



# In & Around the UN

## An Update from the Quaker United Nations Office

October 2013

### Women Building Peace

QUNO recently participated in a day-long workshop organized by the American Friends Service Committee as part of the Women in Public Service Project held at Bryn Mawr College. This annual event brought together 51 women leaders from post-conflict countries, including many of the countries which QUNO focuses on such as Burundi and Liberia.

As part of a panel discussion on women in peacebuilding and development, QUNO shared insights on the unique perspective of Quakers at the UN and offered advice for women to have their voices heard in order to influence United Nations policy.

In many post-conflict settings, women are behind-the-scenes peacebuilders. They are reaching out in their communities, bringing people together, caring, nurturing and helping to heal. These are the kinds of local, grassroots peacebuilding activities QUNO encourages the UN to support because we have seen their impact and the important role that women play in being catalysts for transformative change.

Questions from participants focused on what role civil society can play versus local government officials in helping to support peacebuilding in their countries as well as



Panelists for the women in peacebuilding and development discussion, including QUNO's Camilla Campisi (center), listen to questions from the participants.  
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the activities of the UN on the ground and how inclusive and supportive they are of local women.

QUNO stressed that the participants can have an influence on the UN and that there are steps they can take towards this including learning about the UN structures that relate to their work, finding out what commitments their governments have made at the UN and holding them to these, and sharing their stories of success.

As local women building and supporting peace in their home countries, the diverse group of participants has a lot to offer the United Nations, and the UN should listen and take into account what they have to say. ❖

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## Letter from the Director

Dear Friends:

I'm sitting at my desk overlooking the UN buildings, as preparations are finalized for the opening of the 68th General Assembly Session, marking the beginning of a new year at the UN. Sadly, the backdrop to the high-level meetings and the media circus remains the same as it was last year and the year before – the ever-deepening crisis in Syria, which has now displaced over 7 million people.

This is a disaster on a scale not seen in years, yet the humanitarian response so far has been woefully insufficient. As a result, not only are urgent human needs going unmet for millions of people, but the entire region is in danger

of being destabilized under the growing volume of refugees.

A political process is the only way forward. We are encouraged by recent diplomatic progress around the issue of chemical weapons use, and hope that this can be an entry point for a more collaborative approach among the international commu-

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what has been seen as an inability of the UN peacekeepers to protect civilians from harm. Yet history clearly shows that meeting violence with violence is ineffective at best, actively damaging at worst. Additionally, we are concerned by the contradictions inherent in the UN being at one and the same time an impartial humanitarian actor and a party to violent conflict, all while pushing for a political solution through the role of the new UN Special Envoy to the Great Lakes, former President of Ireland Mary Robinson.

Among the issues that will be discussed in the opening days of the General Assembly session is the rather breathtaking task that member states have set themselves – to complete by the end of 2015 not only a new global agreement on climate change, but also a set of sustainable development goals, building on the Millennium Development Goals and the Rio +20 discussions on sustainability. And they will also be working on the 10 year review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture, also due in 2015. Even the best resourced member states are challenged by the task ahead, and the delegates of smaller countries will be sorely stretched. QUNO continues to work directly and with partners to highlight the issues of peace and stability in these discussions.

Thank you for your continuing support,

*Andrew Tomlinson*

nity. Our thoughts and prayers are with the people of the region, and we continue to press for a political settlement that includes all Syrians.

At the same time, after several years in which the emphasis at the UN has been on peacebuilding and upstream violence prevention, there has been a marked and concerning shift towards more militarized approaches in peacekeeping operations. In particular, in the face of continuing instability and violence in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Security Council has authorized an “Intervention Brigade” of African troops, with a mandate to undertake offensive operations against armed groups.

As long-time observers of peacekeeping operations, and of UN efforts in the Congo, we can appreciate the level of frustration that is felt by the international community and many local Congolese regarding



Quaker House  
Source: Quaker United Nations Office



## Update from the Quaker UN Office in Geneva

QUNO Geneva's work on children of parents sentenced to death or executed was taken up by the UN Human Rights Council in a panel in September, following QUNO Geneva's new publication *Children of parents sentenced to death or executed: How are they affected? How can they be supported?*, on behalf of Child Rights Connect.

QUNO Geneva has produced several other new publications, including one from the integrated Natural Resources, Conflict and Cooperation work entitled *Building Peace around Water, Land and Food*, which was presented at Stockholm World Water Week in September.

On the Food & Sustainability program, QUNO Geneva produced *Small-scale Farmers – The missing element in the WIPO-IGC*.

Additionally in the Food & Sustainability program, QUNO Geneva continues the exploration of what a new framework for agricultural trade and investment would look like,

along with key experts, farmers groups, NGOs and think-tanks. QUNO Geneva will further the discussion by hosting a panel on this topic at the World Trade Organization Public Forum in October.

There have been several staff changes over the past months. Our QUNO Geneva Committee discerned that we should increase our staff commitment to the UN climate change negotiations – a very challenging area but one in which we feel we must play a part. Lindsey Cook, a member of German Yearly Meeting based in Bonn, is currently



The UN Human Rights Council was in session September 9 – 27, 2013.

Source: QUNO Geneva

helping us take this work forward. We are advertising for the position of Representative on Climate Change for 2014. The deadline for applying is October 28th, 2013. Please visit QUNO's website [here](#) for more details. ❖

## QUNO Named One of World's 100 Most Influential Actors

Action on Armed Violence has named QUNO among the world's 100 most influential actors in armed violence reduction, recognising the work done by Quakers in bringing the issue to the UN agenda. QUNO was one of 29 organizations listed under the category "NGO and not for profit leaders" and among other influential actors such as UN officials Ban-Ki Moon and Baroness Valerie Amos; Nobel Peace Prize laureates Kofi Annan, Jimmy Carter, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Leymah Gbowee. Andrew Tomlinson and Jonathan Woolley, directors of the QUNO New York and Geneva offices respectively, were the named individuals on the list. However, Andrew was clear that they were representing many colleagues. "QUNO



Melina Risso and Luciana Guimarães

Juliana Rotich

David Tolbert

Andrew Tomlinson & Jonathan Woolley

QUNO directors Jonathan Woolley (Geneva) and Andrew Tomlinson (New York) representing QUNO as one of the world's 100 most influential actors in armed violence reduction.

Source: <http://aoav.org.uk>

staff have been working on this issue for decades, in Geneva and New York," he said. "We've supported negotiations on disarmament, advocated for local perspectives in peacebuilding, upheld the need for reconciliation and dialogue and researched links between violence and development." QUNO is hon-

oured to have its work acknowledged in this list by Action on Armed Violence, one of the leading organisations in this area. The full list is available at: <http://aoav.org.uk/2013/top-100-the-most-influential-people-in-the-world-of-armed-violence/>. ❖

## Syria Resolution 2118: Victory for Diplomacy

Here in New York we have been watching closely as the international community continues to wrestle with the latest tragic events in Syria. On Friday, September 27th, the Security Council adopted Resolution 2118, which calls for the verification and destruction of all chemical weapons in Syria. It also calls for the Secretary General to make a recommendation on how the UN can be most effective in extracting Syria's chemical weapons.

After two years of deadlock and paralysis, resolution 2118 provided a glimpse of what is possible through diplomacy and negotiation, and represents a first positive collaborative movement made by what has, thus far, been a frozen Security Council. While remaining cautious and conscious of the fact that issues of implementation will need to be addressed, we are heartened by the efforts of international actors to develop creative



Security Council Unanimously Adopts Resolution on Syria Chemical Weapons  
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alternatives to military intervention.

Though we are encouraged by what seems to be the first steps towards a diplomatic solution, we are aware that the violence and devasta-

tion in Syria is far from over. QUNO is committed to working with Quaker partners in promoting peaceful and diplomatic alternatives in response to ongoing needs. ❖

## PA Corner

Greetings from Della and Rachel, the new Program Assistants at QUNO New York! We have been with QUNO for one month, and are already beginning to feel a part of this engaging and inspiring work environment, although we have much to learn ahead of us. All of the QUNO New York staff wish a fond farewell to our outgoing Program Assistants Amelia Breeze and Olivia Ensign, and thank them for their dedicated service over the last year. Amelia is continuing her focus on Asia with a position at the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies in Cambodia, and Olivia has begun her studies at NYU in Law.

As for us, we are excited to be on the east coast, as we both are from small towns on the west coast. Della

joins us from Newberg, Oregon, and Rachel is from Duncan, in British Columbia, Canada. Della graduated from George Fox University with a major in International Studies, focusing on indigenous methods of conflict resolution and mediation. Rachel graduated from Mount Allison University with a major in Geography, and joins us fresh from a summer on the remote archipelago of Haida Gwaii. We are both keen to be working with QUNO and are looking forward to this year ahead. You'll be hearing more from us soon! ❖



New Program Assistants Della (left) and Rachel (right) spend a day getting to know New York City with QUNO Office Coordinator Elisabeth (center) as part of their orientation. Pictured here at the Natural History Museum.

© Amelia Breeze



## Stability and Peace: Finding the Heart of Sustainable Development

September is bustling with activity at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, and QUNO is no exception. On September 23rd, QUNO partnered with the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS) to welcome over 90 diplomats, UN staff, NGOs and members of civil society for a discussion on “Stability and Peace: Finding the Heart of Sustainable Development.”

This event sought to share people’s experiences and to inform policy making for global development goals. Panelists spoke to the inclusion of peace and stability in the post-2015 Development Agenda, and received lively questions from the floor. In 2015, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), established by the UN at the Millennium Summit in 2000, will expire and a new agenda to address development will be put in place. The eight MDGs focused on priorities such as maternal health, eradication of hunger and poverty, and reducing child mortality, among others. As 2015 approaches, it has been recognized that countries affected by conflict have not been able to achieve the MDGs. It is clear that to achieve



Caption: The 8 Millennium Development Goals  
Source: <http://www.iapb.org/advocacy/millennium-development-goals>

meaningful development, and to maintain developmental gains, the root causes of conflict and violence must be addressed.

This event offered insights from policy makers to grassroots actors, and fruitful discussion from the floor followed the panel discussion. Notably, all agreed that violence is a universal phenomenon. While different countries and peoples have divergent experiences of violence, this issue must be addressed in all nations. Tools such as conflict analysis and a locally led understanding of the causes of violence are essential to achieving peace and stability.

The world is coming together to envision the world we want to see in 2030, and QUNO and our partners are working towards a world where peoples can live free from the fear of violent conflict. Sharing experiences and amplifying the voices of civil society is one way we can contribute to ensuring the inclusion of peace and stability as priorities within the post-2015 Development Agenda. ❖

### 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 you 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.

Please send checks to:  
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