

NGOCSD General Membership Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 22 2015, 2 – 4PM, Bahai International UN Office at 866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 120 .

Submitted by Modou Cham, Secretary

Co-Chairs Margo LaZaro and Yvonne O’Neal noted it was the first day of Spring and they wished everyone Happy Earth Day. They also elucidated that the meeting today is on Development and Disarmament: How can you focus on development without disarmament?

*They asked for a motion to approve of minutes for the March 20th meeting. All motions were accepted.

*They asked for a motion to accept the agenda for today’s meeting. All motions were accepted.

*Co-Chair Margo invited up Secretary Modou Cham to give his report.

Secretary Modou Cham acknowledged award-winning Documentarian Lisa F. Jackson, whose work was shown at the last meeting. He thanked Terry Lawler, Executive Director of New York Women in Film & Television for joining the NGOCSD. Margo is working with Terry on collaborative projects with UN agencies and other organizations. Co-Chairs Margo LaZaro and Yvonne O’Neal asked for a motion to accept the Secretary’s report. All motions were accepted.

They invited up Treasurer Martha to speak. Treasurer Martha reported that the previous balance was \$5,012.32. She received \$260 in deposits, from new and renewed memberships, and paid \$696.17 in meeting expenses. The current total balance \$4,526.15. She noted that membership forms and applications are available, and that membership dues were going up from \$25 to \$35 this June. Our Co-Chairs asked for a motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report. All motions accepted.

In a brief update, the Co-Chairs stated that they welcomed US Congresswoman Caroline Maloney, who requested to become an Honorary NGOCSD member, because she was so moved and inspired by our March 20th meeting on Raising Awareness of Human Trafficking and Ending Violence Against Women that she co-hosted with our Co-Chairs Margo & Yvonne a Press Conference in Dag Hammarskjold Plaza on April 13th to mark the one since the girls were taken from their schools in Nigeria for #BringBackOurGirls and on April 14th we co-sponsored with Rep. Maloney the lighting of the Empire State Building in Purple for ending violence against women & Red for #BringBackOurGirls. (They showed photos of the Press Conference and the Empire State Building.) Our next NGOCSD meeting on May 15th would Celebrate Nobel Laureate Professor Wangari Muta Maathai: Her Legacy Continues. The Co-Chairs framed today’s meeting on nuclear disarmament by posing that the development is impossible without addressing disarmament.

Co-Chairs Margo LaZaro and Yvonne O’Neal introduced the first speaker Daniela Bas, the Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development of UNDESA. She found that, for various reasons, there is a tendency for policy makers to focus on the economic aspects of the UN mandate. However, if there are no strong social policy frameworks, plans targeting economy and other aspects won’t work. Experience shows that social policy can increase mobility, lower poverty, and achieve robust economic conditions. Researchers indicate that a 1% increase in government spending for social transfers translates into a 0.3% drop in inequality, as measured by indices. Ms. Bas concluded that without a focus on human capital, monetary capital is worthless.

Co-Chairs Margo LaZaro and Yvonne O’Neal introduced Jonathan Granoff, President of Global Security Institute, as moderator of the discussion. He shared an anecdote where he spoke with Senator Douglas Roche,

former Disarmament Ambassador of Canada. When asked what the foundation for all social development was, they both decided it to be the social fabric, relationships between people, as characterized by our morals. He noted that, interestingly, most countries claim moral propriety when going to war, but those who invoke moral principles to do good are considered idealists. Mr. Granoff expressed his happiness that Pope Francis re-contextualized nuclear weapons by stating that they were not a security issue, but an obstacle from combatting security issues like poverty. Military solutions often worsened conflicts like those between Israel and Palestine, Chechnya, Vietnam. Mr. Granoff wanted to redefine what real security meant by challenging military models and ensuring that international law and promises of matters like disarmament and de-proliferation are kept. He stated that we need to look at security and development in a holistic fashion. Similarly, we should consider climate and poverty together to make policies work.

As the moderator, Mr. Granoff introduced Mr. Leonardo Luis Gorgulho Nogueira Fernandes, Minister of Political Coordination at the Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations. He expressed concern over an imbalance in the UN mandate's three pillars of development, human rights, and security; he believed there was an imbalance towards security, to the detriment of the other two. There are benefits to distancing the Security Council from quick military interventions and the use of force to reorder societies as currently, major sources of instability like nuclear disarmament, flow of weapons to zones of conflict, and rising military budgets are not properly targeted. On that note, while an Open Working Group on the Commission for Sustainable Development took the position that development could not be achieved only through security, some countries still wanted to reduce the UN's budget for disarmament and development. He took the opportunity to denounce the modernization of arsenals and an excessive emphasis on non-proliferation, as there needs to be focus on disarmament as well.

Mr. Granoff introduced Christopher King, Senior Political Affairs Officer and Chief of the Political Affairs Unit in the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs. He began by stating that development requires a peaceful and stable society. However, military expenditures meant for security used the scarce resources that could otherwise go towards a state's economy, productivity, and wellbeing. Last year, 1.8 trillion dollars were spent on militaries worldwide, much more than in the 1980s and 90s. This creates a buildup of public debt, reduces investment into vital areas like infrastructure, and diverts scientific expertise and research from benefiting society. The use, and even maintenance, of some weapons harms society and necessitates disarmament. He concluded by stating that the benefits of disarmament outweigh the costs.

Mr. Granoff introduced Tim Wright, Director of Asia-Pacific Region of International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). He stated that he remains hopeful regarding disarmament, though many believe that the Non-Proliferation Treaty conferences will have bleak results due to the nuclear armed states' lack of progress. Wright said he's seen positive developments in the attempts to reframe nuclear weapons as a humanitarian concern. The Humanitarian Initiative on Nuclear Weapons held three conferences in Oslo, Mexico, and Austria to build the evidence base for nuclear weapons. At the Mexico conference, 146 states were present and the chair called for a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons. NATO states reacted negatively and stated that Mexico was representing its own opinion rather than that of the international community. However, Latin American, Caribbean, and African states stood by the Mexican stance. Wright concluded by suggesting that though moving forward regardless of whether nuclear armed states are onboard is controversial, he wants to see at least an overwhelming majority of states call for the start of negotiations at the next conference.

Co-Chair Margo LaZaro introduced Miyako Taguchi, the daughter of two Nagasaki atomic bombing survivors and a contributor to Hibakusha Stories, a non-profit organization through which nuclear bombing victims share their stories to high school and university students. Though for many the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings are just historical events, Taguchi stated that the use of nuclear weapons was ongoing and personal for her. In the hot summer on August 9th, an atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki and radioactive black debris fell onto the city, contaminating it. As a result of the bombings, people couldn't find food or water, lost family and friends, and fell victim to unknown diseases. Survivors of the bombings were also discriminated against. To this day, the Japanese struggle with nuclear fallout, unable to clean the radioactive Fukushima plant four years after its meltdown. Taguchi concluded by stating that we cannot allow the 'nuclear monster' to grow in our backyard.

Following the presentations, there was a brief Q&A moderated by Mr. Granoff

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

Meeting was adjourned at: 4PM

Attendees took a photo in honor of their commitment to disarmament by Waving Goodbye to Nuclear Weapons