

NGOCSD General Membership Meeting Minutes:
Friday, March 20th 2015, 2 – 4PM
2nd Floor, UN Church Center, 777 United Nations Plaza

Submitted by Modou Cham, Secretary

2PM

Co-Chairs Margo LaZaro and Yvonne O’Neal welcomed our NGOCSD members, colleagues and guests and explained that this month’s meeting is entitled, “Raising Awareness of Human Trafficking and Violence Against Women for a Sustainable Future.”

They asked for motions to accept minutes from our last meeting and accept the agenda for our meeting. All motions were accepted.

Co-Chairs Margo and Yvonne acknowledged Award winning Documentarian, Ms. Lisa F. Jackson whose Film clips were shown prior to our Meeting & GreenGrow Ventures LLC was acknowledged in our Meeting Program for contributing refreshments to our meeting.

Secretary Modou Cham gave the Secretary’s Report. Co-Chairs asked for a motion to accept the Secretary’s Report – All in Favor.

Treasurer Martha Kebalo gave the Treasurer’s – our balance as of March 19th was \$4,962.32, plus an additional \$50 added on 3/20/15. Co-Chairs called for a Motion to Accept the Treasurer’s Report – All in Favor.

Co-Chairs Margo and Yvonne introduced, H.E. Mr. Henry L. Mac Donald, the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Suriname to the United Nations. He began his presentation by elucidating that to build a strong society, we must ensure gender equality in all industries and countries. Further, women make enormous contributions to the world’s economy – girls should be allowed to educate themselves and women should be allowed to work. Ambassador Mac Donald gave three examples of countries (Iceland, Rwanda and Nicaragua) in different regions of the world, that foster greater equality between women and men which resulted in sustained economic growth and social development. For example on October 24 1975, 90% of Iceland's women went on strike for women's rights. The government of Iceland later passed a law that guaranteed women's equality. A few years after, a women was elected president of Iceland, and today, Iceland has the highest rate of gender equality. He ended his statement by explaining that gender equality is critical and essential in achieving Sustainable Development.

Co-Chairs Margo and Yvonne introduced our next speaker, H.E. Ms. Laura Flores, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Panama to the United Nations. She began her presentation by elucidating that all forms of violence against women is unacceptable, for which there should be no impunity. It is hard to believe that at the beginning of the 21st century we need to put gender equality on the upcoming development agenda, but this is where we are and we must continue working on greater gender equality. We should also promote, establish and implement public policy agendas that move gender equality forward. We must work to raise awareness and end all forms of modern day slavery and human trafficking.

Next, Co-Chairs Margo and Yvonne introduced, Mr. E. Benjamin Skinner, Author, Co-Founder and Senior Vice President of Tau Investment Management. Mr. Skinner explained that we should begin to actualize true abolition. Further, the United States of America cannot engage and end all forms of slavery alone. We should create global strategies that are taken forward by entities, freedom fund, and new global fund to end slavery. We need to think in terms of strategy and we can start by forming three principles, 1) We need to organize our networks, 2) We need to drive transparency and 3) we need to engage business because corporations can do in 48 hours what countries can only achieve in 10 years.

Co-Chairs Margo and Yvonne introduced the Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney US Congressional Representative of New York District 12. Congresswoman Maloney spoke of her role as the Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on Human Trafficking, and Co-Chair of the Trafficking Task Force of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues. She wrote and secured the passage of legislation to combat sex trafficking internationally and domestically. She is the lead democratic sponsor of The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act (JVTA), which passed the House in January 2015, and focuses on rescuing domestic victims, tracking down their exploiters, and prosecuting the criminals responsible for modern-day slavery. She elucidated that she introduced The Human Trafficking Fraud Enforcement Act to enable the IRS to investigate sex traffickers for violations of tax laws. In the 113th Congress, she introduced bipartisan legislation to require large companies to publicly disclose their policies aimed at ridding their supply chains of human trafficking. Furthermore Congresswoman Maloney spoke of the young girls kidnapped in Nigeria by Boko Haram and advocated for more bipartisan legislation to stop all sorts of violence against girls and women. She elucidated that human trafficking is the fastest growing business and third largest in the world and hundreds of billions of dollars are being earned every year from sex trafficking.

Co-Chairs Margo and Yvonne introduced Ms. Consolee Nishimwe, Motivational Speaker, Author, and a Survivor of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. Ms. Nishimwe explained that she went through the horrors of genocide at the age of 14 when she and her family were forced to leave their home and go into hiding. During the genocide, her father and three young brothers were murdered along with many other close relatives. Further, she explained that girls and women were targeted and rape was used as a weapon of war. A great number of girls and women were also tortured, and sometimes killed immediately after being raped. In her case, she was raped and subsequently contracted HIV. Today, she is a committed speaker about genocide and sexual violence and is an advocate for survivors like herself who suffered physical and emotional torture. She is a defender of women's rights. Ms. Nishimwe ended her presentation by explaining that she refused to let the inhumane acts she suffered strip away her humanity, zest for life and positive outlook for a better future.

Co-Chairs, Margo and Yvonne introduced (via Skype from Utah) Mr. Timothy Ballard, Founder and CEO of Operation Underground Railroad (O.U.R.). Mr. Ballard spent more than a decade working for the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Homeland Security where he was assigned to the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force and deployed as an undercover operative for the U.S. Child Sex Tourism Jump Team. Furthermore, he explained that he has worked undercover in the United States and in multiple foreign countries to infiltrate child trafficking organizations. In this effort he has successfully dismantled dozens of these organizations and rescued countless children from sex slavery. In O.U.R., he looks for sex tours in order to reach travel agents that buy children. He mentioned that O.U.R. has worked with International Justice Mission.

Most of the children in sex trafficking live in countries where resources are not available to appropriately deal the traffickers. Mr. Ballard ended his presentation by explain that we must all push to end all forms of slavery.

Co-Chairs, Margo and Yvonne introduced, Ms. Holly J. Burkhalter, Vice President of Government Relations & Advocacy, for International Justice Mission. Ms. Burkhalter spoke about her role at IJM's grassroots advocacy program where she helps mobilize people around the country and build support for U.S. policies that will abolish modern-day slavery and other forms of violence against the world's poorest. IJM is a U.S.-based human rights organization that provides legal services in fourteen overseas offices to victims of human rights violations and works to make public justice systems accessible to the poor.

Co-Chairs Margo & Yvonne introduced Ms. Kate Gilmore, Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director (Programme) for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Ms. Gilmore moderated the Q & A Session that followed all of the presentations.

Co-Chairs Margo and Yvonne encouraged everyone to join our NGOCSD

4pm – Meeting Adjourned.