Fund (Norway), Third World Network and others. The overall objective of the project is twofold. First, it aims to inform policy makers in the North and South and encourages them to develop human rights-consistent

IP policy in the agricultural sector. Secondly, it aims to further develop and demonstrate the application of the human rights impact assessment approach.

We will shortly identify the three countries in which the assessments will take place, and after country-based research in the coming months we expect to publish the project's findings by May 2013.

*To learn more about the work of QUNO Geneva, please email us at [quno@quno.ch](mailto:quno@quno.ch) or visit QUNO's website at [www.quno.org](http://www.quno.org). ❖*

## Meet Elisabeth

In January, the office welcomed Elisabeth Halliday as our new Office Coordinator. Among many amazing talents and qualities, Elisabeth speaks German, fosters



Elisabeth Halliday, our new Office Coordinator  
(Source: QUNO)

cats, and sings in an opera company. Elisabeth is from Lexington, Massachusetts, and has lived in New York City for the past five years. She serves as Communications Director for her opera company, Rhymes with Opera, as well as being the lead soprano. When she's not singing or working at QUNO, Elisabeth enjoys reading books and frequenting New York City's many zoos. Her favorite places in New York City are the Natural History Museum and the High Line Park.

As our Office Coordinator, Elisabeth is working on QUNO's communications activities, so feel free to reach out to her with any questions or issues related to the newsletter or website. She can be reached at [ehalliday@afsc.org](mailto:ehalliday@afsc.org). ❖



We're sad to say goodbye to Cathy Thomas, our former Office Coordinator – but it looks like she's having fun!  
(Source: Cathy Thomas)

## PA Corner

Greetings from Kirsten Mandala, Program Assistant. Samia and I have been working here for 10 months already, and it is almost time to welcome our new Program Assistants in August! We have been involved in a wide variety of program work this spring, and I was also able to take my first trip for QUNO. In April, I attended the World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates in Chicago, Illinois. I was selected as a youth representative of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1947. At the summit, nine Nobel Laureates and 13 Laureate organizations were in attendance, and I was able to hear panel discussions that featured the Dalai Lama, President Carter, President Gorbachev, President Walesa, Jody Williams, Shirin

Ebadi, Mohammed Yunis, the United Nations, UNICEF, Amnesty International, and the Red Cross, to name just a few.

The conference, and the varied group of laureates and activists who were present, demonstrated the myriad ways to approach promoting peace, all of which can have tremendous global impact. The official theme of this year's summit was "Speak Up, Speak Out for Freedom and Rights," though the conference focused on a variety of themes, including climate change, women, and nuclear weapons, all with a large emphasis on empowering youth.

I am very grateful to AFSC and QUNO for the opportunity: it was



AFSC Youth Delegates including Kirsten Mandala (3rd from left) at the Chicago AFSC office.  
(Source: Briana Tumangkeng)

great exposure to the wide spectrum of peace work being done all over the world.

To learn more about being a Program Assistant at QUNO, visit the "Get Involved!" section of our website [www.quno.org](http://www.quno.org). ❖