



Quaker United Nations Office Geneva

Geneva Reporter

A New Framework for Trade and Investment in Agriculture

QUNO works towards equity and sustainability in the global food system

In this issue

A New Framework for Trade and Investment in Agriculture
page 1

Human Rights Council
page 2

QUNO and the UN Climate Summit
page 3

Highlights from QUNO New York
page 3

Peace and Disarmament
page 4

News in Brief
page 4

The Aarhus Convention
Briefing Paper

Quaker United Nations Office

13 Avenue du Mervelet
1209 Geneva
Switzerland

Tel: +41 22 748 4800
Fax: +41 22 748 4819

quno@quno.ch
www.quno.org

Printed on recycled paper

QUNO held the first expert consultation on a New Framework on Trade and Investment in Agriculture (NFTIA) in January 2014. The agenda was developed to explore key changes in the international food system since the current multilateral rules were developed, along with key proposals for change. At the consultation, QUNO shared the results of the survey on the current multilateral system governing trade and investment in agriculture. The results showed that 98% of survey respondents felt that the current rules are not adequate when considering food security and environmental sustainability. This presentation will soon be available on the QUNO website.

The consultation gathered thirty key players in this field over two days of wide-ranging discussions. This helped QUNO to focus this area of work and to make good contacts in an area in which we are relatively new.

QUNO utilised and broadened connections made at the consultation when strategizing about how to take NFTIA forward. We have been holding meetings to continue to solidify our core group of thinkers for this area of work. From these meetings, QUNO ascertained that the time was right to hold a second, smaller expert consultation in May 2014. The invitation list to this consultation was designed to gather a 16 person group representing farmers,

key Government trade representatives, diplomats and academic experts from a broad geographical representation.

The consultation aimed, through open and non-attributed dialogue, to gather a shared understanding of challenges and opportunities encountered by these different (and often separated) groups. The group agreed to a report of the meeting (soon to be available on the QUNO website), which includes a series of tools that QUNO is considering to help integrate food security measures with trade rules.



UN Photo/Martine Perret

Papers commissioned by QUNO for this work area were presented to the group. The first paper by University of Waterloo Professor Jennifer Clapp, aims to contribute to “shifting the narrative” away from dominant neoclassical arguments for free trade as a panacea for food security and wellbeing. The second paper reviews key recent international and national measures designed to address food security and analyzes their relation to trade rules. *(continued on page 4)*



Human Rights Council

QUNO reports from the 27th Session of the Human Rights Council.

For QUNO the 27th Session of the Human Rights Council 8 to 25 September is a chance for new Human Rights and Refugees Representative, Laurel Townhead, to reacquaint herself with its processes and practices. It is also an opportunity for QUNO to draw further attention to the rights of children of prisoners, children of parents sentenced to death or executed and conscientious objectors to military service.

Our work at the Human Rights Council continues to make sure that being excluded or overlooked is not a basis for the violation of rights, with a focus on the children of prisoners and children of parents sentenced to death or executed. We are raising these issues through oral statements in the general debate and panel discussions with States, and through contributions in side events - informal, open meetings.

The Council opened with the inaugural speech of Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, the new UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Zeid's speech picked up on values and practices that run through our work, including values of quiet diplomacy and human interaction: "We must therefore persevere together until we bend the course of humanity's future into a destination more hopeful and enlightened, in which human decency is the only currency of human interaction, and is valued above and beyond material wealth or cleverness alone."

The Panel on the Human Rights of Persons Deprived of their Liberty was a key event for QUNO. This was the first time that the Human Rights Council gave time to considering the rights of detainees beyond its interest in torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. This Panel included representation of the



UN Photo/Jean-Marc Ferré

UN Office on Drugs and Crime from Vienna, cutting across UN silos, just as our work seeks to.

Our intervention in the Panel highlighted the dual human rights impact of detention on the rights of detainees and also the rights of their children. The discussion touched on the specific needs of women prisoners and the importance of family contact. The Panel members spoke strongly against over-incarceration and discussed some of the alternatives including restorative justice and mediation. We were pleased to hear the Panel note the negative effect that overcrowding has on maintaining family contact. We will be pursuing this issue as the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights works on a report on the human rights impact of prison overcrowding.

QUNO's recent work at the Human Rights Council provides focus for the next phase of our work. We see that there is much potential to develop further our collaboration with States and NGOs on the marginalized and otherwise forgotten issues.

Support QUNO

Please visit quno.org/donate to contribute to our programme work or to help fund Quaker House renovations in Geneva and New York.



QUNO and the UN Climate Summit

The UN Climate Summit, held in New York on 23 September, played an important role for both world leaders and civil society in highlighting the urgency in acting on anthropogenic climate change.

In the margins of the Summit, QUNO, along with the US-based Friends Committee on National Legislation, organized two lunches at Quaker House in New York. The first focused on building communication and understanding within the science and faith communities. Dr Rajendra Pachauri, Chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, met with faith community representatives to engage in discussion about the most recent climate science and its potential human impact. Participants then discussed their communities' moral and ethical response to ensure that the poorest and most vulnerable peoples now, and all our future generations, do not suffer further as a consequence of our actions.

The second lunch brought together civil society actors and policy makers within the climate advocacy community. Here, participants explored what change was needed to strengthen their collective efforts in facing the urgent call for action on climate change.

In addition, QUNO published "*A Call to Conscience: Quaker experiences facing the challenge of Climate Change.*" The publication profiles interviews with Friends worldwide on why they care about climate change, and what they are doing to address the challenge locally, nationally and internationally.

QUNO also drafted a "*Quaker Statement on Climate Change*", which was signed by Quaker organizations and was distributed to all Yearly Meetings worldwide.

Highlights from QUNO New York

It was a busy summer in New York, with many informal meetings held at Quaker House. Topics ranged from the review of the UN Peacebuilding Commission, the situations in Burundi and the Central African Republic, to the inclusion of peace in the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals.

In June, we were pleased to host Adrien Niyongabo from Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities in Burundi, a local Quaker organization which supports reconciliation and trauma healing at the grassroots level. Adrien's visit coincided with the Quaker Peace and Social Witness photo exhibition and reception at Quaker House for *This Light That Pushes Me*, a series of photos and stories of African peacebuilders, including many African Friends who have collaborated with QUNO over the years.

In August, we bid farewell to our Programme Assistant Della Anderson, who is now working with the Friends Committee for National Legislation in Washington,

DC. Programme Assistant Rachel Singleton-Polster is staying with us until the end of September to assist QUNO Geneva at the UN Climate Summit in New York.

In August we were glad to welcome two new Programme Assistants, Vivien Che and Jordan Street. Vivien has previously worked with AFSC in Beijing. Joining QUNO New York, she will focus on peacebuilding in Central and East Africa, as well as China and Myanmar outreach. Jordan joins us after working with various peace-building and conflict prevention organizations in Washington DC, London, and Northern Kenya. He has a particular interest in peacebuilding in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, and is delighted to be pursuing these passions with QUNO.

In October, we are looking forward to welcoming a one-year Fellow. In addition, we are currently seeking a full-time Representative, Operations.



A New Framework for Trade and Investment in Agriculture *(continued from page 1)*

As input to this analysis, QUNO commissioned eight country assessments of food security measures. The paper is due out by the end of 2014. QUNO intends for the dissemination of the two papers to contribute to the re-framing of trade and investment in agriculture as a food security issue.

We have also been following related discussions in the UN Committee for Food Security, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, Human Rights Council and UN General Assembly, recognizing that these issues are multifaceted and should be treated as such in the multilateral architecture.

Peace and Disarmament

QUNO continues to follow discussions on global arms control and peacebuilding

In August the Geneva Forum, of which QUNO is a founding member, held an event to consider the options for the creation of a Secretariat for the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Factors such as the scope of the responsibilities of the Secretariat and the accessibility for civil society need to be taken into account in determining the location. It is hoped that there will be sufficient ratifications to bring the Treaty into force by the end of 2014.

As part of our watching brief on disarmament, QUNO attended a Framework Forum roundtable event “*Building blocks and multilateral negotiations: From the Open Ended Working Group to a Nuclear Free World*” in September. The roundtable comes ahead of the third international conference on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, which QUNO will attend in December.

News in Brief

QUNO Geneva warmly welcomes two new members to our staff team. In August, **Laurel Townhead** was appointed as Representative, Human Rights and Refugees. In September, **David Elliott** joined as Programme Assistant, Food & Sustainability and Climate Change. We warmly welcome Laurel and David; their biographies are available on our website.

At the same time, we say goodbye to **Emily Graham** as Programme Assistant, Human Rights and Refugees, who is now working with London-based thinktank *Involve*. Our sincere thanks to Emily for her contribution to QUNO. **Claire Rodgers**, who joined us as Programme Assistant, Food and Sustainability,

at the same time as Emily, will stay on with QUNO as Project Officer until December, to continue work around the New Framework for Trade and Investment in Agriculture.

In February, **Rachel Brett**, who has been Representative, Human Rights and Refugees since 1993, announced her plan to retire. Rachel will continue to work with QUNO part-time as Adviser during a significant transition period. Her outstanding work has improved the lives of many, changed attitudes, built understanding and led to new international agreements. We look forward to our continued work with her in the coming months.

Too much paper in your life? Please contact us at quno@quno.ch to receive the Geneva Reporter by e-mail