



Update from the United Nations
No. 43. 06/2020

It's your World

IBVM and CJ together for a humane, just and sustainable world

Life has dramatically changed since the last UN Update in February, then few of us knew of Coronavirus or Covid 19. For some months, it seems that lives have stopped, yet inequality, injustice and the climate crisis continue. In fact, this pandemic highlights the inequality and injustice around the world.

We are all frail, all equal, all precious. May we be profoundly shaken by what is happening all around us: the time has come to eliminate inequalities, to heal the injustice that is undermining the health of the entire human family!

Pope Francis, Homily, April 19, 2020

As always, the marginalized and those who do not have the resources (refugees and asylum seekers, migrant workers and homeless people, mostly women and girls) suffered more. However, as the virus spread, so did solidarity among people (local, national and global) and acts of kindness. As the world stopped, some parts of our planet begun to heal. Sadly, there were also instances of greed, racism and misinformation. We saw the best and worst of human nature. Now, more than ever, we need countries to work together. This health crisis and the subsequent economic fallout are global issues and only a multilateral collaboration will get us through. In this issue, we inform you of a change in personnel at our UN Office and we share the significant work that continues at the UN, and within our network, to achieve a better world.

United Nations at this time of Pandemic

Last April the **UN Secretary-General (SG)**, Antonio Guterres, launched a report on how human rights can and should guide coronavirus response and recovery. This latest report is entitled: 'COVID-19 and Human Rights: We are all in this Together' containing the key message that human rights are critical, not just for the efficacy of a State's immediate response to the pandemic, but also for every States' short, medium, and long-term recovery. Read the full report [HERE](#).

The **World Health Organization (WHO)** declared Covid 19 a pandemic in early March. This pandemic demonstrates the importance of global cooperation, coordinated by UN through WHO and other agencies. WHO and health officials advised that keeping physical distance, washing hands and avoiding crowded places save lives. However, there has been a proliferation of misinformation on social media about causes, treatments and cures and some could be dangerous to our health. WHO advised that to date there are still no confirmed treatment, cures or vaccine against Covid 19. Please check any information you receive. For more information go to the link below.

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>



The Commission on the Status of Women amended their 64th Session because of the pandemic. They held a procedural meeting that included opening statements, the adoption of the Political Declaration and actions on the draft resolution with no general debate. Organizers also cancelled all side and parallel events planned by member states and UN agencies in collaboration with civil society. You can read the Political Declaration [HERE](#).

UN Women also postponed the Generation Equality Forum to 2021. It will launch transformative actions to achieve immediate and irreversible progress towards gender equality. Sadly, despite the commitment made 25 years ago in Beijing, not a single country has achieved gender equality and some have regressed. The Forums will be vital to mobilizing and engaging gender equality advocates from all sectors. To learn about what we can do visit the website [HERE](#).

UN75 People's Forum for the UN We Need

The virtual Forum on May 14-15, 2020 had registered participants from 75 countries and over 600 attendees each day. Many more joined through YouTube and Facebook Live. "We the peoples" sent a strong message to the UN and Member States that, as a matter of urgency, the world needs a stronger multilateral system. Furthermore, the UN75 High Level Event on 21 September needs to be the catalyst for the transformative changes urgently needed to address effectively the 21st century global challenges. One of many highlights at the Forum was the release of the UN75 People's Declaration and Plan for Global Action. Read the Declaration [HERE](#).

High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will hold the virtual meeting of the 2020 HLPF on Sustainable Development from 7-16 July 2020. This year 51 countries (28 first time presenters, 22 second time presenters and 1 third time presenter) will conduct Voluntary National Reviews at the HLPF. Check [HERE](#) if your country is one of them.

The Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) aim to facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The VNRs also seek to strengthen policies and institutions of governments and to mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Read the report of the Secretary-General on Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals [HERE](#).

NGO Office at the United Nations



We farewell Cecilia O’Dwyer and welcome Janet Palafox to the role of UN Representative for IBVM. We are very grateful to Cecilia for her 7 years of service (2013-2020) and her extraordinary commitment, passion and creativity. She worked tirelessly to gain ECOSOC status, strengthened the Province UN Representatives and Human Trafficking networks, and developed various communications mediums – UN NGO website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, UN Update and Global Citizenship Newsletter. Cecilia’s passion was infectious and we were challenged to engage with the UN and become better global citizens. Thank you very Cecilia. Muchisimas gracias!

Due to the pandemic, Cynthia Matthews CJ and Janet Palafox are both working remotely from their home countries (India and Australia) and virtually attending meetings and conferences. With New York City still in lockdown, the UN headquarters is closed to the public. UN briefings and meetings, including NGO coalitions, are all virtual. Nevertheless, the information sharing and advocacy work continues, so expect to hear from us regularly.

IBVM/CJ and National Government Progress Webinar

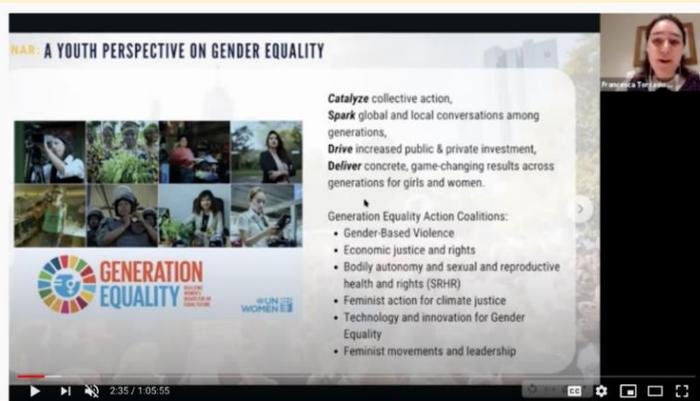


As mentioned in the last UN Update, the NGO Office, in collaboration with the IBVM/CJ Province UN Representatives, organized two webinars in preparation for CSW64 and Beijing +25 to celebrate the achievements and highlight the challenges of the National Review of governments’ implementation of the Beijing Declaration.

You can access the recorded Webinar for Asia and Australia [HERE](#) and for Europe and North America [HERE](#).

Youth and Gender Equality Webinar

On April 2, our intern, Francesca Torcasio Barberis, and Loretto Community intern, Amy Maltz, led a webinar entitled “A Youth Perspective on Gender Equality: Using the Experiences of Young People to Inform Advocacy”. In light of the cancellation of the 64th Commission on the Status of Women, and the ECOSOC Youth Forum we, the current youth representatives thought it was important to continue advocacy and youth engagement in innovative ways.



A Youth Perspective on Gender Equality- Webinar April 2nd 2020

The purpose of the webinar was to give young people, based on their experiences, a platform to share their perspective on Gender Equality. We heard young advocates from the US and Australia speak on a number of different aspects of gender equality, including Gender Based Violence, Women's Access to Healthcare, Economic Justice, Climate Activism, Technology and Innovation, and Feminist Leadership.

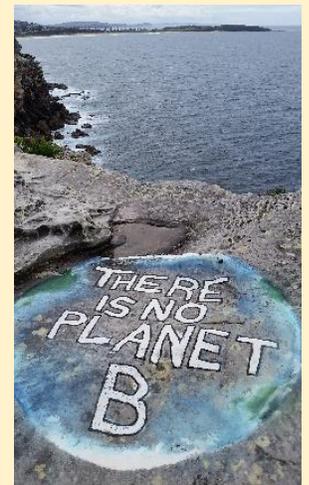
It was a great success, with over 80 people viewing the webinar, and a lot of engagement from the audience, especially during the Q and A session. We hope the webinar inspired others to ensure young people have dedicated opportunities for engagement to ensure their unique perspectives are heard.

Thank you to our panelists for sharing their perspectives and to everyone who watched the event. You can find a recording of the webinar [HERE](#).

By Francesca Torcasio Barberis

Earth Day

This year on April 22, we celebrated 50 years of World Earth Day. To commemorate this jubilee year, we put out an infographic and a paper sharing the IBVM/CJ network's perspectives as to the areas of climate change we need to prioritize and what actions we ask the UN and member states to take about these issues. The document is a summary of the work done by IBVM and CJ UN Province Representatives. You can access the infographic [HERE](#) and the summary document [HERE](#).



Our Network contributes to the work of the United Nations

Mary Ward Youth Engagement and the UN

The current Secretary-General of the UN continues to relay the importance of engaging young people in UN processes, including discussions, forums, and decision-making. As a network with so many dedicated young women, we are committed to ensuring we give youth a gateway to connect with the UN. This is largely done through our youth WhatsApp group. This group has almost 100 members, made up of young CJ and IBVM sisters, aged 32 and below, as well as past youth representatives and the UN office.

The purpose of this group is two-fold: on the one hand, the group exists to educate these young women about the UN, its procedures and its events. On the other hand, to share with them ways to engage directly with the UN, such as with the UN Major Group for Children and Youth, and various surveys and webinars held by the UN and its constituencies.



We also encourage engagement within the group. For example, we recently held a Zoom call to get to know each other, and share challenges and learnings from the current pandemic. One of our members, Sr. Mary Santrina from the East Africa province, made a fantastic video sharing these perspectives. It is available to watch on our YouTube channel [HERE](#).

Another way we would like to engage young people is through an email list. If you are between 18 - 32 years old, and are connected with IBVM, CJ, Loreto or Mary Ward in anyway (member, alumni, employee) we encourage you to email us on ibvmunngo@gmail.com to be added to the email list.

By Francesca Torcasio Barberis

IBVM/CJ Response to COVID-19 Crisis



CJ Patna Province (above) and Kolkota Mary Ward Social Center (right) in India distributing food to migrant workers and people that have lost their livelihood.



COVID-19 pandemic is the defining global health crisis of our time and the greatest challenge we have faced since World War II. It is much more than a health crisis. By impacting every one of the countries it touches, the virus has created devastating social, economic and political crises that will leave deep scars. The impact of this global crisis affected everyone everywhere. Our IBVM/CJ members around the world have responded to those affected by the lockdown, especially the most vulnerable in the society.

Read [HERE](#) to know how the Mary Ward family have followed the principle of “leaving no one behind.” Thank you to Fundación Mary Ward.