

# It's your World

## United Nations Day, 24 October 2013: Secretary-General's Message for 2013

United Nations Day is a chance to recognize how much this invaluable Organization contributes to peace and common progress. The Secretary general writes:

- It is a time to reflect on what more we can do to realize our vision for a better world.
- The fighting in Syria is our biggest security challenge.
- UN experts are working hand-in-hand with the Nobel Peace Prize-winning Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to destroy Syria's stockpiles. And we are pushing for a diplomatic solution to end suffering that has gone on far too long.
- Millions of people depend on UN humanitarian personnel for life-saving assistance.
- Our most urgent development challenge is to make sustainability a reality.
- The Millennium Development Goals have cut poverty in half. Now we must maintain the momentum, craft an equally inspiring post-2015 development agenda and reach an agreement on climate change.
- This year again, we saw the United Nations come together on armed conflict, human rights, the environment and many other issues.
- We continue to show what collective action can do. We can do even more. In a world that is more connected, we must be more united.

On United Nations Day, let us pledge to live up to our founding ideals and work together for peace, development and human rights. *Ban Ki-moon*



*Students from Toronto at the United Nations*

**The Institute We Want in the World We Want.** We are engaged in the preparatory process for General Congregation 2014 during which the IBVM will set guidelines for the coming years. At the same time we are part of **The World We Want** process in which the United Nations invites us to be part of another preparatory process, that of the post 2015 Development Agenda.

For the last 20 years or more, the IBVM has used a type of process in which we are invited to bring to the table our hopes and aspirations for our life and involvement in our world. **This is the first time** the United Nations uses a process which includes civil society in the preparation of what will be a World Agenda. **“Leave no one behind”**: that is the aspiration both for the preparation and the outcome. Voices not sufficiently heard at the moment are those of **elderly people** and those of **youth**.

Many of us have already given our opinion on what needs to be included through **“The World We Want”**, **“My World”** or the **“Future we want”**. Those of us who have easy access to internet did so online, others sent our written responses. We can continue to be part of the conversation. We can still join or continue to be part of the experience of contributing. It is a privileged time for us to have the opportunity to look at our own reality and to look beyond ourselves to the global world we serve.

## Recent Events at the United Nations

**Global Citizens.** With a view to the education of Global Citizens, thirty nine students from four Toronto schools and their teachers, and Evanne Hunter IBVM, former UN Rep, took part in a learning experience in New York during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Week of October 2013. Ann Mc.Gowan, director of the *Mary Ward Center*, Toronto, organized the program for Loretto Abbey, Loretto High School, Bishop Allen and Mary Ward schools. The students engaged in interesting sessions on **Global Citizenship, Trafficking of Persons, Why Girls Matter, Sustainable Development** organized by an NGO called Global Partnership for Justice.



At Canada Mission to the UN.

The Canadian Ambassador, Mr Rishcynski, gave the group a clear and concise overview of the United Nations itself and of the role of the **Canadian Mission** within the UN system. It was followed by a lively exchange with the students. The group visited the **UN Headquarters** and was present at an event for the **Day of the Girl**. As several in the group have the Model UN as part of their activities, they were very knowledgeable about the working and details of the system. Congratulations to all for an invigorating experience!



Surbhi and friend

**NINE IS MINE.** A group of Indian children from the NINE is MINE campaign came to New York to put their case before the representative of Member States. Led by Steve Rocha (Edmund Rice Brother) the NINE is MINE is based on child advocates speaking and working on behalf of children especially in the struggle for good education and health systems. The IBVM Loreto and Presentation Schools have been part of this campaign. **Surbhi**, a student of Loreto Delhi was one of the group. Watch an interview with Surbhi at the following link:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=igej7TMCxTA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=igej7TMCxTA)

## **International Day of the Girl 2013.**

This year's theme for the International Day of the Girl was "Innovating for Girls' Education," - addressing new technologies, mobilizing communities, and engaging girls themselves. It was a moment for us to reflect on the huge challenges girls still face today when trying to access education and, more broadly, to realize their human rights.

**Pat Hanvey ibvm**, engaged the girls from Lukulu, Zambia to speak out in this video which you can access at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jpR6bhBDqkA>

**The UN event**, organized by girls, became the space where girls shared specific initiatives they had taken on behalf of other girls. Girl innovators, both of "high tech" and of "low tech" initiatives, amazed us with their creativity. The innovations included teaching girls "coding" because they create practical apps, or providing bicycles for girls who live far from school. The NGOs supporting the event reminded us that "We are the ones who can work together" so that



girls all over the world can speak out, so that girls can innovate to make our world more sustainable.

**UN NGO Conversations.** In recent weeks we had a number of “Skype Group Meetings” in which IBVM members and colleagues from nine countries took part. We reminded ourselves of the different initiatives taken over the years to build up a cohesive international Institute and Network and focused on the NGO at the United Nations in this context. We considered:

- **The deeper meaning** of our presence - the Institute and Network - as part of civil society at the United Nations. What is that saying to us?
- The NGO at the United Nations **within the larger JPIC framework**
- **Ways in which we can best nourish and enhance** our presence and our engagement in relation to the United Nations.



These first conversations were held with GC 2014 in mind. As we prepare for 2015 we will continue conversations about the “World we Want”.

**Learn+assess+pray+act+advocate**

### Upcoming dates. Looking ahead

**Commission on Social Development.** (CSocD) 11 – 21 February 2014.

**Theme:** “Promoting empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration, full employment and decent work for all”.

**Commission on the Status of women (CSW).** 10 - 21 March 2014

**Theme:** “Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for Women and Girls”

**Post 2015 Development Agenda – ongoing.**

*Cecilia O’Dwyer ibvm*

Looking forward  
to seeing you  
here.

**Facebook: Loreto IBVM**