

Minutes
Monthly Envoy Conference Calls
Thursday, January 26, 1pm and 6pm Eastern

- I. Welcome and introductions
 - a. 1pm
 - i. Allison (UN Office, NYC)
 - ii. Phyllis Baxter (UUEstrie in North Hatley, QC)
 - iii. Bill McPherson (University Unitarian Church in Seattle, WA)
 - iv. Barbara Lacombe (First Unitarian Church in Portland, OR)
 - v. Tom Gale (Northshore UU Church in Danvers, MA)
 - vi. Monica Greene (UU Congregation of Frederick, MD)
 - b. 6pm
 - i. Allison (UN Office, NYC)
 - ii. Wendy Engelhardt (UU Fellowship at Stony Brook on Long Island, NY)
 - iii. Ron Glossop (First Unitarian Church in Alton, IL)
- II. Office Updates
 - a. UNO Director Bruce Knotts just returned from about 2 weeks of travel throughout Asia (Japan, Vietnam, China). In Vietnam he was promoting LGBT and women's rights, especially a curriculum called "[Think Equal](#)" that educates children to be peaceful, respectful global citizens. In China, Bruce met with Chinese NGOs to promote increased participation in the United Nations.
 - b. The UU-UNO hosted a panel discussion on Wed. Jan 25 on the importance of safe & tolerant spaces for Asian LGBT communities, and how this can be implemented for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The panelists talked about some of the differences and similarities between how LGBT communities are treated across countries in Asia; for example in China it is believed that non-hetero sexual orientations are not consistent with Chinese culture and values so there is crackdown in China against LGBT communities, whereas in more Buddhist predominant countries there's less resistance to LGBT people because the Buddhist faith does not have such a culture of prohibiting or banning behaviors. Also discussed was how governments can benefit from tolerant policies toward LGBT communities: tourism and entertainment industries in Thailand have been inclusive of LGBT communities and contributed overall to the economy. Promoting health and wellness amongst LGBT communities, especially treatment of HIV, can help control diseases and create a healthier workforce.
 - c. [Intergenerational Spring Seminar](#) is coming up soon! April 6-8 in NYC. Rather than staying on the floor at All Souls this year, youth and their sponsors will be staying at a hostel. The hostel's venue spaces will also be used for the majority of the Spring Seminar programming, except of course the panel discussion at UN Headquarters!
 - i. Registration is open until February 27th. Envoys get a \$50 registration discount. Just fill out the normal registration form and check the box to say you're an Envoy and you'll automatically get credited with the discount.

- ii. Monica will come along with someone from her congregation who is joining her as co-Envoy
- iii. UU-UNO is trying to get as much info online ahead of time so people are aware of what to expect – if there's something you're not sure of, let Allison know so she knows to put that information on the web or make it easier to find!

III. United Nations News and Updates

- a. New Secretary-General, António Guterres began his 5-year term on January 1st. His plans for strengthening the international community's ability to prevent conflict and maintain global security are focused on upholding human rights. He's already working on reform of the UN itself including new protections for whistleblowers and increased accountability and transparency throughout the UN system. He intends to improve peacekeeping operations and is committed to achieving gender parity at all levels of the UN organization.
- b. High Level Forum last week at UN HQ on Combatting Anti-Muslim Discrimination and Hatred – “Together Campaign” was launched recently to provide resources for combatting anti-Muslim discrimination. Take a look at Together.UN.org for some more about that campaign. Allison will share some resources in the January Envoy News.
- c. Okay, now let's talk about Trump... [As of 1/26/17] the president has drafted two Executive Orders pertaining to the US's relationship with the United Nations.
 - i. One titled “Auditing and Reducing US Funding of International Organizations” would be to review and possibly defund many parts of the United Nations, including any that give full membership to Palestine – defunding from the US would severely inhibit the work of UN agencies, including those that support refugees, peacekeeping, maternal and reproductive health, development aid, and more. The order would create a review panel to identify the “compelling national interest” for continued funding.
 - ii. The second, “Moratorium on New Multilateral Treaties” is focused on reviewing (and potentially leaving) current or pending treaties and negotiations, such as the Paris climate agreement. CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child are also mentioned for review, both of which the US has signed but not ratified, so not clear exactly what purpose of *that* review is.
 - iii. “The most optimistic reading of the orders is that they're too conspicuously ignorant to actually be implemented.” – the first one noted that the US would cut all funding to the International Criminal Court... but the US already does not fund the ICC at all.
 - iv. Ron: With Republicans in control of both House and Senate, it's possible that cutting back the funding could actually probably be adopted, since they're going to be cutting funding *anyways*. This is a classic Republican technique for decreasing support for the United Nations.

- IV. Bill: Seattle had a conversation on how the Paris Agreement affects Washington State, focusing a lot on state-level policy and progress since not possible to make good progress on a national level.
- V. Ron: What activities have Envoys done that work?
 - a. One idea is to follow Bill's example in Seattle and take one of these international agreements, like the Paris Agreement or the Sustainable Development Goals, and work on applying them on a state or local level. A couple months ago, Vicky Demos Envoy from Salisbury, MD, brought up [Cities for CEDAW](#): cities across the US are working on adopting CEDAW as a city ordinance, since it has not been ratified on a national level.
- VI. Next Envoy conference call will be in February – there will be an RSVP form in the Envoy News next week!