



In & Around the UN

An Update from the Quaker United Nations Office

December 2011

Delegation of UN Experts from China Visits New York

Letter from the Director	2
Letter from QUNO Geneva	2
PA Corner	3
Restorative Justice and Peacebuilding	4
Prevention Seminar with the Security Council	5
Quaker Collaboration on the Horn of Africa	5

During November, QUNO and AFSC hosted a visit by leading UN experts from China. As part of QUNO’s work to deepen engagement with rising centers of power, the visit highlighted Chinese perspectives on the UN’s role in peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. It gave the scholars an opportunity to build relationships at the UN and to engage with QUNO and others on these issues. For UN colleagues, the visit was a unique opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of Chinese perspectives on these important topics.

The visit included one public event, co-hosted with the Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum. Delegation members shared research on topics such as the evolution of Chinese approaches to peacebuilding; and challenges around Chinese cooperation within the UN, particularly with Western nations. The large audience included diplomats, UN staff, academics, and non-governmental organizations eager to ask questions. Some sought to better understand Chinese interests and motivations in engaging on these issues, while others were eager to learn more about the diversity of Chinese views on controversial issues such as the

responsibility to protect.

Delegation members also took part in a number of small, informal conversations on similar topics. New York-based participants noted that there are few opportunities for contact with researchers from China. At the end of the visit one delegation member reflected, “I was very sad to learn that so many



QUNO hosts Chinese delegation in Quaker House.
(Source: Jason Tower)

parts of the UN have no engagement with China. I am very glad that Quaker[s] have taken an interest in increasing dialogue, and am very pleased to work with you.”

Together, QUNO and AFSC staff will continue to identify opportunities to build linkages and strengthen common understanding between traditional UN actors and experts from rising centers of power at the UN such as China. ❖

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Letter from the Director

Dear Friends:

I'm writing this on my return from my second trip to Geneva over the last month, this time from the annual meeting of the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform. The meeting was preceded by a full-day expert seminar on prevention: I had been invited to give a presentation on behalf of QUNO on recent developments in the prevention field at the UN, and it was a great opportunity to get caught up with friends and colleagues from across the world working on this key issue.

The potential for violence following the recent elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains a serious concern, and QUNO continues to monitor the

situation closely, particularly through our links with the work of Canadian Friends Service Committee and their local partners on the ground. As with other recent elections in Africa, it is crucial for local civil society to be included in international strategies to address elections-related violence. As we saw in the elections in Burundi last year, local groups play an important role monitoring and reporting on violence and helping to mediate conflicts that arise.

Also, we have been carefully watching a number of positive developments unfold in Myanmar. Over recent years, QUNO has quietly supported UN engagement on Myanmar and we have worked to uphold, where possible, the peace-making and peacebuilding work of

local civil society and actors. While much remains to be done, recent developments fill us with hope for the future.

This is the second of our email-only newsletters. We are aware that our database of email addresses is incomplete. Do feel free to send this on to your friends, and encourage them to sign up on our [website](#).

As the year draws to a close, I'd like to take the opportunity to thank all of our supporters across the world for their help and encouragement. This work would not be possible without you.

In Friendship,

Andrew Tomlinson

Letter from QUNO Geneva

In September, one focus of QUNO Geneva's work on children of prisoners was achieved: the holding by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child of a Day of General Discussion on children of incarcerated parents. QUNO played a leading role in organising the Day, which included active and valuable discussion by over 200 people, accompanying workshops and an acclaimed exhibition. QUNO Geneva was also active in organising the Second Ministerial Review Conference of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, and in ensuring genuine civil society participation. The

Declaration is important because about 90% of violent deaths now occur outside "traditional" armed conflict or "terrorism."

QUNO Geneva continues to raise awareness and understanding about the relationships between intellectual property, seeds and agriculture. Towards this end we held two lunchtime discussions in October that helped prepare delegates for upcoming sessions in the Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants. Discussions focused on what kind of changes would be needed to the current systems to make them more suited to the world's agricul-

tural needs. With the arrival of Programme Assistant Steven Heywood, our work on the human impacts of climate change has strengthened its research into the connections between climate change, migration, and the opportunities for cooperation rather than conflict.

In November, the biennial meeting of the Quaker United Nations Group brought together 18 staff from eight Quaker institutions active at the UN to share plans and ideas in the areas of peace, environment and justice. ❖

Happy Holidays from the Quaker UN Office in New York City!



Kirsten Mandala, QUNO PA, bakes cookies for the Church Center UN holiday party.
(Source: QUNO)

PA Corner

It's December, and I can hardly believe I've already been a Program Assistant at QUNO for over four months! No week in the office – or at the UN – has been the same. And while I've experienced so much already, I also feel like there is still so much more for me to learn. We've already begun the process of recruitment for the new Program Assistants (Kirsten and I have even hosted a few, very informal, information sessions for prospective PAs), which has provided a chance to reflect on what's happened so far. One of the most exciting and interesting events for me this year was the visiting delegation of Chinese academics (read more about it in this newsletter). I got to attend meetings with UN staff, member states, and NGOs that gave me insight into broader discus-

sions on the role of China as an emerging power, and its interaction with the fields of prevention and peacebuilding. It was also great getting to speak with our guests, and learn about their lives and work. Events like these underscore the unique position that I am in as a QUNO Program Assistant, and the incredible opportunities made available.

For those who are interested (or know someone who might be!), the 2012-13 Program Assistant application is available on the QUNO website (www.quno.org), and **this year's deadline will be February 10th**. Feel free to contact Kirsten (kmandala@afsc.org) or myself (sabbass@afsc.org) with any questions. ❖



Samia Abbass, QUNO PA
(Source: QUNO)

Restorative Justice and Peacebuilding

QUNO recently hosted an informal meeting at Quaker House with some of the world's leading experts on restorative justice and peacebuilding. For countries recovering from conflict, the need to deal with the root causes of past violence is an issue of critical importance. Restorative justice, which is focused on repairing the harm that has been caused by wrongdoing, provides a conceptual way in which the UN can frame its overall approach to peacebuilding in order to address grievances that often go unmet in post-conflict countries.

During the lunchtime event, the guest speakers elaborated on the concept of restorative justice as a framework for peacebuilding. First, restorative justice is rooted in a relational approach. For peacebuilding, this

means that it is important to work at healing relationships at all levels of society. Restorative justice is also inclusive, which means that all stakeholders should participate in the peacebuilding process, from setting priorities to implementing and monitoring activities. Finally, restorative justice is participatory, which encourages all those affected by conflict and violence as well as the perpetrators



An informal discussion on restorative justice and peacebuilding at Quaker House. (Source: QUNO)

to come together in order to find solutions that will address the harm that has been done.

As QUNO has seen through our work on Burundi, a restorative justice approach to peacebuilding can enhance dialogue around justice issues and promote the inclusion of local reconcilia-

tion. In Burundi, QUNO collaborates closely with AFSC, which facilitated a high-level workshop in August on the creation of a Truth and Reconciliation (continued on page 5)

Prevention Seminar with the Security Council

One of the few entities at the UN with an explicit prevention mandate is the Security Council Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. QUNO has met with the current chair, South Africa, on a number of occasions since the beginning of the year to discuss the program of events, which has included meetings on topics of interest to us such as the Prevention of Election-Related Violence. QUNO was asked to facilitate a seminar for the Working Group to review experiences in this field. This came to fruition on November 21st with a three-hour session at the UN entitled "Recent Lessons Learned in African Conflict Prevention and Resolution: Coordinating Response and Supporting Local Capacity." Speakers included International Crisis Group (reviewing the headline events, including Cote



Jacob Zuma, President of South Africa, Addresses Council High-Level Meeting on Conflict Prevention. (22 September 2011, United Nations, New York, Source: United Nations Photo)

d'Ivoire, Libya, and South Sudan), the Center on International Cooperation of New York University (on developments in special political and peacekeeping missions), and the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery of the UN Development Program (UNDP) (on building national infrastructures for peace in places such as Kenya and

Ghana). QUNO introduced the session, summarizing key developments since the Secretary General's last major report on Prevention in 2006, and provided closing remarks.

The audience consisted of a hundred or so member state representatives, (including Security Council members and a number of ambassadors), NGOs and UN staff. Discussion following the presentations was lively, with participants raising a range of issues, such as the UN's relationship with the African Union, and recent efforts on building national infrastructures for prevention.

QUNO's introduction to the session was further developed for a presentation given at the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform on December 1st. That presentation will be available on the QUNO website shortly. ❖

Quaker Collaboration on the Horn of Africa

The Horn of Africa region (made up of Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Kenya) has received anxious attention at the UN over recent months due to a number of crises. These have included outbreak of famine and ongoing armed conflict.

Actors in the region and at the international level also share concerns about possible violence surrounding elections in Kenya scheduled for 2012. Because of the large Quaker community in Kenya, the Horn is host to a number of Quaker organizations doing peace work. QUNO has been following discussions at the UN and staying connected with Quaker partners to share information from the ground to the UN. The following outlines some of the challenges that QUNO is monitoring, as well as the Quaker responses:

- This summer, the Horn of Africa suffered from its worst drought in 60 years, leading to a food crisis that is affecting over 13 million people in the region. Tens of thousands have died, with many more expected to die this next year as the famine continues. AFSC is working in the Dadaab refugee camp on the Somali-Kenya border with humanitarian and peace initiatives. You can find out more about their work here: <http://afsc.org/story/afsc-responds-food-crisis-horn-africa>.
- Kenya is preparing for elections in 2012, and Quaker groups are working to ensure that the violence of Kenya's 2007 elections is



Troops serving with the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) are seen at daybreak on a frontline position in the Somali capital, Mogadishu. (18 November 2011, Mogadishu, Somalia, Source: United Nations Photo)

not repeated. The African Great Lakes Initiative (AGLI), Friends Church Peace Teams (FCPT), Change Agents for Peace, and Quaker Peace and Social Witness are all involved in nonviolence training. To learn more about the election, please visit FCNL's Kenya Policy Brief: http://fcnl.org/assets/Kenya_Policy_Brief_2011.pdf. To find out more about AGLI/FCPT work in Kenya, please visit: <http://aglifpt.org/countries/kenya.htm>.

- Tensions between Kenya- and Somalia-based al-Shabab (Islamist militant group) increased this fall with allegations of al-Shabab conducting cross-border raids and kidnappings. On October 16, Kenya sent 2,000 troops into Somalia to confront Islamic militants. While Kenyan troops have since joined with African Union-led peacekeeping forces, there are reports that troops from Ethiopia are also involved. Quakers are concerned about this violence, especially the effect it will have on the humanitarian efforts and prospects for regional destabilization. ❖

Restorative Justice
(continued from page 4)

Commission, and supports the local level trauma healing work of Burundian Quakers. Through discussions at Quaker House and elsewhere, QUNO seeks to link the restorative justice activities of Quakers in Burundi with ongoing policy discussions at the UN in order to further promote peacebuilding as relationship-building. ❖

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.

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