

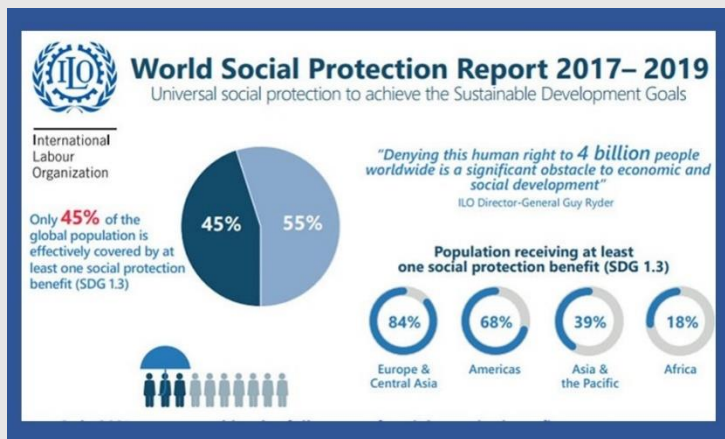
## ECOSOC YOUTH FORUM 2018

January 2018 began with an exciting new initiative. For the first time we were able to have a Youth Representative at the ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council) Youth Forum. Previously we had Representatives at Youth Assemblies which are slightly different. The ECOSOC Youth Forum is an official civil society participatory mechanism. This year, we were invited to send a representative and were thrilled that Christina Zha, Communication Director, [Mary Ward Center](#) Toronto, at fairly short notice, was able to represent us. The Forum is growing in size and stature, bringing together, this year, the largest number of Ministers and senior officials to date (38), and over 700 youth participants from around the world.



During the two days, youth representatives, and Member States delegates, responded to present day challenges by making commitments to build sustainable and resilient urban and rural communities. They focused their attention on access to water, sanitation ([SDG 6](#)), and energy ([SDG 7](#)); sustainable and inclusive cities ([SDG 11](#)), sustainable consumption and production ([SDG 12](#)); sustainably managed forests ([SDG 15](#)); use of science, technology and innovations in facilitating youth engagement, development and resilience ([SDG 17](#)). Listen to an interview with Christina [here](#). We are delighted that Christina will spearhead an initiative to gather the concerns of the youth in our network so they can be presented to the Youth Forum in 2019.

## Universal Social Protection at Commission on Social Development



**How many of the following benefits are supplied by the governments of your country?**

Sickness benefits, unemployment benefits, old age benefits/pensions, employment injury benefits, family benefits, maternity benefits, disability benefits..... others. According to the recent World Social Protection Report 2017/19 only 29 per cent of the world population enjoy comprehensive social protection and more than 1 out of 2 people have no protection at all.

**Who works to ensure that all people have basic social security guarantees?** The International Labor Organization.

The ILO established a framework for basic social security guarantees and for the progressive achievement of comprehensive, universal social protection systems. States, according to the framework, should guarantee, at minimum, through a range of cash and/or social transfer, basic income security for children, the elderly, the unemployed and those of active age without sufficient income. It also sets out the need for universal access to quality, affordable healthcare, including maternity care, as well as other essential services for children such as education, care and nutrition.

**Universal Social Protection** is gaining momentum as a means of eradicating poverty, the chief aim the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. The Report was launched during the Commission on Social Development 2018. Read the summary [here](#). Along with other civil society groups, our NGO at the United Nations is working to introduce universal social protection as a means of eradicating poverty. It is a specific way of responding to commitments made at our General Congregations.



The UN has launched a revised design of Icon 10 of the Sustainable Development Goals. It shows the equal sign surrounded by four arrows and is intended to be a compass for a place where everything is equal. The new design more accurately reflects and symbolizes the objective of Sustainable Development Goal 10, “Reduced Inequalities”. It replaces the former icon effective 1 January 2018.

**The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda**, framework for our work with the United Nations, is universal in character. It seeks to realize the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. It is integrated and indivisible and balances the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental. [Read 17 Ways in which Education influences the 17 Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs).



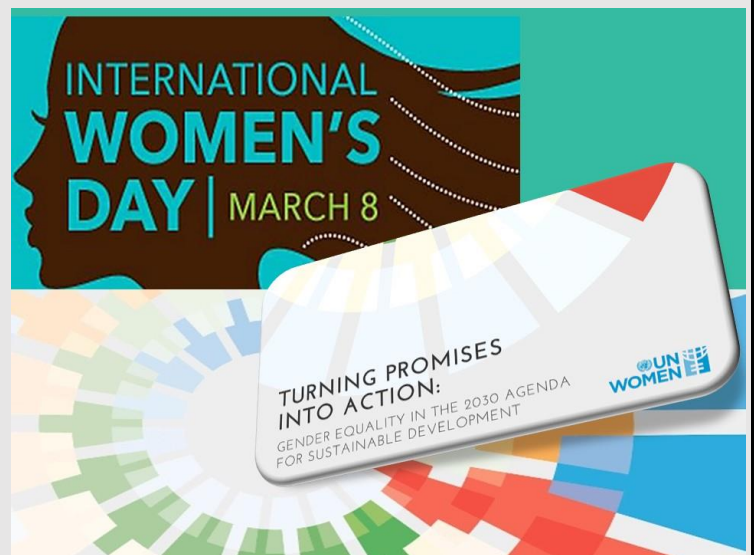
### **Webinar on our work with the United Nations**

On Saturday 17 February 2018 the NGO Office hosted a webinar to welcome the collaboration of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Congregation of Jesus and our networks with the United Nations. The webinar dealt with the meaning, the benefits and the challenges of our presence at the United Nations; the direct work with the UN processes and the involvement of our worldwide network. The content was based on questions submitted from our global network. It was an opportunity to get to know this ministry which is yours as well as ours - yes, yours and ours! Cynthia and Cecilia are here on your behalf. You can go back over the content by clicking [here](#).

### **International Women’s Day 2018**

The Secretary General of the United Nations, after listening to the voices of women and girls around the world who rightfully request their rights, and the men who have supported them, has achieved, for the first time in its history, parity in the senior management positions of the United Nations. One woman present at an International Women’s Day celebration noted that, along with his personal initiative, the Sec. General needs everyone who enters this building (UNHQ) to stand with him and to endorse zero tolerance #UN #MeToo #Time Is Now.

At the same time UN Women launched their new Report, **Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** assessing the progress, gaps and challenges in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from a gender perspective. While monitoring global and regional trends in achieving the SDGs for women and girls, the Report points to two large divides in the situation of women worldwide: the rural – urban divide and the class divide. Read the Report, access the data, study the Fact Sheets for overviews of different regions and watch videos on the various themes [HERE](#).



## Commission on the Status of Women 2018

Rural women are the focus of the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. A basic document to set the scene for the commission is the [Report of the Secretary General](#) addressing areas such as: attaining the right to an adequate standard of living, ensuring the rights of rural women to land and land tenure security, strengthening food security and nutrition for rural women and girls, addressing violence and harmful practices against rural women and girls, ensuring access to health care, sexual and reproductive health and rights. The member states begin their negotiations with a document called

[Draft Agreed Conclusions](#), based on the Report and on other accounts from different sectors. It is worth reading these documents for a deeper understanding of what the Commission is trying to achieve.

The official presentations and negotiations are supported by a myriad of side events, at the UN, and parallel events at 5 other venues throughout the city. Some 4000 participants attend these very interesting and insightful sessions, where a lot of learning and sharing of experience occurs.

This year the **NGO Office contributed to the Commission** with individual and group statements and by co-sponsoring 4 parallel and side events. Our statements can be read [here](#). The two side events focused on



with the Holy See Mission as chief sponsor, drew attention to the work of Religious sisters in the prevention of Human Trafficking and the rescue and empowerment of survivors. Another focused on the use of technology. While the internet is used in the most despicable ways to traffic young girls and women for the sex trade, huge efforts are under way to prevent this happening and to address other aspects of human trafficking. This was the focus of a second parallel event. We co-sponsored an event on women as change makers with stories of empowerment from India and South East Asia - Cynthia was one of the panelists at [this event](#). Finally, we initiated a discussion on the economic empowerment of rural women through innovative financing and effective partnerships.

## Our Network Engagement with United Nations

### National, Regional and Global Implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda.

Some of our Province UN Representatives have been following the national and regional reviews of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda. Aurora Moreno, Spain, Libby Rogerson ibvm, Australia and Mary Elizabeth Kirke ibvm, Peru are monitoring civil society involvement at the national level. Viviana Herrera, Communications Director Peru and Sr. Nelly CJ will take part in the Regional Review in Santiago, Chile in April. Mary Mallaney ibvm, Canada is working on the Canadian Review with a team of collaborators and hopes to have a delegation from Canada at the Final Meeting (HLPF), New York in July. Thanks to them, and to the Provincial/Regional Leadership, for their support in this new initiative. The following video gives excellent indicators as to what is expected of our governments and what we can be alerted to in their responses. The video covers the launch of an independent assessment of the Voluntary National Review reports submitted to the United Nations High-level Political Forum in 2017. Watch it [here](#).

### Leave NO One Behind

**SOLWODI: Solidarity with women in Distress.** Sr. Adina Balan CJ, Romania, President of Solwodi, shared a beautifully presented Report on the work of the organization with women in distress. "Are the women you are working with, really

changing their lives? Is it certain that they are not returning to their former partners? Are they really not going on the street anymore? These are some of the first questions that are addressed to me when I am talking about the Solwodi mission and about our commitment to change the mentality in Romania, regarding abuse against women and children". Read the complete Report of the impressive work undertaken by SOLWODI [here](#).

**Third Level Education for Early School Leavers.** At Loreto Centre, Crumlin, Ireland, Sr. Brede Quirke and colleagues are passionate about promoting access to higher education by under-represented groups. They know that promoting education for disadvantaged or socially excluded groups, especially women, enables significant personal, social and economic benefits from third level qualifications. Loreto Centre offers, among several courses, a Certificate in Women, Gender and Social Justice Education in conjunction with the Department of Social Science, Social Policy and Social Justice, University College Dublin (UCD).

### Human Trafficking.

Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH) held its annual conference recently, bringing together



religious and their colleagues to discuss, hear from speakers and plan the next action. Libby Rogerson ibvm represented our network at the conference. Read her [report](#) on the important issues discussed. It may be the Australian context, but we will find that the same situations exist in every country where we live. Therefore, the importance of keeping ourselves informed.

Mr. Marcello Pallozzi, Principal of Loreto School, Queenswood, Pretoria, **South Africa** recently wrote to the Secretary General of the United Nations on behalf of staff, learners and parents to make their thoughts and feelings known with regard to the scourge of Human Trafficking. Congratulations to all for taking

this initiative - we all feel a part of it.

### Celebrating UN Days

The teachers and sisters of **St. Mary's School, Nepal** celebrated 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2018, International Women's day, by going out in the service of others. "We are fortunate women, in spite of all our little pains and sorrows, and we want to make a little difference in the lives of other women, at least for a day, was the uppermost feeling in each heart as we made preparations for this day" writes Sr. Jessy CJ. Moving intergenerational exchanges with women and children who are most likely to be left behind, the elderly, orphaned and those dying of AIDS occurred as unheard stories found a listening ear and generous manners of giving were experienced. At the same time the mothers of **Our Mary Ward schools Lubhu and Jhamsikhel, Nepal** had education sessions on hygiene, safe environment for the children, home therapy on different sicknesses, basically equipping them to become doctors to their own family members without approaching a medical doctor.

Int. Women's Day in **Gulni, Patna province, India** focused on the theme **SAY NO TO CHILD MARRIAGE and DOWRY.**



*Thank You from  
The UN NGO Office, New York*