

Almost One Year

It is almost a year ago since the **2030 Sustainable Development Agenda** came into force. Our governments committed themselves to this blueprint for the world, its people and our planet. We have never had a plan like this before. It is a plan for us and for generations to come and we are invited to contribute to its implementation. **The 17 goals cover almost every area of our lives** and, as with our lives, they coalesce into an integrated whole. They take into account the interdependence of the human family and the planet. Exploring the depths of this Agenda – its goals, targets and the indicators by which it will be measured – recognizing how it is played out in our lives and how we are contributing to its fulfillment, we begin to monitor its implementation. One out of fifteen years of implementation has almost come to an end.

Question:

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is about social, economic and environmental sustainability. From the information we have, how do you think governments have grasped this factor?

How are governments going about the implementation of the SDGs? Information has come from the following countries: Peru: the Departments of Environment and Social Affairs are active on the SDGs. Mauritius: Departments of Social Integration and Social Environment are implementing them in Mauritius with specific budget resources going to the Eradication of Extreme Poverty, Goal 1. The manner of implementation has not yet arrived at State level in India where partnership with business is stressed. In Australia the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Trade are addressing the implementation while in Canada it seems to be the Department for Environment. Different Government Departments in Kenya are producing information to educate the public.

Learn more about the SDGs Go to [SDG Compass](#). It looks at them from the perspective of companies as to how they can align their strategies as well as measure and manage their

FROM OUR YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE

For the first time, the 2016 Youth Assembly has produced a [Resolution](#) including six pledges by youth to ensure no one is left behind. The Resolution represents **an attempt by today's youth** to ensure the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It recognizes that we, the largest ever generation of youth, **are responsible for its implementation** so that the world we leave for the following generation is in a better condition than we received it. Believing that all parts of society should be integrated in this process of sustainable development, the resolution focuses on three key areas recommended for action. These included a focus on goal 1 – No Poverty, goal 4 – Quality Education and goal 12 – Responsible consumption and production.

For the 2030 Agenda to be a success, we must be as strongly committed to it as our elders. This requires we are afforded the space for such action. By focusing on goals 1, 4

and 13, we have made a concrete plan to ensure no one is left behind. The resolution dictates it is “impossible to transform abstract vision into action without having a palpable sense of whom this agenda is serving”. Therefore, those living in extreme poverty, in any form, should be key beneficiaries of the Agenda's actions. Quality Education is



Youth Representative Emma O'Kane

fundamental to empowering youth to gain meaningful work and be fully part of their societies, as well as educating them to understand and be engaged with the processes of sustainable development. Responsible consumption proves an underlying necessity in ensuring we can actually pursue the other goals with the three main pillars of existence behind us – food, water and energy.

Providing youth with legitimate spaces in government, major groups and international organisations is essential if their energy and knowledge are to be fully utilized in attempts to meet the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

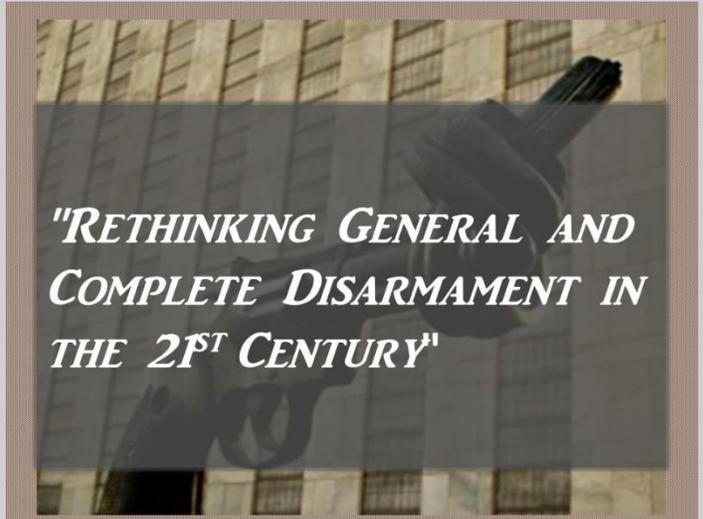
"Rethinking General and Complete Disarmament in the 21st Century"

Does it sound possible? Can we even imagine complete disarmament in this century? What enables us to keep on trying is the unwavering constancy of some people which reminds us of human resilience.

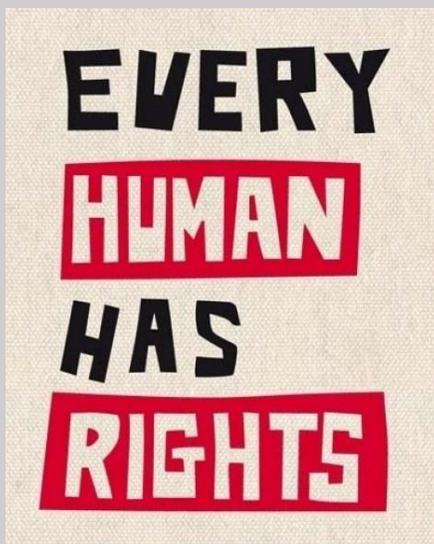
An event on this topic was held at the United Nations on 27 October 2016. The Representative of the Holy See gave input urging us to keep on hoping.

The Representative stated that “.. the objective of general and complete disarmament is hardly a new one. It started in the 1950s and 1960s to advance international security in a system of global governance not relying on the military forces of a State..”

“In our present efforts to establish a safer, more secure and stable world, the Holy See has continued to challenge the disparity between the resources dedicated to military means to accomplish that objective and those devoted to addressing underlying insecurity and instability, frequently fed by great disparities in standards of living and even by the lack of basic essentials for a decent human existence”. We were reminded of the words of Pope Francis on War during his address to the United Nations in September 2015. Finally the member states of the United Nations, working in different coalitions, need to redouble their efforts to build on these undertakings and establish further non-military means to ensure security in this increasingly interrelated world. They need to do so with the objective of an international system not requiring military capabilities to maintain peace and security, however long achieving that objective may take. Read the [complete statement here](#).



Human Rights



The term “human rights” was mentioned seven times in the UN's founding [Charter](#), making the promotion and protection of human rights a key purpose and guiding principle of the Organization. While Human Rights constitute one of the three pillars of the United Nations and the organization has diligently protected them through legal instruments and on the ground activities, it is a struggle to keep these rights at the center of the work of the overall organization. The Human Rights Council is, perhaps, the only UN organ which has a reporting structure holding governments accountable. The UPR (Universal Periodic Review) is well known and some members of our network have contributed to Shadow Reports on their country when it was having its review by the Human Rights Council. Decisions of the Human Rights Council are taken seriously and there is now some concern that decisions taken by the Council in Geneva may be overturned by the General Assembly in New York. Fortunately a human rights approach to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is gathering momentum.

At a recent meeting with the newly appointed Under Secretary General on Human Rights, some members of civil society

noted that it is essential that everybody knows their human rights. Watch this [very interesting video](#) which shows the extent to which we know our human rights.

Do you live in a city?

Most of us live in towns, cities or human settlements. More than half of humankind live in cities and it is expected that by 2030 two thirds of the world's population will live in cities. Extreme poverty is often concentrated in urban spaces, and, in general, national and city governments struggle to accommodate their rising populations, to make cities safe and sustainable, ensure access to safe and affordable housing, and upgrade slum settlements. Urban planning also involves investing in public transport, creating green public spaces, and improving planning and management in ways that are both participatory and inclusive. This is why the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development tackles this challenge through its Sustainable Development Goal 11, which aims to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”

“Habitat III”, a major global summit, formally known as the [United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development](#), was held in Quito, Ecuador, on 17-20 October 2016. Agreement was reached on a [New Urban Agenda](#), which sets global strategy around urbanization for the next two decades. It gives a shared vision of cities and human settlements for all, a vision where “all inhabitants without discrimination of any kind are able to inhabit and produce just, safe, healthy, accessible, affordable, resilient and sustainable cities”.

In the New Urban Agenda Member States are committed to work on: social inclusion and ending poverty, urban prosperity and opportunities for all, environmentally sustainable and resilient urban development. While the document is meant to be universal in scope it is not binding in terms of implementation. The latter depends on the voluntary commitments Member States and urban stakeholders are willing to take and make visible in the [Quito Implementation Plan](#). The task, therefore, for civil society is to advocate for effective Implementation, follow up and review.

From Our Network

Partnership to improve city environment and raise awareness of Human Trafficking in the Area.

Members of Youth Against Trafficking Club of St. Joseph's College Darjeeling and members of School Against Trafficking Club of Nepali Girls High School Darjeeling, Gyanoday Niketan Darjeeling, Loreto Convent Darjeeling, St Teresa's School Darjeeling all partnered with Marg Ngo to clean up Darjeeling and, at the same time, generate awareness of Human Trafficking in the region through their art work. See the many photos on the Facebook Page [here](#).



Africa Human Development Report 2016

Marian Moriarty IBVM was present at the launch, in South Africa, of the [Africa Human Development Report 2016 - accelerating gender equality and empowerment of women](#). She prepared this very interesting [SUMMARY OF THE LAUNCH](#) which is well worthwhile reading. Marian helped to create awareness of the document by circulating it to “our archbishop, to two bishops on the seminary commission whom I happen to know, rectors at seminaries, people in Family Desk roles in the diocese, JPIC etc. I also sent it to the schools linking it with the information re the days of Activism from 25th November. As Church we urgently need to engage around the harmful social norms which create such difficulties for girls and women”.

South Africa and Climate Change

South Africa prepared the National Climate Change Response White Paper for the COP22 Meeting held in Marrakesh, Morocco. The policy recognized South Africa as a significant contributor to global climate change and its extreme vulnerability to climate change, due to the country's socio-economic and environmental context. But fortunately, said Judy Beaumont, Deputy Director General of air quality and climate, as well as the abundance of coal, South Africa is also blessed with some of the best renewable energy resources in the world" (from Marian Moriarty IBVM)



One simple Workshop can change a Person's life.

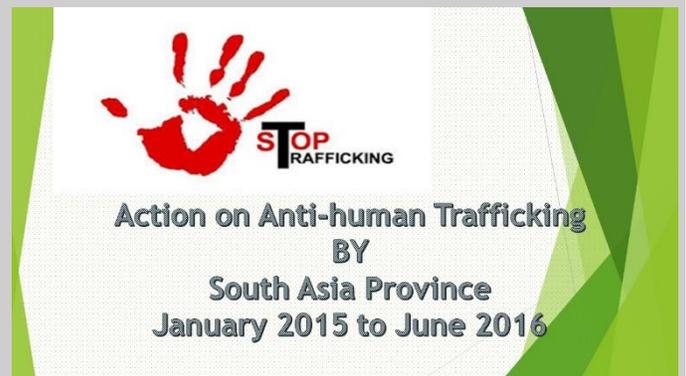


(From Anne Hyzy IBVM)

Accolades to Jean Okroi IBVM for her steadfast efforts in raising awareness of the crime of human trafficking in the Chicago area. Recently, Jean received an award for the work of her committee, Illinois Women Religious against Human Trafficking (IWRAH). Read [here](#) about the events and circumstances that led Jean from an initial inspiration to this award she received on behalf of the group she was instrumental in convening and empowering. In the photo, Jean, center, is accompanied by IBVMs and friends.

Human Trafficking Report from India

"The rate of Human Trafficking is very high in India. One of the root causes of this crime is our increasing rate of poverty. West Bengal is one of the worst affected regions in India. We, the IBVM, committed ourselves to action in this region through our two Development Centers: Darjeeling Mary Ward Centre and Kolkata Mary Ward Social Center". [Read about the amazing work](#) done at the two centers and in India to prevent and end Human Trafficking.



NGO Forum on Social Development: 1 and 2 Feb. 2017

55th. Commission on Social Development: 3 – 10 Feb. 2017

61st. Commission on the Status of Women: 13 – 24 March 2017

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