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In & Around the UN An Update from the Quaker United Nations Office

Who Will Follow in Ban Ki-moon's Footsteps? Selection Process for the New UN Secretary-General Is Underway



Current UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

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Over the next few months, Member States will select a new Secretary-General—a process that has been followed quite closely and passionately by the UN system and the international community. The UN has, over recent years, been increasingly criticized for appointing new leadership in a manner that has sorely lacked transparency. As a result, the UN has made efforts to be more open and inclusive in this current selection process, such as by providing opportunities for the general public to engage with the candidates for the new Secretary-General position. The emergence of the “1 for 7 billion” concept, which advocates that the

UN Secretary-General should represent the world's seven billion people, coupled with growing frustration that the permanent five members of the Security Council have historically monopolized the process, seemed to have had an impact.

In April, the current nine candidates for the position went through three days of informal briefings where they were asked numerous questions from UN delegates, civil society representatives, and the general public. They were asked to discuss the challenges and responsibilities facing the UN and the next Secretary-General, as well as how they would tackle these.

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What's Next in Peacebuilding?



Participants gather at Quaker House for QUNO's annual "What's Next in Peacebuilding" event. © QUNO

In March of this year QUNO held its annual "What's Next in Peacebuilding" event, a three day gathering at Quaker House of 15 peacebuilding networks and organizations from around the world. The event consisted of multiple meetings, some of which included just the core participants, and others which included those from the broader New York peacebuilding community. There was the opportunity to discuss a variety of issues relevant to current peacebuilding challenges, such as peace perspectives on humanitarian action, funding for peacebuilding, the role for peacebuilding organizations in the Middle East, and new perspectives on the prevention of violent conflict.

As part of the gathering, QUNO hosted an evening reception at Quaker House. In attendance were diplomats from the offices of the chair and vice-chairs of the UN Peacebuilding Commission – Kenya, the Republic of Korea and Sweden. UN colleagues and other NGOs were also present. The evening was an opportunity for lively informal conversations on priorities of concern for the peacebuilding community, and allowed for new relationships to develop.

The meeting resulted in a number of collaborative initiatives, and participants also expressed their appreciation for the time set aside for open discussions, giving space for deeper reflection. ❖

New Secretary-General (Continued from page 1)

Many within the UN system and the international community more broadly are calling upon the UN to

appoint one of the female candidates to the position. There has yet to be a female Secretary-General, despite the UN having been active for the past 70 years. Many are also calling

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for a Secretary-General from Eastern Europe—a region that has not yet been represented in the UN's most high-profile position. ❖

Letter from the Director

Dear Friends:

Once every ten years the window opens for the possibility of significant changes at the UN with the appointment of a new Secretary-General (most holders of the position have had two five-year terms). The process is now well underway for the selection of a successor to Ban Ki-moon, to take office in January 2017. This time around, the process is significantly more open, (although the Permanent Five members of the Security Council retain the final say), and there is a good chance that a female candidate will be chosen, for the first time.

The background to this change in leadership is a mixed bag. On the one hand, recent months have seen a series of UN-led multi-lateral success stories, chief among them the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. On the other hand, a lack of consensus

among the international community on peace and security issues has led to impasse in the Middle East, despite the horrific toll on human lives, and revelations of sexual assaults by peace-keepers from troop-contributing countries continue to besmirch the UN's reputation in the field.

In New York, significant attention is being focused on the follow-up and implementation to last year's high-level reviews of Peace Operations (including Peacekeeping), the Peacebuilding Architecture, and Women, Peace and Security. Many of the big-picture structural recommendations will wait for the new Secretary-General to consider, but we already have one considerable success in the new resolution on UN Peacebuilding, passed simultaneously in the Security Council and the General Assembly in April, which highlights the expanded notion of peacebuilding to include a definition of "sustaining peace,"

which encompasses activities for: preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict; addressing root causes; assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities; ensuring national reconciliation; and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development.

So as we move into the last six months of the term of the current Secretary-General, QUNO continues to engage with diplomats, UN officials and civil society representatives, working for a United Nations that addresses key drivers of violence, facilitates and supports change through peaceful means, and whose policies and practices reflect a diversity of voices.

Thank you for your support.



Andrew Tomlinson

Update from QUNO Geneva

The first five months of 2016 have seen a great deal of work undertaken across each of our four programs in Geneva.

For our Human Rights and Refugees team, much of this was focused around the recent session of the UN Human Rights Council during March. Representative Laurel Townhead and Program Assistant Daniel Cullen followed the negotiation of resolutions on several thematic issues, including those on minority rights, torture and freedom of religion or belief.

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QUNO Geneva's Patrick Endall delivering an oral statement on human rights and the environment during the March 2016 session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.
© QUNO Geneva

Pastor Elie's Visit to New York

Last month QUNO was fortunate to be visited by Pastor Elie Nahimana, the Administrative Coordinator of the Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities (HROC) program in Burundi. Pastor Elie was on a tour of the US to speak about the wonderful work that HROC carries out, which involves trauma healing within communities to prevent further violence. QUNO knew that his visit to New York could offer a valuable input into UN policy making in Burundi, where UN staff and member states are currently discussing a police intervention. Pastor's Elie was able to provide an alternative perspective, and demonstrated how Quakers in Burundi have already been working for years with a variety of groups on peace issues.

QUNO organized two busy days of meetings, where Pastor Elie was able to meet with various UN staff, member states and other NGOs who are currently working on what to do



Pastor Elie speaks at Quaker House

© QUNO

about the political crisis. The timing was perfect, as the day after Pastor Elie left there was a UN Security Council meeting on whether to send an international police contribution to try and calm tensions. Since the visit, UN staff have put Pastor Elie in touch

with their own colleagues in Burundi, so that future dialogue can take place between QUNO partners in Burundi and the UN. QUNO hopes that this will lead to more preventative, peaceful solutions to the current conflict. ❖

QUNO Geneva

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Also at the Council session, the Peace and Disarmament program hosted a panel discussion on environmental rights and the prevention of destructive conflict. Among the speakers at the event were the Chilean Ambassador, the Costa Rican Ambassador and the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment.

Meanwhile Food and Sustainability Representative Susan Brag-

don travelled to The Hague in February to present a new paper on the reinvigoration of the public sector in relation to food security. The F&S program is currently working on a consultation event alongside upcoming negotiations at the World Intellectual Property Organization, in order to raise the profile of farmers' rights.

The Human Impacts of Climate Change program organised two "quiet diplomacy dinners" in March, bringing together diplomats, UN officials and NGO repre-

sentatives. These dinners highlighted how the protection of human rights in climate change action can make for more sustainable, effective and just action, and that insufficient climate action is increasingly leading to human rights abuses.

In February, we bid farewell to Mihan Borhani, who was Program Assistant for Peace and Disarmament since February, 2015. We are looking forward to welcoming three new Program Assistants in September. ❖

Putting Prevention Back on the UN's Agenda

Although conflict prevention is at the core of the UN charter, the UN has, over the years, largely failed to prevent armed conflicts. Conflict prevention remains a much debated topic within the UN system, with some Member States advocating for the institutionalization of stronger prevention tools at the UN, while others continue to reject the concept and view it as a problematic attempt at challenging national sovereignty. Three recent UN reviews—the High Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, the Review of the UN's Peacebuilding Architecture, and the Global Study on the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security—all aim at putting conflict prevention back at the forefront of

the UN's agenda. This shared acknowledgement, shaped in part by these three recent reviews, creates an opportune time for civil society to engage actively with UN bodies to establish coordinated and joint action, not only to prevent conflicts from emerging, but also to prevent relapse into conflict. There is momentum for a real shift from rhetoric to action in the prevention field.

Work on prevention within the UN system is quite diffuse and

fragmented. While there is a shared responsibility, there is often a lack of close inter-departmental cooperation on prevention. There is also little strategic collaboration between UN departments and civil society

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Closer Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional and Sub-regional Organizations

The Report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) recommendations have been key to QUNO's work on peacebuilding and conflict prevention. Commissioned by the Secretary General, the Panel chaired by Jose-Ramos Horta, the former president of Timor-Leste included 16 prominent personalities such as former UN diplomats, former heads of missions, military personnel, academics and lawyers. The panel travelled widely through Africa,

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QUNO-AFSC Bring the Perspectives of Chinese Scholars to the UN

In April, AFSC and QUNO collaborated to bring three Chinese scholars and UN experts to the UN. During their short but productive trip, they presented their research on UN peace operations and shared their perspectives on three recent major UN reviews to a variety of Member States, UN officials, think tanks and other civil society actors in New York.

China is becoming increasingly involved in supporting UN peace operations and peacebuilding in conflict-affected and post-conflict states, especially in Africa. These scholars have recently embarked on fieldwork which has looked at China's involvement in UN peace operations, peacebuilding and women, peace and security. Dr. Zhang Guihong, the Executive Director for UN Studies at Fudan University, spoke about the need for greater collaboration between the UN and Asia on peace and security issues; Ms. Li Xueyao from the United Nations Association of China provided information on



From left to right, Jason Tower, Rachel Madenyika, Andrew Tomlinson, Maggie Zeng, Zhang Guihong, Li Xueyao
© QUNO

China's current involvement in UN peace operations; and Dr. Maggie Zeng, an expert on gender issues, discussed the recent UN review on Women, Peace and Security and China's efforts to implement the recommendations within this report.

Discussion on the three UN reviews remains at the forefront of

the UN's agenda and QUNO believes it is crucial to bring a diversity of voices and perspectives to this process. By bringing these scholars to the UN, QUNO and AFSC hope to have contributed to this effort and provided the space for frank and open dialogue about China's involvement in peace operations. ❖

Closer Cooperation (Continued from page 5)

Asia, Europe and South America, where they consulted with local civil society groups, international non-government organizations (INGOs), think tanks, peacekeepers, UN regional offices, UN Member States, UN staff in the field and headquarters. These consultations led to over 100 recommendations on ways to improve UN peace operations. Most importantly the report called for greater global-regional cooperation between the UN

and the African Union (AU).

Over the past six months, QUNO has honed into this recommendation and focused on methods of building a greater partnership between the UN and AU mission in conflict prevention in New York. In the coming months, QUNO will facilitate the "Africa Speakers Series" at Quaker House, which will involve the UN, AU and various African sub-regional organizations to develop, practical steps

to finding peaceful solutions to conflict.

Rather than focus on the issues and challenges, the "Africa Speakers Series" will identify areas of potential collaboration and ways to strengthen AU and UN cooperation at a practical level, exchange experiences and information and, discuss ways of bridging the identified gaps and to build momentum of this agenda. ❖

Celebrating the Work of Quakers at the United Nations



Guests gather at Quaker House to hear about 70 years of Quaker work at the UN

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In March QUNO hosted a gathering to welcome 40 Quakers and friends of QUNO to join staff for an evening at Quaker House celebrating Quakers' seventieth year at the United Nations. Refreshments were served, and there was an opportunity to hear from current and former staff. Those in attendance heard speeches from QUNO Director Andrew Tomlinson, as well as two of the current QUNO Committee members, Anna Crumley-Effinger and Doug Bennett. Anna was also worked as a QUNO

program assistant in 2007/8, so all three speakers were able to give different perspectives on the work that Quakers do at the UN.

QUNO has been involved since the founding of the UN, from the initial discussions on the Law of the Sea Treaty, to drafting an international convention on the rights of migrant workers, to pushing for the inclusion of a Sustainable Development Goal on peaceful and inclusive societies. ❖

Prevention

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organizations working on prevention in the field. QUNO believes improving the dialogue between the UN and civil society organizations at both the local and policy level is an important aspect of enhancing

the UN's preventive capacities. As a result, QUNO has been closely following these discussions on prevention, and staff have been meeting with relevant prevention actors at the UN, including member states, to better understand their perspectives and priorities on conflict prevention.

QUNO's work on prevention has also included bridging the gap between civil society and the UN and bringing these two groups together to share ideas, best practices on prevention and potential avenues of collaboration. ❖