QUNO’s continued support for Peace in the 2030 Agenda

July in New York was once again an exciting month for QUNO. The meeting of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the theme “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality” took place from 9 to 18 July at the United Nations (UN) Headquarters.

This year, six goals were up for review and the UN community was re-energized in its support of the 2030 Agenda, which includes Peace as one of five areas “of critical importance for humanity and the planet.” Throughout the Forum, Member States, civil society and practitioners stressed the critical importance of ‘leaving no one behind’ in the pursuit of peace.

For QUNO, this was an entry point for reviewing progress on all goals, especially for Goal 16, which remains at the heart of the work of QUNO and peacebuilders all over the world. This goal covers cross-cutting issues, and reaches the furthest behind first, including those threatened by violence, injustice and exclusion.

When we do look at the Goal 16 targets, the scope is surprisingly broad, emphasizing reducing violence and violent death, equal access to justice, good governance (including fostering accountable and transparent institutions), inclusive decision making, access to information and funda

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This summer, QUNO had the great pleasure of welcoming our colleague, Tobias Wellner, the East Africa Programme Manager at Quaker Peace and Social Witness (Quakers in Britain, QPSW). The trip was a wonderful opportunity for QUNO and QPSW to further strengthen our work together to promote Quaker-rooted peacebuilding approaches, and for QUNO staff to learn more about QPSW’s programs and partners in East Africa.

QPSW’s East Africa Programme works with peacebuilding partners in Kenya, Rwanda and Burundi to implement initiatives through the Turning the Tide (TTT) program. TTT accompanies and supports local peace and justice campaigns, with all programming centered on seven principles of non-violence. Through trainings and programming grounded in these principles, TTT supports the transformation of societies to prevent, mediate and respond to conflict and tensions before they become violent. Together with their fellow peacebuilding organizations in the region, QPSW works to directly contribute to building peaceful and just communities in East Africa.

The visit allowed for QUNO and QPSW to share more about each organization’s experiences to build and sustain peace. Tobias taught QUNO staff about the non-violent principles that underpin the TTT work and how those principles translate into the programming implemented throughout East Africa. QUNO staff also discussed the quiet diplomacy working methods we carry out at the UN, and how we seek to strengthen the UN’s capacity for peace through our conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives.

Tobias’ visit also coincided with the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), which takes place each year and is the UN’s platform for process,
Letters from the Director

D ear Friends:

Greetings from New York!

This year has seen significant progress for the peacebuilding and prevention agenda at the UN. The Secretary-General’s reforms of the peace & security architecture led to the creation of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs – a renaming and reconfiguration of one of the most important offices of the UN secretariat, reflecting a mainstreaming of peacebuilding approaches. And the reforms of the development system hold out the promise of UN country teams that are more closely aligned to the broader aims of the organization across the three pillars of development, human rights, and peace and security.

The past year has also seen a renewed focus on the universal commitment to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies that is headlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)). A highlight was the High-Level Political Forum in July, which included a focus on the goals and targets on peace and inclusion. Welcome progress is being made in some areas, but efforts to integrate a peace lens need to be significantly accelerated if the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda are to be met.

As we move into the 74th Session of the UN General Assembly, QUNO continues to act on your behalf behind the scenes, working for a more just and peaceful world through the unique vantage point of the United Nations.

Thank you for your encouragement and support!

Andrew Tomlinson

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News from QUNO Geneva

At the climate change negotiations in Bonn, Germany in June, QUNO held an off-the-record quiet diplomacy dinner for negotiators from nineteen countries. These dinners, offered at the negotiations since 2013, aim to help build communication and understanding between countries.

Representative for Climate Change, Lindsey Fielder Cook, also spoke at a press conference calling for courage and ethics for climate action as a moral call to conscience. Lindsey shared how the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s Special Report for Global Warming at 1.5C confirmed that a 1.5C temperature rise limit is still possible, and stressed how following the healthiest pathway could save hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of human lives, save thousands of species from extinction, and prevent the collapse of critical eco-systems.

QUNO also distributed a new leaflet, Human Rights Based Climate Action, outlining how rights-based approaches to climate policy can result in more effective and fair action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Also in June, our Human Rights & Refugees programme published Briefing Tools for Practitioners—Children: unseen victims of the death penalty. The set of seven briefings was published ahead of the World
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mental freedoms. It also addresses issues at the global level, including trafficking, illicit financial and arms flows, and more inclusive global governance.

Much of the discussion in July placed great emphasis on Goal 16 as both an end in itself, and a crucial part of delivering sustainable development in all countries. It has in fact been seen by many Member States and civil society alike as being the transformational goal and key to ensuring that Agenda 2030 can be accomplished.

QUNO believes that the transformative potential of the 2030 Agenda as a whole, and the peaceful, just and inclusive societies agenda in particular, is very substantial. At the very least it provides a new, positive and universal aspirational framework that can recast the terms of discussion on a wide range of issues, from development to the prevention of armed violence.

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Quaker Peace & Social Witness  
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as well as expectations for opportunities and challenges moving forward.

As the office representing Friends at the United Nations, QUNO values the opportunity to support the work of our fellow Quaker organizations, and to facilitate their participation in peace work at the UN.

We learned so much from Tobias’ visit on the work carried out by QPSW and its partners, and value that we were able to learn more about the impact of Quaker peacebuilding work in East Africa. We hope to welcome QPSW back soon and look forward to continued partnership with Quakers in Britain.
QUNO was excited to join Friends from New York, New Jersey and Connecticut for the Summer Sessions of New York Yearly Meeting (NYYM). NYYM Summer Sessions is an annual event that brings together Quakers from local and regional Meetings and their families for a week full of exciting activities focused on community and movement-building.

This year, QUNO was represented by Mireille Evagora-Campbell and Jedrzej Nowe, QUNO New York Program Assistants, who were delighted to have the opportunity to participate in the first three days of the gathering.

Particular highlights included attending the plenary session “Being Quakers in a World That Needs Us,” connecting with Young Adult Friends and joining Friends in Meetings for Worship. Our Program Assistants also held an Interest Group Session on our work representing Quakers at the United Nations, which was a great chance to share insights into Quaker approaches to achieving change through peaceful means and answer questions regarding our peacebuilding and prevention programs.

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It has been a time of transition and excitement for our office. As QUNO continues its work at the United Nations (UN) we have reached that time of the year when we have to say goodbye to our outgoing Program Assistants (PAs) and reflect on their year of service with us.

QUNO was privileged to have Mireille Evagora-Campbell and Jędrzej Nowe serve on our team in New York, where they assisted senior staff in our programmatic areas of Peacebuilding and the Prevention of Violent Conflict. We now welcome Stephen Murray into the PA role and are excited to have him on board.

Additionally, we find ourselves saying farewell to our Office Coordinator (OC) of eight years, Elisabeth Halliday-Quan, and welcoming our new OC, Andrew McKenna, who joined us in September.

Mireille and Jędrzej left an indelible impression through their professionalism, insightful enthusiasm and commitment towards our goal of promoting peace and cooperation at the UN.

With regards to our PA transitions, Mireille leaves QUNO grateful for the many learning opportunities she has benefitted from and confident that QUNO’s unique working methods, including quiet diplomacy and bridge-building through transformative spaces, will greatly impact her future career in the international sector. Mireille returns to Europe where she will carry out research for a gender equality and global health initiative before pursuing development experience at the country level. She looks forward to applying the skills and knowledge she has developed at QUNO.

Jędrzej has very much enjoyed these past 8 months at QUNO. With a focus on the Peacebuilding Program, he engaged in multiple projects centering on civil society. In addition, he helped organize meetings with Member States and was responsible for covering the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. As much as he is sad to (continued on page 7)
leave QUNO and his colleagues, Jędrzej is excited about his next professional experience working for the United Nations Human Security Unit.

While their time with us was short, Mireille and Jędrzej left an indelible impression through their professionalism, insightful enthusiasm and commitment towards our goal of promoting peace and cooperation at the UN. Their experiences throughout this year of service have been especially helpful to our incoming PA, Stephen Murray.

Stephen is originally from Belfast, Northern Ireland, where he holds a BA in International Politics and Conflict Studies, and an MA in Violence, Terrorism and Security from Queen’s University Belfast. He joins QUNO with a background in peace and reconciliation efforts in Northern Ireland and a desire to learn more about and contribute to our Peacebuilding and Prevention of Violent Conflict programs.

QUNO is sad to see the departure of Elisabeth Halliday-Quan, who has served as Office Coordinator since 2012. Elisabeth’s time with QUNO New York has been a challenging and rewarding experience and she moves on to her next adventure carrying with her a wealth of experience and memories.

We are glad to welcome Andrew McKenna to QUNO as he transitions into his new role as Office Coordinator. Andrew joins QUNO after completing two years of volunteering with the Peace Corps. Serving as a community agribusiness specialist, Andrew lived in Uganda for two years working with a local community-based organization on reducing the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS, and trying to help women and families improve their economic and nutritional security.

QUNO wishes Elisabeth, Mireille and Jędrzej the very best in their personal and professional adventures to come and hopes that Stephen and Andrew will find their experience as rewarding and challenging as it has been for their predecessors.