



Update: July 2013

UN Closed for Renovation?

But *not* really *closed*! If you were planning to come see the UN General Assembly Hall any time soon, you are too late. Visitors arriving for tours at the UN come in a side gate, and tour a very limited part of the Secretariat Building and the Security Council room (if the SC is not in session). The post office, book store and gift shop occupy tiny spaces in the basement of the library. The old public section will be closed for about two years. The General Assembly now meets in a temporary building (the North Lawn Building) where most meetings have been held for the last two years. The rest of us have moved back to the renovated meeting rooms, which look very nice and have plenty of electrical outlets! The renovation was badly needed, as the structure had not been updated since it was built in the late 1940's. The already-leaking roof was not helped by Hurricane Sandy. The NGO community and Indigenous Peoples Forum enjoyed "inaugurating" the new meeting rooms.



"This is Just a Test"

As some of you will see, we are experimenting with a new format for the *Update* newsletter. We know that different member communities send out the UNANIMA news in different formats, and don't know if this will complicate things for our members. But new things are always worth a try!

Please try this out, and let us know immediately if you have any problems disseminating this to your members, or if it is incompatible with your computer resources. We will value your input.

Speaking of new things, if you have not visited our Facebook page, go in and "Like" us there. (facebook.com/unanimaintl) There's a lot more global and UN news there, than in the *Update*...

Some News Briefs

- UI submits its priorities to the SDSN group developing a recommendation on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the UN Secretary General.
- UI signs onto an intervention by an NGO group lobbying for inclusion of a Social Protection Floor in the SDGs.
- UI is a signatory on a letter to several UN agencies (UNDP, UNFPA, UNAIDS) objecting to their support of the decriminalization of the purchase of sex.
- UI visits headquarters of Holy Child Sisters in Rye, NY to share info about their sisters in Ghana

SDSN Report Submitted to Secretary-General Still Feeling That African Energy

The Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) is a consultation / “think tank” group of academics, scientists, and other experts who work closely with UN agencies. At the request of Secretary General Ban Ki-moon they have been working on a summary of public consultation on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—the goals which ultimately will form the plan of action coming out of Rio+20, and continue the good work on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The SDSN is the group to whom UNANIMA submitted its recommendations for the SDGs. On Thursday, June 6, the SDSN submitted its report, [An Action Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The SDSN leadership group expressed their gratitude for the hundreds of detailed comments received. [A summary of the consultation is available here](#); access the full document at <http://www.unsdsn.org> (translations are supposed to be coming out this week). The group hopes this report will be helpful in the inter-governmental processes on the Sustainable Development Goals, and in the lead-up to the special session of the UN General Assembly on the MDGs on September 25. (To access links, do a “Control/Click”)



The rest of the story about the UNANIMA International Youth Workshop against human trafficking held in Ghana last April—may take years to unfold. But a seed has been planted and should continue bearing fruit. One of the young men stood up and testified that “This has been a turning point in my life. I am promising to dedicate my life to this work (against human trafficking)”. The UNANIMA sisters are talking about what they might do in their areas. Some of the lay people who attended—a married couple from Benin and a woman from Nigeria—are preparing a workshop on human trafficking for

Saint Leo’s Parish in Lagos. Another workshop is in preparation for the Diocese of Abeokuta.

Water Project in Haiti

Sr. Patricia Dillon RJM describes a water project in Gros Morne, Haiti that helps provide safe drinking water for many families. It is called *Gadyen Dio*—Haitian creole for “water guardian”—and is set up at the parish rectory. A network of families have been through



training to learn how to treat their water using a five-gallon bucket which has a spigot, lid and label bought for a very low price. What a gift it is to save lives by treating water.

Do any of our other UNANIMA communities have “water success” stories to tell?

We would be especially interested in hearing about any who are cooperating with **Water With Blessings**, a project that the UI board voted to support this year.

Increased US Focus on Human Trafficking

The group of religious women who gathered in Washington DC in April have formed a “Google group” and are now united in an informal network under the “umbrella” of the *Bakhita Initiative*, an already existing group of US Catholic Sisters United Against Human Slavery. Saint Bakhita is the patron of enslaved people. Check the *Bakhita Initiative* website at www.bakhitainitiative.com

Prostitution as “Just Sex Work?”

UI is joining with other groups to protest the inclination of some UN agencies to decriminalize the buying of sex, “in order to cut back on HIV/AIDS.” These agencies (UNDP, UNFPA, and UNAIDS) try to separate prostitution from the issue of trafficking. But “for the most part, prostitution as actually practiced in the world usually does satisfy the elements of trafficking. It is rare that one finds a case in which the path to prostitution and/or a person’s experiences within prostitution do not involve, at the very least, an abuse of power and/or an abuse of vulnerability.” —N. Ramos (head of Coalition Against Trafficking in Women)



UN International Year of—What?

Quinoa. The supergrain of the Andes was so revered by the Incas, they called it *chisaya mama*, or “mother grain.” A nearly perfect nutrition source, this edible seed is related to spinach and beets. It has been cultivated for over 4,000 years. The Indigenous Peoples of the Andes felt that ignoring it was a rejection of traditional knowledge, and lobbied the UN to have it celebrated this year. So cook some quinoa!



Calling Interested Intern Applicants

Don’t wait until the last minute to think ahead about a possible internship in your future! There are visas, ministry decisions, and all those unexpected things that come up when you are trying to make plans. First talk to your community leadership people, and contact Michele Morek, Coalition Coordinator at UNANIMA International, to ask questions or express your fears. To date there is no one signed up for the fall session, which begins in early-mid September; if no sister applies, UI will take on some students, who are always knocking at the door...

The work in the fall semester is very different from that of the spring; it is really in the fall that the major work of the United Nations is done, through its committees and special meetings. But if spring is your goal, remember that November 13 is the deadline for the spring applications! **Don’t delay; we want to welcome you to the UN!**

