

IBVM and CJ together for a humane, just and sustainable world

Welcome to UN Update No 42 where you will read about significant events held in January and February, initiatives during preparation for UN Commissions and Forums in New York and in Africa. Thanks to Province UN Representatives and friends for sharing initiatives from India, Morocco, South Africa and U.K all of which represent ways in which our network, by working in partnership, contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda with its focus on creating peace and prosperity for people and our planet.

COP 25 – COP 26 (Climate)

In the December edition of UN Update we heard about the Climate Conference (COP 25) in Madrid. While consternation continues in light of the fires, floods and the warmest January worldwide since measurements were introduced, there are some small voices focusing on initiatives that may help us adapt to the situation. Angela Orellana, from Toronto, who was present at COP25, shares her insights with us in this [interview](#). COP 26 will be held in Glasgow, Scotland - another opportunity, to be informed, involved and to take positive action.



International Day for Education



On 24 January 2020 the 2nd UN International Day for Education was celebrated. We attended the dialogue held at the United Nations and launched our position paper on [“The Human Right to Education”](#), a significant action for our joint work with the United Nations. This document, which will guide our advocacy in UN Forums, is the outcome of work done by Mrs. Marie Lynch (U.K.), Ms. Shiobaun McGee (Ireland), Sr. Elena Cerdeiras (Spain) Sr. Cynthia Mathew, Sr. Janet Palafox and Sr. Cecilia O’Dwyer (NGO Office) during the 2019 UN Human Rights Social Forum.



Commission on Social Development

The 2020 Commission on Social Development with its focus on Homelessness has made history. It is the first time that Homelessness has been addressed at one of the ECOSOC Commissions. It took enormous effort and collaboration on the part of the NGO community and the group of African Nations, called the “Africa Group,” to ensure that this issue was actually the theme of the Commission. The Africa Group was responsible for negotiating with the other member states in the commission. The Working Group on Homelessness, led by the Vincentian Family and UNANIMA International, played an excellent leadership role in ensuring vibrant discussion and advocacy, all of which led to a Resolution where Homeless is in a position to be defined and data on homeless people made available so that countries can address this global issue. We contributed in several ways. Look out for [Francesca](#) as she addresses the Commission and a [conversation](#) with Soria Nongtdu ibvm, Director of Rainbow Homes, Kolkata.



Cecilia, Cynthia, Soria, Francesca

Commission on the Status of Women – Beijing+25

This year the Commission on the Status of Women commemorates the 25th Anniversary of the World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 which has been a milestone in the advancement of women. While we prepare in New York, members of our network are preparing for some significant events:

Webinar on Beijing+25.

A graphic poster for a webinar. At the top, a red and orange wavy banner contains the word 'WEBINAR' in white. Below this, the text reads 'NATIONAL REVIEWS ON PROGRESS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS' in bold. Underneath is '25 Years from the Beijing World Conference on Women (Beijing +25)'. The date 'WHEN: Saturday 29 February 2020' is listed. A yellow box contains two topics: '1. Asia – Australia' and '2. Africa, Europe, North and South America'. The IBVM/CJ Global Concerns logo is on the right. At the bottom, it says 'Organized by NGO Office NYC and Province UN Representatives'.

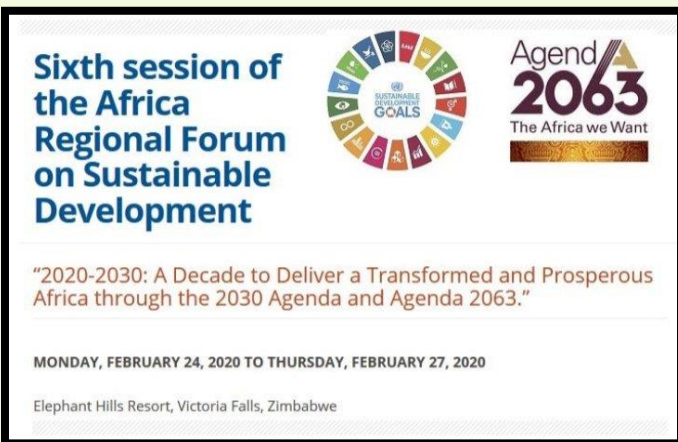
Two Webinars to commemorate Beijing + 25 will be hosted by the NGO Office and the IBVM/CJ UN Province Representatives on Saturday 29 February 2019. Because of time limitations, one webinar will cover all of Asia and Australia and the second webinar will cover the “rest of the world”. Our presenters will comment on the Reports, submitted by their counties, to chart progress in the advancement of women since the Beijing Conference. Please join us: you can register [here](#). Read more about the background [here](#).

Meanwhile, in New York we joined with other NGOs to use this once in a generation opportunity to achieve change for girls. A specific initiative called [GenerationEquality](#) could have provided an

opportunity to address change for girls, but it did not deliver what was needed. We believe that the required change will not happen without a specific action coalition on girls. Our letter to UN Women on this issue is [here](#).

The Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.

This Forum, the regional follow-up and review of progress made in the implementation of the Sustainable Development



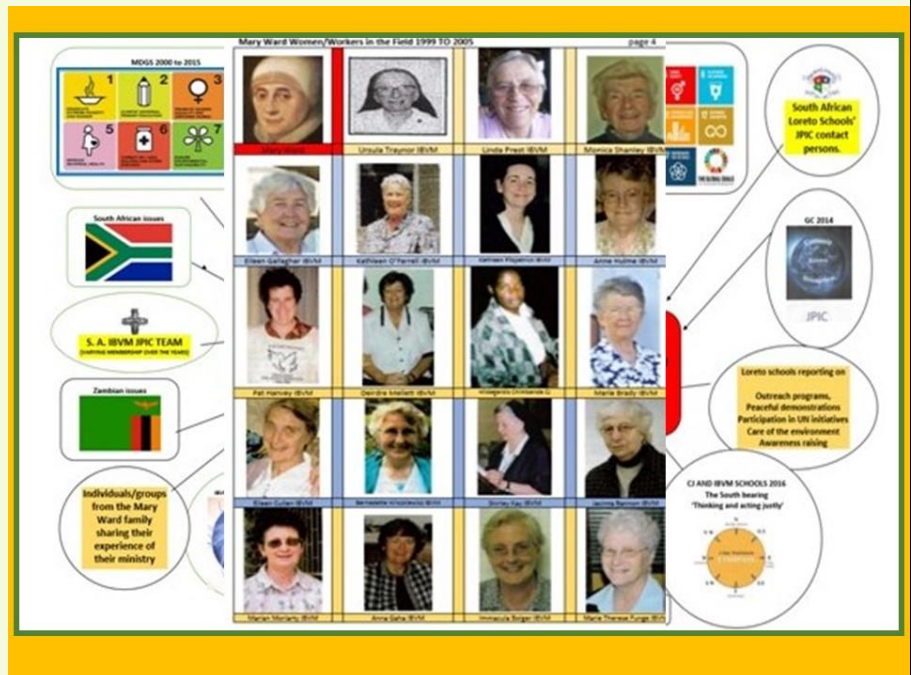
Goals (SDGs), will be held at Victoria Falls Zimbabwe from 24 – 27 February 2020. With the theme “2020-2030: A Decade to Deliver a Transformed and Prosperous Africa through the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063”, the Forum will focus on People, Planet, Peace, Prosperity and Partnerships. A civil society meeting will be held on Sunday 23rd. At this meeting members of civil society decide on the issues about the continent they want to convey to the governments of Africa. We hope to have three participants from the continent: Faith Dlamini, CJ Zimbabwe and Pat Hanvey ibvm, Zambia will represent us and Kelly Mthembu, a recent student of Loreto Nana Sita Street, Pretoria South Africa will be our Youth Representative. Kelly, with the guidance of Francesca our

Youth Representative in New York, is making pertinent contacts with the Children and Major Group for Africa. While they are at Victoria Falls, Faith and Pat will meet with other members of JCoR, the coalition of Religious Congregations working together with the aim of enabling our members to engage effectively with UN processes both in New York and at local and National level.

Our Network contributes to the work of the United Nations

JPIC Newsletter (SA) – Final Edition.

After 20 years, the South Africa JPIC Newsletter produced its final edition in October 2019. This newsletter has made a significant contribution to our understanding of the interwoven dimensions of all aspects of life. In a very specific way, it made connections with the local and global, beginning with the Millennium Development Goals, almost 20 years ago and continuing with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the 17 interconnected SDGs. A tribute to lives in collaboration and to actions and activities understood as part of broader, systemic worlds. Our most sincere thanks to these unsung women and their beautiful way of being present in South Africa and Zambia. Read [Final Edition](#).



St. Mary's Schools India

St Mary's Schools (CJ) all over India are working hard to educate responsible citizens through diverse JPIC-related activities. These same activities also contribute to the implementation of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (SDGs) especially SDG 13 (climate change) and SDG 15 (life on land). The many aspects of indoor and outdoor pollution and the effects of climate change are specific areas engaging students at school, at home and in their local context. Many very exciting initiatives and commitments were shared in the recent JPIC Report.



St. Mary's Convent High School, Mumbai is engaging in a "Breathe Free Campaign" where children plant trees and advocate for climate change and environmental issues. The Eco-Nex club has been established as part of the Green School Campaign.

Members of the JPIC club and teachers took part in a Cycle Marathon to promote a pollution free environment. They collaborated with NGO Group SWAR in the initiative.

"Recurring floods and natural calamities suffered by the people of the state of Tamil Nadu had the effect of a shock treatment and now they have realized the

importance

of caring for the environment". They are encouraged to take many environmentally friendly actions.

Students from JPIC and staff from six schools of the Bangalore Region met to celebrate Mary Ward's rich legacy which inspires all involved in her schools today to be **"Seekers of truth and doers of Justice."** A collage to depict the call to *"save Mother Earth, plant trees and protect the environment, take sides with the poor and support them, work for unity, peace and justice"* was prepared by the JPIC members.



WoW: Women of the World: an initiative at Loreto College St Albans, UK.



Lucy Daniels-Conroy, Year 12 WOW Reps and Christine Mclauchlan (right)



“WoW” is a feminist group comprising Form (Class) Reps from years 7 -11 (ages 11 years to 18 years). The initiative is promoted by two staff members, Ms Daniels Conroy and Ms McLaughlin. They share the following information on this very interesting and necessary initiative.

“We aim to promote gender equality, challenge gender stereotypes and celebrate the achievement of girls and women. We now have a fantastic team of WoW representatives with one main Form Representative in each form and a Deputy, following a vote taken at the end of term. The WoW leaders ran a fun ice-breaker session to help the reps get to know each other and at subsequent meetings there was a discussion about inequality in other parts of the world.

In addition, the reps marked International Day of the Girl on October 11th. The theme this year was **Girl Force: Unscripted and Unstoppable**. The reps gave a short presentation to their Form about how this day was created by the United Nations including facts and statistics about the barriers some girls face in other parts of the world and a powerful video was shown to each form. The aim was to inspire the girls to think about what they might achieve if they challenged themselves.

The reps profiled four inspirational girls who are already making a difference in the world:

- **Bella Lack**- environmental campaigner, age 16, from the UK. Bella campaigns for animal welfare and has been a Youth Ambassador for the Born Free Foundation from the age of 11. She campaigns against the trade of palm oil and its impact on orangutans.
- **Cori Gauff**- tennis player, student, age 15 from the United States. She has smashed age records in tennis, becoming the youngest US Open Junior Tennis Finalist in history at the age of 13.
- **Haneen Al-Ghazawi**- student, aged 17, a refugee to the UK from Syria. Haneen started her GCSE exams last year, with no knowledge of English but managed to achieve a string of top results. She gained the highest (Grade 9) grade in philosophy, theology and ethics, and Arabic, as well as Grade 8 in maths, biology, chemistry and physics.
- **Great Thunberg**- activist/student from Sweden. At just 16, she is holding the world leaders to account to take action against Climate Change.”

Sharing life and working with Muslim Women in Morocco

In Morocco one of the activities we are engaged in is that of empowering women through the provision of basic literacy skills and other tools to enable them improve their lives and those of their families. Even though legislation has advanced, implementation of the legislation, and its culture, continue to relegate women to a secondary role. Gender differences are still substantial and are reflected in higher rates of illiteracy among women and lower rates of access to education. While much of our effort in Asillah focuses on SDG 5, the empowerment of women, there are other aspects which provide beautiful examples of



the promotion of peaceful societies represented in SDG16 on Peaceful Societies. Lisiane says: "I love travelling by public transport, it is where I live my interfaith in everyday life ". It is one of the ways she lives out respect and tolerance for persons of different faiths. Clotilde offers the students courses on personal integral training, based on silence and contemplation. Maria runs the activities at the *Kanisa Cultural Centre*. Read here about their ways of building peaceful societies by focusing on learning, inner growth and awareness and outreach. Find out more about their lives [here](#).

ONE BILLION RISING 2020

One Billion Rising is a global movement begun in India 6 years ago. Kolkata Mary Ward Social Centre collaborated with Loreto Day School, Elliot Road to celebrate this movement in Allen Park on the 31st January, 2020. **One Billion Rising**, the biggest mass action in human history to end violence against women was launched on Valentine's Day 2012. It began as a call to action based on the staggering statistic that 1 in 3 women on the planet will be beaten or raped during her lifetime. With the world population at 7 billion, this adds up to more than ONE BILLION WOMEN AND GIRLS. The last few years, writes Monica Suchiang ibvm, Director of Kolkata Mary Ward Social Centre, "we actively celebrated OBR at various venues. The year 2020 ushered in another new aspect when we had the complete support of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation. Apart from the Mayor, support came from the councillor of Ward 63, Mr Mukherjee of KMC, Mr Shane Calvert, MLA representing the Anglo Indian Community and Neeloo Sherpa, The Commissioner of Kolkata Police." Read her exciting report of the event [here](#).



IBVM and CJ at the United Nations