

Newsletter

April 2017

I. MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF CoNGO

As I think ahead towards the 70th Anniversary of CoNGO (1948-2018), I realize that I have long been part of the great number of NGO people who live with the term "non-governmental organizations" because it was introduced to the world through the United Nations Charter - which we support wholeheartedly - and has acquired quasi-legal standing and political recognition.

When two years ago CoNGO organized three major events to pay tribute to the United Nations on the UN's 70th Anniversary, it was evident from the serious contributions to the discussions from very senior UN political and administration figures that NGOs are stable and welcome contributors to intergovernmental dialogue and in certain areas to negotiation processes.

Of course, over the years many NGOs have been unhappy - frustrated, even - with being described by a negative term. NGOs do not owe their existence to the fact of "not-having-been-established-by-a-government". The generally-accepted term used within the UN's predecessor, the League of Nations, was Association. Over recent decades, a plethora of alternative terminologies have arisen: Third sector; Non-profit or non-commercial organizations; Voluntary agencies; Community or Community-based Organizations; Civil society; Major groups; Stakeholders; and my own favorite invention, Extra-Governmental Organizations, giving the acronym EGO!

This variety is not particularly troubling, and indeed gives ample scope for the academic community to produce volumes of research and studies. What is troubling is that a number of governments lacking democratic credentials are inventing new and deliberately derogatory terms. Often these are incorporated in new national legislation intended to give a basis for restricting or even eliminating some categories of NGOs. Bad examples include labeling of NGOs as "Foreign agents", "Foreign-funded organizations", or incredibly "Undesirable organizations". The latter makes me wonder if the next legal aberration might not be "Undesirable citizens"!

All of this calls us collectively to be extremely vigilant, not to hesitate to expose such abuses, and to express our solidarity with and support to NGOs under threat, whatever the country and whatever the economic imperatives. Our individual and collective advocacy roles are ever more important when democracy, human rights and the rule of law are in jeopardy. For when Associations' rights and citizens' rights are subverted at the national level, we will be less able to protect them at the international level, both within the United Nations System and throughout the myriad of International Conventions and Covenants. The price of Liberty is indeed Eternal Vigilance.

Cyril Ritchie, President of CoNGO

II. CoNGO Secretariat

This issue of the CoNGO E-NEWSLETTER has again been competently processed by the Kyung Hee University intern in the CoNGO Geneva office, Yoojeong Jeong, who will be with us until June 2017. Many thanks again to her. CR

▪ FRIENDS OF CoNGO

CoNGO established an honorary membership category of FRIENDS OF CoNGO, being those who have made a special contribution to CoNGO. CoNGO Friends set an example of civil society activism and devotion.

The CoNGO website gives all necessary information. Those who signed up as Founding Friends constitute the CONGO FOUNDING FRIENDS GOLDEN CIRCLE.

They are

LEVI BAUTISTA
LIZ BENHAM
ADAMA DIOP
JOY GARLAND
MARGARETHE JONES
DAVID KIRSHBAUM
CYRIL RITCHIE

More FRIENDS OF CoNGO are welcome any time! Sign up and contribute on the website.

▪ CoNGO SUBSTANTIVE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, LEARNING AND LITERACY, New York (NGO.CELL)

The former New York CoNGO Substantive Committee on Education has been reconstituted as above, with the following new Officers elected in March 2017:

Chair: George Platsis
Vice-Chair (Education): Joseph DeMeyer
Vice-Chair (Learning): Holly Shaw
Vice-Chair (Literacy): Bryan Ardouny
Treasurer: Donna Akilah-Wright

III. NGO NEWS

- **INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY WEEK 2017**

CIVICUS (the World Alliance for Citizen Participation) organizes the ICSW each year: in 2017 it will be held from December 4-8 in Suva, Fiji. The host partner is Pacific Island Association of NGOs (PIANGO).

Holding ICSW 2017 in the Pacific "provides an ideal forum for civil society to discuss climate and social justice" on which there are several key UN events this year (the UN International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development; the UN Oceans Conference - SDG 14 - at UN.HQ in June; the UN High Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development - HLPF - at UN.HQ in July; UN Framework Convention on Climate Change COP 23 in Bonn in November).

Information: icsw@civicus.org

- **NIGHTINGALE INITIATIVE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH**

- Introducing An Engagement & Education Platform

The year 2020 will mark Florence Nightingale's 200th birthday. This is a milestone opportunity to engage nurses, midwives and concerned citizens in celebrating the Nightingale legacy — with proactive online grassroots-to-global 'advocacy activities' to achieve a healthy world.

A global online Engagement & Education Platform — called e-Nightingale™ — is thus being developed by the Nightingale Initiative for Global Health to appreciate and encourage worldwide participation in Nightingale's 2020 Bicentenary — starting with a 'soft launch' on May 12, 2017, her 197th birthday — to grow through to 2020 and beyond.

We are welcoming a variety of collaborators and envision mutual benefits — with high-profile, high-intensity grassroots-to-global outreach — for all participating partners.

The Plan

This e-Nightingale™ project includes four timely inter-related and collaborative strategies to:

- 1) Build a robust global online 'Engagement & Education Platform' to widely promote the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) — connected to Florence Nightingale's work and vision.

As part of this Platform NIGH is creating modules to educate a global audience about the UN SDGs, Nightingale and related public health concerns. These modules can be used by health professionals to achieve Continuing Education Units 'CEUs' — and also serve a global audience with open-source learning.

2) Curate / produce a global video and photo-journalism series — with nurses & midwives, from every country — sharing their stories for global distribution — focused on achieving the UN SDGs. We have already posted Tanzania & Nicaragua examples on our current website.

3) Secure 20,200,000 signatures for the 'Nightingale Declaration for a Healthy World.'

4) Partner to produce a feature film — linked with a worldwide promotional transmedia campaign — all to be called 'Legacy of Light ©' A feature-length screenplay has already been officially registered. Our plan for engaging optimal producing partners is well-underway!

More information: <http://www.nighvision.net>

▪ **BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE: Human Rights Award**

Cynthia Maung, a medical doctor who has devoted nearly 30 years to providing healthcare to refugees from Myanmar living on the Thai-Myanmar border, will be the 2017 recipient of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) Denton and Janice Lotz Human Rights Award. The award is given for significant and effective activities to secure, protect, restore or preserve human rights as stated in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other declarations on human rights.

The award presentation will be during the BWA Annual Gathering in Bangkok, Thailand, in July 2017. Maung was among the displaced Karen who fled to and settled in Mae Sot on the border between Thailand and Myanmar. In February 1989, five months after escaping Myanmar, Maung established the Mae Tao Medical Clinic with a staff of six in a dilapidated building in Mae Sot. The clinic was opened in response to the prevalence of infectious and other diseases such as malaria and pneumonia in Mae Sot and other refugee camps.

By 2003, the clinic was treating more than 42,000 patients per year and had a staff that included six doctors, 86 health workers, 150 other medical and administrative staff members and 20-40 international volunteers per year.

The clinic, which now has a staff of more than 600, delivers up to 15 babies per day and fits 250 new and replacement prosthetic limbs each year. It treats between 300 and 400 patients daily, or up to 150,000 annually, including refugees, migrant workers and locals.

Maung had previously received the Jonathan Mann Award, sponsored by Swiss and US health organizations, in 1999; Southeast Asia's Ramon Magsaysay Award for community leadership in 2002; the Sydney Peace Prize in 2013; and the South Korean POSCO TJ Park Prize in 2015. www.bwanet.org

▪ **WORLD YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION**

The new General Secretary of the World YWCA is Malaya Harper (Canada)

IV. UN NEWS & UPCOMING UN EVENTS

▪ UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH (UNITAR)

UNITAR offers online courses on Multilateral Diplomacy. These courses target professionals who are involved in inter-governmental negotiations.

E-Learning course: Overcoming Negotiation Deadlocks [24 April - 21 May 2017]

This course aims to equip participants with practical skills to enhance individual negotiation capacity and lead through situations of deadlock. It will help learners to improve their negotiation performance in order to obtain better outcomes in bilateral and multilateral negotiations, but also to become brokers of agreements when solutions look impossible.

Registration:

<<https://www.unitar.org/event/full-catalog/overcoming-negotiation-deadlocks-4>>

E-Learning course: Chairing International Conferences [8 - 20 May 2017]

This training course will focus on developing skills and knowledge to efficiently chair a meeting and to efficiently work together with a chairperson. Analysis of case studies drawn from international conferences will allow participants to examine and evaluate the actions taken by chairpersons and the impact of their decisions on the negotiation process.

Registration: <<https://www.unitar.org/event/full-catalog/chairing-international-conferences-8>>

Contact: mdp-elearning@unitar.org <<http://www.unitar.org/>>

▪ MUSEUM FOR THE UNITED NATIONS - UN LIVE

Here is an update on the first announcement on the UN LIVE MUSEUM (in CoNGO E-NEWSLETTER of December 2015, page 6)

Museum for the United Nations – UN LIVE continues to gather momentum and support. The project is taking important steps towards realization with approximately half of the funding for the UN LIVE building committed - contingent on receipt of additional funds. Copenhagen Municipality has committed to donate an attractive site for the Museum.

Additionally, a small group of five Danish individuals have decided to contribute financially to the project and become part of the Danish Patrons group.

With support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the content team is mobilizing people around the world to participate in the development of the content strategy. People are invited to discuss how the goals of the museum would resonate locally, and how the museum could be relevant in

their communities, while being a visionary global museum.

A steering group of leading experts will provide strategic guidance on the design and development of UN LIVE's three interlinked platforms: UN Live Online, UN Live Network and UN Live Copenhagen. Jimmy Maymann, former CEO of Huffington Post, has agreed to chair the development of UN Live Online.

Information: info@unlivemuseum.org unlivemuseum.org

<http://unlivemuseum.us13.list-manage.com/track/click?u=74faa8728461d83f38ceb4d4&id=b87f2ecfbd&e=72c25be91e>

- **PRESIDENT MICHELLE BACHELET OF CHILE named UN HONORARY INTERNATIONAL GENDER CHAMPION**

In March, 2017, Michelle Bachelet, President of the Republic of Chile, was designated as a UN Honorary Gender Champion for her tireless efforts in promoting full equality, inclusion and participation of women.

Michelle Bachelet was the first Executive Director of UN-Women (2010-2013), the first woman to serve as Minister of Defence in the Americas in 2002, and the first woman President of Chile from 2006 to 2010.

During her current presidency, Chile established the Women and Gender Equality Ministry in 2016. As a Gender Champion, President Bachelet is joining United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, UN-Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo, and another 160 Gender Champions in Geneva and New York, leaders from the diplomatic and international communities as well as the private sector who have committed to work towards gender parity in their organizations.

- **ECOSOC FORUM ON FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT**

The ECOSOC FfD Forum is held annually at UN.HQ and assesses progress, identifies obstacles and challenges to the implementation of the outcomes of the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda (from the Third International Conference on Financing for Development).

The FfD Forum will be held from May 22 to 25, 2017 with a plethora of intergovernmental leaders (UN.SG, World Bank, IMF, WTO, UNCTAD, UNDP, ESCAP). Round Tables will take place on, inter alia, "Domestic and international private business and finance", "Trade, science, technology, innovation and capacity-building" and "The specific challenges to finance sustainable development for countries in special situations".

Civil society and business representatives will be present throughout the FfD Forum.

(Note from CR: The Forum Programme contains the rather unusual phraseology that its Stakeholder Dialogue "will provide space for non-institutional stakeholders, such as civil society, the business sector and local authorities to interact directly with Member States to discuss commitments contained in the Addis Agenda and to highlight the ways in which non-institutional stakeholders are supporting the implementation of the Addis Agenda".

So together with local authority institutions, civil society organizations/institutions now have the additional soubriquet of "non-institutional stakeholders".

Fortunately it should not have an effect on our input..... CR)

More information from the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN.DESA)

- **INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (IFAD)**

The President of IFAD, Kanayo F. Nwanze will be succeeded from April 2017 by Gilbert Fousoun Hougbo, currently Deputy Director General of ILO. Mr Hougbo is a former Prime Minister of Togo.

V. FROM THE ARCHIVES

Note from CR: As further illustration of "Plus ça change...." please see the following extracts from the 2006 "UBUNTU Conference for the reform of international institutions".

"Nuclear war remains the greatest threat to the survival of humanity. There is no political will to remove the nuclear threat and there will not be until civil society mobilizes a massive campaign.....Nuclear disarmament has faded from the intergovernmental scene while combating terrorism so fully occupies the stage."

"Human security is at the core of all UN Programmes, including disarmament. It is no longer sufficient to focus on programmes enhancing State security: rather, the human being has to be at the centre of every UN activity.....Focus on terrorism has displaced the fundamental issues of human rights and eradicating poverty. There is clearly a lack of political will, even to uphold the rule of law."

"Since political decisions are too often short-term, civil society's proposals for reform should all be focussed on the long-term: what institutions does the world of the future need in order to function.....Today's young people have dreams that adults have to listen to: young people sense what needs to be done to achieve a better world, and they sense that politicians are not going to do what is necessary."

VI. Publication

- Global Inequality: A new approach for the age of globalization

Author: Branko Milanovic. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2016

- The Management of UN Peacekeeping: Coordination, learning and leadership in Peace Operations

Editors: Julian Junk, Francesco Mancini, Wolfgang Seibel, Till Blume

Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, December 2016, pp425

- STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE (SIPRI)

New SIPRI publication: CHINA–RUSSIA RELATIONS AND REGIONAL DYNAMICS

The report 'China-Russia Relations and Regional Dynamics: From Pivots to Peripheral Diplomacy' contains case studies from 27 experts from 13 countries. Over two days in January 2017, these experts assembled at a workshop of over 70 participants to discuss their research and analyses on China and Russia in both non-traditional and traditional security domains. From development to deterrence, these experts covered a broad range of issues impacting China-Russia rapprochement and regional engagement. By turning China and Russia from the subjects into the objects of inquiry, this report explores how regional actors view the impact of Chinese and Russian activities on their strategic domains in North East Asia, South East Asia, South Asia, Central Asia and Europe.

EDITOR: Dr Lora Saalman is the Director of and a Senior Researcher with SIPRI's China and Global Security Programme. <http://openemm.sipri.org/r.html?uid=1.ez.96c.a0k.0nazls4rmm>

- UNITED NATIONS WORLD WATER DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2017

"Waste water – The untapped resource"

Information: UN World Water Assessment Programme – wwap@unesco.org

VII. In Memoriam

- We regret the death in January 2017 of Nigel Rodley, a world renowned expert on human rights law, described once by a reporter as a "founding father" of human rights. Throughout his lifetime he held numerous positions in the human rights world, including membership in the UN Human Rights Committee from 2000 to 2016. Nigel Rodley was one of the luminaries of the international human rights movement, who inter alia had battled dictatorial regimes in Latin America, and had done ground-breaking work on the recognition of rape as a form of torture. Nigel Rodley was a strong ally and supporter of non-governmental organizations.
- Monique Costermans died in November 2016 at the age of 83. She was formerly Secretary General of AFI-ICA (Association fraternelle internationale/Intercultural Association) and a long-term UN representative for UFER (Union Fraternelle entre les Races et les Peuples). In her retirement Monique wrote that "I know very well that these (NGO) actions are a drop in the ocean, but I also know that without these drops there would not be any ocean."

VIII. CALENDAR

NOTICE:

1. The CoNGO Calendar is a service to the NGO constituency to enable each individual organization to determine, in good time, its possible or desired involvement in the event mentioned, in accordance with the organization's own statutory or programmatic focus.
2. The conferences and meetings listed in the CoNGO Calendar are not under the convening or invitational or access responsibility of CoNGO. They are listed for the information of readers, and any queries about any event should be addressed solely to the organizer of the event, not to CoNGO.

Cyril Ritchie, President of CoNGO

2017

May

- **May 2-12:** Non-Proliferation Treaty, Preparatory Committee, UNOV
Vienna - <https://www.un.org/disarmament/>

- **May 12-13:** Launch of the CoNGO Regional Committee in Asia-Pacific (RCAP),
Bangkok, Thailand
- **May 15-26:** International Narcotics Control Board, 119th Session (UNOV, Vienna)
- **May 18-19:** African Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, Addis Ababa
United Nation Economic Commission for Africa (UN.ECA)
- **May 18-20:** International Press Institute World Congress
"Building the journalism we need: media freedom and quality in the digital age" (Hamburg, Germany)
Website: www.freemedia.at / E-mail: ipi@freemedia.at
Address: International Press Institute Spiegelgasse 2/29 A-1010 Vienna
- **May 22-26:** GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (Cancun, Mexico)
<http://www.unisdr.org/conferences/2017/globalplatform>
- **May 22-26:** 26th Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) (UNOV, Vienna)

June

- **June 5-9:** United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. (UNHQ, NEW YORK)

Overarching theme of the Conference: Our oceans, our future: partnering for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14

For more information:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/oceans/SDG14Conference>

- **June 7-16:** UN Office of Outer Space Affairs: Commission on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, 60th Session (UNOV, Vienna)

- **June 12-16:** World Summit on the Information Society-WSIS Forum 2017 (Geneva, Switzerland)
- **June 13-15:** 10TH CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD) (UNHQ, New York) http://bit.ly/crpd_cosp10
- **June 13-16:** Global Intergenerational Conference, Milwaukee WI, USA / Theme: "Generations Remixed" / Information: GENERATIONS UNITED, <http://www.gu.org>
- **June 15 - July 7:** Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Session, UN.HQ
<http://www.icanw.org/campaign-news/negotiations/>

July

- **July 10-19:** HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM (HLPF), (UNHQ, New York)
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>
- **July 22-29:** 102nd World Esperanto Congress (Seoul, Korea)
Universal Esperanto Association: uea@co.uea.org

September

- **September 4-5:** Preparatory process for the "United Nations global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration" to be adopted in 2018.

A preparatory process thematic session, to produce recommendations and inputs for the 2018 compact, will be held at UNOV, Vienna on the theme: "Smuggling of migrants, trafficking in persons and contemporary forms of slavery, including appropriate identification, protection and assistance to migrants and trafficking victims". Information: <http://refugeesmigrants.un.org/>

- **September 20-23:** UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Ministerial Conference on Ageing, preceded by an NGO Forum on Ageing, Lisbon Portugal
E-mail: ngoageing@gmail.com

November

- **November 8-10:** World Federation of the Deaf, Third International Conference (Budapest, Hungary) <http://wfdbudapest2017.com> glob@congressline.hu
- **November 27-29:** United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR): Sixth Annual Forum on Business And Human Rights, UNOG Geneva

E-mail: forumbhr@ohchr.org

Web: WWW.OHCHR.ORG/2017FORUMBHR

December

- **December 4-8:** CIVICUS (World Alliance for Citizen Participation); International Civil Society Week (Suva, Fiji) Information: icsw@civicus.org

2018

CoNGO's 70th Anniversary!

February

UN-HABITAT: 9th World Urban Forum (WUF9) (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)

<http://unhabitat.org/kuala-lumpur-to-host-world-urban-forum-in-2018/>

March

- **March 1-3:** 26th CoNGO General Assembly (Geneva, Switzerland)
- UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY: UN High-Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament <http://www.2020visioncampaign.org/en/action-alerts/high-level-nuclear-disarmament-conference.html>
- **March 18-23:** 8th World Water Forum (Brasilia, Brazil) www.worldwaterforum8.org

July

- **July 4-7:** Joint World Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development (Dublin, Ireland) Theme: "Environmental and community sustainability: Human solutions in evolving society" (Also marking the 90th anniversary of the first international conference on social work, Paris, 1928) Information: szelenev@icsw.org

2019

- 100th Anniversary of the International Labour Organization (ILO) <http://www.ilo.org/century/>
- Centenary of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (founded as the League of Red Cross Societies)

2020

- **200th Anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale**("The Lady with the Lamp", inspirer of modern health and nursing services)

NB: The Nightingale Initiative for Global Health (NIGH) has proposed a "Nightingale 2020 Vision" linked to the SDGs.

E-mail: NIGHinfo@gmail.com