

NGOCSD-NY General Membership Meeting

Wednesday, 27 January, 2015 from 1-4PM

2nd Floor, CCUN

Submitted by Chris Dekki, Secretary

Co-Chairs: Margo LaZaro & Yvonne O'Neal welcomed everyone to our meeting.

They shared updates on upcoming programs - Re: Ms. Manizha Naderi -Executive Director of Women for Afghan Women Unfortunately, due to an injury Ms. Naderi will not be able to attend our meeting. We look forward to another opportunity to have her join us.

Our topic: Stories from the Front Lines to Renewed Hope for a Sustainable Future.

The Co-Chairs introduced: via Skype **Mr. Shadi Martini** is the Senior Syria Advisor to the Multifaith Alliance for Syrian Refugees. As it has with so many other victims of this crisis, the Syrian war turned businessman Mr. Martini into a refugee, an activist, and an unlikely advocate for greater cooperation across faith and cultural lines. Now, this remarkable man visits the United States and countries abroad to share his experiences with government officials, civil society leaders, the media, and various secular, faith, and interfaith gatherings. Mr. Martini described his initial work in the early days of the Syrian conflict. As violence escalated, he started helping people who needed medical treatment. Eventually, he left Syria after his area was taken over by extremists, and began operating from neighboring countries. Mr. Martini described how there is a mass influx of refugees to Western European countries from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and North Africa and how he continues to do his best to help these people and ensure that they are able to rebuild their lives in their new countries.

The Co-Chairs welcomed: **H.E. Mr. Carlos Garcia** the former Ambassador of El Salvador to the United Nations and founder of United Nations to Change a Life. He is also Founder & CEO of CG Global Consultant, as well as an active member of several other companies and Non-Governmental Organizations. Ambassador Garcia began his statement with an explanation of how the SDGs differ from the MDGs, especially in terms of how they were designed: Through an intergovernmental process. He explained the crucial role of civil society in the SDG process and in the next steps. He went on to stress the importance of youth in the implementation and the need to connect young people to the agenda. Ambassador Garcia then described some of the youth work and projects he is helping to implement in small towns in El Salvador. These projects are meant to develop local youth leadership, especially around SDGs 8, 11, and 17. The ultimate goal is to increase local economic development and combat youth unemployment and NEETs (not in education, employment, or training).

They introduced: **Ms. Ayla Bakkalli** is the USA Representative of the Crimean Tatar Mejlis at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and Adviser to the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations on Indigenous Matters. She is also currently serving her second term as an Executive Member of the World Congress of Crimean Tatars. She began her statement with a short history of Crimean Tatars She then explained some of the current human rights and property rights issues facing her people, especially since Crimea is now part of Russia. According to Ms. Bakkalli, 99 percent of Crimean Tatars boycotted the referendum concerning Crimea's secession from Ukraine. In terms of Tatar youth, they are targeted since they prefer to speak their indigenous language. This creates serious issues for the Crimean Tatars as a people and is a challenge to their integral, sustainable development.

The Co-Chairs introduced: **Mr. Andriy Dobriansky** is a member of the Executive Board of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America and the United Nations Representative of the Ukrainian World Congress. Mr. Dobriansky has devoted his life's work to empowering the worldwide Ukrainian Diaspora. Serving a multitude of functions, principally as a community organizer and chief advocate, as well as a decorated artist and a cultural historian, he represents his community chiefly through the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (www.ucca.org), the largest representative body serving the needs of approximately 1.5 million Americans claiming Ukrainian descent, as well as the Ukrainian World Congress (www.ukrainianworldcongress.org), the international assembly of all Ukrainian public organizations in the worldwide Ukrainian diaspora of nearly 25 million people. During his statement, he described the humanitarian crisis facing Ukraine with over 3.2 million people living in a combat zone. Moreover, over 2 million people are displaced and half of them are permanently displaced. Undefined borders continue to plague the country, especially in terms of its relationship with Russia. According to Mr. Dobriansky, many refugees are going to Belarus and Poland. SDG

implementation poses a challenge for Ukraine because of the military conflict and because of budgetary problems. New jobs are sorely needed in Ukraine and the hope is that new investment will help spur job creation.

Co-Chair Yvonne introduced: **Reverend Gabriel Garang Atem Garang** who is a deacon of the Sudanese Dinka-language Congregation of All Saints Episcopal Church in Salt Lake City, Utah. He is one of the Lost Boys of the Sudan. Reverend Garand described his experiences in terms of living in a country consumed by conflict. He was pushed out of his country by the war in Sudan. He explained how he is grateful to the UN and the United States, as well as the Episcopal Church, for their support and for helping him find some peace in his life.

Co-Chair Margo welcomed: **Ms. Tilottama Puri** is an international and human rights lawyer. She is currently a consultant for UN-Habitat & the International Labour Organization (ILO). For UN-Habitat, Ms. Puri is conducting the first global study on youth law and legislative frameworks affecting urban youth in the context of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. For the ILO, she is drafting a research publication on the incorporation of labour clauses in international trade agreements. Ms. Puri explained her background and how she grew up in an environment that stressed multiculturalism and gender equality. She then described her research around youth and how they are underrepresented in governments. Her work shows that there is a large gap between human rights law and legislation on the ground. She stressed the need for a convention on the rights of youth.

The Co-Chairs both welcomed: **Mr. Narayan S. Subramanian** is the Climate Policy Officer for Independent Diplomat. Mr. Subramanian is a member of the climate change team at Independent Diplomat (ID) – a non-profit diplomatic advisory group – which has advised the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) on UN climate change negotiations since 2009. Most recently, at the Paris climate change conference (COP21) in December 2015, Mr. Subramanian and the ID climate team supported RMI Foreign Minister H.E. Tony de Brum in his efforts to build and lead the “High Ambition Coalition” – an economically and geographically diverse grouping of progressive countries committed to an ambitious global climate change agreement. The High Ambition Coalition has been heralded as the strongest diplomatic force at COP21 and played an instrumental role in securing an agreement that provides a hope for survival for the world’s most vulnerable countries. Mr. Subramanian described his work with Independent Diplomat and his efforts around COP21 in Paris. He explained the agreement reached in Paris and the critical work of the Marshall Islands, as a frontline country, in bringing together what became the High Ambition Coalition.

The Co-Chairs moderated the Q&A and our speakers gave final Wrap-ups:

Being able to build coalition is vital to countries like Marshall Island

ID Follow ups: infuse private sector voices and keep it going

If interested, check Ukraine 2020 website

NGOCSD-NY website: www.ngocsd-ny.org

Meeting Adjourned at: 3:45PM