



# Update

## February 2017

### **A Note from Our New Director**

At last I arrived here in New York at the beginning of January to a very warm welcome from the UNANIMA Team who were at the airport to welcome me. I am finding my way around on foot and on the buses and subway!!

I am a member of the Congregation of the Daughters of Wisdom spread out throughout the world. I have been actively involved in the International Justice Mission of the Congregation for many years. I have served at Administration level in the Congregation first as Provincial Councillor and then as Provincial of England, Ireland and Scotland for ten years. I also served for Eight years on the Executive of the Conference of Religious of Ireland and in my final year as Vice President.



I am a passionate advocate for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation. I have been involved for many years with the homeless in Dublin (Ireland) and then as Founder of Sophia Housing in Ireland and this year in Sophia we celebrate our 20th year as an organisation.

I feel privileged to have taken on the role of Executive Director of UNANIMA International. I'm looking forward to establishing new partnerships with communities, NGOs, Civil Society and Member States at the UN, I am convinced of the value and works of the UN and I am committed to bringing your voice and that of the poor and oppressed to the activities and policies of the UN.

Please feel free to get in touch with me at any time and if I can be of any help or support

to your communities I will be delighted to do so. I can be reached at my new e-mail address: [director@unanima-international.org](mailto:director@unanima-international.org).

With love and blessings,

Jean Quinn

### **UNANIMA Welcomes a New Intern: Colleen Jackson**



Colleen is an RSC (Sister of Charity) from Australia. With a background in education (she started life as a Physical Education teacher!) she has, over the last 20 years, worked as a psychologist with a special interest in grief and trauma. Currently she is a counsellor/advocate with Foundation House (the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture) where she provides specialist torture and trauma counselling and advocacy for recently arrived asylum seekers. Her work with asylum seekers also extends to regular visits with, and advocacy on behalf of, a group of asylum seeker men who have been indefinitely detained under Australia's refugee determination policies, and support for the men's wives and children in their home countries. Colleen is also actively involved in her local ACRATH group.

She's delighted be engaged in a UNANIMA internship and looks forward to rich learnings and hopefully, making some contribution!

### **New Female Faces in UN Leadership**



The UN may not have a female Secretary General, as many hoped it would, but that does not mean the institution will need to wait another five years to see women become more visible and influential in its . In his [statement before the General Assembly after taking his oath of office](#), Secretary General António Guterres named the achievement of gender parity in leadership as one of the chief aims of his term. He pledged to achieve full gender

parity in the offices of the senior management group and chief executive board of the UN, including Special Representatives and Special Envoys to the Secretary General, by the end of his mandate. Thus far, Guterres has named women to the posts of Deputy Secretary General and Chief of Cabinet. He has also appointed a woman to a new cabinet position of his own creation: the Special Advisor for Policy. The appointed Deputy SG, Amina Mohammed (above), comes to her new role from service as Nigeria's Minister of Environment, Special Advisor to Ban Ki-Moon



in planning for the Sustainable Development Goals, and, previously, Nigeria's Special Advisor on the Millennium Development Goals. Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti (right) of Brazil will take up the mantle as Chief of Cabinet and South Korea's Kyung-wha Kang (left) will break ground as the UN SG's first Special Advisor on Policy. The UNANIMA team looks forward to seeing what waves the feminine spirit can bring to these prominent global

leadership roles. [See this article](#) for a thorough account of Guterres' gender party campaign thus far.

## Two Major UN Commissions on the Horizon

In the months of February and March, UN Headquarters will host two of its largest annual conferences. From 1 to 10 February, the 55<sup>th</sup> Commission on Social Development (CSocD55) will address the theme "Strategies for the eradication of poverty." It will be preceded by a two-day forum hosted by Civil Society, during which the non-government community will draft a resolution to be presented at the opening of the official CSocD.

The 61<sup>st</sup> Commission on the Status of Women (CSW61) will be held from 13 to 24 March. It will focus on the theme "Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work."

UNANIMA will be represented by 10 delegates at CSocD55 and by 15 delegates, including a few young students, at CSW61.

### **Justice Denied for a UI Woman of Courage**

The UI family extends a hand of compassion and solidarity this month to our 2011 Woman of Courage, Jessica Ernst. At the time she received the award, Jessica was in the midst of a prolonged legal battle against EnCana, a natural gas producer whose fracking project had contaminated the drinking water in her home community and against the government of Alberta, Canada. She was also in pursuit of legal recourse against the Board of Alberta Energy Regulator (AER), the former government agency (now independent entity) responsible for ensuring the safety, responsibility, and efficiency of energy exploits in her province. Ernst accused the AER of a failure to investigate or address the concerns she presented and of denying her constitutional rights to a judicial pathway for the redress of grievances.



After ten years of litigation that cost over \$350,000 on Jessica's part, the Canadian Supreme Court concluded by 5-4 split decision that, as a government agency, AER is immune to claims of constitutional infringement. Laura Track, counsel with the BC Civil Liberties Association who served as an intervenor in the case, expressed concern for the broader consequences of this verdict. "The [Constitution]," she asserted, "guarantees everyone the right to an appropriate and just remedy if their constitutional rights are violated, but a majority of the Court has now said that, in some circumstances, legislatures may shield certain government administrative decision makers from Charter scrutiny. This decision has worrisome implications for people across the country seeking to hold government-appointed decision makers accountable for egregious unconstitutional actions."

The next steps for Jessica will be to continue pursuing her claims of negligence against the Alberta government and EnCana through Alberta's provincial courts. Now more than ever, the UNANIMA community stands behind her in this prolonged battle for corporate and governmental accountability. For a more complete account of the details of the verdict and the case itself see [this article](#).

## UI Talks to GSR About Refugees

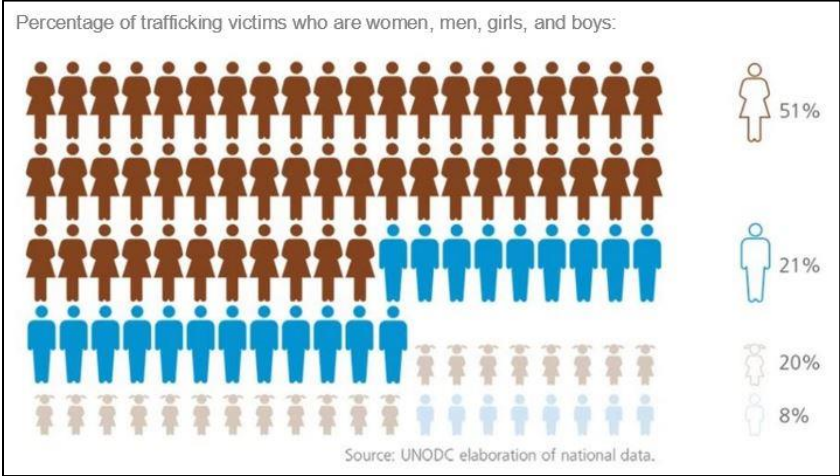
In January, UI Executive Assistant Teresa Blumenstein was tapped by National Catholic Reporter's Global Sisters Report for an interview on the policy and demographic outlook for refugees and migrants in 2017. The resulting article was produced in recognition of National Migration Week in the USA, which occurred from 8-14 January. In addition to speaking about the upcoming negotiations of a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration, Teresa was glad for the opportunity to shine some light on an



intersection of two of UNANIMA's areas of concern: climate change and human displacement. Despite the fact that the population being displaced by climate change on an annual basis is more than double that fleeing armed conflict, the former group receives significantly less press. Climate-displaced persons are also particularly vulnerable to falling through the cracks of international policy as they do not fit the legal definition of a refugee and are therefore not entitled to any of the protections enshrined in the UN's 1951 Refugee Convention. Because most climate-displaced people do not cross international borders, they are not protected by any existing or forthcoming conventions on migrants and are not considered to be the responsibility of the international community. This policy gap is particularly incensing given the international community's awareness of their shared culpability for climate change, the driving force behind this group's displacement. For these reasons, Teresa is currently representing UNANIMA on a committee of NGOs focused on promoting the rights of and protections for those displaced by climate change and disaster. Find the [full GSR article here](#). For more information on the work of the committee on climate-induced displacement, see [their page on the NGO Committee on Migration website](#).

## New Global Report on Trafficking in Persons

As we turned our calendar pages to a new year, the UN was rolling out a new global Report on Trafficking in Persons. The report identifies patterns among trafficking and regular migration flows with a common destination country. It also describes trafficking trends within countries, between neighboring States, and across regions. Among the report's key findings are that 71% of trafficking victims are women or girls, one third of victims are children, and risk factors for being trafficked include the presence of transnational organized crime in one's country of origin as well as one's socio-economic status. An English version of the [full report can be found here along with executive summaries](#) available in all six UN languages.



**Flashpoints Welcome!**

We are hungry from news from your corners of the world. Please write to Jean at [director@unanima-international.org](mailto:director@unanima-international.org) to let your UN contingent know what challenges and triumphs you have encountered in your work in the last few months. Accompanying photos are encouraged!