

***“Let us allow the light of Christmas to enter into our hearts and reach out toward those who are most in need.”***

***Pope Francis***

What an extraordinary year 2020 has been! As we look back on this year, we may marvel at our strength, weakness, fears, creativity and everything in between. We realized that we live in a very unequal world, however, we saw what could be achieved if we all work together.

As we face a worldwide pandemic, one we cannot control, our understanding of who and what is essential changed. We realized the importance of our caring industry. These thoughts give new meaning to the Little Prince’s words, when he says: “It is only with the heart that one can see rightly, what is essential is invisible to the eye.”

Almost a year later, it seems this microscopic virus continues to confound us. Worldwide, there are countries which are experiencing their second or third wave of infections. Globally more than 71 million people have been infected, with over 1.6 million deaths. Moreover, although at the beginning there were hopes that our leaders would see the crisis as an opportunity to build back better for the people and the earth, this remains a hope while there is still hesitation to give up power, wealth and privilege.

However, we know that our collective effort to contain the virus and care for each other made a difference. And we continue to see around us signs of love and hope. In this issue, we share with you stories of global cooperation to eliminate Human Trafficking, to protect Human Rights and the Environment, and create a more peaceful and just world.

## UNITED NATIONS

### ***Secretary General’s ‘State of the Planet’ address***

On 2 December 2020, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stood at Columbia University to make a speech about the ‘State of the Planet.’

His speech details three imperatives we must take on board to address the climate crisis. Firstly, we need to achieve global carbon neutrality within the next three decades. Secondly, we have to align finance with the Paris Agreement. Thirdly, we must deliver a breakthrough on adaptation measures to protect the world, especially the most vulnerable people and countries from the impacts of climate change.



In line with Guterres' plans, the European Union is committed to become the first climate neutral continent by 2050. Further, Japan, the Republic of Korea and more than 110 countries are also committed to carbon neutrality by 2050. Guterres suggests a shift towards renewable energies, not just for the environment but for the economy as well.

He calls on polluters to pay the price for the environmental derogation they cause as well as encouraging companies to adjust their business models to align themselves with sustainable systems and protocols. He continues to make suggestions that provide the means to finance the Paris Agreement.

Guterres maintains that "as always, the impacts fall most heavily on the world's most vulnerable people. Those who have done the least to cause the problem, suffer the most." He reminded us that, "even in the developed world, the marginalized are the first victims of disasters and the last to recover." With this in mind, advocating for the environment and sustainability is paramount in today's global world.

You can watch Antonio Guterres' speech [here](#) and a transcript can be found [here](#).

By Evangeline Polymeneas

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### ***COP 10....COP20....COP24 and All of That: Behind the Acronym***



Recently the acronym COP has become part of our vocabulary and experience. Perhaps we heard a lot about COP 25 when the Climate Change meeting moved from Chile to Madrid. This time we would like to focus on another COP held in Vienna.

What is COP? It means Conference of Parties, the meeting of countries that have ratified a United Nations Treaty or Convention. The Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and with it, the Protocol on

Trafficking, usually called The Palermo Protocol was adopted in 2000. At the same time, a Conference of Parties was established to promote the implementation of the Convention and three Protocols<sup>1</sup>.

The 10th Session of COP for UNTOC was held from 12 – 16 October 2020. Three members of our IBVM/CJ network attended to represent our NGO. Imelda Poole ibvm (President of RENATE), Adina Balan CJ (JPIC International Coordinator) and Cecilia O'Dwyer (former NGO Representative to UN), participated online in this hybrid session. Some representatives of countries and civil society were present in Vienna, but the vast majority attended online.

While our main interest was in Human Trafficking for sexual exploitation, the width and complexity of different forms of trafficking in women, children, and men already existing, along with emerging forms are unbelievable. Countries are faced with enormous challenges to keep up with the evolving trafficking situation. It seems that organized crime is adapting and changing so quickly and efficiently that in most countries it outpaces governments' capacities. This situation is exacerbated by the exponential growth of online learning methods making children and young girls among those most vulnerable.

Imelda and Adina both have experience of the deficiencies within the system and what needs to be done to improve it. Capacitation of government officials, legislators, police, judges, border control officials, medical, social assistance, civil society is essential for an effective response and remain a huge challenge.

<sup>1</sup>The three protocols supplementing UNTOC are the Protocols against Trafficking in Persons; the Smuggling of Migrants and the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms.

A number of side events complemented the main sessions in Vienna, where the challenges and success stories were shared. The way forward is by working together. Governments alone cannot address this problem and different types of collaboration between governments, companies, banks and civil society organizations are helping to achieve the eradication of this crime. The approval of a review mechanism to advance its implementation is a decisive step forward.

As capacity and response improve, so does the awareness of the need to address this issue from the Human Rights perspective where the trafficked person is at the center of the whole process.

Cecilia delivered a statement on our behalf in collaboration with seven faith-based NGOs. Read our [Oral Statement](#).

By Cecilia O'Dwyer ibvm

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### *Side Events at the COP for UNTOC*

Imelda Poole attended a number of side events at the Conference of Parties (COP) for the UN Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons. She attended four side events that focused on – the impact of the Fund, how we can foster partnerships to prevent human trafficking, the non-punishment of victims and the overlap between smuggling and human trafficking. She shares her notes of the main points covered by the speakers at the following side events.

Read a summary of her notes [here](#).

## NGO OFFICE AT THE UNITED NATIONS

### *International Day of the Girl Summit in collaboration with Working Group for Girls*

Students from both IBVM and CJ schools submitted a diverse number of creative works for the Day of the Girl Summit for the International Day of the Girl 2020. Submissions could be a video, art or graphic design, poem or monologue on the theme “Building Equity for Girls.” Over a hundred Mary Ward students submitted their work and a number of these were chosen and featured at the [Girls Speak Out](#) on October 11, 2020.

You can see their submissions [here](#).

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### *Call to sign Conventions ILO C190*



Numerous studies have found that violence and harassment in the workplace negatively impact the physical, mental, emotional, social and economic well-being of those affected. With a number of Member States failing to ratify and implement ILO C190, a call must be made to remind them of its importance.

The COVID-19 crisis highlighted the fluidity of the workplace and exacerbated the pressures of the most vulnerable,

especially, women, youth, children, migrants, refugees and those with disabilities. The risks faced by workers, including domestic violence and cyberbullying need to be addressed. The International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 190, and its accompanying Recommendation 206 provides the legislative and policy framework for addressing violence and harassment in the world of work, including gender-based violence. We need to call on our national governments to ratify this important convention.

Find the NGO Coalition’s call for ratification of the ILO Convention 190 [here](#).

### ***16 Days of Activism to Eliminate Violence against Women and Girls***

The 16 days of activism began on November 25 – International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women until December 10 – Human Rights Day. For sixteen days we raised our voices on social media to advocate and remind our network that we need to continue to work together to eliminate gender violence. Before the Covid 19 pandemic, one in three women suffered violence at the hands of their intimate partner. Reports indicate that the pandemic exacerbated the level of violence against women and children, especially during the lockdown when they are unable to flee their perpetrator. Let us call on our governments and our societies to STOP the violence!

Read and share our posts on [Facebook](#) or follow us on [Instagram](#).

### ***Opportunities for Participation at the UN and JPIC***

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Event</u></b>	<b><u>How/Where</u></b>	<b><u>Possible Participation</u></b>
1 Jan	World Day of Peace	Catholic	Awareness Raising
24 Jan	World Education Day	UN Day	Awareness Raising
8 Feb	St. Bakhita Day	Resource	Talitha Kum Toolkit – animate network Designing a toolkit and organizing an online event with Human Trafficking network
8-17 Feb	UN Commission for Social Development (CSocD)	Virtual - <a href="#">UNwebtv</a>	Input from our network for Oral Statement during the commission on Priority Theme – “Socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all.” Attend/watch the event.
8 March	International Women’s Day	Resource	Invite network to write about women’s experience (strength, commitment of women during COVID-19, resilience, etc) Designing a Mary Ward network booklet.
15-26 March	Commission on the Status of Women 2021	Virtual - <a href="#">UNwebtv</a>	Input from our network for Priority Theme: “Women’s full & effective participation & decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality & the empowerment of all women & girls.

			Review your own country's report and share. Attend/Watch the event.
21 March	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	UN Day	Awareness Raising

## FROM OUR NETWORK

### *CJ/IBVM Latin American UN Network Webinar*



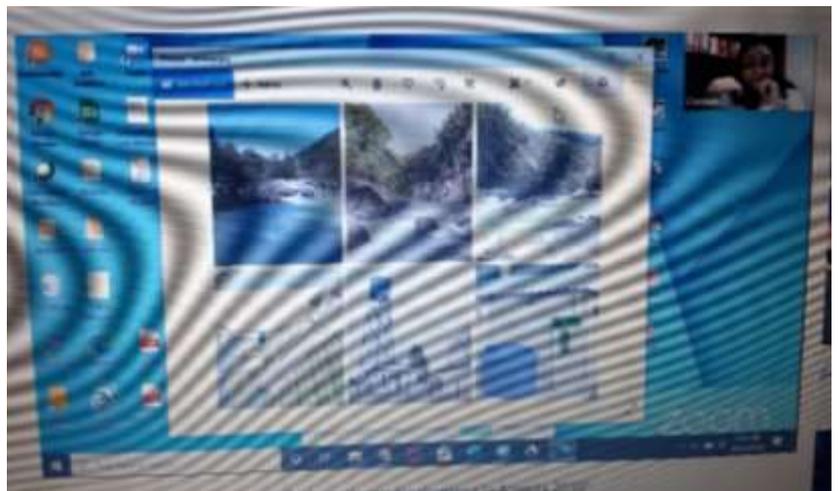
CJ/IBVM Latin American UN Province Representatives Group Webinar: Dialogue with young people and the 2030 Agenda took place on October 24 to commemorate “United Nations Day”. Thirteen student speakers participated and more than 100 people from the Mary Ward Family community in Latin America joined us.

In these times of change and uncertainty, young people are the hope and giving them the floor is fair and

necessary. From the Latin American CJ and IBVM group of United Nations Province Representatives, the idea was born of creating a space for dialogue and listening to the students of the Mary Ward network of schools in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Peru. Our young people, with the support of their teachers and colleagues, spoke of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from their own experiences and realities. We cannot fail to mention that the pandemic provided a different way of looking at reality and for them this is not alien.

One of the things that most caught our attention is the power and strength of their arguments. They challenged us and called us to action from concrete and simple activities. It was very enriching for them to listen to young people their own age, share their ideas and find out what is happening in other countries close to theirs. They feel that the opportunity to link education with today's great problems and the challenges is valuable.

This invites us to continue working and to think about other meetings that can include the entire educational community.



We are the “Mary Ward Family”, it is also necessary to be “United Nations Family,” where we build Global Citizenship.

By Viviana Herrera (Associate IBVM Peru)

## *The Forgotten Victims: Women Prisoner Experience of Victimization & Engagement with the Criminal Justice System*

Australia's National Research Organization for Women's Safety's (ANROWS) report provides a thoroughly researched link between imprisonment of women and the family domestic (DFV) and sexual violence they experience. Although the report is Australia based, the learnings could also apply to other countries, especially in the West.

Jwan Kada, from Australia, works with the Australian criminal justice system. She gives us a summary of the report [here](#).

## *Youth Engagement for Global Action – A Story by Dennis Ochieng (Nairobi, Kenya)*

On August 12, 2020, the IBVM/CJ youth network celebrated International Youth Day by hosting a webinar on "Youth Engagement for Global Action". Dennis Ochieng, a year 11 student from Nairobi, participated in the conversation. He shares his reflection on his experience linking with the worldwide network of Mary Ward youth. Thank you to Leonida Kwamboka ibvm Executive Director of Wanawake kwa Wanawake Kenya for sharing this article.

Read his story [here](#).

## GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP NETWORK

### *Loreto College Curepipe: Save our Common Home*



Loreto College Curepipe Mauritius' members of the Eco School and Young Reporters for the Environment have been active in the project: SAVE OUR COMMON HOME. They participated in "Ten Peaks Challenge to save the corals".

The group climbed the Le Chat et La Souris mountain and learned about respecting, preserving and conserving our common home. Their activities included collecting empty bottles and cans, and other rubbish on the mountain.

Their message to us: Together we make the difference to save our common home.

From Facebook from Young Reporters for the Environment Mauritius

Over the course of our time as learners, and educators, we have often found the need to quote - to use the words of a diverse array of achievers from different walks of life. Quotations are channels of ideas; they are tools to laud or critique the status quo.

Why are we drawn to quote?

Ideas carry power- in the same capacity and magnitude as our bones and muscles, or even more so. These very foetus opinions and designs find power and expression in words of those who guard the frontiers of all that we believe in.

Model United Nations Programs are opportunities for students across the globe, enabling us to quote not sentences, but the whole of diplomats and world leaders. Through public speaking, critical thinking, and in-depth research, a Model UN experience allows us to cultivate skills and enrich our global affairs knowledge.

The maiden edition of national, all-invitational St. Agnes' Model United Nations was hosted from the 6<sup>th</sup> through the 8<sup>th</sup> of November 2020. The three-day conference witnessed intense debate and deliberation amongst over 250 delegates, partaking

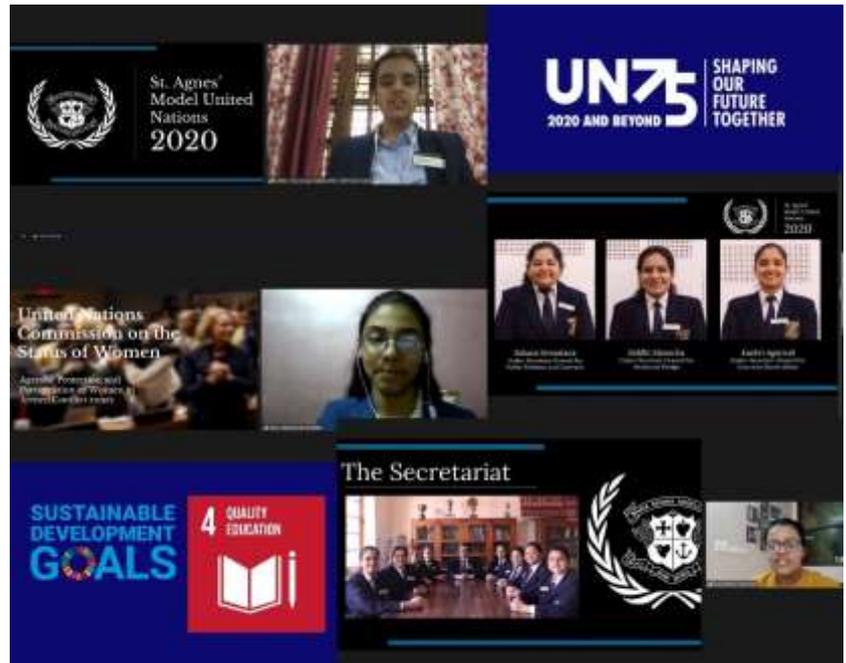
in 6 committees, in capacities of diplomats, heads of states, and journalists.

We were honoured to have with us some of the best-accomplished Executive Board members from India, the USA, and New Zealand. SAMUN also collaborated with the UN Refugee Agency for the 2020 Refugee Challenge.

The United Nations General Assembly Third Committee [SOCHUM], the largest committee at this year's conference discussed Climate Change and Disaster Displacement; the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women undertook deliberations on Protection and Participation of Women in Armed Conflict Zones, while the World Health Assembly tackled the nitty-gritties of Universal Health Coverage. We ran a simulation of a historic session of the Security Council on the Libyan Civil War. The fifth committee at this year's SAMUN was the European Council- a forum for discussion on Defence and Military Cooperation within the European Union. The International Press Simulation played host to caricaturists and journalists.

Organising the conference equipped the Secretariat members with six-months' worth of knowledge, leadership, and administrative experience. Handled by a team of Technical Executives, the online platform was used to the best of its services to make the conference a success. To everyone associated with the MUN, these three days were rewarding and enriching alike, and we hope to have forged a tradition of knowledge and diplomacy with this year's conference.

By St. Agnes Loreto School Head Girl



*And finally ...*

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support and appreciation of our work especially during this time of crisis and opportunities. As we continue to work from our home countries of India and Australia, we thank you for your enthusiasm in engaging with the opportunities offered by a virtual United Nations. Thank you for your openness to new ways of connecting, advocating and educating. It is only with your support that we were able to continue our work despite not being in New York.

This year, we also started offering virtual internships to interested young people in our network. We welcome our four pioneer "virtual" interns: Evangeline Polymeneas, Aislinn Healy, Eleanor Johnson and Charlotte Jones. Evangeline and Aislinn have begun working with us while Eleanor and Charlotte will begin in the New Year. We are all excited to trial this new initiative and hope that this will allow us to offer a more inclusive opportunity for internship in the future.



*We wish you all a Happy and Holy New Year!*

*May our inner vision be transformed so that we can see more clearly our own journey with all humankind as a journey of peace, hope, and bondedness (Nm 24:15-17; Jn 20:20).*

*May ours be the gift of reverence for all created things. May we face bravely and enthusiastically the responsibility to preserve and care for the beauty of Earth (Sir 42:15-43:33).*

*May the wellsprings of compassion flow deep within us until we can taste the tears of our brothers and sisters (2 Cor 1:3-7).*

*May we be aware of all the places our feet carry us in the New Year. May we know "how beautiful are the feet of the messenger of good news" (Rom 10:15).*

*May our life this New Year be a living legacy to our God.*

*Adapted from a New Year's Prayer by Joyce Kopp*

*Cynthia and Janet*

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