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Executive Director's Reflection

Dear Friends,

I am writing this reflection today on World Environment Day—June 5th, 2021. Designated by the UN General Assembly in 1972, it was first marked in 1974

with the slogan “Only One Earth”. Since then, World Environment Day has become one of the most significant platforms for environmental awareness.

It is an important day for all of us, as it offers us a global platform for inspiring positive and collective change, encouraging us to make peace with nature. We have been taking the environment for granted, trying to change and control nature. We need to collectively learn to protect and align with nature.

This year’s theme is Ecosystem Restoration, which is about helping in the conservation of ecosystems and the recovery of those that have been destroyed or degraded. It covers measures such as the greening of cities, growing trees, changing diets, and the cleaning of rivers. This year also marks the United Nations Decade on Ecosystems Restoration.

Every crisis that affects the world has an impact on those who are marginalized / homeless. Justice for our planet and justice for all



our sisters and brothers are conversations that are happening globally, but often in separate places. The interconnectedness of daily human life and the state of our earth often go unexamined, but they are conversations that cannot be held separately.

World Environment Day is also about Environmental Justice, reminding us to stop abusing the land and waters that give us life every day. And Social Justice is inseparable from Environmental Justice because of what has been done to our indigenous people due to colonization and what was done to the land.

Pope Francis in Laudato Si emphasized that our relationship with the environment is one relationship among many. It is bound into all our relationships. Respect for our family, our local communities, and our friends, must be accompanied by respect for our natural environment if we and our world are to flourish. We do not have an environment; we are part of it.

Actions we can take:

- Start an initiative on restoration and conservation.
- Become more aware of our environmental footprint.
- Give voice to the issue, especially in your local environment.
- Encourage Governments and local authorities to make decisions that help in the restoration of the ecosystems around you.
- Spread awareness about ecosystem degradation and actively participate in restoration efforts.
- Include environmental justice in discussions of housing security.

Warmly,

Jean

Upcoming Dates

June 15

World Elder's Abuse Day

June 16

International Day of Family Remittance

June 19

International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict

July 11

World Population Day

July 18

International Nelson Mandela Day

July 30

International Day of Friendship

July 30

World Day against Trafficking in Persons

August 9

International Day of World's Indigenous Peoples



Research Update

UNANIMA International recently launched our newest publication: "The Intersections of Family Homelessness and Human Trafficking." The publication features original analyses and research, lived experience testimonies, and expert contributions. Our launch event on May 11 began with an explanation of the Indigenous "smudging prayer," which serves to purify any negative energy present. It was read in French, English, Spanish, and Irish.

Jean Quinn, DW gave a brief summary of UNANIMA International as an organization, followed by an explanation of the issues of homelessness' relevance to our organization and the United Nations. This was complemented by Sr. Amarachi Grace Ezeonu's presentation of Human Trafficking within International affairs.

All speakers were diverse in background and expertise, and given the topic of our publication, spoke to the two different issues and their intersections. The experts included those with lived experience, United Nations advocates, religious leaders working to end trafficking, among others. UNANIMA International's lead researcher

for the publication, Kirin Taylor, shared the organization's methodology and approach to research, as well as action steps that attendees could take when seeking to address and prevent both Family Homelessness and Human Trafficking.

You can access the publication here:

<https://unanima-international.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Intersections-Publication-2.pdf>

Publication Launch Recording:

<https://youtu.be/f5pQSDEjgTw>

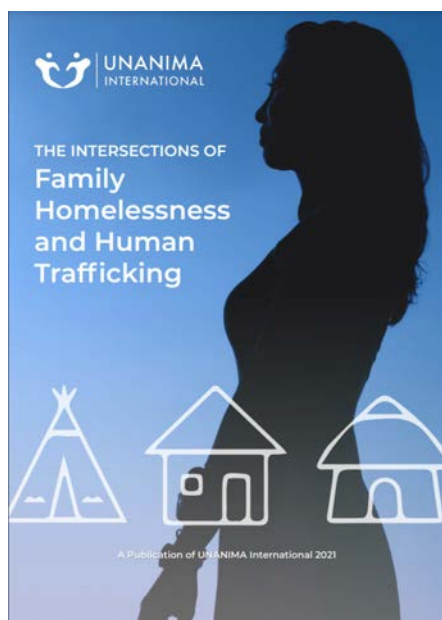
*Apologies for the beginning of the recording being cut off.

Access to Speakers' Presentations:

https://drive.google.com/drive/u/3/folders/ITCsvtdIOE44PMYjQcR6QNf8OHfVJb_no

Evento traducción al español:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WEL_UQgHjBsunCHApnaVfgMimHkNLyrb/view?usp=sharing



What's Happening At the UN?



NGO Committee Updates

Working Group to End Homelessness - WGEH



Eliminating homelessness in all its forms continues to be the focus of the Working Group to End Homelessness (WGEH). It is a complex issue affecting most of society's most vulnerable people. During the past year, the number of homeless people throughout the world was 150 million, which is 2% of the world's population. Additionally, more than 20% of the world's population may lack adequate housing. However, we know the numbers could be higher because we do not have firm data on it at the moment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable countries around the world, particularly those with Women and Girls, people of color and those already struggling to access basic health care. It is estimated that COVID-19 will push more than 71 million people into extreme poverty. More needs to be done to build back better, fairer, and more inclusively after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our mission continues to be that we advocate at the UN for persons who are vulnerable and in need of housing as a human right. Our key accomplishment in the past two years has been a Resolution on Affordable Housing and Social Protection Systems for all to address Homelessness.

Read the full Resolution here –

<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3869551?ln=en>

Our current Goals are to:

- Advocate for a new Resolution through the Third Committee of the GA
- Seek a standardized definition on homelessness.
- Collect disaggregated data on homelessness

NGO Committee for Social Development



High Level Political Forum 2021

We are now preparing for the UN's High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2021. The event will take place from July 6th–15th and is the main review body of the 2030 Agenda. It provides a key moment in the year to consider progress and follow up on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This year's theme focuses on the need for a 'sustainable and resilient recovery' from the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, the event will focus on Sustainable Development Goals 1 (eradication of poverty), 2 (zero hunger), 3 (good health and well-being), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 10 (reduced inequalities), 12 (responsible consumption and production), 13 (climate action), 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions), and 17 (partnerships).

This year 44 countries will be presenting on their progress in the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). UNANIMA International will be collaborating on several Side Events with our JCOR Partners, REDES NGO (European Justice Group of Religious), CSOcD, and others.



Response to Unrest in Haiti



Some weeks ago, Religious at the UN (RUN) received a letter from our partners at the Latin American Confederation of Religious (CLAR), urging us to act in response to the increasing unrest in Haiti. UNANIMA International supported JCOR (Justice Coalition of Religious) in taking action. Based on conversations with contacts in Haiti and elsewhere in Latin America, together with news reports, and statements coming out of Haiti, a letter was composed and sent to the Permanent Missions of the United States, Canada, France, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and the Holy See. UNANIMA International was a signatory on these letters.

Please find a copy of this letter on our website at this link: https://unanima-international.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/UN-Haiti-Response-letter_April-2021-1.pdf



The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

The Forum took place from April 19-30, 2021, with the theme "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: the role of indigenous peoples in implementing Sustainable Development Goal 16" in consideration of the COVID-19 situation. In his address, The Under Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Liu Zemin, said that the "impact of historical injustices, often without redress or reconciliation is a major reason for the continued marginalization of indigenous peoples. The lack of recognition of their existence challenges their ability to live in dignity and peace".

At the opening of the Forum, the Under Secretary-General asserted that "although they represent the greater part of the world's cultural diversity and speak the major share of its languages, indigenous people are three times more likely to live in extreme poverty." He urged all of us to "do better" at fostering inclusive, participatory laws and policies with strong and accountable institutions that provide justice for all; and to "promote and uphold" the right to health for people and the environment. He said indigenous people are "indispensable to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their voices need to be heard".



United Nations Permanent Forum
on Indigenous Issues

UNANIMA International's UNPFII Side Event: Women & Girls' Homelessness and the SDGs in Indigenous Communities,

WOMEN & GIRLS' HOMELESSNESS AND THE SDGs IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES



SPEAKERS

- Grandmother Isabelle Meawasige (Serpents Band of Ojibway), Ki Ga Do Waak Nookimissuk - Grandmothers' Council
- Akikwe (Treaty #61 Territory), Knowledge Carrier
- Delores Peltier (Three Fires Confederacy Tribe), Tenant Relations Officer, Gignul Non Profit Housing Corporation
- Franklin Antunish (Metzankim, Ecuador), Shuar Educator & Leader
- Lara Hicks, UNANIMA International Intern
- Kirin Taylor, UNANIMA International Lead Researcher & Policy Advocate

WHEN

April 20th, 2021
10 am EST (USA)

MODERATOR

Sheila Smith, RSCJ
UN-NGO Representative
Society of the Sacred Heart

REGISTRATION

[Click HERE to Register!](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KzQMThwXzQ)



On April 20, 2021, UNANIMA International held a Side Event as part of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) to highlight the issue of homelessness among Indigenous communities. Indigenous people make up a disproportionate percentage of the people experiencing homelessness. However, the information we have on this topic globally is insufficient. From previous quantitative and qualitative evidence, we know there are distinct experiences and manifestations of homelessness

faced by women, and more specifically, Indigenous women. Thus, this event was conceived with the intention of making space for a gendered discussion of homelessness (and this topic's relation to the SDGs) within Indigenous communities.

Our event was titled: "Women and Girls' Homelessness and the SDGs in Indigenous Communities". It was moderated by Sister Sheila Smith (RSCJ) and included accounts of homelessness as experienced by Indigenous people, by those with lived experience, academics, and human rights experts. Our presenters included Grandmother Isabelle Meawasige (Serpents Band of Ojibway); Akikwe (Treaty #61 territory); Delores Peltier (Three Fires Confederacy Tribe); Franklin Antunish (Shuar Educator and Leader, Ecuador); Lara Hicks (UNANIMA International); and Kirin Taylor (UNANIMA International). These speakers gave important insights into how we may begin preventing and addressing homelessness in Indigenous communities with special consideration of Indigenous history, contemporary research, and the specific needs of women and girls.

A recording of this presentation is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KzQMThwXzQ>



Above: Grandmother Isabelle Meawasige

UNANIMA International Interns

This spring we had three wonderful interns from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University: Xiaowen (Abby) Cui, Lara Hicks, and Tyra Jean; as well as Rocio Moron from St. John's University. These women made insightful and important contributions to our organization's research for education and advocacy. Abby and Rocio will continue our team for the summer, while Lara and Tyra are dedicating their time to finishing graduate level capstone projects.

Their contributions:

Lara Hicks

Lara's contributions included presenting as a panelist at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) UNANIMA International side event in April titled: "Women & Girls' Homelessness and the SDGs in Indigenous Communities." She also made the flyer for the event.

You can view the event at the links below:

Recording Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KzQMThwXzQ>

Concept Note:

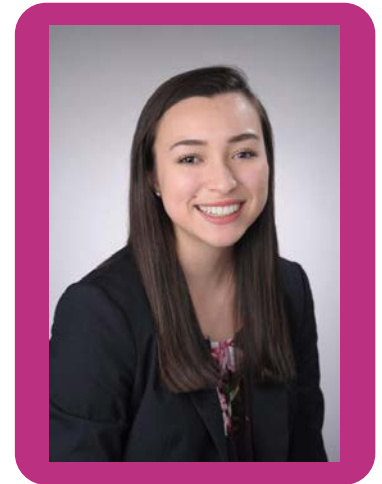
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nM8xjgz07pmisqJSM3cGSLTReErj6pHY/view>

Working Definition:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/18YvFgdPiczeOX7GmR9moERltb7pfsB_h/view

Access to all speaker's presentations:

https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/17imjgyJ--WrrQ9xPDdoKF2pA4d41_qRl



Xiaowen (Abby) Cui

Abby joined the Open Doors Group, a new subcommittee of the UN NGO Working Group to End Homelessness. There she contributed significantly to the group's exploration of how to engage in evidence-based projects. She wrote a contextual analysis, "Promotion of International Definitions of Homelessness and Hidden Homelessness," which will serve as an important document as we go forward to advocate for the use of the homelessness and hidden homelessness definitions by UN Member States.



UNANIMA International Interns (continued)

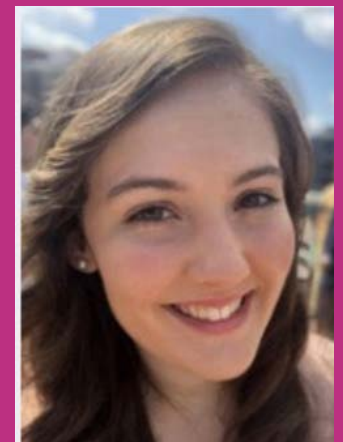
Tyra Jean

Tyra contributed uniquely through her writing and case profiling skills. She wrote a blog post that will be posted later in the summer. Additionally, she wrote a paper titled “St. Vincent and The Grenadines: The 2021 La Soufrière Volcanic Eruption & Climate-Induced Displacement” which contributes to our understanding of Family Homelessness in the Caribbean region.



Rocio Moron

Rocio is acknowledged for her research support and had her contributions published within our new publication, *The Intersections of Family Homelessness and Human Trafficking*. Rocio’s background in biology and service engagement with homeless populations in NYC has given her the unique ability to reflect on experience, while also giving incredible insights into the topics at hand.



We are thankful to all our interns for their amazing commitment!

Intern Reflection

In our final reflection, Jean shared with the Interns that “what has struck me is your commitment to UNANIMA International.” Indeed, these interns contributed holistically to our research, education, and advocacy, as they engaged in NGO working groups/committees, completed research, and presented their research findings.

Lara Hicks shared that, “even though we couldn’t be in person, I felt connected and part of the team. It’s just the beginning of a longer journey and it takes a village...I want to be one of those shared voices [working to help the most marginalized of our world].” Lara also felt that “the events and webinars that UNANIMA International spearheaded created a deep sense of community.” Tyra Jean shared that, “I was drawn towards UNANIMA International because of the focus on the feminine spirit. The internship was an opportunity for following the whisper in our hearts.”

The three women highlighted the following as their favorite parts of the experience: participating in subcommittees and attending events, becoming a part of the UN NGO community, feeling a part of a bigger movement for social good, being able to connect the dots between different issues (such as homelessness, environmental challenges, family wellness, and more), understanding the root causes of homelessness, and connecting to our team through a reflective and caring atmosphere.

The interns assured us that they want to remain connected, and we have even considered the possibility of creating a “Friends of UNANIMA International” Group in the future. The interns each said they will bring this experience and research, including experience in qualitative research, up to future employers and hope to do similar work—whether with us or elsewhere—in the future.



Grassroots Stories: "I Dream of a World"

Over the last few years, UNANIMA International has been thrilled to see homelessness enter the agenda of the United Nations, and one dream is certainly to see a world where it stays there. Given the pervasiveness and global nature of homelessness, and particularly the effects on Women and Children/Girls, we need decision-makers to devote their energy to creating solutions. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us are even more desperate to see the changes that we crave for our world.

Perhaps at this time, we know what we do not want... insecurity, struggle for basic resources, violations of human rights, and the like. But do we know what we want?! What type of a world do we envision? Can we identify some of these dreams for ourselves, our relationships with others (including those we serve and those who serve us), and more broadly, our global society?

Perhaps we dream of ourselves communicating better to our God and our community members. Perhaps we dream of generosity being present in the mindset of all those who have abundance. For our global society, what comes to mind is the conversion of society to community—creating mutually beneficial international relations and having care for all within nature.

One thing is certain: if we identify dreams, and work towards their fulfillment, we are much more likely to improve our own attitudes and actions. Let us hear from some of our collaborators. What are their "Dreams of a World" ...

"I dream of a world where people living in disaster prone areas will go to bed at peace, knowing that the house they are sleeping in will be standing in the morning."

Pereka Nyirenda RSC



UNANIMA International Board:



UNANIMA International's Board Members at one of our recent meetings

Resources

[Secretary General Report on Disability](#)

[World Situation and Prospects of 2021](#)

[UN Habitat on Internal Displacement](#)

[UN chief to Indigenous Forum: 'Prioritize inclusion and sustainable development'](#)

[Ecosystem Restoration Playbook](#)

[Global Sisters Report: "Act locally to help break the chains of human trafficking"](#)

UNANIMA International will be back with our next newsletter in October!