



In & Around the UN

An Update from the Quaker United Nations Office

June 2013

Including Local Perspectives at the UN

One ongoing challenge that QUNO faces in its work is that the United Nations is a club of member states, which means that local perspectives of people in countries affected by violence often do not have a place in the high-level policy debates in New York. In all of QUNO's activities, we try to find ways in which the perspectives of those working on peacebuilding and prevention in local communities – such as civil society groups, grassroots organizations, women, youth, and religious leaders – can have an impact on policy decisions at the UN. QUNO does this by hosting delegation visits of local actors, and also by maintaining close relationships with partners working on the ground, so that the information they share with us can then be fed into the UN through our contacts there.

Recently there has been an increased focus by various international NGOs on how to include local perspectives. QUNO supported the launch of two of these initiatives in New York. The first is the People's Peacemaking Perspectives (www.c-r.org/PPP), a joint project by Conciliation Resources and Saferworld. QUNO organized a series of quiet, informal meetings with UN experts as well as a public event at the EU delegation to the UN to discuss this project, which uses conflict analysis as a way to include and empower local



Participants at a meeting on the inclusion of local perspectives in peacebuilding at the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation in Uppsala, Sweden.

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actors in order to influence policy-makers. The second is Local First (www.localfirst.org.uk). Along with Peace Direct, QUNO helped to organize and host a meeting of experts in New

York to discuss this initiative that encourages the UN and donors to take into account local expertise and capacity. QUNO staff from New York and Geneva also recently participated in an expert meeting in Uppsala, Sweden focused on inclusivity and how to strengthen the role of local perspectives in peacebuilding, co-

organized by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation and the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform.

These projects, as well as many of the other current initiatives taking place which QUNO remains engaged with, highlight the importance for the UN to support local participation and include local perspectives in order to help transform societies affected by conflict and build lasting peace. ❖

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Letter from the Director

Dear Friends:

This spring has seen significant progress on a number of QUNO's major strands of work. The May seminar in Beijing, on UN peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding, which brought together scholars and practitioners from China, Africa, and the UN, was the culmination of nine months of work by QUNO and AFSC staff. Participants expressed their appreciation for the open and constructive exchange of views that took place.

In the spirit of linking peacebuilding policy organizations around

the world and bringing their insights to the UN, QUNO hosted speakers from Washington, Brussels, London, Geneva, and Africa in its "What's next in Peacebuilding?" event at Quaker House: from this and similar activities we are pleased to see a noticeable increase in exchanges between peacebuilding policy centers.

QUNO also continued to focus on the inclusion of civil society in peacebuilding and prevention at the UN by hosting and participating in a series of related meetings from March to May. And as the initial consultation phase of the process to replace the Millennium Develop-

ment Goals draws to a close, QUNO was invited to speak as the only civil society representative at a high-level special event at the UN, hosted by the Finnish, Indonesian, and Liberian missions, and then co-hosted a day-long workshop for UN agencies, funds, and programs to bring together the latest thinking on the impact of conflict and fragility on development and its importance in the post-2015 agenda.

Thank you for your continued support.

In Friendship,
Andrew Tomlinson

Update from the Geneva Office

Our Geneva office continues to raise the neglected rights of children of prisoners and children of parents sentenced to death. In February, they convened an expert workshop on the subject with practitioners from Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, and North America, some of whom also spoke at a side event at the Human Rights Council.

In the area of Natural Resources, Conflict, and Cooperation, QUNO Geneva recently held the first of a series of informal lunches to explore the opportunities surrounding water, food, and conflict prevention. They are taking forward research on peacebuilding approaches to water and land management, which considers how resource policy and practice can empower communities to peacefully manage resource conflict.

QUNO Geneva attended an intersessional meeting for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Bonn, Germany, at the beginning of May. They are currently exploring ways to

help build trust among States and will be hosting a small, off-the-record dinner at the next UNFCCC meeting in June.

In our work on food and sustainability, they initiated two teleconferences with key actors to begin exploring an alternative trade and investment framework with food security at its center. Existing World Trade Organization and other international rules relating to agricultural trade and investment do not contribute to a sustainable, equitable, or people-centered food sys-

tem. QUNO Geneva will provide opportunities for governments and civil society to think about alternative ways to govern agricultural trade and investment over the next four years, with a conference scheduled to take place in Geneva in January 2014. ❖



Food security should be at the center of the international trade and investment framework for agriculture.

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Participants Gather in Beijing to Share Perspectives on UN Peacemaking, Peacekeeping, and Peacebuilding

After many months of planning and preparation, QUNO staff were thrilled to travel to China with a delegation of UN officials and African and Asian peace practitioners to join a seminar on UN peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. Held at the School of International Relations and Diplomacy of the Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU), the meeting provided an opportunity for Chinese academics and policy advisors to meet with academics and peace practitioners from Africa and other parts of Asia, as well as key UN staff members. Titled Towards Coordinated Response to Conflict: Perspectives on United Nations Peacemaking, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding, the two-day meeting was a collaborative effort between QUNO, the Africa and Asia regions of the American Friends Service Committee, the Social Science Research Council, the Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU), and the China Academic Network for UN Studies.

The meeting kicked off with a

plenary session during which reflections were offered by Ambassador Chen Jian, Director of the China Academic Network for UN Studies, as well as Ambassador James Jonah, Senior Fellow at the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Affairs of the City University of New York. Both speakers offered their views on the changing world of international cooperation in the areas of peace and security, including particular challenges facing the UN around peace operations in Africa. Ambassador Jonah shared his perspective based on over three decades of service in the UN secretariat as well as experience as Minister of Finance, and Development and Economic Planning in



Ambassador James Jonah presents a key note address during the opening plenary.
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Sierra Leone.

Following the keynote address, seminar participants had an opportunity to meet informally on a broad range of topics related to the work of the UN in peacekeeping operations, post-conflict peacebuilding, and peacemaking efforts. Participants to the seminar shared openly and expressed their gratitude for the unique opportunity to exchange ideas and explore future collaboration. ❖

A Workshop for Incoming Members of the UN Peacebuilding Commission

In March, QUNO partnered with the International Peace Institute and the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office to hold a workshop for new and incoming members of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). In addition to introducing new PBC members to the concepts of peacebuilding and reconciliation, this event was an opportunity to take stock of the progress and challenges facing the PBC prior to the next five-year review scheduled for 2015. The workshop focused on the topics of UN political accompaniment for countries undergoing political transitions, tactics to promote reconciliation

in post-conflict settings, and the need for more engagement between the PBC and civil society, as well as the broader role and potential value added of the PBC. Triphonie Habonimana from the American Friends Service Committee's Burundi program brought a much welcomed grassroots perspective to the panel discussion on reconciliation. QUNO's hope coming out of this meeting is that members of the PBC will take the recommendations that surfaced dur-



Triphonie Habonimana speaks on a reconciliation panel.
© International Peace Institute

ing the workshop as a call to action, exploring ways to maximize the impact of the PBC in post-conflict settings. ❖

The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Comes to New York



The Organization of American States' Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and attendees of the Forum gather at Quaker House.

QUNO is currently hosting colleagues from Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC) while they attend the Twelfth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The forum has certainly brightened up the UN as many of the 2,300 indigenous attendees wear their traditional dress, making a pleasant change to the abundance of suits that normally fill the corridors.

The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues highlights the success and challenges faced by indigenous peoples globally while celebrating and sharing their unique traditions; the gathering is truly remarkable to witness.

This is a review year for the Forum and the focus will be on education, culture, youth, indigenous peoples in Africa and international financial institutions. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous

Peoples outlines the principles that the Permanent Forum is guided by. We are especially interested to hear discussions on topics that combine indigenous issues with areas that QUNO regularly engages on, such as peacemaking, the creation of inclusive societies, and the Post-2015 Development agenda.

Our Friends from CFSC organized an event with partners at Quaker House on the topic of "Ethnic and Gender Discrimination in the Americas: the Case of Indigenous Women" with special guest Dinah Shelton, the Organization of American States' Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The event was a huge success: Quaker House was filled to capacity and the discussions were lively and informative. CFSC also was involved with joint statements presented at the Forum and those can be found on their website: www.quakerservice.ca. ❖

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.

Update on the Post-2015 Development Agenda

April 5th marked the beginning of the 1,000-day countdown to the target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). QUNO has continued to engage around the process of formulating a development agenda to replace the MDGs in 2015.

In our work on this topic, we have emphasized the importance of including considerations of the impact of violence and the particular needs of fragile and conflict-affected countries in the Post-2015 development framework. To this end, we have taken part in a range of events. QUNO Director Andrew Tomlinson was asked to be the civil society representative at a UN special event in April to present the findings of the High-Level Consultation on Conflict, Violence, and Disaster in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Also, in collaboration with the International Peace Institute and the United Nations Foundation, QUNO organized a workshop on conflict, violence, and instability in the Post-2015 Development Agenda with the goal of bringing together members of the UN system to



UN staff members form the number 1,000 to mark the thousand day countdown to the expiration of the MDGs.

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strategize on the most effective way to frame and coordinate efforts on these topics.

At the end of May, the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (HLP) will present its report of recommendations to the Secretary General. This report will encapsulate a worldwide debate taking place over the last eight months,

which has brought in a range of perspectives on future development priorities. The HLP was tasked with creating a framework that both draws upon the lessons learned from the MDG process and takes into account shifting contexts for development. QUNO is eagerly awaiting the release of the HLP report, and we hope to see our concerns reflected in it. ❖

QUNO Annual Review

We are thrilled to announce the publication, in conjunction with our Geneva office, of the 2013 QUNO Review (see picture at right). Our two offices have worked hard to create a publication that reflects all the hard work we do here at QUNO, as well as the joy with which we do it. The Review can be found in electronic form on our website, www.quno.org. If you would like to receive a hard copy please let us know by emailing qunony@afsc.org.

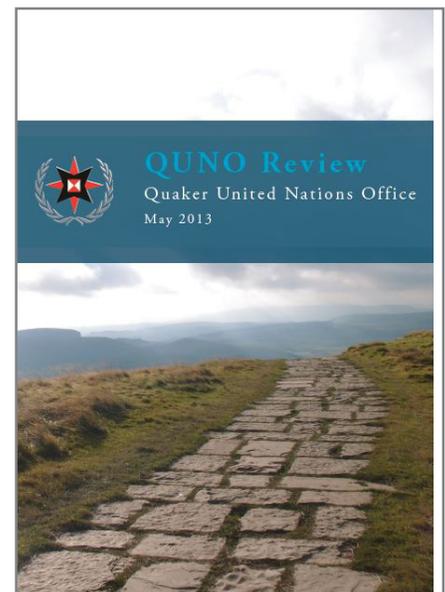


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