



# In & Around the UN

## An Update from the Quaker United Nations Office

May 2015

### Local Peacebuilders Speak, UN Experts Listen

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Luis Ximenes, local peacebuilder from Timor Leste, shares his perspectives on working for peace during a three-day civil society consultation on the reviews of the UN's Peace Operations and Peacebuilding Architecture at Quaker House. © QUNO

In March, as part of the New York Peacebuilding Group and in partnership with the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), QUNO hosted local civil society representatives from Mali, Kenya, Burundi, Timor Leste, Liberia, Central African Republic, and South Africa in New York for a consultation on the review of the UN's Peace Operations and Peacebuilding Architecture.

QUNO is one of the founders and a key member of the New York Peacebuilding Group, which is a gathering of organizations (the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, the International Peace Institute, Interpeace, PAX, Peace Direct, the Quaker United Nations Office, and World Vision) engaged in various peace-related issues at the UN and in the field.

The UN Peace Operations Review and the UN Peacebuilding Architecture Review, both happening in 2015, are two separate processes aimed at identifying the strengths and shortcomings of the UN's peacekeeping and special political missions, as well as its peacebuilding activities, particularly the role of the UN Peacebuilding Commission. It is hoped that each review will offer specific and realistic recommendations for change in order for the UN to better promote global peace practices.

As a contribution to the two reviews, the New York Peacebuilding Group and NUPI brought together members of civil society organizations engaged in promoting peace and development in conflict and post-conflict countries across the world. The local participants shared their perspectives and suggestions

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with the experts conducting both reviews on how the UN can better engage with local actors both in its peace operations and peacebuilding work.

The three-day event began with a preparatory workshop at Quaker House to help the local participants

consolidate their messaging, and later moved into formal presentations by civil society to members of the expert groups in a roundtable discussion. Several of the civil society participants were also featured speakers in an open panel event at the International Peace Institute on the third day.

The consultation was well received on all sides: the civil society representatives felt encouraged and empow-

ered from being heard and appreciated in the UN community, and the UN experts and other relevant audiences were deeply inspired by the creative stories of local peacebuilders. The local perceptions of UN missions in conflict and post-conflict countries, as well as the innovative approaches in local peacebuilding by civil society, provided valuable inputs into both reviews. ❖

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## Letter from the Director

Dear Friends:

This 70th anniversary year of the UN sees an unprecedented number of significant UN and UN-led processes on peace and security, development, climate change, women's issues, disaster relief, and humanitarian action, playing out against a background of concern at the international community's inability to make meaningful progress on a range of crises.

Reviews of UN Peace Operations (including Peacekeeping and Special Political Missions), the UN Peacebuilding Architecture (the Peacebuilding Commission, Peacebuilding Fund, and Peacebuilding Support Office), and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace & Security are well under way. The release of the Secretary General's synthesis report on the Post-2015 Agenda "The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet" at the end of last year affirmed the ambitious set of 17 goal candidates established in the summer, including Goal 16 "Promote Peaceful and Inclusive Societies." The Special Summit on Sustainable Development in New York in September is bracketed by

the third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa in July and the Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris in December.

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reviews. We have partnered with member states from the global South and global North to affirm political support for the essential peace issues within the sustainable development agenda. And we have continued to uphold the global peacebuilding policy community as we seek together to maximize our collective impact on decision-makers internationally.

QUNO has been in the media

in recent months. An article in the *Western Friend* in February [westernfriend.org/article/facing-limits-reconciliation](http://westernfriend.org/article/facing-limits-reconciliation) was followed by an interview on Northern Spirit Radio [www.northernspiritradio.org/episode/tilting-un-toward-peace-justice-quno](http://www.northernspiritradio.org/episode/tilting-un-toward-peace-justice-quno), and QUNO's views on peace and post-2015 were highlighted in an article in the *Journal for Peacebuilding & Development* [www.quno.org/timeline/2015/4/peace-and-post-2015-home-stretch](http://www.quno.org/timeline/2015/4/peace-and-post-2015-home-stretch).

On a final note, we hope and pray for a peaceful resolution to the current political crisis in Burundi. Our thoughts are with the people of Burundi, including local Friends and AFSC staff, during this challenging time. In New York, we are actively working to facilitate discussions between the UN, member states, and NGOs on Burundi as well as sharing information from local partners and lifting up the voices of community members who are working for peace.

Thank you for your continuing support.

In Friendship,



Andrew Tomlinson

## Highlights from QUNO Geneva

**2015** is shaping up to be a busy year for QUNO Geneva. The year has already presented several opportunities for different strands of QUNO Geneva's work to come together. The 28th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) in March was one such opportunity. Staff from our Human Impacts of Climate Change programme and Natural Resources, Conflict & Cooperation workstream presented a joint oral statement in response to the report of the Independent Expert on Human Rights and the Environment. The statement highlighted the complementary nature of rights-based and peace-building approaches to environmental decision-making, especially with regards to climate change. The Food & Sustainability and Human Rights & Refugees programmes also delivered written and oral statements at the HRC.

QUNO Geneva has also sought to support the various rounds of negotiations coming to a head in 2015. The Peace and Disarmament (P&D)

programme has produced a publication in support of the negotiations taking place for the application of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. P&D has also seen the launch of the collaborative and comprehensive White Paper on Peacebuilding, in both Geneva and New York. Elsewhere, in February, QUNO Geneva held two "quiet diplomacy" dinners during one of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's inter-sessional conferences, providing a safe space for negotiators to work towards a fair, ambitious, and transparent climate agreement in Paris in December.

In February, we bid farewell to



QUNO Geneva staff members (L-R) Laurel Townhead, Mihan Borhani, and Lindsey Fielder Cook, at the 28th session of the Human Rights Council, March 2015 © QUNO

Rhiannon Redpath, Programme Assistant for the Peace & Disarmament Programme since February 2014. Rhiannon will shortly be moving to Portland, Oregon, where she will be working with disadvantaged urban youth through Quaker Voluntary Service. At the same time, we welcome Mihan Borhani as the new PA for Peace & Disarmament, who comes to us from Vancouver, Canada, and holds a Master's degree in International Peace & Security from King's College London. ❖

## QUNO Welcomes a New Representative



Rachel F. Madenyika, UN Representative to the Quaker United Nations Office in New York.

In January, QUNO welcomed Rachel F. Madenyika as our new UN Representative. Rachel joins QUNO with a broad range of experience in economic and social development and financial and nonprofit management. A former QUNO Program Assistant in 2000, Rachel is glad to have come full circle and to have returned to support Quaker efforts at the UN in a leadership role. In the intervening 14 years, Rachel has worked in various capacities with organizations

such as the International Center for Transitional Justice, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars – Kennan Institute, WITNESS Inc. and, most recently, HealthRight International. In her capacity as UN Representative, Rachel will oversee operations and lead on QUNO's work on the prevention of violent conflict. She will also work on China and Somalia. Rachel was born in Zimbabwe and currently lives in Brooklyn, NY, with her husband, Luke. ❖



## QUNO Contributes to the Review of the UN's Peacebuilding Architecture

QUNO has partnered with the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) to author a report on the inclusion of civil society perspectives in the UN's Peacebuilding Architecture, which is being reviewed in 2015. The report, entitled *Filling the Gap: How civil society engagement can help the UN's Peacebuilding Architecture meet its purpose*, assesses the policies and practices of how the UN seeks to include the perspectives of people in countries where it is focused on peacebuilding and offers concrete recommendations for improvement.

The UN's Peacebuilding Architecture was established in 2005 to fill a "gaping hole" in the UN's accompaniment of countries emerging from conflict. The Architecture consists of the Peacebuilding Commission, an intergovernmental body that advises countries on its agenda, as well as the UN, in peacebuilding matters; the Peacebuilding Fund, which finances short and medium-term peacebuilding activities in countries around the world; and the Peacebuilding Support Office, which is the part of the UN Secretariat that supports the Commission and the Fund.

In the first review of the Peacebuilding Architecture in 2010, there was a sense that much more needed to be done to ensure that the Peacebuilding Commission in particular brought a "value added" for the UN system on peacebuilding. The Architecture has faced a number of challenges since its creation: internally, many other parts of the UN now engage in peacebuilding, and yet there remain only six countries (Burundi, Sierra Leone, the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau,



QUNO partners with the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC). © <http://www.gppac.net/>

Liberia, and Guinea) on the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda; externally, it is not well known and is often overshadowed by the work of the UN Security Council.

The report by QUNO and GPPAC, which is based on 30 interviews conducted in New York with member states, UN experts, and civil society, as well as local research carried out in Burundi, the Central African Republic, and Liberia, seeks to show that one of the fundamental problems facing the UN's Peacebuilding Architecture is that it has not done an adequate job of incorporating the perspectives, analysis, and capacities of civil society in its work, either in the countries on its agenda or in New York, where it is based. In many situations it is local peacebuilders who are carrying out the important work of rebuilding their countries and promoting healing and reconciliation. The report argues that meaningful engagement with such civil society perspectives could become the "value added" of the Peacebuilding Architecture at the UN, where such perspectives are often missing. ❖

### How to Support QUNO

QUNO welcomes donations to help cover the cost of its work. We are happy to accept contributions towards two areas of our work:

*The Fund for Quaker House:* the endowment supports the maintenance and operation of Quaker House.

*QUNO Operating and Program Expenses:* contributions can be made toward the cost of our annual budget.

Please make your check payable to "QUNO." If you'd like your gift to go towards Quaker House, please write "Quaker House" in the memo portion of the check.

For credit card gifts, call toll free 1-888-588-2372 ext.1, or click the "[Donations](#)" button on our web site and follow the instructions provided.

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Gifts made to QUNO within the United States are deductible for federal income tax purposes.

## Peacebuilding Around the World: What Next?



Ambassadors and UN figures joined QUNO staff and other senior representatives from peacebuilding organizations from around the world, for a packed Quaker House reception on the “Emerging issues in Peacebuilding and Prevention.” © QUNO

In early March, QUNO convened senior representatives of peacebuilding organizations from major policy capitals to participate in our annual “What’s next in Peacebuilding?” meeting. For the fourth consecutive year, participants from New York, Washington, DC, London, Brussels, Geneva, and Johannesburg shared current priorities and insights, and identified areas of collaboration to further strengthen the voice of the peacebuilding field. While a range of topics were discussed, particular focus was given to the need of peacebuilding organizations to consider engaging with the growing discourse on Countering Violent Extremism, the need to foster the increased inclusion of local civil society perspectives in policy con-

versations, and potential methods to amplify strong examples of evidence-based peacebuilding research.

Focused strategy discussions were alternated with two public sessions with a wider New York community of relevant stakeholders. A lunch discussion, featuring a dialogue on the emerging trends in the peacebuilding world, was well attended by civil society partners and representatives of the UN secretariat, including senior members of the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Peacebuilding Fund, and the President of the General Assembly’s Office. This was complemented by an Ambassador-level reception at Quaker House, co-hosted by the Ambassadors of the Permanent Missions of Sierra Leone and Timor

Leste, with a focus placed on a number of key processes and conversations that will occupy the United Nations community this year. These topics included the reviews of UN Peace Operations, the UN Peacebuilding Architecture, and UNSCR 1325, as well as the broader consideration of peace and justice issues within the post-2015 agenda.

There are surprisingly few peacebuilding organizations that are part of global policy discussions. Gatherings like this one provide the opportunity for like-minded organizations to share ideas and identify ways to work together to maximize our impact on decision makers. ❖