

Minutes
Bi-monthly Envoy Conference Calls
April 20, 2016 1pm and 7pm Eastern

- I. In attendance
 - a. 1pm
 - i. Allison (UN Office, NYC)
 - ii. Carroll (Greenville, NC)
 - iii. Chris (Ottawa, ON)
 - iv. Eryl (Toronto, ON)
 - v. Debby (Toronto, ON)
 - vi. Joanne (Lacombe, LA)
 - vii. Nancy (Duxbury, MA)
 - viii. Liza (Thousand Oaks, CA)
 - b. 7pm
 - i. Allison (UN Office, NYC)
 - ii. Barbara (Portland, OR)
- II. Office Updates – These are some of the things you can talk about at your congregation when people want to know what the UN Office does anyway.
 - a. [Racial Justice](#) – The UN is currently in the midst of a UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on global drug policy. This is the first such special session in 18 years and this UNGASS is really focusing on how to approach drugs globally from a treatment perspective rather than a punishment one. As Envoys, you're thinking globally while acting locally – as we are opposing the War on Drugs and its impacts on especially communities of color, I'm sure it is helpful to look at how the UN and how other countries address drugs in their public policies. Look to Portugal for example as a model, which has entirely decriminalized drugs and is focusing on treatment instead. Our office has been very involved in attending events at the UNGASS and developing our relationship with groups there.
 - b. [Climate Justice](#) – We're working on several things relating to the topic of ethical eating in collaboration with the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation. Ethical eating is not just about animal rights and being vegetarian, though that's certainly part of it. Our goal is to have people decrease the amount of meat that they eat, because of the disastrous effects on our environment and climate caused by the meat industry and the whole act of raising, breeding, and feeding cows, pigs, and etc. for consumption. It's also about eating locally, due to huge carbon footprints created by shipping produce and other food items across the country and the world. This partnership with the Tzu Chi foundation includes drafting a joint statement about ethical eating that we expect to be presented in a special ceremony this summer in Taiwan where the Tzu Chi foundation is based. We are also putting together a panel discussion at the UN coming up on May 19th about Ethical Eating. A representative from the Tzu Chi foundation will be speaking at our interfaith climate action workshop at General Assembly! We'll be talking about what action we

can take as a religious community to achieve (and surpass) the goals set out in the Paris Agreement.

- c. DPI NGO Conference in Korea May 30-June 1. UNO Director Bruce has been very involved in planning that and will be going and leading a workshop about working to end discrimination in education. This is only the second LGBTQ-focused workshop in the history of DPI NGO conferences, after the first one that the UU-UNO led in 2008 in Paris. (Bruce will go to Taiwan to meet with the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation after the conference in Korea.)
- d. [LGBTQ human rights](#) – The program has been working on solidifying the structure and sustainability of our recently established Subcommittee on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (a subcommittee of the NGO Committee on Human Rights). Such a group has been tried in the past, but this time it seems to be really taking off. The subcommittee is a forum where different NGOs and civil society organizations as well as individuals working to further human rights relating to sexual orientation and gender identity can all get together and connect on what they're working on, create a strategy to move forward with advocacy at the United Nations and in member states worldwide. The subcommittee has been very successful so far and has managed to bring together activists not just in New York City attending in person, but also from around the world calling in on a video conference. We see great hope for this program in the future.

III. Spring Seminar re-cap

- a. This was our biggest Spring Seminar yet in terms of number of participants – we had almost 160 people! (157 to be precise) We had some great speakers addressing different aspects of the income inequality spectrum and the broad range of ways in which income inequality is affected and has effects.
- b. The Spring Seminar Statement is now online:
<http://www.uua.org/international/events/seminar/colors-inequality-costs-and-consequences> Envoys are encouraged to share this with their congregations, not just as a statement resolved upon by Spring Seminar participants, but as a statement of how we will move forward with Unitarian Universalist action against income inequality.
- c. Eryl: Phenomenal seminar with astonishing speakers and wonderful young people involved. Very encouraged by the youth participation.
- d. The third panel is available to [view online!](#) This panel was live broadcast from the UN Headquarters. It is about 2 hours long and focuses on the effects of overt and unconscious bias (re. gender, race, criminal history, etc.) on income inequality.
- e. Nancy: Adult participation in the seminar is challenging because \$, Youth participation is challenging because have to miss school. UU-UNO provides a letter that participants can give to their boss/teachers excusing them from work/school for the Spring Seminar.
- f. Carroll: Speakers were really incredible. Would be good to hear more about the NGO committees that the UU-UNO works with.
- g. Joanne: Talent show sharing was amazing – most of the presenters were youth and it was very inspiring. In terms of speakers, it would be good to have more UN voices included in future seminars.

- IV. UN General Assembly delegates had the opportunity recently to pose questions to the candidates for the new Secretary General. These informal dialogues are available to be viewed online. Very inspirational and can be shared with youth and others.
- a. General Assembly President H.E. [Mogens Lykketoft's introduction](#) to the informal dialogues with candidates.
 - i. Dialogue with [António Guterres](#) (Portugal)
 - ii. Dialogue with [Irina Bukova](#) (Bulgaria)
 - iii. Dialogue with [Danilo Türk](#) (Slovenia)
 - iv. Dialogue with [Vesna Pusić](#) (Croatia)
 - v. Dialogue with [Natalia Gherman](#) (Moldova)
 - vi. Dialogue with [Vuk Jeremić](#) (Serbia)
 - vii. Dialogue with [Helen Clark](#) (New Zealand)
 - viii. Dialogue with [Srgjan Kerim](#) (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)
 - b. [UN Web TV](#) has lots of interesting events that are broadcast live and available later to watch online. One event of particular interest aimed at youth is coming up on April 28th from 10am – 1pm EDT: Education for Global Citizenship: Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals Together – Youth Pushing the SDGs! (This session will present young people as tomorrow's leaders today acting as agents of change and drivers to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. A major outcome of this session will be the presentation of the youth voice in the global consultation process of the draft conference action agenda for the 66th UN DPI/NGO Conference.)
- V. Upcoming events – please let Allison know if you will be present at either of these conferences! We hope to see many familiar faces.
- a. CUC conference May 20-22 Vancouver, BC (UU-UNO staff will not be present, but Envoys/CUC UNO Advisory Council/volunteers will still do an excellent job representing the office!)
 - i. UU-UNO reception including Blue Ribbon ceremony
 - ii. Multi-generational UN-themed workshop led by Tui Torrie and Gabi Rockenfield from Grand River Unitarian Congregation in Kitchener, ON
 - b. UUA general assembly June 22-26 Columbus, OH
 - i. Sustainable Development and Interfaith Action against Climate Change (Workshop) – Thursday afternoon (6/23/16 at 3pm)
 - ii. Black Lives Matter Beyond Our Borders (Workshop) – Friday afternoon (6/24/16 at 3pm)
 - iii. International Reception, including Dana Greeley Award and Blue Ribbon ceremony – Friday evening (6/24/16)
 1. This year's Greeley Award winner is Doug Harrell from the UU Society of Millcreek, Delaware. His winning sermon addressed the topic of International Criminal Justice: From Punitive to Restorative, more info [here!](#)

- iv. Envoy Breakfast – Saturday morning (6/25/16) Early in the morning, but won't conflict with other scheduled events/meetings/workshops and food and coffee will be provided!
- VI. Nancy: Heard somewhere about the UDHR (Universal Declaration of Human Rights) having failed to secure basic protections for children. Has protection for children has arisen as a topic within the Human Rights committee? Allison: no, it hasn't as far as I know, but I'll follow up on that.
 - a. Joanne – We should work on raising consciousness about the Convention on the Rights of the child (as opposed to a Declaration, "Convention" means you need to enforce the laws in your country, which is why the US has not signed it.) Just the United States and Somalia have not signed this one... [Allison: just checked after the call – the United States is actually now the ONLY country not to have ratified this convention. Somalia just ratified it in 2015.]
- VII. Envoy Programs
 - a. Opportunities for action:
 - i. Feeling uninspired? Check out the Envoy News "Time to Act" section for suggestions on what you can do
 - b. What are you working on?
 - i. Toronto: Debby and Eryl will have a large display table at church where they will give information and materials that were presented at the Seminar
 - 1. Debby is working on linking up with the children and youth at the congregation, and will specifically be concentrating on getting them involved. Hoping to involve more and more people in the congregation.
 - 2. Invite people to meet soon to develop a group of people who are engaged and committed to the work (both adults and youth).
 - 3. Debby: Created a curriculum for 6 weeks called "It Starts with Me" and it incorporates the program areas of the UNO. Will be glad to share this curriculum with Envoys
 - a. Allison: Also remember the UU-UNO has a RE curriculum to teach people about the UN – it's called "UN Me" and is available on our website:
<http://www.uua.org/international/engagement/re/un-me-curriculum>
 - ii. Joanne: In October, Bruce is coming to speak at congregations near New Orleans – hoping to have a couple events that weekend as well as in the lead-up to raise interest and enthusiasm.
 - iii. Nancy: Baby steps in Duxbury, MA; Nancy was finally able to ask for contribution for the UU-UNO from the congregation equivalent to \$1 per member. Social justice issues are not necessarily at the very heart of the congregation but Nancy and others are working on it and making slow but steady progress!
 - iv. Allison: next week I'll be hosting a workshop at the Pacific Southwest District Assembly about income inequality.

1. Californians & other west-coasters often feel rather isolated from the UN, which is why we're going to host this workshop and bring some of this to them to try to bring the southwest of the US on board.
 2. Suggestion: invite local UN Association presidents/leaders for guest speakers at UU events? This is a good idea, but make sure to properly vet them first. Liza had a bad experience with this – someone who seemed very interesting and qualified but ended up giving a very awkward, irrelevant speech.
- v. Barbara: First Unitarian United Nations Contest: "What does the UN mean to me" Essay contest for the youth with Cash Prizes and recruiting a Youth Envoy. Judges will be from the Peace Action committee.
- c. Envoy-related Questions/suggestions?
- i. Nancy: it would be great to know who's active nearby, and how to connect with geographically nearby Envoys
 - ii. Carroll: Going to be moving soon. Any advice on how to find new Envoys to serve as replacement?
 1. Make an announcement either at the beginning of service or in your congregation's social justice group or even congregational affairs group. Describe a bit about what the Envoy's role is and encourage people to come talk to you more. (Allison will be happy to provide some sample language if you'd like!)
 - iii. Barbara: How to Recruiting youth Envoys?
 1. Talk to the DRE or head of the youth group about if there are any youth interested in international issues or who have shown particular leadership. Maybe plan a time to talk to the youth group about the Envoy program.
 2. UU-UNO is working on developing more resources for youth Envoys/ways for youth specifically to get involved in the UN and the work of the UU-UNO. Stay tuned over the summer for further developments!
- VIII. Eryl: it's important for Envoys to engage and communicate with each other. We should encourage Envoys to post in the Facebook group
- a. Allison will send around again the [instruction sheet](#) on how to join and participate in that group.
- IX. Many thanks to all – the next call will be in June.