

NGOCSD General Membership Meeting Minutes:

Thursday, November 13th 2014, 11:30am – 2:30pm
UN Church Center, 2nd Floor, 777 United Nations Plaza
Submitted by Modou Cham, Secretary

Co-Chairs Margo LaZaro & Yvonne O'Neal welcomed everyone to our meeting and elucidated that this month's meeting is Themed: "The Importance of Building a Culture of Peace for a Sustainable Future."

Approval of the Nov. 13th Meeting Agenda
Approval of the Minutes from the Oct. 7th Meeting Minutes

Secretary Modou Cham gave his Report.

Our Co-Chairs asked for a Motion to Accept the Secretary's report – All in Favor.

Treasurer Martha Kebola gave her Treasurers Report – our balance as of October 6th 2014 was \$6,299.62 and our balance as of November 12th was \$6,002.19. Meeting expenses for November was a total of \$300 and we have four new memberships, totaling \$100.

Our Co-Chairs called for a Motion to Accept the Treasurer's Report – All in Favor.

Margo and Yvonne introduced Professor Jan Dash, NGOCSD Adviser on Climate Change and he presented the NGOCSD Climate Change document which he prepared for the UNFCCC's COP 20 in Lima, Peru. He reviewed the recommendations to Governments for Action on Climate Change:

1. Recognize that climate change causes widespread conflict.
2. Adopt agreements enhancing numerous agreements such as, Copenhagen Accord, Cancun Agreements, Durban Platform, Doha Gateway, Warsaw Mechanism, and the Kyoto Protocol, in order to combat greenhouse emissions at sustainable safe levels.
3. Adopt adequate climate-risk management mitigation/adaptation strategies.
4. Adopt/implement further financial and technical commitments in order to help developing countries.

Next, Margo and Yvonne began the presentations of NGOCSD Roundtable speakers on "The Importance of Building a Culture of Peace for a Sustainable Future" by introducing Dr. William F. Vendley, the Secretary General of Religion for Peace International – the world's largest and most representative multi-religious coalition. Dr. Vendley spoke about the Sustainable Development agenda and emphasized the work being done in religious communities to create a shared vision of peace. He also stated, peace is more than the absence of war. He advised that for sustainable development to be possible, the cultivation of virtues must begin. Dr. Vendley in essence stressed that social institutions cannot survive without upstanding citizens and communities.

Furthermore, Margo and Yvonne introduced H.E. Mr. Carlos Garcia, former Ambassador and Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the United Nations. Ambassador Garcia elucidated that the culture of peace and sustainable development lies within the community. For example, through Education Peace in El Salvador has become a in a public space for resolving conflicts in a passive manner. He then spoke of the social violence in El Salvador and he advocated for strengthening national institutions, enhancing global partnership for development and including the participation of civil society and private sector in the creation of sustainable cities.

Margo and Yvonne welcomed Mrs. Sally Kader, Founder and President of the U.S. Federation for Middle East Peace. Ms. Kader elucidated that the U.S. Federation for Middle East Peace aims to educate others about the Middle East: its culture and its people. She founded her NGO in October 2001, after the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington. She coordinates with individuals in Cairo to help combat the tensions between Middle Easterns and Americans through educating both sides respectively to aim towards peace. Further, she explained that it is the right of every human being to live in peace and dignity: for an individual to choose their religion, choose what they want to wear, choose their partner, etc. as long as their decisions aren't inflicted on others and doesn't harm others. Finally she explained that wars should not include children and sustainable peace will only occur if we all work together in order to combat conflict and work towards peace.

Our Co-Chairs next welcomed Mr. Bruce Knotts, Director of the Unitarian Universalist Association and he explained that 90% of people are attracted to the opposite sex and the 10% attracted to the same sex experience discrimination that is not consistent with human rights laws worldwide. Next he said that Climate Change is occurring and the future of it is not promising; therefore, we must all work together in order to turn climate change around. Without working towards this, the 1% will continue to protect themselves and the poor/vulnerable worldwide (Global South), will all suffer. Climate Change will cause conflict and wars in the future and it is already happening now. For example, people are migrating due to the lack of resources to other parts of the world with resources and this is creating wars amongst groups. He further explained that Sustainable Development Goal 10 focuses on human rights in an effort to create sustainable development and peace. Mr. Knotts ended his presentation by explaining that the World Bank has reported that supporting the human rights of individuals adds to the GDP of a country (there is an economic payoff – in the inclusion of those who are attracted to the same sex) and marginalizing those that are homosexual leads to a deficit within the economy

The next, Ms. Emilie McGlone, Director of Peace Boat US. She elucidated that the Peace Boat is a Japan-based international non-profit NGO that works to promote peace, human rights, equality and sustainable development and respect for the environment. Peace is more than words, but also a cultural exchange through the arts, music and sports. They seek to create awareness and action based initiatives on affecting positive social and political change in the world. They pursue this through the organization of global educational programmes, responsible travel, cooperative projects and advocacy activities. These activities are carried out on a partnership basis with other civil society organizations and communities in Japan, Northeast Asia, and around the world. Ms. McGlone elucidated that they invite guest speakers to discuss and lecture about peace building, such as Ambassadors, indigenous leaders and representatives of NGO organizations. Peaceboat also worked in conjunction with the United Nations to bring many performances and guest speakers for important issues and they participated in Rio +20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

Reverend Farida Ali, Principal Representative of the All Pakistan Women's Association to the UN spoke of our responsibility to building a culture of peace. Further, she explained that the importance of engaging children in the peace process, citing children as important factors for sustainable development. She applauded the Peace Boat for how it aligns to the idea that to progress with a sustainable development agenda, people need to leave their national prejudices aside. To build a culture of peace, Reverend Ali emphasized that people need to inculcate an open-minded mentality for children, especially because many of them are growing up in conflict and violence. Thus, teaching children how to coincide and live together is a necessary step for sustainable development.

Ms. Kamila Jacob, Envoy Coordinator and Youth Representative for UUA-UN Office was the final speaker. She discussed how youth are actively engaged and want to work with everyone in being part of the solution in promoting sustainable development and peace.

Margo & Yvonne invited our speakers to join them at the Tables in the front of the room for a Q&A session following all our presentations.

Margo and Yvonne thanked our speakers and our members and their guests for participating in our meeting and they encouraged everyone to join our NGOCS.

3:00pm – Meeting Adjourned