

NGOCS General Membership Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 17th 2015, 12pm – 3pm
2nd Floor of Church Center for the UN at 777 United Nations Plaza
Submitted by Modou Cham, Secretary

Co-Chairs Margo LaZaro and Ms. Yvonne O’Neal commenced the meeting by thanking individuals and distinguished guests for attending this meeting centered on the topic of sustainable development. Next, motions were made to accept the Minutes of previous May General Membership meeting as well as the agenda for today’s General Membership meeting which were accepted and approved by all.

Co-Chairs recognized secretary, Modou Cham to deliver his report. Secretary Modou Cham delivered his report and the Co-Chairs asked for a motion to accept his report and it was accepted.

Treasurer Martha Kebalo was unable to be in attendance for today’s meeting and Secretary Modou Cham gave the Treasurer’s report which stated \$135 in new member dues was accrued bringing the account total to \$4,700.12. The Co-Chairs asked for a motion for the Treasurer’s Report to be accepted and it was approved.

Co-Chair Margo, thanked Ms. Selma Senese-Smulders, Ms. Sheima S. Sweiss, along with The Picnic Basket and Food Trends Catering for the light refreshments at today’s General Membership meeting.

The Co-Chairs shared the importance in addressing today’s topics: “**The Future Role of Major Groups & Stakeholders in the High Level Political Forum**” with Jeffery Huffines & “**Stakeholder Partnership Building: Investing in the Future**” with our Roundtable panelists.

The Co-Chairs welcomed, Mr. Jeffery Huffines, who currently serves as the main UN/NGO Representative for CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation. He spoke about the importance of the role stakeholders will hold in the High Level Political Forum process. The role these major groups will hold ensuring the review and monitoring of mechanisms to be established on international levels and implementation on SDGs. Two issues to combat include the issue of governance and transparency. He urged the NGOs to continue to serve as watch dogs and the necessity of accountability. He commended the role NGOs play by explaining without the history of NGOs, the HLPF would have never been created. As he wrapped up his remarks, he concluded that sustainable development requires action and inclusive engagement at all levels while being based on a framework built on human rights.

The Co-Chairs introduced, H.E. Dr. Caleb Otto, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Palau to the United Nations. Dr. Otto expressed his sincerest thanks for the opportunity to speak. Dr. Otto brought attention to various events tied to the UN addressing major issues including climate change, financing for development, disaster risk management, and the adoption of the post 2015 sustainable development agenda. Dr. Otto added NGOs will play a major role in monitoring and reporting these events. He expressed his thanks to NGOs, because as many people tend to listen to the government, NGOs remember what is best for the people. Dr. Otto remarked on including the major issue of climate change, specifically the health of the ocean as in his country, the ocean is their source of food, culture, and identity. He also touched on the effect of non-communicable diseases stating eight out of the ten most obese countries are in the Pacific due to the mentality of “whatever is Western is better” as it is a symbol of status. Non-communicable diseases have a major negative affect on the economy.

Co-Chairs Margo & Yvonne introduced Ms. Nana Taona Kuo, the Senior Manager for Every Woman Every Child Health Team, Office of the UN Secretary General, who spoke about the initiatives the UN Secretary General began including foregoing strong partnerships and bringing political attention through action. An upgrade of their global strategy is currently in the works which will mobilize strong political commitment, strong partner commitments particularly the country level, and innovation to create partnerships with the private sector. Adding adolescent health to the agenda to bridge the gap between children and mothers. EWEC Health Team is searching for ways to protect progress, ensure investments are strongly continued, and ensure access to education and life skills as we have a once in a lifetime opportunity to end maternal and child deaths. EWEC Health Team is looking to create an inclusive setting where nobody is left behind as well as exploring opportunities to use tools such as the World Bank for sustainable financing.

Co-Chair Margo introduced Ms. Yamina Djacta, Director of the New York Office of UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), who addressed partnership building invention solutions and how to allow more participation for relevant stakeholders. The goal of urbanization is to create environmental, sustainable cities as the majority of the population are already living in urban areas. Ms. Djacta explained 80% of GDP is generated in cities along with two thirds of the emissions of greenhouse gas illustrating the importance of environmental, sustainable cities. She continued by stating cities are taking action and are part of the solution as they are working with many partners to advance sustainable urbanization. In her concluding remarks, Ms. Djacta honed in on the value of partnerships because no focus area is operationalized without collaboration. Lastly, she expressed the

importance of the World Urban Forum where public, private, and civil sectors can share their experiences and learn from each other.

Page 2 – NGOCS D General Membership Meeting: Wednesday, June 17th 2015 – 12N-3PM

Co-Chair Yvonne, introduced Mr. Daniel Platz, the Economic Affairs Officer in the Financing for Development Office, UN DESA, who spoke about the Third International Conference on Financing for Development held in Addis Ababa. A successful outcome would be constituted with a plan of implementation, concrete deliverables, and a follow up process which leaves no country behind. Furthermore, Mr. Platz explains we cannot wait for the private sector to come up with the trillions of dollars needed for funds, rather options need to be found for countries to generate more income by increases tax revenues through decreasing tax evasion and exploitation especially among corporations that are exploiting the system. Developed countries are better equipped to handle the loss of revenues than developing countries. He expresses the value in strengthening the follow up process and concluded his remarks with encouragement to be engaging and spread the word about the third International FfD Conference.

Co-Chair Margo introduced Mr. Michael Drexler, Senior Director and Head of Investors Industries for the World Economic Forum, who spoke about the importance of the private and public sectors working together with civil society. He believes the private sector is coming from a good place, however, empathy is practiced too little. There is a large unbalance between the public, private, and civil society sectors. A major problem is the private sector wants the public sector to take all of the risk. He concluded by stating the upcoming years are full of challenges.

Co-Chair Margo introduced Ms. Samira Salman, the founder and CEO of Salman Solutions and Senior Advisor of Think Global Institute, a Global Institute for Women Entrepreneurs. Ms. Salman spoke to the importance of integrating multiple stakeholders. It is essential to have diversity to think about a new approach to problem solving, critical problem solving skills, and business backgrounds. A variety of skill sets, backgrounds, and experiences lead to as many different, viable solutions as possible. Ms. Salman suggests to connect with the person in the room who is most different than you. She expressed the importance of consulting with experts and using advisors to achieve the best solution possible.

Co-Chairs Margo and Yvonne introduced Mr. Vadim Belikov, coming into the meeting via Skype from St. Petersburg, Russia. Mr. Belikov serves as the Vice Chair of G8Youth Summit. He illustrated the importance in investing in solutions specifically, children as they are the future. Mr. Belikov encouraged all to be involved in their community and know what is happening in the neighborhood. Focus must also be placed on rights of equality and connecting with the next generation. Through this, we can build a happy society which is essential for sustainable development.

Co-Chair Margo introduced Ms. Hadia Sheerazi, an Advisor on Youth and Enterprise for the Commonwealth Business Woman Global Champion for Empower Women Campaign, an Amplifier for “Girl Be Heard.” Ms. Sheerazi spoke about growing up in Pakistan sharing the limited role women play as they were not seen nor heard. With two teachers as parents, Ms. Sheerazi was encouraged to read and grew up surrounded by books. She began to question the problems she experienced growing up and later finding out they were a microcosm of problems in the world. Ms. Sheerazi spoke on the power of the people and society stating a small group of citizens can have a great impact. The small, simple things, such as organizing a beach clean-up can have a great impact. She ended her remarks by recognizing the importance of multi-stakeholders and stating what is done for the people without involving them cannot be sustainable.

Co-Chairs Margo & Yvonne introduced Mr. Bruce Knotts, Director of the Unitarian Universalist Association, UN Office. Mr. Knotts spoke about Queen Mother’s Association, a program in Ghana to help those infected with AIDS. He elucidated that often times, many organizations go into help others and tell them what to do or how to spend the aid. Instead, these organizations must ask how to help and allow the organization receiving the aid decide how to use it. Mr. Knotts concluded with stating nobody must be left behind and there is a moral obligation to help everybody.

Co-Chair Yvonne O’Neal introduced the final speaker Ms. Lynnaia Main, the Global Relations Officer for the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Episcopal Church. Ms. Main explained the ministry and mission of the Christian Protestant organization and the importance of investing in the solutions. Their goals and agenda include things such as praying, caring for people, and marrying and baptizing people. Regardless of faith background, the mission is to constantly seek ways to care and serve all people.

Co-Chair Margo thanked everyone for their participation and encouraged attendees to stay and engage the speakers with their questions and feedback.

The Co-Chairs Margo & Yvonne adjourned the meeting at 3:00 PM.