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New Sustainable Development Goals

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On September 25th, 2015, the United Nations General Assembly formally adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, along with a set of bold new Sustainable Development Goals (the SDGs), comprised of 17 goals and 169 targets aimed at wiping out poverty, fighting inequality, promoting sustainability, building peaceful and inclusive societies and tackling climate change over the next 15 years.

The SDGs aim to build on the work of the historic Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which, in September 2000, rallied the world around a common 15-year agenda to tackle the indignity of poverty. However, the 2030 Agenda is universal in its remit, setting aspirations for developed countries as well as developing ones, for the US as much as Burundi.

The goals are also much broader in scope, going well beyond traditional development objectives to frame a transformative vision for people and the planet, to be addressed not as North and South, but in partnership, addressing together our common problems.

The 2030 Agenda includes many topics of interest to Friends, and covers all of the issues that the Quaker UN Offices in New York and Geneva work on. In New York, we have been particularly focused for several years on the effort to ensure that support for peaceful, just and inclusive societies were included, and we therefore gladly welcome Goal 16 on Peace and Justice, and Goal 10 on Reduced Inequalities: this work is discussed in more detail later in this newsletter. ❖

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## Peace and the Sustainable Development Goals

The 2030 Agenda includes Peace as one of five areas “of critical importance for humanity and the planet,” with the details set out in several of the Global Goals, in particular Goal 16 - “promoting peaceful and inclusive societies” – and Goal 10 – “reduce inequality within and among countries.” The inclusion of these issues was in doubt until late in the process, and is a significant achievement for peacebuilding proponents. The targets included in these goals address root causes of violence and injustice both within societies (social, economic and political exclusion, corruption, poor governance, lack of access to justice) and externally (illicit financial and arms flows, lack of participation in global governance). Although there is a particular need to focus on these issues as they impact the poorest, most fragile and conflict-affected countries, this agenda is universal, and peace advocates will find much in these goals to work with in their own countries.

While these goals are worth celebrating, much remains to be done, particularly regarding the implementation of the new agenda at the national level, and the mechanisms by which the results will be measured and reviewed. In particular, peacebuilding organizations have voiced concerns regarding the potential co-option of Goal 16, and have advocated for greater inclusion of local peacebuilders

in decision making and implementation processes moving forward.

In the weeks leading up to the adoption of the goals at the Sustainable Development Summit (which took place on September 25th-27th), QUNO held two informal strategy sessions with peacebuilding organiza-

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*“We are determined to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence.”*

**Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

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tions, member states and UN officials on the role of peace in the 2030 Agenda. These sessions addressed next steps concerning the implementation, measurement, and communication of the agenda, and allowed civil society actors in New York and internationally to agree on a unified peacebuilding voice and strategy ahead of the Summit.

In honor of the international day of peace on September 21st, and prior to a number of high-level discussions on terrorism, UN peace operations and peacebuilding, QUNO and 38 other peacebuilding organizations issued a statement to Member States and UN officials. Titled “[Facing the Challenge of Peace: A Shared Statement by Peacebuilding Organizations](#),” the statement encourages the international community to adopt the following principles: embracing the universality of the 2030 Agenda; seeking to understand local contexts; seeking to do no harm when planning and implementing development, humanitarian, economic and security engagements; focusing on increasing

resilience; and prioritizing local needs.

QUNO looks forward to continuing its involvement with the peace issues within the 2030 Agenda in the years to come. ❖

### 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 you 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.

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## Letter from the Director

Dear Friends:

The end of September is always the busiest time of the year for the UN in New York, with world leaders coming together for the opening meetings of the new General Assembly session. This year has been even busier than usual, with the visit of Pope Francis adding some moral depth to an exceptionally busy agenda, including Summit meetings on Sustainable Development, Peacekeeping and Preventing Violent Extremism.

A particularly strong theme this year has been the crisis in humanitarian action. In the year 2000, humanitarian need totaled \$2 billion. Last year it was \$25 billion and it continues to grow. Although donors are giving more money than ever before, some 40 per cent of basic humanitarian requirements were not met last year. And the burden is falling on too few countries

– 10 states provide 90 per cent of humanitarian funding. The most striking feature of this crisis is that most of the need is driven by violent conflict, rather than natural disaster, and the displacement emergency in Europe this summer has made it all too clear that unless something can be done to better prevent and respond to violent conflict, then humanitarian need and displacement will far outstrip the world's ability to cope.

The issues of peacebuilding and conflict prevention have also been a focus of the three UN peace reviews (described in this newsletter), and have been strongly emphasized in the development discussion, where Goal 16 (on supporting peaceful, just and inclusive societies) has been described as the most transformative part of the 2030 Agenda. And the discussion on Preventing Violent Extremism (the UN's preferred nomenclature)

is also shifting to balance short term response with longer-term, preventive measures focused on the root causes of violence.

So as we move into this, the 70th year of the United Nations, there is a strengthening focus on preventing violent conflict and looking to peacebuilding for lessons learned. 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*

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## Update from QUNO Geneva

September has been an eventful month in Geneva, both in terms of program work and changes in the office. At the beginning of the month, we bid farewell to our Climate Change and Food and Sustainability PA, David Elliot, while welcoming two new PAs, Patrick Endall and Daniel Cullen, to the Climate Change/F&S and Human Rights programs, respectively.

With the opening of the September session of the Human Rights Council, QUNO Geneva have been very busy following resolutions on the death penalty and on the administration of justice, linked with our work on the rights of children of prisoners and of children of par-

ents sentenced to death or executed. During the first week of the Council, we made an oral statement on the issue of the death penalty. We have also been following the two resolutions on the issue of Indigenous Peoples' rights.

The F&S team have been working to get the first iteration of their interactive trade policy tool finished with the aim of presenting it for feedback at both the WTO Public Forum and the Council for Food Security in October. In its final form, the tool will help users understand and navigate the complexities of matching food security measures with international trade rules, which can often come into conflict.

Meanwhile, our Climate Change programme has been focused on preparations for the upcoming COP21 negotiations in Paris, with our representative Lindsey Fielder Cook hosting a series of quiet diplomacy dinners in order to enable open and honest conversations during the September round of talks at the UNFCCC. Lindsey has also been preparing a number of interlinked briefing papers that will provide both background information and guidance on engagement for those with an interest in the conference and a concern for its outcomes. ♦

## Arria-formula Meeting on Gaza

In July, for the first time since 1997 and just the second time ever, the Security Council held an Arria-Formula meeting focusing specifically on the issue of Palestine. Arria-Formula meetings (named after Ambassador Diego Arria of Venezuela, who initiated the practice in 1992) are informal, confidential gatherings which allow Security Council members to discuss a topic in more depth. They are intended to be an opportunity to hear from people who would not normally be able to speak directly to the Council.

The meeting was entitled “Reflections One Year Later and Charting a New Course for Gaza,” and was co-sponsored by the permanent missions of Malaysia and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, with assistance from the Israel-Palestine NGO Working Group. The Working Group is a coalition of organizations at the UN that meet to share information and advocate for a just peace in Israel and Palestine. QUNO has been an active member since the founding of the group and acted as the secretariat for this event.

As noted by the working group, “One year on from Operation Protective Edge, the 2014 Israeli military offensive against the Gaza Strip, little to no reconstruction has taken place. This latest military offensive has exacerbated an already dire humanitarian crisis due to the ongoing eight-year blockade imposed since



2007 by Israel, by which it has sealed off Gaza by land, sea and air, and separated and isolated it territorially, economically, socially and politically from the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.” The meeting followed a detailed report from the Association of International Development Agencies (AIDA) on the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, which was signed by several Quaker agencies.

The meeting featured briefings from speakers from civil society and academia, and was well attended by Council members and the UN community alike. The speakers included Mr. Vance Culbert from Norwegian Refugee Council, Mr. Ardi Imseis of Cambridge University, Ms. Tania Hary from Gisha (an Israeli human rights organization) and Dr. Sara Roy from the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University.

Security Council member states were largely represented at Amba-

sador level, and were constructive in their response to the four speakers’ testimonies. Many delegates welcomed the convening of the meeting, which also served to inform the Council’s quarterly debate on the Middle East, which took place a few days later. There was a general agreement that the current situation in Gaza is unsustainable and must be alleviated, with interventions focusing on the need to lift the blockade, for donors to fulfil aid pledges and for all actors to ensure that steps are taken to prevent future hostilities.

A booklet of the speaker’s presentations has now been published, and has been distributed to all UN member states in New York. QUNO hopes that the booklet will reinforce the impact of the meeting, and contribute to an end to the occupation and a peaceful future for the people of Gaza, and, indeed, for all Palestinians and Israelis. ❖

## Emerging Views on Global Peace Practice: New Directions in UN Peace Operations on the Occasion of the 70th Anniversary of the UN

In July, QUNO, together with United Nations Association of China (UNA-China), the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and the Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum at the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), held a workshop in Beijing. The workshop brought together scholars from the US and China; local NGO workers faced with conflict situations in Africa; and policy advisors within the UN. The series of closed discussions delved into the UN Peace Operations Review and Peacebuilding Architecture Review; perspectives on UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding in Africa; reports on China's effort to integrate women into global peace and security; and emerging peace practice tools and approaches in China, Africa and the West. About 40 individuals from China, Africa, Europe and the US participated in the two-day event. More broadly,

the workshop provided an opportunity for exchanging perspectives and promoted better understanding among Chinese, Western, African and UN-based experts on UN peace operations and peacebuilding practices. Sessions were conducted under the Chatham House Rule, allowing participants to speak candidly and honestly about the issues related to the UN peace practice.

Of the many recommendations that emerged from this workshop, a few resonated with all the participants. First, given the changing nature of conflict, the UN should reconsider how to identify and work with local stakeholders, empowering them, supporting inclusive national ownership and providing space for local strategies and shared decision-making. Second, the UN needs to adopt a conflict-analysis approach in both peacekeeping and peacebuilding. By looking into the root causes,

key factors and key actors driving conflict, we can learn to engage them directly and invest in the peacebuilding priorities that create the most impact on local lives. Third, evidence shows that gender mainstreaming is an effective peacebuilding strategy, as women readily acknowledge the destructive effects of conflict and are connectors for peace and security. Sustaining peace requires women's leadership and representation at all levels of decision-making.

Realizing the sobering challenges faced by the UN in fulfilling its mandate and the existing gaps in implementation, there is a need to shift priorities from short-term response to longer-term structural drivers of conflict if the UN is to achieve results. The workshop was a great success and we plan for exchange to become an annual event. ❖



Workshop participants in Beijing © QUNO

## Review of UN Peacebuilding

**2015** is the year of reviews at the UN. In particular, three significant reviews have been taking place – the review of UN Peace Operations, the review of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace & Security, and the review of the UN’s Peacebuilding Architecture. QUNO has engaged on all three of these processes over the past year, with a particular focus on the UN’s Peacebuilding Architecture.

In April 2015, QUNO issued a joint report with the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) entitled *Filling the Gap: How civil society engagement can help the UN’s Peacebuilding Architecture meet its purpose*. This report traces the history of the UN’s Peacebuilding Architecture, which includes the UN’s Peacebuilding Commission, and analyzes the relationship between the UN and civil society.

The report finds that the UN’s peacebuilding activities have not adequately incorporated the perspectives, analysis or expertise of civil society, either in New York or in country, leading to a less strategic and ultimately less effective peacebuilding response. The report includes concrete recommendations for how the Peacebuilding Architecture can improve its working methods and partner with civil society in order to strengthen its



Launch of GPPAC/QUNO report on civil society engagement in the UN’s Peacebuilding Architecture at Quaker House © QUNO

impact overall.

In June, QUNO and GPPAC launched their report at Quaker House in New York with three civil society representatives from Burundi, Central African Republic and Liberia, who contributed research to the report. This launch not only highlighted the important work of these local peacebuilders, who shared their own personal experiences engaging with the UN system on peacebuilding, but also demonstrated how vital it is to include these perspectives in a policy context such as New York.

The report has been well received

by the UN and member states, and several of the recommendations made by QUNO and GPPAC were included in the final report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the UN’s Peacebuilding Architecture, entitled *The Challenge of Sustaining Peace*. The review process has now moved to an inter-governmental phase, where member states will agree on which recommendations to adopt and implement in the coming months. QUNO will continue to focus on this process in order to ensure that engagement with civil society remains a key focus. ❖

## Comings and Goings at QUNO New York



New Program Assistants Hannah Larn (L) and Debbie Leter (R) © QUNO

In August, QUNO said farewell to Program Assistants Vivien Che and Jordan Street. Jordan is now working across the street from QUNO at the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA), and after three years of living, studying and working in the US, Vivien has returned home to China.

Our new Program Assistants, Hannah Larn and Debbie Leter, joined us in August.

Hannah is from the UK, and spent 4 years in Liverpool completing an undergraduate degree in Politics and a Master's degree in Humanitarian Studies. This past summer she spent two months with Change Agents for Peace International in Kenya, evaluating their peacebuilding



New Fellow Linda Kitenge © QUNO

programme Turning the Tide. She is a member of Reigate Meeting in Surrey, UK, where she grew up. At QUNO, Hannah is focusing on our Peacebuilding work.

Debbie is originally from France, and joins QUNO after graduating from Haverford College. She previously interned with the American Friends Service Committee and the UN Association of South Africa. She wrote her undergraduate Anthropology thesis on religious co-existence initiatives led by civil society organizations in Hyderabad, India, and will be working on Prevention of Violent Conflict and the Sustainable Development Goals at QUNO.

Additionally, QUNO welcomed a new Fellow in October, Linda Kitenge, who will spend a year working on growing QUNO's work in Prevention of Violent Conflict. Linda come to New York from Rwanda and the UK, and has worked as a Quaker Peace and Social Witness volunteer in Burundi with INAMA, a network of 25 grassroots organizations monitoring electoral violence.. ❖